VOLUME 14

1989

NUMBER 1

THE ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Editor :

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Rs. 30.00
£ 3.50
$ 6.00

Single Copy :
Rs. 20.00

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P. Ramamoorthy

'THE BANQUET IS THE THING . . .' A NOTE ON *MACBETH*

Shakespeare's use of banquets in his plays is very often seen as a ritual, or sometimes merely as a beautiful spectacle or pageantry. There is more than what meets the eye in these banquets. The banquet scenes in *Antony and Cleopatra* are a grim summary of the state of Rome. In the early banquet scene in Alexandria, we see Charmian and Alexas mock their masters in their wooings. The presence of the soothsayer adds to the irony of the scene; the fortunes of Antony and Cleopatra are at stake; they seem to be least conscious of their fortunes, lost in their world of luxury and lust. The satellites around them are worried about their petty fortunes. In the second banquet at the deck of Pompey's galley, we meet Lepidus 'high coloured.' Lepidus is made a fool. Enobarbus' comment[1] : 'A' bears the third part of the world, man' – is quite significant in pointing out how Rome is shaking under the weight of people like Lepidus, and Menas' plan, if it had been carried out, the pillars of Rome could have been easily killed. The banquet, here, is not a mere ritual. It reveals the royalty of Pompey and shows up in bold colours the antithesis between Antony and Ceasar and how Lepidus fails to be a synthesis.

The banquet in *Macbeth* is rich with ornaments of royalty, pomp, regal banners and a halo of regality; but something is missing. That which is missing has been killed : Grace. The term could mean beauty in whatever is said or done with propriety. T. Mc.Alindon calls this 'decorum'. The epithet 'gracious' is almost a part of Duncan's name. When courtiers address Macbeth as 'your Grace', it is made to sound grotesque. McAlindon says 'King Macbeth can dignify no noble

presence with his company; he is devoid of mercy and favour; he is untouched by the regenerative influence of Heaven; and everything he does lacks becomingness. All of which means that he is without grace, for all of these meanings are embraced by that word'.[2]

Macbeth and his wife keep repeating the word 'welcome' in the banquet scene.[3] Through this key word they beguile the time with the mask of order and propriety. Macbeth tells the Lords : 'You know your own *degrees* sit down : at first' And last, the hearty welcome .[4] (III. iv. 1-2) (italics mine). The word 'degree' emphasises hierarchy and the Lords know their respective positions. It is this hierarchy Macbeth violates in the murder of Duncan. Degree denotes, again, order which also has been violated in the murder of Duncan. All the portents, thunder and lightning in the opening scene, the dark night strangling the travelling lamp, the falcon being 'hawked' by a 'mousing owl' and Duncan's horses 'eating' each other, point up the unnaturalness of the Macbeth universe and the reversal of order. Nothing can picture the world so beautifully as those key lines of the play : Fair is foul, foul is fair (I. i. 11).

The word 'degree', here, used in a sense of mock irony brings to the spectator's mind, the cosmic order or harmony that has been violated : 'Take but degree away, untune that string, And hark, what discord follows. (*Troilus and Cressida*, I. iii. 109-10) The 'heavens themselves 'observe degree, priority and place.''' Once this degree is violated, Ulysses knows that 'the enterprise is sick.' Macbeth by shaking the degree which he invokes at the banquet scene, has brought upon Scotland a strange disease. The very name of Macbeth 'blisters our tongues' and Scotland weeps and bleeds'. The Thanes have come to partake of Macbeth's bread and wine and they will carefully arrange themselves according to their 'degrees'. It is a royal banquet and to these Thanes Macbeth is the King, the Dispenser of Justice, their hero, and hence they willingly participate and enjoy the ritual of hospitality. Rosenberg finds in this ritual a symbol of 'idealized

order in family, tribe and state : an archetypal gesture of amity and concord .[5]

The banquet also has other dramatic implications. and one of them is the overtones in it of the Last Supper. In the John Barton production in The Other Place (1978), Macbeth carrying a chalice around the banquet hall suggested a travesty of the Communion. Macbeth alludes to the banquet in Act III Sc. i. as a 'solemn supper'. The verbal echoes of supper are rich and later Macbeth in a mood of frustration, echoes : 'I have supped full with horrors' (V. v. 13). The 'solemn supper' also evokes the picture of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, in their earlier roles as hosts of King Duncan. The Mask of regality, which they wear now, like the strange garments, does not sit on them 'without the aid of use'.

On stage, the banquet will provide a rich spectacle with great trays of food and drink, gold and silver vessels, hot costly viands, smoking meats, all that go with a solemn supper. Malcolm's allusion to Macbeth as *'luxurious'* can be seen in the banquet.

Macbeth's next speech puts the directors into some difficulty. He says : 'Both sides are even : here I'll sit in the midst' (III. iv. 10). It looks a simple statement but in the context of the murderer's presence a lot more is implied. Macbeth chooses a middle seat Macbeth has invited Banquo to the solemn supper He must not feign any knowledge of Banquo's murder Lenox, Rosse and other Lords too are aware that Banquo has been invited and they expect him too. Macbeth wears the look of welcome and his face shall not reveal 'what his false heart doth know'. Mecbeth makes a reference to the missing Banquo :

> Here had we now our country's honour roof'd,
> Were the grac'd person of our Banquo present;
> Who may I rather challenge for unkindness,
> Than pity for mischance; (III. iv. 39-42)

As if Banquo were invoked, the ghost of Banquo enters and sits in Macbeth's place, i.e. the central position in the banquet table. Rosse blames Banquo for his absence and

invites Macbeth to join them in their mirth. Macbeth now finds The table's full' (III. iv. 44).

How are we to read this line? Is the table really full? Was a seat reserved for Banquo? If a seat had been reserved for Banquo, the table would not be full. The lords do expect Banquo, and Macbeth must pretend expecting him. In a director's prompt copy [6] we are told how he had conceived the whole scene. In a semicircular table there are nine seats--on the Stage Right we see the 3rd Lord, Cathness Menteth and Angus; on the left. we see Lenox. 1st Lord. 2nd Lord and Rosse. Between these two rows of seats is a place reserved for Macbeth. The Ghost of Banquo sits there. In the Cambridge Theatre Group's production,[7] it was a rectangular table with 3 seats on each side and one at the centre. Rosenberg gives us an account of Edwin Booth's production : Edwin Booth's imagining seems to have been particularly effective; he made the ghost appear to audiences by the convulsions of fright that shook Macbeth, and later, his wild fury as he stared at the 'appalling vacancy' of Banquo's chair. in an 'intense. horror-stricken concentration of eyes and sense and soul'.[8]

Macbeth, clever as he is, tries to play the King and wears the mask of regality to cover his foul deeds. But here in this scene he betrays himself. All his calculated efforts to remain cool are of no use. When he says, 'Th: Table's full,' he tries to hocdwink the Lords that there is nothing abnormal. But the moment he sees the ghost, he screams : 'Which of you have done this ?' (III: iv. 48). Macbeth's control is wearing thin. He suspects for a moment a trick by the Lords. But when he shouts. --Thou canst not say. I did it' (III. iv 49), everything surfaces. Macbeth alone sees the ghost. It is merely a material vision or a hallucination in Macbeth's mind. Lady Macbeth is also not aware of the presence of the ghost Macbeth's actions, at this moment, sum up another important thesis antithesis, between thought and deed. Later in Act IV. we hear Macbeth saying:

> From this momeni,
> The very firstlings of my heart shall be
> The firstlings of my hand. (IV. i. 146-48).

The relationship between thought and action. again, is hinted. Macbeth has failed to effect a synthesis between thought and deed in the banquet scene. Macbeth fails in this scene because the whole problem is much more complex and metaphysical than Macbeth had imagined. Macbeth's crime is the killing of the order of the universe and so what we witness is a wrestling of 'destruction with creation'[9] Now the line 'Both sides are even' assumes a greater significance. Macbeth's ego has been shattered in the banquet scene. The 'man' who said he could do anything a man might dare. is haunted by his own hallucinations. Multiple impulses hound Macbeth, fear of insecurity. the dread of losing reason, the warrior's rage and bewilderment.

The banquet scene is the climax of the play and here Macbeth learns to trust the powers beyond his comprehension. His problem is that he mistakes these powers as the weird sisters. This scene demands of the actor and the actress playing Macbeth and Lady Macbeth extreme concentration and tact. Specially Lady Macbeth does not have many words to speak. The actress must fix her eyes on Macbeth and simultaneously on the Lords. She must play the wife and the hostess at the same moment. Mrs Siddons, it is told 'showed a growing uneasines'[10] from the point at which Mecbeth moved apart and spoke to the murderer at the door. Bell speaks of her secret 'uneasiness' being an excellent theatre. Fanny Kemble concerned herself with the problem of watching her moody lord and at the same time she was 'eager to prevent the guests from catching any of the wild words which his guilt-haunted agonies made him utter'[11]. Gemma Jones of the Cambridge Theatre Group played the role in a much different key. She did not seem to suggest that she had anything to do with the murder of Banquo, but curious as she looked, seemed to have guessed the murder. All her efforts were to keep the lords cool; any speck of suspicion, she was bent on clearing. She was seated in her throne for a few seconds, then she moved towards the Lords and for the rest of the scene, her eyes kept shifting from Macbeth to the Lords. Gemma Jones revealed that this was the most strenuous scene(not the Sleep-walking)

as it demanded of her concentration and very few words to speak[12].

The banquet in *The Tempest* is a creation of Prospero, the Magician, to bring the 'three men of sin' to repentance. The viands vanish before their eyes. The banquet is arranged by 'ministers of Fate' and withdrawn by those same ministers. Macbeth arranges a banquet himself but here too the 'ministers of Fate' play a significant role. His failure to provide a seat for Banquo and his hallucinations in the banquet are indications that Macbeth is being watched and kept in vigilance by the ministers of Fate. Just as the banquet in *The Tempest* is an admonition and warning to the 'three men of sin', the banquet in *Macbeth* also could be seen as a warning to Macbeth not to trust his powers too much. He begins to mistrust alright; but once again in seeking succour, he chooses not 'Grace', but the weird sisters. The banquet in Hamlet (I, iv) is a symbol of the corruption in Denmark. Hamlet speaks of this state:

> This heavy-headed revel east and west
> Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:
> They clepe us drunkards, with swinish phrase
> Soil our addition . . (I, iv. 17-20)

The banquet in *Hamlet* is a barometer of the rottenness of the universe peopled by Claudius, Gertrude and Polonius. So too, the banquet in *Macbeth* is a pointer to the fallen state of the thanes. The murderer is the 'best o' th' cut-throats.' Rosse is a mere weather-cock. Scotland is full of such scorpions. The banquet scene is also a pointer to the ironic play of the powers above. Lady Macbeth tries to calm her husband with the words : 'When all's *done*/ You looke but on a stoole' (III, iv. 66-67). M. M. Mahood observes. 'The phrase, usually equivalent to "after all" and practically meaningless, is here charged with dramatic irony. What has been done, unknown to Lady Macbeth, is Banquo's murder; but the murderer's final words after the deed : 'Well let's away, and say howmuch is done', show all that all is not done'.[13] Macbeth cannot prevent Banguo's children succeeding to the throne. The ghost of Banquo sitting in Macbeth's place, seen in this light, is

highly significant, that the seeds of Banquo shall succeed Macbeth and they cannot be extinguished altogether.

The banquet in *Macbeth* is a beautiful symbol of the 'admired disorder' which pervades the atmosphere of the Macbeth-world. When Lady Macbeth tells the Lords : 'Stand not upon the order of your going,/ But go at once' (III. iv. 118) Macbeth, in the beginning of the scene wanted them to observe 'degree' but now finds confusion because of the observance of the degree The Thanes cannot rush out in a group if they must observe the degree The Thanes, from Macbeth's words, know that each must follow some one else. They are now likely to line up to kiss the King's hands. So Lady Macbeth decrees disorder. In the play it is left to Lady Macbeth to call for disorder, and her famous invocation to the evil spirts :

> Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers,
> Wherever in your sightless substances
> You wait on Nature's mischief. (I. v. 47–50),

is another decree for disorder. When she decrees disorder, it is left to Macbeth to kill the natural 'order', so that disorder can find a place. Only when order is evacuated, disorder can enter in its place. With the death of Duncan, disorder dispels order and this again is suggested through the repetitive images of darkness enveloping the earth and light being strangled. There is a constant struggle between order and disorder and with the death of Macbeth and the restoration of Malcolm to the throne, 'Grace' is reinvested in Scotland[14]. There is harmony again, the 'sick enterprise' gone, and degree reinforces 'newer comfort'.

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NOTES

1. II vii 90 References to plays other than *Macbeth* are from *Shakespeare, Complete Works*. ed W J. Craig (London, 1974),
2. T. McAlindon *Shakespeare, and Decorum* (London 1973), pp. 163-64.
3. The word *welcome* is mentioned four times in this scene.
4. All citations to the play are from *Macbeth*, the Arden Shakespeare, ed. Kenneth Muir (London, 1970).
5. Marvin Rosenberg, *The Masks of Macbeth* (Berkeley, 1978), p. 429.
6. Dennis Bartholomeuz (G. Byam's Shaw's prompt copy quoted partially in) Appendix II of *Macbeth and The Players* (London, 1969), p. 282.
7. Directed by Jonathan Lynn, the play was presented at the Music Academy, Madras on 29th Jan. 1981.
8. Marvin Rosenberg (Review of *Tribune* quoted partially in) *The Masks of Macbeth*, p 45.
9. Wilson Knight, *The Imperial Theme* (London, 1968), p. 140.
10. John Bell, *Papers on Acting*, ed. Brander Mathews (New York, 1958), p. 92.
11. Marvin Rosenberg, p. 443
12. In a conversation with the writer.
13. M. M. Mahood *Shakespeare's Wordplay* (London 1968), p. 138
14. Ionesco and Polanski hold an opposite view. Polanski's film ends with Donalbain seeking out the witches. Ionesco's *Macbeth* implies that with the inauguration of Malcolm everything may begin again. See also Richard Horwich, 'Integrity in Macbeth : The Search for the Single State of Man' *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 29, No. 3 (Summer 1978).

Mohammad Yasin

JOHN FLETCHER'S ROMANTIC COMEDIES

Fletcher, undoubtedly deserves our first attention in any study of the development of post-Shakespearean romantic comedy. Historically he was one of Ben Jonson's tribe but he also collaborated with Shakespeare. The great master was once belived to have felt inclined to follow his style in his own later romances. Whatever the truth, there is little doubt about the place Fletcher occupied among his contemporaries.

In the whole range of English drama there is, perhaps, no figure more worthy of attention than 'the mysterious double personality' of Beaumont and Fletcher. They combined in their plays poetry and romance with the code of manners and the standard of morals which prevailed among gentlemen of the Court of James I. The spectator was entertained by a lively succession of events to produce the most interesting situations and the most pleasurable surprise and by a considerable variety of characters. In the comedies, the audience was interested and delighted by a new style of wit and brilliancy in conversation Dryden was only reflecting a commonplace when he said, comparing Beaumont and Fletcher with Shakespeare, that 'they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better whose wild debaucheries and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done.'[1]

We find here fully developed for the first time, a species of stage entertainment which is 'rather an acted romance than a drama'[2] in the strict sense of the word; without the intensity of tragedy but with more emotional interest and a more poetical style of expression than is proper to comedy. The species was better exemplified in the works of Shakespeare's

latest period, in *Cymbeline, Pericles, The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale*. The name 'tragicomedy' is applied usually to about a third of the whole number of Beaumont and Fletcher plays. In fact, the great majority of the plays in this collection are of the intermediate class to which the term 'dramatic romance' is properly applicable

As there is complete 'consimility of fancy' between Fletcher and his senior collaborator, it is impossible to begin without a reference to their joint endeavour in the art of drama. Of the fifty-two plays gathered under the names of Beaumont and Fletcher in the Second Folio of 1679, modern criticism has been able to separate with some certainty the writing of Fletcher, but it has not been able to determine exactly the dates or extent of his collaborations with Beaumont, or to indicate his other collborations with much certainty, except Massinger.

It seems important to consider the chief characteristics of Beaumont and Fletcher, the probable gains that the latter made in his collaboration with the former and the distinguishing feature of Fletcher's comic art which flourished after Beaumont's death. Beaumont is clearly the more conservative nature. To him has been assigned a more serious moral attitude towards life than is Fletcher's Fletcher is more inventive in his art and more eclectic in his practice. He excelled as a master of immediate stage effect. He placed before him the ideal of a drama that should be at once novel and entertaining: John Fletcher was the first English dramatist to rescue the term tragi-comedy' from its 'mongrel' status and to restore its standing in the world of letters. Regarding the attributes of Fletcherian tragi comedy Ristine holds that the *denouement* is its most characteristic feature.[3] The preceding English playwrights had depended upon such clumsy devices as disguise known to the audience but not to the characters on stage. Fletcher, according to Ristine, improved upon this technique. He maintained suspense until the last scene. It is true that Beaumont and Fletcher were masters of the big scene, of surprise and suspense, and

perhaps they practised the technique more consistently than any other dramatist before or after them. Big scenes and surprising *denouement*, however, were common in Italian and French romantic plays. Waith's analysis of the pattern of Fletcherian tragi-comedy is more elaborate than Ristine's[5] He finds eight characteristics as follows : (1) familiar manners. (2) remote setting. (3) intricate plot. (4) improbable situations, (5) atmosphere of evil. (6) Protean characters. (7) 'Lively touches of passion' (Dryden's phrase) and (8) the language of emotion. These qualities were strongly influenced or overlaid by satire and pastoral romances.

Many problems becloud Beaumont and Fletcher's comedies of collaboration. William Appleton has traced in *The Coxcomb* (1610). *Wit at Several Weapons* (1609). *The Scornful Lady* (1613). *The Captain* (1612) and *The Nice Valour* (1615-25). the mingling of the two minds in comedy which were better suited for tragi-comedy in collaboration.[5] The majority of these plays were failures. Fletcher's genius turned rather to comedy than to the graver vein of drama and after Beaumont's withdrawal he devoted more and more of his attention to this field Here in tragi comedy his originality, his sense of stage effect and his mastery of a lively bustling plot are his distinguishing characteristics. He drew on Jonson for various 'humours' but never allowed them to dominate the action: he cared little for consistency of character, and even less for a moral explicit or implicit His comedies superficially reflect the manners of upper class English life but they have a strong vein of romanticism, chiefly borrowed from Italian and Spanish sources. M. C. Bradbrook, while tracing the translation of romantic comedy from Shakespeare to Fletcher. suggests the title 'From Symmetry to Sophistry' and comments on Fletcher's comic genius :

> Its literary ideals were no longer intellectual, like those of Lily's audience, or moral, like Jonson's; they were ideals of behaviour, of manners and deportment. which the playwright presented in a heightened but uncritical form. Banter, artifice and a taste for the sensational, together with a sense of the absured, provided the bond between author and audience.[6]

It is as though 'romance' has been polished to suit the taste of the new audience This characteristic is invariably found in all Fletcher's plays.

Broadly speaking Fletcher's comedies may be divided into two groups. In the first place there is the comedy of manners, where character, to some extent at least, starts the action and determines the solution. Four comedies in which Fletcher had a share and which date between 1608 and 1614 offer no elements of adventure or romance. In *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* and such comedies as *Wit at Several Weapons*, *The Scornful Lady* and *Wit Without Money*, the content includes both extravagant fare and verbal repartee; and in the general artificiality of construction grossness and liveliness of wit and unsensational presentation of sex relations, the way is being prepared for the Restoration comedy of manners. But these comedies, strictly of London life, represent only a part of the generous contribution of Fletcher. A larger, and for the most part, a later group are those that, laying the scenes in foreign places, in Italy, France or Spain, exhibit elements more or less romantic. We have not to forget that realism and romance play an equal part in Fletcher's comedy. Only the emphasis or tone decides about the real nature of the play. This is a point often forgotten when we speak of the romantic elements in Shakespeare and Fletcher. Romantic, they are, for they see things in the 'mists of beauty and remoteness'. The realism of Fletcher however, is no small part of his dramatic effectiveness. But in the more representative plays that I propose to discuss the tone is graver and the animating motive more romantic.

Any consideration of Fletcher's romantic comedies should be preceded by an account of his first important play *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608-9) as it reveals certain aspects of Fletcher's romantic temperament and his allegiance to Italian poets. On the surface, Fletcher's play relates to Guarini's *Il Pastor Fido* (1585), but the resemblance scarcely goes beyond that. At the same time it would be going too far in claiming 'that neither plot, situation nor characters imitate

foreign models'.[7] It is true that the play relates most closely, perhaps, to Spenser than to Guarini or Daniel but the influence of the latter masters cannot be ignored.

The scenes in the pastoral drama are laid in Thessaly and the action in a nearby wood, reminding us of the bliss of the forest of Arden. The romantic glamour of the wood-land is there but the Pastoral and Masque make it different from *As You Like It*. Perhaps the sophisticated audience felt the artificiality of the design and called it a 'play of country-hired shepherds in grey cloaks'. Fletcher defended himself in his address to the reader thus : '. . . a pastoral to be a representation of shepherds and shepherdesses with their actions and passions, which must be such as may agree with their natures, at least not exceeding former fictions and vulgar traditions'. He planned his play along these lines and defended it boldly :

> A tragi-comedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no comedy, which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned; so that a God is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy.[8]

The play as it is, despite its failure on the stage, affords a greater relief from the courtly plays and the humour comedies. The intrigue in the play is complex but it can be reduced to a single theme. The theme is love, and the variations of love, and the characters make up a 'spectrum of lovers'. Men and women fall in love, are separated and united by beneficient powers. Virtue is rewarded; sin is condemned, and the repentant has the solace of forgiveness.

The Faithful Shepherdess, as Appleton points out, does betray Fletcher's youth and comparative immaturity. The characters lack depth and 'third-dimension' and the language, too, is essentially non-dramatic. Obviously Fletcher had not as yet mastered the highly-wrought situation, the change of pace in language and the variety of scene that stamp the later plays. But it would not be quite improper to suggest that this play shows the romantic temperament of Fletcher and

his preoccupations with the romantic pastoral type which brings his play somewhere, say, between *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* and *As You Like It*.

First published in 1639, *Monsieur Thomas* (1616) is one of the earliest unaided comedies of Fletcher. It enjoys a distinct place among his comedy of manner plays and romantic plays of Spanish origin. The play is a most amusing compound for high flown romance and extravagant farce. As the main plot (romantic action) is based on a story in the second part of D'Urfe's *Astree*, published in 1610, the play must have been written after that date and there are indications in it of a later revision.

The romantic action deals with the rivalry in love between an old gentleman (Valentine) and his young friend (Frank) for the former's betrothed (Cellide). The play begins with and centres round Valentine and his young friend Frank whom he has brought from Italian sojourns. After his return from foreign travels, Velentine enquires after the health of his betrothed from his sister Alice. He also introduces her to Frank whom he found a poor and needy gentleman at Valentia :

> I have brought a noble friend, I found in travel.
> A Worthier mind and a more temperate spirit.
>
> (*Works*, Vol. IV, Act I, Sc. 1)

Among those who come to greet Valentine after his travel is Hylas, a near relation of Sir Epicure Mammon and a fond lover of 'mature women' : 'These young colts are too skittish'. In Act II, Scence 1, we find Valentine romantically longing for marriage with Cellide :

> Our blessed hour comes on now,
> In which our loves, and long desires like rivers
> Rising asunder far, shall fall together. (Act II, Sc. 1)

He is, however, more anxious about the health of his friend who seems to have been afflicted with some mysterious disease. Actually he has fallen in love with Cellide but cannot express his sentiments for fear of hurting his benefactor's feelings. Valentine, as soon as he comes to know of Frank's

disease, decides to open his heart to Cellide. He tells her frankly that Frank loves her and that he is willing to give up his claims to her for his sake. Valentine further confides that his 'declining age' and his growing 'impotence' should be no reward for her faithful attachment to him. Cellide now realises that she is suffering because of two friends who love her and yet would like to sacrifice her for the rival :

> And now to show you that I am a woman
> Rob'd of her rest and fool'd out of her fondness.
> The Gentleman shall live, and if he love me,
> Ye shall be both my triumphs . . .
>
> (Act II, Sc. 4)

She, however, reprimands and curses him to die like a 'bankrupt fool' that flings away his treasure.

Ultimately, Cellide, following Valentine's requests, administers 'cordial' to love-sick Frank who declares that he would rather prefer to die than glory in his friend's misery. Cellide assures him of her love for him as Valentine is 'old and impotent.' Frank dissuades her from deserting her 'father, friend, herself, her faith' for a petty stranger. Valentine, then declares :

> Take her with all my heart, thou art so honest
> That 'tis most necessary I be undone.
>
> (Act II, Sc. 4)

When Cellide finds Frank cold and unresponsive, she declares that his constant memory would be 'Friend, companion and husband' to her.

Romantic love and sacrifice for friends is not uncommon in Italian stories and novelles. Fletcher gives the story a poignant touch by depicting the inner conflicts of Cellide and very successfully, works up the emotions of the lovers to a climax. The woman as usual is for suffering. Cellide plays her part exquisitely. Her nobility and graceful suffering remind us of some of Shakespeare's heroines, especially Viola in *Twelfth Night*.

In Act IV, Sc 1, Valentine is unhappy to know that his best friend has gone away. A neighbour, Michael, comes to enquire after Cellide whom he dreamt as being in a nunnery. Alice reports that Cellide has really gone away and Valentine starts cursing himself for his double loss. Michael, however offers his services to bring back Cellide from St. Katherine's nunnery and trace Frank if he has not already left the country. In Sc. 5, as Frank is getting ready to sail abroad, Michael appears with a warrant against him for stealing money from the house of his benefactor. Frank denies any theft except a jewel that was the 'first and last of his wealth'.

The final act brings us at the nunnery where the abbess is seen consoling Cellide. She on her part curses Valentine for bringing Frank from abroad and causing her so much suffering because she had started loving him passionately. In the meantime Thomas dressed as a spirit so terrifies the nuns that they start running helter-skelter. Inspite of the 'holy water' he refuses to clear away and demands : 'Out with this nun she is too handsome for ye' (Act V, Sc. 6). Both the abbess and Cellide, finally agree to obey the spirit. Thus she is procured to Valentine.

In the concluding scene, Frank is brought before Valentine and other family members He swears having worn the jewel upon his arm since his childhood and not stolen as alleged by others. Alice recognizes him to be Fransisco, his nephew, whom his brother had lost in Genoway Galleys. Frank narrates his pitiful story and his eventual rescue by Valentine. Valentine's happiness knows no bounds. Amidst family rejoicing he asks him to marry Cellide.

Lost child, discovery through jewels or amulet and family reunion are old stuff of romantic comedy but Fletcher adds new dimensions to the story by interweaving it with fanciful scenes. Thomas's encounter with the abbess and nuns is highly entertaining and has few parallels in English comedy.

The farce is beautifully interwoven with the romantic story of Valentine' In the relation of Thomas who gives the

piece its name and his father Sebastian, there is a variation from the conventional attitude of the elderly parent towards a escapegrace son. The farce centres on the comic dilemma which confronts Monsieur Thomas on his return from his travels. His father longs to see him in the role of a witty, high flying rake. But to his father's chagrin he is no longer 'mad Thomas' but a reformed character. The old man in sheer disgust threatens to marry in order to disinherit Thomas. Monsieur Thomas is more worried about his sweetheart Mary, who is sick of his riotous behaviour. Eventually with the help of his resourceful twin-sister, Dorothea, and through a series of strategems and disguise, he succeeds in the double reconciliation with his father and his mistress. His father recognizes him as a chip of the old block--*Father's own son* was an alternate title for the play---and the lady is content to take him for all his wildness.

Monsieur Thomas is a representative Jacobean comedy, which clearly shows Jonsonian interest in 'humours'. Old Sebastian is a typical 'humour', while Thomas and Mary foreshadow future Comedy of Manners characters like Mirabell and Millament. Thomas's strategems to win his mistress are not only highly entertaining but also suggestive of the social milieu. The romantic story of Valentine and Cellide suggests noble gesture, loyalty and sacrifice as sterling qualities. *Monsiur Thomas* is still an entertaining play for a reader ready to admit a suspension of moral scruples as well as of disbelief.

Fletcher's next important play *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1619) stresses the comic element and blends it with a high romanfic strain. The main plot is romantic and treats of love and war. The gallant prince Demetrius (son of the Greek king Antigonus) loves and is loved by Celia, a fair captive. The play opens with Celia moving about the outer gates of the palace to seek the prince. She notices the king followed by three ambassadors sent by Selecus, Lysimachus and Ptolomie. The three kings who are equal sharers with

Antigonus of what Alexander had, are opposing him with united power. The young Prince ridicules the three kings by charging that they have nothing of 'imperial dignities' or 'God-like actions', fit for the Princes. He persuades his father not to buy peace but to declare war against them. Celia is marvellously happy to see the Prince bubbling with material energy.

During his absence in the war, the old sensualist Antigonus is infatuated with the beauty of Celia and sets his bawds to bring her to court. The king praises his servant Mennipus for bringing news about Celia from the governess to whose charge the Prince had left her. The lustful king does not change his mind even when told that the Prince loves her extremely. He means to seduce her and thereby remove her from the path of his son. For this he sends rich presents through his bawds to lure Celia. Surrounded by evil agents, she resolves to face it all but she is also afraid of their machinations :

> bless me Heaven,
> What shall become of me ? I em in th' pitfall :
> O my conscience, this is the old viper . . .
>
> (Act III, Sc. 4)

Celia knows the danger of defiance. When confronted with the king (who meets her in disguise) she confounds him by rejecting the trinkets. She refuses to be 'the King's whore' and the 'chief commandress of his concubines'. She tells him the king after enjoying her beauty would transfer some of his Royal aches to her bones and leave her to perpetual shame. The king eventually confesses and seeks to be his 'own speaker'. When even this does not cut any ice, he resolves to find 'apter means' to enjoy her. Finally the king seeks to procure a love-potion from a magician to win her favour. Luckily for all concerned it is administered to the homorous lieutenant with imaginable comic consequences. The king is again disappointed in his mission when Celia flatly refuses his offer to become his queen as she feels herself a Queen

already, crowned by Demetrius's love. The denouement to this romantic venture is exquisite. The king curses himself for his lustful designs and swears to preserve her virginity : 'Live now for ever, and I to serve your vertues' (Act IV. Sc. 5).

On his return from a victorious war Demetrius is told by his father that the lady he loved, a creature far beneath him, has been put to death as a witch. Plunged in despair, Demetrius cuts himself off from all company. But the King convinced of her virtue sends Celia to his son gorgeously attired and decked with jewels. He at once suspects and denounces her as a 'subtle Circe'. In his anger he asks her to go away from his presence. Despite her tearful protestations the Prince remains adamant. In the end she too replies with a hurst of anger that leaves him speechless :

> I am above your hate, as far above it,
> In all the actions of innocent life,
> As the pure stars are form the muddy meteors.
>
> (Act IV Sc. 8)

In Act V. we notice the remorseful Prince trying to win back Celia through the good offices of his faithful soldier, Leontius. With much ado they are brought together again and it then appears that Celia, captive though she was, is the daughter of Celecus lost in the battle of Antioch, a recognition which of course, brings about the happy ending. Celia's words to the Prince are worthy of a noble heroine :

> Kneeling I give it too; kneeling I like ir;
> And from this hour, no envious spright ere part us.
>
> (Act V, Sc. 5)

The sub-plot depicting the 'humours' of the soldier, after whom the play is named, is not just an attempt to relish in the delineation of Jonsonian humour It is deftly interwoven with the main plot. The 'humorous lieutenant' is not exactly like one of Jonson's satiric creations. He is very much alive, a jolly, boisterous, mirth-provoking soldier. It is the peculiarity of the lieutenant in his career as a soldier that when he is in his usual ill-health owing to his dissipated habits, he

fights bravely. But when he has paradoxically been cured of a wound received in a battle his longing for the fray quite leaves him. It is only when he has been tricked into the belief that he is suffering from a mortal illness that he has again roused to a display of excessive martial valour. It is a whimsical conception, but it is carried through unflagging zest.

As the sub-plot reveals Ben Jonson's influence on Fletcher, the main plot shows the impact of Elizabethan romantic comedy, particularly of Shakespare. Love and war, disguise deception, faith in virtue, valour and loyalty are the characteristic elements of the story. Celia is undoubtedly among the most attractive heroines of Fletcher. She ranks with some of the best that Shakespeare produced. Her love for the Prince remains firm but piqued at his insinuation she shows another dimension of her character. Let virtue and innocence win her battle of love, she seems to imply, and she wins. Corruptions at the court and agents of evil deeds are exquisitely exposed by Fletcher in this comedy. Use of love potion and faith in magicians was common in earely seventeenth centuary literature but it had become a part of Elizabethan romant ic tradition since the appearance of *A Mid Summer Night's Dream* or even earlier in the plays of Greene and Lyly. Fletcher not only carries the tradition with him but also exploits contemporary dramatic modes to provide entertainment to Jacobean theatre-goers.

As a mere story play *The Humorous Lieutenant* is a masterpiece but it is more than that. Fletcher's high-pitched declamation is exactly suited to the fantastic contrasts in arms and courtesy that fill up half the play. His art of dramatic dialogue is at its best in the scenes between Demetrius and Celia. Fletcher's characters for once, are no puppets moving as he pulls the strings. Celia above all is Fletcher's most living and most lovable lady, tender, witty, chaste and proud, a very woman. He who can take no delight in this play will find nothing better in the author. In Fletcher's blend of comedy and romance there is nothing nearly so good.

Turning to the group of Fletcher's romantic plays which are certainly from Spanish sources, no less than four levy on the treasures of *Novelas Examplares*, of Cervantes. These are *The Chances*, *Th Queen of Corinth*, *Thc Fair Maid of the Inn* and *Love's Pilgrimage*. Among these plays *The Chances* deserves our special attention.

In *The Chances* (1615–25) we turn to the familiar Fletcherian background of an Italian city (Bolognia) and the strange adventures in which two young Spanish gallants become involved. Don John and Don Frederick have set their servants to trace an 'invisible beauty' of whom they have heard a lot in the city. The servants are sick of 'enquiries, dreams and revelations' and the masters are equally tired of locating this 'paradise preserved from public view' As luck would have it, Don John on one of his nocturnal prowlings comes across a woman who requests him to carry a 'bundle of fortune'. Elated, he accepts the bundle but actually it turns out to be Constantia's child (born of secret wedlock with the Duke of Feraro) whom she puts in the care of Don John. He feels punished for being so curious. 'And I am now bumfidled with a Bastard' ? (Act I, Sc, 6) His only hope is to request his landlady to accept the charge of the baby.

Don John's friend, Frederick meets Constantia while trotting the streets of Bolognia She warns him not to stay any longer in the street and further requests him to remove her immediately to a safer place Frederick carries the lady to his lodgings and assures her of safety. Out of gallantry he even rushes to rescue a gentleman from the hands of some marauders. Actually Constantia set him to save her husband from the hands of her brother, Petruccio (Governor of Bolognia who imagined their relations to be illict.

Perhaps in the whole range of Jacobean comedy there is nothing more entertaining than the scene in *The Chances* where the roaring and reproaching landlady of the gallants confounds them with her disapproval of their romantic ventures. She rebukes Don John for his foolishness in bringing a bastard to her place ;

Bring hither, as I say, to make my name
S ink in my neighb~ur's nostrils ? Your devises,
Your boots. got out of Alligant, and broken oaths ?

(Act I Sc. 9)

She is appeased only when Don John drenches her with a good round of draught'. The landlady again becomes furious when she discovers that her tenants have secretly lodged a woman in her house :

Ye may with shame enough
If there were shame amongst ye : nothing thought on,
But how ye may abuse my house ? not satisfied
With bringing home your Bastards to undo me,
But you must drill your whores here too ?

(Act III, Sc. 1)

The Duke is pursued by Petruccio and his kinsman but Don John rescues the Duke from the murderous clutches of the angry men. When the two gallants reach home they find Constantia cursing her stars for her misery. They also confront Petruccio at the Lodgings who tells them how the Duke has dishonoured his sister. It is at this stage that the two friends come to know the identity of the lady in question.

Don John accompained by Petruccio confronts the Duke in a valley and charges him of ruining a 'noble stock'. But the Duke makes a confession that Constantia is his legal wife. The angry brother is pacified and invites the Duke of Ferraro to accompany him to Bolognia. But they must first trace Constantia. When she is not found at Don John's dwellings they set out for a house where the landlady was supposed to have gone with the lady Actually the landlady fearing the immoral behaviour of the tenants had sought refuge in her brother's house. But the Duke and the Spaniards are misguided to a brothel where a whore of the same name (Constantia) meets the Duke. The Duke in great anger rebukes the Spaniards for the impudence. Finally they decide to find a wizard who can raise a figure and help them trace Constantia. They approach Vecchio's house which is actually the same house where the landlady has carried Constantia. Vecchio is supposed to be a magician and in his typical dress he raises the

figures of the landlady and Constantia. The landlady reveals that she brought the lady to the place to save her honour. Vecchio confesses that he is only a teacher of grammar and music and that he raised the figure of the two women for the sake of entertainment. The Dake and Petruccio thank the Spaniards for their trouble and the play ends with the usual happy note.

The Chances is remarkable not only for its romantic story and farcial situations but also for foreshadowing certain elements of the Restoration Comedy of Manners. The dialogue between the two gallants who relish hunting beauties in the streets of Bolognia is typical :

John : Ye talkt to me of whoring, let's have fair play,
Square dealing I would wish ye.
Frederick : When 'tis come
(Which I know never will be) to the issue,
Your spoon sha l be as deep as mine, sir.

(Act. II. Sc 1)

Similarly the 'song of liberty' sung in the brothel where the Duke and the Spaniards had gone to seek Constantia, fully bears testimony to the taste of the audience and the changes that were gradually creeping in English Comedy :

Buddir g beauty, blooming years
Were made for pleasure, farewell fears . . . .

(Act IV, Sc. 3)

The whore Constantia tickling the Duke of Ferraro introduces herself as one who can show as much variety in half an hour as other women can in half a year. We have certainly moved further from the world of court beauties and courtesans of the Elizabethan stage.

In this delightful comedy, Fletcher follows his original, *La Senora Cornelia,* with singular fidelity, catching not only the spirit, but the very atmosphere of his source. He has substituted for the dry humour of Spain the coarser and more boisterous humour óf England; and has added several minor personages and details of plot. The free and outspoken characters of the two young friends, with the humours of

Mistress Gillian. the landlady, kept *The Chances* long popular on the stage. The play contains a passage which well expresses Fletcher's self-estimate as a comic writer. In the final scene Vecchio, the illusionist, makes an apologia that sums up this play and Fletcher's own comic attitude : 'My end is mirth And pleasing, if I can, all parties'. The prolongue fully brings out Fletcher's theory of drama :

> Aptness for mirth to all, this instant Night
> Thalia hath prepar'd for your delight,
> Her choice and curious viands, in each part
> Season'd with varieties of Wit and Art;

Fletcher further holds 'sweet expression, quick conceit and familar language' to be his *forte*. Needless to say *The Chances* remains even to date one of the most readable of Fletcher's comedies

For *The Pilgrim* (1621) Fletcher turned to the popular prose romance of Lope de Vega. Pedro, a Spanish gentleman of Segovia, adopts the disguise of a pilgrim to carry on his wooing of Alindo whose father wishes her to marry Roderigo a wealthy suitor, who for political reasons has been banished from the city and has become Captain of an outlawed band. Flights, pursuits and disguises, strange happenings in the outlaws' camp and the surroundrng woods and in the city madhouse end in Pedro's union with Alinda and their all–round reconciliation.

As the play begins we find Alphonso very angry with his daughter Alinda for refusing to marry Roderigo He does not care for the advice of his friends, and asserts :

> Let her be rul'd; let her observe my humour,
> With my eyes let her see; with my ears listen.
>
> (Act I, Sc. 1)

Alinda protests against her father's obstinacy but finds herself helpless. Her only friend is her witty and faithful maid, Juletta, who tries to tickle and humour her with jokes

Alphonoso is annoyed to see beggars and pilgraims coming to his house to pay their tributes to the 'living monuments of goodness', Alinda. She, however, is moved by one of the

pilgrims whose affections seem to be too much for his youth and age. The pilgrim who is none other than Pedro, her lover in disguise, tells her that he is much comforted by her words. To her query as to what he wants. he replies : 'All that can make me happy; I want myself,' (Act I, Sc. 2)

In the meantime peeved by her father's rude behaviour, one night Alinda disappears from her house. Alphonso is mad with fury and admonishes her servants and her maid for neglect of duty. Julletta's explanation does not serve any purpose nor cools his anger.

> I think she is gone, because we cannot find her;
> I think she is weary of your tyranny,
> And therefore gone; may be she is in love;
>
> (Act II, Sc. 1)

When they fail to trace her whereabouts Alphonso swears to discover her himself.

Meanwhile, Alinda in disquise of a page is caught by Roderigo's outlaw friends. The captain is impressed by the appearance of 'the boy' and feels he could comfort him in sad hours. As luck would have it, Pedro is also caught by the outlaws and Roderigo recognizing him asks his men to kill him. But none of them comes forward to shed the blood of an innocent man. Finally he asks 'the boy' to do the job but he (she) pleads that it would be honourable to 'scorn him and let him go' for the present and seek revenge when he is armed. To this Roderigo agrees and Pedro is set free.

Roderigo is non-plussed to find that the 'beautiful boy' was Alinda in disguise who managed to secure Pedro's release and then herself gave a slip to the marauders. To add to the captain's miseries there comes Alphonso who has also been checkmated : 'How dost thou Captain ? I have been fool'd and jaded, made a dog bolt,' (Act III, Sc, 1) Juletta plays several tricks to try Alphonso's patience. She not only robs him of his hat and house but almost causes him nervous break-down by beating upon a drum in the jungle where he meant to seek his daughter.

After his release, Pedro accompanies a certain gentleman who offers to show him the castle and the city mad-house.

Pedro is moved to see the humours of the inmates. As the master is showing him round, Alinda enters dressed as a boy. Pedro asks him about the boy and is told that he was found in the town somewhat crazed and distracted and was sent to the asylum for recovery. After the master's exit, Pedro confronts the boy and addresses Alinda :

> Pedro, O my life . . .
> Alinda, O Pedro, Pedro
> Pedro, O my soul !
> Alinda, Let me hold thee
> And now come all the world, and all that hate me
> Pedro, Be wise, and not discovered.
>
> (Act III, Sc. 6)

In Act IV we find Alphonso's anger crossing all limits. He has been doubly outwitted by his own daughter and her maid. Convinced of the old man's sadism, Juletta thinks of a novel plan to punish him. Before she executes her plan strange things happen to Pedro and Roderigo. Alinda approaches as a fool and comforts Roderigo to an extent that he feels as if he has undergone a sea-change :

> I have been ill, and (which is worse) pursu'd it,
> And still run on : I must think better, nobler,
> And be another thing, or not at all.
>
> (Act IV. Sc. 2)

Fortunately for him Pedro appears from nowhere to save his life from some disgruntled farmers who had been looted by his men before. Roderigo is so impressed with Pedro's humanity that he swears to give up all enmity and become friendly with him.

Alphonso in his hectic search for Alinda reaches the madhouse and seeks the master's permission to inspect the rooms in the hope of tracing his daughter. Presently Juletta enters with a letter supposedly written by the Duke of Medina and addressed to the master. The letter said that Alphonso was mad and needed proper care in the asylum. Alphonso, when told that 'the boy' (Alinda) has run away from the asylum,

threatens to whip the master and the keepers for their negligence of duty. Upon this the master shows him his chamber and despite his protestations thrusts him inside the dark cell. Juletta asks the master not to spare him if he became rebellious : H' as flesh, and hide enough, he loves a whipping'. (Act IV, Sc. 3) Here is a hilarious situation. Alphonso, like Malvolio in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* is tricked by Juletta who acts like her counterpart, Maria, in Shakespeare's play. They all join to punish, the over-virtuous steward in the former play and the over-jealous father in *The Pilgrim*.

While Alphonso is consumed with anger in his cell Alinda and Juletta dodging Alphonso's friends, move about the forest. The forest scene reminds us of the Forest of Arden in *As you Like It* :

> Roderigo : How sweet these solitary places are !
> how wantonly
> The wind blows through the leaves and courts,
> and plays with 'em'!
> Hark how yond purling stream dances, and
> murmurs,
> The birds sing softly too !
> (Act V, Sc. 4)

In such a romantic atmosphere Pedro sighs fo his beloved, Alinda. And presently she is there but in disguise of an old woman accompained by her maid Juletta in the same garb. They recognize Pedro and Roderigo and bless them. Alinda further asks Pedro to go to Segovia and pay his tributes of prayer before 'the altar'. Roderigo is dazed. He believes the woods inhabited with 'rare dreams and wonders' : 'I would ever dwell here, For here is a kind of court of Reformation.' (Act V, Sc. 4) Alphonso's friends somehow come to know about the sad plight of their friend in the lunatic asylum. They approach the master and inform him about the counterfeit letter. He, on his part, taking pity on the man, restores him to their charge.

In the final scene (Sc. 6) the governor of Sergovia and other officers offer their prayers before the altar. Pedro and

Roderigo also seek God's mercy and forgiveness, Alphonso kneels and prays and declares :

> For my daughter I would pray
> But she has made a holy-day
> And needs not my devotion now
> Let her take her own course, Heaven,
> Whether it be odd or even.
>
> (Act V, Sc. 6)

In the meantime Alinda and Juletta enter dressed as shepherds. There is general reconciliation and forgiveness and the play ends with Alphonso's happy note.

Dr. Rosenbauch observes a likeness of temperament between Fletcher and Lope de Vega and finds this illustrated especially in their 'love of intrigue, of imbroglio, of disguisings, of successful love-making'[9] He could as well have added their tireless inventiveness and facile ability to turn away any material into acceptable drama. Like Lope he doubtless kept Plautus and Terence in his study but put them aside when the time came to write a comedy. Though *The Pilgrim* is not one of Fletcher's best plays, it was adopted in 1700 by Vanbrugh with a prologue, epilogue and masque written by Dryden. The play is worth reading as one of Fletcher's happiest experiments in the romantic comedy of Hispanic intrigue.

In *The Island Princes* written about 1621 Fletcher seems to have succeeded in exploiting the best traditions of Spanish and English drama. The play carries us into a region unfamiliar to London theatre-goers of the period, the Molucca islands.

The King of Tidora has been seized and imprisoned by the Governor of Ternate, and his place as ruler has been taken by his sister Quisara. Like Portia in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* she has many wooers : King of Bakan, King of Siana, the Governor of Ternate and Ruy Diaz, a leader among the Portuguese who have a fort in Tidora. Armusia, 'a goodly fellow and a brave companion' is the last to join the rank of Quisara's lovers.

Armusia feels enraptured by the romantic beauty of the island :

> We are arriv'd among the blessed islands,
> Where every wind that rises, blows perfumes
> And every breath of air is like an Incence,
> The treasures of the sun dwells here, each Tree
> As if it envied the old Paradice . . .
>
> (Act I, Sc. 1)

In such a beautiful setting love grows luxuriously. The suitors press their respective claims and even quarrel amongst themselves for the hand of the Princess. Quisara chides them for their love wrapt in violence and promises her hand only to the rescuer of her brother who bears his captivity and tortures wrth stoic constancy.

Encouraged by Quisara's promise, Armusia hatches up a plan to secure the King's release. He succeeds in his mission by causing general conflagaration in the Governor's gunpowder stores and creating terror and confusion. In the darkness of smoke, they speed away with the King in a boat. Quisara thanks the stranger for his bravery and scolds Ruy Diaz for his 'sloth'. The King in open court thanks Armusia for his noble feat and announces suitable award for him. But Armusia insists that the Princess is the only reward acceptable to him. The King is inclined to ask his sister to fulfil her promise but finding her vacillating in her moods, asks Armusia to be patient in his suit towards Quisara,

Ruy Diaz is afflicted with a mysterious melancholy since the King's rescuer, Armusia, has proved to be a formidable rival. Armusia on his part is equally sad and dejected. His friends advise him to play the He-man in this game of love but he chooses his own strategy—visiting the Princess in her bed wrth the connivance of the maid. He is rebuked by Quisara for his rude impudence but he goes on pleading for mercy. In the meantime Ruy Diaz enters the Princess' chamber and is infuriated at the sight of Armusia. He even charges

her of infidelity. Quisara bursts in anger and rejects him as a worthless lover :

> But being nothing but a sound, a shape,
> The meer sign of a soldier--of a lover.
> The dregs and draffy part, disgrace and jealousie,
> I scorn thee; and contemn thee.
>
> (Act III, Sc. 1)

Meanwhile the arch-rival, the Governor of Ternate being checkmated by Armusia's valiant tricks adopts another device to win the Princess. He goes in disguise of a Moor-Priest to the King and succeeds in almost mesmerizing him. He asks the King to beware of the Portuguese who came to the island as beggars but soon became prosperous by sucking the blood of the poor Islanders.

Interestingly enough, a duel between Armusia and Ruy Diaz in which the former defeats the Captain. results in their reconciliation. Ruy Diaz is so pleased with his rival's behaviour that he swears to be friendly with him in future This metamorphosis reminds us of Pedro and Roderigo reconciliation in *The Pilgrim*.

When Armusia has shown proof of his noble nature and his devotion, Quisara puts him suddenly to 'the utmost trial' by bidding him 'worship our gods'. Religion plays but a small part in Fletcher's dramatic canon but here something of sacred fire touches Fletcher's pen in Armusia's indignant refusal to forsake his faith. He declares to Quisara that he will kick her 'mammetgods' into puddles. He rhus plays into the hands of the Governor of Ternate who disguised as a priest, urges the reluctant King of Tidore to seize and threaten with torture and death his earstwhile deliverer for dishonouring their gods. The unflinching composure of Armusia effects what his eloquence could not do--Quisara announces that she will embrace his faith end share his fate. She condemns her brother for his ingratitude and charges 'the priest' of cruetly :

> I could curse thee too
> Religion and severity has steel'd thee
> Has turn'd thy heart to stone; thou hast made
> the gods hard too.
>
> (Act V, Sc. 1)

The Priest surmises : 'They must dye both, And suddenly, they will corrupt all else.' But in animated closing scenes, the Portuguese rescue the two lovers by turning the guns of their fort upon the city. The villainous Governor of Ternate is unmasked. The King is baffled at this discovery and he gladly agrees to the union of Armusia and Quisara. Admist rejoicing he orders :

> To prison with this dog, there let him howl
> And if he can repent. sigh out his villainies.
>
> (Act V. Sc. 1)

The final words of the King are characteristic :

> Come Princes,
> Come friends and lovers all, come noble gentleman,
> No more guns now, nor hates but joyes and triumphs.
> An universal gladness fly about us, (Ibid)

The Island Princes is romantic in more than one sense : idyllic setting of the Island; beauty surrounded by lovers; King abducted and imprisoned; his release by a devil-may-care noble, fights and duels, gun-powder strategy and final conversion of the Islanders to the Christian faith

Though the last Acts of the play smack of religious conflict, yet it cannot be said that a religious theme underlines *The Isalnd Princes*. Fletcher has no real interest in the friction between East and West. He uses the Indian locale merely for its novelty, and in using this setting he has considerable success. The ingenuity of the plot coupled with its idyllic setting make it doubly romantic. One finds elements of *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* beautifully interwoven with the Spanish tale. It is obvious why the later Restoration audiences, captivated by the exoticism of *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor* welcomed Fletcher's play and delighted in the opportunities it provided for spectacular display.

Apart from the plays we have discussed. it would be relevant in this context to refer to a few other roamntic plays of Fletcher in which he had collaborated with Massinger. It

is generally admitted that of all the Fletcher-Massinger collaboratiens, their comedies have perhaps the greatest interest. The earliest of these *The Little French Lawyer* (1619) has little to recommend it. *The Spanish Curate* (1622) also lacks in real merits. Far more interest attaches to *The Sea Voyage* (1622). Here the story turns upon castaways and ship-wreck: and the various humours of a ship's company in terror from storm, quarrelling over discovered treasure and near the extremity of starvation, are dramatized with much vigour. Clearly inspired by Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, this play foreshadows the Dryden-Davenant adaptation of this romantic comedy. But the plot is an even more wildly improbable one than Shakespeare's. Everywhere the play is marked by haste and carelessness. The play serves as a stepping-stone between the romantic comedy of Shakespeare and the Restoration theatre.[10]

The stories which Fletcher uses for his plays are, perhaps, never of his own invention. Like other Jacobean masters, he draws from historical or quasi-historical sources but he deals with these as with romances. He took stories from Bandello (through Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*) from *Astree* of D' Urfe and from d'Audiguier; but the material which suited his genius best was that which he is known to have borrowed from *Historia de Auxelio y de Ysabela Fl Espenol Gerardo*, no less than three of the *Novelas Exemplares* of Cervantes. But, even here, he usually follows his method of combining two separate stories, so that the play might not be deficient in persons and incidents. He works them out side by side establishing such links between them as he conveniently could but not always successfully. The contemporary Spanish stage might have supplied him with abundant materials and its methods in comedy were not very unlike his own.

Fletcher worked over suggestions for stories to suit the tastes of the Jacobean audience and followed the formula of sensation and surprise. Besides Spanish drama, he made use of practically everything that the Elizabethan drama provided. He can present a string of usual tricks by which a scapegrace nephew cozens an uncle or an usurer, and he can make his

lovers wander in a forest and discourse beautiful sentiments. Disguises, duels, drunken scenes, lovers caught by husbands, and long lost children discovered by their parents are common. The action is always brisk. Fletcher continues his situations on two principles, first, nothing is what it seems to be; second, whatever, is happening, something different will succeed. 'If a lady seems to be yielding to her lover, he is likely to get his ears boxed. If a coffin is brought on the stage, the corpse will come to life.'[11] Comedy is kept lively by surprise and change. Life is usually gay and is always exciting.

Plots and situations are the essence of Fletcher's theatrical comedy. To them characterization is readily sacriffced. Indeed Fletcher has little interest in character apart from its service to dramatic situation. The type usual in the early Beaumont and Fletcher romances reappear in the later comedies—the courtly hero, the lustful tyrant, the poltroon, the evil woman, and the lovelorn heroine. The court poltroon more often is reduced to the rascal and the blunt soldier is often a merry fellow who stands by his friend and amuses the ladies. Clowns of the Shakespearean story rarely appear. Humorous and eccentric persons are rather less common than in other drama of the time but they are often utilized to help out the comic effect. Fletcher's imagination is not fully to be trusted to present the simple and natural efforts of true modesty and chastity in women, and this is an undeniable blot upon his work in the higher drama.[12] His heroines, ne doubt, witty and resourceful, are wanting in the poetical tenderness of a Viola or an Aspatia. Their chestity, too, is much of the formal order. Nevertheless, Fletcher's Celia and Oriana, Mary and Alinda, are, to some extent, akin to Shakespeare's Beatrice and Rosalind.

According to Edward Philips. Fletcher does not seem to have had any conscienee, artistic or moral. 'His morals, like his poetry, are ready for any situation but are incapable of sustained and consistent effort. He depicts the conduct and ideals of gentlemen and ladies but only in accord with the

standard of his own time and even then not often without serious blemishes and lapses.[13] In his comedies, he gives us examples of all varieties of love-making. His lovers are seen as models of restraint or eagar young animals or both in successive scenes. He has less of moral sentiment than Beaumont and less of moral principle than Massinger. Comedy for Fletcher was neither a means of reforming society nor of idealizing life, it was only an entertainment.

The plays of Beaumont and Fletcher, in which obviously Fletcher's romantic comedies and tragi-comedies predominate, enjoyed great popularity right to the closing of the theatres in 1642. In the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668) Dryden remarked : 'Their plays are now the most pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of them being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's[14] Yet Fletcher's name is now never, as it was for 150 years, automatically bracketed with Shakespeare's The plays have sunk very low indeed. Coleridge accused them of 'ultra royalism' and 'hollow extravagance'[15] while more recentiy they have been thought of as contentedly mirroring the more commonplace intellectual and sensual pleasures of their time G.C. Macaulay in his essay in the *Cambridge History* charged them with looseness of construction and superficiality in charaterization. T. S. Eliot in his essay on Jonson dubbed these plays as 'superficial with a vecuum behind them.'[16] Professor Leech in his study of Fletcher observes : 'The essential property of the new Beaumont and Fletcher drama consists in its dislocation (the norm being Elizabethan drama) . . . There is no firm ground for reverence, or for a cosmic scheme, in the great majority of plays which deeply bear John Fletcher's impress.'[17] There is no denying the fact that the romantic plays of Fletcher do little to explain the human condition, their comment on contemporary society is trifling, their psychology and politics are often (not always) jejune. They seem too consciously srtificial and too proudly elaborate. Yet, inspite of his deficiency in the highest values, Fletcher does employ great resources of poetry and invention

in the creation of comedy. It is not his art to deal with subtleties of behaviour, but to deal subtly with obvious types of behaviour. His comedies reveal a lively world where anything may be expected in truthful or fantastic mimicry of reality.

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TENNESSEE WILLIAMS: THE EVOLUTION OF HIS DRAMATIC FORM

Tennessee Williams, like Shaw, is fond of appending forewards and prefaces to his plays. These prefaces, like Shaw's, are not particularly helpful in our understanding and appreciation of these specific works. In some cases they seem to project the unrealized intentions of the author and in others, they are too general. But from these statements we can reconstruct Williams' theory of 'plastic theatre' and dramatic form, which, in turn, can serve as a satisfactory basis for making an independent study of his plays. Drama for Williams is a form of personal lyricism and his achievement as a dramatist, I feel, can best be appreciated in terms of the evolution of a dramatic form for translating a subjective vision of life in terms of concrete and vivid dramatic realization.

A study of the themes and substance of Williams' plays reveals his affinities with Strindberg, Lorca, Chekhov, Pirandello, O'Neill and Lawrance. It also underscores his debt to Freudian psychology and, to a greater extent, to Jungian concept of the collective unconscious. A study of his concept of dramatic form and theory of drama, on the other hand, underlines his debt to the ideas of Richard Wagner, Adolphe Appia, Gordon Craig, Antonin Artaud, Luigi Pirandello and Bertolt Brecht. Like Wagner, Appia and Craig, he enriched his concept of the 'plastic theatre' with elements borrowed from architecture, painting, music, ballet and cinema. A close attention to his dramatic form and techniques of presentation also reveals the influence of modern art, particularly of impressionism, expressionism, surrealism and, to some extent,

cubism. Along with these, we can also see the impact of the symbolist movement in poetry and art on his dramatic work. These are the components of his synthetic theatre

For Williams, drama is not an illustration of an abstract idea or a well-defined philosophy of life, but a search for meaning in a fragmented universe, and the dramatic form is the chief expression of this search. According to him, drama is not predominantly a linguistic expression but a concrete presentation. 'A play in a book', he points out, 'is only a shadow of the play, and not even a clear shadow of it'. It is 'hardly more than an architect's blue-print of a house not yet built, or built and destroyed'. 'The message of art', he asserts, 'lies in the abstract beauties of form.' For him, 'the colour, the grace, the structural pattern in motion, the quick interplay of live beings . . . these things are the play; not words on paper, nor thought or idea of an author.'[1]

Drama for Williams is a projection of the totality of existence in concrete images and symbols. It is concerned with the realities of subconscious mind and the dream world as much as with surface existence and rational world. Consequently the realistic technique, he believes, is inadequate for the purposes of a dramatist. 'Life, reality and truth', Williams asserts, 'is an organic thing, and cannot be depicted photographically. It can only be translated in concrete symbols and images by poetic imagination.'[2] Like the surrealists, Williams believes, that, along with the rational universe, there is another realm of existence, which is rooted in fantasy, imagination and intuition, and that this world, despite the resistence of logic and reason, is ever striving to come into being. Hence the task of an artist, as well as of a psychologist, consists in incorporating this more inclusive realm in our conception of the world. And the problem of dramatic form is chiefly the problem of capturing and transforming these elusive experiences of the subconscious mind. These experiences can be contained in symbols and images rather than in abstract statements. 'We all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images,' writes Williams in his preface

to *Camino Real*, 'and I think all human communication is based on these images as are our dreams.' The legitimate function of these symbols, he points out, is 'to say a thing more directly and simply and beautifully than it could be said in words.'[3]

For Williams drama holds special fascination as it is a kind of arrested movement, as the characters in a play are immune against the corrupting rush of time. And it is also a form of life affirmation, since 'snatching the eternal out of the desperately fleeting is the great magic truth of human existence.'[4] And here, Williams is close to Pirandello's concept of dramatic art. Pirandello juxtaposes the coherence, completeness and arrested dynamism of a work of art against fleeting, diffused and unifinished character of human existence. For him art is perhaps the only possible way of creating meanig in life. But it is a desperate form of life affirmation, since this coherence is achieved at the expense of the liquid warmth of actual life processes. For Williams, too, dramatic form is a means of creating order and meaning in fleeting and chaotic experiences of life. Consequently in Tennessee Williams, a technical resolution or the evolution of a more complex and imaginative form is often a measure of a greater depth of experience or maturity of vision. Yet there is no finally perfected form to which he is committed. For Williams, as Esther M. Jackson points out, has rejected the static structure of classical drama and is committed to the creation of an anticlassical form, which elevates lyric above poetry, spectacle above thought and passion above reason. even if it can capture only 'fragmentary visions of reality--brief moments of truth'. Even so, in his successive plays, we notice a progressive attempt to enlarge these 'fragmentary visions of reality' and make the 'brief moments of truth more authentic and compelling'.

As the above discussion shows, Williams' approach to drama is subjective and lyrical, his concept of form organic and experimental and method of presentation concrete. For realization of these objectives he has made ample use of visual and auditory resources of drama and the 'multi dimensional

language' of the theatre. He has explored the artistic potentialities of its various elements like space, volume, line, form, colour, movement, light, shade, sound and music. And these elements are used not only to provide aesthetic pleasure and thrill, but also to articulate the emotional and philosophical content of his plays.

In the present study I propose to trace the evolution of dramatic form in Tennessee Williams with reference to five of his major plays, viz., *The Glass Menagerie* (1945), *Camino Real* (1953), *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), *The Night of Iguana* (1961), and *The Milk Train Does Not Stop Here Anymore* (1963). These I consider to be the most striking and significant examples of form that enabled him to enlarge his vision of life and intensify his exploration of contemporary human situation, and as such, important landmarks in his progress as a dramatist.

II

The Glass Menagerie (1945), variously characterized as a lyrical drama, a mood play and a poetic image has been identified by Williams as 'a memory play'. It is so both in technique and substance. The successive scenes in the play are supposed to be the reverie of its narrator –Tom Wingfied– who is also a character in the play. In substance it is a reshaping of Williams' own experiences of his early youth. The play is not only personal and lyrical, but also has autobiographical overtones. The situation and dilemma of the three protagonists closely resembles the situation and experiences of the author's family at Saint Louis in the thirties. *The Glass Menageri*e is conceived as a poetic image and here Williams has emyloyed what might be called 'the poetry of stage'. The play is episodic. It presents seven scenes that spontaneously arise fom memory and vaguly merge into silence. These scenes gradually unfold the dilemma cf three characters, viz., Amanda (mother), Laura (daughter) and Tom (son), caught up in the web of cicumstances and crushed by suffering. The slow destruction of the family is presented egainst the social background' of economic depression in

the thirties, when, in Williams' words, 'the huge middle class of America was matriculating in a school for the blind' and while there was revolution and Guernica in Spain, in America there was only 'shouting and confusion'. This background lends generality and social significance to the personal sufferings and desperate struggle of the protagonists. But, at the same time, the disintegration of a vulnerable family obliquely suggests the erosion of a delicate and vulnerable southern culture by an impersonal, callous and commercialized mode of existence. This point is brought home, effectively, in the delicate poetry of the last scene Tom's nostalgia for the past and his regrets for his sister are touched by a general sense of loss and homelessness :

> I left Saint Louis. I descended the steps of the firescape for the last time...I travelled around a great deal. The cities swept about me like dead leaves—leaves that were brightly coloured but torn away from the branches. (p. 313)

And Tom's last touching farewell to the memory scene : 'Blow out your candles Laura--for now-a-days the world is lit by lightning . . . and so good bye . . . ' (p. 313) is also a farewell to a delicate and personal sense of life that has become an anachronism in a fast moving, mechanized and competitive world.

The drama, as mentioned above, revolves round the dilemma of three members of a family. Amanda, the mother, is the most articulate and vivid figure in this trio but the artistic focus is on Laura--the least articulate of the three characters. The drama projects her plight--her complete withdrawal from the world of reality. This alienation and escape is symbolized in her exclusive preoccupation with old records and 'the glass menagerie' as well as in her limp, The successive scenes also reveal her mother's desperate efforts to find a suitor for her, but we know that Amanda is fighting a losing battle. In her encounter with Jim--the gentleman caller--Laura is momentarily awakened to a new sense of life, but her radiance is like the 'radiance of a translucent glass touched by light--a monentary radiance not

actual, not lasting' (p. 231). On the whole, Laura is less of a realistically conceived, psychologically motivated character and more of a poetic image that creates a mood, crystalizes the emotional content of the play and symbolises the slow extinction of a delicate and vulnerable way of life.

On the other hand, Amanda is a vivid and fully realized character. Her personality is a unique blend of absurdity and pathos. Her constant nagging, her dated dress style, her naive pride in the 'gifted personalities' of her children and fantastic stories about 'seventeen gentlemen callers' underscore her as an absurd old woman. But her touching concern for her daughter and her brave desperate struggle in an indifferent, impersonal and incomprehensible world win our admiration and sympathy. Amanda is a vigourous woman but she too is enveloped in illusions and dreams. In her desperate need for identity and reassurance, she has transformed her past into a myth of glory and romance which compensates for her present drab existence. Her struggle is of no avail as she is unable to comprehend the vast impersonal forces that govern her existence or even to face the stark realities of the present situation. But her involvement, vigour and unique style make her conspicously alive. Her character is drawn with an uncompromising realism, psychological insight and dramatic tact.

Tom, her son, too, is deeply involved in the situation but his need to break away and embrace a fuller and more spontaneous life is equally great. For Tom—who much against his inclination is employed in a warehouse-is a poet and believes that 'Man by instinct is a lover, a hunter and a fighter' and none of these instincts is given much play in the warehouse, or even in the domestic scene which he finds cramping and uninspiring. His attitude towards his family is both touching and ambivalent.

In *The Glass Menagerie* Williams has employed a non-realistic technique. It has been called a mood play, and this mood is created with the help of images, symbols and other poetic devices. The central symbol is the glass menagerie

itself, which suggests, not only Laura's isolation and escape, but also the general vulnerability of the situation. The firescape entrance too, as Tom points out, 'has a touch of accidental poetic truth as all these huge building are burning with the slow and implacable fire of human desperation' (p.234). Several other details like Laura's limp, the unicorn and the failure of electric light as well as Tom's addiction and Laura's sickness operate both on realistic and symbolic levels, The use of light and music, too, is symbolic and poetic. Of music Williams says ;

> A single recurring tune. 'glass menagerie' is used to give emotional emphassis to suitable passages .it weaves in and out of preoccupied consciousness...it is the lightest, most delicate music in the world, and perhaps the saddest...when you look at a piece of delicetely spun glass. you think of two things; how beautiful it is and easily it can be broken. Beth of these ideas should be woven in the recurring tune (p. 230).

Similary the use of light, too, is not merely descriptive and functional but suggestive and poetic. In the production notes Williams points out :

> The light in the play is non-realistic. In keeping with the atmosphere of memory the stage is dim. Shafts of lighr are focussed on selective ereas, acrors. sometime in contradlstinction to what is the apparent centre···The light upon Laura should be distinct from others having a pristine ciarity such as light used in the early religious portfaits of female saints ot Madonnas (p. 231)

These poetic devices contribute to the lyrical atmosphere of the play. The setting too—a bare structure of transparent walls—is non-realistic. But it is expressionjstic rather than symbolic. The visual shock provided by the skeleton set emphasises the non-logical nature of the play and selective, arbitrary function of memory in reshaping the substance of experience. It also suggests and facilitates the duel function of Tom as actor and narrator. Williams also introduced the Brechtian device of projecting images and 'legends on the screen' but it did not blend with the personal and lyrical atmosphere of the play and was dropped in subsequent productions.

The Glass Menagerie represents a successful blend of impressionistic, expressionistic and symbolic modes for the dramatization of realistic material. This realism can be seen in the initial situation as well as in characterization, particularly in the delineation of Amanda's character. In the final scenes Jim O' Corner, too, is introduced as a 'realistic character'. In Tom's words 'an emissary from the world of reality that we were somehow set apart from.' And Tom, with his poet's weakness for symbols tries to turn him into a 'long delayed but always expected something that we live for' (p. 235). He is, however, considerably less real than the other three characters and his symbolic function, too, is rather laboured and single-dimensional. Jim's presence, however, adds to the complexity of the play's theme as he represents the success ideal and materialistic outlook of a competitive society--a theme that was to be treated more ruthlessly by Edward Albee in his several plays.

From the technical point of view, Tom is the most important character. He is simultaneously involved in the action and also detached from it. He reshapes the material of memory and comments upon it. The successive scenes represent Tom's attempt to come to terms with his past. His position is parallel to the author's who is deeply involved in the situation but is also trying to achieve artistic distance through the creation of an appropriate dramatic form, and thus to come to terms with his past. The achieved resolution is artistic rather than moral or philosophical. *The Glass Menagerie* is a unique blend of lyricism and detachment--of poetry and pathos. But this artistic perfection is a corollary of its limited canvas and the intensely personal nature of its theme. And in this respect the play was both an artistic triumph and a dead end.

III

Camino Real, on the other hand, is ambitious and has a much larger canvas. It is, perhaps, the most ambitious work in the entire Williams cannon. Williams meant it to be an allegory of modern times. In the foreword to the

play he says : 'It is nothing more or less than my conception of the time and world I live in, and its people are mostly archetypes of certain basic attitudes with those mutations that would occur if they had continued along the road to this hypothetical turning point in it'.[7] These 'archetypal' characters, borrowed from legend history, literature and contemporary life include Don Quixote, the eternal idealist, Jaques Casanova, the eternal lover, Lord Byron, the eternal artist in search of reality, Margurite, the lost but touching woman, Baron de Charlus, a decadent aristocrat, Lord Mulligan, a business tycoon, and Kilroy, the contemporary American Everyman. Besides these there are numerous others including businees magnates, gypsies, beggars, prostitutes, vendors, survivers, street cleaners and fugitives. The drama is supposed to represent the contemporary situation in a legendary and historical perspective.

The setting is elaborate and impressive. It represents the plaza of a seaport, vaguely suggesting Havana, Shanghai, Casabalanca, New Orleans etc. This plaza is the microcosmic image of the 'absurd universe' and the action of the play a modern version of Inferno. On one side of this plaza are luxary hotels and shops with 'dummies looking out into the plaza with painted smiles'; on the other side flea-bags hotels, gypsy stalls, pawn shops and other paraphernalia of a desperate existence. In the middle is a fountain which remains dry until the last few moments of the action and in the rear an ancient wall with an archway and a great flight of steps leading to 'Terra Incognita' representing the unknown but possible way to freedom. The symbolic intentions of the author can be seen in several stage directions too, like 'loud singing of the wind 'as the curtain opens or 'flickering of white radiance . . . as though day break were a white bird caught in a net and struggling to rise 'or the phoenix painted on silk and to be lighted now and then in course of the play since resurrections are so much a part of its meaning' (Prologue). Several other details are meant to operate as symbols, like the street cleaners who sweep away the dead bodies of the

unfortunate people who have somehow strayed into this land of no return. or La Madrecita--the blind singer who is often presented in the attitude of Michelangelo's 'Pieta''. or the unchartered plane 'Fugitivo' representing the possibility of an undignified escape for the less sensitive people. or the fountain that begins to flow as Kilroy picks up courage to leave through Terra Incognita and Casanova and Margurite accept each other.

The play is divided into a prologue and sixteen 'Blocks', which follow each other in quick succession. Gutman is the major domo who announces the 'Blocks' and presents the action, and Don Quixote the 'Dreamer' whose dream the entire play is supposed to be. And this dream is meant to be a pageant or a masque, in which, 'old meaning will be remembered and possibly new ones discovered (Prologue). But in this modern Inferno every thing is topsy turvy. Casanova, the legendry lover and symbol of virility, is old and impotent and is to be crowned as the 'King of Cuckolds'. Margurite Gautier or Camille, the most beautiful and famous courtesan of literature, who once took Paris by storm, is a pathetic aging woman who has to 'pay for her pleasure' and the young men, employed for the purpose, rob and humiliate her in the bargain. Byron, the great Romantic poet, can listen only to hired musician behind a row of artificial trees . . instead of the single pure stringed instrument of his heart' (Block 8). The dead bodies are carried away by the street cleaners in garbage cans. Love, Romance, Death, Honour all are shorn of their dignity and all those who enter this port of no return have to pay only one price of admission--DESPERATION. On the other hand the Gypsy claims to possess the cure of all ailments and an answer to all perplexing questions. This state of desperation, hopelessness and anxiety is summed up in Margurite's speech to Casanova :

> What are we sure of ?... Not even our existence. and whom can we ask the questions that torment us ?···'What is this place ?' ..'Where are we ?'.....What else are we offered ?... the never broken procession of little events that assure us that we and the strangers about us are still going on. Where ? Why ? and the perch we hold is unstable. We

are threatened with ev ction, for this is the port of entry and departure, there are no permanent guests here.....We're lonely. we're frightened. We hear the street cleaners piping. not far away So now and again, though we've wounded each other time and again—we strech out hands to each orher in the dark, that we c n't escape from .we huddle together for some dim communal comfort—and that is what passes for love on this terminal strech of road thet used to be royal (Block 10).

It is clear from the above passage that what Williams is attempting here is to create an image of human existence, and with his emphasis on uncertainty, impermanencnce, loneliness and absurdity of the scheme of things, he is fairly close to the existentialist position. Moreover, Williams, like the existentialists, is not satisfied with painting a vivid picture of the harrowing human situation, but proceeds to suggest the possible modes of salvation. Margurite believes that 'tenderness, the violets in the mountains can't break the rocks'. But Casanova believes that they can, if only we believe in them and allow them to grow'. Lord Byron who believes that 'there is a time for departure, even when there is no certain place to go to', and leaves through Terra Incognita, suggests another possibility of freedom which is a 'leap in the dark'. But the dramatic focus is on Kilroy, the modern Everyman—a young American of little education, but with a 'heart of gold as large as a baby's head'. Kilroy is a curious mixture of absurdity and idealism of clownish blunders and engaging warmth. He is an 'absurd man' an 'anti-hero' but also a modern Ulysses in search of meaning in the unnamed ports of the world. He is robbed, humiliated and destroyed in 'Camino Real', but like the phoenix, he can still rise from his ruins and make the crucial decision of leaving through Terra Incognita. Kilroy, as Esther M. Jackson points out, 'is a symbol of all maimed creatures, deprived, mutilatad and homeless', and in him 'Williams symbolizes mankind's capacity for absurd suffering on behalf of others and for himself'. According to her, 'His destruction and resurrection suggest the possibility of a hope for humanity.[8]

Camino Real is a bold and ambitious venture, both in its form and substance. But it is not without its predecessors. Williams' at least partially conscious models appear to be

Strindberg's *Dream Play* and *Road to Damascus*. The structural pattern of *Camino Real* bears a striking resemblence to the first part of *Road to Damascus*. The device of the dreamer, too, seems to be borrowed from the earlier play and even the title 'Camino Real' brings to mind the title of Strindberg's monumental work. The sixteen blocks on 'Camino Real' seem to parallel seventeen scenes in *Road To Damascus*. A striking resemblence in the opening remarks of the two plays bears testimony to the closeness of their authors' intentions. In his introduction to *Dream Play* and *Road To Damascus* Strindberg points out that in these plays the author has 'tried to imitate the disjointed but apparently logical pattern of a dream', Consequently, 'anything may happen, everything is possible. On the insignificant groundwork of realities, the imagination spins and weaves its own patterns--a mixture of memories, experiences, unfettered fancies and improvisations . . But a single consciousness sways them all--that of the Dreamer' [9]

Of *Camino Real* Williams says :

> A certain convention of the play is its existence outside of time in a place of no specific locality ...My desire was to give the audience my own sense of something wild and unrestricted that ran like water in the mountains, or clouds changing shape in a gale, or the continually changing and transforming images of a dream.10

But despite these obvicus similarities, *Camino Real* falls shart of the depth and complexity of *Road to Damascus*. It also lacks the freedom and spontaneity of the earlier work and inevitability of its form. Williams has adopted a symbolic mode, but his characters, though touching and convincing in themselves, fail to function as symbols in a larger symbolic framework. Others like 'Fugitivo' and 'street cleaners' are rather too obvious. The play is not quite symbolic and surrealistic as Williams intended it to be. It is a combination of fantasy and allegory. But it only partially succeeds as an allegeory of modern times, for Williams' point of view, though touching and relevant, lacks complexity, and the central vision of the drama is lost in the jungle of details and the procession of events.

Another dramatic work that *Camino Real* brings to mind is the dream interlude in Shaw's *Man and Superman*, i.e., 'Don Juan in Hell'. The action of 'Don Juan in Hell' takes place outside of time and recognizable space and in it contemporary fictional characters appear as legendary and mythical characters and are seen in the perspective of eternity. It goes without saying that Shaw has a greater degree of intellectual clarity, but the dream interlude has little dramatic action or human interest. It is more or less a witty, inspired philosophical debate in a dramatic mode while *Camino Real* is rich in particularity and human interest.

On the whole, the *Camino* is a significant landmark in Williams' progress as a dramatist. It broadened his intellectual and moral horizon and enabled him to explore new potentialities of his medium. Many of his later plays seem to emanate from it. It contains interesting and touching characters, ingenious scenes, acute observations, sensitive perceptions and memorable lines, like :

'The violets in the mountains can break the rocks if you believe in them and allow them to grow'. (Jaques Casanova)

'Heart is a sort of instrument that translates noise into music, chaos into order . . . a mysterious order'. (Lord Byron)

'Everything is for a while. For a while is the stuff that dreams are made of'. (Kilroy)

'Revolutions only need good dreamers who remember their dreams'. (Gutman)

'Caged birds accept each other, but flight is what they long for'. (Margurite)

'We are all of us guinea pigs in the laboratory of God. Humanity is just a work in progress'. (The Gypsy).

IV

Suddenly Last Summer is another daring experimental drama that defies definition and eludes a clear cut interpretation. It is a short play consisting of four scenes, much less ambitious in its scope than *Camino Real*. But exhibiting a grater concentration, spontaneity, organic unity and projecting a highly personal, disturbing and authentic vision of life.

The play revolves round the story of Sebastian Venable's life and death, variously reconstructed by his mother, Violet Venable and cousin, Catherine Holly. According to Mrs Venable

Sebastain was a poet *par excellence*, whose work was his life and whose life was a work of art. A refined aristocrat and a lover of beauty, he was always surrounded by a little court of beautiful and gifted people that protected him from the ugly and unpleasant realities of the surrounding world. His life was meticulously ordered. Each summer, while travelling with his mother, he created a poem, after nine month's preparation. Only 'last summer', he went abroad, not with his mother, but with his cousin--Catherine; and he did not write his poem, but died. And according to Mrs. Venable, 'the world lost a great deal' when she lost her son 'last summer'.

This image of Sebastian as a refined aristocrat, a fastidious perfectionist and a gifted poet is rudely disturbed by Catherine's account of his last days and death, creating a vision of horror, violence and perversity. According to her, Sebastian was a homosexual who 'used' his mother to procure young men, but when Mrs. Venable was disfigured by stroke, took Cathrine with him and used her for the same purpose. But half way through their sojourns abroad, he started losing his nerve—his vitality and youth. Finally he abandoned the hope of writing his poem and with it also his reserve and fastidiousness. He was irresistibly drawn to the public beach at Cabeza de Lobo, swarmed by hungry, naked children. This noisy crowd progressively overwhelmed him, until he was killed and devoured by them on a hot summer day, under the blazing sun.

This nightmarish story, creating a vision of violence, horror, cannibalism and self-destruction, brings to mind Antonin Artaud's definition of the 'Theatre of Cruelty' in which man is to be confronted with his inner chaos and primordial passions, projected in dream images and symbols--a theatre in which 'his taste for crime, his erotic obsessions, his savagery, his chimeras, his utopian sense of life and matter, even his cannibalism pour out, at a level, not counterfeit and illusory, but interior'.[11]

This atmosphere of violence and horror interpeneterates *Suddenly Last Summer* and is reinforced by the recurring

images of destruction and violence in plant, animal and human life. The first thing to strike one's attention in Sebastian's garden is the Venus flytrap--an insect-devouring plant. And the garden itself is :

> more like a tropical jungle or forest in a prehistoric age of giant fern forests . . . The colours of this jungle garden are violent . . . there are massive tree flowers that suggest organs of a body, torn out, still glistening with undried blood . . . there are harsh cries and sibilant hissings and thrashing sounds in the garden as if it was inhabited by beasts, serpents and birds, all of savage nature.[12]

In the animal world the image of carnivorous birds devouring the flesh of newly hatched turtles reinforces the vision of violence and savage destruction. And this vision culminates in the vivid account of Sebastian's destruction. The blazing sun 'like a great white bone of a giant beast that had caught fire' and the band of naked children 'like a flock of black plucked birds', pursuing Sebastian and finally killing and devouring him, create a nightmarish vision and also recreate the images of insectivorous plants and carnivorous birds in a major key.

Thus an atmosphere of violence and disruption of harmony frames the action of the play. The present situation, too, is fraught with disruptive and destructive possibilities. Mrs. Venable is determined to save her pretentions and her son's reputation at any cost. She has already branded Catherine Holly as insane and is, now, planning to silence her by making her undergo a brain operation. Dr. Cuckrowicz--a brain surgeon--who is being tapped for the purpose, is promised a generous grant for his research, if only he chooses to oblige Mrs. Venable. Catherine's mother and brother, too, press her to change her story in order to please Mrs. Venable and enjoy their share of the booty. But Catherine Holly insists that her story is the true story of her times and of what happened to Sebastian in Cabeza de Lobo.

That the play does not operate on a realistic level and Catherine's story may not be taken literally, is generally recognized. But there is a wide range of difference in its

interpretation. The controversy mainly revolves round the question of cannibalism. Robert Brustein[13] interpreted cannibalism as a metaphor for homosexuality. Paul J. Hurly,[14] on the other hand, considers homosexuality itself to be a symbol of moral disorder in Sebastian's personality. Brook Atkinson characterized Sebastian's destruction as a ritual sacrificial act. Others see it as a case of guilt and retribution. It is, however, clear from Williams' own statement that although he used cannibalism as a symbol, he meant it to embrace a larger meaning and indicate a general tendency, viz., the destructive potential of society and human nature.

Paul J. Hurly suggests that *Suddenly Last Summer* is a morality play illustrating the idea that 'the recognition of evil carried to the point of consuming obsession is itself the worst of evils'.[15] According to this interpretation, Sebastian who sought a cruel and destructive God, is the villian of the piece. Catherine represents the poet whose function it is to tell the truth while Sebastian represents poetry which is sterile, self-involved and ultimately suicidal. This interpretation, though perceptive and attractive in many ways, is based on a certain process of simplification which ignores the haunting poetic quality of the play and the sense of mystery it evokes.

In my opinion *Suddenly Last Summer* is not a morality play or an allegory but a surrealistic drama with symbolic overtones. In form and spirit it has a certain affinity with Strindberg's *A Dream Play*. The characters of the play, its episodes, sudden shifts of action, the set, and several details in the stage directions evoke dream images creating an atmosphere of mystery and perplexity. The setting is expected to be unrealistic and a trifle fantastic, 'like the decor of a dramatic ballet'. The interior is to be blended with a fantastic garden which is more like a tropical jungle. The colours of this jungle garden are 'violent', its images fantastic, suggesting cruelty, bloodshed and mutilation of a living organism. The noises of this savage garden are sinister and mysterious. Often in course of the action we hear 'wild, harsh ravenous cries of the birds' of

strange sounds 'coming in waves like a savage chant', or the 'jungle garden sounds that are not loud but ominous'. The play unfolds itself, like a dream, in vivid, colourful images enveloped in mystery. These images appear and disappear contrary to everyday logic. They are tinged with emotions, but their precise relation to every day life is blurred. Like dream images, they do not project a well-defined idea, but are in the process of defining themselves.

Within this framework of a dream play, the dreamer appears to be the Doctor, who observes and wonders and tries to come to terms with his observations. The most vivid and haunting image in this dream is Catherine Holly and her story is a kind of dream within a dream. She recreates the character of Sebastian, which is also created by Mrs. Venable. And these contrary images are to be reconciled in the dreamer's consciousness. The technique of *Suddenly Last Summer* is surrealistic and its characters and events are not to be taken literally. Like dream images they are symbolic and bear a profound relationship to our experiences, but this relationship is complex and elusive. The play projects, in an oblique way, the undefined fears of man and his nightmare of annihilation and points to the irrational forces and destructive energies lurking just beneath the smooth surface of civilization and threatening to destory the logical structure of rational world. It also translates, in dramatic symbols, the destructive potential of society itself, exhibited in and nourished by cut-throat competition. In his interview for the *Morning Telegraph* Williams defended the introduction of cannibalism in *Suddenly Last Summer* in these terms. He said : 'Life is cannibalistic. Truly. Egos eat egos, personalities eat personalities. Someone is always eating at someone else for position, gain, triumph, greed whatever'. *Suddenly Last Summer* is an oblique acknowledgement of this uncomfortable fact. It is also an attempt to incorporate the undefined and unrealized realm of unconsious experiences in our conception of the world. Catherine Holly insists that her story is not an invention but

'a true story of our time and the world we live in'. And this is how Williams would have us accept this play—a drama significantly and profoundly related to our life and times

V

The Night of the Iguana presents a sharp contrast to *Suddenly Last Summer*. It is not harrowing and perplexing like the earlier play, but balanced, serene, tender and compassionate. It is subtle and complex rather than fantastic and experimental. It has, by and large, a realistic framework interpenetrated by a network of symbols which give it depth and dimension and articulate its vision and meaning in an eloquent manner. *The Night* has a symphonic movement. It states a theme, develops it and then arrives at a solution. The lyric substance and humanistic vision is realized in concrete dramatic terms.

The central symbol is Iguana itself, which brings to mind the symboljc titles of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* and Chekhov's *TheSeagull*. Williams' approach to symbols is closer to Ibsen's but the influence of Chekhov is deeper and can be seen, not only in the title symbol, but also in the warmth and tenderness of human concern and in a fine blend of realistic and poetic modes. The poetic realism noticeable in *The Glass Menagerie*, is put here, to a larger use. *The Night of the Iguana* has not only greater delicacy of technique but also a larger perspective.

The action of the play takes place in a dilapidated Mexican tourist hotel, situated on a hill top, overlooking the 'Morning Beach' and surrounded by the rain forest The set represents the front verandah of the hotel, framed by thick shrubs, cactus plants and coconut palms and with a row of cubical bed-rooms in the rear. The characters include the hotel owner Maxine - a lusty, middle-aged, newly widowed female, Shannon—a defrocked clergyman, Nonno—'the oldest living poet of America' and his spinster grand-daughter Hannah. In addition to these, there is also a busload of school mistresses and a monstrous German Nazi family.

The story is interpenetrated by a series of closely interlocked tensions, viz., Shannon's struggle to transcend his spiritual and moral crisis, Maxine's efforts to keep Shannon with herself, Nanno's struggle to complete his poem, Hannah's efforts to cope with a complicated situation and finally the iguana's desperate struggle to escape its tragic destiny. The iguana tied to rock is a symbol of the suffering humanity and has several dimensions of meaning closely related to the destinies of central characters. As the iguana is striving to break away from its captivity, Nonno, too, is stuggling with his last poem. When the iguana is released by Shannon, Nonno is able to complete his fine, touching poem, which, for him, means release. As the freed iguana is lost in the forest, Nonno, too, is able to embrace the ultimate freedom of death and is lost in silence. The image of the iguana tied to rock, also gives poignancy to the image of Shannon tied to the hammock. But Shannon is the mock Christ as well as the anti-hero of the play. His passion, his suffering. his mock crucifixion and his act of redemption, all are in a very minor key, devoid of heroics, glamour and metaphysics. This defrocked cleric, dissatisfied with the conventional concept of God and unable to give shape to his own concept of him, would have liked to conceive of God as lightning and thunder but he has to learn to accept him as an "Incomplete sentence" which has to be completed with his own efforts, in the acceptence of his destiny and in a moment to moment affirmation of life. Hannah helps Shannon to come to terms with his destiny, but ultimately he has to work out his own salvation through ordinary human realtionships. He is inspired by Hannah and would like to explore the unknown lands with her, but he has to accept the more down to earth Maxine and agree to stay with her.

Hannah, the saintly heroine of the play, too, is conceived in purely humanistic terms. She is noble, serene, selfless, kind-hearted and her devotion to her grandfather is touching and beautiful. Like the saintly heroines of Shaw (Saint Joan) and Eliot (Celia) she has risen above personal gratification,

love and romance. But she is neither a Christian martyr like Celia nor a genius, visionary and political martyr like Joan. She is a simple woman, trying to work out her destiny in a modest and simple way and helping others to come to terms with theirs Even her detachment from sex is not glorified, but is seen as a limitation

The play's action is more or less static, for the emphasis is on the inner movement. Consequently the silences are often more eloquent than speech. Shannon's spiritual regeneration, which is, perhaps, the central 'event' in the play, and his efforts to reach out beyond himself, are conveyed in the following scene :

(Shannon moves away from the wall to the edge of the verandah, as a fine silver sheet of rain descends off the sloping roof, catching the light and dimming the figures behind it. Now everything is silver, delicately lustrous. Shannon extends his hand under the rainfall, turning them in it as if to cool them. Then he cups the water in his palms and bathes his forehead with it. The rainfall increases. Sound of music comes from the sea Shannon streches his hands out through the rain's silver sheet as if he were reaching for something outside and beyond himself. Then nothing is visible except these reaching out hands. A pure white flash of lighting reveals Nanno against the wall.. the electric light is extinguished by the storm, but a clear shaft of light stays on Shannon.[16]

Here the movement of soul is conveyed through the symbolic use of light, rain, the music coming from the sea, expressive gesture and significant groupings, all constituting a concrete language of the theatre, articulating the emotional and moral substance of the scene. Similarly other realistic detals, too, are loaded with symbolic significance. The setting of the outer verandah, with cubical bedrooms in the rear, where the characters, mostly travellers, meet each other, symbolizes the possibility of reaching out and human contact, even though it may be for a short while. This possibility is most fully realized in Shannon's encounter with Hannah. The separate cubicals, alloted to each character, are illuminated from time to time, as the drama illuminates the interior existence of these characters. The situation too, has symbolic overtones. The characters are all travellers, not by accident, but by virtue

of their being human, for every one, as Hannah points out, has to make subterrarean travels to reach the core of his being. And this is exactly what the play is attempting to project. The characters, too, are endowed with symbolic significance. Shannon's symbolic significance has already been mentioned. Hannah's symbolic function is that of a poet. She observes people, paints them and thus helps them to discover themselves. This, however is somewhat subdued by her humanistic considerations, for she paints them, not as they are, but as they would like to believe they are. The most poignant character, however, is Nonno : and he is less of a dramatic character and more of a poetic image. His old age, his warmth and cheerfulness, his charming manners and noble personality lend warmth and poignancy to the drama. His touching struggle to complete his last poem constitutes one of the central tensions of the play and his fine completed poem seems to crystallize its theme. This theme is 'courage' which has to find a 'second home' in the 'frightened human hearts'. For Nonno it takes the form of courage to accept death : 'Without a cry, without a prayer / With no betrayal of despair'. For Hannah it is the courage to accept her predicament and to tread her noble path all alone. For Shannon it is the courage to piece together the fragments of his shattered existence. Nonno's poem brings the play to its thoughtful, serene and touching finale, and seems to place the temporal events in a timeless perspective. *The Night of the Iguana* has its weaker moments and some inadequately assimilated material. The introduction of the Nazi family is a case in point. But in its totality it is a powerful and authentic dramatic statement, exhibiting both maturity of vision and mastery of form.

VI

The Night of the Iguana might convey the impression that Williams has abandoned experimentalism and is returning to a more classical mode of poetic realism, but his next noticeable play—*The Milk Train Does Not Stop Here Anymore*—belies this impression. *The Milk Train*, which presents the last two days of Mrs. Goforth's existence and projects her loneliness, anguish

and horror of death as well as her desperate, comic attempts to cling to life, is conceived as an allegory or a 'sophisticated fairy tale' and presented as a masque or pageant. The cast includes a pair of 'invisible stage assistants', who work on the stage during the performance and occasionally appear in costume as minor characters. They announce the scene, introduce the play and, now and then, comment on the action. According to the author, their function is halfway through the Kabuki theatre and Greek chorus, but to a modern spectator, they are likely to strike as a Brechtian alienation device, which, in its turn, has a distant connection with Kabuki stylization. The set represents the white villa of Mrs. Goforth, with two small villinoes (pink and blue) in the rear. The interior merges with the exterior and the entire structure merges with the sea and sky scape and the screens that mask the portions not in focus are painted in semi-abstract style to represent the mountain sea sky of 'Divina Costiera' and also to blend with the cyclorama. The setting combines the process of abstraction, necessary to articulate the meaning of the play, with Williams' unmistakable lyrical impulse. The sea surge and the emotionally charged music, underlining the mood, add to the lyrical elements in the play.

In the centre of the scene is Mrs. Goforth, a rich old lady, living in a mountain villa surrounded by the sea. This symbolizes her isolation. Her property is guarded by ferocious dogs and an equally ferocious and sinister servant--Rudy. This symbolizes her fear of exposure and external intervention. She is surrounded by hired servants who dance attendance on her, thus contributing to the illusion of her centrality and power. A complicated, sinister intercommunication system indicates her complete hold on the establishment. Mrs. Goforth cannot stand the smell of food and lives on morphine injections, various kinds of tablets, black coffee and liquor. This indicates not only her state of health, but also, her fatal separation from the sources of vitality and spiritual nourishment. Mrs. Goforth jealously guards her property, keeps a strict check on her assets and bank balance and desperately

clings to her fabulous diamonds, fantastic robes, gorgeous furs, rare historical treasures, precious china and other valuable posessions. This, in the main, constitutes her defence mechanism against the stark reality of death. She also craves for romance and sexual satisfaction as a more potent protection from the horror of death, hoping that the young poet Chris will oblige her. She is dictating her memoirs with her four (or six) husbands, innumerable sex adventures, fantastic romances and sensational triumphs. This is her last desperate attempt to cling to the past and immortalize the legend of her youth and glamour. Altogether, Mrs. Goforth is the sole monarch of her closed realm and manipulates it to satisfy her emotional needs and to cover up her sense of futility and frustration.

Her supremacy is, however, challenged, in the first place by her secretary, Blackie, a young widow, with a strong sense of duty and an irrepressible passion for truth. Blackie tries to make her aware of her state of health, warns her against various kinds of self-delusions and refuses to be an accomplice in her lies, pretentions and unkind acts. Finally Mrs. Goforth's precarious sense of security is disturbed by Chris, who helps her to overcome the horror of death and encounter her predicament with dignity. He helps her to die peacefully, thus justifying his name Chris, the diminutive Christ, his nickname 'The Angel of Death' and his chosen profession of helping people to die. But ultimalely Mrs. Goforth has to face her death all alone, and this realization comes to her just before her end. But Mrs. Goforth's realization of the unreality of her dreams and futility of her ambitions is not entirely unpredicted. It is foreshadowed in an earlier moment of faint self-awareness when she 'absents herself from her dreem of felicity' for a while to reflect on the meaning of life and wonders : 'sometime I think that everything that we do is a way of not thinking about it—Meaning of Life, and Meaning of Death too . . . What in the hell are we doing ? . . just going from one goddam distraction to another, till, finally, one too many goddam distraction lead to diaster and black out'.[17] The passage sums

up Mrs. Goforth's desperate, futile existence (and of human beings in general) and conveys her desire to grasp the meaning of life at a deeper level.

But it is not Mrs. Gotorth alone who wonders about the meaning of life. The drama as a whole is groping to make a statement about the possible meaning of life, or rather, about the possibility of meaning in human existence. And the chief spokesman of this quest is Chris. 'Life is someting, Death is nothing', he declares tentatively. Later he expresses his sense of the trapped existence of Man in the following words : 'We all live in a house on fire . . . . iust the upstairs windows to look out of, while the fire burns the house below, with us trapped, locked in it' (p. 87). But these upstairs windows or human consciousness, which might enable man to observe his predicament, cannot help him to escape his destiny, as these windows are not 'wide enough to crawl out of'.

We may here note, in passing, the closeness of Williams' vision of a trapped existence to the existentialist point of view. Similarly, Chris's mobile decoration, entitled "The Earth is a Wheel in a Great, Big, Gambling Casino', can be seen as his oblique comment on the absurdity of the scheme of things and contingency of human existence. But Williams' existentialist outlook is somewhat modified by his passionate, lyrical approach. In response to the sea surge, Chris is now planning a new mobile 'BOOM', which will epitomize his vision of Life and Death (the sky and the sea) as well as the beauty of human companionship (the little fishing boats) and explore the obscure depths of human soul, symbolized in the deep, dark sea.

The above discussion of the play, brings home the fact that in *The Milk Train*, Williams has abandoned the social, cultural and psychological approaches that characterize his earlier work. His approach is primarily existential, for he is here writing an Allegory of Death, which has also to make a statement about human life and predicament. In view of this fact, it is not surprising, that *The Milk Train* brings to mind a number of 'absurd' plays, that concern themselves with existential

and metaphysical problems, projected in a symbolic and surrealistic framework. It brings to mind, particularly, three of them. namely, *The Chairs* (Ionesco), *Endgame* (Backett) and *Exit the King* (Ionesco).

Like the old couple in *The Chairs*, who live in a circular room, surrounded by water, Mrs. Goforth lives in a mountain villa, surrounded by the sea. Like the Old Man, who is preparing to convey a message to the world, which will be the quintessence of his life-long experiences, Mrs. Goforth, too, is keen to complete her memoirs. which, she hopes, will immortalize her legendary existence. The message is never delivered, for the Orator, employed for the purpose is dumb or the message is Silence. Mrs. Goforth's memoirs are never completed, for she is called upon to embrace the silence of Death.

In the *Endgame* the protagonist, Ham, is the sole monarch of his closed realm and is constantly obsessed about his being in the centre. Mrs Goforth, too, is the sole monarch of her isolated kingdom and is obsessed about her centrality. Ham has a resentful servant (or son) Clove to dance attendance on him and Mrs. Goforth has her secretary - Blackie - who is critical of her ways, but has to comply with her wishes. Ham has imprisoned his old parents (or his past, or his sub-conscious or his sense of guilt) in dust cans and tries to ignore them. Mrs. Goforth, too, has her 'Obliette' (a grass hut on the outskirts of her property) where she sends her visitors to be forgotten, if they fail to fit in her scheme of things. Like Ham, who is spinning a tale round his stark existence, Mrs. Goforth, too, is trying to transform her futile and directionless existence into a legend of youth, romance and glamour.

The resemblance between *The Milk Train* and *Exit the King* is even closer. *The Milk Train* records the last two days of Mrs. Goforth's existence and *Exit the King* dramatizes the last two hours of the King's life. Both the protagonists are called upon to face their final destiny - Death. Both try to escape this terrifying imminence and seek refuge in the past or in some kind of fantasy. Both try to believe that they are exceptional, i.e. immortal, or at any rate, can choose to die

when it suits them Both try to cling to their 'Kingdoms' which are fast slipping through their fingers The King's kingdom is crumbling in a fantastic way The sun has lost its warmth, the rivers are disappearing in holes and the milky way has turned into curd. His army has revolted, ministers are lazying around and servants have deserted Mrs. Goforth's kingdom, too, is going to pieces though not in such a fantastic way. The kitchen staff has been dismissed. she is worried about her china and 'important jewels' and as her end approaches, the hired servants desert her, one after the other. with the contents of the safe. until she is left with her two faithfuls – Blackie and Chris. In *Exit the King* the King has his younger queen to lure him into a life of romance and oblivion In *The Milk Train* Mrs Goforth allows herself to be lured by her own fancy that all she needs. to set things right, is a romance and a lover. The King is flanked by the Doctor, who explains the fact of his approaching death from a 'scientific' point of view, and the Elder Queen, who impresses this fact upon his mind from an existentialist point of view. Mrs. Goforth is surrounded by Blackie and Chris. The earlier tries to crack the citadal of Goforth's self-delusions with her insistence on fact and truth and the latter approaches the subject from an existentialist point of view. The elder queen, in the final scene, removes the invisible encumberances which the King has gathered around him. so that he may 'travel light' to his ultimate destination. Chris removes Mrs. Goforth's rings and jewels so that she may die peacefully.

These resemblances, obviously, are not accidental, but bear testimony to the closeness of theme and oonception in these plays, which lead their authors to choose similar symbols, images and situations. This, however, should not lead us to lose sight of the fact that Williams' approach, even in *The Milk Tiain* is not quite an absurdist approach. In the first place, the absurd plays, by and large. are more abstract and concentrated, and their symbols more stark, expressjve and elusive. There is no room in them for particularity and recognizable social scene. Contrary to this, *The Milk Train* is rich

in particularity and often a heightening of these details constitutes the mode of its abstraction. With its complicated intercommunication system, mikes. tape recorders, X ray machines, bankers, brokers, publishers and frequent references to floor shows and carnivals, *The Milk Train* builds up the atmosphere of contemporary America with an Italian flavour thrown in. These details, no doubt, often have a symbolic significance but the symbolic framework is in a distinctly modern idiom, unlike the symbolic framework of the absurd plays, which is either totally fantastic. as in *Happy Days* (Beckett). *Amadee* (Ionesco) or *Rhinoceroses* (Ionesco) or completely stark as in *Waiting for God* or *The Chairs*.

However, what *The Milk Train* loses in concentration, philosophical depth and haunting quality of its symbols, it gains it in richness of detail, lyrical atmosphere and psychological atmosphere and psychological interest. Even the principal characters, notwithstanding their symbolic functions, are sufficiently individualized and are recognizable Williams characters Mrs. Goforth is an intensification and culmination of a series of Williams' heroines, more particularly Blanche in *A Street Car Named Desire,* Margurite in *Camino Real,* Princess Alexandra of *Sweet Bird of Youth* and Mrs Venable of *Suddenly Last Summer.* An acute, sensitive and compassionate study of aging, suffering. lost and broken women is Williams' forte. He has given ample proof of his insight into such personalities in the characterisation of Blanche, Margurite, Alexandra and others. Mrs Goforth combines the pathos and desperation of these women with the rigidity and dictatorial tendencies of Mrs Venable.

Similarly, Chris, too, is not merely an abstraction—a Christ figure or a supernatural 'Angel of Death', but can best be understood in humanistic terms. He, too, is a combination and culmination of a series of Williams' heroes, including Kilory (*Camino Real*), Chance *(Sweet Bird of Youth).* Shannon *(The Night of the Iguana)* and Val (*Orpheus Descending*). He is, like Kilroy, an antihero, who has to make sense of an absurd universe ; a disappointed man, no longer fashionable,

who. like Chance, has to do without 'the sweet bird of youth'; a deviant, like Shannon, who had lost his sense of reality and had to piece together his shattered existence; an artist like Val, who must find an artistic expression to convey his personal sense of life. But, above all, he is an existentialist hero, who has discovered that real life begins on the other side of despair. Helping dying people to face their destiny is his chosen vocation that ralates him to life and humanity in a meaningful way and the mobile decorations, his modest self expression. which obliquely convey his vision of existence

In all, *The Milk Train* is an impressive and authentic dramatrc venture in which Williams has attampted a philosophical approach without quite sacrific ng his personal, lyrical mode and psychological emphasis The play is a valid and compelling dramatic statement, exhibiting both intensity of conception and comprehensiveness of vision. It goes without saying that it owes much of its success to the discovery of an appropriate and articulate form –a modern allegory in which expressionistic and symbolic devices are supplemented by Brechtian alienation technique and the 'absurd' vision modified by a personal, lyrical approach It is also one of the most economical and coherent of Williams' plays exhibiting a complete fusion of form and substance and combining intensity of experience with lightness of touch and dramatic ease

This brings us to the end of our discussion of the evolution of form in Tennessee Williams' dramatic work. We notice, in these five major plays, a gradual exapansion of his vision along with a consistent refinement of technique and enrichment of form. From this evidence, it is not difficult to conclude that in Williams' plays a quest for meaning is inseparable from the search for significant dramatic form and an increasing mastery of form and technique in his successive pays is an expression of greater depth of experience and progressive inclusiveness of his vision.

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S. A. H. Jafri

W. W. GIBSON: POETRY OF NATURE

Spanning two widely varying eras--the Victorian and the modern--and representing a fairly wide variety of taste, W. W. Gibson (1878-1962) has suffered an undeserved neglect on the part of critics. His intrinsic appeal is reflected in the number and frequency of his publications; more than 40 collections of his poems came out between 1902 and 1950. For quite some time he was a recurring source of some favourite anthology pieces. By the early twenties he had acquired considerable literary fame so that a selection of his poems entitled *Sixty-Three Poems* with a fairly long critical introduction by E. A. Parker was published in 1926 for the use of schools and colleges. Gibson's poems were published in the first four volumes of *Georgian Poetry* edited by Edward Marsh. His poems were also published in *An Anthology of Modern Verse* in 1921 (whose 29th edition appeared in 1939) chosen by A. Methuen with an introduction by Robert Lynd (for schools) and students' notes by Gerald Bullett. In 1936 W. B. Yeats included a few of Gibson's poems in *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse 1892-1935*. Moreover, John Heath-Stubbs and David Wright also published his poems in their selections *The Faber Book of Twentieth Century Verse*. From this it is obvious that Gibson had once attained recognition, popularity and fame as a major poet so much so that in 1929 Gerald DeWitt Sanders and George Nelson included Gibson's poems in their book entitled *Cheif Modern Poets of England and America* considering him as one of the representative poets of England.

Critics have discovered in Gibson's works some kind of a meeting-ground between the late 19th century and the modern

poetic sensibility. Moreover, by the late twenties Gibson had already established his literary reputation and despite changes in literary fashion, never ceased to command a sizable readership. The fact was recognized by the leading publishers of modern poetry, Faber and Faber, when they brought out a selection of Gibson's poems entitled *Solway Ford And Other Poems (1945)* edited by Charles Williams, a critic whose opinions influenced even T. S. Eliot,

Gibson tried his hand at many important forms of poety and produced volumes of lyrical, dramatic and narrative works impressive not only quantitatively but also notable in quality. He started writing poetry in the last decade of the nineteenth century at the age of eighteen and continued writing upto 1950. His first collection of poems came out in 1902 and the last in 1950. He made a lecture tour progrmme and went to America in January 1917 for a period of six monts where he delivered lectures and read out his poems at several colleges in many towns and cities of the United States of America. He was a true patriot and as such, 'served as a private in the Army Service Corps' in 1917 in the Wold War I and continued to serve upto 1919. He was one of the promoters of the literary activities of the Georgian period. In collaboration with Lascelles Abercrombie, Rupert Brooke and John Drinkwater he laid the foundation of the short-lived quarterly Georgian magazine of poetry--*New Number* in 1914. After four successful issues it could not be continued due to the outbreak of World War I. He had also been the sub-editor of *Rhythm*. Realizing the change in contemporary poetic trends, he made strenuous efforts to widen the scope of his themes extending the frontiers of his poetic vision. Moreover, being influenced and acqainted with new ideas, he started looking at unfamiliar aspects of ordinary experience.

It is noteworthy that for creating his poetic world Gibson drew on both the North and the South Tyne regions. He also extended its scope by introducing the North Sea-coast landscape and imagery which had associations with fishing, dangerous and adventurous life. In short, these facts--specific

literary influences, his attachment to the countryside of a particular region, his travels and, lastly, his personal experiences during the First World War actually shaped his poetic genius. It was these sources that provided him with the main themes of his poetry. But for a proper appreciation of his work it is equally important to bear in mind the main trends in Victorian poetry and poetic developments in the pre-World War I years of the twentieth century.

Though aware of changing trends and not totally unresponsive to them, Gibson retained his love for nature. Indeed natural landscapes and the memory of his early childhood spent in proximity with the fauna and flora and the humble folk of Northumberland continued to provide spiritual sustenance to his poetic vision. Of course, he lacked Wordsworth's mystical insights but his genuine and deep understanding of the pastoral aspects of life in his native place single him out as an unsophisticated admirer and authentic singer of nature's plenitude and charms. Therefore, he deserves fresh attention as a poet of nature.

Gibson produced many collections of poems like *The Nets of Love, Stonefolds, The Web of Life, Daily Bread, Chambers, Travels, Casualties & Khaki. I Heard a Sailor and Other Poems, Beauty for Ashes, Highland Dawn, The Golden Rooms and Other Poems*, etc. They dealt with the phenomena of nature presenting beautiful pictures of country-life and attractive landscapes. The poet sought his subject in the lives of the shepherds, sailors, fishermen, simple poor and humble toiling people, charwomen, painstaking mine and factory workers etc. Time, beauty, mirth and sorrow that have been everlasting themes of many poets have also been dealt with in his several poems. His poetry provides some realistic and penetrating glaimpses of life of his native Northumberland. In his collection of poems, *I Heard a Sailor and Other Poems*, he focused his attention on fishermen and sailors etc. and their mirth and sorrows and hazardous romances. Being a realist, he presented true pictures of the sufferings, perils and adventures related to their lives. This reminds us of John Masefield who

'turns in verse from romance to realism'.[2] Like Gibson, Masefield, too, was a prolific writer and he, too, produced nature poetry. His poems are realistic and natural in tone. He had sympathy for the miserable, poor and down-trodden people. In *Reynard the Fox* and *Right Royal* he presented beautiful scenes and fascinating picutures of the phenomena of nature and also of countryside. Thus, both the poets, Gibson and Masefield, were close to each other and blended beautifully realism with romance and beauty. Masefield, however, lacked deep and mature understanding of nature and, as such, he showed little sense of harmony with her. Masefield presented nature in descriptive form and used her mostly as background and for purposes of appreciation and pleasure. But he failed to bring himself into harmony with nature and also to develop an insight into her mysteries. Therefore, he has not been considered as one of the nature poets. So far as Gibson is concerned as a poet of nature he had more genuine harmony with her and deeper understanding of the multifarious aspects of pastroral life. Nature is an integral part of the tone and tenor and themes of his poems. Megroz rightly remarked : 'Masefield could scarcely be thought of as one of the nature poets since his master Chaucer could not. Wilfred W. Gibson might be regarded as a modern and greater Crabbe in his many dramatic and narrative vignettes of poor people's lives'.[3] Gibson wrote a good deal of nature poetry which dealt with the moor, the form, the sea and the sea-coast. He was an admirer of Nothumberland. He gave local colour to his poems which raised him to the stature of a great poet of nature. He praised the place of his birth in his poem 'Northumberland' and focused attention on the charming characteristics of it.

Heatherland and bent land—
Black land and white,
God bring me to Northumberland,
The land of my delight.

Land of singing waters.
And winds from off the sea,
God bring me to Northamberland,
The Land where I would be.

Heatherland and bent-land,
And valleys rich with corn.
God bring me to Northumberland.
The land where I was born.

(*Sixty Three Poems*, pp. 126-27.

Here Gibson appears before readers as a Wordsworth of Northumberland (excluding the element of mysticism of Wordsworth). As a matter of fact, he figures as a realist and delineates true pictures of the behaviour, feelings of love and the sorrows of men and women in natural environment. Robert H. R. Ross remarks about Gibson's poetic realism, 'The beginnings of Georgian poetic realism can be seen in the early works of two young men, Wilfrid Gibson and Rupert Brooke'.[4] In the poems in his collections like *The Nets of Love*, *The Web of Life*, *Stonefold* etc. Gibson presented graphically the environment with local colours of the countryside. Often he picked up tales of woe and mirth, tales of unrequited love and tragic events of life or some domestic tragedy for a moving treatment which evoked a flavour of romantic melancholy and sympathy for the poor. His style appears very attractive and natural when he individualizes the characters. The dramatis personae of his poems are moving, real, active and alive and identifiable by their proper background. One of the poems of *The Nets of Love* entitled 'The Lambing' delineates the shepherds' life creating a realistic pastoral environment. It portrays forcefully the death scene of a shepherd's wife who had just given birth to a child. The Shepherd returned from his fold outside to see if the ewe that had lambed early in the night was well or not, hopeful though he was that everything would be all right. On his return home he was shocked to see the tragic situation that the mother was dead, while his own new born child was puling :

Then setting a quaking hand to the latch
I opened the door. And shaking the cold from
My heart, I stumbled across the floor
To the bed where she lay so quiet, calm-bosomed,
in dreamless rest. And the wailing baby
Clutched in vain at the lifeless breast.

(*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 4)

Birth and death were simultaneous facts and it is this paradixocal situation that the poem brings out so powerfully.

> I looked on the still white face, then sank with a cry by the bed,
> And knew that the hand of death had stricken my whole joy dead—
> My flock, my world and my heart—with my love at a single blow;
> And I cried "I, too, will die !" and it seemed that life ebbed low.
>
> *(Collected Poems, 1905-1925, p. 4)*

Nature and the countryside not only supplied themes and matter to Gibson for his poems, but they also suggested some poignant contexts and images for the treatment of urban realities and scenes of organized violence. Certain aspects of untamed and wild nature remind the poet of their resemblance with phenomena of ferocity, war and destruction in a supposedly civilized society.

As is evident from the above, Gibson bears sympathy with the miserable lot of the shepherd. As a realist he has delineated a true picture of the life of the shepherds of Northumberland. Like Wordsworth, Gibson avoids sensational content to tell plain tales of the joys and sorrows of his humble neighbours—the shaperds.

In another poem, 'In The Forest', Gibson deals with the themes of life and death through the symbolism of light and darkness taken from nature. The two contrasting words play a significant role in the description of the scene ef the forest as well as the theme of the poem :

> Unflinching I have borne the brunt of spears—
> Yet, under these dark boughs that writhe and twist,
> My heart is as a wren's heart when she hears
> The litch-owl calling through the evening mist,
> And falters cowed a thing of fluttering fears,
> Before some shadow-plumed antagonist."
>
> (*Collected Peoms, 1905-1925*, p. 43)

Here the poet has delineated a real picture of a forest where different types of animals, birds, reptiles are found under 'dark boughs that writhe and twist'. All these phenomena of nature create awe and horror. In the poem the poet has derived

images of awe and horror from the living things in the forest which stand for difficulties, calamities and horrors of human life. In life man is confronted with different kinds of horrors, but his desire to cling desperately to life is also intense. In short, the forest scenes have been introduced for purposes of evoking awe and horror.

Similarly, the poem entitled 'Jungle Drums' reveals the horrible savagery of war. The poet, who is the protagonist, happened to be in a forest where he observed very closely beasts of prey fighting with one anorher.

> Huddling among the scared baboons, he watches
> From his uneasy refuge in the boughs
> The battle-royal as the lion rolls
> A whirl of lashing tails and crashing limbs
> Round the contested carcase of the quarry,
> But now, a lithe light-hearted springbok leaping
> In the still crystal of the wizard moon;
>
> (*Islands*, p. 4)

As Gibson himself participated in the First World War and worked as a private in the Army Servive Corps he had first hand experiance of it which he used in his poems.

The fightings symbolize the savage forces that are released in the world at the time of war The sound passing through the jungle is felt as the drums of war creating a threatening and awesome atmosphere :

> . . . those steely clutching claws of sound
> Blunted and muted to a thudding thrumming,
> A far dull thudding, as of the juugle's heart beat
> Grown audible . ..
>
> (*Islands*, p, 4).

The lion's steely clutching claws create an image of war-weapons in the mind of the protagonist. Their fightings produce a dull thuddiug thrumming sound that becomes audible as 'the jungle's heart-beat'. It also creates an image in his mind that reminds us of :

> . . . the heart of occult evil
> Pulsating with slow measured palpitation
> Of sluggish blood . . .
>
> (*Islands*, p. 4)

Even the beasts of prey move secretly with an evil purpose creating awe and terror, or rather panic by 'mesmerising : 'Monotonous redundant muttering menace' (*Islands*, p. 41). All such animals vanish suddenly from the forest like 'soundless ghost unheeded'. It gives him an impression of 'drumming of ghostly marchers ever closer coming' creating a scene of the dance of death :

> The bloodless drumming of bony army
> Beating again to unremembered battles
> On the taut tympan of the tom-toms rattling
>
> (*Islands*, p. 4)

Further, it produces a continuous cracking and discharge of fire arms, grumbling and creating an air of the earthquake underfoot followed by the confused noise of waterfall. But it comes to an end gradually. Now he realizes that the pulse of his own terror beats in a quick and irregular way. He further realizes that his senses which had lapsed into a state of unconsciousness have returned to the state of consciousness. He feels that he has been relieved of a traumatic effect. He conceives savage forces at work, but they have not been defined precisely. Here he turns his tendency to vagueness to good account. It is due to the fact that vagueness adds to the impression of multi-dimensional horrors produced by innumerable voices that he wants to create. The law of jungle skulks and shrinks before this human savagery. Here the protagonist stands for man :

> Rending each anguished fibre of his being
> Till, just a stretched skin on earth's hollow gourd,
> He throbs and quivers, swinging at the thigh-bone
> Of the old inexonerable skull-faced Drummer
> Midding the fearful hearts of men to war.
>
> (*Islands*, p. 5)

The whole earth becomes the hollow gourd on which his own skin is stretched and is beaten by the drummer. This idea refers to the Greek Church where a figure represents Christ or

a saint. The poet presents a magnified form of the feelings through sound pictures using jingling/feminine rhymes :

> On the taut tympan of the tom-toms rattling
> In cracking fusillades, then dully grumbling
> Like earthquake underfoot, then sharply shattering
> The zenith with a cataract of chattering.
>
> (*Islands*, p. 4)

In 'The Beloved' Gibson expresses his tender sentiments for his beloved. He compares her beauty to the beauty of the objects of nature like the sea, the stars, the hills and the wind :

> The wind, the stars, the mountains and the sea—
> With these thy beauty dwells within my heart
> From frail and mortal loveliness apart,
> Sea deep, star-bright, hill-steedfast and windfree;
> Yet though with these thou share eternity,
> Not theirs the mortal tenderness of thee . . .
> But though thy soul should see the ocean spilled,
> The hills dissolve, the shuddering stars burn out
> And all the winds with one despairing shout
> Perish in some new dawn of dreams fulfilled—
> Some new eternity man's soul shall build
> With hands by fruitless toil for triumph skilled—
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 49)

He holds the view that she shares eternity with these natural phenomena which stand for permanence. He comes forward with the idea that she is superior to them because she possesses mortal tenderness.

Similarly, in 'Sight' Gibson delineates a pictorial scene of the phenomena of nature and expresses his sense of gratitude praising the Creator for the beauteous sight :

> By the lamplit stall I loitered, feasting my eyes
> On colours ripe and rich for the heart's desire—
> Tomatoes redder than Krakatoa's fire,
> Oranges like old sunsets over Tyre,
> And apples golden-green as the glades of paradise.'
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 270)

For some time, he is lost in the endearing sight of the phenomena of nature. Meanwhile he is startled to hear the tapping of a blind man's stick :

> And as I lingered lost in divine delight,
> My heart thanked God for the goodly gift of sight
> And all youth's lively senses keen and quick
> When suddenly behind me in the night
> I heard the tapping of a blind man's stick
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 270)

The event leads him to think about a blind man who has been deprived of the enjoyment of such sight due to lack of vision. The poet intends to highlight the sense of futility of life in the poem. This theme of futility of life is one of the significant themes of modern poetry.

In the poem 'The Parrots' an image of mortality is derived from the objects of Nature. Here Gibson presents a charming scene of parrots in their natural surrounding. He sees there three parrots flying out of black cedars when the sun is to set against snowy peak :

> Somewhere, somewhen I've seen,
> But where or when I'll never know,
> Three parrots of shrill green
> With crests of shriller scarlet flying
> Out of black cedars as the sun was dying
> Against cold peaks of snow.
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 477)

At the same time he is reminded of the agonies of men due to bombardments and firings. As a result of it, he is overpowered with a sense of horror, his heart jingles and vibrates like a bell :

> Yet the shrill colour and the strident crying
> Sing through my blood and set my heart replying
> And jingling like a bell
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 477)

In it, the use of 'three parrots of shrill green' is a magical number and indicates mystical experience. Their flight from black cedars, when the sun was setting, reminds us of the mortality of men.

In 'Before Action' nature serves as background. Here the poet deals with the theme of nostalgia for peace time. He speculates on the restoration of normalcy, both in nature and life—which should be free from the ravages of war, and man's destructive proclivities—through the scene of daffodils and lambs:

I sit beside the brazier's glow
And, drowsing in the heat
I dream of daffodils that blow
And lambs that frisk and bleat—

Black lambs that frolic in the snow
Among the daffodils
In a far orchard that I know
Beneath the Malvern Hills,

Next year the daffodils will blow
And lambs will frisk and bleat,
But I'll not feel the brazier's glow,
Nor any cold or heat.

(*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 319)

The narrator may be dead by then and deprived of the brazier's glow. The poem is marked with a note of pathos, deepened by the memories of the horrors of warfare. From yet another angle it brings to mind the opening lines of Wordsworth's poem, 'Tintern Abbey'. In that poem Wordsworth contrasts the tranquil beauty of the landscape before him with his own anguish and miseries during the preceding years. He even reminisces about his enjoyment of nature as a much younger man. The two are sharply contrasted. In Gibson's poem too, there is a sharp contrast between the uneasy present and the tranquil past amidst natural surroundings. Gibson's poem also reminds us of Wordsworth's lyric, 'Daffodils' where the poet envisages nature (the daffodils) as a source of constant enjoyment. Similarly, in the poem 'Deaf' the poet expresses his view that the previous year he could enjoy 'the curlew caling' and the gentle sounds of falling water from the hills. This reflects the situation of the war.

This day last year I heard the curlew calling
By Hallypike,
And the clear tinkle of hill-waters falling
Down slack and syke.

(*Collected Poems, 1905-1925* p. 321)

But then the blast of bombs, gunfire and crackers made him deaf to the extent that he could not hear even 'the shrapnel's screaming' and 'the screech of shells'.

> But now I cannot hear the shrapnel's screaming,
> The Screech of shells,
> And if again I see the blue lough gleaming
> Among the fells,
> Unheard of me will be the curlew's calling
> By Hallypike,
> And the clear tinkle of hill-water falling
> Down slack and syke.
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 321)

He would be deprived of hearing and enjoying the objects of nature. He was simply living the life of the deaf. The absence of the sense of hearing made life worthless to him. Therefore he becomes a victim of despair and expresses his inability to enjoy the calling of the birds and the musical sounds of falling water.

In a sonnet Gibson shows his personal attachment and love for his intimate friend, Rupert Brooke. The poet says that once, being tired, he was brooding, sitting in a chair and watching '... the London sunlight feeble and grey' (*Collected Poems 1905-1925*, p. 333) And as he looked up :

> . . . I saw you standing there
> Although I'd caught no footstep on the stair,
> Like sudden April at my open door
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 333)

The above lines are quite suggestive in a symbolic way. Apart from the geographical fact of April being associated with vernal showers in England, the reference to 'spring' brings to our mind the theme of rebirth and regeneration. In some of the early poems of Eliot the symbolism of 'April' and 'Spring' is used in a similar way. Though his friend's sudden appearance like April has been the cause of his bewilderment and pleasure yet he fails to trace the foot-print of his friend on the stair.

Elsewhere too the poet presents contrasting images—the state of life and the state of death and the windy poppies and

the Lethean poppies. Here he has used the significant modern device of contrasting juxtaposition. He appears to have been in the company of his beloved friend, Rupert Brooke, who, when alive, rejoiced in nature's lovely scenes and :

> . . . Windy poppies streaming like a sea,
> Of scarlet flame that flaunted riotously
> Among green orchards of that western shire,
> You gazed at though your heart could never tire
> Of life's red flood in summer revelry.
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 334)

He desires his friend to continue to enjoy 'life's red flood in summer revelry.' He recollects the lovely nature's scenes he had enjoyed with him in the past. He never thought before it that his friend would be deprived of them due to untimely and early death. The poet imagines that his soul is in the underworld and his eyes would be :

> Half-glad, half-sad, remembering, as they see
> Lethean poppies shrivelling ashen grey.
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 334)

The images are very touching as the poppies, which are fraught with the spirit of life, are converted into Lethean poppies in the underworld where his eyes would see : 'Lethean poppies shrivelling ashen grey' (*Collected Poems 1905-1925*, p. 334) This also reveals the poet's flight of imagination and love for the objects of nature.

Likewise, in the poignant poem entitled 'Tarras Water' a contrasted scene of a streem and a waterfall is presented to focus on the theme of nostalgia :

> From the top of Hartsgarth Fell
> Runs the Tarras Burn,
> Tinkling fall and golden pool,
> Through the heather and the fern,
> Calling, calling, clear and cooi—
> Tarras Water calling,
> Tarras Water falling,
> Tarras Water calling, calling—
> Tarras Water, Tarras Water;
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 473)

The poet appears to have reached a place from where he has no hope to come back and,

> Through my heart the livelong night
> Runs the Tarras Burns
> Golden pool and tinkling fall—
> In the land of No Return
> Still I hear that golden call.
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925* p. 473)

as a result of it, he will not be able to enjoy the beauteous sight of the stream.

Nature even serves as a contrastive and poignant background to the war, and the poem 'Fallowfield Fell' gains poignancy and a touching quality from this contrast between the harmony in serene aspects of nature and the destructiveness of war :

> Soldier, what do you see,
> Lying so cold and still ?
> Fallowfield Fell at dawn
> And the heather upon the hill . . .
>
> Fallowfield Fell at noon
> And the whin like burning gold . . .
>
> Fallowfield Fell at night
> And the stars above the hill.
>
> (*Collected Poems, 1905-1925*, p. 471)

Fallowfield Fell is a stream which flows at dawn, at noon and at night in the presence of different objects of nature presenting lovely scenes and sights. The Soldier observes them lying silently, rather coldly. It reflects the soldier's indifferent attitude towards the beautiful scenes of nature.

Another poem entitled 'The Peonies', brings out the theme of the impact of nature on a dying man. As a matter of fact, he describes the effects of the flowers on an old man who is dying, This effect of the flowers bestows upon him a momentary revival before he dies. This is very significant in the sense that the paradox of wordly existence is delineated through a sense of exuberance and beauty of life juxtaposed with that of the grim coldness of death--co-existence of the life-principle and the death-principle. The vision of the

exuberance of life is realized by a dying man, which is again a paradox. This vision is a grotesque vision--the beauty of the world co-existing with the ugliness of the world :

> The little crystal bowl of 'living red
> Brimmed his age—wasted heart with summer bloom . . .
> Through his closed eye-lids : bloom on burning bloom
> Blazed his starved senses to an ecstasy
> Of clear red life, until the unseen room
> Burned all about him, one vast peony.
>
> (*Hazards*, p. 3)

Here the words and images are functional in nature. The white colour is associated with the cold austerity of the dying man's situation; but the 'living red' of the flowers brings in, by contrast, the sense of life and its exuberance. With its 'blazing' and 'burning' impression the vision transcends physical facts and resonates with symbolic overtones. It is a vision of a dying man who is already beyond the normal consciousness. Gibson shows artistic maturity in delineating the mood with clarity. He brings out the symbolic significance of things more consciously, consistently, coherently and intensely. Therefore, he achieves a great concentration and intensification in respect of poetic effect in the poem.

It may be seen that like the major Romantic poets especially Wordsworth, Gibson bears love for nature. In most of his poems he presents the objects of nature through decription of beauteous scenes and sights. Megroz holds the view that : 'Gibson might be regarded as a modern and a greater Crabbe in his many dramatic and narrative vignettes of poor people's lives'.[5] When Gibson deals with some events he paints them in domestic and local colours. This may be seen in the poems analysed above as well as the others which could not be discussed here due to the limited scope of the paper. Gibson cultivates this artistic style deftly and liberally in his poems. In fact, he excels in the use of local colour. He, therefore, projects himself before the reader as a latter-day Wordsworth of Northumberland. In short, Gibson's poetry deals with manifold objects of nature covering various subjects like war,

society, religion, love, life and death. Though largely derivative and writing in an idiom unfamiliar to modern ears, Gibson yet achieves distinction in poems where his vision of Nature transcends its inherited conventional framework to fuse into modes of perception that are not far from the symbolic.

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Dorothy Glenn

TIME AND TIMELESSNESS IN ELIOT'S POETRY

No single theme in Eliot's poetry has such a wide relevance to his creative thought and his *forma mentis* as that of time, in dealing with which Eliot shows philosophical subtlety, moral profundity and creative originality all at once. His notion and treatment of time is both complex and coherent—the coherence deriving in great part from his religious and philosophical bent of mind and his powers as an analytical thinker.

In his very first poem, 'The Love Song Of J Alfred Prufrock', the perceptive awareness of time is a central factor as evidenced by the repetition of such lines as 'In the room the women come and go/Talking of Michelangelo', and the phrase 'there will be time,—time for this and time for that, time consumed by so many decisions and indecisions, visions and revisions, by so many deeds, misdeeds, acts and non-acts: 'In a minute there is time/For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse'. Such an awareness is memorably epitomized in the well-known line 'I have measured out my life with coffee spoons'. But the haunting awareness of time co-exists—and cannot but co-exist—with another awareness, that of the past, and of one's having 'known them all already, known them all'. If all time present soon turns into past then the present has to be lived with such an intensity of awareness as to force each moment 'to its crisis' It is thanks to this intensity that one can—or at least the poet can—squeeze the whole past and the present into one moment, or, as he says, squeeze 'the universe into a ball'. Hence time exists as far as the poet is concerned, on two levels: one, the awareness of the past and the present, and the other, the awareness of those moments which have

become, one might say, permanent landmarks of his life, even though time is slipping out and he can do very little to hold it: 'I grow old . . . I grow old . . . / I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled'. For, as he tells us in 'Portrait of a Lady', time's march doesn't take into account the significance or emptiness of the things one's life consists of—'. . . a life composed so much, so much of odds and ends'—nor how it might mean different things to different people in the same context. For instance, in the case of the lady who is old, life means something quite different from what it means to the young man she is talking to. For, as she tells him, 'you do not know / What life is, you who hold it in your hands' . . . 'You let it flow from you, you let it flow, / And youth is cruel, and has no remorse / And smiles at situations which it cannot see'. But for her, who goes on drinking tea, time moves with a different pace, and it is the different pace of time that creates what she calls 'the gulf' between them. The gulf divides them not merely because of the age difference between them, but because of the kind of time awareness each of them has, thus creating a difficulty in communicating, which at least she hopes can be overcome: 'I am always sure that you understand / My feelings, always sure that you feel, / Sure that across the gulf you reach your hand'. Her need to communicate is all the greater because she knows that she is 'about to reach her journey's end'. How differently she and the young man regard time is borne out by such lines as where she asks him 'When do you return?' and realises that it is 'a useless question': 'You hardly know when you are coming back, / You will find so much to learn'. In the case of the lady time not only moves faster, but moves with a deeper sense of its irreversibility, and a feeling that it is too late to alter anything: 'We must leave it now to fate. / You will write, at any rate. / Perhaps it is not too late'. But it may be, in fact, too late for the young man too, who muses: 'and what if she should die some afternoon, / Afternoon grey and smoky, evening yellow and rose; / Should die and leave me sitting pen in hand / With the smoke coming down above the housetops; / Doubtful, for

a while / Not knowing what to feel or if I understand / Or whether wise or foolish, tardy or too soon . . .'

'Preludes', too, has the awareness of time, and the various masquerades time assumes, as a focal theme. Awareness of time and awareness of what memory does or can do go together in the poem 'Rhapsody on a Windy Night'. Here time is measured in terms of hours during which memory throws up lots of things—or, as he points out : 'throws up high and dry / A crowd of twisted things; / A twisted branch upon the beach / Eaten smooth, and polished / As if the world gave up / The secret of its skeleton, / Stiff and white'. In 'Gerontion' an old man's awareness of time is at the core of his awareness of life itself and of his own position in it : 'Here I am, an old man in a dry month, / Being read to by a boy, waiting for rain'. His sense of time is something at once sad and realistic, which he conveys through typically Eliotian images : 'Vacant shuttles / Weave the wind. I have no ghosts, / An old man in a draughty house / Under a windy knob'. His own thoughts are different from those of a younger man and he calls them 'Tenants of the house / Thoughts of a dry brain in a dry season'. In 'Burbank with a Baedeker' time is characterised in different modes--'the smoky candle end of time', when time declines, or 'time's ruins'– that is, not simply things which have turned into ruins in the course of time, but time itself reflected through those ruins.

In *The Waste Land* the urgency of time, that is to say of time within time, during which something can be done or can't be done, is brought out in the second section of the poem 'A Game of Chess'. The urgency is indicated by the repetition of the phrase 'HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME', time during which Lil can get herself a bit smart before her demobbed husband comes home In 'The Fire Sermon', too, the passing of time and what can and cannot be achieved is brought out. The poet's desire for time to stop cannot be fulfilled any more than the Thames could stop flowing : 'Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song, / Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long'. Nor can he cancel the memory of the past : 'But

at my back in a cold blast I hear / The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear'. The sense of time and how it makes people go through the ritual of living in a mechanical, monotonous way is conveyed through a kind of realistic-cum-allegorical picture of a London typist coming home, preparing tea, doing the household chores and then meeting a lover who comes, makes love and then goes away—all this done as if it were an automatic ritual through which she and her lover go, each of them being oblivious of the meaning or purpose of what they do, thereby emptying time itself of its significance :

> At the violet hour, when the eyes and back
> Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits
> Like a taxi throbbing waiting,
> I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,
> Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see
> At the violet hour. the evening hour that strives
> Homeward and brings the sailor home from sea,
> The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast. lights
> Her stove, and lays out food in tins.
> Out of the window perilously spread
> Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,
> On the divan are piled (at night her bed)
> Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.

And after the lover is gone, the typist, as if to emphasize the meaninglessness of what has been gone through as a mechanical gesture, 'turns and looks a moment in the glass, / Hardly aware of her departed lover; / Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass : / "Well now that's done : and I'm glad it's over."'.

In 'What the Thunder said' living and dying are both seen as two aspects of the self-same process going on in and through time : 'He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying / With a little patience'. The so-called peaks of time, or what Wordsworth calls 'spots of time' are those which memory treasures, such as, for instance, 'The awful daring of a moment's surrender', or occasions which were unique and which left a permanent mark on one's life, or gave one a glimpse of reality that couldn't have been had otherwise. So

the poet tells us: 'I have heard the key / Turn in the door once and turn once only / We think of the key, each in his prison / Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison / Only at nightfall'. It is such moments that constitute both the meaning and the richness of life, moments in time which acquire through memory a kind of timelessness—so that 'the hour when we are / Trembling with tenderness' may and *does* pass, but the tenderness remains. But what connects one rich and significant moment with another equally so, is given a religious-cum-philosophical twist in Eliot, so that

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow

Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow

For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
Life is
For Thine is the

In 'Ash-Wednesday' the desert of time, meaning the void between one significant and fully realised moment and another is regarded as time which is 'always time' and nothing more. But for time to become something more it has to have a significance beyond that of those individual moments during which

we feel most alive and which shine like beacons in our memory. For a poet like Eliot with a religious frame of mind, those moments are pregnant with a religious significance; they are moments during which one is 'devoted, concentrated in purpose', moments in which all loves end and the torment of unsatisfied love is terminated, as well as 'the greater torment / Of love satisfied'. It is through such moments alone that one not only transcends the existential reality of life, but time itself, and so moves in a different sphere of feeling than that of 'the time between sleeping and waking'. It is through these moments, 'devoted, concentrated in purpose' that time is made meaningful, in other words, redeemed, so that the prayer is: 'Redeem / the time. Redeem / The unread vision in the higher dream'. And without such moments we are walking in darkness, we are 'torn on the horn between season and season, time and time, between / Hour and hour, word and word, power and power'. In other words, time without such significant moments, without such peaks, is a desert: 'The desert in the garden the garden in the desert'. For a poet like Eliot those time-redeeming moments are not merely moments of happiness or happy events, but largely moments of 'the ecstasy of thought and prayer'.

Already in 'Marina' Eliot is talking of the timelessness of time being lived and realised within time, something that would be one of his chief concerns in *Four Quartets*. He indicates his preference for what is beyond time and beyond speech to be perceived and to be lived within time and through speech: 'This form, this face, this life / Living to live in a world of time beyond me; let me / Resign my life for this life, my speech for that unspoken, / The awakened, lips parted, the hope, the new ships'.

Choruses from 'The Rock' may be considered in many ways as a prelude to *Four Quartets* and this is certainly the case as regards the theme of time, where 'a moment not of time but in time', and time with a meaning and time without a meaning, are treated from a strongly religious as well as philosophical point of view.

The soul and essence of time in Eliot are constituted by the sense and significance, meaning and purpose, of what is achieved in a given time, so that 'without the meaning there is no time, and that moment of time gave the meaning'. What makes the moment more weighty and significant is the religious and metaphysical undertones in which it is so rich. The insatiable quest for meaning with wich to redeem time--in other words, with which to redeem the present, and by redeeming the present, also the past--leaves no time to worry about what the future is going to be like. In any case, the seed of the future lies in the present, and though redeeming the present may not mean redeeming the future, it is the first step towards it. One's concern is not with the future--'Seek not to count the future waves of Time'--since, to quote the *Bhagavad Gita* with which Eliot was so familiar, it is not the fruit of action (representing the future) which counts, but action itself (which represents the present).

If *Choruses from 'The Rock'* and all that precedes it leads up to *Four Quartets*--not only Eliot's artistic masterwork but a monument to his creative thought--it is partly by virtue of the theme of time. For, together with that of spiritual salvation, transcendental reality, redemption, the contrast between the contingent and the perennial, the sense of purposefulness and purposelessness, that of time is a major theme of *Four Quartets*. In fact, it is the central importance of the concept of time and the way Eliot explores, defines and elaborates it as a means of defining transcendental reality that makes Leavis, while commenting on *Four Quartets*, assert that 'an attitude to time is an attitude to life'.[1]

'Burnt Norton' states the theme of time and the importance it is going to have for Eliot in his exploration of reality; this can be seen in the very first few lines, which for Leavis constitute 'the magnificent first movement'[2] of the poem: 'Time present and time past / Are both perhaps present in time future, / And time future contained in time past. / If all time is eternally present / All time is unredeemable'. All time being eternally present is Eliot's way of dealing witn the nature of the eternal

as something being both in time and outside of time. In his philosophical attitude to time Eliot regards past, future and present as essentially indivisible so that both what is past and what is future can have a meaning only in terms of the present; that is to say, they are perpetually present: 'Time past and time future / What might have been and what has been / Point to one end, which is always present'. The end to which both past and future point is at times interpreted as representing 'the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless; / Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,/ But neither arrest nor movement'--but, says Eliot, 'do not call it fixity, / Where past and future are gathered'. In other words, one may not be able to pinpoint something which is in time and yet outside of time, by referring it to either the past, the present or the future, for this is something apprehended through a mystical intuition only. Eliot thus establishes a link between time and timelessness, between what is in time and what is outside it, by pinpointing the things and objects that are in time, and by the help of which timelessness can be perceived and identified, almost like Leopardi perceiving the infinite through the finite in 'L'Infinito'. 'Time past and time future', says Eliot,

> Allow but a little consciousness
> To be conscious is not to be in time
> But only in time can the moment in the rose-garden,
> The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,
> The moment in the draughty church at smokefall
> Be remembered; involved with past and future.
> Only through time time is conquered.

Conquering time means overcoming the limits or the boundaries of past, present and future imposed upon us by the nature of time itself and by what Professor A. A. Ansari calls 'the persistent burden of consciousness'.[3] To conquer time therefore means achieving an apprehension of what is beyond those limits and therefore outside of time. In other words, through an act of creative imagination Eliot forges a link with what Emmanual Kant would consider impossible for a human mind to grasp i.e. something outside of time: 'the cold wind/That

blows before and after time'. This wind is indicative not so much of something timeless or existing prior to time, but of something unredeemed in time and therefore constituting 'the waste sad time / Stretching before and after'. The 'waste sad time' is time devoted to, or consumed by things, acts and occupations that exist in time, but that have no link with what is permanently meaningful :

> In succession
> Houses rise and fall, crumble, are extended,
> Are removed, destroyed, restored, or in their place
> Is an open field, or a factory, or a by-pass.
> Old stone to new building, old timber to new fires,
> Old fires to ashes, and ashes to the earth
> Which is already flesh, fur and faeces,
> Bone of man and beast, cornstalk and leaf.
> Houses live and die: there is a time for building
> And a time for living and for generation
> And a time for the wind to break the loosened pane
> And to shake the wainscot where the field-mouse trots
> And to shake the tattered arras woven with a silent motto.

However meaningful these things might appear to be in a given context and at a given time and place, they are essentially doomed to perish :

> They all go into the dark,
> The vacant interstellar spaces, the vacant into the vacant,
> The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters.
> The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers,
> Distinguished civil servants, chairman of many committees,
> Industrial lords and petty contractors, all go into the dark

Time's all-devouring power is measured in terms of 'the waste sad time, which envelopes what man does, all of which is heading for oblivion unless charged with a meaning that has a timeless relevance and value although it can be measured only in terms of what is in time. This relevance and this value have essentially a religious and philosophical significance for Eliot, so that just as time can be redeemed by time, the darkness can be redeemed by what he calls 'the darkness of God' :

> I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
> Which shall be the darkness of God . . . .
> I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope

> For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
> For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
> But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
> Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
> So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.

It is this light of darkness that impregnates (what is otherwise 'the waste sad time / Stretching before and after'. And when Eliot tells us, echoing Krishna's advice to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—'But perhaps neither gain nor loss. / For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.'—he is suggesting the only way time can be redeemed, fructified and saved from 'the waste sad time / stretching before and after'—for being is not less significant than becoming; it is rather, in Ansari's words, 'in the processes of Becoming that Being achieves its fullest expression'.[4]

Time past and time future constitute what Eliot calls the two 'metalled ways' on which the world moves 'in appetency'; but a sage—and this is one of his occupations—contemplates what 'moves perpetually in its stillness'—i.e. contemplates what is not in time, and therefore cannot die : 'words move, music moves / Only in time; but time which is only living / Can only die.' Hence in his mind 'the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end. / And all is always now.' The sage's perception of time is, therefore, at once deep and comprehensive. And the subtlety and complexity of the reasoned creative thinking required to capture it and turn it into poetry, as Eliot, while taking his cue from the *Bhagavad-Gita*, so magnificently does in the following verses, shows that, as far as his analysis and treatment of the theme of time is concerned, he himself was a sage :

> Love is itself unmoving,
> Only the cause and end of movement,
> Timeless. and undesiring
> Except in the aspect of time
> Caught in the form of limitation
> Between un-being and being.

So perceived, even 'the waste sad time / Stretching before and after' is something unreal, serving as a foil to what is timeless,

even though it can only be grasped in time which signifies the limit 'between un-being and being', whereas timelessness signifies freedom from what is contingent and therefore perishable--'for that which is only living/Can only die'. But freedom from the contingency of time also means freedom from desire 'not in itself desirable', from love and from the ecstasy and agony of love, so that having attained that goal, one can 'be still and still moving/Into another intensity/For a further union, a deeper communion'.

Thus Eliot's probing into the nature of time leads him to explore and interpret, not so much in a religious or mystical as in an essentially creative way, the timeless and transcendental. Thus, like what he says of the tolling bell, his poetic genius too--which in his case implies also genius for first-rate creative thought—

> Measures time not our time, . . . a time
> Older than the time of chronometers, older
> Than time counted by anxious worried women
> Lying awake, calculating the future,
> Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
> And piece together the past and the future,
> Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
> The future futureless, before the morning watch
> When time stops and time is never ending;
> And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning,
> Clangs
> The bell.

The poetic quality of this passage--a superb example of the close co-operation between analytical thought and creative poetry--depends on Eliot's dealing in a masterly, subtle and supple way with the various pulses or levels of time—so that what it meant to the 'anxious worried women' and what it means to a sage, a philosopher or a poet, come under his poetic scrutiny and inspire him just the same.

Redemption of time and realization of time thus come to mean one and the same thing to Eliot--so that the awareness of past, present and future become synonomous with 'the co-existence' of time, as he calls it, where 'the end precedes the

beginning, / And the end and the beginning were always there / Before the beginning and after the end./And all is always now'. Such a realization redeems 'the waste sad time / Stretching before and after'; and without it, the time 'stretching before and after' can only be a 'sad' and ridiculous 'waste'. It is not merely seeing 'eternity' in an instant in the Blakian sense, but grasping and going beyond the form of limitation / Between un-being and being', which enables the poet to say that 'in my beginning is my end' or, equally purposefully, 'in my end is my beginning'.

But an end is itself a preamble to a beginning, so that 'the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing'--which, in terms of Eliotic thought is an equivalent or elaboration of the need 'to be born again'; a mode of conquering time by time : 'Only through time time is conquered' (*Burnt Norton*, Section II); i.e. it is only in and through time that one can comprehend the timeless; not only through 'the intense moment / Isolated, with no before and after', but also through one's awareness of 'a lifetime burning in every moment / And not the lifetime of one man only / But of old stories that cannot be deciphered'.

Tied up with the paradoxical distinction between time that stops and time that is never ending (indicating thereby the dual categories of time--our time and time that is not ours; historical and pre-historical time and time when there will be no history to record or any one to record it) there is the sense of the past as being sometning more than the past :

> I have said before
> That the past experience revived in the meaning
> Is not the experience of one life only
> But of many generations—not forgetting
> Something that is probably guite ineffable :
> The backward look behind the assurance
> Of recorded history, the backward half-look
> Over the shoulder, towards the primitive terror.

This actually amounts to not only the past having 'another pattern', but also the present; and to our time and time which is not ours merging indistinguishably with one another,

whether in the past or in the present. That is why, for example, Eliot calls the moments of agony 'permanent / with such permanance as time has', something that we experience better, says Eliot,

> In the agony of others, nearly experienced,
> Involving ourselves, than in our own.
> For our own past is covered by the currents of action,
> But the torment of others remains an experience
> Unqualified, unworn by subsequent attrition.
> People change, and smile: but the agony abides..
> Time the destroyer is time the preserver.

That is also why 'time is no healer'; and the future is a faded song, a Royal Rose or a lavender spray / Of wistful regret for those who are not yet here to regret, / Pressed between yellow leaves of a book that has never been opened''.

It is such an attitude to and such a poetically charged and philosophically pregnant concept of time that accounts for the mood in which we consider the future and the past, or action and inaction 'with an equal mind'; or contemplate action without thinking of the fruit of action, as the *Bhagavad-Gita* Eliot quotes from in the third section of *The Dry Salvages* enjoins us to do. And whereas 'most of us' cannot but cling to the dimensions of past and future, some—say, a saint or a poet like Eliot himself—can 'apprehend / The point of intersection of the timeless / With time', and conquer the past and the future by freeing themselves from them by contemplating and getting absorbed in the contemplation of the timeless reality, or the reality of the timeless and the transcendental. An important factor in this liberation from the future as well as from the past, as Eliot explains in *Little Gidding* is 'detachment / From self and from things and from persons' as well as 'expanding of love beyond desire'. But such detachment need not mean diminution; on the contrary, it means enrichment of love and of the objects loved, so that 'the faces and places, with the self which, as it could, loved them', become 'renewed, transfigured in another pattern'—a pattern in which the beginning and the end are the same, the moment of the rose and the

moment of the yew-tree / Are of equal duration', and 'the fire and the rose are one'.

Hence it is largely in relation to his attitude to time as well as to timelessness—and for F. R. Leavis, such an attitude is tantamount to one's attitude to life—that Eliot impressively displays his powers as an original, creative thinker as well as poet, thereby both vindicating and exemplifying the truth of Leavis's claim vis-a-vis *Four Quartets* that it proves how formidable poetry can be as thought.

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[1] F. R. Leavis, 'Four Quartets' in *The Living Principle*, (Cambridge, 1975), p. 177.

[2] Ibid, p. 188.

[3] See A.A. Ansari', 'The Concept of Time in T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*' in *Dr. Zakir Husain Presentation Volume* (New Delhi, 1968), pp. 227-50.

[4] Ibid, p. 232.

Sachidananda Mohanty

'THE WOMAN WHO RODE AWAY': DEFEAT OF FEMINISM ?[1]

Despite Millet and Beauvoir, an account of sexual politics in Lawrence is clearly hamstrung by a host of bewilderingly complex factors. Most of the tales of Lawrence are oriented towards women and their quest for selfhood. Indeed, in many cases, the narrative itself is from the feminine point of view (Blanchard, 1978, p. 251). Further, female characters in Lawrence are generally more powerful and more completely realized than their male counterparts. Compared to Gertrude Morel, Lydia, Anna, Ursula, Gudrun, Kate and Constance, the males like Paul, Tom, Will, Anton Skrebensky, Don Ramon and Oliver Mellors appear weak-fleshed. The initiative for action, as women critics have themselves observed, is usually in the hands of women. Others agree that Lawrence 'makes no demands on women that he does not also make on men' (Harris, 1974, p. 522). It is also noticed that 'Lawrence offsets his male arguments for domination by creating intelligent and rebellious heroines like Ursula' (Blanchard, 1975, p 439).

While the defenders of Lawrence have relied on his ideal conception of love as 'a strange conjunction . . . not meeting and mingling . . . but an equilibrium, a pure balance of two single beings as the stars balance each other'; elsewhere, one must reckon with his theory that hetero-sexual love leading to marriage must give way to a special tie between the males, what Birkin in *Women in Love* described as 'another kind of love'. Similarly, while sex remains for Lawrence the overriding impulse for both the male and the female, the male curiously is endowed with a special mission in life, namely, 'the desire of

the human male to build a world' (*Fantasia*, 1922; rpt, 1983, p. 18). One is naturally inrigued as to why the female should be denied what Lawrence terms the essentially 'religious' or 'creative' motive.

In particular, Lawrence's characters during the period of his 'leadership fiction' seem to betray a strong penchant for power and leadership. The fate of many of the female protagonists such as Dollie in 'The Princess' Banford and March in 'The Fox', the vicar's daughter in 'The Virgin and the Gipsy' reveal the woman's fatal attraction to the powerful male, leading in some tales, to the extinction of the self, occasionally even inviting death. Such a seemingly masochistic desire on the part of women has predictably come for strong attack at the hands of critics (Cornelia Nixon, 1986). Consider, for instance, Kate Millet's classic indictment of the sacrificial scene in 'The Woman Who Rode Away' :

> The act here at the centre of the Lawrentian sexual religion is coitus as killing, its central vignette a picture of human sacrifice performed upon the woman to the greater glory and potency of the male. But because sexual potency could accomplish little upon a corpse, it is painfully obvious that the intention of the fable is purely political. The conversion of human genitals into weapons has led him from sex to war. Probably it is the perversion of sexuality into slaughter, indeed the story's very travesty and denial of sexuality whlch accounts for its monstrous, even demented air (Millet, 1969, p. 293).

Of all the fiction of Lawrence, 'The Woman Who Rode Away' (written in 1924) and first published in *The Dial*, July and August 1925)[2] perhaps comes the closest for a fascist reading. Nevertheless, a closer study of the text would reveal that charges of anti-feminism, male chauvinism or female masochism that are levelled against Lawrence seem to owe more to the ideological preoccuption of these critics, rather than to Lawrence's fictional writings. Even the defenders of Lawrence have not entirely escaped from this pitfall. Both Mailer (Mailer, 1971, p. 41) and Blanchard, sympathetic critics, appear to implicitly acknowledge the presence of anti-feminism but consider the tale to represent only one of the

many attitudes that Lawrence was exploring in his later narratives. The conclusion of 'The Woman Who Rode Away', affirms Blanchard, 'is only one of a number of possible conclusions Lawrence was considering during the same period' (Blanchard, 1975, p. 41).

This paper, therefore, attempts an ideological definition of 'The Woman Who Rode Away' in the general bakground of Lawrence's treatment of power, sex and fascism. Power is defined as the capacity to determine the behaviour of others in accordance with one's own. According to Weber, 'Power is the probability that an actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance' (Weber, 1947, p. 152). Politics may similarly be defined, for our purpose, in Kate Millet's sense of 'all power-structured realtionships and arrangements whereby one group of persons is controlled by another' (Millet, 1969, p. 23). Fascism may be taken as an extreme form of control of an individual, an institution or the state by the others. In inter-personal relationship, fascism preaches an inequality among the sexes with a pronounced domination of the male over the female. At the societal level, fascism advocates a hierarchy of the classes rooted to an ascriptive and hereditary order and proclaims a totalitarian system of regimentation, ruled by a power elite.

II

It will, however, be incorrect to suggest that 'The Woman Who Rode Away', has received a universal indictment. For instance, arguing from an anthropoligical point of view, Wesserstrom contends that the woman's fate 'represents not simply a unique experience but also all culture's evolution and destiny'. Lawrence, he remarks, 'urges us to set aside invention and technology and to complete this new transfigured woman who symbolizes a realignment of her sex with the earth and the sun' (Wesserstrom, 1978, pp. 172-97).

Similarly, critics have seen in the tale the presence of the sleeping beauty theme. According to this favourite critical

stereotype, supposedly employed in many of Lawrence's works such as 'The Princess', 'You touched me', 'The Horse Dealer's Daughter', 'The Virgin and the Gipsy', the female protagonist who leads a sterile death-in-life existence, undergoes a welcome experience of sexual and ritual initiation by the powerful male. In the process, the female awakens from her stasis and accepts submission of the male in order to gain a sense of fulfilment. A closer look will, however, reveal that no such polarisation is available in 'The Woman Who Rode Away'.

Critics who have condemned this tale for its alleged anti-feminism have paid insufficient attention to the complexity of the narrative. They have taken little note of the shifting mood of the woman : the conflict, anxiety and dilemma that constantly beset her in her journey. The sacrificial death of the woman-victim in the hands of the male priests has been taken by some as the crucial factor that betrays male-chauvinism. Similarly, many hostile feminists have ignored the vital role of imagery and the tone of the narrative voice.

I wish to suggest, firstly, that the surface meaning of fascism has been subverted by the eye of the woman and the narrator who constantly see the Chilchui Indians in an unfavourable light. Secondly, this attitude of disfavour has been reinforced by a predominantly negative animal imagery used to describe the Indians. Thirdly, I wish to argue that the woman's stupor was at least partly induced through drugs and therefore her attitude towards her sacrifice cannot be described as masochistic. Fourthly, I contend that while the world of the mining town is conclusively rejected, that of the Chilchui Indians too is shown as no viable answer. Though the destination proves to be elusive, the journey marks an advancement in her spiritual quest. The progress is primarily achieved by the woman's rejection of the highly personalized culture of the silver mining town in favour of the non-personal as typified by the older priests of the Chilchui tribe. The significance of the non-personal is seen in the individual's ability to break free from the boundary of the self and to establish a communion with the larger world of Nature and the Cosmos.

III

To begin with, the world of the mining town represents unequivocally decay and claustrophobia. The notion of death-in-life is recurrently and obsessively present throughout the early part of the tale. The woman lives amidst the silver mines, an obvious setting of physical and moral devastation. There are 'the deserted mines, deserted works, and a bunch of half-deserted miner's dwellings'. The backdrop is provided appropriately by the 'blank hills' (393).[3]

She can see 'great void tree clad trees piling one another from no where to no where'. They are 'for most part pinkish, stark grey and abstract' (391). Furthermore, the sense of deadness and claustrophobia makes an insistent presence :

> And in his battered Ford car her husband would take her into the thrice dead little spanish town forgotten among the mountains. The great sun-dried dead church, the dead portales the hopelessly covered market place, where the first time she went she saw a dead dog lying between the meat stalls and the vegetables array, streched out as if for ever, nobody troubling to throw it away. Deadness within deadness (398).

While the narrator's attitude towards the husband is unmistakably scornful as the latter 'had come to America a scrap of a wastrel, from Holland years ago as tiny body and from the gold mines of the west had been kicked south into Mexico', it soon becomes equally clear that the scorn has nothing to do with the husband's alleged indifference towards his wife. For a while it seems as if the woman was a sleeping beauty in need of a prince to awaken her from her stupor. For he had 'never become real to her, neither mentally, nor physically'. He was 'a squeamish waif of an idealist[4] and really hated the physical side of life' (392). But it turns out that the sleeping-beauty motif cannot hold. For, the man was not unphysical himself. He may have been 'little' but he was also 'wiry' and 'tough', 'a man tough as wire, tenacious as wire still full of energy'.

Subsequent details confirm that the woman's desire to ride away stems not so much from the man's indifference or neglect as from his possessive domination. For, the man 'swayed her,

downed her in an invincible slavery'. Her development has been arrested apparently because 'he was jealous of her as he was of his silvermine'. This equation between the woman and commodity is recurrent: 'It was as if his wife were some familiar secret vain of ore in his mines which no one must be aware of except himself . . . and if a gentleman looked at his wife, he felt as if his time were being looted, the secret of it pried out' (393).

Consequently, the woman has a deep yearning to escape the 'invincible slavery'. She refuses to lend credence to Lederman's observation that the Indians, like all savages, are 'rather low down and dirty, unsanitary with a few cunning tricks and struggling to get enough to eat'. Not even the news that the Indians living in a high valley to the south still 'offered human sacrifices' deters her.

It is therefore not surprising that initially the woman feels a sense of elation. Her 'loneliness was like a drink of cold water to one who is very thirsty' (396). She senses 'a great crash at the centre of herself' and feels 'like a woman who has died and passed beyond' (396).

Soon, however, there is a shift from the mood of contentment: Other feelings begin to assail her. With the approach of her destination, she begins to 'get disheartened'. She has 'no will of her own' and is 'afraid of the coming night'. This sense of unease is deepened by her encounter with the men of the Chilchui tribe who are invariably portrayed as cruel, inhuman and barbaric. For instance, the young man's eyes were 'quick and black and inhuman'. Not even her habitual 'half arrogant confidence in her own female power' can match him and her eyes contain 'a curious look of trance'. Even the assertion of her own womanhood seems to be hopelessly inadequate against 'the bright inhuman look'. The recurrent use of the animal imagery by the woman and the narrator to describe the captors helps to underscore the latter's attitude towards the woman which is made to appear as fiercely hostile. To her they appear unfailingly as some fearful animals. When they squat, they eat 'mechanically like animals'. They treat her

'with no more sign of interest than if she had been a piece of venison they were bringing home from the hunt and had hung inside a shelter' (401). At the break of dawn, she hears a clink of flint and steel 'and spots the form of a man crouching like a dog over a bone' (401). The 'intense, yet remote, inhuman glitter' of the elder man seems to take away her womanhood and leave her 'as some giant female white ant' (402). Later in the village of the Chilchui the singers seemed to her 'like wild creatures howling to the invisible gods of the Moon and the vanished Sun. Something of the chuckling, sobbing cry of the coyote, something of the exultant bark of the fox, the far off melancholy exultance of the howling wolf, the torment of the Puma's scream'. On the last day, the day of the sacrifice, the people emit 'that low animal cry which was so moving' (419).

The same savage attitude is reinforced by a host of other descriptions as well. The priests are always terrifying'. The Indians exhibit an extraordinary thrill of triumph and exultance' (404). Inside their black eyes 'a steely covetous intention glittered incomprehensible'. The young Indian who brings food to her had 'a curious look of triumph and ecstasy' (408). The Indians who cast a spell upon her 'seemed to take her will away leaving her willless and victim to her own indifference' (410). Behind the smile of the young Indian, there lies 'a soft strange malignancy' (413). The priests' eyes have 'something very primitively male and cruel' (418). At the pit of the fire, the priest is 'naked and in a state of barbaric ecatasy'. Those who hold her down watch with a 'glittering eagerness and awe and craving' (422).

This feeling of fear is paradoxically matched in the woman by an *apparently* masochistic desire: 'she knew she was a victim that all this elaborate work upon her was the work of victimizing her. But she did not mind. She wanted it' (419). She often falls into a self-induced state of trance and has an irresistible death desire while making her way to the village. She wonders all the time 'why she persisted in clinging and crawling along these mile long sheets of rock—why she did not hurl herself down and have done. The world was below her' (402). She goes through the same experience compulsively

for a number of times (e.g. pages 404, 407, 408, 412, 415 and 420).

On the other hand, the woman can never conclusively give in to a self-extinction as she fails to overcome her fear, anxiety and dilemma till the very end. For instance, she is 'frightened' and feels 'uneasy' (408). She gets 'a shock of fear' (409). She gets 'a sudden revival of her will and a desire to go out' (411). 'An icy pang of fear and certainty was at her heart' (413). Even while she feels that there is no difference between 'the transition from the dead to the dead I shall be' her soul 'sickened and felt wan' (420).

The argument in support of a masochistic extinction is further negated by the fact that the woman's hesitations get silenced not because of any profound spiritual experience but because she is drugged by the Indians. For instance, she is given a liquor 'made with herbs and sweetened with honey' which has a 'strange lingering flavour' (408). Again, when she has 'moments of terror and horror' she is given a 'sweetened' and 'emetic' drink and she feels 'lightened and langurous'. She even takes the drink willingly which is offered by the older priest at the time of the ceremony 'because of the semi trance it would induce' (418). And finally, even before the actual sacrifice, on the last day 'she was given a little to drink' and she feels no sensation at the time of her death.

A rather superficial reading of the tale supported by Lawrence's pronouncements such as 'America, Listen to your Own', (1920) where he urges the Americans to 'take up life where the Red Indians, the Aztec, the Maya, the Inca left it off', (*Phoenix*, 1936, p. 90) might make the tale appear as proto-fascist. But the present analysis points out a host of complex evidence in the narrative which negate such a reading.

IV

To sum up: firstly, the woman's journey is constantly dogged by doubt, disbelief, fear and anxiety. At no period has there been an unequivocal acceptance of death. The basic weakness of the exotic cosmology which the Indians flaunt so

proudly is exposed by the frequent use of the drugged drink meant to induce an enervating stupor in the victim. For the woman, the expedition may have been prompted at least partly by romantic considerations, for the thrill and excitement of the journey : 'She had her own horse and she dreamed of being free as she had been a girl among the hills of California' (395), but by the middle of the journey, she is overtaken by anxiety and fear. Indeed, at times, both the experiences—the new and the old—to her appear as ominously identical. When she looks at the valley, for instance, 'the unusual thing was that the low houses glittered *white*, *white washed*, looking like crystal of salt or *silver*. This frightened her' (402) (Emphasis mine). The recurrence of the silver imagery has an unmistakably ominous ring.

But at the end, the Indian alternative is rejected primarily because it represents a gospel of cruelty and the cult of the blood which are largely atavistic remnant of the past. It negates the true religion of the spirit which enhances life and does not cancel out the gains of civilisation. Certainly Lawrence appears to have noted the difference. His remarks in the Melville essay (*Studies in Classic American Literature* 1923; rpt, 1913, p. 145) make the vital distinction between primitivism and savagery clear.[5]

Secondly, the same attitude of disapproval towards the Indians is echoed by the narrative voice. This voice, often identified with the woman's tends to portray the bulk of the Indians essentially as barbaric and savage. The recurrent use of the animal imagery manages to capture the same effect.

And finally, though the husband and the older sacrificial priest share a number of similarities, they do underscore fundamental differences as well. It is true that both of them try and exercise some form of power over the woman. But whereas the husband's stranglehold is moral, coercive and intensely personal, the priest's control is characteristically non-personal. It is this behaviour of the older priest that distinguishes the older and presumably more mature members of the primitive cult from the younger zealots. When 'the white-haired

glassy-dark old man moistened his finger tips at his mouth and most delicately touched her on the breasts and on the body', she 'wondered almost sadly, why she did not feel shamed in her nakedness' (407). Similarly, at the hour of sacrifice, when the eyes of the younger man were 'anxious, terribly anxious and fierce' and they watched 'the sun with a glittering eagerness and awe and craving', (422) 'the eyes ot that oldest man were not anxious. Black and fixed as if sightless, they watched the sun, seeing beyond the sun. And in their black empty concentration, there was power, intensly abstract and remote but deep, deep to the heart of the earth, and the heart of the sun . . .'

Thus, for the woman, while the past is irrevocably rejected, future remains indeterminate. True, the sacrifical death itself does not meet with any approaval either by the woman or the narrator. Nevertheless, the significance of the woman's quest, as indeed the significance of the tale, cannot be equated finally with only the act of sacrifice. Such a plain reading of the tale would obviously suggest the extinction of the woman's self. However, despite the fact of death, the woman's quest has not been entirely futile. Her tryst with death has paradoxically resulted in the recognition of and immersion in the non-personal as embodied in the older priest. While savagery of the younger Indians has been rejected, primitivism of the older priest is seen not without its merits. The discovery of the non-personal is acknowledged as a positive turning away from the intensely personalized white civilization that she leaves behind. It is this discovery that finally leads the woman paradoxically to an enhanced perception of her womanhood.

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NOTES

1. See R. P. Draper's 'The Defeat of Feminism : Lawrence's "The Fox" and "The Woman Who Rode Away"' *Studies in Short Fiction*, 3, No. 2 (Winter 1966), 186-98.
2. Other publications include those in *New Criterion* in July 1925 and January, 1926. The tale was also incided in *The Best British Stories of 1926* and became the title of Lawrence's third collection of short stories *The Woman Who Rode Away*, 1928.
3. All references to 'The Woman Who Rode Away', 1928 pertain to the Penguin edition of *D. H. Lawrence: Selected Short Stories*, 1985 and are parenthetically given in the text.
4. Compare this with what Lawrence says in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, p. 161 : 'The first thing of all to be recognized is the danger of idealism. It is the one besetting sin of the human race. It means the fall into automatism, mechanism and nullity'.
5. 'We can't go back. We can't go back to the savages, not a stride. We can be in sympathy with them. We can take a great curve in their direction onwards. But we cannot turn the current of our life backwards, back towards their soft, warm, twilight and uncreate mind. Not for a moment, it makes us sick'.

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3. Janice Harris, 'D. H. Lawrence and Kate Millet', *Massachusetts Review*, 15 (Summer, 1974).
4. Kate Millet, *Sexual Politics* (London, 1969).
5. Norman Mailer 'The Prisoner of Sex', *Harper's Magazine* (March, 1971).
6. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organisation* (New York, 1947).
7. William Wasserstrom, 'Phoenix in Turtle Islands : D. H. Lawrence in Henry Adams's America, *Georgia Review*, 31, No. 1, 1978.
8. D. H. Lawrence, 'America Listen to your Own' (1920) reprinted in *Phoenix: The Posthumous Papers of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Edward D. McDonald (London, 1936).

9. ——— *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1983).
10. ———, *Women in Love* (1920; rpt. New York, 1960).
11. ———, *Studies in Classic American Literature* (1923; rpt. Harmonds worth, 1983).
12. ———, *The Plumed Serpent* (1926; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1982).
13. Cornelia Nixon, *Lawrence's Leadership Politics and the Turn Against Women* (Berkely, 1986).

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SPATIAL FORM IN MODERN FICTION: A READING OF *ULYSSES* AND *THE WAVES*

One of the features of modern literature has been the use in it of what Joseph Frank has called 'Spatial Form'. I intend to examine *Ulysses* (with special reference to 'The Wandering Rocks') and *The Waves*[1] in the light of this concept of spatial form. I shall, through such an examination, arrive at an idea of the modernity, similar or varied, of Joyce and Virginia Woolf.

The Impressionist painters juxtaposed pure tones on the canvas, instead of mixing them on the palette and left the blending of colours to the eye of the spectator. Modernists like Proust, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf attempt a similar technique in literature: they give us what might be called 'pure' views of characters—views of them 'motionless in a moment of vision' in various phases of their lives—and allow the sensibility of the reader to fuse these views, as far as this is possible, into a unity.[2] They do this by breaking up the temporal sequence of the narrative. To experience the passage of time, it is necessary to rise above it and to grasp both past and present simultaneously in a moment of what Proust called 'pure time'. 'Pure time' is not time at all, it is perception in a moment of time which is frozen, that is to say, space. And by the discontinuous presentation of character (and incident) the novelist forces the reader to juxtapose disparate images spatially, in a moment of time, so that the experience of time's passage is communicated 'directly' to his sensibility.[3] Spatial form is thus an attempt at a simultaneity of perception by the breaking-up of temporal sequence; an attempt at spatialization of time. It is the art, as R. P. Blackmur says, 'of the anecdote begun in one place, taken up in one or more places, and

finished, if at all, in still another. This deliberate disconnectedness, this art of a thing continually alluding to itself, continually breaking off short, is the method,[4] by which the novel ties itself together, if it ties itself together, that is. The reader is to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity, if it can be apprehended as a unity at all.

I have been obliged to constantly qualify the expressions 'fusion', 'unity', 'tying itself together' etc. For there is a basic difference between Joyce and Woolf in the manner in which they employ spatial form in their fiction: while a reader of *Mrs Dalloway* or *The Waves* does emerge with some sense of pattern, he emerges out of *Ulysses* impressed more by the absence of pattern or unity, for all its mythopoeic structure. So, when Frank says, 'Joyce composed his novel of a vast number of references and cross references that relate to each other independently of the time sequence of the narrative [and that] these references must be connected by the reader and viewed as a whole before the book fits together into any meaningful pattern',[5] we have doubts about the meaningful pattern. I shall now take up 'The Wandering Rocks' chapter from *Ulysses* and *The Waves* and illustrate the manner in which this device is being used.

I am not sure that the argument whether 'The Wandering Rocks' 'consists of eighteen short scenes followed by a *coda* describing a viceregal passage through Dublin',[6] or it comprises 'seventeen framed by the first and the last[7] episode, is, in the final analysis, all that important. At least, not for my purposes. I feel, though, Stanley Sultan's division is more acceptable, as Fr Conmee at one end of the spectrum and the Viceroy at the other symbolize the Roman and British representatives in Ireland, its spiritual and political domination. I agree with Stuart Gilbert, however, that 'In its structure and its *technic* ('labyrinth') this episode [The Wandering Rocks] may be regarded as a small-scale model of *Ulysses* as a whole'.[8] To me 'The Wandering Rocks' is a model of *Ulysses* in respect of its 'spatial form'.

In discussing 'The Wandering Rocks' critics often talk about what they call 'intrusion' of one section by (a sentence or more of) another It is not, I think, really to be looked upon as intrusion; it is the novelist's attempt at synchronicity. For the duration of the scene at least, the *time-flow of the narrative* is halted (*not* clock time, obviously, as the incidents of 'The Wandering Rocks' take place between 3 and 4 in the afternoon of June 16, 1904); and attention is fixed on the interplay of relationships within the immobilized time-area. It is as though the reader, along with Joyce, raised himself to a God's-eye viewpoint, looking on to the city as on a map and watched the synchronisms of the action, as from the Eternal Now.[9] From this vantage point the novelist or the reader watches, at the same point in time, Fr Conmee stepping into the Dollymount tram on Newcomen bridge *and* Corny Kelleher chewing his blade of hay, leaning against the doorcase of his establishment; Conmee's stepping into a tram is *not* then, an intrusion in Kelleher section. The reader *listens* to Maggy Dedalus in the Dedalus household telling Boody that they wouldn't give anything on Stephen's books; he, 'at the same time', *sees* Conmee now walking through Clongowes fields, real or imaginary, his thinsocked ankles tickled by stubble. This is not an interpolation of Conmee section into the Dedalus household section.

While he *is still with* the Dedaluses, the reader also *hears* the lacquey in Dillon's auctionrooms ring his bell:

> —Where did you get it [peasoup]? Katey asked.
> —Sister Mary Patrick Maggy said.
> The lacquey rang his bell.
> —Barang!
> Boody sat down at the table and said angrily:
> —Give us it here!
> Maggy poured yellow thick soup from the kettle into a bowl. (p 226),

and *sees* a skiff, a crumpled throwaway, Elijah is coming, ride lightly down the Liffey, under Loopline bridge, shooting the rapids where water chafed around the bridgepiers, sailing eastward, between the Customhouse old dock and George's quay. To mention just two more instances of spatialization:

while Ned Lambert is looking into the card of Rev. H.C. Love, the young woman among Clongowes fields with slow care detaches from her light skirt a clinging twig; both actions, of course, happen at the same instant of time and the narrative aspires to register both, flouting its normal sequential mode. Similarly, when Martin Cunningham is talking about young Dignam to his friends, 'Bronze by gold. Miss Kennedy's head by Miss Douce's head appeared above the crossblind of the Ormond hotel'. (p. 245)

Spatial from is the art, we said earlier, of beginning an anecdote in one place in the novel, taking it up in one or more places and finishing it in still another. Now, this art is evident not only in 'The Wandering Rocks' chapter but also throughout *Ulysses.* The last quote is already an illustration: in 'The Wandering Rocks' are introduced the two barmaids of the Ormond hotel, who apparently have nothing to do in this chapter and whom the reader will meet only in the next. In section 5 of 'The Wandering Rocks', where Blazes Boylan is buying fruit for Molly, there is the mention, for the first time, of a darkbacked figure under Merchants' arch scanning books on the hawkers' car (p. 227). This is taken up in section 9, where Lenehan and M'Coy see a darkbacked figure scanning books and the figure is disclosed to the reader as Bloom; and in the next section, Bloom is himself presented as buying, in his role as cuckold and pander, *Sweets of Sin* for his wife, Molly. Bloom reads this book at random. For instance he reads : '-Her mouth glued on his in a luscious voluptuous kiss while his hands felt for the opulent curves inside her deshabille'. (p. 235) The point is that everything is not over with Bloom and *Sweets of Sin* yet. Phrases from this salacious book keep coming back in Bloom's mind and the reader encounters them in Bloom's various monologues throughout *Ulysses.* For example, when Bloom is sexually 'basking' in the presence of Gerty Macdowell, who is exhibiting herself on the beach, there is this in his monologue : 'Felt for the curves inside her deshabille'. (p. 366) Again, 'For him! For Raoul'! from this

book recurs, either fully or in part: For some man. For Raoul. (p. 262).

In section 5 of this chapter we read:

> The blond girl in Thornton's bedded the wicker basket with rustling fibre. Blazes Boylen handed her the bottle swathed in pink tissue paper and a small jar.
>
> —Put these in first, will you? he said.
>
> —Yes, sir, the blond girl said, and the fruit on top....
>
> She bestowed fat pears neatly, head by tail, and among them ripe shame-faced peaches. (p. 226)

We are not told here the contents of either the bottle or the jar. We, of course, mark the language with its ring of sexual innuendo. We will know that Boylan is sending them to Molly for the seduction feast after four o'clock. And on pape 595 the contents are revealed: when Bloom arrives at home in the small hours of the next day along with Stephen, he notices in one of the kitchen shelves 'an empty pot of Plumtree's potted meat, an oval wicker basket bedded with fibre and containing one Jersey pear, a halfpenny bottle of ... port, half disrobed of its swathe of coralpink tissue paper ...' An attentive reader will recall that he has already read on page 76: 'What is home without / Plumtree's Potted Meat'. Again, Molly's arm is seen first flinging money to the sailor, later putting back in the window, whence she dislodged it, a card announcing *Unfurnished Apartments*. (p. 233) Stephen is later offered accommodation by Bloom in the house but he declines it. (p. 616) Similarly, the throwaway Elijah is coming, which appears thrice in this chapter alone, was, the reader notes, received and dropped by Bloom into the Liffey nearly five hours earlier. (p, 152)

In their analysis of 'The Wandering Rocks' critics speak about 'traps' created by the interpolations[10] and Clive Hart picks out for particular mention this one, from section 8: From a long face a beard and gaze hung on a chessboard. (p. 230) Hart assists the reader by saying: Parnell's brother is playing chess in the DBC, not in Mary's abbey.[11] My point is that such talk about 'traps' becomes rather pointless, once the reader is aware of spatial form and alert to recognize a new

'anecdote' and await its later occurrence or occurrences in the novel, as this one about Parnell's brother, which occurs, first, in section 8 (Ned Lambert and Jack O'Molloy section), then, surprisingly enough, is not repeated until its final disclosure in section 16 :—Parnell's brother. There in the corner. They chose a small table near the window opposite a longfaced man whose beard and gaze hung intently down on a chessboard. (p. 247)

To come now to the question of 'meaningful pattern' in *Ulysses*. Our analysis has demonstrated the fact that all the 'factual' background and details, that a reader normally finds summarized in a nineteenth century novel, must in *Ulysses* be reconstructed from fragments, sometimes hundreds of pages apart, scattered through the book. In other words, the reader has to approach and read *Ulysses* in much the same manner as he reads modern poetry. 'The burden placed on the reader by this method of composition may well seem insuperable. But the fact remains that Joyce, in his unbelievably laborious fragmentation of narrative structure, proceeded on the assumption that a unified spatial apprehension of his work would ultimately be possible'.[12] The 'fact' however seems very doubtful today. For one thing, there are in *Ulysses* a host of insignificant details or 'unstructed material'. There are coincidences, meetings that have a point, and coincidences which do not.[13] To take 'The Wandering Rocks' chapter, many of the characters and details who appear here are not crucial for the development of the story, though, it is true, nearly all the major characters do appear here end the chapter does help carry forward the story. To give a couple of insignificant details : Bloom, the dentist and 'Bang of the lastlap bell' for the halfmile sprinters. Joyce appears to have thrown in these details deliberately to confuse the reader who would meaningfully connect every detail. Indeed, there are many such 'wandering rocks' in *Ulysses* which the reader must carefully avoid knocking himself against. R. M. Adams has navigated quite successfully. After a lot of digging into the sources of *Ulysses* and after having identified an astonishing wealth of names, addresses, local events and

even newspaper cuttings, Adams realized that many of the details served to blur or confuse rather than sustain patterns:

> The close reading of *Ulysses* thus reveals that the meaningless is deeply interwoven with fhe meaningful in the texture of the novel .... It is a book and an antibook, a work of art particularly receptive to accident. It builds to acute and poignant states of consciousness, yet its larger ambition seems to be to put aside consciousness as a painful burden.[14]

And the 'fact' of *Ulysses*, would seem, then, that *Ulysses* is not so much a novel about Dublin life as is a novel about the capacity of language to represent life or reality, studying and developing as it does the tension between paradigm and reality, asserting 'the resistance of fact to fiction, human freedom and unpredicability agains plot'.[15] Hence its plurality of styles and its parody of styles. (Hence also its persistent appeal to Post-Modernist Writers).

It appears that Frank uses the concept of spatial form also in the sense of an art that transmutes 'the time world of history into the timeless world of myth'.[16] For the chief source of meaning in *Ulysses*, he says,

> Is the sense of ironic dissimilarity and yet of profound human continuity between the modern protagonists and their long-dead (or only imaginary) exemplars.... Past and present are apprehended spatially, locked in a timeless unity that, while it may accentuate surface differences, eliminates any feeling of sequence by the very act oi juxtaposition.[17]

Spatial form, in other words, is 'an imagination for which historical time does not exist, and which sees the actions and events of a particular time only as the bodying forth of eternal prototypes'.[18] I am not at all sure to what extent spatial form understood in this sense is applicable to *Ulysses*. As Wolfgang Iser admirably demonstrates in his book, *The Implied Reader*,[19] one is not impressed at all by the claim that Bloom is a Ulysses in a modern dress. The differences between Homeric and modern heroes are far from being peripheral, as Frank implies. If anything, the mythic pattern only serves to accentuate the irreducible differences. And the function of the mythic pattern in the novel seems to be just that. Joyce's characters begin to take on a life of their own, the moment the reader

begins to react to them, and his reactions consist of an attempt to grasp and hold fast to their individuality—'their constitutive instability', to use that phrase by Kermode,[20]—a process that would be unnecessary if they were immediately recognizable types. There is an enormous difference in stature between the humble citizen of Dublin and the Homeric Ulysses. Bloom's character and conduct is as fluid as Ulysses' is rigid and stylized. Bloom lacks most of Ulysses' characteristics and vice versa. Still, the title of the novel makes the reader think of Bloom as a Ulysses and so offsets those elements of the character which prevailing conventions prevented Homer from dealing with.[21] If one considers the archetypes—the homecoming, the city and the quest—there is trouble again. In the *Odyssey* there is no equivalent to the 'new Bloomusalem'. The quest, too, shows differences: Telemachus searched for his father, while Bloom searches for his son-substitute. For Ulysses the homecoming meant the end of his travails, while for Bloom it is a return to the unchaste Molly who, unlike Penelope, has had one more of her sexual encounters with Boylan and who promptly begins to design on young Stephen: in other words, the homecoming for Bloom 'brings nothing but a heightened sensitivity to the unforeseable'.[22] 'By evoking and at the same time deforming archetypal patterns [thus] Joyce succeeds in throwing into relief the uniqueness of Bloom as a citizen of the modern world'.[23] The archetypes thus are just a frame, a scaffolding, as Pound rightly called them, and *Ulysses* is not determined by them so much as set off by them. So that when T.S. Eliot says that the use of myth in *Ulysses* is 'simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history',[24] we are not persuaded, knowing as we do that the real strength of the book is its lack of mythologizing.

Lack of mythologizing renders Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* a good illustrative text, in my view, of the use of spatial form. It is an open question, admittedly, whether the six soliloquists in *The Waves* are six individuals or six different voices of one

multiple personality; whether 'the flow and the play of consciousness',[25] is unipersonal or multipersonal. Until we reach the last section of the novel, however, we are more or less under the impression that they are six different persons. All along one carries the feeling though, that, despite his name and his having a shave in the haridressers, Bernard is not masculine enough in his activities and mental attitudes. So that the reader is not altogether surprised when Bernard confronts him thus: 'I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am—Jinny, Susan, Neville, Rhoda, or Louis; or how to distinguish my life from theirs'. (p. 187) Or again: '. . . nor do I always know if I am man or woman. . . . (p. 190) Whether one takes Bernard, Susan, Louis, Rhoda, Neville and Jinny as six characters or six voices of one mind, the reader's mode of grasp of these is radically different from that of his grasp of characters of nineteenth century fiction. And this is the point here. Instead of being submerged in the flow of time and intuiting a character progressively, the reader of *The Waves* is confronted with various snapshots of the characters' consciousnesses taken at different stages in their lives; and in juxtaposing these images he experiences 'spatially' the effects of the passage of time. Thus we are confronted with the stream or flow of consciousness of each of these six, juxtaposed in space, as when they were children in nursery, at school, at college, youth, men and women with careers of their own, in their middle age and finally, in their late middle age.

In order to illustrate the spatial form of *The Waves* I could do no better, I think, than reproduce select 'snapshots'[26] from each person's flow of consciousness at various phases in his or her life. This I believe proves the point effectively and avoids what would otherwise be a clumsy jumble of criss-cross quotations.

Jinny :

'I see a crimson tassel', said Jinny, 'twisted with gold threads'. (6)

'The back of my hand burns', said Jinny, 'but the palm is clammy and damp with dew'. (7)

'I should like a fiery dress'. (14)

'I long that the week should be all one day without divisions.... My hands pass over my legs and body. I feel its slopes, its thinness.... There will be parties in brilliant rooms; and one man will single me out and tell me what he has told no other person.... But I shall not let myself be attached to one person only. I do not want to be fixed, to be pinioned'. (37)

'He smiles at my reflection in the tunnel. My body instantly of its own accord puts forth a frill under his gaze.... We have exchanged the approval of our bodies'. (42–3)

'I am admitted to the warmth and privacy of another soul'. (70)

'Our bodies touch... Our bodies burst into fire'. (94)

'All London is uneasy with flashing lights. Now let us sing our love song—Come, come, come... Jug, jug, jug, I sing like the nightingale whose melody is crowded in the too narrow passage of her throat'. (119)

'I am no longer young.... I shall soon raise my arm in vain and my scarf will fall to my side without having signalled'. (130)

'Time's fangs have ceased their devouring. We have triumphed over the abysses of space, with rouge, with powder, with flimsy pocket-handkerchiefs'. (154)

Rhoda :

'Islands of light are swimming on the grass', said Rhoda They have fallen through the trees'. (6)

'One sails alone. That is my ship'. (13)

'I sail on alone under the white cliffs. Oh, but I sink, I fall!... I am stretched among these long lights, these long waves, these endless paths, with people pursuing, pursuing'. (18–9)

'That's my face', said Rhoda, in the looking-glass behind Susan's shoulder.... But I will duck behind her to hide it.... I have no face. Other people have faces'. (29)

'To whom shall I give all that now flows through me, from my warm, my porous body? I will gather my flowers and present them—Oh! to whom'? (38)

'I want publicity and violence and to be bashed like a stone on rocks'. (107)

'Now I will at last free the checked, the jerked-back desire to be spent, to be consumed'. (111)

'Oh, human beings, how I have hated you!... I have been stained by you and corrupted.... I left Louis; I feared embraces'. (137–8)

'Now I climb this Spanish hill.... There is only a thin sheet between me and the infinite depths'. (139)

'But I did not hide behind them. I walked straight up to you instead of circling round to avoid the shock of sensation as I used'. (150)

Louis:

'I hear something stamping', said Louis. 'A great beast's foot is chained. It stamps, stamps and stamps'. (6)

'She has kissed me. All is shattered'. (9)

'I will not conjugate the verb . .. until Bernard has said it'. (13)

'As I stand here with my hand on the grained oak panel of Mr. Wickham's door I think myself the friend of Richelieu, or the Duke of St Simon'.... (35)

'I look at the little men at the next table to be sure that I do what they do.... I am conscious of flux ... of annihilation and despair. If this is all, this is worthless'. (63)

'There Rhoda sometimes comes. For we are lovers'. (114).

'Rhoda left me'. (137)

Neville:

'I see a globe', said Neville, 'hanging down in a drop against the enormous flanks of some hill'. (6)

'I hate dampish things. I hate wandering and mixing things together'. (13)

'Yesterday, passing the open door leading into the private garden, I saw Fenwick with his mallet raised'. (35)

'There are the lovers lying shamelessly mouth to mouth on the b rnt grass Percival is now almost in Scotland' .... (48)

'There is some flaw in me' 56)

'I cannot endure that there should be shop-girls' (58)

'He is dead .... I sob, I sob' (130)

'I cannot tumble, as you do, like half-naked boys ... squirting each other with house-pipes'. (121)

'Making love to a nursemaid behind a tree, that soldier is more than admirable than all the stars. Yet ... we maggots deforming even the trees with our lust' (152-3)

Susan:

'I see a slab of pale yellow', said Susan, 'spreading away until it meets a purple stripe'. (6)

'I saw them, Jinny and Louis kissing'. (9)

'I saw Florie in the kitchen garden ... Ernest kissed her' (17)

'So each night I tear off the old day from the calendar, and screw it tight into a ball'. (27)

'I would bury the whole school'. (30)

'I want to give, to be given, and solitude in which to unfold my possessions'. (36)

'I shall be debased and hide-bound by the bestial and beautiful passion of maternity'. (89)

'Yet sometimes I am sick of natural happiness'. (129)

'My body has been used daily, rightly, like a tool by a good workman, all over'. (145)

Bernard :

'I see a ring', said Bernard, 'hanging above me. It quivers and hangs in a loop of light', (6)

'I must make phrases and phrases and so interpose something hard between myself and the stare of housemaids, the stare of clocks, staring faces . . . or I shall cry'. (20)

'Bernard [Neville said] has escaped us, making phrase . . . . He began it when he rolled his bread into pellets as a child. One pellet was a man, one was a woman. We are all pellets. We are all phrases in Bernard's story'. (47)

'When I cannot see words curling like rings of smoke round me I am in darkness—I am nothing'. (89)

'But what are stories? Toys I twist, bubbles I blow, one ring passing through another'. (97)

'My son is born; Percival is dead'. (103)

'Mrs Moffat, I say, come and sweep it all up'. (125)

'. . . I distrust neat designs of life that drawn upon half-sheets of paper'. (161)

'All this little affair of 'being' is over'. (194)

'The shock of the falling wave which has sounded all my life, which woke me so that I saw the gold loop on the cupboard, no longer makes quiver what I hold'. (197)

'Against you I will fling myself, unvanquished and unyielding, O Death'! (200)

These select snapshots, for all their copiousness, are, if I may claim it, *The Waves* in a nutshell. They bring out Jinny's zest for life and her polymorphous sexual urge, Rhoda's solitude and her mistrust of life and people (hence her final suicidal leap). Louis's pessimism and his refuge in historicism, Susan's love for, and acquiescence in, domesticity and Bernard's artistic nature and androgynous mind ('the logical sobriety of a man joined to the sensibility of a woman'. (p. 52) What is

remarkable about these soliloquies, these records of 'atoms as they fall upon the mind', is that they effectively register the subtle changes, too, that take place in the six characters, as they proceed along the human cycle of growth, expectation, fulfillment, frustation and decline; these changes, however, do not alter their basic attitudes significantly.

There is no mythic parallel in *The Waves* to set off its characters and 'events'. Unlike in *Ulysses*, there is no unstructured or insignificant material in *The Waves*. Nor is the picture of life / reality such a grim one of a growing disarray. The energy of the novel seems directed towards erecting a pattern or patterns against the disintegrating reality.

As Robert Alter puts it, the consciousness of imagery, poetry, all the apparatus of literary tradition, as a means to a human coherence that can be set over against awaiting abyss is especially central in the writing of Virginia Woolf'.[27] Again, Woolf's interest in the immediate texture and structure of consciousness is different from Joyce's : whereas for Joyce, consciousness is ultimately a kind of artifice, for Woolf it is art. And her metaphor of 'the luminous halo' is an image of consciousness not as fluid or kinetic, but as a circle perfected by art, taken from the tradition of iconography.[28] This is the reason why the stream of consciousness in her novels is all lyrical, symmetrical, continuous, polished and complete, never reaching the pre-speech level, very unlike Joyce's which is more often than not, prosaic, dicontinuous, stripped of context as in montage, raw, and labyrinthine, receding as it does into the impenetrable private sphere of Joyce himself. Also, as H. Richter points out ; 'Virginia Woolf does not attempt to reproduce the specific biological rhytm of a part of the body as does Joyce; she is concerned instead with the rhythm of the body organism as a whole'.[29] in all this, then, Virginia Woolf, though influenced by Joyce, has not been a mere imitator, but has pursued her own, independent, further investigations into the art of representation of reality in fiction. And her novels are of a unique, modern feminine consiousness. What is more,

in her awareness that her fictions might as well not survive the general dissolution, like Bernard's fictions ('My book, stuffed with phrases, has dropped to the floor . . , to be swept by the charwoman' . . . . p. 199), she is also a forerunner of Post-Modern writers.

Spatial form, thus, is a constituent feature of modern fiction, of *Ulysses* and *The Waves*. And the point to be borne in the mind is that spatial form is not merely a matter of technique, just a novel experiment. For 'experimentalism does not simply suggest the presence of sophistication, difficulty and novelty in art; it also suggests bleakness, darkness, alienation, disintegration'.[30] When the relationship between man and society / cosmos is one of disharmony and disequilibrium, one of alienation and withdrawal, art tends to turn non-natural, stylistically experimental. The modern fiction of Joyce and Woolf, then are an art that respond, in their different ways, to the scene of modern chaos, the one leaving the reader with almost 'an impression of hopelessness',[31] the other, with some sense of consolatory form.

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NOTES

1 I have used the Penguin edition of *Ulysses* (Harmondsworth, 1979) and the Panther edition (1979) of *The Waves*.

2 See Joseph Frank, 'Spatial Form in Modern Literature', *The Widening Gyre* (New Brunswick, New Jersy, 1963), pp. 24-5

3 Ibid., p. 24.

4 As quoted by Frank, 'Spatial Form', p. 12.

5 Ibid., p. 16.

6 Stuart Gilbert, 'The Wandering Rocks', *James Joyce's Ulysses* (London, 1950), p. 225.

7 Stanley Sultan, 'The City', *The Argument of Ulysses* (Ohio, 1964), p. 205.

8 Gilbert. p. 225.

9 See Clive Hart, 'Wandering Rocks', *James Joyce's Ulysses: Critical Essays*, edited by Clive Hart and David Hayman (Berkeley, London, 1974), p. 194.

10 Ibid., p. 193.

11 Ibid., p. 196.

12 Frank, p. 19.

13 Frank Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending: Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York, London, 1979), p. 113.

14 As quoted by Ihab Hassan, *Paracriticisms: Seven Speculations of the Times* (Chicago, 1975), p. 9.

15 Kermode, p. 113.

16 Frank, p. 60.

17 Ibid.. pp. 58-9.

18 Ibid , p. 60.

19 Wolfgang Iser, *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett* (Baltimore, London, 1974), pp. 179-233.

20 Kermode, p. 141.

21 See Iser, p. 229.

22 Ibid.. p. 229.

23 Ibid , p. 229.

24 As quoted by Iser, p. 179.

25 See Erich Auerbach, 'The Brown Stocking', *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1974) pp. 525-553.

26 Admittedly these snapshots falsify the reading experience to some extent. In the book Woolf assembles the 'six' characters at different periods in their lives and records the 'atoms as they fall upon the mind'—which is already a falsification of sorts; to prove better the point of spatial form, I have re-assembled the 'atoms' of each separately.

27 Robert Alter, 'The Modernist Revival of Self-Conscious Fiction', *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre* (Berkeley, London, 1975), p. 149.

28 Ibid., p. 151.

29 Harvena Richter, *Virginia Woolf: The Inward Voyage* (Princeton, 1970), p. 207.

30 See Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism: 1890-1930* Penguin Books, (Harmondsworth, 1978), p. 26.

31 Auerbach, p. 551.

BOOK REVIEW

Beyond the Occult : A Twenty-Year Investigation Into the Paranormal :
By COLIN WILSON, Carroll and Graf, 1990, 381 pp.

Author of *The Occult* (1971) and *The Psychic Detectives* (1985), Colin Wilson conveys a great deal in *Beyond the Occult* without being solemn or stuffy. He addresses topics like telepathy, hypnosis, and voodoo, and, supporting his passion for the paranormal with sound scholarship, he will quote authorities on the subject. An accomplished novelist as well as a mystic, he knows the value of specific detials. Thus he tells of a Russian woman who, after looking at a man's stomach, told him what he ate for lunch; he cites a girl who could smell through her chin and see with her ears; he discusses a German who could read books by placing them face down on her stomach. What's more, he claims such events to be scientifically verifiable—and attainable. We all possess hidden intuitive powers, like clairvoyance, even though we don't know it.

Wilson's belief in both the creativity and healing power of our unconscious selves has an engaging vigour that he supports with good sense : 'If we are to live with maximum efficiency our lives need to be as simple as possible', he says in his Introduction, where he also claims, 'We waste about 90 per cent of our time in coping with minor problems and vastly overestimating them'.

What robs such judgments of force is the book's waywardness. The clues and insights into mystical consciousness that make up *Beyond the Occult* lack development, often lapsing into series of anecdotes and personal reminiscences. In places, the book softens and sags so much, in fact, that it resembles

a self-help book of the 1950s. Furthermore, it contains errors of fact. Graham Greene's 1971 autobiography is called *A Sort of Life*, not *A Kind of Life*, and neither boredom nor 'a naturally gloomy outlook' drove him to attempt suicide as a teenager. What did depress him was the inner division he felt from being a student at the same school where his father was headmaster. Wilson's logic also slips. He attacks C. G. Jung's description of synchronicity as 'an acausal connecting principle' because it claims that synchronicity is both a cause and not a cause. Yet his own description two pages later makes the same mistake he charges Jung with. If synchronicity is 'a coincidence so outrageous that it can't be shrugged off as a coincidence' (p 147), then Wilson's definition needs to introduce a new descriptive term for it.

Such flubs show why the mysteries he recounts, though fascinating, remain unsolved, i.e., what they were before he wrote about them. He ends Chapter 5 by refuting the claim that 'moods of optimisim' can improve life as 'scientifically indefensible'. But then he says of this claim that 'most of us have a gut-feeling that it contains more than a grain of truth'. Aren't we entitled to bring away something more substantial than a grain from a 381-page book than a 'gut feeling'? Of course we are, and as learned and profound as he is, Wilson hasn't given it to us. His *Beyond the Occult* is a work of intellectual authority that lacks intellectual tension.

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