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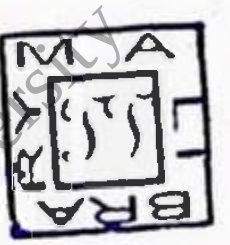

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EDITOR'S NOTE

The publication of a literary journal, under the auspices of the Department of English here, is the fulfilment of a long-cherished dream. The need for having such an organ available to us was acutely felt by my colleagues and me for quite some time. This journal will enable Indian scholars of English, in Aligarh and outside it, to crystallize their views on the complex and manifold problems of literary evaluation and judgment requiring discrimination and sensitivity to the nuances of literary experience, as also to make an occasional excursion into stylistic and linguistic analysis. Though not exclusively devoted to any specific area of British or American literature, a distinctive feature of this journal would, however, be its concern to focus partially on Shakespeare. Hence each issue will necessarily include one or more articles on some aspect of Shakespearean studies. This modest venture in the form of a journal would, I hope, give a fillip to English studies in this country and help us forge a dialectics of relationship with scholars abroad for purposes of a fruitful academic inquiry. Catholicity, disinterestedness and good sense in its fullest connotation will be our watchwords in the realization of our objective.

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G. E. Bentley

A JEWEL IN AN ETHIOP'S EAR

The Book of Enoch as inspiration for William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, Richard Westall and Lord Byron

Students of Blake have been aware of his series of five enigmatic designs for the apocryphal *Book of Enoch* since Allan R. Brown first described and reproduced them in 1940, and recently Professor John E. Grant has pointed out a sixth Blake design for *Enoch* in the Fogg Museum. However, relatively little has been related of the contexts of *The Book of Enoch* or contemporary responses to it, and part of what has been told was false; Professor Peter Alan Taylor has shown, for example, that the text of *Enoch* cited by Allan R. Brown and Sir Geoffrey Keynes was not published until sixty years after Blake's death and contains important discrepancies in crucial contexts from the only one he could have known. It is the purpose of the present paper to indicate briefly when and how *The Book of Enoch* came to be known in Europe and some of the ways in which William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, Richard Westall and Lord Byron responded to it.

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The Book of Enoch is a very miscellaneous collection of prophetic texts from various periods including The Book of the Watchers, The Vision of Noah, and The Book of Astronomy, as well as vigorous denunciations of astronomy. Parts of it, such as the account of the Flood, may be very ancient in origin, but the work seems to have been written down in its present form about the first century before Christ.

Most of *The Book of Enoch* is exotically obscure, though its confident prophecies of the imminent advent of The Son of God seem familiar to us, partly because they were repeatedly quoted in the New Testament. The book was named after Enoch chiefly to lend

it a spurious authority, for Enoch has little or nothing to do with much of the action. To most readers, certainly to most lay readers of Blake's time, the most fascinating part of *The Book of Enoch* is the account in the Book of Watchers of how angels, called The Watchers of Heaven or the Sons of God, fell in love with the beautiful and elegant daughters of men and begot on them a race of giants three hundred cubits or five hundred feet high. Certainly this is the section which formed most of all the basis for the derivative works of William Blake, John Flaxman, Thomas Moore, Richard Westall and Lord Byron. Indeed, only Blake's work shows any clear evidence of being based on other sections of *The Book of Enoch*.

The Book of Enoch in general and the sections containing the account of the Watchers with the daughters of men in particular has a history almost as curious and exotic as the stories they relate. *The Book of Enoch* was apparently written down in Hebrew or Aramaic in the first century before Christ by a Jew who lived a little north of the Black Sea, and for several centuries it was accepted as a genuine prophecy, being well known to early Jews and Christians; according to one authority, its "influence...on the New Testament has been greater than that of all the other apocryphal or pseudoepigraphical works taken together."[1] However, it was excluded from the European biblical canon by the Council of Nicaea in 325 A.D.; by the time of Jerome at the end of the 4th century it was taken to be apocryphal; and there are only occasional references to it in European literature thereafter. Had it been left to Europeans, probably *The Book of Enoch* would have been lost entirely, for no copy made before 1800 survives in Aramaic, Hebrew, or any European language. It was referred to in Origen, Tertullian, the Cabala, and a few other places, and parts of Chapters vii to x were given in parallel Greek and Latin texts in Scaliger's *Thesaurus Temporum* (1606) and Fabricius's *Codex Pseudoepigraphis Vetsris Testamenti* (1703). But in Europe generally it disappeared so completely that its very existence was doubted; as we are told in Genesis v. 24, "Enoch...was not, for God took him".

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However, from a very early date *The Book of Enoch* was revered as a canonical book of the Bible by the Christian church of Ethiopia. The Ethiopians believed that it was written at least in part before the Flood and that they had obtained it in pagan times before the books of Moses. They preserved it piously, and today the only known complete copies of *The Book of Enoch* are in Ethiopic or in translations from Ethiopic. But though the Ethiopians preserved *The Book of Enoch*, they were apparently not inspired artistically by its divine eroticism as were the poets and painters of the Romantic era in England. For centuries, *The Book of Enoch* was obscured from Europe in African darkness, hanging

> upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear—
> Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear !
>
> (*Romeo and Juliet*, i.v. 43-5)

A very few authors discussed the known fragments of Chapters vii-x, including M. Mace in French in 1713 and an English translation of Aristeas in 1715, but the work was first seen whole by a modern European when the formidable Scot explorer and adventurer James Bruce reached Ethiopia in his search for the source of the Nile in 1768-1773. He discovered that the Ethiopians preserved *The Book of Enoch* in their Bible, and in great excitement he obtained three beautiful copies to bring home with him. One he left in Paris for the Library of Louis XV, one copy he gave to the Bodleian Library, and one copy he kept for himself. He referred to it in his *Travels* (1790), I, 497-500; he translated in manuscript Chapters i-xviii (less than a fifth of the whole); his editor summarized the contents in the 1805 edition of Bruce's *Travels*; Dr Woide translated in manuscript a few passages of the Paris copy into Latin, and M. Sylvestre de Sacy published a Latin translation of most of Chapters i-xxiii in the *Magazin Encyclopedique* (1800). But for about fifty years after Bruce's great discovery, there was no printed version of the whole of *The Book of Enoch* at all, and the only printed fragments were in obscure works, mostly in Latin and Greek. The first complete printing of *The Book of Enoch* was the English translation made by the Reverend Professor Richard

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Laurence and printed at the Oxford University Press in 1821. SinceByron, Moore, and Richard Westall manifestly used Enoch's story after 1821, and since Blake and Flaxman seem to base their designs in part on passages not printed until 1821, it seems clear that all five men derived their inspiration from the 1821 publication. And since all five had completed their work between 1821 and 1827, the intensity of this outburst of creative energy is as remarkable as its diversity and quality.

Laurence's edition of *The Book of Enoch* seems to have made surprisingly little immediate impression upon the general public. I have encountered only one review before 1829, eight years after publication. Only two hundred and fifty copies of the book were printed, and a second edition was not made until 1832; most buyers were probably clerical patrons of Parker's Bookshop in Oxford, one of the two agents for the work. Certainly the only public notices I have seen within ten years of publication were scholarly polemical pamphlets such as those by J. M. Butt and John Oxlee in 1827 and the journalistic attack in *The Christian Observer* in 1829. (*The Christian Observer* complained of the "absurdity,...grossness, and even obscenity" of *The Book of Enoch*, which makes it seem ideally suited to an audience of the 1820s or the 1970s.) This comparative silence among scholars and the general public over such a sensational work as *The Book of Enoch* is as surprising as the vigour of the response among a few men of genius.

The story of the Watchers given in *The Book of Enoch* is essentially an amplification of the account in Genesis vi of the sons of God (called Angels or Watchers of Heaven in *Enoch*) who "became enamoured" of the "elegant and beautiful" daugthers of men. The chief of the Watchers is Azazyel, whose name and role are somewhat like those of Zazel in Blake's *Tiriel*, and he persuades the two hundred Watchers to bind "themselves [*to each other*] by mutual execrations" (vii. 7) so as to spread the guilt among them and to keep them to their purpose. They teach the beautiful daughters of men sorcery, astronomy, the making of mirrors and

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bracelets, "the beautifying of the eyebrows", and other forbidden mysteries (vii. 10, ix. 5, viii. 1) and beget upon the women a race of giants five hundred feet high who are so ravenous that they turn carnivore, eating the flesh of beasts, birds, and fishes and "drink [*ing*] their blood" (vii. 11-14).

Mere men could not compete with such giants; their works were destroyed and they cried out to heaven for protection from these misbegotten monsters. God responded by sending a message to Enoch that "all the earth [*except Noah*] shall perish [*in*] the waters of a deluge" (x. 4). God sent Raphael and Michael to "Bind Azazyel [*and the other Watchers and*]...cast [*them*] into darkness" (x. 6, 15), and he sent Gabriel to "destroy the children of fornication [*i.e., the giants*]...by *mutual* slaughter" (x.13), when Enoch presented God's message to the delinquent Watchers, they persuaded him to intercede for them with God, begging "remission and rest" for them (xiii. 7), but in response God rebuked them—"you ought to pray for men, and not men for you"(xv.1)—and He refused their prayer; "what you request will not be granted you as long as the world endures" (xiv.2). Such in brief is the story of the Watchers of Heaven, purged of its hortatory rhetoric—a rhetoric largely ignored by the Romantic poets and artists, who were fascinated by the sexual love of angels for women but who disregarded the cataclysmic doom which they bring upon the world.

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About 1821 Ireland's sweet lyrist, Byron's friend Tom Moore began a novel, his only novel, called *The Epicurean*, which is set in Egypt about 257 A.D. In it he introduced a poetical episode called *The Loves of the Angels* based upon *The Book of Enoch*. *The Epicurean* was not published until 1827, and when it finally appeared it lacked the episode of *The Loves of the Angels* because Moore had already used it elsewhere. As Moore explained, in 1823 he

> found that my friend Byron had, by an accidental coincidence, chosen the same subject for a Drama; and, as I could not but feel the disadvantage of coming after so formidable a rival, I thought it best to publish my humble sketch immediately.[2]

Moore's *Loves of the Angels* and Byron's play upon the same subject, *Heaven and Earth*, were each published early in 1823, and they were reviewed together by Francis Jeffrey in *The Edinburgh Review* for February, 1823. Moore's poem proved immediately popular; there were eight editions in 1823 alone, it was translated into French, Dutch, Spanish and Italian; and the very successful book illustrator Richard Westall made a series of four striking designs for the second edition of 1823.

Before turning to Moore and Westall, however, let us glance briefly at Byron's drama. Whereas Moore uses the angels to explore several kinds of love, Byron's *Heaven and Earth* exhibits chiefly one facet of love, the jealousy which two mortal men feel towards the angels Samiasa and Azaziel whose mistresses the mortals love. Byron's story is manifestly based upon the account in Enoch, for his text mentions "The scroll of Enoch" and a footnote cites "The book of Enoch, preserved by the Ethiopians". Characteristically, however, Byron is chiefly concerned not with angelic love but with human jealousy, and the angels seem largely to provide hopeless perversions beyond those of ordinary men. But since I am concerned here largely with the illustrations to Enoch, let us move on to *The Loves of the Angels*.

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Though Thomas Moore quotes *The Book of Enoch* on his title-page, and though he has many pages of learned notes citing the preposterous opinions of the Church Fathers, their modern commentators, and the Cabala about *Enoch*, the three stories he narrates in *The Loves of the Angels* are based on little more than a connection of immortal angels with mortal women. In the first story, a woman returns the carnal love of the angel with a true love for the heavenly, and, by a kind of poetic sleight-of-hand, she gets his wings and flies to a star, while he is left behind on earth to mourn his folly. In the second story, an angel seduces a girl by giving her glorious visions of himself, but when he embraces her, his fiery radiance consumes her entirely, and she is left "Black'ning within my arms to ashes".

All, all, that seem'd one minute since,
So full of love's own redolence
Now, parch'd and black, before me lay
Withering in agony away;
And mine, o misery ! mine the flame,
From which this desolation came—
And I the fiend, whose foul caress
Had blasted all that loveliness!

The scene seems beautifully adapted to that amatory poignancy at which Moore excelled.

Moore's third story is of a woman who loves a seraph worthily, and, to our astonishment, they get MARRIED and live happily ever after. Apparently marriage makes all the difference.

In his designs to *The Loves of the Angels* Westall depicts Moore's love-sick and love-lorn angels and maidens as if they were in the bowers and temples of classical Greece. Their straight robes and thonged sandals are redolent of classical simplicity rather than of Hebraic prophecy, the angels seem to be mere men wearing wings and the hair of the women sometimes curls in neat ringlets of a distinctly Regency style. Westall's design here for the second story shows the angel appearing on a "shrine" and the girl kneeling in adoration and longing before him; notice the regular marble pavement stretching into the indefinite distance and the severe, rectilinear, classical simplicity of the altar onto which the angel steps. Moore has described three angels who fall from heaven and two women who seem to become divine, and Westall has given distinctly classical locations to these airy spirits. The scores of Watchers of Heaven in *The Book of Enoch* who swarm to earth to populate it with their giant offspring five hundred feet high have shrunk in Moore's poem to little more than winged, melancholy men, the Irish melodist singing Irish fairy-stories with a Hebraic context, a context which has been regularly altered to one of classical simplicity in Westall's designs. The first European illustrations derived from *The Book of Enoch* adapted the story so thoroughly to modern Georgian tastes that little remains of *Enoch's* moral ruthlessness and apocalyptic grandeur.

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The unpublished drawings of John Flaxman for *The Book of Enoch* are as classical as those of Westall, but Flaxman's interests lay with the perversions of divinity and the mortal women appear in them only as the cause for which the Watchers fell from heaven, not as individuals of importance in themselves. Indeed, there are scarcely individuals at all in Flaxman's *Enoch* designs. All are symbols of mighty spiritual forces, rarely do they exhibit clearly individual characteristics, and usually they appear as massed banks of figures rather than one by one. Flaxman's thirteen designs for *Enoch* must have been made between 1821, when Laurence's translation was published, and 1826, when Flaxman died; none was published during his lifetime, they have never been reproduced or studied as a group, and several have not been reproduced or mentioned in print at all. They deserve to be better known, for some of them are lovely, such as the one of the Compact of Angels.

Though there are thirteen Flaxman designs thus far associated with *The Book of Enoch*, they illustrate only nine scenes, for six designs are variants of only two scenes. We may be confident that most of these drawings were intended to illustrate *The Book of Enoch*, because some bear titles naming Enoch, and the other designs without inscriptions seem to represent the same actions and the same figures. How extensive the series originally was is not known, for it has long been scattered, and probably other drawings for the series have yet to be identified. It seems to me likely that Flaxman thought of having them engraved as a set without text and published in book form, as were his designs for Homer, Aeschylus, Dante, and Hesiod in 1793, 1795 and 1817. Some of the drawings have the straight-line modeling by which line-engravers indicate shadows and contours but which is irrelevant to the pencil- or ink-artist who can use solid blacks or modulated grays to achieve these effects. But if Flaxman intended to publish them, the project did not get very far, for most of the designs are quite unfinished, and no reference to the series is known from contemporary records or for long after his death.

Flaxman has represented the chief actions of the Watchers with the daughters of men, except for those five hundred feet high

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offspring. The first scene represents a score of heroically naked Watchers floating in the air (not on Mount Hebron as in *Enoch*) and binding themselves by "mutual execrations" (vii. 7) and by their joined hands. It is noteworthy that Flaxman's Watchers are wingless and have merely human features but that their actions uniformly mark them out as great spirits—in both respects contrasting strongly with Westall. Flaxman's Watchers are always naked, though his women are mostly clothed.

In this scene, the Watchers, having bound themselves to one another by their compact, descend toward the earth with their hands still clasped but already separating as they see the daughters of men below them. The effect of massed, harmonious flight just beginning to disperse is here beautifully achieved. The moment depicted is not described in *The Book of Enoch* but is clearly implied. Flaxman has skillfully focused our attention upon the Watchers, their original unity and subsequent fall, before he allows *us* to see the daughters of men. It is also striking, though perhaps not surprising, that these lusting, naked angels are almost genital-less.

Flaxman's next scene is the moment when the Watchers "select...wives from the progeny of men...[to] beget children... each choosing for himsalf" (vii. 2. 10). Each Watcher is flying down to a different woman, there seems to be no dispute among them, and the women seem notably acquiescent. This design seems to represent a vast mass of innumerable spirits darkening and overwhelming the daughters of men. In a variant of the design the effect of heavenly energies dispersed and dissipated is even more powerfully evoked. The gestures of the central Watcher in particular are tender and passionate, combining eloquently gentleness and impulsiveness. Notice in these first designs the effect of figures materializing in bas-relief; Flaxman's profession of sculpture is always visible in his designs.

In *The Book of Enoch* after the Watchers had begotten giant sons and corrupted the earth, God sent the angel Gabriel to "excite them one against another. Let them perish by *mutual* slaughter... for they have tyrannized over mankind" (x, 13. 18). Flaxman's

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splendid design of two men contending over a woman may well be related to this passage in *Enoch*, but, if so, he has somewhat altered the literary details. *The Book of Enoch* does not specify that they fought over women and it implies that the wars were between the giant offspring, who are many times larger than the women, rather than between the Watchers themselves. We should remark the similarity Flaxman evidently felt between *The Book of Enoch* and the works of Homer and Aeschylus which he also illustrated with similar heroic naked warriors—the similarity is so strong that it is difficult to be confident whether designs such as this one have a classical or Hebraic subject.

In order to purge the earth, God sent Raphael to "Bind Azazyel hand and foot; [*and*] cast him into derkness"(x.6). This scene is apparently represented here where a flying naked man lifts high above his head another naked man whose wrists and ankles seem to be bound. At least the aggressor must be a spirit, for he is clearly floating in air with his burden in a very Blakean way—similar scenes are in Blake's *America* pl. 7 and *Europe* pl. 5—and the extraordinary elongation of limb is a common metaphor for spirituality, in Blake, El Greco, and elsewhere.

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God sent Michael "to Samyaza, and to the others who are with him" to "bind them...underneath the earth, even to...the lowermost depths...shut up for ever"(x.15,16). In this design, Flaxman has represented three naked men driven by a giant into a cavern in the earth which they seem to create by their struggles. The compression of the earth seems to be enormous and their destined punishment eternal. The effect is made even more emphatically in the next drawing of a powerful bearded athlete pressing two of the victims firmly into the same rocky cavern, in a gesture similar to that of Blake's "Ancient of Days". The darkness of that exitless rock-tomb indicates effectively the eternity of their punishment. By this time, the earth above them has been flooded and cleansed, and peace and righteousness have been restored there.

Flaxman has given the outline of the whole story of the Watchers of Heaven with the daughters of men, compressing powerfully

the gigantic events into a few key actions. They gave him scope for depicting the struggles of heroic naked warriors and mighty spirits, as he did in the engraved designs for Homer and Aeschylus and the feminine tenderness evoked so beautifully in his funerary monuments and in his pubublished designs for *Pilgrim's Progress.*[3] His death in 1826 cut short what might have been one of his finest series of engraved designs.

It is striking that Tom Moore, Richard Westall, Lord Byron and John Flaxman pay relatively little attention to the more extraordinary theological implications of *The Book of Enoch*, that they minimise the erotic implications of the story, and that they entirely ignore the gigantic monsters produced by the congress of sexual supermen and willing women. And it is equally striking that Blake seizes most vigourously upon just these theological and erotic elements and that he represents the giant offspring as central to the story.

Blake illustrated The Book of Jude,[4] where *The Book of Enoch* is referred to, the prophet Enoch appears in Blake's *Milton* pl. 37, l, 26, in *Jerusalem* pl. 7, l. 25, and in his description for his drawing for Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs*, and about 1807 Blake made a lithograph of Enoch in prayer. His interest in Enoch and in prophetic literature, and the fact that he himself wrote prophecies, make his fascination with the new-found *Book of Enoch* very plausible. The interpretation which he imposed on *The Book of Enoch* is, however, leses predictable.

Blake made at least six designs for *The Book of Enoch* some time between 1821, when Laurence's translsation was published, and 1827, when he died. All are powerful though unfinished, all have at least the word "Enoch" written on them, evidently in another hand, and all are on paper with the same WELCAR watermark. They may well have been commissioned by John Linnell, for he certainly owned them in 1863 when W. M. Rossetti traced them to the Linnell Collection, and they were sold posthumously with The Linnell Collection in 1918. Five are now in the Rosenwald Collection of the U. S. National Gallery of Art, and the sixth, on the

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back of one of the Dante designs which Blake made for Linnell, is now in the Fogg Museum of Harvard Uuiversity.

In his drawings, Blake's emphasis is strongly upon the superhuman erotic element in *The Book of Enoch*, and in this he is much more faithful to the Hebrew prophecy than were Thomas Moore and Richard Westall with their sentimental mortals dressed in wings, or John Flaxman with his emasculated gladiators floating in air or struggling in the rocky depths of earth. In some senses, Blake's daughters of men "who led astray the angels of heaven without resistance" (xix. 2) are carrying out the command of Enitharmon in his *Europe*. pl. 5,l.3, that "Woman, lovely Woman may have dominion". On a supernatural level, the relationship between the sexes has been reduced to mere sexuality, and the very stars of heaven have fallen to earth to enter the wombs of women. The monsters bred of this carnality are essential to Blake's interpretation, as they were to the author of *Enoch*, though they play no role in either Moore or Flaxman. Blake has characteristically drawn together the disparate parts of *The Book of Enoch*, but the parts reinforce one another, and his interpretation is unique and justified.

His first *Enoch* design[5] here represents an heroic naked man in a position like Blake's own Milton Doffing the Robe of Promise in his *Milton*, pl. 13, encircled by four nude figures. The nobility of the central figure has led Allan R. Brown, Sir Geoffrey Keynes, and the authorities of The National Gallery to describe it as The Son of Man as Messiah with Four Attendant Spirits, but a close examination makes this seem improbable. Those heavenly spirits are women with the breasts carefully emphasised, and the so-called "Messiah" has an enormously enlarged penis extending most of the way across his hip. We may see such phallic exaggeration in Blake elsewhere, for example in pl. 18 of *Europe* copy G and in Apollyon Fighting with Christian in his *Pilgrim's Progress* designs of about 1824, but we never see it in connection with the Messiah. This *Enoch* drawing represents one of the fallen Watchers, and his gaint phallus is the reason for his attraction to the surrounding daughters of men. Note the plurality of women ; Moore and

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Flaxman had presumed one woman per Watcher, but the text of *Enoch* is not explicit in this respect, and the orgiastic implications of this and the next design seem to me perfectly consistent with the intentions of *Enoch*.

Blake's second design shows a naked Watcher, plunging down from his natural place in the sun to whisper in the ear of the nude woman as he caresses her belly and she holds his arm gently. On either side is one of their giant offspring, not three hundred cubits high, to be sure, but at least many times the bulk of their parents. They are not yet ravening and desolating the earth—perhaps they are not yet full grown—but are rather looking at their parents with expressions of pathos, expressions which are explicable by the flames enveloping the one on the left and the vegetation perhaps enveloping that on the right. The scene might almost be an illustration for Blake's *Book of Los*, pl. 3, ll, 25-26: "And Wantonness on his own true love Begot a giant race". In a sense here, supernatural seduction, demonic propagation, and divine punishment are simultaneous, and the woman, looking not at the Watcher but at her monstrous offspring, sees the result of their transgression but yet does not resist it. Note that the Watcher seems as yet to have done little more than tell her the secrets of sin, of good and evil, but that the knowledge alone corrupts. In *Enoch*, the secrets of heaven are told after the seduction, but here they are not only coincidental with it, they are the same thing. In the eyes of God, there is no sin. Nothing is evil but thought makes it so.

Blake's third *Enoch* design is one of the most finished, beautiful, and sexually explicit of the series. The focus of the design is the head of the nude woman, poised between two enormous, light-giving phalli, whose owners are in other respects far less distinct than their generative organs. The woman seems to have her left hand on one phallus while she gazes fixedly at the other; her vulva is carefully emphasized, and her right hand is turning into claws or vegetation. The orgiastic implications of the first design seem to be continued here; the woman seems to be tantalized by the difficulty of deciding which phallus to choose first.

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The divinity of the Watchers is faintly implied by their dim haloes but is concentrated in their star-like phalli. This feature is an addition to the story of the Watchers with the daughters of men as told in the section of *Enoch* called The Book of Watchers, the section preserved till the Renaissance in Latin and Greek. However, it is not Blake's invention, for it clearly derives from a much later section of *The Book of Enoch* (lxxxvii, 5). There, in a story strikingly like the punishment of the Watchers, fallen angels are bound "hand and foot" and "cast...into the cavities of the earth" by God's four punishing angels. These fallen angels are seen by *Enoch* in a dream in the shape of "great stars, whose parts of shame resembled those of horses". Blake seems to have associated the two stories, quite plausibly, and his Watchers have star-like parts of shame like those of horses. Their divinity lies in their organs of generation.

The fourth of Blake's designs is labelled "Enoch",but its connection with the book is obscure. Both nude women have carefully emphasized vulvas, and the one floating at the left is clad in scales which are familiar to us in Blake's mythology but which have no explicit justification in *The Book of Enoch.* The vaguely sketched figure at the foot of the page seems to be rigid in death, and the phallic implication of the tree above his hips is the chief justification for describing him as a man. Perhaps the scaly woman is one of the lascivious, already-corrupted daughters of men who has seduced, and perhaps killed, one of the merely mortal sons of men, whose mate looks on despairingly. Such a scene might at least be a plausible extension of the story as told in *Enoch.*

The last of Blake's numbered *Enoch* designs seems to show Enoch before the Throne of One Great in Glory; this is the least distinct and one of the most impressive drawings in the series. When Enoch was sent by the fallen Watchers to intercede for them with their Angry God, he came to "One great in glory" sitting upon

> an exalted throne . From underneath this mighty throne rivers of flaming fire issued....the sanctified...were near him ..And he raised me up...My eye was on the ground.
>
> [*xiv. 21, 17, 19, 24,25*]

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Blake suggests all this in his drawing, with a magnificent deity brooding on His throne, with vaguely indicated shapes of "the sanctified" beside Him and two dim figures standing before Him; there seems to be a canopy over His head, steps lead up to His exalted throne, and rivers of flaming fire issue from it.

Only two significant features remain to be accounted for: Is that an open book on His knees? And if Enoch is the figure on the right with bowed head and eye "directed to the ground" who is the figure at the left (that is, on God's right)? The answer may be found in a later, and quite discrete, vision in which Enoch sees "the Ancient of days" on His throne accompanied by "the son of Man" (xlvi. 1, 2); further, the Ancient of Days has "the book of the living opened" before Him (xlvii.3). Blake, like most early commentators, would have taken the Son of Man to be the Messiah, Christ, and it is appropriate that He should intercede for sinners with Enoch, standing at God's right hand.

But note the ominous implications of this design : God's forehead is furrowed in anger, and flames issue from His throne. There is to be no mercy for the Watchers from what Blake called "The Angry God of This World". Their punishment for doing evil is what Blake would expect from a God of Good and Evil.

The newly discovered *Enoch* design indicates the punishment meted out to the fallen angels. Despite the elaborate directions God gives in *The Book of Enoch* for burying them within the earth, this Watcher is free to fly from earth on a short tether. He is, like all mortals, chained to earth though with immortal aspirations for the stars. Blake had drawn similar soaring, tethered mortals elsewhere, for example in an engraving for Young's *Night Thoughts* (1797), p. 16, and in his own *Vala*, p. 2. The chief iconographic feature associating this design with *The Book of Enoch* is the great stars at the left. Previously we have seen such stars associated with the genitalia of the Watchers, but now they are separate from the Watcher, in the sky. Evidently the design represents one of the fallen Watchers confined with the "seven great stars (which transgressed the commandment of God), like great blazing mountains"

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in a "desolate" spot which, "until the consummation of heaven and earth, will be the prison of the stars, and of the host of heaven" (xviii. 14, 15, 16). Now perhaps we know why "the stars threw down their spears And water'd heaven with their tears", as they do in "The Tyger"; they were bound to earth by a jealous God.

Blake found in *The Book of Enoch*, as he did wherever he turned his eyes, confirmation of his own visions. In his *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* many years before, he had written of the giant antediluvians chained to earth who are our energies. In *The Book of Enoch* he found an ancient prophecy which expressed his own ideas in Hebraic form. No wonder he began to illustrate it with such enthusiasm: it was deep calling to deep, vision answering to vision. The graceful poignancy of Moore's *Loves of the Angels*, the sentimental invocations of Westall's designs for it, the classical warriors of Flaxman's illustrations to *Enoch*, all seem earth-bound and immature compared to the erotic and spiritual intensity of Blake's greate unfinished series.

Departmet of English
University of Toronto
Ontario, Canada

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NOTES

1. *The Book of Enoch*, tr. R. H. Charles (London, 1912), xcv.
2. Thomas Moore, *The Loves of the Angels*, fourh edition (1823), vii.
3. See G. E. Bentley, Jr., "Flaxman's Illustrations for *Pilgrim's Progress*", to be published in a collection edited by R. Morton & D. Williams (Toronto, 1976).
4. "Satan and the Archangel Michael Contending for the Body of Moses"—see Allan R. Brown, "Blake's Drawings for *The Book of Enoch*", *Burlington Magazine*, LXXVII (1940), 80-85.
5. I give the designs in the order of the numbers on them, with the unnumbered sixth design last.

O. P. Govil

KEATS'S VISION OF HYPERION

The Fall of Hyperion was Keats's most ambitious final effort. He originally conceived of it as a large poem with an epic design, containing ten books of which only two and a half were finished. The subject was the overthrow of the Titans by the true gods of which he had read in Chapman's *Homer* and *Hesiod* and in Sandys' *Ovid*. His aim was to ascribe the downfall of the primordial rulers of the universe to the fact that their power was that of mere brute force. They were destined to fall when there arose, in Apollo, a noble type of power—a god whose strength lay in beauty, enlightenment, and poetry, and who had attained his godhead by becoming acquainted with grief and tears.

In this endeavour to write an epic, Keats's chief inspiration was Milton. He sought not merely to reproduce the effects of the Miltonic style whose frequent occurrences in the first version later led him to recast the poem, but also modelled his first version of the story on the early books of *Paradise Lost* which too is a story of the wars of the deities. In the first book of *Hyperion* we see the fallen deities just as in Milton's poem we see the fallen angels. In the second we have the gods in council, as in Book II of *Paradise Lost* the fallen angels debate. In the third book of *Hyperion* the account of Apollo, the new deity, likewise is a parallel to the passage in the third book of *Paradise Lost* where we behold Heaven, God and Christ. Keats's treatment of the story, however, shows several weaknesses. In the second book, his account of the crest-fallen Saturn in a fit of despair, with the other deities around him in council, pales before Milton's account of the fiery and indomitable rebel in his epic. Saturn who speaks first is a picture of stupe-

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faction and perplexity. His speech is followed by the speeches of Oceanus, Clymene and Enceladus, while Hyperion, who is clearly set for the role of leading the Titans against the usurping deities in the wars that are supposed to follow, makes his appearance rather late in the book, and then too does not speak. Of the three who speak after Saturn, the first two make an impassioned defence of the new gods. This obvious split in their ranks which shows their lack of spirit not only weakens the conflict between the old and the new gods, but also nips the action in the bud. This can be contrasted with Milton's account of the fallen angels who are strongly united in rebellion against the established authority. Another factor which retards the progress of Keats's story is the role of Mnemosyne, a goddess of the old order. She gives Apollo 'knowledge enormous' by which he achieves divinity. The situation clearly boils down to this. Not only do the Titans show little sign of determination to regain their thrones, since some of them publicly argue in favour of the new order, but one of them is an instrument by which Hyperion's successor comes to power. In other words, not only are the Titans a house divided against itself, there is also treachery in their ranks.[1] From this we can infer that Keats's handling of the story shows an obvious bias towards the new gods which proves fatal to the progress of the action. Milton, on the other hand, is more objective. He is able to put life into the conflict because he paints God and Satan with equal force, and does not take sides in the early part of his book.

Keats felt dissatisfied with his handling of the story and decided to recast it. He gave up *Hyperion* because there were, as he said, too many Miltonic inversions in it. But this does not really explain the cause of his abandoning the story. For one thing, the so-called Miltonic inversions do not constitute the weaker part of the poem and, secondly, they are not totally eliminated from the recast version either. Moreover, in the consensus of critical opinion, the first version is artistically superior to the second, it being more homogeneous and sustained. The reasons for abandoning the first *Hyperion* certainly lay deeper. Many theories have been put

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forward to explain it. It is neither possible nor necessary to discuss them here. But a few facts deserve to be noted. Keats firmly believed that "A Man's life of any worth is a continual allegory" and that "Even a Proverb is no proverb to you till your life has illustrated it". He expressed his personal feelings and preferences in his lyric poems—odes and sonnets—but many of his highest intuitions about life and poetry found allegorical expression in his verse-tales. Just as in *Endymion* his main interest was to set forth the quest of the soul for an ideal, and to juxtapose human love and divine love, in *Hyperion* he likewise sought to allegorise his apprehensions of life's meaning and purpose and his highest conceptions of the nature and office of poetry. Consequently, in the course of his writing the first version of *Hyperion*, his original design of a large epic poem underwent a change; he endeavoured to interpret the old myth in terms of his own highest intuitions about life, but when he found himself dissatisfied with the movement of the story in the first version, he recast it, attempting this time, not an epic fragment, but a vision, an allegory not merely of the growth of life and poetry in general, but also of his own. We can thus argue that Keats could have continued the narrative if he had persisted in writing in the manner of Milton. He had to abandon it, however, not because he was, as he thought, too much under the influence of Milton, but because he strove to get rid of it, having decided to be more of himself.

The dramatic vigour of an epic action depends upon a firm realization of the idea of conflict. In Milton the conflict between God and the rebellious angels is brought into a clear focus, and the action therefore proceeds on right lines. Milton's theology, too, with its emphasis on a sharp cleavage between the forces of good and evil reinforces the idea of conflict. Keats, on the other hand, is neither doctrinaire in approach nor ethical by implication. In a letter to Bailey on 3 November 1817, he expressed his yearning "for a recourse somewhat human independent of the great Consolations of Religion and undepraved Sensations—of the Beautiful—the poetical in all things". To him the conflict between the old and the new gods was not a conflict between two entirely

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different orders of society or even ideologies; it was not a question of replacing an old order by a new and different one altogether. It was basically the struggle to progressively attain a higher level of perfection, as Oceanus affirms;

> Mark well!
> As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
> Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
> And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
> In form and shape compact and beautiful,
> In will, in action free, companionship,
> And thousand other signs of purer life;
> So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
> A power more strong in beauty, born of us
> And fated to excel us, as we pass
> In glory that old Darkness; nor are we
> Thereby more conquered, than by us the rule
> Of shapeless Chaos ...
> Yea, by that law, another race may drive
> Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
>
> (II, 205-13)

The new order does not so much supplant the old as grows out of it. This concept of change obviously minimises conflict and emphasises the evolutionary process. Such a view though acceptable as a philosophy is inimical to the life of the epic narrative.

The central concept of *Hyperion* is the ceaselessly dynamic process of creative evolution, as Oceanus observes :

> And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
> So thou art not the last, it cannot be;
> Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
>
> (II, 188-90)

This process is essentially qualitative, involving growth from within. It is not a mere biological evolution like the one conceived by Darwin and his tribe. Oceanus lays clear emphasis on free

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will and action and "thousand other signs of purer life". The triumph of the new gods led by Apollo over the Titans is a victory of the creative aesthetic power over the uncreative fossilized mind; it is not a biological struggle in which the physically fit survive. Oceanus himself explains how the Titans were dispossessed by the Olympians, not by brute force, but by the sheer charm of their beauty:

> for 'tis the eternal law
> That first in beauty should be first in might;
> Yea, by that law, another race may drive
> Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
> Have you beheld the young God of the Seas,
> My dispossessor ? Have you seen his face ?
> Have you beheld his chariot, foam'd along
> By noble winged creatures he hath made?
> I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
> With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
> That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
> To all my empire.
>
> (II, 228-39)

That this process of evolution is basically a ceaseless unfolding of beauty in its spiritual, "more comely" aspects is further evidenced by Clymene's confession that he had to abdicate his control over his realm when his "sense was fill'd/With that new blissful golden melody" which flowed wave after wave from young Apollo's lute.

Keats thus interpreted the old myth as signifying the growth of the human mind, of human culture through the ages, which in a letter to Reynolds he terms as the "grand march of intellect", using the term "intellect" not so much to refer to human reason and science as to human consciousness in general as revealed through man's manifold aesthetic and cultural pursuits. Each stage in this "grand march" however seemingly perfect is succeeded by another striving for "a fresh perfection" and this process continues endlessly. Now in terms of this interpretation of the old myth, it is necessary that Keats should represent Apollo as

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ceaselessly evolving, but he fails to do so. When he conceives of Apollo's deification through the pouring of "knowledge enormous" into the wide hollows of his brain, he invests him with faultless perfection, and this not merely baulks the progress of the intellectual design of the story but also ruins the prospects of maintaining its narrative flow. The reason why Keats abandoned *Hyperion* is that his general conception of the grand march of intellect clashed with his growing consciousness of his own problems as a poet. Consequently, he first read into the old myth his own perception of the growth of poetry and then the growth of his own poetic mind.

Oceanus's account of the triumph of the Olympians over the Titans in terms of vegetative growth symbolically presents the growth of the poetic mind in terms of Wordsworth's three stages of natural education which are recalled in Keats's famous Mansion of Poetry letter. "The dull soil" of "chaos and parental darkness" corresponds to "the infant or thoughless Chamber" of the first stage of "simple sensations". "The proud forests", "green groves" and "Fair boughs" fed by that dull soil which are "in form and shape compact and beautiful" represent "the Chamber of Maiden-thought" "showing a bright appearance" where the mind "is imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us" and "intoxicated with the light". This is the second stage of high sensations with knowledge which is differentiated from the first stage of simple sensations without knowledge by Keats in the earlier part of the same letter thus :

> The difference of high Sensations with and without knowledge appears to me this—in the latter case we are falling continually ten thousand fathom deep and being blown up again without wings and with all the horror of a bare shouldered creature—in the former case, our shoulders are fledged, and we go thro' the same air and space without fear. This is running one's rigs on the score of abstracted benefit.[2]

Here Keats describes the two stages in the manner of Oceanus, the second stage of light emerging from the first stage of darkness; the

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assurance of clear thinking being achieved after a period of will o' the wisp sensations. "Eagles golden-feather'd" bred forth by those forest trees represent the third stage "when the second chamber becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages, when we feel the burden of the Mystery". The poet, like Shelley's skylark, soars high on the luminous wings of his imagination. "Eagle" for Keats stands for the poet. While talking of Wordsworth as a deeper poet of the human heart than Milton in the same letter he employs the same image;

> I will return to Wordsworth—whether or no he has an exalted vision or a circumscribed grandeur—whether he is an eagle in his nest, or on the wing.

In another letter written about a year later, he talks of poetry as being "not so fine a thing as philosophy—for the same reason that an eagle is not so fine a thing as a truth",[3] and significantly enough quotes Milton where he refers to Apollo's music :

> "How charming is divine Philosophy
> Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose.
> But musical as is Apollo's lute".

This quotation throws light upon Oceanus's contrast between "eagles golden feather'd" and "pale solitary doves". While eagles stand for poets, imaginative artists, doves stand for earth-bound rationalists and philosophers.

Oceanus' account also adumbrates Keats's view of the process of poetic composition which he had succinctly presented in a letter to Haydon on 8 April 1818:

> The innumerable compositions and decompositions take place between the intellect and its thousand materials before it arrives at that trembling delicate and snail-horn perception of Beauty.

"Chaos and parental darkness" represent the depths of the poet's subconscious mind where sensuous impressions are stored. "Intestine broil/That sullen ferment" refers to the process of innumerable

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compositions and decompositions which continually goes on in the poet's mind, consolidating, as Wordsworth puts it, "numbers into unity and dissolving unity into numbers".[4] "Light the first fruit" of that process signifies the final emergence of organized impulses in the form of images on the threshold of the poet's consciousness, the imposition of order on that primeval chaos. "The ripe hour" indicates the perception of that Beauty which is Truth, in other words, the birth of true poetry—of that light which touches the "whole enormous matter into life". It is significant that in his well-known letter to Woodhouse, where Keats discusses the true poetical character and distinguishes it from 'the egotistical sublime', he observes: "Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the characters of Saturn and Ops?" Indeed, in terms of Keats's well-known concept of "negative capability" or "disinterestedness", Oceanus' account of the struggle between the Titans and the Olympians recalls Keats's distinction between the "Man of Power" and the "Man of Genius", the egotistical poet and the poet of negative capability, between "those whose self-interests are their passion" and "those who will sacrifice their worldly interests for a friend". To Keats, Coleridge, and later on Wordsworth and Byron represented the first kind, while Christ, Socrates and Shakespeare, the second. The Titans are weak because they are "self-hid or prison-bound". They are uncreative because they are unable to transcend the limits of their narrow personal identities. They are consumed by wrath and "passion-stung"; they "writhe at defeat" and nurse their agonies since they have lost their realms. Similar is the mental state of Saturn,

> the supreme God,
> At war with all the frailty of grief,
> Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
> Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
> (II, 92-95)

He is not merely despondent, but also deeply self-absorbed;

> Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
> Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
> Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,

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Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn.

(I, 98-102)

Clymene too proposes :

let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.

(II, 259-61)

Like the egotistical poet, he reproaches that "solitude" which breathed of "joy and soft delicious warmth" with "songs of misery, music of his woes". Poets of his class are described in the second version of *Hyperion* as "mock lyrists, large self worshipers/And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse" (I, 207-08).

Apollo, on the other hand, is free from the base emotions. No personal grief motivates his shedding of tears. He is continually striving for non - identity in his quest for universal knowledge :

I strive to search wherefore I am sad,
.....
... O why should I
Feel curs'd and thwarted, when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant?

(III, 88-93)

He embodies the true poetical character that continually endeavours to enlarge his self through self-effacement. That is why he requests Mnemosyne :

Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing
Are there not other regions than this isle ?
What are the stars ? ...
...Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.

(III, 95-102)

This calls up to mind Keats's observation to Bailey on 22 November 1817: "if a Sparrow comes before my Window I take part in its existence and pick about the Gravel".

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"Negative capability" or "distinterestedness" which Keats regarded as the supreme quality of a great poet is partially represented by Oceanus, the old God of the Sea, whose speech, as we have seen, constitutes the cornerstone of the poem's philosophical framework. Though one of the fallen Titans, he has the courage of conviction to analyse the facts dispassionately and to "bring proof" to his comrades that they "must be content to stoop". He also impresses upon them that they will get much comfort in the proof. if they consider its "truth", but he also knows that being what they are i,e., despondent and self-absorbed—his proof will give instead "the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain". Oceanus is a sage and a sophist—a truly disinterested person in the spirit of the Gita as Keats himself conceived and yearned to be. To him, "the top of sovereignty" is "to bear all naked truths,/ And to envisage circumstance, all calm". He is indeed the true poet, as defined in the revised version of *Hyperion*, who is "a sage, a humanist, physician to all men".

That Oceanus is spiritually akin to Apollo is proved not merely by his eloquent defence of the dispossession of the Titans by Apollo's tribe, but also by his own attitude to life. He fearlessly utters the painful truth, even though Enceladus and other comrades "scorn" his "lore". He is a seer, for "his truth his first-endeavouring tongue/Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands". Keats's vision of a perfect and ideal poet is however projected in Apollo whose transfiguration at the end of the poem has a spiritual or even religious air. In the letters this ideal is embodied in Shakespeare who is "a miserable and mighty poet of the human Heart", but in the poem it inspires his conception of Apollo. Apollo's struggle symbolizes Keats's own struggle as a poet. Even so early as *Sleep and Poetry*, he had expressed his determination that

> First the realm I'll pass
> Of Flora, and Old Pan ...
> .....
> Yes, I must pass them for a nobler life,
> Where I may find the agonies, the strife
> Of human hearts.

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Apollo's early life, like Keats's, is spent in the pursuit of "simple sensations" in "grassy solitudes". He has thrilled the world with "such new tuneful wonder", yet he is sad. He is unhappy because of his "aching ignorance', because he has an insatiable yearning to know himself and all other forms of life—the desire to transcend his narrow self. His mental state recalls that of Keats when he commented on his sonnet "Why did I laugh tonight?" to his brother George on 19 March 1819: that "it was written with no Agony but that of ignorance; with no thirst of anything but knowledge'. Apollo's transfiguration is indeed a projection of Keats's cherished desire to attain the "philosophic mind"—the true poetic imagination which would enable him to lift the burden of the Mystery of human life. and the sudden illumination of Apollo, in spite of Mnemosyne's muteness, recalls Keats's account of the manner in which the simple imaginative mind develops into the complex imaginative mind:

> the simple imaginative mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent working coming continually on the Spirit with a fine suddenness.[6]

Keats indeed believed that Apollo's "rapturous hurried notes that fell, one after one, yet all at once, like pearl beads dropping sudden from the string"could be produced by a poet who, as Wordsworth also believed, had thought long and deeply. In Keats's account Apollo sees, as it were, "the still point of the turning world" in a theophany, like Arjuna in the *Bhagwad Gita*, but after his vision time and space have little meaning, and so the narrative cannot go on. It however brings into focus Keats's conception of poetry as being noble like the highest religion and lofty like the greatest prophecy.

In this process of Apollo's transformation, Mnemosyne plays the key role. She is instrumental in resolving the struggle in Apollo's mind and in his becoming a god. When Apollo beseeches her in an impassioned voice to tell him why he thus raves about these groves, she remains mute, but her silence is most articulate. She indeed symbolizes not merely the whole gamut of man's intellectual and

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cultural inheritance through the ages as being cumulatively stored in human consciousness or racial memory, but also an individual mind's share of this whole stock as well as the sudden intuitive manner in which it bursts upon human consciousness in moments of creative activity. She also represents Wordsworth's "inward eye" which is "the bliss of solitude". In terms of Keats's original design, Mnemosyne as mother of both the Titans and the Olympians should have remained neutral or at best should have like Oceanus exercised a restraining influence to resolve the conflict between the two parties, paving the way for an easy switch-over from the old regime to the new, and that would have been consistent with Keats's general concept of creative evolution as treated in the poem. But her partisan attitude in supporting Apollo not merely diminishes her role but also retards the action. Her intervention in the story like *deus ex machina* helps Apollo in attaining perfection, but since it neither leaves any room for further progress nor has any bearing on the central theme of conflict between the old and the new gods, its purpose is defeated. The fact is that the original epic plan was eventually thwarted by Keats's later intuitions which invested Mnemosyne with an allegorical meaning. And since Keats realized the difficulty of conveying his meaning within the epic framework, he recast the first version, and took Mnemosyne out of time to make her an eternal figure in the spirit of his allegorical design. Consequently, the Miltonic epic scheme was transformed into a Dantesque vision, in which Keats, replacing Apollo, could himself hold a dialogue with the great Goddess. And in this recast version the allegory becomes more directly personal and more specific.

The shift in Keats's allegorical design from the general to the personal, as shown above, is already perceptible in the first version of *Hyperion*, but in the second this shift is complete. As Keats replaces Apollo, many things which happened to Apollo in the first version, happen to Keats in the second. In Book III of the first version, the poet affirms that "Apollo is once more the golden theme" while in Canto I of the recast version he focuses attention on "that full draught" which is "parent" of that theme. Apollo,

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as we have seen already, symbolizes the birth of poetic beauty, while "that full draught" signifies that state of "indolence" or "abstraction" which is creative of that beauty. To Keats, wine is always associated with that state of the poet's mind when "the fibres of the brain are relaxed in common with the rest of the body, when it passes "into a sort of oneness" and apprehends beauty or truth with a fine suddenness. In the "Ode to a Nightingale", he yearns for a draught of vintage—"the true, the blushful Hippocrene" so that he may leave the world unseen and be with the "immortal" bird. Apollo, too, in the first version of *Hyperion*, on achieving godhead feels

> as if some blithe wine
> Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk
> And so become immortal.
>
> (III, 118-20)

In the opening Canto of the recast version, Keats imagines that while wandering through a fine garden he has drunk the same "elixir peerless" and become immortal so that he starts up "as if with wings". He has the vision of-

> an old sanctuary with roof august,
> Builded so high, it seem'd that filmed clouds
> Might spread beneath, as o'er the stars of heaven.

He then descries an image standing on an altar which can be approached through a flight of steps. Now this account allegorically presents the various stages in the highest development of poetic character. While the garden betokens the early period of sensuous delight, the temple, the period of intellectual activity when one dabbles in knowledge, art and philosophy without a clear sense of purpose, the altar marks the highest stage when one at last discovers himself through relentless effort and selfless dedication and is thus really able to serve mankind. In the dream Keats holds a "propitious parley" with the priestess of that temple—Moneta—who stands for the processes, to use Keats's own words, of "consequitive reasoning" as a counterpart of Mnemosyne or "intuitive knowledge", both being functions of memory. He

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is thereby enabled to know the truth not merely about other poets' growth but also about his own which he has been now curious to know like Apollo in the first version. The best and highest of all men, he is told, are the real benefactors of mankind, "no dreamers weak",

> Who love their fellows even to the death,
> Who feel the giant agony of the world,
> And more, like slaves to poor humanity,
> Labour for mortal good.

They do not come up to this "altar", "for they have no thought to come". To this rare category of completely "disinterested" men, as Keats observes in his long journal-letter to his brother George, belong Socrates and Jesus. Most people are allowed to wander in the garden and through the temple,but those keen to go up to the altar have to labour very hard of which very few are capable. Those few who reach the altar are the true poets "to whom the miseries of the world/Are misery, and it will not let them rest". To this class belongs Shakespeare, whom Keats regarded as "a mighty and miserable poet of the human Heart" and who had "no poetical character". The lower category is that of the dreamer who "venoms all his days/Bearing more woe than all his sins deserve". These two categories of

> The poet and the dreamer are distinct
> Diverse, sheer opposite, antipodes.
> The one pours out a balm upon the world,
> The other vexes it.

In Keats's view, the work of the poet of negative capability, which faithfully projects the joys and sorrows of others, has a cathartic effect while that of the subjective, lyrical poet "whose passions are his self-interest" is not so beneficent. Keats believes that he himself belongs to this class of dreamers, which he further differentiates from a worse variant of the same type, that is, "mock lyrists, large self worshipers/And careless Hectorers in proud bad verse". This lowest type of poets, as he describes them in a letter, have "self-

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interests" for their "passion", and Byron is their exemplar. In a letter he contrasts himself with Byron thus : "He describes what he sees—I describe what I imagine. Mine is the hardest task."[6] In Keats's view these three types of poets correspond more or less to three stages in the hierarchy of animal life which he had figuratively described in his earlier journal-letter to his brother (19 March 1819). He compares "the noble animal Man" with the lower animals :

> The greater part of Men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the Hawk.

But there are also superior beings who are completely disinterested. As for himself, Keats believes that he is far "from any humble standard of disinterestedness", yet he is ever eager to reach it—"though I myself am pursueing (sic) the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of—I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness". This eagerness to rise high in the scale of being is expressed when the poet asks Moneta in the poem :

> "Majestic Shadow, tell me where I am,
> Whose altar this ...
> ....
> ...and who thou art,
> Of accent feminine so courteous?"
>
> (I, 211-15)

Moneta promises that he shall "with these dull mortal eyes behold" "the scenes/Still swooning vivid through my globed brain,/With an electral changing misery". As Keats sees her wan face, he finds in it a queer blend of death and life, extreme suffering and calm serenity, kindness and fear, and in her "planetary eyes" glimpses of "high tragedy". This account of Moneta, as D. G. James has suggested,[7] symbolizes what Keats wished to be as a poet and as a man; she stands for what Keats hopes the human soul might come to, that is, acceptance of a tragic lot, and attainment of serenity in it so that what is tragic is also seen as beautiful. Further on, as Keats

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desires to know what "high tragedy" lies behind, in the "dark secret chambers of her mind", she induces him to have a theophany :

> Whereon there grew
> A power within me of enormous ken
> To see as a god sees.
>
> (I, 302-04)

On seeing the face of Moneta, Keats, like Apollo in the first version of the poem, undergoes a kind of "dying into life", which obviously has religious overtones, recalling as it does, the sacrifice of Christ (and that of Cordelia in *King Lear*). In simple words, it means that a higher life is possible only through self-abnegation. The way in which a god sees is similar to the perception of "a superior being" as described in the same journal-letter :

> May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive attitude my mind may fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of a Stoat or the anxiety of a Deer? Though a quarrel in the Streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest Man shows a grace in his quarrel... This is the very thing in which consists poetry.

A god, whether in the sense of a perfect man or a perfect poet, in Keats's view, combines the attitude of the spectator and of the participant. Like a spectator, he views life with a calm, detached amusement, but this attitude does not imply a sense of nonchalant self-superiority. This Olympian calm indeed stems from a complete and selfless participation in the emotions and sensations of Man, the Hawk, the Stoat. This attitude to life which a perfect poet has, Keats now seems to believe, can best manifest itself in dramatic art, which Keats hereafter set for his life's goal.

The Fall of Hyperion thus registers the high water-mark of Keats's cogitations on the nature and office of the poet vis-a-vis human life. But Keats is not yet able to act upon and live up to these views. He cannot make the reader see as he himself sees like a god. He is unable to continue the narrative, for he is yet

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unequal to the task. The recast version nevertheless has its own poetic charm. The narrative definitely gains in vividness as the poet describes things as if they are being actually re-enacted before his inward eye, focusing light upon each significant detail. He no doubt makes a new experiment, anticipating the effects of the cinematic technique, but it could not help him in achieving his present objective—in unfolding the epic action. Another reason why he failed to continue the narrative was that Keats was no longer in that mood of optimism in which he could confidently describe the triumph of Apollo. Apollo's rise which in the first version is the natural culmination of the philosophy of progress as symbolically presented through the Greek myth is not described in the second version; Keats breaks off before that point is reached. As a matter of fact, the mood of the poet is already in unison with that of the crest-fallen Saturn. Since the *Fall* was written towards the end of 1819 when the burden of unhappy love, financial misfortune and ill-health had grown too great for equable endurance, he relapsed into a mood of utter despair:

> Often times I pray'd
> Intense, that Death would take me from the Vale
> And all its burthens—gasping with despair
> Of change, hour after hour I curs'd myself. (I, 396–99)

Being himself in the Saturnine mood, his creative powers stood frozen, and hence the action could not proceed further. Moreover, his tendency to concentrate and dwell on moments of stasis is also partially accountable for his failure to meet the demands of action in the narrative,

To conclude, the two versions of *Hyperion* are not so much attempts to reorient an old myth as "further steppings of his Imagination Towards Truth"—as successive endeavours to apprehend and come to terms with life's reality. The figure of Apollo accordingly is his projection of "a Vision in the form of Youth, a shadow of reality to come"—that is, the emergent man or poet of ripe experience. Apollo's short career in the two poems reflects the dilemma of Keats' s own life—between what he was and what

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he yearned to be ; in a sense we can even say that he is existentially conceived. The vision of Hyperion is thus an all-inclusive vision, marking as it does the final stage in the progression of Keats's thought andpoetic powers.

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NOTES

1. D. G. James, *The Romantic Comedy* (Oxford, 1948), p. 137.
2. To Reynolds, 3 May 1818.
3. To George and Georgina Keats, 19 March 1819.
4. Preface to the *Poems* (1815).
5. To Bailey, 22 November 1817.
6. To George and Georgina Keats, 17 September 1819.
7. Op. cit., p. 135.

A. A. Ansari

PATTERNS OF LOVE IN *Twelfth Night*

Twelfth Night represents the crowning achievement of Shakespeare in the early phase of his comedy. Its design is intricate, its texture rich and subtly unified and the interweaving of its various threads is skilful, highly dramatic and full of surprises. Contrary to *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* it does not concern itself with any explicit social theme. Love is, indeed, the central *motif* here, not treated in a detachable, theoretical way but anatomized through the various patterns of behaviour and interplay of barely suspected impulsions and psychological drives. Some of the characters are silhouetted by masks and this results in a number of confusions. But these confusions are subservient to the achievement of a purpose lying deeper below the surface. Too much has been made of the aristocratic bearing of the protagonists—Orsino and Olivia, of their being self-involved and placing a higher valuation on their concept of love rather than its concrete object. Orsino appears to be an egoist and a solipsist and Olivia shrewd, high-brow and disdainful. Both are alleged to be self-centered and prisoners of their illusions. All this has a grain of truth in it. But the facts of the case may be re-examined in the hope that some other facet of this whole complex phenomenon may emerge into light.

The universe of *Twelfth Night* is a dual one: predominantly it is underscored by culture and sophistication, a kind of aestheticism, and here the finer tones of living matter more than anything else. Here things ripen too fast and the process of maturing brings in its wake both satiety and nostalgia. But a coarse and brutal world also winds itself in and out of it continu-

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ally. Taken as a whole it looks bizarre, and the Duke's characterization of it at a later stage

> A natural perspective, that is, and is not !¹

(V. i., 209)

seems to be an adequate summing up. The perspectivist view is obliquely sustained by the assumption of masks by characters like Viola, Malvolio and the Clown. In this universe everything seems to be shifting from moment to moment and a stable vantage-point is lacking. The very first speech of the Duke both reflects his absorption into love and his sense of its romantic paradox : it is tempestuous, highly assimilative of various moods and impressions and yet mercurial and changeable. This contrariety is hinted at thus :

> O spirit of love ! how quick and fresh art thou,
> That, notwithstanding thy capacity
> Receiveth as the sea, naught enters there,
> Of what validity and pitch soe'er,
> But falls into abatement and low price,
> Even in a minute : so full of shapes is fancy,
> That it alone is high fantastical.

(I. i., 9-15)

The speech begins with a reference to music which feeds the Duke's passion, and the notations of music are correlated to the rhythms of love not only here but elsewhere, too. As such music may be regarded as one of the integrative forces in the play. Orsino's constant demand for snatches of music, antique and nostalgic, along with the Clown's songs, evocative of a sense of transience and ephemerality, introduce elements of romance and tenderness into the play. These words of the Duke betray a polarity of attitudes—his deep involvement in love—and he later on refers to his being as hungry as the sea, 'But mine is all as hungry as the sea/And can digest as much' (II, iv, 100-101)—and the reaction against its imperious sway because of a lack of positive response from the object of his love. This may be accounted for by the rather unnatural embargo Olivia had placed against yield-

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ing herself to any sexual temptation. This has been termed as a delicious over-indulgence in grief, and for sometime this kind of posturing is warranted by facts. And yet it is from this luxuriance that Orsino infers Olivia's infinite potentialities for reciprocal sexual love. Thus speaking to Valentine he flatters himself with the vague and distant hope of winning her love :

> How will she love, when the rich golden shaft
> Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else
> That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
> These sovereign thrones, are all suppli'd, and fill'd
> Her sweet perfections with one self king.
>
> (I. i., 35-39)

Not only is the idiom conventional and hackneyed it is also not wide of the mark to detect in his words a preoccupation with his own image as a lover. The falsity of tone produces a sense of the incongruous and is a bit discomforting.

Early in the play Viola—a crucial character in the drama—makes up her mind to enter the service of the Duke in the disguise of a youngman after the rumour of his continuous, though fruitless, courtship of Olivia had been dinned into her ears. Into the elegant society of Illyria Viola bursts with all her subtle and elusive charm, masquerading as a youngman and with the amazing and arduous mission of unfreezing Olivia and bringing her round to accept the Duke's importunities. She proceeds in this embassy of love with the greatest poise, sagacity and judiciousness so much so that she is able to worm her way into his confidence in no time, and the Duke makes a candid confession to Cesario thus :

> I have unclasp'd
> To thee the book even of my secret soul :
> Therefore, good youth, address thy gait unto her;
>
> (I. iv., 13-15)

These lines go a long way to prove that Orsino is capable of having a confidant to whom he would unburden himself of those feelings that were stirring in the depths of his heart. That he regards himself

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as a model lover and is not altogether free of the taint of the braggart is brought out in these lines :

> For such as I am all true lovers are :
> Unstaid and skittish in all motions else
> Save in the constant image of the creature
> That is belov'd.
>
> (II. iv., 17-20)

He is a devotee of Venus and such a lover of physical form and the exquisite sensations attendant upon this experience that every other mundane consideration is just irrelevant to him. Addressing Cesario he cannot help concealing his order of preferences and asks him to convey to Olivia that he prizes her above everything else:

> Get thee to yond same sovereign cruelty :
> Tell her, my love, more noble than the world,
> Prizes not quantity of dirty lands;
> The parts that fortune hath bestow'd upon her,
> Tell her, I hold as giddily as fortune;
> But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems
> That nature pranks her in attracts my soul.
>
> (II. iv., 80-86)

It is the soul of the sentimental aesthete that is poured forth here, and in this gesture of self-advertisement he seems to go the whole hog. To the image of the constant lover is added the idea of scaling down of material and earthly possessions as against the life-rhythms of the human body. At the same time he cannot help assert the superiority of the male spirit over its feminine counterpart :

> There is no woman's sides
> Can bide the beating of so strong a passion
> As love doth give my heart; no woman's heart
> So big, to hold so much; they lack retention.
> Alas ! their love may be call'd appetite,
> No motion of the liver, but the palate,
> That suffer surfeit, cloyment, and revolt;
>
> (II. iv, 93-99)

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Even making due allowance for his hyperbolic mode of utterance and his unjust reduction of a woman's passion to mere 'appetite' subject to 'surfe it', 'cloyment' and 'revolt' (all containing a hint of pejorative connotation), the fact of some degree of emotional attachment on the part of Orsino may not be altogether denied.

Viola's role in the play is both intriguing and admirable. She has chosen voluntarily to champion the Duke's cause, that is, bring about some kind of rapport between him and 'the cruellest she alive'—the supercilious object of his passion. And yet in spite of her mask the Duke cannot help perceive that in Viola-Cesario "all is semblative a woman's part". She has to manoeuvre Olivia into responding to the Duke's persistent entreaties and yet she cannot resist falling head over ears in love with him. Hence when the Duke observes:

> Make no compare
> Between that love a wöman can bear me
> And that I owe Olivia.
>
> (II. iv., 101-103)

her sly, cryptic comment

> Ay, but I know,—
>
> (II. iv., 104)

affords us a sudden, unexpected glimpse into the depths that had lain sealed so far. Tracing the history of her supposed sister's inhibited love as parabolic of her own self-consuming passion she continues upholding her mask thus :

> She never told her love,
> But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
> Feed on her damask cheek : she pin'd in thought,
> And with a green and yellow melancholy,
> She sat like Patience on a monument,
> Smiling at grief.
>
> (II. iv., 110-15)

The fact of one being slowly withered by unrequited love—a predicament borne with tight-lip patience—is both arresting and poignant. And though it is all a fictional make-believe yet it

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nevertheless, makes us realize the continual need for self-sacrifice imposed upon herself by Viola. For in spite of burning with ardent love for Orsino she perseveres in her entreaties to Olivia in behalf of her master :

> If I did love you in my master's flame,
> With such a suffering, such a deadly life,
> In your denial I would find no sense;
> I would not understand it.
>
> (I. v., 254-57)

A kind of transparent sympathy shines through these words. They do not betray any kind of pose or attitudinizing. So strongly does she feel about the whole affair that in reply to Olivia's "Why, what would you do?" she cannot restrain herself from invoking the contempt of the whole of the physical world and make it indict her thus :

> Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
> And call upon my soul within the house;
> Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
> And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
> Holla your name to the reverberate hills,
> And make the babbling gossip of the air
> Cry out, 'Olivia'! O ! you should not rest
> Between the elements of air and earth,
> But you should pity me !
>
> (I. v., 259-66)

These lines are marked by a straining after the consciously poetic effects as well as raise the finger of accusation against Olivia. Viola is the Janus of love: trying to win Olivia's love for the Duke and yet herself loving the Duke no less fervently, though secretly, all the time. The irony of it is that Olivia remains obdurate as far as the Duke is concerned, but cannot forbear chasing a chimera in the form of Cesario :

> Methinks I feel this youth's perfections
> With an invisible and subtle stealth
> To creep in at mine eyes.
>
> (I. v., 286-88)

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This is in the nature of a self-communion. To Viola as Cesario she does not hesitate to make a free and open confession :

> Have you not set mine honour at the stake,
> And baited it with all th' unmuzzled thoughts
> That tyrannous heart can think? To one of your receiving
> Enough is shown; a cypress, not a bosom,
> Hideth my heart.
>
> (III. i., 118-22)

There is here a betrayal of a nervous and muscular tension—a conflict between the opposite pulls of 'honour' and 'love'—a sense of being tugged at by powerful emotions. It would, however, be naive not to notice the tone of aggressiveness that envelops the whole speech. And yet Olivia's heart seems to rest in the right place; it is a 'headstrong potent fault' that leads her astray. It would, nevertheless, be wrong to suppose that Olivia is imperci-pient to the virtues and gifts of Orsino, and yet she remains unmoved:

> Yet I suppose him virtuous, know him noble,
> Of great estate, of fresh and stainless youth ;
> In voices well-divulg'd, free, learn'd, and valiant;
> And, in dimension and the shape of nature
> A gracious person; but yet I cannot love him :
>
> (I. v., 248-52)

In spite of all the pleading done by Viola as Cesario—and Viola's disinterestedness is hallowed by Shakespeare—Olivia finds herself unresponsive as is evident from the brisk interchange of words between the two of them :

> Olivia: What shall you ask of me that I' ll deny,
> That honour sav'd may upon asking give ?
>
> Viola : Nothing but this; your true love for my master.
>
> Olivia: How with mine honour may I give him that
> Which I have given to you ?
>
> Viola: I will acquit you.

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Olivia: Well, come again tomorrow : fare thee well:
A fiend like thee might bear my soul to hell.

(III. iv., 201-7)

The last sentence betrays a total abandonment to Viola-Cesario; it carries with it the suggestion of an irresistible, devellish charm that is capable of sweeping one off one's feet. It seems to destroy all the dykes of self-containment that Olivia had been at such pains to erect against the supposed youngman. But Viola had earlier referred to the mysterious potency and magical powers possessed by herself and through which she had hoped to bring about a transformation of Olivia's psyche thus: "What I am, and what I would, are as secret as maidenhead" (I. v., 208-9). And Howarth makes a very illuminating comment on it thus : "The lines in which Viola beguiles Olivia by the evocation of maidenhead send out into the play a hint of the mythic force a virgin wields: a force by which she wins Olivia and eventually will win the Duke."[2] The two patterns of love so far represented in the play include the one in which Orsino and Olivia engage themselves through attorney and the other is a triangle in which Olivia is breath-takingly enamoured of Viola-Cesario and Viola is in turn deeply fascinated by the Duke.

Malvolio, steward to Olivia, seems to be at odds in this world of romance and sophistication of Illyria and elicits nothing but pity, contempt and derision of the reader. Excess of self-love is his besetting sin; he is presumptuous, lamentably conscious of his importance and given to futile day-dreaming. Olivia provides us with a useful clue to his character :

O ! you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite.

(I. v., 90-91)

And Maria capitalizes on that in this way:

the best persuaded of himself; so crammed, as he thinks, with excellences, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love him; and on that vice in him will my revenge find notable cause to work.

(II. iii., 139-42)

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Malvolio is obviously projected in a lower key and he is also very much out of the orbit of harmony in the play. To his self-delusion is added a certain narrowness born out of his Puritanic exclusiveness, and this leads on to his cultural ostracism. He has little in common with Falstaff: he has neither his breadth of humanity nor his wonderful resilience nor his ingenuity and incisiveness of wit. He is more like a Jonsonian character, uprooted from the classical soil and transplanted into the alien climate of *Twelfth Night*. Before he is brought to bay by the impish genius of Maria and the sheer callousness of Sir Toby Belch he does show a spark of light-heartedness and good humour especially when he reports to his mistress about Viola-Cesario thus:

> Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a squash is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple: 'tis with him in standing water, between boy and man. He is very well-favoured, and he speaks very shrewishly : one would think his mother's milk were scarce out of him.
>
> (I. v., 152-57)

The very fact that Malvolio allows himself to be gulled by the 'sportful malice' of Maria, and the machinations of the Clown and Sir Toby Belch confirms the impression that he is grossly deluded and self-involved. His mind seems to be immovably fixed on one single idea and the mainspring of his behaviour is his exaggerated notion of himself. He is not presented in depth because of the parodic intention behind his creation. He represents the third pattern of love in the play: he is made to take his imagined courtship of Oliva in all seriousness and thus takes care to appear before her cross-gartered and in yellow stockings, and this evokes her utter disgust. His soliloquy reveals how the contents of the letter dropped in his way by Maria have gone to accentuate his imagined self-estimation :

> 'Tis but fortune; all is fortune. Maria once told me she did affect me; and I have heard herself come thus near, that should she fancy, it should be one of my complexion. Besides, she

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uses me with a more exalted respect than any one else that follows her. What should I think on't ?

(II. v., 20-25)

This is Edmund or Iago placed in a comic setting, gloating on what comes his way, but at the same time time lacking in the power of manipulation of either of the tragic figures. Malvolio is puzzled as to how he should adjust himself to the unexpected flood of fortune with which he seems to be overwhelmed. His fanciful courtship of Olivia is a burlesque of the Duke's serious and pertinacious preoccupation with Olivia's image as the object of his passion. This sort of make-believe evokes both contempt and laughter. Maria's comment about him to the effect that "he has been yonder i' the sun practising behaviour to his own shadow this half-hour" (II. v., 13-14) provides us with a rare insight into his character and establishes his remote kinship with Orsino. The "Contemplative idiot" that he is, he is limed by the phrase in the letter "some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them", and the reiteration of the phrase helps create the proper context for his self exhibitionism. But Malvolio, though subjected to a process of unmasking that involves both physical and mental torture, does not attain to any comic purgation. He ends up by expressing a sense of outrage when he says that he "will be revenged on the whole pack" of them. Unlike other characters in the play he can hardly reconcile himself to a change of heart.

The process of disenchantment, as far as Olivia is concerned, begins with the beginning of Act IV when Sebastian, who so closely resembles Viola-Cesario, at long last appears on the scene of action. He is confronted with the Clown, and the latter who is very well acquainted with Cesario, is piqued at the rebuff received from Sebastian. The Clown may as well deny the authenticity of his own sense-perceptions as to be beguiled into believing that he was talking to Sebastian and not to Cesario :

No, I do not know you; nor I am not sent to you by my lady to bid you come speak with her; nor your name is not Master

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Cesario; nor this is not my nose neither. Nothing that is so is so.

(IV. i., 5-8)

Everything seems to be out of focus, and is a source of delusion. This is followed by a scuffle between Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Sebastian under the former's mistaking Sebastian for Cesario, and when Sebastian is able to free himself from the restraining hand of Sir Toby and Sir Toby is about to draw, Olivia makes a sudden and dramatic appearance on the stage. She tries to rebuke Sir Toby and appease Sebastian mistaking him for Cesario to whom she had lost her heart quite some time ago. The harshness of the rebuke is in proportion to the depth and intensity of her feeling for Sebastaian or Cesario—both being like "an apple cleft in two", as Antonio remarks later on :

Will it be ever thus ? Ungracious wretch !
Fit for the mountains and the barbarous caves,
Where manners ne'er were preach'd. Out of my sight !
Be not offended, dear Cesario.
Rudesby, be gone !

(IV. i., 46-49)

To the unwary Sebastian this demonstration of love for him by Olivia comes as a revelation in dream. To Olivia the occasion may appear as a consummation of what she had been working and perparing for. Sebastian's whole self is soaked in an unanticipated inundation of light from above—something which seems to be the product of fancy. And if it more is a product of dream or fancy than a fact of wakeful reality he would much rather have the blissful moment protracted than let the fabric of vision be broken. He would not be drawn back to the sanity and sordidness of the workaday world :

What relish is in this ? how runs the stream ?
Or I am mad, or else this is a dream :
Let fancy still my sense in Lethe steep;
If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep !

(IV. i., 59-62)

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Still enwrapped in his newly discovered bliss Sebastian, communing with his solitary self in Olivia's garden, feels himself transported to a brave new world. Under the impact of this gift of grace it appears to him as if the whole of mundane reality has been transfigured into something rich and strange. For a moment he begins to be sceptical of his powers of perception and reasoning and yet the miracle seems to be substantiated by the facts of the situtation :

> This is the air; that is the glorious sun;
> This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't;
> And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
> Yet 'tis not madness.
>
> (IV. iii., 1-4)

Here a fine distinction is made between 'wonder' and 'madness', for "to look upon life with 'wonder', a proper sense of reverence, is to be, in Shakespearean comic terms, the opposite of mad".[3] Sebastian, it may be added, has been sketched in rather faintly, and he reappears on the stage after his identity had been almost forgotten in Acts II and III. Joseph H. Summers has perceptively accounted for this fact on the plea that Sebastian is "the physical image of the duality that has made the confusion and the play"[4]. This facilitates the transfer of Olivia's love from Viola-Cesario to Sebastian, and to the latter, who accepts it unhesitatingly and with gratitude, it comes uninvoked.

Orsino and Olivia are thrown together eventually in the last Act of the play, and the climactic dialogue between the two ensues thus :

> Olivia : If it be aught to the old tune, my lord,
> It is as fat and fulsome to mine ear
> As howling after music.
>
> Duke : Still so cruel ?
>
> Olivia : Still so constant, lord.
>
> Duke : What, to perverseness ? You uncivil lady,
> To whose ingrate and unauspicious altars

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My soul the faithfull'st offierings hath
breath'd out
That e'er devotion tender'd ! What shall I do?

Olivia : Even what it please my lord, that shall become him.

(V. i., 102-16)

Olivia speaks here with a firmness of purpose generated by the assured love poured out by her on Sebastian and gratefully accepted by him. Equally naturally Orsino responds to "the marble-breasted tyrant" in a mood of utter desperation which has sometimes been mistakenly equated with masochism :

Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,
Like to the Egyptian thief at point of death,
Kill what I love ? a savage jealousy
That sometimes savours nobly.

(V. i., 111-14)

This reminds us of a similar spasm of jealousy experienced by Othello and Leontes in the plays that followed, for in all these three cases the self-torturing jealousy is in inverse proportion to the intensity of love: it is the love-hate relationship that has a psychological validity about it. Orsino's last words reflect the same ambivalence of emotions with which his speech had started :

But this your minion, whom I know you love,
And whom, by heaven I swear, I tender dearly,
Him will I tear out of that cruel eye,
Where he sits crowned in his master's spite,
Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief;
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.

(V. i., 119-25)

And Viola, with her clear-eyed rationality that can pierce through all shams, wiser, and in a way having greater perspicacity than either Orsino or Olivia, has the unique privilege of speaking the last word on the matter :

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Viola : And I, most jocund, apt, and willingly,
To do you rest, a thousand deaths would die.
(V. I., 126-27)

The emblematic force of the three words 'lamb', 'raven' and 'dove' throws a flood of light on the nature of the triangle of love constituted by Orsino, Olivia and Viola. Orsino seems to be torn between antithetical emotions : he loves Viola-Cesario and yet is amazed at Cesario's apparent perfidy; he is most reluctant to give up his claim upon Olivia and yet has failed to win her over. Viola holds the key of the enigma locked up in her heart and is the catalytic agent who brings about a fundamental change in both Orsino and Olivia without their being aware of it themselves. When she expresses her willingness to die a thousand deaths she seems to be obliquely and parabolically supporting Orsino's intention to sacrifice the lamb which had been nursed by him with such tender and assiduous care. 'Lamb' has all the nimbus of innocence about it and is evocative of a sense of unalloyed purity. Viola's continual self-sacrifice is, indeed, tantamount to the death in spirit she has been undergoing all along and has definite religious overtones about it.

On an over-all view of the relationship between Orsino and Olivia one cannot help being struck by the fact that neither of them meets the other except in the last Act. That both of them are capable of strong attachment is betrayed by the savage jealousy exhibited by Orsino in his last crucial speech to Olivia (V. i., 111-25) and the almost hysterical expostulations of Olivia with Viola-Cesario. The thesis of their being in love with love[6] alone has, therefore, little or no cogency about it, and is not fully corroborated by facts. The truth is that Orsino and Olivia are not so much pure egoists as two closed monads and suffer from a certain degree of existential vacuum and loneliness. Orsino's marked fondness for solitude is brought out early in the play when he remarks 'for I my-self am best/When least in company' (I. iv., 37-38). And Olivia had been in perpetual mourning for seven years continuously and even hidden herself from the public gaze : 'The element itself, till seven years' heat,/

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Shall not behold her face at ample view;/But, like a cloistress, she will veiled walk,' (I. i., 26-28). Neither of them feels for the other the kind of love that may serve as the basis for communication. And though love does not of itself establish communication yet communication serves as a necessary test and medium for it. "An isolated human being exists", according to Karl Jaspers, "as a boundary concept, not in fact". To communicate is to be one self with another, and solitude blocks the way for this kind of identification. But solitude which entails a sense of the shortcoming of communication is the source of a break-through to Existenz. This, however, presupposes the reality of manifestation, for it is through manifestation in the phenomenality of the temporal world that one may hope to travel from one's stable empirical existence to possible Existenz. In other words, self-being has to outgrow itself and be countered by a dialectics in which specific human beings are not half so significant as the totality of being with all the darkness of historic origin clinging to it. The sense of solitude, even in the midst of a superficial abundance of life, may arouse the abysmal terror of non-being. This may sting us into developing a new variety of solitude which may prove therapeutic and renovating. Love, for Shakespeare is, in the ultimate analysis, a kind of involvement, a dark and sacred passion, an unmotivated impulse to bind self to self. It is both a unique and unpredictable motion of the spirit and depends for its growth and sustenance upon some mode of existential communication. A rupture of communication in existence puts Existenz in jeopardy, but a sense of its inadequacy prepares us for the realisation of Existenz. Viola's role in the play is precisely that she tries her level best to make Orsino and Olivia achieve a semblance of communication, and she even undergoes the mythical ritual of self-sacrifice for this purpose. She doesn't quite succeed in her mission but nevertheless proves herself effective to the extent of making both of them find their true counterparts—Sebastian in the case of Olivia and herself in the case of the Duke. It is the search for authentic being, the effort to have a glimpse of Existenz by transcending the particularities of existence and to engage oneself in a loving combat

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which may be regarded as the focal point of the play—the point towards which the entire content of the comic action seems to be directed.

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M. H. Khan

AN APPROACH TO SHAKESPEARE'S *Henry V*

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Henry V may be approached in terms of what might be designated as its unpremeditated, improvised ambivalence, an ambivalence, that is, achieved through the dynamic relationship of successive dramatic moments and the urgent need for a credibilising and humanising agent. Though the theatrical realization of recalcitrant material might have occasioned its initial use, yet ambivalence soon entered as an integral element into the play's dramatic mode and indeed, viewed from the standpoint of similar practice elsewhere, of its moral vision. The sets of antinomies, operating at various levels, have generally been noted, though mostly in isolation ; shadowy legend and living truth, enthusiastic commitment and disengaged irony, epic sweep and dramatic localisation, extensive design of a historical tetrology and particular, perhaps isolated, intensifications and explorations of a single play. Difficulties in interpretation arise when a single term in a pair of contraries is given undue salience and made the focal point of an approach to the play. Such a procedure may lead not only to a distorted view of the play itself and especially of the protagonist but also prevent us from noticing how crucial a link it provides with some later developments. The balancing of opposites which is here only tentative, hesitant and exploratory, and also with a predominantly affirmative objective, acquires negative ideological overtones in a play like *Troilus and Cressida*. The puzzling moral dubiety of that 'coterie' play is no doubt a far cry from the unmistakable celebration of public virtues in *Henry V*, but it is not difficult to see that the pervasive irony of the later play had begun as a tentative

exploration of the complexities of moral issues. This is not at all to suggest that the counterpoint in *Henry V* completely balances the main statement in a way similar to the one in *Troilus and Cressida*. Incidentally, even in that play of intense disillusion the ironic mode is not totally destructive since the sense of strong, though unfocalised, discomfort we have while confronted with the scurrilities of Thersites—the most powerful agent of deflation in that play—forces on us a disturbing awareness of the inadequacies of negation. The point of contact between *Henry V* and *Troilus and Cressida* may perhaps be more closely defined by suggesting that the attitudinising of Troilus and the constant balancing of irony and sympathy for his infatuation is a development, in terms of lesser commitment, from the attempt in *Henry V* to explore the human consequences, both positive and negative, of the assumption of a certain role. In this play, the unmistakable note of celebration as mediated through various dramatic elements, especially the verse, does not suggest any other use of the ironic except as an amplifying and diversifying agent. To go beyond this is to ignore the difference in mood and intention introduced by the obvious fact that the earlier play seeks,with a self-conscious, deliberate and disarming naiveté, audience participation in the theatrical representation of a 'public' experince while the 'minority view', so to say, of a great moment in the civilised world's remote past, as dramatised in *Troilus and Cressida*, was probably never intended to be 'stal'd with the Stage', to be 'clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulgar'.

The credibilising and humanising irony that attends the major concern of *Henry V*—the celebration of the birth of a nation—and its various ramifications is therefore not to be taken as an indication of moral confusion, 'double-think' or even neutrality. A taut ambivelence necessitating careful and artistically controlled manipulation of contrary responses has generally been posited as a source of unresolved tensions at a number of interpretative levels in Shakespeare. In this regard the case of *Troilus and Cressida*, as is generally recognised, is rather exceptional. A degree of detachment, howsoever minimal, is required even in plays like *Romeo*

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and Juliet, Julius Caesar and *Hamlet* and the great Jacobean tragedies from *Othello* to *Timon of Athens*. In Brutus and Hamlet both, for example, there is decidedly a commitment to a higher self, but it would equally certainly amount to a 'romanticising' of their character to be unduly impressed by their commitment without noticing the remarkable limitations it imposes from the standpoint of life's total equilibrium. The suggestion may not be regarded as an attempt to admit *hamartia* through the back door since the feature under consideration and presumed in what follows to be the main source of critical difficulty in coming to terms with *Henry V* has relevance to dramatic texture as a whole and not to the 'character' of the protagonist alone. No doubt, *Henry V* is not to everyone's liking, nor is it generally regarded as among the 'best' of Shakespeare's plays. Importance, however, of more than one kind it certainly possesses, and among the more noticeable of the play's aspects is the manner in which, notwithstanding the deeply pervasive and sincere note of jubilation, sympathy is momentarily withdrawn, never totally denied or undermined, and the spectator is allowed breathing space to formulate a few awkward questions—time enough to formulate but never to press them. The daemon of doubt is given his due, but —such is Shakespeare's pragmatic skill—the freedom allowed to him serves only the cause of the more positive objectives of the play as a whole.

To come to Henry with preconceptions derived from the 'character' of Hal is to invest Shakespeare with a schematisation that goes against the grain of his art—an apotheosis of opportunism. It also presupposes on his part an inerest in character with a predominantly psychological-biographical orientation. It is rather too late in the day to deny the validity of an approach to Shakespeare through his 'characters'—if the totality of design of which they are part is not neglected. That the unity and independence of *Henry V* has not generally been recognised is evident from the critics' overwhelming concern with the pseudo-biography of the protagonist. The continuity of characterisation through the two parts of *Henry IV* and *Henry V* has been an almost

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inescapable preoccupation of critics. This is, for example, what Bradley[1] has to say about Henry :

> Just as he went to war chiefly because, as his father told him, it was the way to keep the factious nobles quiet and unite the nation, so when he adjures the Archbishop to satisfy him as to his right to the French throne, he knew very well that the Archbishop wants the war, because it will defer and perhaps prevent what he considers the spoliation of the Church. This same strain of policy is what Shakespeare marks in the first soliloquy in *Henry IV*, where the Prince describes his riotous life as a mere scheme to win him glory later. It implies that readiness to use other people as means to his own ends which is a conspicuous feature in his father.

Interestingly enough, John Palmer in his book on the *Political Characters of Shakespeare* leaves us in no doubt about his approach by the title of his relevent chapter : 'Henry of Monmouth'. The sense of satisfaction he expresses at the widespread prevalence of the critical procedure he himself follows is noteworthy[2]:

> Be it noted that all critics alike, however much they may differ in their estimate of Henry, discuss his behaviour and feel the impact of his personality as though he were a real person and not a character in a play...Shakespeare's concern as a dramatist was to present a man and he has here presented him to such good purpose that we dislike or admire him, quarrel about him, take one view of him today and another view of him tomorrow,...as we should do in the case of any real man in real life who claimed to be our leader or representative in war and peace.

The idea of the continuity of Henry's character has indeed had such a compulsive force as to lead critics to envisage a hiatus or break in it at the end of *2 Henry IV*. Preoccupied as Tillyard is with the idea that Shakespeare gives in *Richard II* and *1* and *2 Henry IV* 'his version...of what life was like in the Middle Ages as he conceived them and in his owe day', he believes that in *Henry V* Respublica was replaced by Rex, and therefore 'the form

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created by Shakespeare [in the earlier plays of the tetrology] collapsed and the problem of tragedy thrust itself forward'.[3] Tillyard, of course, does not preoccupy himself exclusively with Henry's character, but the kind of doctrinal interest he attributes to Shakespeare prevents him from perceiving that instead of being a diversion from the epic concerns of the previous plays, *Henry V* actually marks the culmination of their exploratory processes.

Out of Shakespeare's ten plays on English history eight deal with the period from Richard II to the Battle of Bosworth. The period was already much written about and made familiar to the average Elizabethan reader by chroniclers that had an important political axe to grind. The myth of the Tudors as God-ordained saviours of the country, as also its ancillary, that of the Civil War as divine retribution, was not only the one patronised officially but whole-heartedly accepted by the people. All this, however, should not encourage us to postulate—as the historical-minded critics generally do—a Shakespeare that laboriously transposed into the plays the chronicler's 'thought'. He might indeed have needed a large, controlling idea round which to organise his material and, one might add, to provide himself with a kind of scaffolding for deeper poetic explorations. In the *Henry VI* plays Shakespeare did probably start with a sin-atonement pattern and with a concern with rebellion and civil disorder as fervent as that of the writers of the homilies, but to go on from this and to suggest, as Tillyard does, that 'the whole theme of insurrection and civil war as developed in the plays is continuous, as if conceived as a whole'[4] is to miss the important truth that, the unity of the source material notwithstanding, the plays in varying degrees represent a combination of design and improvisation. Even the plays of the first tetrology reveal an urge to go beyond Hall and Holinshed. Though the ultimate source, no doubt, of the suggestion of the diabolic in the portrait of Richard Crouchback is Sir Thomas More, the Shakespearian superimpositions are no less significant. The infusion of the Marlovian Machiavel reflects Shakespeare's struggle to liberate himself from a too narrow schematic design both morally

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and artistically. The fictional verisimilitude achieved through the humanisation of evil and monstrosity and the breath-taking spectacle of Richard's irresistible march towards doom invite attention to themselves leaving the doctrinaire scheme of the chroniclers far behind.

The retributive pattern was, however, an important part of audience expectation, and so it runs through the two tetrologies as a framework of larger reference, but, one feels, relegated in *Henry V* to the status of a minor contrapuntal note, as an element in determining the audience response to the protagonist and the central experience of the play. The larger interest that has a more direct bearing on *Henry V* has its starting-point in *Richard II* with its profound attempt at seeing what Shaw would call 'the vast impersonal forces of history' and of which he himself had a very theoretical notion. This representation of the clash of the ages is accompanied with a new though half unconscious shifting of the historical perspective which in all its implications almost totally destroys the truth of Hall and Holinshed, and ironically enough, discovers beneath their Providential design an entirely new dynamics of history. Hall's apologia for the Tudors was couched in intellectual terms that were essentially medieval. His scheme, moreover, was not very consistent. The Unquiet Tyme of Kyng Henry the Fourth and the Tragicall Doynges of Kyng Richard the Third had perforce to be punctuated with The Victorious Actes of Kyng Henry the Fift. Shakespeare may or may not have seen through this, but he certainly had his own historical imagination as well as his acute sense of the contemporary reality to guide him. By the time he came to write his second tetrology, Shakespeare had probably discovered the links between the past and the present and therefore knew what the reign of Elizabeth Tudor was the culmination of. The world of *Henry V* was the microcosm where Shakespeare could easily perceive the hidden, tragic tensions of his own age. There was, moreover, not much need overtly to repudiate the retributive scheme. In conformity with his improvising norm, he put the scheme to other uses. Reference will later be made to the climactic soliloquy[6]('Not today, O Lord,/O not to-

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day...'), but the Epilogue's words, as also those of Henry to Katherine (V. ii. 204-208), come with a mildly shocking reminder that the moment of transcending glory is but short-lived:

> Small time, but, in that small, most greatly lived
> This star of England. Fortune made his sword;
> By which the world's best garden he achieved,
> And of it left his son imperial lord.
> Henry the sixth, in infant bands crown'd king
> Of France and England, did this king succeed;
> Whose state so many had the managing
> That they lost France and made his England bleed;
> Which oft our stage hath shown;...

'Small time, but, in that small, most greatly lived/This star of England'—the words might be an echo of Holinshed, but they provide the key to the play. To approach it in terms other than its celebration of a moment greatly lived is to misjudge its independent dramatic design.

It should now be apparent that an important critical task involved in an appreciation of *Henry V* is the recognition of mutually opposed backward and forward pulls embedded in the texture of the play. Taking its place in the grand design of the second tetrology it heralds the birth of a new historical order, an order, based on the absolute monarch's direct appeal to the people, on a merit-oriented power structure in society and the myth of the nation-state. All this is, however, balanced by an underlining of the inner contradictions inherent in the new ordering of the individual-society relationship. But that is to anticipate.

Dr Johnson was puzzled by the use of the chorus in the play : 'The lines given to the chorus have many admirers;...though it can not be easily discovered why the intelligence given by the chorus is more necessary in this play than in many others where it is omitted'.[6] It is also to be noted that critics who discover satirical intentions in the play usually skip over the choruses. Gerald Gould, whose attack[7] on Henry reflects more the contemporary mood of disillusion with war and militarism than the realities of Shakespeare's

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play, hardly refers to any of the choruses much less quote from them. As a matter of fact, the broad epic sweep of the play, the sense of things on the move and of being brought to a head, a feeling of action leading to some great fulfilment, all this is mediated primarily through the choruses. The impassioned and engaged tone of the opening lines of the first chorus :

O for a Muse of fire, that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention, ...

leaves very little scope for irony. There is, if anything, an attempt to ward off parody by modulating the rhetoric of 'famine, sword and fire'(l.7) into the chatty informality of 'But pardon, gentles all'. The rest of the chorus descants on the inadequacies of Elizabethan stage. It may be possible to trace a significant development in Shakespeare's references to the conditions of his art, but to find, as Anne Righter[8] seems to do, the sole significance of the *Henry V* chorus references to theatrical conditions as lying in Shakespeare's realization of the abject status of actors and pretensions of illusion in a dramatic representation suggests an inability to see how the insistence on the theatre's inadequacies is much more than a casual intrusion into the play of a personal preoccupation. The references to 'this unworthy scaffold', 'this cockpit' and 'this wooden O' have indeed an entirely functional role and are closely integrated into the texture. Apparently, as has already been suggested, the mock humility is an attempt to preclude parody and caricature. The apologies are, it further appears, a reaching out to the audience, an appeal to the communal, as opposed to the universally human, part of the audience's consciousness. It might well be worth remarking that the sense of movement and of a nation coming to life originates in the choruses exactly where the audience is made specifically conscious of the limitations of theatrical illusion. The third chorus with its string of imperatives ('Suppose that you have seen...', 'Play with your fancies...', 'Hear the shrill whistle...', 'O, do but think...', 'Follow, follow; 'Grapple your minds...', and so on) powerfully evokes what it patently says it is unable to do. It brings to mind an England of youth and freshness (ll. 19-24), of throbbing, pulsating life ('A city on

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th'inconstant billows dancing—l. 15). There is, one might be tempted to say, an element of consecration in all this, the work of a sanctifying imagination, and the remarkable thing is that it works through parody and self-disparagement. This is, moreover, closely fused into the deeply religious tone of the play.

It is difficult to see the point of recalling Hal's soliloquy in *I Henry IV* (I. ii. 187-212) while dealing with his reported 'conversion' in *Henry V* (I. i. 24-37). Bradley, as we have seen, thought that the soliloquy was reflective of the darker side of Hal's character. Others discovered an attempt at deflation in the fact that the conversion should have been reported by cynical and worldly-minded ecclesiastics. While it is generally true that the significance of a particular comment in Shakespeare is determined by its dramatic context, it may occasionally be found that the principle is ignored in the interest of greater economy. It has often been felt that some urgent dramatic objective tempts Shakespeare to allow a slight disruption of the immediate character-situation design with a view to introducing thematic statements that significantly link up with similar concerns elsewhere in the play. Canterbury's account of Henry's transformation is probably 'out of character', but a slight readjustment of the focus, a change in the speaker's tone and demeanour, the voice slighty raised and the venerable ecclesiastic's face more earnest, his expression of the political 'lobbyist' momentarily gone,—and the complex dramatic objective of the evocation of the world of 'commodity' modulating into that of the transcendent and the 'miraculous' is achieved;

> Yea, at that very moment,
> Consideration like an angel came
> And whipp'd th' offending Adam out of him;
> Leaving his body as a paradise
> T' envelope and contain celestial spirits,
>
> (I. i. 27-31)

The invocation of the religious, the sense of the 'political' moment being lived in the perspective of the timeless pervades the entire play though it surfaces only at climactic moments. The element of religious

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earnestness in Henry has been misunderstood, and that primarily because, as suggested above, too close a scrutiny in psychological and moral terms has been made of Henry's character and motives. The play's morality is that of fairy-tales and legendary stories—the *donnés* include a heroic prince and a noble cause, and they are not to be questioned. That the King's adjuration to the Archbishop of Canterbury (I. ii. 9-12) is not hypocritical, and that the prelate's unambiguous 'The sin upon my head, dread sovereigh' (I. 97) is crucial to the moral design becomes clear in the light of the emotional tone of Act IV and its exploration of moral issues involved in warfare and conquest. Before that, however, is the scene dealing with the discovery of the conspirators' plot. The King's angry words to Lord Scroop, unlike to the other traitors, are provoked by a strong sense of personal betrayal. It is an unusually long speech (94-142). It has been suggested that the theme of friendship betrayed, as so eloquently expressed by Henry, is Shakespeare's wry and oblique comment on Henry's own 'betrayal' of Falstaff. The scene is no doubt closely followed by the one that announces the death of Falstaff, but within the terms of the responses evoked by the play, this juxtaposition,like the one in which Fluellen establishes parallelism between Henry and 'Alexander the pig' (IV. vii. 10-50), does not seriously qualify our sympathy for Henry and his cause. The long indictment ranges from a sense of outrage to a deep and indignant pity :

> I will weep for thee;
> For this revolt of thine, methinks, is like
> Another fall of man.
>
> (II. ii. 140-42)

The confession of Scroop and the other conspirators has an element of ritualisation about it (II. ii.151-65) and the whole affair does not seem much relevant to the conduct of the protagonist as an object needing ethical scrutiny. The conspirators are in a technical sense scapegoats, and the indignation evoked by their obloquy is a necessary adjunct of the more central experience to follow.

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A function similar to that of the conspirators' episode is also to be ascribed to the last scene of the third act. Contrary to his sources, Shakespeare shows the French King not only in command but also as exercising a moderating influence on the French side. On the other hand, Shakespeare seems deliberately to have built up the Dauphin as a foil to Henry. In the scene just before the climactic intensities of Act IV, Shakespeare seems to be engaged in heightening our sense of the Dauphin's *hubris* which is, however, kept within manageable comic proportions so that the later account of the French defeat—so fantastic by any realistic standards—may become emotionally credible.

It seems difficult to accept Professor Sen Gupta's suggestion[9] that the play, if anything, is a personal not a national epic since Henry is out to defend his personal claim to the French throne. This is probably an occasion where the intellectual formulation of a fact in a play seems at odds with the impression created by the minutiae of reference within the text. The Battle of Agincourt is the great moment of the play, and it is this event that marks for Shakespeare the complete identification of Henry with his people. Moreover, it is significant that there is very little of the 'battle', of alarum and excursion, about it. The entire Act IV is taken up with the presentation of Henry as completely identified with his people. The fourth chorus presents us with the 'conjecture' of the eve-of-battle preparations in both the camps. That the critical attempt to isolate Henry's religious humilty for its supposed suggestion of the ironic is unjustified may be borne out by the Chorus's picture of the English army the night before the battle :

> The poor condemned English,
> Like sacrifices, by their watchful fires
> Sit patiently and inly ruminate
> The morning's danger; and their gesture sad
> Investing lank-lean cheeks and war-worn coats
> Presenteth them unto the gazing moon
> So many horrid ghosts.
>
> (ll. 22-8)

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The imagination lovingly dwells on the plight of the English, but when it comes to Henry the tone deepens and vague suggestions of the holy reinforce the merely patriotic:

> O, now who will behold
> The royal captain of this ruin'd band
> Walking from watch to watch, from tent to tent,
> Let him cry, 'Praise and glory on his head;'
> For forth he goes and visits all his host;
> Bids them good morrow with a modest smile,
> And calls them brothers, friends and countrymen.
>
> (ll. 28-34)

The brightest, transcendent heaven of invention is ascended with the Chorus's suggestion about the 'largess univeral' and 'a little touch of Harry in the night' since, it may be suggested, they are a way out of the limiting, intractable emotions of jingoistic nationalism.

The scene of the King's encounter with the soldiers and the debate over the responsibilities of kingship may be regarded as the heart of the play. The discussion gives an impression of subtlety, but it has to be approached within its over-all 'simple' design of a legendary setting—the disguised king meeting the 'people'. Henry has been accused of sophistry. Williams had contended that the cause being unjust, the sin of killing in a war is entirely the King's. Henry shifts the ground of the argument by introducing the topic of the individual soldier's personal sins and the responsibility for them. Now it may perhaps be truer to suggest that Shakespeare is not arguing anything one way or the other; his aim, when Williams puts his case, is to deepen the audience's sense of crisis, to broach the issue though perhaps not to provide answers in intellectual terms—in the manner of a Shavian debate. Consequently, the next 'issue'—the hallowed cause *vs* the unregenerate humanity—is introduced without causing the least suspicion (in the theatre) of a fallacious dodging of the earlier one. The focus all the time is on the physical reality of the disguised king talking to the humblest of soldiers. The note sounded here

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is one of delightful surprise consequent upon the 'discovery' to us of the king's humanity, of the king who, 'his ceremonies laid by, in his nakedness ... appears but a man'. It is from this same idea that the unusual wooing scene in Act V takes its point—a scene that Dr. Johnson thought entirely superfluous. 'The military grossness and unskilfulness in all the softer arts' which Dr. Johnson found to be inconsistent with Henry's portrait in the earlier part of the play is, as a matter of fact, a product of the imagination that improvised and discovered exciting new possibilities as it moved on from situation to situation. The King as God's anointed in Richard had already led to the Machiavellian 'King of smiles', an exploration on art's symbolic plane of an aspect of contemporary reality. In *Henry V*,however, both give place, during the course of the play, to the King-as-people, to the leader of a 'band of brothers' whose claim to supremacy is grounded in instinct and personal dynamism. Richard could appeal to what he tragically regarded as the eternally fixed scheme of things, to the system more than to the divine ordainer of it. The hero of Agincourt, on the contrary, had nothing but the truth of instinct to guide him and, consequently, his awareness of God is the recognition of the limits upto which his psychic energies alone could show him the way, the limits of his daring. His was the Renaissance Man's paradox of a sense of finitude resulting from the discovery of his hidden human resources. This shift in perspective, rather than a preoccupation with the chroniclers' scheme of history, may perhaps better explain the strange dramatic power of 'Not today, O Lord/O not today...'

Richard's tragedy lay in the forced 'de-casting' of his role, in the traumatic discovery of the distance between self and office. Henry too has a would-be tragedy—hence the dramatically 'localising' counterpoint in the play as opposed to its main legendary sweep. This potential tragedy lies in a 're-casting' of roles. Henry's is the would-be tragedy of meaningful, purposive, though severely limiting, action. Incidentally, one has a feeling that here the best gloss is not the elusive figure of the Friend in the Sonnets

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but the Renaissance dichotomy between 'meditation' (which in its widest sense included a predilection for rich, sensuous experiences) and action. With this in mind, it is not difficult to see that to talk of a tragedy in Henry's case is not to discover a focal point for our sympathy for him. Moral inadequacy with 'meditation' as an agent requires a response different from the one needed in a case of practical success. It is in this context that the absence of Falstaff, or rather the presence of his large shadow, becomes significant. Sentiment here is unnecessary though most people have been reluctant to dispense with it. *Henry V* has an artistic design of its own, and Falstaff does not quite fit into it. The audience's memory, however, of the fat knight and the mental attitudes he represented, has been exploited as a counter for the regions of sensitivity to life missed in the 'glorious' enactments of the play. 'The King has killed his heart' (II. i. 48) and 'As Alexander killed his friend Cleitus, ... so also Harry Monmouth ... turned away the fat knight with his great-belly doublet ...' (IV. vii. 42-6) are only attempts, perhaps, to put across a different point of view, to take cognizance of a different rhythm. This is in keeping with a whole series of discordant notes : the worldly prelates guided by self-interest, the equally self-seeking inhabitants of Eastcheap ('like horse-leeches, my boys,/To suck, to suck, the very blood to suck!' —II. iii. 52-3), Henry's threatening speech before Harfleur (III.iii), his reaction to the news of Bardolph's hanging and the massacre of the French prisoners (both appear more sinister in the study and when approached rather out of the context) and the references to the civil disorder of the next reign. All this provides a certain amplitude and diversification and also a context of 'maturity' to a play that unashamedly undertakes to be simple and naive. Its 'patriotism' has proved the greatest stumbling-block to most of us in the present century. Or, has it? Perhaps it is our intellectual and dogmatic formulation of attitudes that forces us to turn away from, and misrepresent to ourselvs, an experience of the play that is certainly marked by pleasure. Patriotism for the English should no doubt be anathema to the French in real life, but they both take delight in it in the symbolic world of the theatre, as did

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Hazlitt[10] who knew in this case better than most how imagination transformed.

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Alur Jankiram

REASON, LOVE AND FAITH : *Othello*

The structure of *Othello* is replete with words that were the favourite terminology of the Renaissance moral philosophers : wit, judgment, reason, will, passion, sense, motion and soul. Almost all these words occur more than once and words like "soul", "judgment" and "will" have a greater frequency, with "soul" leading the list. The soul-refrain, as also the reiteration of words like judgment, will, passion and appetite which were generally spoken of as instruments of the soul in the Renaissance, lends an ethical and spiritual dimension to this tragedy. More than any other play of Shakespeare, *Othello* concerns itself primarily with the state of concord or discord among the various faculties of the human soul in relation to the theme of love and faith. The inversion of values, of appearance and reality, accorded a comic treatment in *Much Ado*, receives here a sombre treatment. For once, "reason" or "judgment", whose function is to distinguish appearance from reality, good from bad,[1] becomes inoperative at crucial moments in the play so that its very failure begins the play's pattern of deceitful appearances. The simplistic design of this drama which the various commentators have likened to that of a morality play[2] has much to do with Othello's choice between Iago's version of reality and the reality that Desdemona represents. In a tragedy whose focus is on the human soul (Othello's in the main), we are shown how reason, as the highest mental faculty involved in the dual orders of action and knowledge, no longer "assays to lead the way" but capitulates before the "assays" of passion and "rude will" which take precedence over "grace" and intuitive values. It seems but reasonable then to suggest that this play, often described as a tragedy of faith,[3] is basically concerned

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with the corruption of judgment or rational powers by the pseudo-rational forces represented by a great "seemer" like Iago.

I

References to "judgment", "assay of reason" and the role of will in the human microcosm (Cf. Iago speech in I. ii. 320-34)[4] occur early enough in *Othello*, providing the groundwork of assumptions which motivate its action. Doubtless, Shakespeare here seems to be consciously employing the Renaissance doctrines of the soul's instruments. And this is as it should be in a play whose plot turns so much on the nature of Othello's choice, particularly the disastrous failure in his exercise of the judging powers of reason.

Take, for instance, a word like "judgment" which is one of the recurring *motifs*. In the council scene (I. iii.), Brabantio's main charge against Othello is that he has abused his daughter's judgment with witchcraft :

> It is a *judgment* maim'd and most imperfect
> That will confess perfection so could err
> Against all rules of nature,... (I. iii. 99-101).

Only a "maim'd judgment", he says, would insist that a tender maid, symbolising "perfection", could go to Othello's "sooty bosom" in spite "of nature,/of years, of country, credit, everything".

The very purpose for which the council is summoned at midnight is to exercise proper "judgment" and take swift action concerning the conflicting reports received about the aims of the Turkish fleet. Thus, even as the senators are busy sifting and interpreting the divergent testimony concerning an important public issue, they are faced with another thorny issue, this time a private affair of love between Othello and Desdemona also demanding an exercise of judgment. The designs of the Turkish fleet are assessed properly when the first senator roundly dismisses the first false report, about the directions of the enemy's movement, as not amenable to an "assay of reason":

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This cannot be
By no assay of reason. 'Tis a pageant
To keep us in false gaze.

(I. iii. 17-19).

The later reports that the Turks are really heading for Cyprus confirm the Senator's "assay of reason" which act, as the later events in the play demonstrate, is essential for sifting the false "pageants" or appearances from the substance or truth.[6] When the Senate turns to hear the lovers, Othello's "round unvarnished tale" of his wooing of Desdemona establishes that their love was free and involved no deception of the testimony of reason and the senses.

Othello's and Desdemona's efforts before the Senate to defend their love are also "assays" of reason or judgment. The charge of witchcraft levelled against Othello is effectively rebutted first by Desdemona when she declares that her love is based on an appreciation of the mind behind Othello's "visage".

My heart's subdu'd
Even to the very quality of my lord :
I saw Othello's visage in his mind;
And to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.

(I. iii. 250-54).

The assertion that her heart and soul have been "subdu'd" and "consecrated" (a word of religious import) to the best parts of Othello implies a rational basis of her love and faith. Othello buttresses Desdemona's plea in almost similar terms :

I therefore beg it not
To please the palate of my appetite;
Nor to comply with heat—the young affects
In me defunct—and proper satisfaction;

(I. iii. 261-64).

In effect, Othello's plea is that it is not sensual pleasure which is urging him to plead for Desdemona's joining him in Cyprus but that they should be "free and bounteous to her mind". He assures

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the senators the "disports" of love will not be allowed to "taint"[6] either his "speculative and offic'd instruments" or even the "business of the state":

> No, when light-wing'd toys
> Of feather'd Cupid, seel with wanton dulness
> My speculative and offic'd instruments,
> That my disports corrupt, and taint my business,
> Let huswives make a skillet of my helm,...
>
> (I, iii. 268-74)

Othello's defence, it is obvious, is stated in terms of contemporary psychology. Both "young affects" and "appetite" of the sensible soul are poised against the "speculative and offic'd instruments" of the higher rational soul. "Speculative" instrument in Elizabethan faculty-psychology was another expression for reason or the judging faculty, and the will which carried out the bidding of the reasonable faculty is implied in the "offic'd" instrument.[7] By taking the side of his rational powers, Othello is in effect saying that his love is in accord with reason. It is the reasoned nature of the appeals of both Othello and Desdemona that moves the Senate to allow this pair of lovers to go to the island threatened by strife. And one of the strange ironies of this play rich with ironies is that strife comes to the island not from without (the Turks) but from within, from the very failure of the cognitive or judging powers which Othello relied on at the beginning. The play thus chronicles the gradual disjunction of "the speculative and offic'd instruments" in Othello's make-up.

The council scene is of crucial importance[8] in the play's first movement, for it defines the values of reasoned judgment and order. The first senator's expression "assay of reason" (already cited) establishes one polarity in the drama, and the initial movement dealing with the events in Venice is governed by this polarity. The middle movement dealing with the crescendo of tempestuous passions and their culmination in violence shows how Othello's judgment is corroded by Iago's stratagems. The final movement, beginning with the later half of the last scene, provides some

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clarification through a return to an "assay of reason" and faith both of which initially provided bases for Othello's love.

The movement from Venice to Cyprus is also of crucial significance as Alvin Kernan noted in his analysis of the play's "symbolic geography".[9] Reason "assays to lead the way" (II. iii. 196) most of the time the characters are in Venice, identified by the play's action as the citadel of reason, order and law. Iago's potent villainy and his efforts to stir up trouble here are as surely doomed to failure as are Brabantio's attempts to prove that his daughter's wit has been abused by witchcraft. On the contrary, Othello and Desdemona emerge before the Senate in Venice as a glorious pair of lovers who by surmounting the conventional barriers of race, country and social class have asserted the claims of their love to be in harmony with those of reason.[10] Reason and love encounter serious opposition when the action shifts to Cyprus which, in terms of the play's "symbolic geography", is civilisation's outpost poised delicately on the frontiers of savage forces and infidel Turks. It is in Cyprus, we know, that Iago manipulates appearancesfor realities and weaves his net of artifice so skilfully that Othello gets caught in it and becomes the very antithesis of the great soldier and compelling lover that he is at the beginning. He finally becomes, we know, the "dolt", the "gull" and "murderous coxcomb" of Emilia's description, as also a "base Indian" in Othello's own terms, who has thrown away "a pearl richer than all his tribe." Othello extends the identification further in his last speech by speaking of how he once dealt with a certain "malignant and turbaned Turk", an action which he repeats on himself ("I smote him thus"). The comparison tells us that Othello has become, at the end of the play, one with the infidel and savage forces, and by directing the sword against himself he removes those very amoral forces that destroyed the ordering powers of love, of trust and reason as embodied in Desdemona. The play, then, essays at a psychological level the manner of his dramatic journey towards his final act—a journey from love, order and faith to hate, anarchy and distrust.

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II

Any discussion of the play would be incomplete if it ignored Iago who, as a shaper of events and corrupter of Othello's judgment, contributes so largely to the movement of the plot. And, even Iago is concerned with "wit" and "judgment", the crucial values in the play, if only to subvert them. He tells Roderigo, "Thou knowest we work by wit, and not by witchcraft" (II. iii. 360). But his use of "wit" has the bewitching power of only poisoning another's judgment by pouring "pestilence into his ear." He vows to make Othello "eggregiously an ass" (II. i. 304) by working up in him "a jealousy so strong/That judgment cannot cure" (II. i. 295-96). The midnight brawl in Cyprus involving the drunken Cassio and Montano is a testimony to Iago's versatile ability to deceive the others' cognitive powers by "collying" (blackening) their judgment. That the incident almost throws Othello's own judgment into disarray is evident from the manner in which Othello himself reacts :

> Now, by heaven,
> My blood begins my safer guides to rule;
> And passion, having my best judgment collied,
> Assays to lead the way.
>
> (II. iii. 196-99)

Iago marshals all his knowledge of the psychology of human behaviour and language to create a complicated web of appearances and half-truths so that his victim's reason is deluded. Terence Hawkes has remarked that Iago's methods of destruction are exactly those of the "lower reason" (*ratio inferior*, as he puts it). "He will observe, analyse, explain, define, and so interpret to Othello with such validity, logical necessity, and rational certitude, that the seemingly impregnable fortress will crumble."[11] The measure of Iago's success lies in his substitution of validity for truth through the constructs of false reasoning. His manipulation of reasoning to achieve only an effect of verity, and not the whole truth of any situation, is fundamental to his method of working evil, to his role as a destroyer of harmony and as a disguiser of

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reality. His first strategy is to use equivocation and innuendo to fan up suspicion and jealously in Othello in the temptation scene:

Iago: I did not think he [Cassio] had been acquainted with her.
Oth.: O yes; and went between us very often.
Iago: Indeed !
Oth.: Indeed ? Ay, indeed. Discern'st thou aught in that? In he not honest?
Iago: Honest, my lord ?
Oth.: Honest ? ay, honest.
Iago : My lord, for aught I know.
Oth.: What dost thou think ?
Iago: Think, my lord ?
Oth.: Think, my lord ! By heaven he echoes me,
As if there were some monster in his thought
Too hideous to be shown.

(III. iii. 100-112)

It is obvious that throughout this scene Iago skilfully wields the language, with an appropriate variation of *know* and *think*, to gain some foothold on Othello's "thoughts". Once he gets it, he again engages in a slowly developed reversal process by refusing to let Othello know his (Iago's) own thoughts :

It were not for your quiet nor your good,
Nor for my manhood, honesty, and wisdom,
To let you know my thoughts.

(III. iii. 156-158)

Like a true psychologist he reminds Othello of the dangers of "monster" jealousy and of allowing his heart to be "eaten up with passion". By warning against the unhealthy consequences of "wild surmises" and "conceits" of an excited imagination Iago paves the way for the onset, in his victim's mind, of those very psychological forces he has been cautioning against; for, we know that Othello's imagination is soon to get inflamed with the "dangerous conceits" about his wife's infidelity.

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At a later stage, Iago uses the language masterfully to play what stop he pleases on Othello's imagination. Perceiving that Othello has been sufficiently "eaten up with passion", he deliberately studs his language, in his relation of Cassio's voluptous dream, (III. iii. 423-30) with inflammatory images and details like Cassio's planting of kisses on his nether lip and laying his leg over "my thigh". When Othello demands proofs and "satisfaction" of his wife's unfaithfulness, Iago replies that "satisfaction" can be had only with "imputation and strong circumstances" leading to the "door of truth". There will never be an opportunity, he protests, to see Cassio and Desdemona engaged in the act of love-making:

> but how—how satisfied, my lord ?
> Would you, the supervisor, grossly gape on—
> Behold her topped ?...
> Where's satisfaction ?
> It is impossible you should see this,
> Were they as prime as goats, as hot as monkeys,
> As salt as wolves in pride...
>
> (III. iii. 398-400, 405-408)

Before an Othello willing to accept half-truths or "poor likelihoods" (I. iii. 108) for truths, Iago produces, by way of proof, just two "trifles light as air"; the account of Cassio's dream and Cassio's possession of handkerchief. These scraps of testimony, particularly the latter fashioned by accident, serve as the basis for Othello's judgment: "Now do I see 'tis true" (III. iii. 448).

The extent of Iago's influence on Othello's identity and thinking may be seen in his reiteration of Iago's words and images. When Othello hears from Lodovico that the Venetian Senate has summoned him to leave Cyprus to Cassio's charge and finds Desdemona expressing her joy at the news, he leaves the scene, after striking her, with angry words: "Goats and monkeys" (IV. i. 260). They are the very images which Iago used earlier, as we saw, for stating that it would be difficult to produce proof of the mating of Desdemona and Cassio even if they had been "as prime as goats" and "as hot as monkeys" (III. iii. 405-408). This

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shorthand reiteration is an indication of how much Othello has appropriated Iago's concepts of love as primarily bestial. Outraged as much by this transformation in Othello's nature as by his open uncivility to gentle Desdemona, Lodovico rightly asks whether this was the "noble Moor" of the famed "solid virtue":

> Is this the noble Moor whom our full Senate
> Call all in all sufficient? Is this the nature
> Whom passion could not shake, whose solid virtue
> The shot of accident nor dart of chance
> Could neither graze nor pierce ?
>
> (IV. i. 261-265)

In order to understand what Iago represents in this tragedy of love, it is necessary to look back to an earlier incident, the reunion of Othello and Desdemona in Cyprus, which is indeed the brightest moment of blissful love in this drama. When Othello speaks of "too much of joy" and "content so absolute" (II.i. 195, 189) he is communicating that experience of high rapture which pure love causes. Here, as the lovers embrace and share their sense of joy, Iago's threatening aside sounds an ominous note :

> O ! you are well tun'd now!
> But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
> As honest as I am.
>
> (II. i. 198-199)

To the Elizabethan imagination, accustomed to viewing love as one aspect of the harmony underlying music and dance, Iago's analogy of music must have revealed him as the arch enemy of their cherished values, love and concord. Iago himself is conscious of the extent of damage he is unleashing in all that he does. Thus, when Othello breaks down under the weight of "his unbookish jealousy" (IV. i. 101) Iago reveals his likeness with Vice and Iniquity in his gloating

> Work on,
> My medicine, work. Thus credulous fools are caught;
> And many worthy and chaste dames even thus,
> All guiltless, meet reproach. What, ho ! my lord !
>
> (V. i. 44-47)

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Iago is the antithesis of all supreme values and stands for "a devil-world, unlimited, formless, negative".[12] Interestingly, this sense of the devil incarnate in Iago is articulated by Othello in the final scene when he calls him the "demi-devil" who hath "ensnar'd" his soul and looks down toward Iago for the signs of cleft feet.

I look down towards his feet—but that's a fable.
If that thou be'st a devil, I cannot kill thee.

(V. ii. 289-90)

III

In the much remarked moralistic design[13] of the play, which opposes good agtinst evil on a fundamental level, Desdemona stands for the positive moral pole of love, order and higher rational forces while Iago is the evil forces seeking hate, anarchy and unreason. Where Iago is cynical and uses others for his own sinister purposes, she thinks the best of everyone and seeks to serve the cause of others. Her gentleness, her guilelessness, and her absolute commitment to Othello despite his unkindness to her suggest that she embodies, in a purer form, the values of love and constancy. Having seen her mistress meekly suffer all the insults from the Moor, Emilia remarks: "I would you had never seen him" (IV, iii. 17). Desdemona's reply is typical of the principle she represents :

So would not I : my love doth so approve him,
That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns—
Prithee unpin me, —have grace and favour in them.

(IV. iii. 18-20)

This is on the night when she sings the "willow, willow" song, totally ignorant of the kind of fate that is to overtake her. And this attitude of absolute commitment endures even past her death at her husband's hands; Shakespeare makes her come back to life, if only for a moment, to answer Emilia's question: "O, who hath done this deed ?" with words that express charity itself:

Nobody. I myself. Farewell.
Commend me to my kind lord. O, farewell!

(V. ii. 127-128)

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Truly, there cannot be a better concretisation of that famous line "Love and constancy is dead" than that provided by Desdemona's last moment transfigured by her final unbelievable words. What she represents is a "state of mind", "a life force that strives for order, community, growth and light"[14] even as her opposite, Iago, stands for anarchy, death and darkness.

Othello's role has, surely, all the suggestion of a central figure in a morality play, surrounded on either side by good and evil forces. What his journey from Venice to Cyprus implies at the level of character and psychology has already been remarked upon. In Venice, when he married Desdemona, he chose the values of love and order. He could thus speak of her as his "soul's joy", "the fountain from the which my current runs,/Or else dries up" (IV.ii. 60-61). When he increasingly comes under Iago's dominance in Cyprus, he suffers a total loss of faith not only in his beloved but in the very order of reality itself. For a man whose love has acquired all the ardour of a faith, in whom love calls up a response touching the very depths of his being, a discovery of corruption in his beloved becomes a discovery of corruption everywhere :

> Perdition catch my soul
> But I do love thee; and when I love thee not
> Chaos is come again.
>
> (III. iii. 91-93).

> What committed !
> Heaven stops the nose at it, and the moon winks;
> The bawdy wind, that kisses all it meets,
> Is hush'd within the hollow mine of earth
> And will not hear it. What committed !
>
> (IV. ii. 77-81).

The cosmic imagery, as well as the words of religious import like "heaven" and "perdition" in the foregoing two passges, describes the negation of love for Othello as a return to primeval emptiness, an elemental crisis shattering faith in the order of reality itself, a failure not of mere belief but of the human condi-

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tion. Once Iago supplants Desdemona's position and commands allegiance Othello's mode of discourse and thinking undergoes a radical change. The crucial stage in his career, from the ethical angle, thus arises when he kneels down, in a prayer-like manner, vowing vengeance on the "fair devil" and is joined by Iago with an assurance, "I am yours for ever". This hate ceremony shows how completely Othello has abjured the rational faith of Desdemona for Iago's faith, the very antithesis of love and reason. Symbolically, it represents the triumph of a seemer or heretic over the real intuitive values. Othello's journey from this point on is a steep descent to the lowliest level of an infidel's senseless hate that passion can cause in such a strong nature as Othello's.[16]

It has been said that *Othello* is a tragedy of faith.[18] Surely, the language of Othello's statements invites us to think of his love as a kind of religious faith ("My life upon her faith"). But it is a faith which is, unfortunately, not rational to the same degree as Desdemona's. Presented as a constant in the play, Desdemona's all-giving and all-forgiving love, already alluded to, shows up by contrast the inadequate basis on which Othello's faith rests. Leone Ebreo's formulation of perfect love as related to "uncommon reason", as a kind of love animated by a rational concern for the other[17] and the least regarded for one's own interests, finds its true exemplification in the language and character of Desdemona. Consider, for instance, her solemn avowal that she would never allow her lord's unkindness to "taint" her love, come weather come rain :

> Here I kneel.
> If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
> Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
> Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or my sense,
> Delighted them in any other form,
> Or that I do not yet and ever did,
> And ever will—though he do shake me off
> To beggarly divorcement—love him dearly,
> Comfort forswear me ! Unkindness may do much;

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And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love.

(IV. ii. 152-162).

Her love is certainly not the kind of "love which alters when it alteration finds". Her naive belief that there are no such women who do "abuse their husbands, in such gross kind" reflects the utter simplicity of her pure goodness and trust. Emilia's passionate assertion: "The ills we do, their (men's) ills instruct us so" (IV. iii. 101) does not evoke a similar response but, on the contrary, only a gentle resolve to hold on to her own conviction :

God me such uses send,
Not to pick bad from bad, but by bad mend !

(IV. iii. 102-103).

Surely, Desdemona is Shakspeare's emblen of "Love and Constancy" which he celebrated in a different manner in the union of the Phoenix (love) and the turtle dove (constancy) in the poem of that title. She may even be described as "that rare Arabian bird", in some ways, even if the miraculous union of the two-in-one paradox flashes but for a while in that brief moment of the lovers on their arrival in Cyprus. Her tragic end invites us to consider her as a true "Love's martyr."

Nowhere does the rational faith of Desdemona become more evident than when contrasted with Othello's attitude towards the vexed question of the handkerchief. In itself, it is really a "trifle light as air" but, in terms of the plot, it acquires a sinister significance and provides the chief link for the play's other coincidences which Iago manipulated as proofs of Desdemona's unfaithfulness. For Othello, it has all the "mumbo-jumbo"[18] of an ancient world with which the Moorish prince seems to have some association despite the idiom of Christian eschatology suffusing his speeches on other occasions.

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give.
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people ; she told her, while she kept it,

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'Twould make her amiable, and subdue my father
Entirely to her love;...

(III. iv. 55-60).

Othello's love, we know, was born of free rational choice ; but the language here ("It would make her amiable and subdue my father/Entirely to her love...") indicates an irrational notion of love as a kind of subduing of one person to the other—a state maintained with the help of charms rather than free choice. Having denied in the earlier council scene (I. iii) that his love had anything to do with witchcraft, he now comes to link it, strangely enough, with a token of love which he describes as having "magic" in its "web". It is characteristic of the kind of irrationality that has latterly taken hold of his faith that he attaches more value to the token or gift than the love which it was meant to represent, that he gives more credence to the appearance world of Iago than to Desdemona's world of reality. Desdemona's attitude to this muddle, on the other hand, has all the character of rationality and is best summed up in her reply:

Des. : I' faith ! Is't true ?
Oth. : Most veritable ; therefore look to 't well.
Des.: Then would to God that I had never seen't !

(IV. iv. 75-77).

The implication of this statement as well as her prayer a few lines later on. "Heaven bless us", is that their love, more than the token of it, needs guarding and that it would have been much better if such a gift had not existed to serve as a bond of love. Othello's behaviour in this sorry episode of the lost handkerchief culminating in his angry exit with a word "Away", is hardly amenable to "an assay of reason." Emilia certainly speaks for the audience here, as surely as she does in the final scene, when she asks: "Is not this man jealous ?" and goes on to comment later on the nature of "jealous souls":

Theyare not ever jealous for the cause
But jealous for they are jealous. 'Tis a monster
Begot upon itself, born on it self.

(III. iv. 161-163).

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So, the tragedy of this play is largely Othello's even if Iago happens to be its originator. It is Othello's to the extent that his faith is not animated by the same values of love's higher reason as Desdemona's is. Cardinal Bembo's ideal lover goes beyond the sense perceptions to the values of intuitive understanding. Perfect love has its own kind of higher reason and does not insist on "proof" and "satisfaction".[19] We find its realisation in Desdemona who continues to love the Moor without any such insistence and does not allow her love to be "tainted" in any way. That Othello allows his love to be tainted is the central fact of this play, a factor which makes it a tragedy of an imperfect faith. "My life upon her faith !" (I. iii. 294) is rich with tragic irony considering that Othello finally realises the worth of Desdemona's faith only at the cost of his life. Such a recognition comes a bit too late when the pearl has been thrown away and when his life is bereft of any meaning.

It has been noted that Othello is the "most emphatically Christian"[20] of Shakespeare's tragic heroes and that he speaks the language of Christian eschatology. In a sense, his love for Desdemona is a version of Christian faith and words like "heaven', "soul', "perdition" are freely employed in his statements on love. Norman Rabkin also goes on to speak of Othello's totality of commitment, irrational in the main, as the cause of his tragedy :

> In his unquestioning and swift allegiance to what he believes, in the lack of division between that belief and act, he manifests a quality which one sees only in the saint or the fool. The speed and fulness with which he alters his beliefs to fit his situation once Iago has entered it indicate a character which can exist only in terms of total commitment.[21]

This formulation, true in some details, seems to overstate the nature of Othello's commitment. It is difficult to quarrel with Norman Rabkin's statement that Othello's faith lacks a "rational substructure" which is a feature, for instance, of Dante's faith in Beatrice.[22] What is debatable, however, is whether Othello's

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commitment is really total enough, at least to the same degree, as Desdemona's surely is. What makes Othello's faith deficient in "rational substructure" is not its "totality" but its "inadequacy" of commitment. The absence of higher rational values renders Othello's kind of faith totally inadequate to meet Iago's challenge. Passion, more than reason, is a notable element of Othello's faith which makes it look like total commitment at certain moments in the play ; and when it does seem so, it becomes a commitment to anything but rational love. The choices Othello has to make are indeed difficult considering the mental fit that Iago induces in him, the pressure of passion that the delicate issue of sexual jealousy usually builds up. However, it is obvious that Othello could have countered Iago's insinuations only by displaying total faith in Desdemona, by giving the kind of reply[23] that he gave earlier to Brabantio who warned him in a cynical manner :

> *Brab.*: Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see :
> She has deceiv'd her father, and may thee.
> *Oth.* : My life upon her faith !
> (I. iii. 292-94).

The play's conclusion is marked by a return to reason and faith—most certainly Desdemona's and not Iago's. If "assays" of reason marked the first movement and assays of passion the middle movement, the final one is a swing back to the values of the Venetian Council scene. When all the tragic confusions are cleared away and Iago is exposed as a "hellish villain" and a "Spartan dog", Othello recovers the harmony of his defunct "speculative and offic'd instruments" which enables him to assess properly not only Desdemona's faith but his own role and identity. His final speech, as Helen Gardner has noted, is marked by a poise and discipline of his earlier self, aspects which endeared him to the Venetian Senate :

> The discipline of a life that has been lived at danger-point and has taken its value from service to the state is behind the control with which Othello here attempts a summation of what we have seen, without extenuation, and without

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indulgence in the hysterical self-loathing he has shown earlier in the scene.[24]

His self-image as one who "lov'd not wisely, but too well" and one "not easily jealous, but, being wrought, perplexed in the extreme" (V. ii. 347-49) does become in the play's terms a reasonable evalution of his role. And it is significant that he abdicates life, not with sickness in his soul, but with a sense of being in harmony with himself, at once reflected in his final gesture:

> I kiss'd thee ere I kill'd thee. No way but this—
> Killing myself, to die upon a kiss.
>
> (V. ii. 361-362).

With Iago being led away to be submitted to the reasoned judgment of the Venetian state, we are back once again to the values of reason, law, and order which were evident in the first council meeting.

The play's conclusion vindicates the harmonsising of the antithetical values : reason and faith. Othello's situation is just the reverse of that of Troilus who lavishes all his faith on a person who does not merit it wholly; Othello, on the other hand, does not have enough faith in his beloved who is certainly worthy of it in every way. The meaning of the tragic action essentially resides in the moral that reason and faith, in love as in religion, are not mutually exclusive but complementary opposites, and that each component needs the support of the other.

Department of English
University of Rajasthan
Jaipur

Aligarh Muslim University

NOTES

1. The Elizabethan moral Philosophers generally speak of "judgment" as an aspect or function of reason. Cf. Primabdaye, *The French Academie*, Bk. II (1618), ch. 26, p. 416: "This faculte and vertue of the soule, so necessary in man, and which is able to iudge of things imagined and perceived by the other senses....to know whether they be good or bad..., is called, the *Iudging* or *discoursing faculte*, namely, *Reason*, which is the principal part and vertue of the soule, and beareth rule among all the other senses."

2. See Terence Hawkes, *Shakespeare and the Reason* (London, 1964), p, 101. Also, Alvin Karnan, Introduction to the Signet edition of *Othello*, reprinted in *Twentieth Century Views, Shakespeare : The Tragedies* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1964), p. 83. See also Bernard Spivac, "Iago Revisited", an extract in the same collection, p. 92.

3. On this aspect Helen Gardner has some perceptive comments to make in her lecture, "The Noble Moor", published in *Proceedings of the British Academy* (London, 1955) pp. 197-198, 201-202.

4. Iago's basic analogy in this much discussed passage is that of body as a garden and the will as a gardener. It depends upon the will whether the body or garden is full of well-tended plants or whether it becomes "an unweeded garden", to use Hamlet's terms. He may speak also of the "balance of our lives" as consisting of two scales, one of sensuality and "raging lusts" and the other of reason which checks it. But it is obvious that he gives importance to "will" as an instrument of the reasonable soul. When at the end he speaks of love as "a lust of the blood and permission of the will" he seems to be thinking in terms of the corresponding lower aspect of the will, the appetitive part of the sensible soul. The citations from the play are from the Tudor edition of *The Complete Works*, ed. Peter Alexander, ELBS (1964).

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5. Philip C. Mcguire, "*Othello* as an 'Assay of Reason'", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXIV, 2, (Spring 1973), 200.

6. Eldred Jones : *Othello's Countrymen*, (London, 1965) cited this as an example of Shakespeare's delicate handling of Othello's love "in order to remove him from any hasty association with a type" (p. 97); the Moors, as this critic points out, had acquired disreputable associations with lasciviousness and villainy for the Elizabethan mind both in popular belief and in the London stage tradition. It is characteristic of Shakespeare's stature beside his contemporaries that he could move away from a stereotype and make a Moor not only a hero of a moving tragedy but a character who has his own moments of rational and dignified behaviour.

7. The word "office" in Elizabethan English invariably meant duty or function, and "offic'd" instrument would mean, then, the will which served the "speculative" (i.e. counselling) power. For this gloss see Jared Curtis's perceptive essay, "'The Speculative and Offic'd Instrument' : Reason and Love in *Othello*" : *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXIV, 2, (Spring 1973), 192-93. Although my debt to the essay mentioned here and the one referred to in *n.* 5 (both articles interestingly have appeared in the same number) is general, my argument has a different bias and purport.

8. Philip C. Mcguire, "Othello as an 'Assay of Reason'", *Shakespeare Quarterly*, XXIV, 2, (Spring 1973), 200.

9. See his Signet edition introduction reprinted in Twentith Century Views series, *Shakespeare : The Tragedies*, pp. 76-84.

10. It is typical of Shakespeare's consistent advocacy of the wisdom of loving that he should present this marriage as based on ideal considerations while Cinthio was much concerned with tracing the causes of its failure to the disparities of race and background. It is obvious that the marriage is disrupted in Shakespeare owing to a multitude of factors that have little bearing upon the racial disparities. Eldred Jones has remarked about the status of Moors and African characters

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in the London Stage tradition : "The first type whose blackness was generally emphasized in the text, was the villainous Moor. Muly Hamet in *The Battle of Alcazar*, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus*, Eleazer in *Lust's Dominion* are notable examples of this type". The other type whose blackness was not emphasized in the text was portrayed as a dignified oriental ruler capable of cruelty as well as noble conduct. Shakespeare's "immense stature" is evident, according to Jones, in his "complete humanization of a type character" so that in the end "Othello emerges, not as another manifestation of a type but as a distinct individual who typified by his fall, *not the weaknesses of Moors, but the weaknesses of human nature.*" *Othello's Countrymen*, *op. cit.*, p. 87, p. 109. (Italics mine).

11. *Shakespeare and the Reason*, *op. cit.*, p 108. I wish to amend Hawkes's identification of Iago with the *ratio inferior* by stating that it is only an approximation and not exactly a one-to-one correspondence.

12. Maud Bodkin, *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, V.i., "The Hero and the Devil", reprinted in Laurence Lerner's *Shakespeare's Tragedies, An Anthology of Modern Criticism* (1963), Penguin Book, p. 102.

13. See Alvin Kernan, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-82.

14. Alvin Kernan, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

15. John Wain, *The Living World of Shakespeare*, (London, 1966) has remarked that Othello is a "kingly barbarian" with no "middle range of conduct". Either he loves, giving himself totally, or he hates destroying what he loves. (p. 146)

16. Helen Gardner, "The Noble Moor", *op. cit.*, pp. 197-198.

17. See *Dialoghi d'Amore*, translated as "Love and Desire", *Renaissance Philosophy*, Vol. I, *The Italian Philosophers*, eds. & trs., Arturo B. Fallico and Herman Shapiro, Modern Library (New York, 1967), pp. 220-225.

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18. John Wain's phrase : *The Living World of Shakespeare*, *op.cit.*, p. 147.

19. Commenting on the significance of Emilia's death, Helen Gardner observes : 'By her heroic disregard for death she gives the only 'proof' there can be of Desdemona's innocence: the testimony of faith. For falseness can be proved, innocence can only be believed. Faith, not evidence, begets faith', *op. cit.*, p. 202.

20. Norman Rabkin : *Shakespeare and the Common Understanding* (New York, 1968), p. 63.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

23. Helen Gardner, "The Noble Moor", *op. cit.*, p. 198: "That Othello does not or cannot reply so to Iago, and instead of making the venture of faith, challenges him to prove his wife false, is his tragic error."

24. Helen Gardner : '"*Othello* : A Retrospect, 1900-67', *Shakespeare Survey*, 21 (1968), p. 7.

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M. L. Raina

SYMBOLISM AND FICTION—SOME THEORETICAL DISCRIMINATIONS

The use of symbolism in fiction is directly related to meaning and communication. Unlike other narrative forms, fiction, by and large, tends to be referential and appeals to a wide range of sympathy by presenting characters in different social and personal situations. The formal elements of a novel combine to give an image of reality which corresponds more or less to our own daily perceptions. We cannot say of a novel as we can say of a lyric poem that it does not mean but is. Though the new critical analyses of the novel have yielded some fruitful insights into the way language works in fictional structures, they have not taken into account the fact that the experience organised in the novel is not independent, but related to the experience outside the book. This 'outside' is not something static, forever 'there', but expresses a sense of reality from several angles. As Roman Jakobson points out, realism in fiction may refer 'to the aspiration and intent of the author' who conceives it 'as a display of verisimilitude', or it may refer to the judgment of the reader who perceives it 'as true to life'[1]. The empiricism of attitude and technique makes the language of fiction less loaded with metaphorical associations than the language of poetic discourse, and keeps its referential character intact. This does not mean that novelists have not aspired towards the suggestiveness of poetry or the depth of myth. Indeed, much of the modernist revolution in fiction was against the representational nature of the world it portrays. The fact remains that however far novelists may stray from realism, they do not completely abandon the traditional components of the art like character and story. The 'formal realism' of the novel has undergone considerable strain but is still retained, if only in a tenuous

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form. Novels still tell us about our complex world as well as our complex selves, and their possibilities go in many directions embracing both life and form. At one pole we have the seemingly unadulterated factualness of Defoe, on the other the well-regulated orderliness of a fable, an allegory or any other structure in which the mimetic element is secondary to the requirements of formal design. By insisting on the representational character of fiction I am not suggesting that this is the sole norm of right judgment, nor that realism is the best form of fiction. Fiction, however factual it may pretend to be, reflects but certain aspects of life under various conventions, and our response is shaped by the resemblance between the virtual world of the novel and our own experience of that world under those conventions. If the novelist is inclined towards the outward aspect, realism will have the truth of social fact; if the novelist is inclined towards the psychological aspect, his fiction will have the truth of psychological fact. The realistic mode in fiction moves between these two points: there is social as well as psychological realism, but the emphasis in both cases is on the specificity of individual experience rather than on the illustration of a concept. This does not mean that the realistic mode excludes the ordering of experience by moral vision; only that the morality of the author forms part of the experience rendered and is not to be evaluated in isolation. In all significant realistic novels symbolism contributes in drawing attention to that moral vision which the formal components of the novel subsume under the web of relationships and interactions. Symbolism within the realistic mode functions without contradicting our sense of the way things actually happen in everyday life.

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Symbolism and the Realistic Mode

In her book, *Problems of Art*, Susan Langer distinguishes between art symbol and symbol in art. The first is the total structure of a work of art seen as symbolic. In this sense all art is symbolic because it recreates reality imaginatively. The second is an element or a constituent within the art-symbol whose significance is conceived in relation to the total meaning of the whole

work.[2] Whenever we refer to a literary symbol we mean this particular element or a set of elements within the total structure of the work. Its special quality is a powerful concreteness combined with a wide suggestibility. Its concreteness is part of the world of the novel, of what Peter Fingesten calls 'the visual presence' of the book, while its suggestibility renders it amenable to various levels of meaning depending on the author's particular vision.[3] The meaning of the symbol is determined largely by the context in which the author puts it, by the narrative strategies of the author. Narrative strategies are devices that 'establish the verisimilitude for the narrative material'[4] and involve the use of rhetorical elements. The relationship of the symbol with the context, however, is not causal but analogous, and to enforce the analogy the author's voice counts for much. Where private symbolism is used the absence of the authorial voice detracts from our acceptance of the truth of his symbolism. In realistic novels the most unobtrusive form of symbolism is that which is incorporated in the texture of language. It functions as an extension of the particular situation rendered. It brings together the stated and the unstated meanings of the book and exploits to the maximum the expressive quality of language. In George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and *The Mill on the Floss* the striving towards unity in the former and the flux of life in the latter novel is suggested in terms of the imagery of the river. Metaphors of organic life evolving imperceptibly are used to describe character and suggest links between man and nature. Similarly Forster's *Howards End* renders the conflict between two opposed viewpoints in terms of the metaphors of 'flow' and 'run'. Through the suggestiveness of the language itself part of the symbolic framework of the novel is related to the tension between the civilisations of luggage and hurry. Metaphors of fire in *Jane Eyre* contribute both to the exploration and the explanation of the theme of the novel. In *Wuthering Heights* the metaphoric linguistic texture corresponds to the larger relationship between the workings of nature and the subjective experiences of the main characters. The language of this novel is charged throughout and is appropriately indicative of the tension between freedom and

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bondage—the principal theme of the novel. By interposing a narrator between the actual happenings of the story and their telling, the narrative strategy helps the wild passion of the story to be accommodated within the rational mould of the novel's structure. This was necessary because in the novel the conflicts of the characters have been invested with epic proportions and it would have been impossible to retain the immediacy of apprehension without some formal attenuation. Sometimes figurative languge accumulates symbolic significance when it is related to the thematic symbol, as in *The Golden Bowl*. In this novel the metaphors of gold and the gilded quality are directly associated with some principal characters. Though there is nothing peculiarly obtrusive about James's language, the constant reminder of the golden bowl at the centre of the narrative makes the metaphoric associations in the linguistic texture doubly clear. The language of narrative which purports to have symbolic suggestion not only is part of the realistic tenor of the novel but also seems to be so. It is through successive readings that we notice a ceremoniousness in it, particularly as a result of the recurrence of certain metaphoric details that compel attention to a resonance round the discursive meanings of the plot. The figural aura of language thus built creates what R. P. Blackmur calls 'a cumulus of meanings' around the story.[5] Unlike in an allegory, as Walter Benjamin aptly observes, such symbolism respects the autonomy of character and story and saves their human core from being 'sundered from meanings, from spirit, from genuine human existence'.[6] What it adds to the plot is a feeling-tone, a moral or cognitive element deriving from within the structure of events rather than from without. In this sense the symbolism of the linguistic texture is centripetal in that it refers to the world of the novel *per se*, and is to be distinguished from what Mark Schorer calls 'the analogical Matrix'. The recurrence of terms from finance and commerce in Jane Austen directly places the characters in a particular social milieu, while the recurrence of the fire imagery in *Jane Eyre* comments upon the passion of the characters without taking overt cognizance of their milieu.

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Symbolism need not necessarily be a quality of language only. Symbols can be isolated figures, situations, or objects. Such symbols have a greater directing function than the symbolism of the linguistic texture, because as concrete images they invite attention to themselves far more easily by occurring in various contexts of the story. Once our attention has been seized, feelings and associations are generated and we tend to read more deeply into the text than before. Such images could have a purely local significance, as the beggar's song in *Madame Bovary* has in the particular context of Emma's romantic longings which it mocks; but, more often, such symbols are thematic and have to be so evaluated. Here some more discriminations are in order considering the variety of ways thematic symbols have been used by various novelists. Three such symbols would do as an example : the conch in *Lord of the Flies*, Dr. Eckleberg's eyes in *The Great Gatsby* and the black swan in Thomas Mann's story. In Golding's story the conch is more or less unobtrusive and suggests an underlying aspiration towards order and harmony so cruelly lacking in the novel's world. Its role is tangentially gestural, though it must be conceded that the whole tenor of the novel is somewhat more portentous than is ordinarily the case in a realistic novel. Fitzgerald's symbol, notoriously engaging critical attention over the years, is on a different footing. Its presence is far more palpable, as it has been invested with particular evocative qualities by the author. Like the canal in the beginning of Lawrence's *The Rainbow* it acts as a topographical radiating point giving us glimpses into the various kinds of worlds portrayed in the novel. But unlike the canal in Lawrence's novel, it plays a more dominating role in that it not only objectifies the moral blindness of the main characters (there are frequent variations on eyes and eyesight), but also holds in balance the superficial glitter of the Gatsby world and Fitzgerald's superior judgment of it. This is sufficiently made clear after Myrtle Wilson's death in the conversation between her husband and Michaelis. George denounces his wife's betrayal of him and then looks at the eyes of Dr. Eckleberg which he associates with the God's all-seeing Eye. Michaelis

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replies that it is only an advertisement. Through a remarkable concatenation of realistic detail, moral comment and symbolic suggestion, the advertisement gets transformed both into the descriptive frame of the novel and the rippling reverberations of the symbol. Its propriety as a mimetic object also highlights its gestural role. Looking now at Thomas Mann' swan we see that it is still more deeply interfused with the plot of the story than Fitzgerald's symbol. It concretises suggestions already emanating from the plot. The inevitability of the old woman's death is already foreshadowed in the fact of her fatal disease. Towards the close of the story when her passion for the young teacher is awakened again, the black swan acquires a prophetic quality. Unlike Dr. Eckleberg's eyes, it is a constant presence (somewhat like Lawrence's fox in the story of that name) and its significance waxes and wanes in accordance with the mutations of the old woman's passion and her fatal disease.

Closely allied to their role as thematic centres, symbolic objects can dominate the novel by organising the attitudes of characters around themselves. In this way they become the causes of and co-terminous with the narrative. The structure of the narrative is controlled by their strategic deployment. Being dominant and central to the narrative, they are less definitely assigned than the overt thematic symbols and account for the complexity of the theme. They embody either unusual aspects of the character's experiences or a dominant idea. The bell in Iris Murdoch's novel, the spire in Golding's novel and the mine in Conrad's *Nostromo* are symbols of this nature. In *The Bell* the literal context in which the major symbol takes on significance and distinction is established by the movement of the plot itself (as is the spire in *The Spire*). The installation of the new bell in Imber Abbey and Dora Greenfield's substitution of a new bell for an old one are the prime causes of the movement of the plot. Its involvement with the character's attitudes is seen at the moment when James Typer Pace and Michael Meade interpret it differently. The novel itself does not fix on any particular interpretation but manages to convey the feeling that it embodies both 'simplicity'and

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'truthfullness' that Pace seeks and 'self-knowledge' that Meade seeks. Because Iris Murdoch keeps the two responses constantly within the reader's consciousness, the novel's organisation does not suffer. In *Nostromo*, the mine functions both as the organising focus of the narrative and the symbolic focus of the theme. Its multi-levelled function is linked with the attitudes of various characters. In the first place the symbolism of the mine is merged with the requirements of a fast-moving suspenseful story. Yet, as Conrad himself maintained, the silver remains 'the pivot of the moral and material events, affecting the lives of everybody in the tale'.[7] By gradual advancement the mine enters the lives of the characters in the story (Chapter VI). That it means different things to different people can be understood when we compare its use with Lawrence's use of the title symbol in *The White Peacock*. Whereas Lawrence attributes a fixed quality to the symbol and brings it out in the character of Lettie, Conrad relates his symbol to every character in one way or another, both physically and in terms of the moral argument of the book. Charles and Mrs Gould, Nostromo, Decoud and Dr. Monygham (it is he who discovers the moral disorder brought about by the mine)—all are summed up in terms of their attitudes to the mine. Through intricate involvement with the lives of the characters, the mine is causally linked with the story and, at the same time, stands apart as an isolated symbol acting as a repository of moral value.

As a corollary to the above, symbolic elements can elicit different responses from the same character at different times in the story. In such a situation the symbol keeps on changing its significance with a particular character's state of mind. This can be seen in the symbolism of Joyce's *Portrait*. One of the several symbolic patterns in the novel is formed by the symbol of water. Its dominant role is to organise Stephen's changing attitudes at various periods in the story. In his early school days it is the bog water that irritates him. Later on water acquires affirmative connotations through Stephen's developing consciousness. It becomes fertilizing; baptismal and life-affirming. This meaning is forcefully established when Stephen resolves not to serve and

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wades through water on the beach. All these symbolic intimations are subordinated to the central situation of the novel—the growth of Stephen's consciousness. Compared with *Crime and Punishment* where the water symbolism, by and large, retains a fixed connotation of release against Raskolnikov's suffocating experiences (except towards the end, when it suddenly presages death in Svidrigaylov's dream of the flood in Part VI, Chapter 6), the water symbolism in Joyce's novel acquires a rhythmic expansion directly associated with the widening of Stephen's interests.

My idea in isolating some of the symbolic devices for individual attention is to indicate that symbolism in fiction that has not completely rejected the mimetic basis of reality is part of the narrative strategy and that its effectiveness is to be judged by the intentions of the novelist. As Barbara Hardy points out in a perceptive study of the novel, realistic novels combine the formal and the ideological aspirations within the structure of their plots so that we have to view the function of symbolism in terms of the meaning, rather than within the intrinsic correlations of novelistic elements.[8] There is always the danger that symbolism within the realistic mode may be stretched in a manner that violates the basis of the entire mode. In the case of the metaphoric linguistic texture, it is possible that the language itself becomes overwrought, as Thomas Mann's *Death in Venice* easily illustrates. Not only does Mann structure his imagery in accordance with the needs of his extra-realistic purpose—the juxtaposition of the Apollonian and Dionysian impulses informing the plot—, he sees to it that there is no other reading possible without knowledge of such a a conceptual dialectic. The language always draws attention away from the interests of the story. But such a distraction is possible even when the language is not overwrought. This happens when we are caught in a borderline situation where the urge to stylistic freedom (stopping short at a meaningless play of language for its own sake) competes with the demands of the story as a narrative with meaning. What is involved here is the question of tone, the relationship of the author to his material. When the tone corres-

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ponds to the thematic intent, there is no disjunction between the plot and the figural language. But when it does not (*Howards End*) a disjunction is caused in the reader's response. Forster's instinctive admiration for what he consciously sees as destined to die brings about a split between the plot and the tone. Similarly in *Death in Venice* Mann's surrender to the Dionysic power of art is counterbalanced by his need for Appollonian restraint, resulting in an ambiguity that the story does not resolve.

In the case of thematic symbols the danger is that unless they are rooted within the story, they tend to become emblematic and if pressed further, allegorical. We can see this happening in Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* as well as in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*. The symbolism of the skull in *Jacob's Room* is not mediated through the authorial voice, nor does it relate to any character or a group of characters. It is purely thematic in that it points out the writer's preoccupation with the theme of death. As the representational element of the novel gets thinner and thinner the symbol assumes disproportionate importance and acquires an illustrative character. An extreme case, however, is *The Scarlet Letter*. The emblematic character of the mysterious letter A is appropriately criticized by Henry James. What James finds in this novel is 'a want of reality and an abuse of the fanciful element'.[9] Emblematic symbolism makes characters representative of one state of mind, 'picturesquely arranged'. In the case of the letter A Hawthorne seems 'charmed by it' until the reader 'feels tempted to declare that his enjoyment of it is puerile'.[10] James goes on to suggest that when such an image becomes 'importunate', it represents nothing but itself.[11] This is the stage where, as Walter Benjamin puts it, we get to the purely allegorical, a stage at which the symbolic object becomes a' script',- a 'key to some realm of hidden knowledge',[12] and by abandoning the outer world succeeds merely in 'colonizing the inner'.[13] What is lost in the emblematic symbolism is the variousness, richness and wholeness of effect—qualities dependent as much upon the reader's imaginative participation in what James calls the 'compositional contribution' as on the author's conscious

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attempt to create a certain kind of world in the novel. Here, by way of a comparison, we may relate two novels to *The Scarlet Letter*, one which treats the theme of guilt and expiation and the other in which there is a dominant symbol always bordering on the emblematic : *Crime and Punishment* and *Return of the Native*. Dostoeyevsky manages to present Raskolnikov's character through a subtle analysis of his state of mind rather than through fixing on an emblem, though the references to the cross could have easily lent themselves to such a procedure. He maintains a constant interaction between his hero's acts and his inner states and shows Raskolnikov to the reader both internally and externally. What saves Egdon Heath from becoming a pure emblem is the fact that it is inextricably related to the daily life of Hardy's principal characters and numerous others who form a choric ensemble in the Wessex universe. In spite of Hardy's p.seudo-philosophizing about the Heath in the opening chapter, the object remains closely bound to the earthly reality of his characters. Hawthorne has stretched his symbolism in the service of his puritan conscience and damaged the authenticity of his world. *The Scarlet Letter* serves as an instructive example of how character and plot come to be dominated by an emblematic symbol which stands outside the world of the novel. It also serves as a convenient transition from the realistic to the symbolic mode.

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II

The Symbolic Mode

Since all language is a symbolic instrument, the novel, like any other art form, may be termed as symbolic. But the novelist uses various degrees of symbolization ranging from the mimesis of the realistic mode to the non-verbal discourse of the symbolic mode. At its simplest the symbolic mode may involve some esoteric private symbolism of the author. But the symbolic mode is more authentic when it replaces action and narrative with a highly expressive symbolic gesture. Such a symbolic gesture aims at a greater fulness of expression than is possible through the medium of language. It is a way of conveying meanings not

otherwise conveyed by symbolic objects, characters or metaphorical analogies in the texture of language. There is a formality about it, a weightiness which distinguishes it from the gestural functions of symbolism in the realistic mode. As the symbolic gesture becomes the dominant vehicle of meaning in a novel, it acquires a qualitatively different significance from that of isolated symbolic gestures in realistic nove's. This comes about when the novel seeks to transcend the bounds of narration and aspires towards the condition of poetry. We see this tendency in Lawrence's recourse to dance movements in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, in the ceremonial character of the parties in *Mrs Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*, and more explicitly in the ritual scenes in *A Passage to India* and *Henderson the Rain King*. In another form the dream patterns in *Pincher Martin* and *Finnegans Wake* also illustrate the dominance of the symbolic mode as do the attempts of several other novelists to make their worlds prefigurations of particular mythic patterns. It would be unwise to suppose, however, that the mere substitution of the symbolic mode for the realistic is an advancement. What is involved is not simply a new technique, however radical it may be structurally, but a radical new way of appraising experience. What distinguishes the symbolic mode as a governing principle in the novel (more so in the modern novel) is its basis in belief. "A symbol remains vital", says Karl Vossler, "only when its representation is accompanied by faith".[14] The validity of the symbolic gesture is not in its relevance to particular characters in particular situations, but in its power to transform the action into something different. In the case of Lawrence, it becomes a quasi-religious attitude, in Forster and Virginia Woolf it is expressed in their belief in the transforming powers of the 'moment'. The symbolic mode purports to render not the bare observable commonplace of everyday experience, but something beyond it, something of higher or deeper significance. But as critics of the novel we need not accept these claims at their face value as, unfortunately, symbolist and myth critics tend to do. The questions to be asked are : does the incorporation of the symbolic mode *inevitably* enrich the narrative

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surface of the novel ? Can it not be that the 'higher significance' is acquired at the expense of the density and palpable livingness of everyday experience ? Is it possible to see such significance every time a new reader confronts such novels, or the same reader confronts them at various times? Is it possible to reconcile a reality taken on trust with one which is sensuously apprehensible to a large body of normal human beings?

Myth, ritual and dream are the forms of the symbolic mode most frequently cited as having brought about a radical change in the structure of fiction. Northrop Frye speaks of them as being interdependent, but such a linkage is not feasible when we are investigating their effectiveness as symbolic devices in particular aesthetic structures. "Myth", says Frye, "gives meaning to ritual and narrative to dream : it is the identification of ritual and dream, in which the former is seen to be the latter in movement".[15] Frye is concerned with these terms in the total context of literature and not in the sense in which they are used in the present discussion as vehicles of meaning. For him these are aspects of symbolism and in its archetypal phase, the archetype itself being construed as simply a communicable unit.[16] The difficulty with Frye's classification is that it does not take into account particular works in which myth, ritual and dream may have a functional value; secondly (and this applies to Frye's system as a whole), he places works of art in a particular literary hierarchy without assessing their achievement as modes of communication.[17] The point, however, is not whether a particular story approximates to a particular myth or not, or whether a particular scene is ritualistic enough, but to what extent does the mythic approximation succeed in conveying the writer's meaning and how far does the ritual scene impress the point the story seeks to make. Like the symbolic devices used within the realistic mode, ritual, myth and dream are to be evaluated as parts of the rhetoric of fiction. Unlike in the realistic mode, the symbolic mode formalizes action and invests it with more meaningfulness. Nothing seems casual or contingent. But such formalization passes through various

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gradations, each new stage refining on the preceding stage and reducing the mimetic basis of the story.

Dream, Myth and Ritual

Dream symbolism is an old accepted way in medieval allegory and in many realistic novels. It represents the subjective element, the inner world of desire which affects human action on the conscious plane. In the medieval allegories the dream illustrates the operation of the divided will, the 'bellum intestinum', to quote C. S. Lewis[18] and relates the individual to the conflict of good and evil. In realistic novels dreams are the means of exploring the character's motives, those unapprehended goads that make characters act. In the words of Harry Levin, 'though our daylight selves may conform to a public vista of bland perfection, on the night-side we are not exempt from the visitations of insecurity'.[19] It is to that region that dreams refer. In a realistic novel their presence is subordinated to and controlled by the rational order of plot. A vivid example of this is *Crime and Punishment*. Raskolnikov's dreams and hallucinations are clearly held under control and a consistent motivation provided for the irrational and fantasy element of his ravings. Dostoeyevsky does not let his character's dream visions acquire a significance all their own. They are part and parcel both of the psychology of crime and the morality of guilt. Similarly on a less ambitious scale, Virginia Woolf's *The Voyage Out* justifies Rachel Vinrace's hallucinations by reference to her delirium. No shift from the realistic to the non-realistic mode takes place either in *The Voyage Out* or *Crime and Punishment*. With Lawrence's story *The Fox* we move further into the total symbolic mode, but not quite. In the early part of the story March's dream is part of the realistic tenor of the narrative appropriately objectifying her isolated existence in the bleak surroundings of her house. As the narrative proceeds both March and the reader come under the growing spell of the dream. This is partly impressed by March's increasing fascination for the dream fox whose presence in her imagination becomes more insistent, and

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partly by the incantatory iterative rhythms of Lawrence's prose. But just at the moment the dream-like trance is at its deepest, the symbolic fox of March's dream is transformed into a flesh-and-blood character, and the entire symbolic framework is once again under the control of the narrative. At this point in the story the dream assumes the role of a prefiguration. In Golding's *Pincher Martin* the state of suspended consciousness is maintained throughout. Though the narrator's physical state is discovered quite late in the book, the linguistic structure is still coherent and what we are offered is a distilled content of that suspended consciousness. It is in *Finnegans Wake* and the surrealistic novel, however, that dream is the dominant symbolic mode. The chaos of consciousness is rendered through a structure which in itself seems chaotic. Joyce's book encompasses in the dream of HCE the total history of the human race and through the linguistic structure characteristic of the dream state replaces the narrative of an ordinary realistic novel. *Finnegans Wake* is an extreme example of the dream symbolism becoming the total vehicle of symbolic meaning, and as it displaces all the traditional components of the novel within its circular, ever-recurring structure, it cannot be compared with anything else. It draws upon the psychoanalytic theories of the dream and makes the most of its linguistic resources. The distinction between the dread and the waking state, between the inner and the outer world is blurred, and the act of 'narration' becomes synonymous with the narrated material. As Frye remarks, such structure corresponds to scripture, the rise and fall of the human soul and 'creation and apocalypse of nature'.[20]

On a smaller scale than that of *Finnegans Wake* the surrealistic novel makes full use of the symbolic possibilities of the dream mechanism. The surrealistic novel is based on the assumption that language can never render experience 'as it is', but fetters it within its encrustations. Defining surrealism as 'pure psychic automatism', Andre Breton saw its aim as the verbal expression of the 'real process of thought...in the absence of all control exercised by the reason'.[21] He saw the transmutation of dream into an

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absolute reality. Taking their cue from this statement, novelists present distorted perspectives on reality through a distorted vision, often that of a mentally unbalanced character. A good example of this is Anais Nin's dream novel *House of Incest* written in the thirties though Faulkner's *Sound and Fury* would also partially qualify. The dream symbolism creates a solipsistic world centring round the desires of the dreaming narrator. It is solipsistic because the reality of the characters, particularly that of Sabina and Jeanne, is contingent upon what the dreamer makes of it. The dream mechanism, as a narrative device, is immune to judgment because in such a state everything is possible. Here it is important to mention that the deformation brought on by the unregulated dream mechanism is different from the stream of consciousness as commonly understood, particularly in novelists like Virginia Woolf. Here the ramblings of the unconscious are in full control of the author and there is always a formal framework, however tenous it might at first appear, in which such ramblings are cast. In the surrealistic novel, formal control is deliberately avoided because it interferes with the free flow of the unconscious.

Myth operates in different ways in a fictional structure. From an isolated simile or a metaphoric association, through a retelling of the mythic story in modern terms, mythic symbolism can encompass the total structure of the novel in terms of its plot and character. Myth as used here is to be differentiated from *mythos* which, according to Frye, is 'the structural organising principle of literary form'. For Frye *mythos* is simply an aesthetic category without any normative basis. But myth mostly operates as a normative gesture. It is both analogy and commentary. Joyce's treatment of the Homeric myth judges contemporary reality as inferior, chaotic and in need of order and perspective. On the other hand, in David Jones's *In Parenthesis* the battle experiences of private Ball are judged as celebrating the exploits of the Welsh legendary heroes. Taken in this sense myth becomes what John Holloway calls 'potential narrative',[22] a story carrying an immanent meaning in terms of an ancient story. There is, as Holloway suggests, a transacting of the archetype through a given narra-

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tive. Thus in Lawrence's *The Trespasser* there is the transacting of the Tristan myth in the story of Siegmund and Helena, just as in *Dr. Zhivago* the elaborate images and correspondences work out the complex parallels in Christian liturgy and mythology. Because the mythic narrative is capable of being re-enacted in different guises, it is open and possesses a wide latitude of meaning. As Warner Berthoff notes "the essential character of myth is plenitude and accommodation, above all the accommodation of the collective mind of men to their own incessant experience."[23] In whatever form it is applied, the mythic dimension always carries the suggestion of a larger significance. Whether we are referring to a unique and complex characterization by equating a fictional character with a mythic hero (Stephen with his mythic analogue), or to the transposition of an ancient story into modern terms (like the Oedipus myth in *Sons and Lovers*, or the Faust legend in the story of Mann's Adrian Leverkuhn), we are in both cases looking for significance and formal organisation outside the story. Even when the analogy is explicitly stated as in Updike's *The Centaur*, we try to seek its significance in the mythic figure rather than in the charcter of the novel. Yet this is not always helpful procedure, because one cannot escape the impression that an abstract frame is being imposed on the developing story by linking it up with the mythic parallel. Secondly, a good part of the meaning of such prefiguration will remain obscure if the reader is culturally removed from the particular parallel. There is, therefore, some truth in the allegation that too close a mythic parallel restricts rather than expands the sense of development of the novel and tends to rigidify characters and events into a sort of schema.[24] A glaring example of this in modern fiction is *Women in Love*. Despite the critical acclaim showered on this novel we cannot help the impression that it lacks that density and richness of experience which creates the illusion of truthfulness in the reader. Part of the reason is that in this work Lawrence has allowed his mythopoeic vision unrestricted scope, so much so that the experiential world is displaced by a narrow archetypal confrontation between the Lawrentian positives and his negatives; by

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reducihg the Gerald-Gudrun world to an archetype of evil (Lawrence establishes his parallels by constant reference to the Cain figure as well as the 'whiteness of death'), and by aligning Birkin and Ursula with what he regards as the ideal, he drains his story of whatever attributes of ordinary humanity it might have possessed. One need not, therefore, insist too heavily on the normative value of mythic parallels, though to be ignorant of them would be equally indefensible.

Myth can be a mode of envisaging reality, not merely a way of creating ancient analogues for contemporary themes. Used in this way it becomes far more integral to the structure than the transaction of a mythic archetype does. When a novelist conceives of his world mythopoeically (as Lawrence and Joyce do in *The Rainbow* and *Ulysses* and, to some extent, Virginia Woolf, does in *The Waves*), they break up the accepted pattern of time and space and see a repetitive, cyclic recurrence of time as well as a correspondence between the human and the natural planes of being. A good example is the synchronization of the human and the natural in *The Waves* : here the movement of the book is governed by the waxing and waning of the diurnal rhythm. Such correspondence suggests continuity against the enclosing of possibility in a linear plot. In *The Rainbow* the mythic is a quality of vision embodied in the *structure* of the novel. Though the novel retains the surface of a family chronicle like *Buddenbrooks* and *The Forsyte Saga*, it differs from these in that the reality of life for Lawrence is not in the historical growth of the family, but in the revelation of quintessential nature of human relationships that transcend history, but are neverthless formed within historical time. The quintessential can be grasped only at significant moments (here again the structural parallel with the mythic narrative is implicit), like the initiation ceremony or the sexual union between man and woman. Many critics have accused Lawrence of repetitiveness in this novel, but it must be understood that the structural quality is the natural outcome of the nature of Lawrence's mythopoeic vision. There is enough realism in this novel (as there is in *Ulysses*), and as the generations pass

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more experience is presented in terms of individual life. All the cycles of experience, however, revolve round the same axis : the nature of the quintessential man-woman relationship. There are other angles in the novel, such as religious (Anna), traditional (Tom) and modern educational (Ursula), but these are absorbed by the overarching mythopoeic vision that accommodates all and spares the novel the circumscription of an elaborate allegory. Any critical attention to the novel must take this feature of the book into account instead of looking for analogues.

Ritual is a particularized activity. It differs from other human activities in its symbolic powers of transformation. Cassirer sums up the nature of the ritual act in these words : "Rites cannot be explained as a mere representation of beliefs...they do not copy or represent but are absolutely real; they are so woven into the reality of action as to form an indispensable part of it...Those who believe in them not only believe in the efficacy of magic as a means to something else, but are convinced that in it they possess the very thing themselves."[3] What strikes us in the use of ritual as a symbolic mode is the total assimilative activity involved. On the one hand ritual exemplifies the breakdown of the conceptual mode of the realistic novel, on the other it blurs moral discriminations between characters and their world, something that novel uses as part of its rhetorical strategy. Professor Godbole's dance in *A Passage to India* is assimilative in this sense. Even when the outcome of the ritual act is far from assimilative (as in Clarissa Dolloway's party), there is a sense of participation all the same. Mrs Ramsay's dinner in *To the Lighthouse*, Brangwen sisters' dance in *Women in Love*, Henderson's participation in the theatricality of the African rituals in *Henderson the Rain King*, the pageant in *Between the Acts*, the milkmaids' dances in the early sections of Hardy's *Tess*—these are only a few instances of the way ritualistic action is presented in fiction. As I mentioned earlier, there is a ceremoniousness about ritual symbolism which makes each gesture significant. This accounts for a measure of inappropriateness in a novel where the ritual action is only a part of the whole action. It is difficult in such a case to judge where precisely

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the singificance of the gesture lies, more so if the author's rhetorical strategy is seemingly in abeyance and there are no 'scaffoldings'; to quote Virginia Woolf. This is where the formality of language assumes greater importance in the absence of anything else, there is nothing to go by except the formality of the language. Sometimes we may not be able to account for the ritualistic action in terms of the motivations of a character as in the episode at Oniton in *Howards End* where Margaret is touching the turf in invocation of the first Mrs. Wilcox. To Charles Wilcox, who has been spying on her from a distance, this act seems irrational, but in the total context of the novel it has meaning insinuated to the reader through careful but unobtrusive hints.

We are back to the problem of belief. No ritual act will carry conviction with the reader unless he shares with the author his belief in its power. Otherwise ritual symbolism with its suggestion of archaic primitivism tends to become a mere exotic paraphernalia. Part of the reason why the Hindu ritual at the end of *A Passage to India* fails to satisfy is that Forster's belief in its efficacy is cancelled by his scepticism. Although this is true of all symbolism, it is more so in ritual symbolism. Here we are faced with another problem : to what extent can the ritual act be believed in as real without straining the reader's credulity? Why does *The Plumed Serpent* leave us dissatisfied ? Certainly not for want of belief, but because of excess of it. Lawrence is guilty of pleading with us rather than addressing our perceptions. His story takes it for granted that the way of the Mexicans is the only way. It leaves no scope for discriminations, whereas ritualistic symbolism is only one of the several ways in which a novelist can acquire what Forster called the 'bardic' quality. It defeats its purpose if it becomes too insistently 'bardic'. We cannot escape the generic qualities of the novel as a representation of common reality, however far we may travel in the direction of 'bardic' transcedence.

That some modern novelists have come to grips with this problem in their work is to be seen in the works of Lawrence, Forster and Virginia Woolf, among others. Their novels represent

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a tension between the mimetic and the illustrative modes and a study of the results that follow such an organisation of the narrative material would be highly interesting. It would tell us something about how each of these novelists faced this tension, how each attempted to solve it and with what degree of success. But more than that, it would help us in understanding the particular dilemma of the modern novelist : how to integrate the poetic and the prosaic worlds, the vision and the side-board, the commonplace world of everyday and the aspiration towards something more central.

Department of English
Punjab University
Chandigarh

Aligarh Muslim University

NOTES

1. Roman Jakobson, "On Realism in Art" in *Readings in Russian Poetics : Formalist and Structuralist Views*, ed. Matejka and Pomorska (Cambridge, Mass. 1971), 36-46. Leo Bersani makes a similar useful point : "What we call realism in the novel refers to certain kinds of novelistic subjects, to a certain mode of narrative presentation, and, most fundamentally, to assumptions about the 'place' of reality in words". *Balzac to Beckett* (New York 1970), p. 8. For differing views on realism see Becker, *Documents of Modern Literary Realism* (Princeton 1963), particularly Eric Heller's essay, 'The Realistic Fallacy', pp, 591-98. See also J. P. Stern, *On Realism* (London 1973).

2. Susan Langer, *Problems of Art* (London, 1957) pp. 124-49. I am concerned with the symbol as a unit of communication within the narrative design of a novel and not in any techn-

ical linguistic sense. For further elaborations of symbolism in this limited sense see Miriam Allot, "Symbol and Image in the Later works of Henry James" in *Essays in Criticism*, III (1953), 321-36; Ursula Brum, "Symbolism and the Novel", in *The Partisan Review Anthology*, ed. William Philips and Philip Rahv (New York, 1962), 221-30; Kenneth Burke, "Symbols and Association", in *Hudson Review*, XI (1956), 212-25; J. Cirliot, *A Dictionary of Symbols*, trans, Jack Sage (London, 1962); Norman Friedman, "Imagery : from Sensation to Symbol", in *Journal of Aesthetic and Art Criticism*, XII (1953); Walter Hinderer, "Theory, Conception and Interpretation of the Symbol" in *Perspectives in Literay Symbolism*, ed. Joseph Strelka, (Univ. Park: Penn State University Press), pp. 83-127. See also Burke's essay in the same collection, "Words Anent Logology", pp. 72-82; Harry Levin, "Symbolism and Fiction" in *Contexts of Criticism*, ed. R. S. Crane (Chicago 1952), pp. 567-94; John Peter, "Symbol and Implication", in *Essays in Criticism*, IV (1954), 145-67.

3. Peter Fingesten, *The Eclipse of Symbolism* (Columbia, 1971), pp. 101-105.

4. Franz Stanzel, *Narrative Strategies in the Novel* (Bloomington, 1971), p. 7.

5. *Language as Gesture* (London, 1952), p. 16.

6. Quoted by Frederic Jameson in *Marxism and Form* (Princeton, 1971) p. 71.

7. G. Jean-Aubry, *Joseph Conrad : Life and Letters*. Vol II. (London, 1927), p. 296. The white whale has a similar function is *Moby Dick*.

8. *The Appropriate Form* (London, 1964), pp. 51-82. See also Malcolm Bradbury, *Possibilities* (London, 1973), pp. 3-30. In her *Tellers and Listeners* (London, 1275), Barbara Hardy touches upon this subject from a different angle.

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9. *The Portable Henry James*, ed. Morton. D. Zabel (New York 1951), p. 446

10. James, p. 449.

11. James, pp. 450-51.

12. Jameson pp. 71-72.

13. Jameson, p. 73.

14. Quoted by Harry Levin, *Contexts of Criticism*, p. 202

15. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1957), p. 107.

16. *Anatomy*, p. 102

17. For a recent critique of Frye's treatment of myth see William Righter, "Myth and Literature" in *New Literary History*, III (2, 1972), 319-44. See especially section IV, pp. 333-42.

18. *Allegory of Love* (New York, 1971), p. 55.

19. *The Power of Blackness* (New York, 1958), p. 6.

20. *Anatomy of Criticism*, p. 108.

21. "Surrealism", in *The Modern Tradition*, ed. Feidelson and Ellman (New York, 1965), p. 602. It is interesting to note that the year Breton published his manifesto, Louis Aragon published what is the most surrealistic of contemporary city novels, *Le Paysan de Paris*, translated into English by Frederick Brown as *Nightwalkers* (Englewood Cliffs 1970). Using the external circumstances of the narrative as his vehicle, Aragon gradually dissolves it as he guides us through the glass-roofed arcade near Montmarte and the Paris suburb of Buttes-Chaumont. A world of chaos, disruption and hallucination, *Nightworkers* is a key document of the surrealistic technique and marks a high point in the dissolution of palpable reality into a dream-like blur. In another way Robbe-Grillet's *In the Labyrinth* creates a similar effect, though the author's theoretical position would preclude any direct identification of the soldier's ramblings with a dream state.

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22. "The Concept of Myth in Literature", in *Metaphor and Symbol : Proceedings of the Twelfth Symposium of the Colston Research Society*, ed. Knights and Pottle (London, 1960), p. 128.

23. "Fiction, History, Myth" in *Harvard Studies in English*, I (1970), p. 281. See also Northrop Frye, "Myth, Fiction and Displacement", in *Fables of Identity* (New York, 1963), pp. 21-38.

24. John J. White, *Mythology in the Modern Novel* (Princeton, 1971), pp. 106-17.

25. *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, II (New Haven, 1955), pp. 39-40.

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Mohammad Yaseen

CONRAD AND CONTEMPORARY WRITERS OF ENGLISH FICTION

Conrad's literary career marks the transition from the Victorian to the modern age. The period from 1895 to 1924 not only coincides with an extremely complex phase in the history of fiction but also reveals contradictory tendencies existing side by side : love for the exotic and the quaintly remote along with a keen interest in real life and its manifold problems, satirical indictment of certain aspects of contemporary society alongside philosophical or scientific Utopianism. It is, at the same time, not unusual to come across solitary figures, like Conrad himself, plying their way regardless of literary movements.

The closing years of the nineteenth century and the earliest of the twentieth reveal a medley of attitudes and stances relating to the theory and practice of fiction. There is little doubt that, but for the work of the two expatriates, James and Conrad, a sense of decline, of a certain falling-off, would have been inevitable in coming to deal with pre-modernist fiction. Conrad stands out as a writer of extraordinary integrity and distinction by virtue of, among other things, a consistent standpoint in relation to the art he practised. This standpoint, however, can best be appreciated against a background of other theoretical formulations in the period.

The first among the tendencies in the novel of the period is a predilection for the exotic. The body of work exemplifying this trend has also been termed as "the novel of adventure".[1] They are, however, quite different in theme and treatment from such novels of adventure,as. say, *Robinson Crusoe*. Love of the Orient, its lands and climes, its lore and living all fascinate the exotic

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writers. From the science of nature which daily grows more prodigal of wonders, the transition is easy to the poetry of the supernatural. Thus a new literature takes its rise in the scientific imagination. Stevenson was fully aware that his work was prompted by a desire to avoid the naturalism of Zola.[2]

The Exotic novelists hankered after colour and romance. They were not philosopher-aestheticians as their aim was solely to paint life as they saw or imagined. Their artistic creed may be summed up best in terms of Conrad's famous statement in the Preface to the *Nigger of the Narcissus*:

> The artist appeals to that part of our being which is not dependent on wisdom...He speaks to our capacity for delight and wonder, to the sense of mystery surrounding our lives, to our sense of pity, and beauty and pain ...*All art therefore appeals primarily to the senses.* (p. vii)

The Realists whom Virginia Woolf was later to dub as "Materialists" stand contrasted to the Exotics. Seeking their inspiration from Balzac and the French naturalists, the English realists were akin to the Russian Gorky and the American Dreiser. They took pride in stripping their art of "the clouds of mysticism which once surrounded the phenomenon of literature with a poetic colour and warmth", and sought to face things in a clear sharp light. Believing as they did in the utilitarian value of art, they tried to make the novel a vehicle for social and sociological discussion and condemn the idea of its being solely a means of relaxation. Further, discarding the spiritual and mystical values of life they relished the idea of encompassing socio-economic life within the scope of the novel. The realistic trends in English fiction were already visible in the works of Gissing and in Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* and *Erewhon* but among Conrad's contemporaries the three principal exponents of the school were Arnold Bennett, Galsworthy and H.G. Wells who, in spite of their differences in the treatment of social themes, had common artistic aims. In certain respects H.G. Wells may be regarded as the leader of the group. His talk on the scope of the novel given to the

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Times Book Club in 1911 may be treated as a treatise on the contemporary novel,[3] and a manifesto of the realistic creed. He begins his essay by rejecting two of the most banal qualities of Victorian and contemporary fiction. His first criticism is levelled against the view that regards the novel as "wholly and solely a means of relaxation". Wells's second charge is against the exponents of 'form'—Henry James being his chief target. Under the changing modes of contemporary life, the novel, according to him, should not be identified exclusively with any single conventional pattern since

> ...if the novel is to be recognised as something more than a relaxation, *it has also*, I think, *to be kept free from the restrictions imposed upon it by the fierce pedantries of those who would define a general form for it.* (p. 134)

Wells considers novel to be a "discursive thing" which comprises "not a single interest but a woven tapestry of interests". He wants the novel to adopt the form, if it can be called a form, of *Tristram Shandy* and *Tom Jones* and that of *Jean Cristophe* by Romain Rolland.

Fully conscious of the dissociation of modern sensibility, its doubts and fears, Wells aspires to make the novel more and more realistic. *"The novel is a story that demands or professes to demand no make-believe."* And so he considers it not simply a fictitious record of conduct but also a "study and judgement of conduct" and through that of the ideas that lead to conduct. Finally, rejecting outright the claims of other media—biography, autobiography and the stage—he announced his famous plan of the scope of the novel :

> It is to be the social mediator, the vehicle of understanding, the instrument of self-examination, the parade of morals and exchange of manners, the factory of customs, the criticism of laws and institutions and of social dogmas and ideas. It is to be the home confessional, the initiator of knowledge, the seed of fruitful self-questioning...The novelist is going to be the most potent of artists...We are going to write, subject

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> only to our limitation, about the whole of human life. We are going to deal with political questions and religious questions and social questions...We are going to write about business and finance and politics and prudence and pretentiousness and decorum and indecorum, until a thousand pretences and ten thousand impostures shrivel in the cold, clear air of our elucidations. Before we have done, we will have all life within the scope of the novel.
>
> (pp. 154-56).

The mainfesto is quite in agreement with the 'artistic' aims and motives of the journalist in Wells. In him as in other "Realists" there is a constant disposition to substitute the general social theory for the story which is supposed to float it. And once he lets himself go, once he reconciles himself to the subordinate role of the story, there is nothing to check him in his rambling. He had a naturally discursive mind and he brought into circulation more general ideas on the social order than any English writer since Matthew Arnold. And yet all his talk about the role of the novel is nothing but, to quote his own words, "brave trumpetings". His fellow-writers—Galsworthy and Bennett—in spite of their realistic bias, guard against the pamphleteering mania and considerably retain the artistic integrity of their work.

Henry James, Joseph Conrad and Ford Madox Ford all share certain concerns which are essential-modernistic, or at least anticipatory of later developments. On the one hand, they had an unprecedented passion for 'form' and 'technique' (most of them schooled under Turgenev and Flaubert) and, on the other, they also seem to have benefitted from modern psychology. James, Conrad and Ford, all went to the same source, the French novelists of the late nineteenth century, and derived their own conclusions after studying their "models". James was more interested in "the dramatization of situations" and rendering of life through "central intelligence"; Conrad found his *forte* in the creation of atmosphere by making the reader "hear...feel...see". But Ford's chief motive was the search for the *mot juste* and the plea for *progression*

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d'effet. Basically they all shared common principles of aesthetics and differed only in attitudes and emphasis.

"The Art of Fiction"[4] is the clearest statement of the Jamesian point of view in fiction. In his characteristic style he has tried to define the art of novel-writing and has discussed the ingredients of a novel with keen insight. He starts with the thesis that since" a novel is a novel, as a pudding is a pudding. ...our only business with it could be to swallow it". A novel, however, is more serious than a pudding and the theoretical aspect, therefore, deserves attention.

James regarded fiction as one of the best suited media for the expression of life. The only reason for the existence of a novel, according to him, is that it attempts to represent life. He refuted Anthony Trollope's view who always tried to remind his readers that they were only dabbling with a "make-believe". James was very emphatic on this point :—

> "I may venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel... If it be not there they (other merits) are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the sucess with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success, the study of this exquisite process, form, to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist. They are his inspiration, his despair, his reward, his torment, his delight. It is here in very truth that he competes with life, it is here that he competes with his brother the painter in *his* attempt to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the colour, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle." (p. 149)

Henry James thinks no less of the scope of fiction than does H. G. Wells. Both aspire to encompass life within the folds of the novel but their ideals are different. Whereas Wells tries to be particular about the socio-political aspects of life, James lays stress on the inner life of man. The novel in its large,

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free character of "an immense and exquisite correspondence with life", is in its broadest sense, "a personal, a direct impression of life" and the artist should be free to represent life as he sees it through his temperament. The good health of an art which undertakes so immediately to reproduce life must demand that it be "perfe ctly free" :

> The advantage, the luxury, as well as the torment and responsibility of the novelist, is that there is no limit to what he may attempt as an executant ..no limit to his possible experiments, efforts, discoveries, successes...*His manner is his secret*... (p. 146)

It is, really speaking, his concern with *manner* that makes Henry James what he is, and this notwithstanding his profoundly authentic engagement with reality. His theoretical position proceeds from the core of his creative genius which lay in his endeavour to arrest and to give shape even to the haziest of forms that pass through consciousness and have their being in it.

Ford Madox Ford, a disciple and admirer of Henry James, occupies a distinct place among Conrad's contemporaries. Almost from the beginning of the century when he was collaborating with Conrad, his public career can be described in terms of poets, painters and novelists whom he met, encouraged and published. Ford had a deep insight into the theories and techniques of fiction and his views influenced men so widely separated by time and nature as Joseph Conrad and Ezra Pound.

Born and bred in a family of artists Ford developed a taste for art and literature early in life. Almost from the very beginning of his literary career he was conscious of the civilizing value of art in society. He later came to assert that for him the world divided itself into those who were artists and those who were merely the stuff to fill graveyards.[5] Of all the arts, however, Ford liked the art of the novel most. He found the novel capable of conveying "the subtlest speculations of metaphysical or the most *doctrinaire* of social philosphies".[6] Being the most flexible of all

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the forms of literature it has the potential of saving the Republic from the onslaught of philistinism. Guided by such fastidious principles in art, Ford was disappointed to find in the typically British authors of his age an utter disregard for conscious art. His views about "the temperamentally British novel, the loose, amorphous, genial and easy-going thing",[7] are well-known. What is less known is his sincere attempt to bring the English novel *at par* with the French novel in technique. In his critical writings Ford reminds us that it was against the tyranny of the "serial" and the "nuvvle" that he and Conrad first launched their joint adventure.

Reference has already been made to Ford's collaboration with Conrad and their joint venture to reform the English novel by adopting the "New Form". In as much as most of Ford's fiction and criticism of fiction was written during or after his collaboration with Conrad (1898 to 1903, and intermittently thereafter until 1907), that phase of his career and those conceptions about technique which evolved from that association deserve primary consideration because they are the foundations of Ford's impressionistic theory and lead us towards a definition of his kind of Impressionism.

The central problem of the "impressionist" novel, as Ford conceived it, lies in the "form" of the novel which must give the effect of the formlessness and fragmentary nature of life as it meets the individual consciousness, while at the same time everything must move in a direct, carefully calculated line to the inevitable conclusion. Art has eternally sought to achieve order out of the diversity and confusion of life, but it was the impressionist who, according to Ford, sought to keep the feeling of that disunity and confusion in the fore-front of his work. The reader is deceived into believing that he is experiencing life as it is, while the novelist is actually arranging and managing his tale so as to leave the reader with a view of life clearer, more organic, and more meaningful than life itself could probably ever give. The secret lies in concealing the art.

The manifold concern of Flaubert and his followers for technique was of enormous value to Ford. Like Henry James and

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Conrad, he emphasized the significance of Flaubert's literary set and their preoccupation with the manner of their art. Flaubert, the Goncourts, Turgenev, Gautier, Maupassant, Zola, James, he writes, all of them

> discussed the *minutiae* of words and their economical employment; the *charpente*, the architecture of the novel; the handling of the dialogue; the rendering of impressions; the impersonality of the author. They discussed these things with the passion of politicians inciting to rebellion. And in these *coenaculae* the modern novel—the immensely powerful engine of our civilization—was born.[8]

Ford condemned his contemporaries for using words borrowed from literary sources. His plea was always that the writer should use the language of his own day, not fine and literary language but the vernacular. He found models of excellent vernacular prose in the King James Version, in the English and American newspapers of the eighteen-twenties, in Clarendon and Cobbett, and in his contemporary, W. H. Hudson. He had turned to these and other writers of non-fictional English prose after he had modified his admiration for the more intricate and conscious style of Flaubert, James and Conrad. He never, however, modified his faith in the methods by which Flaubert and Conrad sought to discover "exact words".

This brief survey can help us define Conrad's position among his contemporaries. It is well known that Conrad had his associations with almost all the great writers of his day. M. G. Jean-Aubry records his friendship and acquaintance with leading intellectuals of the age as early as 1898 when the author was living at Pent Farm. He was a sort of beacon light for the contemporary "Exotic" school and such writers as W. H. Hudson and Cunningham Graham remained attached to him till the last days of his life. Galsworthy was not only a great friend of Conrad but shared with him his artistic and intellectual life; Wells and Bennett had great regard for the English Pole; Stephen Crane was fascinated by him and Henry James always remembered him as his "confrere."

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Conrad's personality was a queer combination of exotic, realistic and impressionistic strains. His fascination for the Tropical East, dark regions of Africa and other far-off places was boundless, and the true significance of this in the context of his work has not been fully realized. In the Preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus*, he says :

> My task, which I am trying to achieve, is by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel...it is, before all, to make you *see*.

In his attempts to appeal to our 'senses' he never dabbles in fantasies. As a matter of fact he is as realistic in his details as any naturalist can be but the crudeness of bare facts is invariably enwrapped with his poetic vision. He never considered realism to be the only method for artistic production. This is evident from his letters to H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett. He had urged Wells to make his art "contain his convictions, where they would be seen in a more perfect light..." but finding him incorrigible, wrote back :

> The difference between us, Wells, is fundamental. You don't care for humanity but think they are to be improved. I love humanity but know they are not.[9]

And yet he was the connecting-link between James and Wells whose friendship, after a fruitless growth, ended in animosity. Conrad had great respect for his "*cher maitre*" but his essay on Henry James clearly reveals that he was not blind to the master's limitations. Not only in theoretical cogitations but also in practice he differed fundamentally from the master. In spite of his love for 'form' and 'method', he never allowed his art to be unduly influenced by Jamesian stylization. Once or twice he lapsed into mere imitation; *The Idiots* was written under the immediate shadow of Maupassant and *Chance* under the benign shade of the master but Conrad never spoke very highly of these works. To him a marriage between form and matter was the *sine qua non* of artistic perfection.

In spite of his individualism and romantic strain, Conrad could never tolerate the rag-bag of "stream of consciousness" cult

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of novelists. In one of his letters to C. K. Scott Moncrieff, dated 17 December 1922 he wrote of Marcel Proust :

> I have seen him praised for his 'wonderful' pictures of Paris life and provincial life. But that has been done admirably before...One critic goes so far as to say that P.'s great art reaches the universal and that in depicting his own past he reproduces for us the general experience of mankind. But I doubt it. I admire him rather for disclosing a past like nobody else's for enlarging, as it were, the general experience of mankind by bringing to it something that has not been recorded before. However, all that is not of much importance. The important thing is that whereas before we had analysis allied to creative art, great in poetic conception, in observation, or in style, his is a creative art absolutely based on analysis. It is really more than that. He is a writer who has pushed analysis to the point when it became creative... Those who have found beauty in Proust's work are perfectly right. It is there. What amazes one is its inexplicable character. In that prose so full of life there is no reverie, no emotion, no marked irony, no warmth of conviction, not even a marked rhythm to charm our fancy.[10]

The passage brilliantly exposes to us the hollowness of the writers who are all out for technique. Conrad thought that for a true artist there is no division of faiths, no adherance to scholastic formulae. He was at once an exotic and a realist; and he had as ambitious a concern for 'manner' as Henry James yet he never liked to be labelled or classed. The idea of "schools" in literature was repugnant to him and he was no less tormented when his critics tagged him with pet epithets. His letter to Sir Sidney Colvin, dated 18 March 1917, shows how Conrad reacted to such criticism :

> Perhaps you won't find it presumption if, after 22 years of work, I may say that I have not been very well understood. I have been called a writer of the sea, of the tropics, a descriptive writer, a romantic writer...and also a realist. But as a

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> matter of fact all my concern has been with the "ideal" value of things, events and people. That and nothing else. The humorous, the pathetic, the passionate, the sentimental aspects came in of themselves.[11]

This is the whole truth. Conrad's one or other work may smack of exotic or realistic flavour or might be a *tour de force* or a psychological probe into the mysteries of human life, but he never swore by any rigid formula. His fulminations against such shallow assessments were as genuine as Shakespeare's who through Polonius criticised the "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral" non-sense.

Conrad's devotion to his art and his aspiration to make it 'human' is well known. Even his first book, *Almayer's Folly*, has that touch of humanity which is the hall-mark of all great art. Addressing his imaginary Almayer, in *A Personal Record*, Conrad wrote :

> It is true, Almayer, that in the world below I have converted your name to my own uses...You came to me stripped of all prestige by men's queer smile and the disrespectful chatter of every vagrant trader in the Island. Your name was the common property of the winds : it, as it were, floated naked over the waters about the Equator. I wrapped round its unhonoured form the royal mantle of the Tropics...[12]

The same note rings through all his works which never smack of despair. The world, he regarded as mere 'spectacle'–"a spectacle for awe, love adoration, or hate...but never for despair.[13]

Conrad's distinction among his contemporaries or for that matter among twentieth-century novelists lies precisely in the perfect union of his individual vision and his medium.[14] He had an artist's mind, an impressionist's eye, and a poet's heart and when he worked upon his slender material his imaginative faculty turned it into a perfect work of art. As one of the most conscientious writers—'Ilya tojours la maniere', as he said...he never forgets the claims of 'form'. Having been nurtured in the school of Victor Hugo, Balzac, Flaubert, Turgenev and last but not the

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least his *cher maitre*, Henry James, Conrad could never fall in line with the 'Materialist' school. His art was not just an abortion: it was the product of genuine inspiration. None shows that perfect harmony of form and vision among his contemporaries without loss to one or the other fundamental aspects of art: Henry James goes on elaborating and dramatising his vision of the world to the extent that he occasionally gives the impression of being lost in his own 'meanderings': Wells becomes just 'topical' and the writers of the Psychological school remain confined to their 'ivory-tower'. But Conrad, despite certain lapses from time to time, retains, broadly speaking, his ideal of true art. Lord David Cecil in his study, *The Fine Art of Reading*, says of Joseph Conrad :

> His was a brooding, questioning intelligence, out to explore the motives behind the simple violent events he describes and to discover their universal application; so that though his plots may be like Stevenson's, their focus of interest is much more like Hardy's. The thrilling highly-coloured adventure tales are for him the vehicle through which he expresses his sense of man's predicament in the universe. His subject is not men but man; man face to face with his inescapable destiny of which this picturesque world of romance and action which he writes about is only one manifestation. Behind the stirring events, through the vivid, exotic scenery, are discernible the stern lines of Conrad's view of life.[16]

This is the considered view of a well-known critic. During the interrugnum of the last decade of the nineteenth century and the last seventy years or so of the present century, Conrad has been judged and reviewed by many renowned artists and literary critics. As early as 1898, Edward Garnett (Conrad's discoverer) in an "appreciation" of Conrad wrote about the "mirage of life" he conjures up in his art :

> The quality of Mr. Conrad's art is seen in his faculty of making us perceive men's lives in their natural relation to the seen universe around them...This faculty...it is that gives

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> Mr. Conrad's art its extreme delicacy and its great breadth of vision. It is pre-eminently the poet's gift, and is very rarely conjoined with insight into human nature and power of conceiving character...To reproduce life naturally, in its close fidelity to breathing nature, yet to interpret its significance, and to make us see the great universe around—art cannot go beyond this, except to introduce the illusion of inevitability.[17]

Contemporary appreciation of Conrad's art reveals that apart from the amiability of his nature he had something genuine to force the applause of his 'confreres'. In the famous polemic on the art of fiction between James and Wells, Conrad was admired by both the parties. H.G. Wells, while hurling his shafts right and left in "The Contemporary Novel", considered *Almayer's Folly* "as an important and necessary thing indeed in that complicated system of uneasy adjustments and re-adjustments which is modern civilization".[18] Not that he was blind to the poetic and picturesque side of Conrad's art. He had asked Ford Maddox Ford not to collaborate with Conrad for fear of corrupting his 'oriental style'. Wells was equally fascinated by Conrad's objective method and preferred him to Thackeray and Galsworthy. In his art he finds as if "a man comes in out of the darkness to tell of perplexing things without", and *Lord Jim* stands out as "a great masterpiece which gives a sort of depth, a sort of subjective reality, that no such cold, almost affectedly ironical detachment as that which distinguishes the work of Mr. John Galsworthy, for example, can ever attain."[19] Even in his malignant satire, *Boon*, in which the image for Bennett's fiction as the "squeezing of plump and juicy orange" had infuriated him and he likened Henry James to "a magnificent but painful hippopotamus, resolved at any cost upon picking up a pea...,"[20] Wells spared the worthy disciple of the master.

On the other hand, Henry James, in his "The Younger Generation" lamenting the 'saturation' of the Wells group in the mud and soil of 'triviality', praised Conrad's effort in the direction of true art. He was quite emphatic about *Chance* :

> Mr. Joseph Conrad's *Chance* places the author absolutely

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> alone as the votary of the way to do a thing that shall make it undergo most doing.[21]

Galsworthy in his brilliant "Reminiscences of Conrad" paid a glowing tribute to the author's memory and the abiding values of his art. In his famous article "Six Novelists in Profile" he ranked Conrad with such masters as Dickens, Turgenev, Maupassant, Tolstoy and Anatole France and referred to his "cosmic sense" which is the *sine qua non* of his best work :

> Conrad had, beyond all novelists, the cosmic sense. Throughout the long drama of his work, Fate, powerful and mysterious, plays the star part; his human beings, though highly individualised, perform minor roles. And from this subordination they derive a pathos and poignancy, an epic quality which attaches to those who struggle to the death against that which must beat them in the end...Mystery enwraps the cause, the origin, the end of life, yea, even of human life. And acceptance of that mystery brings a certain dignity to existence, the kind of dignity we find in the works of Conrad.[22]

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But the best praise came from Virginia Woolf, a connoisseur and an artist herself. In her famous essay on "Modern Fiction" where she is vehement against the Edwardians' concern with the 'body' rather than with the 'spirit', she reserved her "unconditional gratitude for Mr. Hardy, for Mr. Conrad..."[23] Even though Conrad was not 'spiritual' in the sense James Joyce was, her praise was definitely for Conrad's vision and his concern both for life and art. One of her sentences in the essay on "Joseph Conrad" has become a favourite with critics and commentators :

> One opens his pages and feels as Helen must have felt when she looked in her glass and realised that, do what she would, she could never in any circumstance pass for a plain woman.[24]

The tradition of such genial criticism has continued through Curle, Edward Crankshaw, Megroz, M. C. Bradbrook and F. R. Leavis. They penetrate through Conrad's art and though

they seldom make a secret of his limitations their assessments undeniably stand as mile-stones in Conradian scholarship.

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NOTES

1. Legouis and Cazamian, *History of English Literature*, (London, 1957), p. 1264.
2. The reaction against Zolaism may also be marked in contemporary French literature. See Cazamian, *A History of French Literature*, pp. 398-400.
3. Reprinted as "The Contemporary Novel" in *Henry James and H. G. Wells* edited by L. Edel and G. N. Ray (London, 1958), pp. 131-156. References herein are to the same reprint.
4. "Art of Fiction" in *Literary Criticism in America*, edited by Albert D. Van Nostrand (New York, 1957), pp. 139-62.
5. F. M. Ford, *It was the Nightingale* (London, 1934), p. 59.
6. F. M. Ford, *The Critical Attitude* (London, 1911), p. 34.
7. F. M. Ford, *The Critical Attitude*, p. 107.
8. "Techniques", *Southern Review* I (July, 1935), pp. 23-24.
9. Leon Edel, *H. G. Wells and Henry James*. p. 28.
10. *Life and Lettes* vol. II, ed. G. Jean-Aubry, pp. 291-292.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
12. *A Personal Record*, p. 87.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
14. Cf. Lord David Cecil, *The Fine Art of Reading* (London, 1957). "This double impulse—to express the individual vision and to

work in a particular medium—actuates every true artist. It is the union of the two that produces the phenomenon that we call a work of art." (p. 5)

15. Leon Edel, *Wells and James*. Wells's letter to James (September 22, 1913) "My art is abortion—on the shelves of study stand a little vainglorіously—thirty odd premature births. Many retain their gill-slits. The most finished have still bare lips, cleft palates, open crania. These are my children...." (p. 176-77).
16. David Cecil, "Joseph Conrad" in *The Fine Art of Reading*, p. 138.
17. Edward Garnett, *Friday Nights*. p. 76.
18. Leon Edel, *Wells & James*, p. 131.
19. *Ibid*., p. 141.
20. *Ibid*., p. 249.
21. *Ibid*.,p 200.
22. John Galsworthy, *Castles in Spain*, pp. 160-61.
23. W. Woolf, *The Common Reader*, p. 185.
24. *Ibid*., p. 283.

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Chowdhry Harish Chander

THREE MODES OF COMMUNICATION IN *Between the Acts*

'And his [Giles's] silence made its contribution to talk....'
—*Between the Acts*[1]

The agony of loneliness, as Virginia Woolf knew it too well, and depicted repeatedly in her works, is an inescapable condition of human existence. Concomitant with this there is also in man a deep urge to escape or overcome it. '"O that our human pain could here have ending!' Isa murmured" (*Between the Acts*, p. 126). This is not Isabella's wish alone. The works of Virginia Woolf embody her lifelong faith that one could come to terms with one's existential anguish through achieving a meaningful I-Thou communication. Thus in novel after novel, she takes recourse to three modes of communication available to man, three different strategies 'defects of loneliness to control', to use Donne's words. These are: speech, art, and silence. Speech, the commonest mode, is the simplest in its range and expressiveness; art, or a work of imagination, is more subtle, and achieves its effect with greater power; and, silence, seemingly the least potent, is actually the profoundest of all in reach and revelation, except, of course, when it is a state of total mental passivity and hence incapable of exercising intuition as a communicative mode.

The purpose of the present paper is to show that *Between the Acts*, which is primarily concerned with the problems as well as the possibilities of human relationship and communication, sums up, with unusual economy and force, not only Virginia woolf's persistent themes, but also her awareness of the relative value and reach of different modes of commnnication, clearly demonstrating that, for her, the most potent of all the modes is silence.

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It is rather surprising that this aspect of the novel should have failed to receive the attention it deserves; all the more so, since our attention is drawn to it unmistakably at the start of the book, repeatedly throughout the book, and emphatically at its end. Moreover, when a member of the Bloomsbury Group discovers that conversation is but a poor medium for achieving a truly deep understanding between one human being and another, one must take notice of it. Take, for instance, the beginning of the novel: 'It was a summer's night and they were talking...' (p. 7) No dialogues follow these words; there is only narrative. Again, at the end of the novel we find Giles Oliver and his wife Isabella in bed: 'Then the curtain rose. They spoke' (p. 152). The rest is silence. Endless silence.

Now, in order to understand the relative value of the three modes of communication, let us briefly mention here the use Mrs. Woolf makes of them.

Speech is used in this novel chiefly to express the insignificant, to keep the narrative going, to comment on some matter, to sketch a character, or to engage in a social encounter. Art, in the form of a pageant of English literary history upto the present, is Miss La Trobe's creation, and affords Mrs. Woolf an opportunity not only to reiterate her well-known vision of the human predicament but also to convey the agonizing struggle of the artist, Miss La Trobe, in communicating her vision of the oneness of all. And, lastly, there are moments of significant silence which not only lay bare the soul, but also a pattern made up of invisible threads of deep personal relations, a pattern that is truly spiritual. In view of this, silence may be looked upon as an almost 'metaphysical' mode of self-revelation as well as of establishing an I-Thou relationship.

It appears to us that both the form of the novel and its present title are clearly calculated to draw our attention to the relative efficacy of the various modes of communication, silence emerging as the most crucial of all. This is easily demonstrable.

A little before Mrs Woolf began to write this novel she had a vision of it. She thought it would be 'poetry and prose; all quite

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distinct. No more closely written books... I don't want to write more fiction. I want to explore a new criticism'.[2] And when the book was finished, she noted in her Diary:

> I am a little triumphant about the book. I think it's an interesting attempt in a new method. I think it's more quintessential than the others.[3]

That *Between the Acts* is a work of fiction as well as one of 'criticism'—at least, in the sense in which Arnold spoke of poetry as 'a criticism of life'—would be conceded without hesitation; that it is 'more quintessential' than her other works in so far as it sums up her usual themes with an unusual economy and force will also be conceded easily; and that it has the novelty of an interesting experiment, is obviously as much a matter of triumph for her as of frustration for her critics.

What the English Romantic and Victorian poets had done in poetry, Mrs Woolf has done in fiction, and perhaps with reason and justification, if not exactly with similar results. Her vision required the unusual mingling of genres ; 'Are they going to act ? Mrs—Manresa asked. Act, dance, sing; a little bit of everything, said Giles' (p. 45). The device of the open-air pageant allows Mrs Woolf the greatest scope in the use of the manifold resources of poetry and prose, of speech and silence, of narrative, drama, tableau, parody, satire, music, song and dance. The form of the book is, indeed, unusual. What else can one say of such a plotless book in which the narrative takes us to a quiet country house, Poyntzet Hall, where strangers (looking for a picnic spot) and acquaintances from the neighbourhood gather together to watch a pageant, which parodies English literay and social history, holds up the satiric mirror, of Swift's definition, to the audience present to expose their unattractive selves, shaking them out of their uncritical complacency. The pageant over, they leave the place in quiet, and, finally, we find Giles Oilver and his wife Isa in bed, about to talk.

Moreover, when the pageant—the most important formal device in the book—affords us such a reiteration of Mrs Woolf's anti-Aristotelion attitude to plot as the following, we can hardly

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blame critics for devoting all their attention to the challenge of the form of *Between the Acts*:

> There was such a medley of things going on...the confusion of the plot that she [Isabella] could make nothing of it. Did the plot matter ?... The plot was only there to beget emotion. There were only two emotions : love, and hate. There was no need to puzzle out the plot. Perhaps Miss La Trobe meant that when she cut this knot in the centre ? 'Don't bother about the plot : the plot's nothing (p. 67).

In dealing with the Pageant there are two courses open to us: to study what it *tells* or to see what it *does*. While critics,[4] by and large, have concentrated on the former, it may be worthwhile to explore the latter.

The Pageant is a social ritual in the guise of a literary device, and its function is to bring everything together, to reveal the unity or oneness of all created things, man, animal, and nature. But behind its communal function of 'One-making', is a further function—that of affording its creator the satisfaction of having successfully imparted her vision of beauty and harmony.

As we know from Mrs. Woolf's *Diary* she continued to call this novel, 'Poyntzet Hall' till the very end; and when the book was finished,she gave it a new title, *Between the Acts*, presumably because it expressed the central theme of the book more precisely.

Now the change of the title from a visual symbol to a suggestive metaphor has introduced an element of ambiguity non-existent in the earlier title. The change draws our attention away from *place* where the action is located to the *action* itself which has been left tantalizingly undefined and vague.

The difficulty lies in interpreting the word 'acts' correctly. In the words from the book itself: 'They all looked at the play ;.. Each of course saw something different....' (p. 148). There are hints all over, but a clear statement nowhere; Mrs Woolf adopting, in this respect, the strategy of silence, like Miss La Trobe. When a character in the book asks what Miss La

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Trobe meant by the pageant, the reply she gets is : 'When Mr. Streatfield asked her to explaim, she wouldn't,' said Mr Swithin (p. 148). David Daiches speaks of little personal dramas played out Between the Acts of the greater drama of English history.[5] Aileen Pippett informs us that when the novel was published in 1941, its readers found neither its title, nor its last words, ambiguous. It was clear from the title that the book was about England between the two World Wars, while the final words 'meant that the curtain was rung up on a World War of which the outcome was still in doubt.[6]

John Holloway understands by 'acts' all that happens between the acts of the pageant, as well as before and after the pageant; he regards the novel illustrative of a social situation :

> the spiritual deprivation, squalor, physical violence, that everywhere surrounded the village pageant in *Between the Acts*, all at the bottom reflect the plight of the Liberal in the modern world.[7]

Joan Bennett taking a comprehensive view, writes that 'acts' could mean three different things :

(a) the human comedy presented between the acts of the pageant;
(b) the interval between the two World Wars; and
(c) the interval between the loves of Giles and Isabella.[8]

James Haffley is of the opinion that 'acts' means 'actions' and goes on to relate them to the Bergsonian concepts of Time and free will, of achieving freedom through transcending personality.[9]

All this is very well. But the problem continues to tease us still as we discover that Mrs Woolf uses the word 'curtain' only twice in the last seven pages, and though the words 'scene' or 'scenes' occur during the pageant but the title she finally chooses has 'acts' in it, not 'scenes'. It seems to the present writer that the title, far from seeking to draw our attention to the historical pageant, actually focuses it on the communication possible between two acts of speech. In other words, 'between the acts' means the silences intervening between the speech acts.

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A close look at the concluding paragraphs dealing with Giles and Isa should prove helpful:

> Left alone together for the first time that day, they were silent. Alone, enmity was bared, also love. Before they slept, they must fight; after they had fought, they would embrace. From that embrace another life might be born. But first they must fight, as the dog fox fights with the vixen, in the heart of darkness, in the fields of night. ...
>
> Then the curtain rose; They spoke. (p. 152)

Only a few pages earlier we read : 'The curtain would rise. What would the first words be? The words escaped her' (p. 146). Three observations could be made here; first the rising of the curtain, which is used here as a metaphor, is associated with speech or dialogue; secondly, that what is spoken is not important; only the possibility of communication is important; and lastly, that speech would be employed to enact their usual domestic conflict, which would finally end up in a word-less embrace.

Again and again, we are taken to the verge of speech or dialogue, and then allowed as best we can to tune our minds, not ears, to unuttered signals, to unheard melodies, expressive of the agony of the spirit. As Mrs Woolf always believed, the real action is not outer but inner, not of speech, a social gesture of communication—but of silence, a private speech, or an interior monologue.

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II

Let us now explore Virginia Woolf's use of the three modes of communication in the following order : her use of dialogue, her use of the Pageant as an artist's work, and her use of silence.

Between the Acts had an easy birth. The pressure of hard 'facts,' while writing her biography of Roger Fry, was proving unbearable, and she turned for 'relief' to her new book.[10] Before beginning to write the book she recorded in her *Diary* : The only hint I have towards it is that it's to be *dialogue* : and poetry and prose; all quite distinct.[11]

Her stress on 'dialogue' is surprising; for, again and again, when we expect a dialogue, it vanishes or is suppressed by the narrative. From the very beginning of the book the narrative method rather than the dramatic is preferred :

> It was a summer's night and they were talking ...
>
> Mrs. Haines... said affectedly: 'What a subject to talk about on a night like this!'
>
> Then there was silence; and a cow coughed; and that led her to say how odd it was, as a child, she had never feared cows, only horses...
>
> A bird chuckled outside, 'A nightingale?' asked Mrs. Haines. No, nightingales didn't come so far north. It was a daylight bird, ...
>
> 'But you don't remember...' Mrs. Haines began. No, not that. Still he did remember...
>
> 'I remember', the old man interrupted, 'my mother...' of his mother he remembered that she was very stout;..." (pp. 7-8)

As a variation of this tendency to suppress dialogue, we have what looks like direct speech but is actually only the unuttered thoughts of a character. Thus, for instance, we have these words of Mrs Haines which she doesn't speak at all, but conveys them through her silent looks : 'Please Mrs Giles Oliver, do me the kindness to recognize my existence...' (p. 9)

There is another device which may be called the 'depersonalization of speech'. We know what a number of people are saying but we have no way of knowing who is speaking. For instance :

> Friends hailed each other in passing.
>
> 'I do think', someone was saying, 'Miss Whatshername should have come forward...I thought it brilliantly clever ..O my dear, I thought it utter bosh. Did *you* understand the meaning? Well, he said she meant we all act all parts...And if one spirit animates the whole. what about aeroplanes ? Ah, but you're being too exacting... (p. 137).

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And thus it continues for three pages. Nothing is individualized. No deep relationship is established. Only comments are thrown together, and concentrated as if economy and noise were more important than personal relations or revelations.

The fourth method is an extreme step, and may be called the dehumanization of speech.

> The view repeated in its own way what the tune was saying... The cows, making a step forward, then standing still, were saying the same thing to perfection.
> Folded in this triple melody, the audience sat gazing;... (pp. 95-96)

One could not ask for a clearer expression of the inadequacy of human speech, for it needs the three-fold support of nature (the view), music, and cows (animals) to reiterate the central thematic concern of Mrs Woolf in this book: 'One spirit animates the whole' (p. 139). "We are members one of another. Each is part of the whole'. (p. 133)

So far we have adduced instances where even when dialogue is suppressed, at least the contents of what might have been a dialogue are given. We come, finally, to an illustration of the total devaluation of dialogue. This is how the novel ends :

> Then the curtain rose. They spoke. (p. 152).

Obviously it does not matter what they spoke. It is enough that they have come together and will ultimately continue the even tenor of their lives, in love. The book ends on the possibility of speech, but in silence that is everlasting. Like the figures on the Grecian Urn celebrated by Keats, Giles and Isa have been so arrested at a significant stage in their relationship that the possibility of communication will be theirs forever.

III

We now turn our attention to the role of the second mode—that of art, or of a work of creative imagination—in aiding communication and affording relief from one's human agony. For

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this purpose, we will do well to study the two-fold achievement of Miss La Trobe : one personal, and the other social. As an artist she achieves an I-Thou relationship of a kind, as well as creative release in two ways: through her urge to impart her vision of unity, and through her device of the Pageant. The Pageant is her creative work as well as a device of communal celebration and participation in a ritual that reveals the truth of the unity of all. It is a device that links her with her creator, too, for she faithfully builds on the blueprint provided by Mrs Woolf in the following words :

> 'Poyntzet Hall: a centre : all literature discussed in connection with real little incongruous living humour :...all life, all art, all waifs and strays—a rambling capricious but somehow unified whole—the present state of my mind?...and a perpetual variety, and change from intensity to prose, and facts—...[12]

The Pageant is not only her personal creative invention but also what people want. As some of the old cronies put it during the Pageant : 'What we need is a centre. Something to bring us all together' (p. 138). And again :

> 'That's what's so nice—it brings people together. These days, when we're all so busy, that's what one wants' (p. 112).

The Pageant serves also to throw into relief some of Virginia Woolf's recurring themes,[14] and even characters; and it may even seem to us that some of her characters here are stereotypes, flat characters, who have elsewhere had their setting, and appear again. The fact of the matter, however, is that even when there are similarities, the characters in this book are somewhat different from those in other books in outline, emphasis, preoccupation, or motivation. Thus, for instance, Miss La Trobe may bring to our mind another artist, Lily Briscoe, who appears in *To The Lighthouse*. But their likeness is not deep: for while Lily is painfully engaged in completing her painting which is possible only when her vision is completed by real life, Miss La Trobe has a vision to impart, suffers 'triumph, humiliation, ecstasy' (p. 147), in her endeavour to impart it to others.

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Hadn't she, for twenty-five minutes, made them see? A vision imparted was relief from agony... for one moment... one moment'. (p. 72)

Some of the important themes arise from Virginia Woolf's perception of the dualities of experience. Thus, we have clock time as well as time measured as value (p. 11); while the clock time as well as the historical time are divisive, the human mind has an extremely flexible measure, it would rather merge and fuse than segment time into regular parts. Mind life is superior because it can see past, present and future shorn of their artificial divisions; it can see all time as one continuum, condensing or expanding it according to one's inner need or perception (p. 11) as does Mrs Swithin (See pp. 62, 83). Her reading of history is actually an exercise in transcending the limits of clock time, and stressing the continuity of human experience.

Life, too, has a duality about it worth taking into account. As Mrs Swithin, who like Mrs Ramsay in *To The Lighthouse*, is a 'unifier', (p. 85) puts it, we have not only our 'self-contained' lives, 'But we have other lives, I think, I hope...We live in others, ...We live in things' (p.53). This sense of the life of other people is also repeatedly mediated through the stream-of-consciousness of characters not to be identified with the author.

The co-presence of reality and illusion, of the genuine and the fake (p. 34), which afforded Mrs Woolf a good deal of amusement, appears as one of the constants of human life in her works. Hypocrisy, egotism, romanticism, love and greed put man into such a predicament that he often cannot tell one from the other (p. 92). In any case, just as truth is often bitter, so is Reality too strong (p. 125) to bear. It could not be given a more trenchant expression than in the way the audience react to the mirrors reflecting and exposing them: All you can see of yourselves is scraps, orts, and fragments (p. 131). Human relationships also illustrate a similar duality; there are so many paradoxes complicating them that one wonders if they can ever be maintained. For instance, in married life, to be near is to be distant :

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between husband and wife there is always an abyss (pp. 8, 77, 80). It appears in the ambivalent relationship of Isa and Giles : The father of my children, whom I love and hate' (p. 150). Inwardly Isa has experienced a love for 'the ravaged, the silent, the romantic gentleman farmer : but she has a love for her husband of which she is reminded by objects around her. 'Inner love was in the eyes; outer love on the dressing table.' (p. 14) While Virginia Woolf's women are intuitive, mystical unifiers, her men are intellectual, rational and 'separatists'. The contrast between Mrs Swithin and her brother brings it out succinctly : 'What she saw he didn't. What he saw she didn't—...' (p. 22). Besides, her women have faith, and also command faith, but her men question faith, religion and God. Old Bartholomew's irreverent references to his sister's faith are quite consistent with similar views which appeared as early as her first novel, *The Voyage Out*.

Another paradoxical fact relates to conversation : speech hinders communication, silence aids it. Speech, being public, has many hazards; silence, being personal, is safer and truer in its revelations.

In general, Virginia Woolf's vision of life is an existentialist one, masked by alienation and troubled by *angst*. There are varying degrees of alienation between closely related characters in *Between the Acts*. There are repeated references to human life being unhappy. We read, for instance : 'But they were all people's tears, weeping for all people' (p. 126). 'Down it [rain] poured like all the people in the world weeping. Tears. Tears. Tears' (p. 125). Human beings feel the pain of loneliness (pp. 81, 123) as well as the difficulty of relating themselves to others.

Virginia Woolf's ultimate perception, however, is a vision of the oneness of all.[16] *Between the Acts* is thus a novel of fusion ; of 'one-making' (p. 122). The audience feel that 'we should unite' (p. 134); that man, animal and nature all act in concert in the general drama of life, and that 'One spirit animates the whole' (p. 139). When the war planes disturb the pageant, the interruption of the peaceful human drama and the waves of emotion con-

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veying Miss La Trobe's vision, is seen as a disruptive influence of World War.

Now, for the communication of the vision embodied in the Pageant it is necessary for emotional continuity (p. 99). Every time the actors or the music leave a gap Miss La Trobe becomes frantic (pp. 87-88), her vision in danger of escaping her. Sometimes nature and sometimes animals come to her rescue.

> The cows annihilated the gap... filled the emptiness and continued the emotion. Miss La Trobe waved her hand ecstatically at the cows. 'Thank Heaven!' she exclaimed. Suddenly the cows stopped, lowered their heads, and began browsing. Simultaneously the audience lowered their heads and read their programmes.' (pp. 99-100)

It may seem comic to us, but not to Miss La Trobe; nor to her audience. Mrs Swithin tells her how she has been enthralled and moved to her depths :

> You' ve made me feel I could have played... Cleopatra !'... You've stirred in me my unacted part,' she meant (p. 107).

And

> At last, Miss La Trobe...could say to the world, You have taken my gift! Glory possessed her—for one moment. But what had she given?...It was in the giving that the triumph was (p. 146).

IV

For our third mode of communication we could hardly ask for a more succinct starting point than the following words from *Between the Acts*:

> O Lord, protect and preserve us from words the defilers, from words the impure! What need have we of words to remind us?... (p. 132)

From the very beginning Virginia Woolf had been comtemplating writing a novel of silence. It took various forms, including the stream-of-consciousness novel, or the novel using the interior monologue, and the narratives where dialogue would give way to the

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authorial consciousness pervading all. In the present novel, we find silence playing its most active role and communicating the deepest intuitions.

> He said (without words) 'I'm damnably unhappy.'
> 'So am I,' Dodge echoed.
> 'And I too,' Isa thought.
> They were all caught and caged; prisoners; watching a spectacle. (p. 123)

Again we read: 'In all this sound of welcome,...there was an element of silence, supplied by Isabella,...' (p. 31) A little later we read of 'Isabella addressing Mrs Manresa silently and thereby making silence add its unmistakable contribution to talk' (p. 32) A few pages later it is about Giles we read: 'his silence made its contribution to talk...'(p. 39). Again, as Isa and Dodge look at a picture : 'The picture drew them down the paths of silence.' (p. 36)

Some of the important characters are good at silent communication, at hearing unspoken words, and revealing their poetic depths or personal existential concerns :

> Isabella guessed the word that Giles had not spoken. Well, was it wrong if he was that word? Why judge each other. Do we know each other? Not here, not now. But somewhere, this cloud, this crust, this doubt, this dust...She waited for a rhyme, it failed her; but somewhere surely one sun would shine and all, without a doubt, would be clear. (p. 470)

There are times when a character is deeply moved by another, as Giles is by Mrs Swinthin, but he is not allowed to give words to it: ...'you've healed me'...So he wished to say; but said nothing...' (p. 55). Just as we find the Keatsian sensitivity to the music or poetry of silence, so, too, there is a near-Keatsian desire for escape, but only from the world of sound. It finds utterance in a manner reminiscent of that of Emily Dickinson 'What do I ask ? To fly away, from night and day, and issue where—no partings are—but eye meets eye—and...O'...(p. 62). The meeting of eyes is an act of communication, as is elaborated later when Miss La Trobe and

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Mrs Swithin are together : 'Their eyes met in a common effort to bring a common meaning to birth' (p. 107). As in Keats, again, there is also a realization of the value of sensation, but Mrs Woolf goes beyond Keats. Here is sensation issuing from the nearness of Mrs Manresa and Giles, filling the air several characters breathe and influencing them. Silence and sensation co-exist here:

> Why waste sensation, she seemed to ask, why waste a single drop that can be pressed out of this ripe, this melting, this adorable world? Then she drank. And the air round her became threaded with sensation. Bartholomew felt it, Giles felt it. Had he been a horse, the thin brown skin would have twitched, as if a fly had settled. Isabella twitched too. Jealousy, anger pierced her skin. (pp. 43-44)

Silence is also conducive to inward withdrawal when a clarification of vision can take place. Here is Mrs Swithin : Silenced, she returnd to her private vision, of beauty which is goodness; the sea on which we float ... (p. 143). It is also in silence that Mrs Switnin, like Miss La Trobe, has a vision of unity :

> She was off.. on a circular tour of the imagination—one-making. Sheep, cows, grass, trees, ourselves—all are one. If discordant, producing harmony—if not to us, to a gigantic ear attached to a gigantic head. And thus—she was smiling benignly—the agony of particular sheep, cow. or human being is necessary; and so—she was beaming seraphically at the gilt vane in the distance—we reach the conclusion that *all* is harmony, could we hear it. And we shall (p. 122).

Most important of all, Silence reveals the still centre; and an inexpressible experience is sought to be communicated in this passage which occurs early in the book.

> .....The room is empty.
>
> Empty, empty, empty; silent, silent, silent, silent. The room was a shell, singing of what was before time was;a vase stood in the heart of the house, alabaster, smooth, cold, holding the still, distilled essence of emptiness, silence (p. 30).

Finally, it must be admitted that Isabella's life is a life of silence. She is a dreamer of dreams (p. 18), receives shocks of

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recognition; reads and quotes the English Romantic Poets (pp. 81, 83), jumbles poetry and facts (pp. 17, 40), feels peculiarly prisoned (p. 50), and "writes her poetry in a book bound like an account book lest Giles might suspect" (p. 39). As far as establishing a silent relationship is concerned, she and Dodge are "conspirators' (p. 76). Isa and Dodge are later described as 'conspirators, seekers after hidden faces' (p. 82). She, like her creator, is an adept at silent communication; like her, she knew love as well as hate; like her, too, she sought peace, but lived through conflict and war (pp. 337. 342, 356). But where could peace be found ?

> 'Despised are we,' she murmured.. 'Let me turn away... till I come to the wishing well, where the washer-woman's little boy...dropped a pin. He got his houses so they say. But what should I drop into the well? She looked around, She could not see the man in grey, the gentleman farmer; not anyone known to her. 'That the waters should cover me,' she added, 'of the wishing well.' (p. 75)

These words communicate a premonition of what Virginia Woolf was to do not long after *Between the Acts* was completed. This, too, is an achievement of a silent I-Thou communication. 'I think writing, my writing, is a species of mediumship. I become the person,' wrote Virginia Woolf in her *Diary* (p. 18). In the silent chamber of her imagination Virginia Woolf assumed the mask of Isabella; but, even after the book was completed, she could not give up that mask—nor escape her chosen fate.

Christ Church College
Kanpur

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NOTES

1. Penguin Books, 1953, p. 39. Other references are to the same edition.
2. Virginia Woolf, *A Writer's Diary* (London, 1954), pp. 285-286.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
4. Cf. A. D. Moody, *Virginia Woolf* (London, 1963), p. 93. John Graham, "Time in the Novels of Virginia Woolf," *University of Toronto Quarterly*, XVII (1949) calls the pageant microcosmic, and the story of the audience macracosmic (p. 196). Marilyu Zorn, "The Pageant in *Between the Acts*, *Modern Fiction Studies*, II (Spring, 1965), p. 34. A. Y. Wilkinson, "A Principle of Unity in *Between the Acts*", in *Virginia Woolf*, ed. by Claire Sprague (New York, 1971), p. 150.
5. David Daiches, *Virginia Woolf* (Norfolk, 1942), p. 125. He is hardly convincing when he says that this novel 'is a lyrical tragedy whose hero is England.' p. 114.
6. A. Pippett, *The Moth and the Star* (U. S. A. Little, Brown & Co. 1956) p. 349.
7. John Holloway, "The Literary Scene," in *The Modern Age* ed. by Boris Ford, Penguin Books, 1970, p. 74.
8. Joan Bennett, *Virginia Woolf: Her Art as a Novelist* (Cambridge 1945), p. 122.
9. James Hafflley, *The Glass Roof: Virginia Woolf as Novelist* (1954), p. 247.
10. Virginia Woolf. *A Writer's Diary*, p. 339.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 285.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 289.
13. Cf. Ann Y. Wilkinson, "A Principle of Unity in *Between the Acts*", *Criticism*, VIII (Winter 1966), p. 53.
14. Cf.Marilyn Zorn,"The Pageant in *Between the Acts*', *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. II, 1956, p. 35.
15. *A Writer's Diary*, July 11th, 1937, p. 285.

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BOOK REVIEWS

T. S. Eliot: *Between Two Worlds* by David Ward (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1973). Price £ 5.50, pp. 304.

T. S. Eliot : *Between Two Worlds*, by David Ward, is a critical examination of Eliot's poetry in the light of man's persistent concern to resolve the enigmas of multiplicity through some kind of integrative vision. The mythico-religious sensibility has always attained to this vision, and speculative thought has always pointed to it even through its own inadequacy. But between the two worlds of multiplicity and transcendence, the human spirit, 'unappeased and peregrine' also strives to mediate through the forms of art. As regards Eliot's work, Mr Ward takes proper account of this striving. But what he does not take proper account of is the *final cause* of this striving, which can be called by no other name than love : 'itself unmoving' and 'Only the cause and end of movement'. Love as the relation between man and what is over against him, incites the human spirit to discover itself and the world through the various symbolic forms of experience. Problems of multiplicity arise when the forms get darkened and disjuncted into categories of mere subject-object consciousness; but every time that the discovery is made through myth, religion or art it involves the regeneration of human consciousness in one sense or the other.

In case of Eliot's art, the concern with the attainment of an integrative vision is the concern with regeneration of consciousness through love, which also operates as the unifying theme of his work. It is directed inwards towards the formulation of the various mythical patterns pointing to this theme and also outwards towards the formulation of the reader's consciousness. It leads you to the 'overwhelming question' which is later on identified as

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the question of 'death in love' of the egoistic personality. Mr Ward does not face it squarely. Instead he rambles into the mazes of Bradleyan metaphysics in his attempt to view it as a metaphysical problem of the 'desire for the unattainable', which desire involves 'a condition combined with fear of the consummation of that desire : "nympholepsy"' (p. 16). He sees 'Prufrock' not as the case of a foxy, egoistical evasion to respond with love, with all its infernal 'twistings and turnings of a dolorous flame', analogous to the state of damnation-in-the-Eighth-Circle of Dante's *Inferno*, but as a case of metaphysical 'nympholepsy' involving the desire of humanity to attain to 'individuality (an end to the quality of experience) and, paradoxically, 'a destruction of itself'. He thinks "'Prufrock" is a poem which dramatizes our humanity precisely in this respect, and "you and I" are dramatizations of the single human experience in its necessary duality, seeking, yet fearing its consummation in a singleness which is at the other end of thought' (p. 18). He goes into metaphysical niceties over 'you' and 'I' in this case as in all the cases where the words occur; but everything goes out of focus if we see Eliot's 'overwhelming question' as a question of committing a metaphysical suicide. Mr Ward overlooks the fact of love and Prufrock's failure in it by not responding to the demands of his situation with the whole of his being; and therefore he overlooks the sin, the damnation, the tormenting undifferentiated uneasiness of the Prufrockian situation with its pathetic and ridiculous twisting and turning, advance and recoil—in fact the whole complex of feelings crystallized into a mythical structure reverberating through all the perspectives of the human mind; and also the lesson it holds for the visionary pilgrim seeking regeneration through love. And this can be said, by and large, of Mr Ward's treatment of the whole body of Eliot's work.

In failing to see things *in* relation to the *final cause* Mr Ward fails to have a clear understanding of the forward drive of Eliot's poetry as it moves through an exploration of the unregenerate state, which holds out the lesson of an infernal vision, to an exploration of the possibilities of regeneration through the purgative discipline of love, then, after announcing the death of egoism in

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The Hollow Men, to an exploration of the process of purgation, and then finally to a comprehensive vision of the regeneration of the world of time through both the Affirmative and the Negative Ways of love. Both the ways are one and the same : for love implies, not a rejection of the world, but of selfish desire for the world so that you may enter into right relation with it and a recognition that 'you must not deny the body', as Eliot himself puts it. The unidentified 'overwhelming question' instead of being one of metaphysical 'nympholepsy' turns out to be 'the drawing of this Love, and the Voice of the Calling', demanding the death of the ego for the sake of a continual regeneration of consciousness in every 'here' and 'now. The undifferentiated uneasiness of the *Prufrock* volume leads us to 'sleep, prepare for life'; the apparent bitterness and anger of the *Gerontion* volume in the face of dissociation, corruption and violence has the purpose of making us realize the urgent need to make perfect the will through the discipline of love; and the utter barrenness and futility of *The Waste Land* only makes us look forward to the possibility of regeneration through the discipline of love outlined by the injunctions of the thunder : Give, Sympathize, Control. One would suspect that Mr Ward misses the point of Eliot's 'show' which, as Eliot himself says, he has 'not made purposelessly'. This is why he accuses Eliot of 'coarseness of sentiment', 'disgust with the world', 'hysteria' (p. 41), 'prophetic ignorance of anything but the terror and the failure' (pp. 79-80), 'something of the silliness of the twenties, some of its snobbery and intolerance' (p. 109), etc.

Mr Ward is only too ready to relate Eliot's, poetry to some 'nympyoleptic' desire for the world of soul implying a rejection of the world of body. I submit that 'A Cooking Egg' is not about a 'total rejection of the city of earth for the City of God' (p. 38), and that the contrast would only impel Eliot, and even St Augustine, to hallow and transfrom the former into the latter. In this poem the protagonist speculates on Heaven with playful irony and then awakens into an *ubi sunt* realization of the loss of his 'penny world'. It is not difficult to see that the 'penny world' of innocence is lost because he has grown out of his innocent relation with

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Pipit and the world into a world of experience where the promise of a remote Heaven is held up as a tantalizing substitute for Honour, Capital, Society and Pipit herself as a means of spiritual elation. His painful awareness of the loss of the 'penny world', of the red-eyed scavengers and of the 'weeping multitudes' implies the desire for regeneratian or recovery of innocence...—and he is a 'cooking egg' which is not quite gone bad—not in some remote Heaven but in the city of men become the City of God.

Perhaps, as a result of his metapysical preoccupations with 'I' and 'you', Mr Ward confuses one voice with the other in the hyacinth passage in *The Waste Land*. He thinks it is the hyacinth girl whose eyes failed while 'looking into the heart of light, the silence' (p. 233). He forgets that the preceding lines 'you gave me hyacinths...hyacinth girl' are within quotation marks and that the lines 'yet when we came back.....Looking into the heart of light, the silence' are explicitly distinguished from them by the absence of quotation marks and the presence of a separating dash.

If a critic does not accustom himself 'to find meanings in *final causes*', he is likely to ignore the development of Eliot's personal symbols and their specific meanings in relation to specific contexts. Instead, he would tend to apply some fixed, outside meaning of a symbol to a context—and he would do the same thing in case of Eliot's allusions too. In Eliot the special ideality of every personal symbol has a potential ambivalence—it is like 'fire or fire'—and through its repeated occurrence in varying contexts it gradually develops from one polarity of meaning to the other. So is the case with the 'dog' symbol. Its special ideality is that of a fertility symbol, and it has its potential ambivalence for good or evil of the use of fertility. It can be associated with a sterile lubricity and debauchery or with regenerative power and redeemed Eros. But Mr Ward applies a fixed, outside meaning of the 'dog' to every context. He takes it as 'an image of sensuality, of danger to the immortal soul', as something 'unclean' and 'an enemy to spirituality', as it is 'for the Jews and the inheritors of the Hebrew tradition' : and he applies this same meaning to 'Oh Keep the

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Dog far hence' passage in *The Waste Land* (p. 90). Now in 'Dans le Restaurant', to which Mr Ward refers, the 'dog' is associated with a sterile lubricity; but in *The Waste Land* the 'Dog' is a fertility symbol of the most positive kind : it is an agent of regeneration which for the damned and futile Stetson is unthinkable. The word with its capital letter, which Mr Ward has comfortably ignored, has its astrological allusion to Sirius, the Dog-star whose annual rising signalled the flooding of the Nile, the death and resurrection of the waste land which is basic to the Vegetation Cults. In the same way, Mr Eugenides of the Cannon Street Hotel, though he ironically reminds us of the 'one-eyed merchant', the bearer of regenerative mysteries, cannot be put on the same spiritual plane with One-Eyed Reilley who in his own half-serious way administers divine grace. Mr. Ward does not recognize the irony and makes a simplistic equation of one with the other,

Like the outside meanings of symbols the outside meanings of allusions are also modified by their respective contexts and are significant only in relation to them. Mr Ward has a quarrel with Eliot for uniting St Augustine and the Buddha at the end of 'The Fire Sermon' in spite of their different brands of asceticism (p. 112). But for Eliot's purpose of mythical concrescence they are 'united in the strife that divided them'; and it is enough that both of them speak with painful horror of the burning of lust which ironically reminds us of regeneration through the 'refining fire' from which the Lord 'pluckest me out' like the gold of the Rhine-daughters plucked out from the pyre of Siegfried and Brunnhilde. Mr Ward does not seem to have a clear idea of Eliot's mythical concrescence and its ironic undertones.

Mr. Ward's application of the outside, space-time consciousness meanings of 'here' and 'there' to *The Hollow Men* leads to nothing but perplexity. To Mr Ward 'here' means 'death's dream kingdom' where according to him the 'hollow men' live and 'there' 'death's other kingdom' peopled by those with 'direct eyes' (p. 146). But how is it that in Section II of the poem the protagonist uses 'there' while speaking of 'death's dream king-

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dom'? In fact, the 'hollow men' are neither 'here' nor 'there'. They are in 'death's twilight kingdom', the *saeculum*, which is interpenerated by the vision of 'death's dream kingdom' analogous to hell and the vision of 'death's other kingdom' analogous to purgatory. 'Death's dream kingdom' becomes a 'there' as the 'shadow' falls and Beatrice's eyes become 'Sunlight on a broken column' revealing the illusion of semiramis in the Circle of the Lustful in the *Inferno*. The 'hollow men', in whom the egoistic old guy (Fawkes-Kurtz-' old man') is dead, see the illusion for what it is and recognize it as a 'shadow' kingdom obscuring the Essential Reality which they do not see. They are sightless unless they see through each 'shadow' kingdom itself: *For Thine is the Kingdom*. For all these kingdoms

> Are but a preface, shadowy of the truth
> They emblem.
>
> (*Paradiso*, XXX, 80-81)

They are 'Sightless, unless/The eyes reappear' to enlighten them with the *final cause* of all these Kingdoms.

When Mr. Ward's duality-unity thesis falls in line with Eliot's own pattern of resolution or when he forgets his metaphysical formulation of it his elucidation is convincing and he has some valuable things to say. His remarks on the 'Midwinter spring' passage and on the 'compound ghost' passage are quite enlightening, and on the whole, his elucidation of *Four Quartets* is something you can rely on. His approach to *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion* and *The Cooktail Party* in the light of Greek plays can prove quite useful. He really contributes to our understanding of the scene beginning with 'The chair she sat in', in *The Waste Land*, by pointing out that it is built up in terms of the comparison between the boudoir and the temple (pp. 95-98). The boudoir scene reminds us of the temple of the Old Testament and this in turn reminds us of 'the new temple of the Christians, which is within the heart and mind of the Christian himself'. Mr. Ward rightly points to the use of the temple myth in St Augustine (*Confessions*, X, 25) and observes that 'Eliot puts his male and female personae, his bride and bridegroom, in a mimic temple, a

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synthetic parody of the inner chamber complete with golden mercy-seat and seven-branched candelabra, but tawdry, cheapened, empty of real significance...'. And yet Eliot's mythical concrescence of the boudoir-temple has ironic undertones of regeneration suggested not only by the temple analogy but also by the details of the scene, particularly, as Mr. Ward himself points out, by the images of the dolphin and Philomel.

Mr Ward's book has its dangers if it falls into the hands of the beginner. But it can stimulate the initiated reader to return to the poetry again and again in spite of its defects and even because of them : and this is its great merit as it is the great merit of all sincere criticism. We can very well hope that for the initiated reader in whose mind Eliot scholars are 'united in the strife that divided them' 'all shall be well'.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

Z. A. USMANI

Aligarh Muslim University

Yeats and the Noh (with Two Plays for Dancers by Yeats & Two Noh Plays) by Akhtar Qambar, New York/Tokyo, Weatherhill, 1974, Price $ 8.95, pp. 161.

Symbolic in character and austere in the use of stage-machinery, the short musical ghost-plays of Japan were first presented to English readers by Ezra Pound from the materials painstakingly collected and translated by Ernest Fenollosa during his stay in the Far East. Yeats was connected with the publication from the very beginning, and he supplied an introduction to the Cuala press edition of *The Classic Noh Theatre of Japan* (1916). Fascinated by the economy, subtlety and suggestiveness of these plays, and finding their technique suited to his own purpose be fashioned the

Four Plays for Dancers (1920) in an answerable style. In a note on one of these plays he even acknowledged his indebtedness to the tradition : "I have found my first model—and in literature if we would not be parvenus we must have a model—in the 'Noh' stage of aristocratic Japan." Though some salient aspects of this relationship have been touched upon in various studies of Yeats (particularly by Peter Ure and F. A. C. Wilson) and in reviews of his *Four Plays for Dancers*, no full-length study of the subject—excepting the doctoral dissertation of Hiro Ishibashi—seems to have been published. Miss Akhtar Qambar's brief work is a commendable attempt to fill this gap.

Being introductory in nature, the first two chapters supply the background and motives of Yeats's active interest in *Noh* drama. Chapter I analyses, though rather sketchily, the poet's predilection for symbolism and the Symbolist Movement. Chapter II deals briefly with the main trends in contemporary Irish theatre, Yeats's views on dramaturgy and his endeavours for the revival and development of the national drama. The account is interspersed with some casual, but perceptive, observations about the Irish temper and national ethos and their bearing on Irish theatre.

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The author's examination of the Japanese aesthetic attitude (pp. 39-45) responsible for the birth and development of this peculiar form of ritual drama is enlightening and thought-provoking. Her vivid, some times almost lyrical, reminiscenes of some of the *Noh* performances in the land of their origin invest her statements with an added measure of cogency and authenticity, and show a genuine and sensitive appreciation of a difficult *genre*. Interesting and informative in character, chapter III is obviously the most effective and successful part of the book. The general account of the *Noh* drama, its genesis, structure and characteristics, and the description of the stage provide the necessary information for a richer understanding of their assimilation in Yeats's plays. References to the 'Kathakali' and 'Karnatak' schools of dance and music by way of passing comparisons are specially suggestive for Indian readers.

'Yeats and the Plays for Dancers' (Chap. IV) discusses succinctly the characteristics and technique of Yeats's relevant plays. It also furnishes the outline of the plots of two readily comparable Japanese plays—*Hagoromo* and *Nishikigi*. The treatment of the English plays, however, is rather slender, as of the four of them only two—*At the Hawk's Well* and *The Only Jealousy of Emer*—seem to have received some attention—*Calvary* is just referred to in passing. Attention is focused on the point that while writing these plays Yeats was trying to explore the symbolic potential and philosophical significance of these stories and myths, but rather surprisingly there is hardly any mention of any one of his contemporary poems which are no less significant monuments of his concern with symbolism. Similarly notice of the rise of one-act play in England is wanting though a brief addition on this point would have made the historical perspective more factual and realistic.

Miss Qambar has chosen only two plays, which she considers "unique in the history of poetic drama" (p. 96), for detailed treatment of their structure, theme and symbolism (chap. V). Some interesting sidelight is shed on the translation and staging of *At the Hawk's Well* in Japan. Though admitting the possibility of stratification of symbolism in the plays, she restricts herself to only one layer of meaning. She suggests that Cuchulain in *The Only Jealousy of Emer* stands for both fate and the mocker of fate, the destroyer of value (p. 90), and finds that Yeats's conception of female characters in the play is connected with the romantic image of Maud Gonne (p. 93). One, however, is reminded of another source ignored by the author, though specifically mentioned by Yeats himself in a note on the same play : "I have filled *The Only Jealousy of Emer* with convictions about the nature and history of a woman's beauty, which Robartes found in the *Speculum* of Gyraldus and in Arabia Deserta among the Judwalis."

The last chapter offers a cross-section of critical opinion culled from the periodicals, and a general assessment of the plays with special reference to the causes of their failure to catch popular fancy. It is followed by an appendix incorporating the text of

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At the Hawk's Well and *The Dreaming of the Bones*, and the *Noh* plays, *Hagoromo* and *Nishikigi*, translated by Pound and Fenollosa. The author's Indian sensibility is again in evidence in the extended, and rather over-stretched, analogy of the Urdu *Mushaira* with the *Noh* theatre. Even taken as instruments of culture, the comparison between the two does not appear to be quite relevant as *Mushaira* is not a *genre*, nor was it ever meant to be performed by 'actors'. Finally, the author describes the *Noh* drama and Yeats's plays for dancers as 'brilliant spots of eccentricity in theatre' (p. 114). Occasional brilliance of artifice and theme not many may deny. But in view of the pervasive influence of the *Noh* even in the later plays of Yeats—and some of the plays of Wallace Stevens—and the survival of the *genre* in Japan for several centuries it is hardly fair to call them mere eccentricity in theatre.

Yeats and the Noh is an intelligent little book on a difficult subject with occasional flashes of critical insight, and a frequent verve of style that makes it delightful reading. It is a valuable contribution to Yeatsean studies, but in spite of the comprehensiveness of its title, the actual work is much too selective and restricted in range. One wishes that the author had paid attention to some of Yeats's later plays as well like *The Resurrection*, *A Full Moon in March*, *The Herne's Egg*, *Purgatory* and *The Death of Cuculain* which do have unmistakable traces of the *Noh* drama in them. Such an enlarged and comprehensive treatment would have added to the utility of the work. To the academic critic omission of titles of essays in some of the entries in the bibliography (of periodical literature) would also appear as an avoidable minor flaw.

MASOODUL HASAN

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

Aligarh Muslim University

The Soul of Wit : *A Study of John Donne* by Murray Roston, Oxford 1974, price £ 5.00, pp. 236.

In his brilliantly impressive study of John Donne Mr. Murray Roston starts with conceding the validity of the now commonplace critical axiom that Donne's mind freely operates within two worlds—the concrete and the conceptual, the pragmatic and the idealistic, the scientific and the spiritual. But he concedes it only up to a certain point. What is implied by holding in ironic counter point such antithetical positions as represented by Augustine and Montaigne, Petrarch and Loyola, Ficino and Kepler in the bachground of his secular and religious poetry is precisely Roston's point of divergence from the earlier stance. This premise necessarily entails the conclusion that either Donne was prompted by a sense of insouciant irreverence or else he was wholly uncommitted as far as his ultimate ordering of values was concerned. But either of these deductions is unacceptable to Roston. His main thesis in this book derives from the conviction that Donne's major achievement relates to the cultural matrix of the Counter-Renaissance which manifested itself in the form of the Baroque and the Mannerist art and literature.

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But whereas the baroque was characterized by a kind of exotic splendour and flash of exuberance, the mannerist reflected a sensitive mode of spirituality, a degree of self-scrutiny and analysis and a seething perturbation of the soul. In other words, the security and confidence of the High Renaissance, based upon the impregnability of Reason and sense of cosmic harmony, fell into dislocation with the emergence of the New Philosophy. The notion of the heliocentric universe, based upon the orbitting of the solar system, came to shatter the foundations of the Ptolemaic world and Galileo, with the invention of his telescope, came only to confirm the doubts which had been expressed earlier by Copernicus regarding the centrality of man in the hierarchy of creation. Roston's plea is that Donne's poetry reflects the dissonance of the Counter-Renaissance in exactly the same way as

mannerist paintings and architecture do, and can thus be integrated into a larger and more complex framework. In point of its dominant *motifs* this poetry as a verbal semantic structure offers a counterpart to the paintings of Tintoretto and El Greco and the religious art of de la Tour, Zurburan and Rosso. The mannerist technique may be defined in terms of the dematerialization of the actuality of the world, the elongation of time and the eccentricity of space. This results of necessity in the creation of a 'shimmering illusion', a kind of liquescency and haziness. Donne's strategy in his amatory verse, underscored by an interplay of logic and anti-logic, also results in creating an illusion of authenticity. The fact is that Donne makes the reader involved in the specious web of his labyrinthine logic and the latter only gradually discovers the calculated misdirection to which he was subjected from the very beginning. Roston's point, made with great cogency and persuasiveness and supported by profuse illustrative material, is that even beneath the apparent flippancy and prankishness of his shock tactics we can detect the endeavour to have the transcendental and the ethereal glimpsed in and through the factual and the literal. The pragmatic and fideistic interpretations of reality are not only polarized with sheer objectivity but Donne's penchant for the paradoxical is the tool through which the validation of the transcendental is achieved. To put it differently, the ethereal and the intangible is seized upon as an extension of the solid, the tactile and the massive in poetry as in painting and architecture.

Roston has quite justifiably rejected the possibility of any influence of the Spanish theorist Baltasar Gracian's 'Conceit and the Art of Wit' (1642) or of the Italian Emanuele Tesauro's treatise 'The Aristotelian Glass-Perspective' (1654) on Donne on grounds of historical inaccuracy though both of them refer to wit as aspiring to beauty and as being urbanely fallacious. The exercise of wit presupposes 'a sophisticated immediacy of response' on the part of the reader as also the perception of a meaningful ambiguity in the human situation on the part of the poet. But here again the function of wit in Donne is not merely to provide

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intellectual surprise but also to enable the reader to pierce through the quibblings of logic and attain to a unified vision of the Ultimate.

Contrary to the widely accepted view that the process of maturing in Donne may be envisioned in terms of a progression from reckless indulgence in feats of argumentative skill and convolutions of thought of the early phase to the sombre self-searching of the later religious poetry, Roston has laid bare Donne's preoccupation with vital and urgent concerns of life even beneath the ebullience of his amatory verse. In the religious poetry the focus of interest shifts from man-woman relationship to one between man and God. The 'love-saint equation' of contemporary practice, reflected in poems like *The Relique* and *The Canonization*, through which secular love was looked upon as a 'mystery', was transformed into one between the Creator and the sinner who is in desperate need of redemption. The mood of introspection is pervasive and yet the hold on the physical reality is not slackened and "the meditator apprehends the divine *caritas* in terms of a transfigured and spiritualized *eros*" (p. 180). Donne has also tried to minimize the gruesomeness of the image of death in the Jacobean mind partly by the use of erotic imagery and partly by beautifying the inside of the tombs by placing scintillating relics within them.

Roston has designated Donne's vision of things as both 'twofold' and 'transpicuous', and this seems to suggest to me a contradiction. The latter is indentical with Blake's 'fourfold' vision which represents the climactic point of the process of intuitive apprehension. Roston has very perceptively maintained that in spite of references to the limbecks and flasks of the laboratory, 'the sinewie thread the brain lets fall through the body', the elliptical orbits and the atoms and elements that compose our physical being, Donne is very much sceptical of the gains of man's conquest of the phenomenal world. In his amatory verse one is all the time conscious of the indictment, beneath all the philandering, of the empirical in favour of the tender ethereality of the world of spirit. In his religious

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poetry one is struck by a total and unambiguous rejection of reason as an instrument of intuiting Reality and a growing conviction of the futility of the rational and the pragmatic. All this is incontrovertible. But the assertion Roston makes (p. 209) to the effect that Donne is capable of responding sensitively to the newest scientific discoveries in his day and Shakespeare, by contrast, does not register any such impact at all, and the former is, therefore, by implication, possessed of a greater comprehensiveness and subtlety is rather contradictory of his own premises built up earlier with such perspicacity. Shakespeare may or may not have reacted as sharply as Donne to the scientific spectrum of values, but for one thing his range of interests was tremendously wider and deeper than that of any other poet. Secondly, in spite of the melancholy and darkness of the Jacobean phase which is shared by Donne on Roston's own showing, Shakespeare's grasp over both the metaphysical and the mundane planes of reality is doubtless firmer, more luminous and more far-reaching than that of Donne. And this last is the criterion of value framed and established by Roston himself. Also the adumbration of the *motifs* of time, death and eternity in Shakespeare is without any parallel in Donne though the latter has attempted the same in his later religious poetry with all the weight of his preteratural experience behind it.

One also legitimately feels that the equivalence between the 'shimmering logic' in Donne's secular and religious poetry and the illusionism in the mannerist architecture has not been worked out with full convincingness. Roston regards *A Valediction : Forbidding Mourning* as the best specimen of mannerist technique in Donne (p.89) but I should think that *The Relique* or *The Canonization* is an apter example of the hallucinatory perspective, the lightly camouflaged illogicality and the manipulation of surrealistic impressionism that Roston has so ably isolated as elements of salience in Donne's amatory verse. Donne has, according to Roston, expressed through a subtle tangentialism his grave dissatisfaction with the scientism of his day (p. 18). This reminds us of similar antipathy against the inroads of science and experimental philosophy on the preserves of humane culture registered by Blake in the

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eighteenth century and mediated through his clouded and bizarre mythological constructs. In the midst of the rapidly increazing corpus of criticism on Donne Roston's book is a model of literary evaluation in which the insights obtained from a close study of visual and plastic arts have been brought to bear upon the explication of literary artefacts. In his emphasis upon Donne's reaching out to a transcendental reality beyond the pragmatic and the factual Roston has pointed up new avenues of approach to the poet.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

A. A. ANSARI

Aligarh Muslim University

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