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Edward H. Strauch

THE NEW CRITICISM AND ITS LIMITS

A survey of major European critics for and against Anglo-American formalism reveals a plethora of conflicting critical viewpoints. Indeed, the diversity of aims, methods, and approaches they advocate is bound at first to confuse both student and scholar. Yet they provide the ground of being out of which grew the critical concerns of today.

Typical of the time, the dilemma was not restricted to literary criticism alone. Virtually all humanistic knowledge was going through a similar crisis of conscience. Although at times the critics disagreed vigorously, their diverse theories and studies allow us to infer certain attitudes and characteristics which foreshadowed the future of literary criticism. The insights of the Europeans may, therefore, prove useful as criteria, hypotheses, and principles to the reader seeking today to create a new, holistic system of his own.

In his article "Anglo-American New Criticism". Dr. Alfred Behrmann summarizes its preoccupations and aims, its achievements and defects.[1] The New Critics were preoccupied with the poem and the interaction of structure and texture, tenor and vehicle, meter and meaning, and other such entwining terms. Poetry offered a knowledge of existence and a degree of objectivity denied to scientific discourse. As Cleanth Brooks expressed it, a poem reflected knowledge of ourselves as we experience the world. As a consequence, New Criticism paid serious attention to poetry as poetry. Moreover, it concerned itself with theoretical problems, even if these proved merely a rerun of problems already dealt with by pre-positivistic and pre-impressionistic criticism. On the other hand, through the New Critics' insistence on isolating the poem as an object of study, they approached the concerns of structuralism.

To better clarify the aims of the New Critics, Dr. Behrmann situated them in their historical context. He mentioned Benedetto Croce's *La Critica* (1903), which treated literature purely as an esthetic phenomenon. J.E. Spingarn, in turn, attacked the convention of genres because artists were concerned with expressing themselves rather than with writing a specific genre. Next Behrmann discussed T.S. Eliot's contribution to critical development in *The Sacred Wood*

(1920). Eliot advocated that a poem be viewed as a poem and not something else. Moreover, the poet-critic stressed the need to overcome the "dissociation of sensibility", inherited from the seventeenth century, in order to create a unified sensibility. Indeed, Eliot's artistic goal was to attain the impersonality of the most masterful poetry of the past. His erudition and sense of history enabled him to demonstrate how the past and present were interdependent because the past is actual in the present. To Eliot, every new work necessitated a reassessment of the works of the past, and yet a critic's main goal was to understand first the poem itself and not permit any moral, social, or religious implications to interfere with its strict analysis. Such understanding was achieved by close reading -- line by line, stanza by stanza.

I.A. Richards rivaled Eliot in importance by having provided the New Criticism with additional goals. Richards' concern was with poetic tradition in the light of his own ideals of poetic style. He advised critics to study the intricate problem of analyzing a poem in terms of its language, imagery, and metaphor. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), he drew attention to the imaginative and emotional impact of words whereas in his *Practical Criticism* (1929), Richards encouraged the psychological study of language as it bore on literary analysis.

To Dr. Behrmann, Richards' true importance was in the emphasis on the density and stratification of the poem where the parts interact to evoke something beyond their sum. Since the emotive expression of poetic language contrasted to its referential nature, this contrast delineated the difference between poetic value and propositional truth. Joined together as context, they constituted the particular mode of existence of a poem.[2] Thus the achievements of the New Criticism.

As to its defects, Professor Behrmann notes that the New Critics had no common program, no mutual philosophy, no organized method. At most, they had a common inclination.[3] Behrmann refers to Murray Krieger's study of their contradictions and their failure to deal with decisive questions, which led Murray to consider the New Critics as apologists for an amateurish metaphysics.[4]

On the other hand, Behrmann's article just faintly suggested the strong cross-currents of European critical arguments for and against Anglo-American formalism.

A Swiss scholar advocating the formalistic or ahistorical

method of literary study was Wolfgang Kayser (1906 - 1960). In *The Verbal Artwork* (1948), he expressed the belief that poetry created its own reality or objectivity because the integrating character of language structured thought and feeling into a unity.[5] Kayser acknowledged, however, that, since the eighteenth century, critics had realized that literary work engaged deeper levels of the soul than merely the esthetic.[6] To account for such inner levels of meaning , they must be related to the reader's world and to the poet's heart. This concession notwithstanding, Kayser affirmed that the artwork should be studied as artwork, not as disguised biography.[7] The work itself must concern us more than the author.

In his own way, Kayser resolved the problem of dualism by regarding the artwork as a complex unity of "inner" and "outer" world. Based on his awareness that reality comprised the empirical and the abstract, Kayser viewed lyric poetry as the intensification of experience because outer reality reflected the inner world of the soul. In plainer terms, the natural events depicted in poetry were a translation of what was taking place in the poet's soul.[8] Yet, despite these allowances, Kayser insisted that a complete interpretation required a precise understanding of the inner and outer construction of the poem as evinced linguistically and stylistically.[9] His primary concern remained, therefore, with the formalistic (*textimmanent*) elements of the literary work. In general, then, Kayser himself pursued a systematic analysis of formalistic strata. [10]

Nevertheless, Kayser had his reservations about exclusively using any single approach. For example, he doubted whether any isolated method, which explored a particular side of a work, could understand the work as a whole or as a unity. [11] Furthermore, he cautioned against using those principles of form and construction taken from other arts since the literary artwork had its own principles.[12] He even warned against the unconscious use of modern literary concepts on older literature, thus admonishing critics against superimposing their sophisticated notion on works which might not really respond to their method of analysis. On the other hand, Kayser admitted that it might be meaningful and justifiable to examine a poem in the light of a Weltanschauung, the spirit of the epoch, or the meaning of life problems -- if such methods did justice to the essence of poetry.[13] Late in life, he acknowledged the need to situate the artwork in the time of its inception, yet what remained most important for him was form (*Gestalt*) and the close reading

of text.[14]

The Swiss theorist Emil Staiger discussed genres as related to formalistic analysis in his *Principles of Poetics* (1946). He distinguished lyric, drama and epic by the way they evoked our awareness of time. The lyric was unhistorical because it caused us to be in things and they in us;[15] the epic was historical; whereas drama demonstrated the tension between the present and future in the suspense it called forth. [16]However, Staiger was too sophisticated to rest satisfied with distinctions, and he admitted that, as a result of language itself, a literary work could participate in the lyrical, the epic, and the dramatic.[17] A work was all the more complete as it participated in all three genres.[18]

Although Staiger conceded that a knowledge of genres, of history, and the author's biography might help to understand a literary piece, he insisted that the vision in lyric poetry transcended the historical or social mode of contemplation. Rather, the true criteria of interpretation were to be found in man's perpetual capacity to be touched deeply, for understanding came from being moved emotionally. Since some eternal quality in human nature responded to the poem, true interpretation must contemplate what was timeless in the literary work . There was an ageless power in literature which somehow corresponded to the *sub specie aeternitatis* of Spinoza. In this respect, Staiger's ultimate orientation appeared to point the way to an ontology or a phenomenology of literary criticism.

In *The Art of Interpretation* (1955), Staiger continued to stress the need to concentrate on the literary work itself. In no way could a poem be explained from biography, the poet's personality, nor even from the history of ideas, for literary interpretation was the art of discovering the inner voice (*Stimmigkeit*), mood,atmosphere, or state of mind by which individual linguistic parts found their totality. Literary interpretation was not a striving toward the objective knowledge of science. Rather, as an art, interpretation grew out of immediate feeling and the empathic appreciation of the artwork. If there were any significance to the concepts e.g. *lyrical, epic,* and *dramatic*, the reason was that these literary terms reflected the fundamental possibilities of human existence. For this reason the history of literature manifested the existential possibilities of the human being.[19]

Karl Otto Conrady's *Introduction to the New German Study of Literature* (1966) represented continental criticism advocating a

more oecumenical approach. On the one hand, he typified German interpretation concerned with the inner laws of the individual work, with its artistic peculiarity and totality.[20] On the other hand, he believed literary history was indissolubly bound together with the analysis and interpretation of individual works. Furthermore, he affirmed that a methodical cultivation of sciences was urgently needed to complement literary study *per se*.

Similarly, Werner Krauss in *Fundamental Problems of Literary Study* (1968) asserted that a narrow relationship existed between literature and history.[22] Although he discussed the defects of positivism he extolled the virtues of applying the history of ideas to literature. He also situated literary study somewhere between philosophical materialism and idealism. He went on to draw parallels between Anglo-American New Criticism and the formalism developed in France and Russia, concluding that their emphasis on ahistorical study inevitably proved untenable.[23] Even though he acknowledged that the analysis of style was important, he insisted that a sensible explication must be associated with factors largely outside language itself. Indeed, he urged critics to reconsider the full significance of *mimesis*. He asserted that form reflected the perceptible in an object whereas content (*Inhalt*) referred to "...the inner meaning of perceived reality." Ultimate reality was composed of "...spiritual values which lie within sensuous perceptions." Hence as context, content determined form.[24]

On the other hand, the French critics, Carloni and Filloux, with characteristic Gallic lucidity, viewed criticism as a genre itself with its own laws and with its own implicit and explicit methods. The authors' aim was to confront theory and its application.[25] In their book *Literary Criticism* (1966), they reviewed: 1) the historical attempt to judge literature in absolute terms and according to doctrinal rules; 2) the rise of the positivist effort with its emphasis on strict determinism. 3) the reaction of impressionistic criticism, which the authors considered a pseudo-method because of its subjectivism and superficiality; and 4) the erudite criticism of professors.

Carloni and Filloux's comments on the academic critics were illuminating as to the actual method pursued by scholars. As scrupulous and thorough as scientists, as passionate for facts, academic critics made use of documents and information which served the intrinsic explanation of literary works. The merit of such

criticism was its rigour and precision.[26] However, the danger in the method was the frequency with which it stagnated into compilation, ending in arid erudition rather than in meaningful syntheses.[27] In the monographs such professors wrote, the literary work was related to literary history, and the author's own evolution of thought was confronted with his work.[28] Their central activity, then, was documentation in which every reference or statement was backed by documentary evidence. As a means rather than as an end, this erudite display all too often lacked a philosophy to back up the method. [29] Hence academic critics eclectically selected extrinsic materials as evidence and used formalistic analysis to interpret and evaluate the work.

Klein and Vogt's *Methods of Literary Study : Literary History and Interpretation* (1971) reviewed the critical approaches in America, Russia and Germany. The preface made clear their belief that the concepts and techniques of literary practice were not possible without theory, i.e., without knowledge of the historical and ideological changes in method. The authors' aim was to make the studer.t cognizant of these changes in method by confronting the historical and ahistorical views of liteature.[30]

Among the five basic approaches Klein and Vogt examined with care, they dwelted at greatest length on the ahistorical or formalistic theory of interpretation. They restated the already well known view that the literary work was an esthetic product to be explained solely from the text itself. The rise of this technique in Germany came as a reaction to the propaganda of National Socialism, hence its practitioners renounced any ideological *engagement*, and they practised the ahistorical approach rigorously so as to exclude the social, historical, or political implications of literature.[31]

The authors illustrated this formalistic approach in the figure of Karl Viëtor (1892 - 1954), who maintained that where literature is investigated as a by-product of political, social, intellectual, psychological, or cultural events, the critic had moved away from literature *per se*. Viëtor wanted the literary scholar to study the sensuous-spiritual wholeness of the work itself as sui generis, and not as a reflection of forces or influences outside it.[32]

However, by the 1960's the exclusive formalistic interpretation of literature had become forced, unnatural and exaggerated. To emphasize this change, Klein and Vogt quoted Benno von Wiese's 1963 argument that the separation of literary history from interpretation was senseless. As evinced in this development,

critics were striving for the reintegration of esthetic, historical, and social influences on literatrure.[33]

Klein and Vogt themselves felt that the function of literature was to impress and change society. In fact, they believed society must be convinced of the educational worth of literature.[34] For this reason they advocated the inclusion of literary history because it was the mental construct by which a culture accounted for its past.[35] As such, literary history could show how literature had served to enlighten and emancipate the people of a culture. In short, Klein and Vogt saw literature as an influence to better society.[36]

Zdenko Skreb in his article "The Scientific Nature of Literary Research" discussed formalistic approach, especially the exegesis of lyrical poetry, which emphasized the specific quality of the poetical artwork. If this approach was effective at first, the overflow of individualistic interpretations gradually led to a *malaise* as to the exclusive use of the intrinsic technique. Moreover, the multitude and variety of differing interpretations resulted in a sense of bewilderment among conscientious critics. One sought in vain for a common methodical consciousness. No conceptual system for coordinating isolated efforts was evolved.[37]

Skreb cites Jost Hermand's *Synthetic Interpreting* which criticized the formal approach of both the Russians and the West, for to him the poetic artwork was in the middle point of steadily widening, concentric spheres of implication and meaning.[38] Hence if the literary work were to be explicated, he agreed with Hermand's contention that literary research should pursue such comprehensive analysis so that even the smallest detail be explored for its universal connections.

Furthermore, Skreb warned critics against relying on intuition, which was the "fatal error" literary interpreters too often yielded to. Rather, it was necessary to transform the researcher's subjective experience into objective understanding by learning to judge literary works *intersubjectively*.[39] Moreover, he warned originators of methodologies that it was senseless to speak of methods when they had no solid, scientific, conceptual world to support that method.[40] Nevertheless, instead of regarding the formalistic or hermeneutic approach as unscientific, he considered it as one pole of the scientific method with its opposite pole rooted in the deductive method of reasoning. Thus literary study needed to pursue the rigour and exactness of the sciences, complemented by the strictly logical operations of deduction so as to establish a precise knowledge

of the literary work.[41] If such precision of method were followed in the *analysis* of data, a historical *synthesis* of these analyzed phenomena could then take place.

Edgar Lohner, in reviewing the shortcomings of formalism, cited German scholars who felt the need of historical awareness in literary interpretation as a safeguard against *furor interpretandi.*[42] He noted Kurt Müller-Vollmer's observation that the work of art did not represent a closed and isolated world of its own because its symbols and signs related the poetic world to the world we know. In other words, if the verbal structure actually were autonomous, how could a literary work tell us anything about the world?[43]

Lohner also stressed the need of the historical approach as an ancillary aid to *explication de text.* Analyses must be founded on historical erudition, and if literary analysis were to become a literary science, it must be situated in the psychological and cultural moment when the literary form was created.[44] Lohner expanded on this observation by referring to Emil Staiger's statement that poetics should become a kind of philosophical anthropology which revealed the human being in time.

As a final reference to European criticism for and against Anglo-American formalism, mention must be made of Guerin, Labor, Morgan and Willingham's *Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature* (1966). The authors believed that a given work had a most suitable approach and that every approach had its advantages and limitations.[45] They objected to the purist approach of the New Criticism because literature did not exist in a vacuum and a work of art should not be judged as if disembodied from all experience, except the strictly esthetic.[46] A global, catholic orientation was needed because each individual approach had its limitations. If "traditional" methods tended to overlook the structural intricacies of the work, the "formalistic" neglected the context of history and biography which could provide important insights into the meaning of the work. In order to get the total meaning of a literary work, Guerin *et al* advocated using many methods, among them historical-biographical, textual linguistic, and moral-philosophical analyses.[47]

SUMMARY

The purpose of this paper has been to elicit the common attitudes and characteristics of European critics dealing with Anglo-American formalism. We may summarize these findings as follows.

1) Certain European critics approved of formalism and maintained that the *ahistorical* study of literature should remain the critics' uppermost concern.

2) Other European critics averred that *no exclusive critical approach_* should be used. They argued that, if such singlemindedness tended to ensure greater precision of observation, it tended, nevertheless, to miss other elements vital to understanding the literary work.

3) Another group of critics advocated the *eclectic application of multiple approaches*, including those intrinsic and extrinsic to traditional literary exegesis. Obviously, *inclusiveness* was the aim of such electicism.

4) Still other critics advocated a *total syncretism* of methodology in order to achieve the *integration* of what we know about the literary work, the author, the period he wrote in, and his place in literary history.

5) Still other European critics wanted to direct criticism toward the *comprehensiveness of interpretation.* The total meaning of the literary work could best be grasped by dealing with the ways it portrayed the existentialist possibilities of human destiny.

6) The last group advocated that literary study should look to ontology or phenomenology for its ground of being. Wishing to establish criticism as a branch of philosophy, these critics attempted to transform the discipline through a *deeper understanding* of the nature of literature and through a *higher synthesis* of the ways we understand it.

In sum, the antimonies engendered between the formalists and their determined opponents led to the development of even more trenchant positions in the decades that followed, but that is another story.

NOTES

[1]Alfred Behrmann, *"Der anglo-amerikanische New Criticism"* In Smegac and Skreb's *Zur Kritik literaturwissenschaftlicher Methodologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Athenaum Fischer GmbH Verlag, 1973).
[2]Ibid., p. 180.
[3]Ibid., pp. 181-182.
[4]Ibid., p. 189.
[5]Wolfgang Kayser, *Das Sprachliche Kunstwerk, Eine Einfuhrung in die Literaturwissenschaft,* elfte Auflage, (Bern u. Munchen, Francke Verlag, 1965), p.14.
[6]Ibid., p. 21.
[7]Ibid., p. 37.
[8]Ibid., p. 160. Obviously this line of reasoning corresponds to the interpretation of perception embraced by phenomenology.
[9]Ibid., p. 163.
[10]Ibid., p. 239. The kinship of this idea to the Russian formalist notion that form is part of the literary "a materials" is obvious.
[11]Ibid., p. 234.
[12]Ibid., p. 174.
[13]Ibid., p. 225.
[14]Ibid., *"Literarische Wertung und Interpretation" in Die Vortragsreise* (Bern: 1958).
[15]Emil Staiger, *Grundbegriffe der Poetik* (Zurich u. Freiburg i. Br. Atlantis Verlag, 1946), p. 131.
[16]Ibid., p. 152.
[17]Ibid., p. 242.
[18]Ibid., p. 256.
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[20]Karl Otto Conrady, *Einfuhrung in die Neuere Deutsche Literaturwissenschaft* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1966), p.59.
[21]Ibid., p. 58.
[22]Werner Krauss, *Grundprobleme der Literaturwissenschaft* (Reinbek bei Humburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1968), p.26.
[23]Ibid., pp. 91-92.
[24]Ibid., pp. 81-82. Krauss quoted K.S. Lawrila.
[25]J. O. Carloni and Jean-C. Filloux, *La Critique Littéraire* (Paris: Presses versitaires de France, 1966), Que-Sais-Je? series, cinquieme edition revue, p.5.
[26]Ibid., p. 61.
[27]Ibid., p. 64.
[28]Ibid., p. 70.
[29]Ibid., p. 73.
[30]Albert Klein und Jochen Vogt, *Methoden der Literaturwissenschaft I : Literaturgeschichte und Interpretation* (Dusseldorf, West Germany: Bertelsmann Universitats - Verlag, 1971), p.7.
[31]Ibid., p. 44.
[32]Ibid., p. 45.
[33]Ibid., p. 64.
[34]Ibid., p. 11.
[35]Ibid., p. 13.
[36]Ibid., p. 43.
[37]Zdeno Skreb, *"Die Wissenschaft der Literaturfoschung"* in Viktor Zmegak and Zdenko Skreb's *Zur Kritik Literaturwissenschaftlicher Methodologie* (Frandfurt am Main, West Germany: Athenaum Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973), p. 27.
[38]Ibid., p. 28.
[39]Ibid., p. 12.
[40]Ibid., p. 34.

[41]Ibid., p. 17.
[42]Edgar Lohner, "The Intrinsic Method: Some Reconsiderations" in *The Disciplines of Criticism. Essays in Literary Theory, Interpretation and History*, edited by Peter Demetz, Thomas Greene, and Lowry Nelson, Jr., (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 148.
[43]Ibid., pp. 166-167.
[44]Ibid., p. 515.
[45]W.L. Guerin, E.G. Labor, L. Morgan, and J.R. Willingham, *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, (New York and London: Harper and Row, 1966), p.xii.
[46]Ibid., p. 3.
[47]Ibid., p. 9.

G.E. BENTLEY JR.

THE EYES OF SIVA
THE INDIAN GOD'S REVENGE

On the night of Monday 21 October 1743, the quiet house of Thomas Sievewright at Meggetland near Edinburgh was wracked by strange events. That night Sievewright, a wealthy retired East India merchant, quarreled violently with Tom Gordon about a coolness which Sievewright had noticed between Tom and his daughter Mary. A housemaid overheard her master cry, 'you are a scoundrel,Sir, to suggest such a thing! It is a foul lie, and if your repeat it I shall shoot you where you stand:' And Tom replied angrily. 'It is no lie, as I shall prove.' Next morning, Tuesday October 22nd, Thomas Sievewright was found dead in his study, 'with a look of horror and amazement frozen on his features', stabbed through the heart with a blade so thin as to leave scarcely a trace.

When Tom was questioned about the quarrel, he refused to speak until he suddenly whispered to Mary Sievewright: 'What were you doing in the south-wing corridor at half past ten last night, Mary? For God's sake, speak:' 'I? In the corridor last night? I was never near it:' 'But Mary, I saw you— and someone else saw you as well'. 'Someone else? Who was that? 'Your father, Mary, who is now dead.'

Mary was astounded by this statement, and Nancy Joyce, her maid cried out in horror and fled from the room. The police could make nothing of all this.

The next morning, Wednesday October 23rd, before the police had made any arrest, Mrs Sievewright was found lying dead in the study at Meggetland, stabbed through the heart with a long, thin dagger — and Tom had been seen near Meggetland the previous night. Tom was of course arrested, charged with the crime, and incarcerated in the Tolbooth, the Edinburgh prison.

The third morning, Thursday October 24th, there was a new sensation: Mary Sievewright was found lying in the study at Meggetland, stabbed near the heart with a long, narrow dagger. However, its point had been deflected by a whalebone stay, and she was still alive, though desperately wounded. When asked about the circumstances of the attack on her, she became hysterical and could only cry.

The eyes of Siva: Oh, the eyes of Siva!

Tom Gordon had of course been in prison when the attack took place, and when he was told of it he exclaimed in horror:

> Then that black-bearded Hindu has murdered her after winning her love.

After this he was silent, His counsel Robert Dundas (afterwards Lord Dundas) siezed upon this as the first promising clue he had found and pressed Tom strongly to tell more about the Hindu, until Tom said,

> Well, if you want to get information see Nancy Joyce and frighten her into telling you all.

Nancy was immediately sent for — but it was found that she had fled after the attempt upon Mary's life and could not be found. A detective was sent after her but had not returned when the trial began.

In the absense of evidence from Mary or from Tom, who remained obstinately silent, Tom Gorden was convicted of the murders of Mr and Mrs Sievewright and sentenced to death.

The proceedings had just ended when the court was electrified by the appearance of George Williamson, the detective who had been sent to London to search for Nancy Joyce. He had found her only just in time, stabbed near the heart with a long, thin dagger and believing that she was about to die. She provided the testimony which freed Tom Gordon and solved the mystery.

According to Nancy Joyce, Thomas Sievewright had become rich in India partly through robbing Hindu temples. In particular, he had stolen the great diamond eyes of the god Siva in the Hindu temple at Burdwan. When the theft was discovered and Sievewright was suspected, the priests of the temple vowed to recover the diamond-eyes and avenge the god. One of their members, Kharul Hankya, came to Edinburgh, disguised as an Indian gentlemen, and kept watch on the house at Meggetland. There he had met Nancy Joyce, and she fell in love with him. When they met each night outside Meggetland, she was wearing the cloak of Mary Sievewright, and Tom Gordon, seeing her repeatedly with the Hindu priest, had mistaken her for Mary.

On the night of Tom's quarrel with Mary's father,Nancy Joyce managed to insinuate the priest into the house. In searching the study for the diamonds, Kharul Hankya was apparently surprised by Mr Sievewright and promptly stabbed him before he could cry out.

The next night, when Kharul returned to the study, he was surprised again, this time by Mrs Sievewright, and he murdered her as well.

And on the third night, yet again searching desperately in the study, he was discovered by Mary Sievewright, and he stabbed her too.

On this he fled, but he made a rendezvous with Nancy Joyce in London, and she followed him next day with the idol's eyes.

When they met in London, he demanded the jewels, but she refused to produce them until after they were married. The priest therefore stabbed her as well, took the jewels and disappeared--forever.

When all the mystery was revealed, Tom was released, and on Mary's recovery they were married and moved into Meggetland House. Indeed, they evidently flourished there, for Sievewrights were connected with Meggetland for almost another hundred and fifty years — until 1888.

But to their dying days, Tom and Mary Gordon must have remembered with horror the great diamond eyes of Siva and the god's revenge which nearly caused the death of each of them.

SIVA

Not long ago, I was searching for information about a mysterious 'Mr Sivewright of Edinburg' who about 1819 'has just claimed ... As his own invention Blakes Method [*of printing text for engraved plates*] & calls it Copper Blocks', for William Blake's Method is still imperfectly understood, and any new information about it would be most welcome.

The search has proved an intriguing wild goose chase which has led me to 'Thomas Sivright and the Lost Designs for Blair's Grave'[1] and to the Eyes of Siva — but not to Blake's Method of Copper Blocks.

The inventor was probably John Sievwright (c. 1770 - 1846), an engraver and itinerant teacher of music in Edinburgh. He might, however , be the wealthy Thomas Sivright (F1. 1788-1835) of

Meggetland near Edinburgh, who acquired Blake's designs for Blair's Grave, most of which have since disappeared. In seeking information about Meggetland, I came across Charles J. Smith's *Historic South Edinburgh* (1978) with its wonderfully lurid account of the murders at Meggetland and the Eyes of Siva. Most of the facts and quotations below derive from Mr. Smith's book.

There is a curious feature of the story indicating ways in which it has been inevitably altered in transmission through the centuries. The events themselves are of 1743, but they were not resurrected until the nineteenth century, and they are seen here through twentieth century eyes. For instance, the agent who is sent from Edinburgh to London to seek information about the murders is called a 'detective', but the word detective is not recorded before 1843, and the first official detective force in Britain is only shortly before that time. Indeed, the London Police Act of 1753 post-dates the actions here depicted, and our whole conception of police has changed profoundly in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We may, I think, be confident of the accuracy of the actions here reported, but the language and attitudes are likely to have suffered an inevitable sea-change. And of course neither the eighteenth nor the nineteenth century accounts make any attempt to comprehend the Hindu conception of sacrilege or the devoted savage heroism of its priest here depicted.

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A. Joseph Dorairaj

AN EXISTENTIALIST READING OF SAMUEL BECKETT'S 'ENDGAME'

Existentialism: The Major Philosophical Strands:

Existentialism is basically an ontological philosophy, or rather a manner and method of philosophizing, with continental roots, and is at once a philosophical and literary movement that included both theistic and atheistic philosophers, theologians and writers, like Soren Kierkegaard, Martin Heidegger, Gabriel Marcel, Jean-Paul Sartre, Karl Jaspers, Albert Camus, Miguel Unamuno, Rudolph Bultmann and Franz Kafka, among others. The Danish philosopher Kierkegaard is considered to be the founder-father of Existentialism even though Marcel was the first to use that label but later he renounced that appellation because Sartre bracketted Existentialism with atheism.

Notwithstanding the fact that the existentialist philosophers were divided, even polarised, on the basis of their **Weltanschauung** and its philosophico-theological ramifications, they shared certain 'family traits', and addressed themselves to typically existential issues like subjectivity, contingency, absurdity, ennui, nausea, freedom, conscience, responsibility and dread. The major premise of the existentialist philosophy is the Sartrean dictum "Existence precedes essence" which implies that "subjectivity is the starting point" (qtd. in Desbruslais 77), and this stance categorically rejects any form of objectivism and scientism as these underscore the reality of external, objective fact. The thesis that "existence precedes essence" brings into focus the depraved yet 'blessed' condition of the individual who is stripped of all pre-ordained meaning-giving essence, system and structure. In other words, man is divested of his essence, his substance and accidents in the ontic sense. But this subject, who is indeterminate but endowed with enormous responsibility and freedom, has to constantly define his existence a posteriori and authenticate his existence in his own way. Any attempt to disown or abdicate this freedom and responsibility to define existence a posteriori would be considered 'bad faith' or self-deception (mauvaise foi) in Sartrean terminology. "Existentialists," remarks Copleston in his *Contemporary Philosophy*, "are concerned with man as the concrete human person...

considered under a particular aspect, namely as a free, self creating and self-transcending subject" (135).

Existentialist philosophy stresses that the world is contingent, inscurtable and inherently meaningless. In *Nausea*, Roquentin, Sartre's surrogate, discovers that reality is fundamentally contingent (de trop) and absurd. It painfully dawns on him that everything in this world is an accident; that being is fundamentally contingent and gratuitous. In Sartre's philosophy, this phenomenological discovery leads to nausea and absurdity.

Similarly, Heideggerian ontology focuses on the predicament of man. Heidegger's standpoint that man is 'thrown into the world' (*Da-Sein)* captures the existential condition of man. Explicating *Da sein* in Heideggerian ontology, Desbruslais writes:

> He [man] finds himself 'thrown' inextricably into the world. He does not know clearly whence he has come. But he finds himself there and he cannot be otherwise... Man's thrownness implies also the awareness of finitude and of a certain abandonment even (140)

The existentialist world-view underlines the crucial fact that since man is stripped of his metaphysical essence, he has to constantly and continuously define his existence through acts of freedom. And this implies that man, endowed with unlimited freedom and responsibility, is called upon to take decisions and make choices perpetually and be committed to his stand. In Kierkegaardian framework, all decision-making process is reduced to a neat, unrelenting 'either-or' situation wherein man is challenged to make a 'leap' in an atmosphere of faith.

Since there is a constant and irreducible tension between human finitude and the enormous freedom he is invested with, which opens up an infinite repertoire of wishes and aspirations, and also between freedom and facticity ('those elements in existence which are simply given and reduce the area of free decision'), man is overcome by anxiety (*angst*) and despair, and in the final analysis, he is pushed to the frontiers of absurdity (Macquarrie, "Existentialism" 142).

Vincent B. Leitch trying to synthesize the different existentialist strands within a broad framework, comments:

> It [existentialism] is concerned with unaccommodated man and his experience of nothingness, with meaningless social life and

> the fact of alienation, with death and absurdity, with authentic existence and the burden of freedom, with spiritual dread and personal rebellion. (167)

Existentialist Strands in Beckett's 'Endgame':

Absurd playwrights, like Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter and Albee deal with fragments and facets of this metaphysical absurdity and its mainfestations in their works. It has to be underscored that the Theatre of the Absurd throws into relief poignantly and grotesquely the wide gulf between human aspirations and fulfillment, the futility and the meaninglessness of all human relationships and finally the impossibility of communication and the concommittant devaluation of language. While it is true that despair, deprivation and nihilism seem to be the logical outcome of such an extreme and radical stance, it has to be pointed out that the Theatre of the Absurd tries to highlight in its own way what Camus would call man's 'metaphysical rebellion' and 'courageous despair' (qtd. in Desbruslais 149) in the face of stark Nothingness and Absurdity.

Beckett in his entire canon, particularly in plays like *Waiting for Godot, Endgame and Happy Days*, attempts to portray this metaphysical absurdity along with existential anguish, nausea, angst and dread both thematically and formally. It has to be noted that the Beckettian world-view is essentially tragic bordering on solipsism, nihilism and despair. But the redeeming factor is that like their Sysyphean antecedent the Beckettian characters -- at least a handful of them-- are not a mute witness to relentless and pointless suffering; on the contrary, they rebel against it despite the unpalatable fact that their rebellion is ultimately meaningless.

Most Backettian characters are battered with age and ailment, and are either paralysed or immobilized. Inordinate and pointless suffering and anguish run through his plays. Commenting on the plays of Beckett, Alvarez in his *Beckett* points out that "whatever the cast, whatever the situation, there is nothing beyond habit, boredom, forgetfulness and suffering" (88). Estragon's remark that "Nothing happens, Nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful!" (*Waiting for Godot* 71) sums up Beckettian dramaturgy.

Endgame propounds a host of existentialist themes, like metaphysical absurdity, congenital suffering, the futility of human relationships and the oppressive forces of Time and History. George Wellwarth's perceptive comment captures the basic theme and mood

of the play. He declares that *Endgame* can be compared to a "fantastically perverted chess game... a static ballet of two immovable pawns, a helpless king, and an aimlessly roving knight playing themselves into a hopeless stalemate" (47).

In Sartrean ontology, the thesis 'existence precedes essence' declares man to be the starting point and contends that man has no pre-ordained essence and is stripped of all meaning-giving system. In such a system, God has no place. Man, thus estranged from God, is confronted with an inscrutable universe which is inherently meaningless and absurd.

The Beckettian universe is a Godless universe. God is either absent or has been banished from this universe, meaninglessness and absurdity reign supreme. Humm's blasphemous indictment, "The bastard! He doesn't exist" (*Endgame* 55) jolts us and awakens us to a Godless and hostile universe. If for Humm "God doesn't exist," for Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, God becomes a self-contradiction and hence becomes unnecessary and is incontrovertibly falsified. In Lucky's tirade, God is presented as one who has a "white beard" and is "outside time without extension... from the height of apathia divine athambia divine aphasia..." (72-73). Lucky's outburst is punctuated with 'quaquaquaqua' which has both formal and symbolic significance. In the final analysis, a God who is insensitive and insensible to suffering ('apathia'), imperturable ('athambia') and who is unable to communicate ('aphasia') is no God at all; such a concept of God would be a blatant self-contradiction.

In such an alien universe, suffering abounds. Inordinate and pointless suffering seems to be the legacy of mankind, and man, helpless and powerless, is condemned to bear it either meekly or with courageous despair'. This metaphysical absurdity, congenital suffering and existential anguish have enveloped the Beckettian characters. Humm in *Endgame* in his opening soliloquy yells:

> Humm: Can there be misery --
> (he yawns)
> -- loftier than mine? (2)

Later, while commenting on his predicament, Hamm reprimands Clov ('with a prophetic relish'): "One day you'll be blind, like me. You'll be sitting there, a speck in the void, in the dark, for ever like me" and adds, "infinite emptiness will be all around you" (36). Such is the anguish and suffering of Hamm, the blind king checkmated by Death. The ultimate assertion comes in the concluding soliloquy of

Hamm wherein he wearily admits: "Old endgame lost of old, play and lose and have done with losing" (82). Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot* remarks in an almost philosophical vein "they give birth astride of a grave, the light gleams an instant, then it's night once more" (119). Such is man's lot who is condemned to suffer and as Hamm repeatedly admits "there's no cure for that!" (63).

In Sartre's standpoint, both phenomenological and ontological, man is contingent and accidental (de trop). Roquentin in *Nausea* cries out in anguish: "Everything is gratuitous, this garden this town, and myself--and that is nausea." He confounds this situation further by declaring "they hadn't asked to exist, only they couldn't have prevented it; that's all" (qtd. in Desbruslais 101).

Beckett reiterates the viewpoint of Sartre. In *Endgame*, Hamm dismisses his crippled father as "accursed progenitor" (9). A heightened awareness of the contingent nature of man is presented through the verbal duel between Hamm and Nagg:

Hamm: Scoundrel! Why did you engender me?
Nagg : I didn't know (49).

But Nagg has the last laugh. He cynically retorts, "After all I'm your father. It's true if it hadn't been me it would have been someone else" (56). It has to be noted that the same idea couched in a different language and expressed in a different situation is put forward by Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot*: "... I might just as well have been in his [Lucky's] shoes and he in mine. If chance had not willed otherwise" (61). In this context, it has to be stressed that in Sartrean philosophy *de trop* leads to nausea and ultimately to absurdity.

Ennui is one of the existentialist problems that plague man. Time and History when viewed negatively can be enslaving and 'deadening', and 'thrown' into such a morbid situation man is bogged down by sheer boredom. The Beckettian characters hopelessly caught in the vortex of oppressive time somehow seek with all their might to both mitigate and relieve themselves from the pain of boredom.

Hamm who is almost entombed in a claustrophic confine has lost track of time:

Hamm: What time is it?
Clov : The same as usual (4).

In Pozzo's perspective, time is ' accursed':

Pozzo: (suddenly furious) Have you not done tormenting me with

> your accursed time ! It's abominable! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day like any other day, one day he went dumb, one day ... (119)

When time has turned out to be oppressive and 'cancerous', the only way to keep one's sanity, at least in a limited way, is through sticking to habits -- "rituals of repetition and forgetfulness" and "verbal rituals and vaudville routines" (Alvarez 91). Clov's remark, 'All life long the same inanities" (45), lends support to Alvarez's analysis.

In Sartrean framework, human relationship is inherently meaningless and worse, still impossible. Sartre declares that since man is shorn of all pre-ordained essence he has to define his existence through acts of freedom. But Sartrean freedom is so limitless and demanding that in the final analysis it turns out to be self-defeating and destructive. Besbruslais comments "... in the Sartrean perspective, all human relationships [particularly in the light of Da-sein] are veiled forms of either sadism or masochism. This is because any inter-personal exchange involves the clash of two freedoms" (103). When Hamm questions Clov complacently, "I've made you suffer too much. (pause) Haven't I? (6), he bears testimony to the fact that relationship is basically sadomasochistic. The Pozzo-Lucky pair would vouchsafe for it quite smugly.

In a metaphysically absurd universe wherein reality is contingent, gratuitous and meaningless, and where meaningful human relationship is out of the question, language and communication, too, the medium of relationship, becomes futile and empty, and is devalued. "Language in Beckett's plays", comments Martin Esslin, "serves to express the breakdown, the disintegration of language" (86). The hollow and trite nature of language is well brought out by Clov's outburst:

> *Clov: (violently)* That means that bloody awful day, long ago, before this bloody awful day. I use the words you [to Hamm] taught me. If they don't mean anything any more, teach me others or let me be silent (43-44).

Thus we note that the plays of Beckett, particularly *Waiting for Godot*, and *Endgame* deal with existentialist themes and concerns. If it could be argued that philosophy is abstraction, especially third degree of abstraction, then literature turns out to be the medium to

'incarnate' philosophy, and give it a local name, colour and habitation. Viewed within this framework, *Endgame* abounds with existentialist themes, concerns and issues.

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CHRISTINE GOMEZ
AND
YAGNA SRI NAMBIAR

AN ASPECT OF STRUCTURE IN SOME OF CHRISTOPHER FRY'S PLAYS

The structure of Fry's plays is determined largely by their themes, which are worked out by the actions and reactions of appropriately chosen characters. The structure traces the progression of the protagonists from a state of isolation or fragmentation towards reintegration. This chiaroscuro effect of the movement from darkness to light sets forth Fry's comic vision. Fry believes that the bridge by which the characters cross from tragedy to comedy and back again is precarious and narrow and that the characters have to unmortify themselves, to affirm life and assimilate death and persevere in joy.[1] The progress from despair to acceptance and hope determines the linear structure of the plays.

The opening scenes of Fry's plays invariably strike the keynote of each play. The actions follow each other in a progressive movement. Throughout the play the focus on the theme is maintained. With its conclusion the audience is made aware of the unity of the play. Fry's creative skill is such that the conclusion of the play, and especially the last scene, works out naturally, in what may be termed an 'appositional correlation' to the opening scene. It demonstrates that dramatic structure is the means whereby what is most important in the action is kept consistently in the centre of our attention'[2]

The Boy with a Cart, a religious play written in 1949, is based on the life of St. Cuthman of Sussex. The play portrays Cuthman's perseverance and unshakeable belief in God in the face of misfortune and darkness. The structure of the play can be traced as a linear movement in time, with the chorus, the people of South England, relating to the important events. Right at the start Fry establishes the fact of man's union with God, through the chorus, who say '... with God we work shoulder to shoulder; God providing, we dividing, sowing and pruning, and 'we have felt the joint action of root and sky, of man and God'.(p.7) The play begins with a disruption caused in Cuthman's day-to-day life. The first trial is his father's death. Closely follows the news that he has lost property and house. The possibility of Cuthman losing faith is voiced by the

chorus. 'Can faith for long elude Prevailing fever?' But fortified with faith, Cuthman makes a cart and resolves to take his mother on a journey, the destination of which is to be determined by the breaking of the withies that hold the cart. Cuthman believes that God will not desert him. This first miracle occurs when a group of mowers who mock Cuthman's mother are punished when sudden rain destroys the hay. Cuthman stops at Steyning where the withies break and where he sets himself to build a church. The second miracle takes place when the two brothers, Alfred and Demiwulf, who take away Cuthman's oxen are punished by being struck dumb. Their mother, Mrs. Fipps who remonstrates, is blown away by a sudden gale. The final test for Cuthman is the king-post of the church which fails to stay in position. Cuthman envisions the church in ruins, 'demolition written over/The walls,...'[6] (p.44) But Cuthman is rewarded by the Visitation of the Divine Carpenter, who with the touch of His hand upon the king-post completes and blesses Cuthman's endeavour. The sense of participation that is the characteristic quality of the miracle play is achieved. The belief stated early in the play that man and God are working partners or 'root and sky' is re-affirmed as the chorus say,

> We have discerned a little, we have known
> More than the gossip that comes to us over our gates.(p.47)

In *Curtmantle*, written in 1961, the accent is on Henry II, the first of the Plantagenets. In this history play Fry's purpose is to depict the 'private battlefield' of Henry and his stature through the quality of his effort to ascend. In portraying the quality of Henry's effort, Fry has had to structure the play. so that it telescopes the events of Henry's rule. This gives, in an action-packed play, the intensity of Henry's conflicts and portrays the multifaceted personality of the king. Significant historical incidents are related in a chronological order. The cause and effect pattern serves to bring out Henry's character and his movement through life.

Fry makes use of a prologue which begins with Marshal's speech. This explains to the audience that it is a memory play. Richard Anesty's ride through the dark for a direct appeal to Henry depicts briefly the speed with which Henry travels through England, establishing law.

The play begins with compatibility between Henry and Becket. The atmosphere is light and easy. With Henry's appointing Becket as

Archbishop, tension is created. They become estranged from each other as Henry stresses on secular law while Becket is obedient to spiritual law and resolves to lead a true monk's life. Henry's demand for the signing of the Clarendon Codes is the cause for further bitterness and constraint between them. After a confrontation, marked by mounting tension and a duel of words, Henry and secular law triumph. Becket leaves for France and Henry crowns his son, Henry. Yet he desires Becket's return. But Becket insists on subservience to Divine law and excommunicates those who acquiesced in the crowing. Henry's angry words in retaliation, at court,
result in his henchmen doing away with Becket. Then begins Henry's dark night of the soul as recounted by Marshal, which lasts for three years. Henry then returns, with renewed vigour, arrests his estranged queen Eleanor at Poitou and demands obedience from this sons. But darkness descends once again as his sons betray him. At Le Mans, his native city, he dies stripped of his clothes. Only Marshal and Roger, Henry's illegitimate sons, retain their love for and loyalty to him.

It is interesting to note how Fry has brought out the 'appositional correlation' between the beginning and the end of the play. The play opens with Henry persuading Becket to give his cloak to a beggar and Marshal reports this: 'Christ', He said, 'we 'll have no naked men.' The play ends with Roger covering the stripped king with his own cloak and Marshal's recalling of his own words, 'Christ we'll have no naked men'. This is ironic and symbolic of a poignant significance.

These two plays thus show Fry's dramatic skill. A similar instance of 'appositional correlation' can be seen in other plays as well. For instance a study of *The Dark is Light Enough* (1955) reveals that the tone is set when Duchess Rosmarin Ostenburg rides out in the snow to rescue the cynical and alienated Richard Gettner, her erstwhile son-in-law, who has deserted the Hungarian army. A sceptic throughout the play, it is only at the end that the Countess' benign compassion touches Gettner so that he rides through blinding snow to return to ascertain if she is dead, as the rumour went round. This return heralds his final self-awareness. Similarly, in the religious play, *A Sleep of Prisoners* (1951), four prisoners, Joe Adams, Peter Able, David King and Tim Meadows are prisoners in a church, bound as it were, in common hostility towards

the Germans. Through their dreams and participation in a common dream experience, the end of the play marks an 'appositional correlation' to the beginning for now the men realise that progress is vision where hey are bound to each other and all humanity in a spirit of brotherhood, shunning hatred and war.

This vital link between the first scene and the last in Fry's plays thus establishes the organic unity of the individual plays and demonstrates Fry's skill as a dramatist.

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Notes

[1]Christopher Fry, *Comedy Theatre in the Twentieth Century*, ed. R.W. Corrigen, pp. 111-13. Cited by Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *Modern Verse Drama* (London, 1977), pp.57.

[2]S.W. Dawson, *Drama and the Dramatic* (London 1970), p.35.

[3]Christopher Fry, *The Boy with a Cart* (London, 1970). p.7.

[4]Christopher Fry, *Theatre and History*, *Essays and Studies*, 1977, p. 86.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Christopher Fry, *Curtmantle* (London) j1971, p .188.

[7]Ibid, p. 277.

MADHU JOSHI

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE, MARK TWAIN AND THE AMERICAN RACIAL DISCOURSE

In 1862 Kenneth Lynn wrote in the "Introduction" to the Harvard edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "The shame of American literature is the degree to which our authors of the 1830's and 1840's kept silent during the rising storm of the slavery issue."[1] However, a careful survey of the literary scene in the second half of the nineteenth century tells an altogether different story. Indeed, by then there were quite a few authors who were making a significant contribution to the issue of slavery, in quantity if not in quality. While there were many, most of them Northerners, who picked up their pens to plead the cause of the oppressed Blacks, not a few of them also spoke out in support of, what they considered to be, an essentially benevolent and just system. Even though for many authors the issue of slavery acted as, what Robert Frost terms, "poetry's great anti lure",[2] there were some who were not so diverted. Harriet Beecher Stowe and Samuel Langhorne Cleamens, alias Mark Twain, are two such authors who effectively used fiction as a medium for the expression of their antislavery ideas. The names of these two authors tower above all others when one talks of the portrayal of the institution of slavery in the nineteenth century American fiction. Consequently, a comparative study of their fictional works which were greatly influenced by society and which, in turn, helped in moulding public sentiments and in shaping the course of American history, should surely prove to be very informative and engaging.

In order to understand how the theme of slavery has been dealt with by Stowe and Twain one would do well to make an attempt to understand the sort of human beings and literary artists that they were. In this way it will be possible to study the formative influences that moulded their points-of-view about the American racial discourse. The first one of them, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was a product of the New England Puritanical and intellectual aristocracy. Daughter of an Evangelical preacher, sister of another who was a close associate of Elijah P. Lovejoy, and wife of an ardent, if impractical, abolitionist, she appears to have been trained since her birth for the

great humanitarian mission she was to undertake later on in life. Growing up in Cincinnati, on the border of the slave states, she had often got glimpses of the system of slavery --- indeed, her home had provided refuge to fugitive slaves, many a time. Moreover, in her own home, she had often noticed the inadvertent prejudice against the Blacks, which sometimes surfaces to the fore in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, inspite of its author's antislavery stand. However, it was only in 1834 that Mrs. Stowe came face to face with the institution of slavery for the first and last time in her life, during a visit to an estate in Kentucky.

On the other hand, Mark Twain had come in close daily contact with slaves and slavery ever since he was a child. Born in Florida, Missouri in 1835, Twain lived in the slaveholding state of Missouri until he was eighteen years old. There is no evidence to suggest that the young Samuel was, in any way, moved or upset when in 1842, his father sold an old family slave Charley for ten barrels of tar worth forty dollars in Natchez. For him slavery was a way of life and he unquestionably accepted it, with all its shortcomings and discriminatory assumptions. Since 1853, during his travels along the Mississippi Twain had often seen the working of the system of slavery from close quarters. One very interesting fact about Twain's career is that he had actually taken part in the Civil War as a Confederate soldier, albeit for a very short while. Another vital factor which went a long way in shaping Twain's attitude towards the Blacks was his marriage, in 1870, to the genteel Easterner Olivia Langdon. Olivia, whose father was an active abolitionist, was sharply aware of the evils of slavery and racial discrimination. With her liberal antislavery ideas, she played an important role in moulding Twain's attitude towards slaves, slavery and the emancipated Black. Thus, the forces that moulded Twain's attitude towards slavery were many and varied. This is clearly evident in the treatment of Blacks, slaves as well as freedmen, in his works.

Their different family backgrounds go a long way in explaining the widely differing attitudes that the two authors have towards the Blacks. This is clearly evident in the general characterization that is to be found in Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1851), *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853) and *Dred: A Tale of the Great Dismal Swamp (1856) and Mark Twain's The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1883) and *The Tragedy of Pudd' nhead Wilson* (1894). The first thing that strikes one even after a cursory reading

of these novels along with the issue of slavery is the abundance, nay proliferation of Mammies, Uncles and Aunts in the works of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Invariably, these avuncular figures are so loving, sacrificing and maternal that they justify Weinstein and Gattel's calling them "those alternately cheerful and buffoonish Mammies and Sambos."[3] Whether one is dealing with Uncle Tom and Aunt Chloe in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or with Milly, Hannibal and Topsy in *Dred* one finds that they are patterned on the stereotyped notions about the partly downright stupid, partly exceptionally intelligent, yet always well-meaning Black man-child.

"Black Sam"[4] who, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, first swears that he will do his best to "cotch" Eliza and then, when he learns that "missis don't want her cotched, and (if you catch her) she'll be in yer wool"[5] goes out of his way to divert and delay the slave-trader Haley, is one such character. Endowd with more intelligence than most of his Black fictional contemporaries he is, nevertheless, a very good example of the avuncular Black characters whom one often comes across in Mrs. Stowe' works. On the other hand, Mark Twain's Black characters are rarely stereotyped, although Twain's repertoire, too, has place in his short stories for an occasional Uncle Dan'l or Aunt Rachel. However, one cannot help noticing that not once is "Nigger Jim" called Uncle Jim in *Huck Finn* nor is Roxana ever called Aunt Roxy in *Puidd'n head Wilson*. It appears as though Twain, who wrote his antislavery novels almost two decades after Emancipation, could rise above this stereotyped characterization mainly due to the benefit of hindsight. On the other hand, Mrs Stowe, since she wrote all three of her antislavery works soon after the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850, had no such advantage. Consequently, in painting her avuncular characters she meekly followed the tradition of the other mid-nineteenth century American authors.

However, it is not as though there is nothing that Mrs. Stowe and Mark Twain have in common. Since they were both dealing with the same issue, albeit with widely differing attitudes, it is to be expected that there will be a few similarities in their racial discourse. In the works of both these authors all the Black characters, without any exception, are shown as being in mortal dread of being sold "down the river". Whether it is Mrs. Stowe's Uncle Tom and Eliza Harris or Mark Twain's Roxy and Chambers, all the slaves make it clear, by their actions and words that for them being sold down South is a fate worse than death. Furthermore, all the slave charac-

ters of Stowe and Twain, once again without exception, exhibit an intense loathing for slave-traders, slave-catchers, slave-whippers, slave-pen-holders, auctioneers and brutal masters. Another field in which the two authors have almost the same stand-point is the one related to the delineation of the reality about the sexual abuses of slavery. Either the two authors evade the issue or they are discreetly reticent about it. To be sure Harriet Beecher Stowe demurely discusses the mulattoes George and Eliza as well as the reluctant concubine Cassy and the fearful victim of Legree's advances, Emmeline. Mark Twain also refers to the "fiction of law and custom"[6] which makes almost white mulattoes such as Rosana and Chambers, slaves. Yet nowhere in their works does one find the realistic and unashamed portrayal of the sexual perversions and abuses associated with slavery that is to be found in the works of the nineteenth century Black novelists such as William Wells Brown and Martin R. Delany.

Inspite of these superficial similarities, one finds that the racial discourses of Stowe and Twain have very little in common when they are viewed in a larger perspective. While it is true that the final attitudes of both the authors were very different from their initial attitudes, it is also true that since they had different take-off points their final stand points had very few similarities. In this regard the only thing that they have in common is the fact that both of them change and develop as far as their attitudes to the Blacks, particularly the slaves, are concerned. Since this development is a notable feature of the works of both the authors, it would be interesting and convenient to begin with their initial points-of-view and to compare the directions that they take in their journey of discovery and development.

The first thing that one realizes is that, like almost all nineteenth century novelists, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain too had, due to centuries of conditioning, inherent and not-easily-shed notions about their white "superiority". Nevertheless, they soon began to realize, albeit reluctantly and often unconsciously, that they could perhaps have been mistaken in conforming to these pre-conceived notions. Apparently, the contact with the Black --- whether social or , as was more usual, literary --- slowly but surely began to induce in them an almost unwilling and inadvertent realization about the intrinsic and hitherto undreamt-of worth of the much-maligned Black race. However, this does not imply that either of the two white authors was successful in shedding all, or even

most of the prejudices against the Black race. Indeed, neither of them, has, consequently, found favour with the twentieth century advocates of "Black" dignity and equality. At the same time, one must concede that there is a definite development and progression in their attitudes towards the Blacks, specially the slaves.

Undeniably, the dividing-line between White and Black loomed so large before them that they found it a little difficult to even think of the slaves as dignified human beings. This could explain why Mark Twain cannot help calling Jim "Nigger", and why Harriet Beecher Stowe opts for colonization of Blacks at the end of *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* Yet, both the authors could not help being influenced by the current opinions against the false notions about white superiority and, even more important, by the startling discoveries that they made in the course of writing their novels. With their preconceived and deeply engrained prejudices pulling them in one direction and a newly-acquired awareness of the ills of slavery, as well as their own sense of fair-play and justice, tugging at their conscience in another, Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain exhibit, what could perhaps be called, a fascination-cum-repulsion for their Black characters. Undoubtedly, it is this clash of differing emotions and attitudes that makes the racial discourse of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twain, fascinating and thought-provoking.

Harriet Beecher Stowe exemplifies all the doubts, uncertainties, development and dawning of a disturbing and perplexing consciousness that have been discussed so far. At the end of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* the obviously well-intentioned Mrs. Stowe could write:

> Christain men and women of the North: still further; you have another power-You can pray! Do you believe in prayer?... You pray for the heathen abroad; pray also for the heathen at home. And pray for those distressed Christains whose whole chance of religious improvement is an accident of trade and sale, from whom any adherence to the morals' of Christianity is, in many cases, an imposiblity, unless they have given them, from above the courage and grace of martyrdom.
>
> That the providence of God has provided a refuge in Africa is, indeed, a great and noticeable fact; but that is no reason why the Church of Christ should throw off that responsibility to this outcast race which her profession demands of her.

It was only while writing *The Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin* that Mrs. Stowe was rudely jolted into a realisation of the bitter and unpalatable reality about the evils of slavery and the wretched lot of the slaves. Thus, at one point in her second antislavery novel *Dred* it almost appeared as though, in the section dealing with Dred, she was actually supporting and advocating open insurrection. This was not to be---she soon retraced her steps to Christain fold, a region she was only too familiar with.

The fact remains that , in the process of writing her novels, Mrs. Stowe had been forced to view the Blacks and the institution of slavery in an altogether new light. Thus, even though *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is more popular and better-written than *Dred*, it is also the "softer" and less realistic of the two books. In writing the two books and in the period that passed between them Mrs. Stowe had, almost unwillingly, come face to face with fresh, disturbing facets of the institution of slavery . In all her literary works, the dividing line between fact and fiction always merged. For her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Dred* were not merely works of fiction---on the contrary, they gave expression to her inmost beliefs and convictions. That would explain why *The Key* was written and why Mrs Stowe often picked up her pen to defend her views. The writing of her three antislavery works was, obviously, not a very pleasant and comforting experience for Mrs. Stowe. Undoubtedly, the realisation of the awful magnitude of the problem of slavery had shocked and unnerved her. One cannot help wondering if Mrs. Stowe stopped writing about slavery, after *Dred* not because other subjects had caught her attention, but because the topic in itself had become too uncomfortable and distressing for her peace of mind as well as her moral, religious, social and political beliefs.

In the case of Mark Twain, the process of consciousness, awareness and development is even more strikingly marked than it is in the case of Mrs. Stowe. Initially, Twain began by making jokes about Black body odour, miscegenation and slave-stupidity. Indeed, in the 1850's and early 1860's Twain conformed to all the prejudices of the age and did little to conceal his contempt for, what he liked to call, "nagurs" or "niggers". Various factors, including his marriage to Olivia Langdon, contributed towards a change in Twain's attitude . By 1874, when he wrote "A True Story". Twain could conceive of Aunt Rachel as a long-suffering yet dignified and intelligent human being. One has to admit that it would be very difficult to place "Aunt"

Rachel in the category of the other avuncular figures found in the nineteenth century fiction. In *Huck Finn* and even more in *Pudd'n-head Wilson* one sees, notwithstanding the weight of scholarly opinion to the contrary, an author who is willing to see his Black characters, as normal human beings. Thus, "Nigger" Jim, Roxana and even the false Tom Driscoll are unable to come up to the expectations of the twentieth-century critics, not because, as many critics believe, their author was prejudiced against them, but because Twain did not think very highly of the entire human race to which they belonged. Indeed, it is vexing, though not really perplexing when the heroic Jim of early sections of *Huck Finn* is reduced to the level of a farce in the Tom Swayer section of the novel, as also in *Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer among the Indians* and in *Tom Swayer Abroad*.

Religious and moral compunctions had prompted Mrs. Stowe to try to close her eyes to the deeper significance of the issue of slavery. Mark Twain, on the other hand, could not possibly be kind and fair to his slave characters, not because they were Black, but because they had the dubious distinction of belonging to the "damned human race". Inspite of this or perhaps because of this, Twain can be cailed the most realistic of all the authors dealing with the issue of slavery. Inspite of his limitations, shortcomings and lingering prejudices, Twain presents a relatively complete picture of slave life in the South. One cannot help noticing the absence of field-hands, overseers, slave auctions and fugitive slave-chasers in Twain's works (except when Roxy talks about her experiences down South). At the same time, it is Twain, and one feels tempted to say only Twain who treats his Black characters as ordinary, believable human beings. They, like any of Twain's other characters are neither all black nor all white. It is refreshing to see shades of grey in these humanly fallible and humanly noble characters. The romanticizing or inadvertent debasing that are often present in the works of Harriet Beecher Stowe are fortunately missing from Twain's works. This makes him, along with Herman Melville, the most realistic and convincing of all the nineteenth century authors who have dealt with the theme of slavery.

To conclude, one can say that through their almost ambivalent and confused attitudes Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Taiwan reflect the state of nineteenth century social opinion about the Black race. As both the authors battled against social prejudices and tried

to come to terms with a new and overpowering consciousness, they were merely experiencing the uncertainties and traumatic realizations that were beginning to confront their socially-conscious contemporaries. Literature, being a mirror of society, the racial discourse of Harriet Beecher Stowe and Mark Twin very aptly illustrates the feverish uncertainty, the hard-to-shed prejudices, the sense of guilt and the almost compulsive reformist zeal that had gripped American society during those turbulent days when the nation lay divided over the question of slavery. Perhaps, nothing else could or should be expected of literary artists who consciously or subconsciously realized that they were dealing with an issue which would eventually make or mar their nation.

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Notes

[1]Kenneth Lynn, ed., 'Introduction', *Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life Among the Lowly*, p vii.

[2]George F Whicher, "Literature and Conflict", *Literary History of the United States: History*, ed. R.E. Spiller et al., (New York, 1963), p. 565.

[3]Allen Weinstein and Otto Gattel, "Introduction," *American Negro Slavery: A Modern Reader* (New York, 1973), p 3.

[4]Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin or Life Among the Lowly* (Edinburgh, n.d.), p. 51.

[5]Ibid., p.50.

[6]Samuel Langhorne Clemens, *The Tragedy of Pudd'n head Wilson in The Unabridged Mark Twain* Vol II, ed. Lawrence Teacher (Philadelphia 1979)p. 26.

[7]Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, pp. 527-28.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF DIGRESSIONS IN TRISTRAM SHANDY

The characteristics of Sterne's fictional technique are most noticeable in *Tristram Shandy*. Though he declares that he would write about both the life and opinions of Tristram Shandy, there is "very little of the life, and nothing of the opinions of the nominal hero,"[1] in the novel. There is, of course, in the novel the life of his uncle Toby Shandy and the opinions of his father Walter Shandy. The very title of the novel is ironic, because there is incongruity in what the novelist declares he would say, and what, of course, he says. The incoungruity that begins with the very title of the novel pervades the entire novel, and the result is that it has been most frequently criticised as the very symbol of disorder. According to W. Sicher, *Tristram Shandy* is a "farrago, a gallimaufry."[2] Referring to the disorderliness of *Tristram Shandy*, George Saintsbury observes:

> *Tristram Shandy*, the pretended history of a personagewho rarely appears, is , in fact, a "rigmarole" of partly original, partly borrowed humour, arranged in the style which the French call fatrasie and of which Rabelais' great books are the most familiar, though not quite the normal type.[3]

To Baker it is "a salmagundi of odds and ends recklesly compounded."[4] to David Daiches, *Tristram Shandy* is, on the surface, "a rambling and eccentric patchwork of anecdotes, digressions, reflections jests, parodies and dialogues. According to Cazamian, "*Tristam Shandy* recounts the life and opinions of the hero --- an indefinite theme, worked out by a verve that has not the slightest concern for order, unity, or logic."[6] F.R. Leavis observes:

> Associated with this use of Defoe is the use thatwas made in much the same milieu of Sterne, in whose irresponsible (and nasty) trifling, regardedas in some way extraordinarily significant andmature, was found a sanction for attributing value to other trifling.[7]

Behind such critical opinions lies the idea that there is a

clearly defined form of novel to which, it is clear, *Tristram Shandy* does not conform. But the odds are no longer against *Tristram Shandy* when one comes to the criticism of W.L.Cross, who has refuted the charge of disorderliness by elaborating that *Tristram Shandy* is Lock's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in novelized form. Sterne does not make even the least effort to conceal disorderliness. On the contrary, he prides himself on it, declaring repeatedly and insolently the total absence of any artistic premeditation from his book. He claims the privilege of telling his story as he wants, irrespective of every convention and rule, because he aims at expressing the thinker's mind. The earlier writers who used this style were chiefly concerned with their own thoughts. Sterne applied their method to portray the thought- streams of his characters. As humorist he was drawn to this style by its eccentricities, its deviation from conventional prose and its digression. To quote David I . Grossvogel:

> It is hardly more than a commonplace to say that *Tristram Shandy* is an extended digression on the manners and virtues of digressions.[8]

To give an example of digressions in the novel, *Tristram Shandy* starts out on the first page of the novel with a careful enquiry on the need of parents to consider as to what they are about when they are in the act of begetting. The first chapter of the novel begins with these words:

> I WISH either my father or my mother, or indeed both of them, as they were in duty both equally bound to it, had minded what they were about when they begot me....[9]

After this, there is a discourse on the animal spirits, e.g., about how they are transfused from father to son etc., and how much depends on their condition during this significant journey. Later on we are told of the unseasonable question of his mother, "Pray, my dear, have you not forgot to wind up the clock?", which is an example of Locke's doctrine of the association of ideas, in which Sterne was keenly interested. Mrs. Shandy's remark about the clock leads, by association of ideas to a portrait of Uncle Toby, and it was to Uncle Toby that Tristram owed the information relating to the circumstances of his begetting:

> To my uncle Mr. Toby Shandy do I stand indebted for the preceding anecdote, to whom my father, who was an excellent natural philosopher, and much given to close reasoning upon the smallest matters, had oft, and heavily complained of the injury;... *(Tristram Shandy, p. 7)*

Then, by association with conception, origin or the egg, we are led into a discussion of the dictum of Horace on the manner of starting a work of art, as Horace says, *ab Ovo*. From that we are led to an explanation of Mrs. Shandy's unfortunate association between the winding of the clock and the physical communion. Sterne observes:

> -Which strange combination of ideas, the sagacious Locke, who certainly understood the nature of these things better than most men, affirms to have produced more wry actions that all other sources of prejudice what soever. (Tristam Shandy), pp. 9-10)

The above explanation of the association of ideas leads to a determination of the date of Tristram's engendering and the manner of his birth which involves a digression into the history of the midwife, which in turn involves a digression into the history of the midwife, which in turn involves a digression into the history of the parson Yorick, who was responsible for establishing the midwife in her vocation. The history of Yorick necessitates a description of his horse which recalls Rosinante, Don Quixote's horse. This sets Sterne off on the subject of hobby-horses in general.

It is Sterne's structural device to interrupt the history of the hero's birth by filling in the human background so that the Shandean world is well peopled and known to us when the time of his arrival approaches. He preferred to do this by using digressions. Since the hero is not yet born, these sections appear to be digressions from the main subject-matter. But these fulfill Sterne's purpose of peopling the novel and keeping the readers in a state of suspense. Several chapters in the first book of the novel are devoted to Yorick and are, thus, a digression. Yorick comes in by the way of the old midwife to whom he would lend his horse. Then, there are chapters about Uncle Toby with ample explanation of the origin of his hobby-horse. Sterne claims very subtly:

> By this contrivance the machinery of my work is of a species by

> itself;two contrary motions are introduced into it, and reconciled, which were thought to be at variance with each other. In a word,my work is digressive, and it is progressive too, -- and at the same time. *(Tristram Shandy, p. 66)*

The digression often has a central purpose, though it also has its independent life. Freedom to deviate is , of course, an artistic quality if the writer can control the tension brought between new and interesting sources and the reader's anxiety to reach a promised goal. The capacity to manipulate the reader's interest is Sterne's merit:

> ... from the beginning of this, you see, I have constructed the main work and the adventitious parts of it with such intersections, and have so complicated and involved the digressive and progressive movements, one wheel within another, that the whole machine, in general, has been kept a-going; - and, what's more, it shall be kept a-going these forty years, if it pleases the fountain of health to bless me so long with life and good spirits (*Tristram Shandy*, p.67)

To take another example of a digression, we find that in the last chapter of Book IV, Tristram declares:

> - and it is from this point properly, that the story of my Life and my Opinions sets out. With all my hurry and precipitation, I have but been clearing the ground to raise the building -- and such a building do I foresee it will turn out, as never was planned , and as never was executed since Adam. (*Tristram Shandy, p. 306*)

Then, he says that in less then five minutes he will have thrown his pen into the fire -- he has but half a score of things to do in the mean time -- he has a thing to name, a thing to lament, a thing to hope, a thing to promise, a thing to threaten, a thing to suppose, a thing to declare, a thing to conceal, a thing to choose, and a thing to pray for. He names this chapter the chapter of Things. He also says that his next chapter, that is the first chapter of Book V will be his chapter upon whiskers, which he thinks the world will not tolerate:

> I'm sorry I made it - 'it was as inconsiderate a promise as ever

> entered a man's head - A chapterupon whiskers: alas! the world will not bear it -..
> (*Tristram Shandy, p.*314)

The second chapter of Book V brings to Walter the news of his elder son Bobby's death while he (Walter) was "busy calculating the expense of his riding post from Calais to Paris, and so on to Lyons. Sterne passes from Bobby's death to a lot of talk on mortality of all creatures and all objects of the world. While Corporal Trim, goes on with his harangue on death, Sterne asks the readers, to wait because he has a small account to settle with the readers before Trim can go on with his harangue. Sterne, of course, wants to write a chapter upon chamber-maids and button-holes. But Corporal Trim again talks about the death out of doors, death in battle, the death of Bobby and its sad effect upon Uncle Toby who will sigh in his bed for a whole month together, as he did for lieutenant Le Fever. The maid-servant Susannah wants to hear Trim's stories about captain Toby. Then the man-servant Obadiah describes him as follows:

> He is a kind - hearted gentleman, said Obadiah, as ever lived. - Aye and as brave a one too, said the corporal,as ever stept before a platoon.
> *(Tristram Shandhy, p. 335)*

Then we find that after the affairs were a little settled in the family of Walter Shandy, and Susannah had got possession of Mrs. Shandy's green satin night-gown, the first thing that entered Walter's head was to write a *Tristra-paedia* or system of education for Tristram.

As we have just seen, Sterne does not stick to any subject. He takes up a subject, but shifts into another, only to abandon it in its turn. His digressions are the very soul of his novel. Regarding digressions Sterne himself declares:

> Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine; - theyare the life, the soul of reading - take them out of ' this book, for instance, - you might as well take the book along with them;- one cold eternal winter would reign in every page of it; restore them to the writer;- he steps forth like a bridegroom, - bids All-hail; brings in variety,

and forbids the appetite to fail.
(Tristram Shandy)

To Robert Alter, "the very notion, of course, of interpolation tends to break down in a book where virtually all progression is digression."[10] He goes on:

> The zigzag movement of narration is an authentic rendering of the mind's own resistance to the neatness of pattern and schematization, and at the same time it is a continuous declaration by the author of the artful arbitrariness of all authorial decisions.[11]

Sterne justifies the use of digression by saying that the writer who goes on writing in a straight-forward manner is "a muleteer," because a real writer has

> Accounts to reconcile:
> Anecdotes to pick up:
> Inscriptions to make out:
> Stories to weave in:
> Traditions to sift:
> Personages to call upon
> Panegyrics to paste up at this door;
> Pasquinades at that: *(Tristram Shandy, p. 35)*

Sterne thinks that if the writer is "a man of the least spirit he will have fifty deviations from a straight line to make with this or that party as he goes along, which he can no ways avoid. (*Tristram Shandy*, p. 35)

Digressions, of course, provide immense pleasure to the readers. It is not needed to document the extent of this enjoyment among Sterne's contemporaries during "the great age of English conversation." Virginia Woolf considers him to be "a brilliant talker", and she admires "the very punctuation" which is "that of speech, not writing and brings the sounds and associations of the speaking voice in with it." To her, the order of Sterne's ideas, their suddenness and irrelevancy "is more true of life than to literature."[12] Digression is a cult of Sterne's method, and may have been encouraged by his study of Swift and Rabelais. In both Rabelais and Sterne, each part is

essentially a whole in itself by th right of humoristic universality. The digressive spirit in Sterne too is not his wantonness, but, in fact, the very form and vehicle of his genius. The digressions in *Tristram Shandy* not only determine the comic and moral tone of the novel, but also help to keep the tone personal and even intimate.

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Notes

[1]*The Oxford Companion to English Literature,* ed. Sir Paul Harvey (Oxford) 1967), p.834.
[2]W.Sichel, *Sterne: A Study* (London 1910), p. 608.
[3]George Saintsbury, *A Short History of English Literature* (London, 1898), p. 608.
[4]E.A. Baker, The History of the English Novel, IV (New York, 1950), p.204.
[5]David Daiches, *ACritical History of English Literature,* III (1960; rpt. Bombay: Allied Publishers Pvt. Ltd., 1979), p.732.
[6]Legouis and Cazamian, *A History of English Literature* (London, 1964), p. 857.
[7]F.R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962), p. 11.
[8]David I. Grossvogel, *Limits of the Novel; Evolutions of a Form from Chaucer to Robbe - Grillet* (Ithaca 1968), pp. 136-137.
[9]Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy Gentleman* (London, 1966), p.5 All subsequent textual references are to this work.
[10]Robert Alter, *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-conscious Genre* (Berkeley, 1975), p.31.
[11]Ibid.
[12]Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader, no .2* (London, 1974), p.79.

SYED MOHAMMAD ANOOSHEH

IDEOLOGY AS RELIGION AND MYTH IN THE NOVELS OF D.H. LAWRENCE

Religion and myth are closely linked with man's search to interpret natural and supernatural phenomena imaginatively. While religion gets philosophical and discursive, myth is basically a narrative story about the origin of gods and goddesses in the distant past. In his novels, Lawrence saw a great metaphysical significance in religion as well as myth. "The religious effort is to conceive, to symbolise that which it is not, and which it requires, yearns for."[1] In the same way, myth can also be defined: "In general a myth is a story which is not 'true' and which involves...supernatural beings or at any rate super - human beings. Myth is always concerned with creation. Myth explains how something came to exist. Myth embodies feelings and concept. ... Many myths or quasi-myths are primitive explanation of the natural order and cosmic force."[2]

The factor common to myth and religion is that both are concerned with man's aspirations to know the Unknown and to understand its majesty by interpreting the gigantic forces of nature. By implication, there is an element of awe and wonder in the mind of people who felt and conceived religion and myth initially on the plane of imagination. To Lawrence, life is perceived more beautifully on the plane of imagination than through any form of deliberate wit and intelligence.

Lawrence contends that true religious and mythological experience is available only on the plane of heightened imagination; and it is generative of happiness. Once man gets dwarfed in imagination, he is deprived of the mystery of life and its incalculable wonders. He gets physically sickened with the many ailments haunting him, the chief one being boredom.[3] Thus, imagination coupled with man's effort to explain the cosmic forces of nature led to the birth and growth of different religions and myths all over the world.

In his search for something approximating religion, Lawrence aimed at realizing the living truth of being. In experiencing it, one has got to recognise the transience of life which operates from moment to moment in man and his surroundings. He did not believe in the sort

of metaphysical rigidity which is the mainstay of traditional religions. In his novels, *The Man Who Died,* and *The Plumed Serpent* he had dilated upon the utmost importance of finding out a new basis for religion. This is possible if one takes a step towards living one's life in terms of personal honesty and integrity :

> One should stick by one's own soul, and by nothing else. In one's soul, one knows the truth from the untruth, and life from death. And if one betrays one's own soul knowledge, one is the worst of traitors.[4]

In laying emphasis on the purity of life and man's close rapport with his surroundings, Lawrence wanted man to live his life in an integral manner. He knew that man needs both society and nature that is why he desired all along to remain a part of the universe.

Mysticism was a vital part of Lawrence's creative mode. In his novel *Women in Love,* Birkin voices his sentiments: "I abhor humanity, I wish it was swept away. It could go, and there would be no absolute loss, if every human being perished tomorrow, the reality would be untouched."[5] Lawrence gave expression to his mystic sense of life by making his language symbolic and poetic. In his critical writings such as "Studies in Classic American Literature" *an Introduction To The Dragon of Apocalypse* by Frederick Cater, Lawrence repeatedly emphasized the importance of symbolic art expression. This is primarily because the symbolic expression conveys experience in all its multidimentionality. All great literature is symbolic.

When language has the backing of full-fledged imagination, it gets intensely meaningful and symbolic. This is what made Lawrence say that, on reading *The Revelation,* we feel at once that there are, in it, meanings behind meanings, that one is in the world of symbols as well as allegory. Symbols are organic units of consciousness with a life of their own, and you can never explain them away, because their value is dynamic, emotional, belonging to the sense-consciousness of the body and soul, and not simply mental."6 In saying so Lawrence touches upon a very important aspect of literature. It is concerned with the basic concepts of 'allegory' 'symbol' and 'myth':

> An allegorical image has a meaning. Mr. Facing-both-ways has meaning. But I defy you to lay your finger on the full meaning of Janus, who is a symbol.[7]

This means that while allegory has a simple moral, a true symbol is unfathomble in terms of its life-sustaining meaning and potentialities. In the same refrain, Lawrence examines the contending claims of allegory and myth:

> Allegory is narrative description using, as a rule, images to express certain definite qualities. Each image means something, and is a term in the argument and nearly always for a moral or didactic purpose, for under the narrative of an allegory lies a didactic argument, usually moral. Myth likewise is a descriptive narrative using images. But myth is never an argument, it never has a didactic nor moral purpose, you can draw no conclusion from it. Myth is an attempt to narrate a whole human experience, of which the purpose is too deep, going too deep in the blood and soul, for mental explanation or description.[8]

In the above excerpt we observe the great importance of myth in literature and life. Myth has a titanic significance for man's cultural growth. It touches the deepest chords of man's being'.It is quite apparent that myth incarnates by far the deepest human experience. In a myth, the human experience is recorded through a narrative story-from. It is in this context that Lawrence, as a novelist and fine story-teller, strove hard to probe deeply the modern life with a view to find sources of living myth.

As one goes through Lawrence's novels, one often comes across incidents and episodes which have great bearing on some of the burning issues of life and existence. Since the novel is a mirror of contemporary society, Lawrence puts forth his deepest thoughts and feelings through the mind of his characters, who react imaginatively to the forces around them. In doing so, they hit upon newer areas of experience. It is in this context that some of Lawrence's observations are mythic in their amplitude.

In most of his novels, he tries to probe deeper into the substratum of contemporary reality in order to make modern men and women improve the life content of their existence. He does not get unduly attached to a few mythic symbols. Rather, he tries to

create a living continuum on an impersonal plane. As a result, he was able to impart a life-sustaining message to his readers at a time when man was fast losing the basic sense of an emotive zeal to live.

The White Peacock delineates characters who fail to grow to fulfilment because of the failure of man (or for that matter woman) either to rise to the occasion or to choose a better life - elan. Lawrence takes into account the differences in human temperament and inconsistencies of character in this novel. In the relationship between George and Lettie, the fault was partly that of George who failed to respond to Lettie adequately. "You are blind; you are only half born; you are gross with good living and heavy sleeping,"[9] Lettie says to him. This is a reflective comment, which implies the emotional failure of George as a male personality.

However, the title is symbolic of two female characters. Lettie and the spiritual wife of Annable. Annable does not like spirituality and other-worldliness. "Be a good animal, true to your animal instincts,"[10] is his motto. Annable is by no means what Graham Hough unwittingly suggests: he is the first bearer of Lawrentian philosophy".[11] A belief "only in the physical" and a denial of "all spirituality" is not a tenet of Lawrentian creed.

Lawrence was essentially a life-worshipper. Therefore, as a writer, "he commented upon the horrifying effects of dead social conventions and ingrained attitudes. He tried to grasp the pulsing life-flow that runs on a deeper place of reality. This is essentially an endeavour to experience the mythic basis of life.

Lawrence philosophy is somewhat similar to Albert Camus' philosophy of absurdity in his famous thought-provoking essay," The Myth of Sisyphus." Camus, like Dostoevsky, makes a plea for affirming one's existence in the midst of all the contradictions and inconsistencies of life. Camus points out that one should have one's feet on the ground and not lose the path of reason and sanity. This is the view-point Lawrence also affirms.

Lawrence had mythic belief in the efficacy of blood consciousness and its superiority over mind-consciousness. In *The Plumed Serpent,* Kate Leslie symbolises Lawrence's own feeling towards the Western civilization. This novel, with its thematic ambience examines the areas of human experience in which Western civilization has gone wrong. Kate the Irish widow comes to Mexico in the hope of finding a better life pattern. Mexico, she discovers, weighs down her soul with a "down pressing weight upon the

spirit".[12] She comes under the powerful, rather hypnotic influence of the two Mexicans, Don Ramon Carrasco and General Cipriano Videma, who project a new way of civilization based on a revival of the old Aztec Gods. Kate continues to stay in Mexico though divided in her allegiance.

Kate's white, mental consciousness makes her aware that she did not belong to Mexican civilization, but she continues to stay there because of the powerful spell it exercised over her blood-impoverished sensibility. However, Kate found herself unable to accept the religious ways and manners of the Mexican civilization.

> "Oh!" she cried to herself, stifling. For heaven's sake let me get out of this, and back to simple human people. I loathe the very sound of Quetzalcoatl and Huitzilopochtli. I would die rather than be mixed up in it any more... I want to go home loathsome, really, to be called Malintzi.[13]

It is in this context that William York Tindal defines *The Plumed Serpent"* as a myth of rebirth, with symbolic structure of its own."[14] Indeed the entire story of this novel is myth-oriented.

In the same refrain, *The Rainbow* is full of mythical overtones. The pregnant Anna Brangwen expresses these in her states of mind when she reflects on her condition:

> There was another child coming and Anna lapsed into vague content. If she were not the wayfarer to the unknown, if she were arrived now, settled in her builded house, a rich woman, still her doors opened under the arch of the rainbow, her threshold reflected the passing of the sun and the moon, the great travellers, her house was full of the echo of journeying.[15].

This, again, is the cry of a woman who wants to heal her bruised feelings by taking a sacred view of her pregnancy and creation of a new life. By having his characters make such mythic observations, Lawrence draws attention of his readers to the fact that sex-relations and their of his reades to the fact that sex-relations and their outcome in the form of a baby are of cosmic significance. One just cannot deny the unknown spirit (which Lawrence calls travellers) overseeing the manifestation of a new soul in a woman's body

Lawrence's short novel, *The Man Who Died is* also full of mythic significance. In this novel Lawrence examines how a man of culture can keep himself proud and sacred in the midst of surrounding confusion. This is what the hermit-anchorite (who had strong resemblance to Jesus) and the lady of Isis, in search of Osiris, symbolise.

The lady of Isis, like the man who died, did not belong to the ordinary category of females. For seven years, from the age of twenty she had maintained a secluded living, keeping herself busy with understanding the mysteries of life. When she saw "The Man Who Died", she was attracted by the mysterious "quickening quick"16 in his face though it had got emaciated:

> She had no interest in men, particularly in the suervile class. Yet she looked at the sleeping face. It was worn, hollow and rather ugly. But, a true priestess, she saw the other kind of beauty in it, the sheer stillness of the deeper life.[17]

In all his novels, Lawrence has examined life from various angles. Instinctively, he saw life in all its depth. He was always cosmically conscious always raptly quiveringly" aware of the mystery of the world, and to him that mystery was always, in his sense of the world, divine, a divine mystery."[18] He viewed life from this stand point.

Most of Lawrence's major characters are in search of what they lack in the social milieu. Even in the ordinary world in which they move, they try to find a meaning in terms of a mystic standpoint. This is unmistakably true in the cases of characters like Ursula in *The Rainbow.* She found Skrebensky, her lover, a failure, a broken-down life. Poignantly, she thinks of him:

> He was something of the past, finite. He was that which is known. She felt a poignant affection for him, as for that which is past. But, when she looked with her face forward, he was not. Nay, when she looked ahead, into the undiscovered land ahead, into the undiscovered land before her, what was there she could recognise but a fresh glow of light and inscrutable trees going up from the earth like smoke? It was the unknown, the unexplored, the undiscovered upon whose shore she had landed alone, after crossing the void, the darkness which washed the New World and the old.[19]

Ursula's poignant feelings constitute the sensitive human being's quest for discovering life at every new turn. It is only in this context that one can appreciate Lawrence's deeply-felt remark, full of poetic meaning, when he says: "for man, the vast marvel is to be alive," 20 At one stage, Lawrence says that religion is not a question of belief, it is a question of feeling. Here he makes a mystic observation because it is through feeling alone that man can make a start towards religion.

Notes

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[11]Graham Hough, *The Dark Sun : A Study of D.H. Lawrence* (London, 1956), p.30.
[12]Yudhishtar, *Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 259.
[13]D.H. Lawrence, *The Plumed Serpent* (New York 1959), p. 407.
[14]Yudhishtar, *Conflict in the Novels of D.H. Lawrence*, p. 264.
[15]D.H. Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (Harn.ondsworth, 1949), p.199.
[16]"Quickening Quick", the expression used by Lawrence, is to signify the moment-to-moment awareness vouch . safed to man of sensibility.
[17]D.H. Lawrence, *The Man Who Died* (London, 1989) p. 438.
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[19]D.H. Lawrence , *The Rainbow*, p. 500.
[20]D.H. Lawrence : *Apocalypse*, ed., Mara Kalnins (London, 1981), p.8.

S.R. Jalote

THE BALINESE RITUAL DANCE DRAMA AND *WAITING FOR GODOT*: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

The structure and the technique of *Waiting for Godot* may appear by no means unconventional; in fact it is a new combination of a number of ancient traditions of art and drama. The Avant-Garde artists have been producing works of art which are mythic and ritualistic and are characterized by the term anti-theatre. The borrowing of ritual forms distinguishes the Avant-Garde from social or politically committed drama. Both kinds of theatre may repudiate existing social conditions; but since the aim of politically committed drama is to promote a future programe, it uses logical structures as in the plays of Brecht and Bernard Shaw. The Avant-Garde has much in common with the aesthetics of "pure form" and the conscious element of nonsense of the plays of Witkiewitz. It has been described by Ionesco as drama "that cannot serve any other kind of truth but its own" and, therefore, has the sole function of revealing "the fundamental laws of [dramatic] construction."[1] The expressionistic director Jessner observes, "just as there is a pure (absolute) music and a pure (absolute) painting, we must have pure theatre."[2]

Though the Avant-Garde rules any commitment, it emphasizes spiritual revolution and stylistic exploration. It establishes a communion between actors and spectators comparable to the mass-enthusiasm evoked by tribal rituals which look like artistic cults of irrationality and inarticulacy.Both the Avant-Garde and tribal rituals lead to an interior focus on the psyche and are divesting the theatre of scenic progress. The Avant-Garde appears to embody an alien value scale such as we find in primitive African sculpture and Balinese dance drama. It may also be identified with the most frequently used ritual of the "rites of passage" analysed by anthropologists like Van Gannep as early as 1908. The basic pattern here is the separation of participants from their previous environment. The essence of a rite of passage is that it requires physical and emotional involvement of the participants in a present action and seeks to change their nature by irrational, often disturbing means:

In philosophical terms, initiation is equivalent to a basic change in

> existential condition; the novice emerges from his ordeal endowed with a totally different being from that which he possessed before initiation; he has become *another*.[3]

This atavism is a symptom of the Avant-Garde repudiation of society, social organisations, artistic conventions, aesthetic values and materialistic ideals. The exaltation of the unconscious and emotional side of human nature, the exploration of irrationality and dream states, the borrowing of archaic dramatic models are intended to provide an antidote to a civilization that emphasizes the rational and intellectual. From another angle primitivism of the Avant-Garde could be seen simply as escapism and the value put on the subconscious as a retreat from reality. So the Avant-Garde represents the amorphous complexity of post-industrial society. Its multiplicity of dynamic but unstable movements and apparent fragmentation focusses on philosophic abstractions, like the view of society itself as fragmented.

The concept of a ceremonial action changing one's existential nature may seem unrealistic, but in certain primitive cultures there are still rituals in a form of theatre which induce a change in the participants. The best documented example is the Balinese in dance drama, and it was no coincidence that this was the model Artaud chose for his Theatre Alfred Jerry after seeing a single performance by a Balinese troupe in 1931. Though we have no record of the details of that performance, it corresponds to Mead's pathbreaking anthropological film *Trance and Dance in Bali*, shot only six years later. It epitomizes, in a mythic and ritualistic form, many of the qualities that the expressionists and surrealists had been working towards. The film records the dramatized re-enaction of a myth. It symbolizes a quintessential spiritual conflict. Like all early dramatic forms, the Balinese model is closely linked with religion. The type of performance documented by the film is given in temple precincts on a religious festival. It is preceded by the ceremonial purification of the dancers and ends with exorcism. Masked actors are a heretically stylized dragon representing the protective deity and the principle of life itself, and a grotesque human witch representing chaos and death. The clash of these two symbolic supernatural beings is the centre of the drama. These are the only characters with prescribed speeches. The warriors and maidens in the spectacle sing choruses and perform dances. They are unmasked and wear traditional folk dresses. They stand for the

human population. In course of time the original sacred play dramatizing the issues at stake is reduced to a thematic prologue, whereas the choruses and dances of warriors and maidens have been elaborated until these form the theatrical action. At the point of climax the dancers enter a state of trance and turn their swords, with which they had unsuccessfully attempted to attack the witch, against their own breasts. In providing their flesh impregnable to the razor-sharp sword they established dominance of spirit over body. Although they are unable to kill death itself in the symbol of the witch, their souls are invulnerable.

Artaud describes all the elements of the Balinese performance he witnessed as "calculated",

> Nothing is left to chance or personal initiative.., everything is thus regulated and impersonal; not a movement of the muscles, not the rolling of an eye but seem to belong to a kind of reflective mathematics which controls everything and by means of which everything happens.[4]

But Artaud was wrong in attributing all this to "the absolute preponderance of the director (metteur en scene) whose creative power eliminates words."[5] The postures and formalized hand attitudes found in the dancing figures embody various emotions such as those of despair and anger. They are not consciously adopted forms; instead they are prescribed by immemorial, archaic and mythical traditions which can still be seen in twelfth-century Hindu-Javanese religious monuments. All these stylized movements of the dance and the hypnotic monotone musical accompaniment with its strongly stressed rhythms are designed to induce trance. The sequence of movements may be repeated in different permutations according to the need of the dancers entering into mass self-hypnosis. This delirium is of a contagious nature. Once one dancer achieves it, others succumb to it almost immediately. Margaret Mead's film records the instance of an elderly woman in the audience who, in spite of her earlier unwillingness to participate, is irresistibly led into the trance state. According to Artaud this type of communicative delirium expresses "the automatism of the liberated unconscious."[6] It is in no way pretended.

In the Balinese performance there is something of the ceremonial quality of a religious rite and of exorcism:

> The thoughts it aims at, the spiritual states it seeks to create, the mystic solutions it proposes are aroused and attained without delay or circumlocation. All of which seems to be an exorcism to make our demons FLOW.[7]

The dancers become possessed by the spirit they impersonated and hence need to be liberated from their roles. They return to their "right minds" with the aid of a priest who burns incense under their nose. This is a common element in much primitive drama in which the actor reverts to his everyday face after his headdress or mask is removed by a member of the audience.

The psychological effectiveness of this type of Balinese performance makes it a natural model for the Avant-Garde. The Balinese dance drama represents a purely interior struggle of a soul preyed upon by ghosts and phantoms from beyond. The dramatic theme of the Avant-Garde are concerned with highly subjective states of discontinuities - memory, riminiscence, anxiety, fear and nostalgia. In *Waiting for Godot* Samuel Beckett has reflected the vision of anxiety-ridden modern man drifting towards chaos in an industrial and technological society. This condition of modern man has been represented in the form of dreamlike sequences and juxtaposition of unrelated images. The play is constructed in a new fashion, relying for its effect on omitting or annihilating traditional elements of drama such as plot and characterization. The play has neither a beginning nor an end. The play has no sequence of events, and hence no plot. The tensions of the normal play are constructed around the interaction of the characters and the ignorance of the audience about what is going to happen next. But *Waiting for Godot* does not tell a story, it deals with no conflict and it has no suspense. The characters of the play are unrecognizeable, and they babble incoherently like the characters of the Balinese ritual dance drama. In *Waiting for Godot* there are many passages where it hardly matters who says which line. The play presents two tramps in a waste place, fruitlessly and all but hopelessly waiting for an unidentified person Godot, who may or may not exist and with whom they sometimes think they remember that they may have an appointment. The play is "absurd" in the sense that it is apparently irrational, meaningless and illogical. The play has unrelated and unsequential dialogues and action. It explores a static situation as Estragon remarks: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful'."[8]

The spectacle of the Balinese theatre has a little of the theatre in it. It draws upon dance, song and pantomime fused together in a perspective of hallucination and fear. It eliminates the author and all creation comes from the actors having been possessed with a secret psychic impulse. In this connection Antonin Artaud aptly remarks:

> It is very remarkable that the first of the little plays which compose this spectable, in which we are shown a father's remonstrances to his tradition-flouting daughter, begins with an entrance of phantoms; the male and female characters who will develop a dramatic but familiar subject appear to us first in their spectral aspect and are seen in that hallucinatory perspective appropriate to every theatrical character, before the situation in this kind of symbolic sketch are allowed to develop. Here indeed situations are only a pretext. The drama does not develop as a conflict of feelings but as a conflict of spiritual states, themselves ossified and transformed into gestures - diagrams. In a word, the Balinese have realized, with the utmost rigor, the idea of pure theatre....[9]

The themes of the Balinese dance drama are vague and abstract. They are given life by the artifices of the stage and the use of gestures and voice. In fact what sustains the Balinese dance drama are "these, gestures, the angular and abruptly abandoned attitudes, these syncopated modulations formed at the back of the throat, these musical phrases that break off short... these sounds of hollow drums, these robot squaking, these dances animated manikins...."[10] In this drama "the sense of a new physical language, based upon signs and no longer upon words, is liberated. These actors with their geometric robes seem to be animated hieroglyphes."[11] These spiritual signs of the Balinese dance drama strike us intuitively and make useless any translation into logical discursive language.

In *Waiting for Godot* there is an air of improvisation about writing. Beckett manages to give the impression of having written the play without himself knowing how he was going to get on. Although it is not a play in the conventional sense, it is very much a play in the literal sense of the word 'play'. The Balinese dance dramas have a vocabulary of gesture and mime for every circumstance of life, whereas the most important technique used by Beckett in *Waiting for Godot* is anologous to that of the music-hall or the circus tricks of protracted

delay. The Balinese dance drama uses the language of mechanically rolling eyes, pouting lips, muscular spasms, horizontally moving heads that seem to glide from one shoulder to the other as if on rollers, whereas in *Waiting for Godot* no question can be answered without a maximum of interlocation, incomprehension and argument. In *Waiting for Godot* you never go straight to a point if you can evade it or start a long discussion about a short cut. Vladmir and Estragon ask Pozzo why Lucky doesn't put down the bags. Pozzo is delighted at having a question to answer. But it takes five pages of digression, repetition, incomprehension, cross-purpose dialogue and farcical preparation like spraying his throat before he actually answers it. Having nothing to do Vladmir and Estragon play games like children. They play a game of being Pozzo and Lucky, they play at being very polite to each other, at making it up, and they stagger about on one leg and try to look like trees. There is a great deal of vaudeville business and crudely physical humour in the play. The bowler hats that all four characters wear belong to the tradition of Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy. Vladmir has comic disability that makes him rush off to pee in the wings, Estragon loses his trousers, and Lucky drops and picks up his luggage elaborately. Another important trick which gives the play an air of improvisation is the way Beckett uses interruption. There is an enormous number of events in the play, but almost everything in the play gets interrupted. Lucky's big speech, Estragon's story about the Englishman in the brothel, and Vladmir interrupting his own song about dogs digging a dog's tomb.

The Balinese spectacle contains little dialogue in an archaic tongue that apparently neither the performers, nor the audience nor even the priests understood. It thus becomes like an incantation, independent of speech, and expressive of emotional states. These aspects of the Balinese performance have an influential concept in the Avant-Garde theatre. Like the Balinese dance drama it intends to strip away the constraints of civilization by evoking in the audience the images of violence and cruelty. Beckett in *Waiting for Godot* attempts to reproduce the effects of ritual theatre. In the play Lucky's thinking is of schizophranic nature. Lucky represents the spiritual sides of man and has taught Pozzo all the higher values of life: "Beauty, grace, and truth."[12] There is a thin threat of sense that seems to underlie in Lucky's famous demonstration of thinking:

> Given the existence... of a personal God... outside time without

> extension who from the heights of divine apathis divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown... and suffers... with those who for reasons unknown are plunged in torment...[13]

Lucky's long schizophranic utterances are symbolic of the idea that thousands of years of knowledge, instead of making us modest, makes us forget the feebleness of our resources when it comes to unraveling of the mysteries of the universe. The play's brisk rhythm depends not only on the frequent interruptions, but also on shortness of the speeches. The average length of the speeches in *Waiting for Godot* must be less than in any other play that has ever been written. Both the Balinese dance drama and the Avant-Garde induce mystical hallucination, spiritual transcendence, and hence may be said to be cathartic in their effect.

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[5]Ibid., pp. 53-54.
[6]Ibid., p. 54.
[7]Ibid., p. 60.
[8]Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (London, 1975), p. 41.
[9]*The Theatre and Its Double*, p. 53.
[10]Ibid., p. 54.
[11]Ibid.
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NARAIN PRASAD SHUKLA

MYSTERY OF INDIVIDUALITY IN *WOMEN IN LOVE*

Although Lawrence was thoroughly English in spirit and in his view of the novel, he was not the writer of the traditional English fiction. He was to write a new type of novel which would treat life as a mystery and was not to be comprehended in terms of reason or logic. To express this mystery in fiction Lawrence had to dispense with character in the traditional sense. As he wrote to Edward Garnett while he was engrossed in *The Rainbow:* "I have a different attitude to my characters.... I don't care what the woman feels... That presumes an ego to feel with. I only care for what the woman is..."[1] To correspond with such a character Lawrence visualized a new universe in which the individual could operate. Thus when F.R.Leavis placed D.H. Lawrence in the firm ground of traditional English fiction[2], he missed the main point of his novels. For Lawrence himself has been at pains to spade that ground out from under himself.

Unlike the victorian pessimists, who believed that the universe has no need whatever for man, Lawrence considered universe vital for individual salvation. Like his friend Huxley, Lawrence pursues a course essentially radical; he aims at overturning all the versions of settled cosmic order which he had inherited. Lawrence denies that man's environment is the pastoral heaven Wordsworth described. Nor is it the traditional battleground of inevitable human suffering which Conrad and Hardy represented. In fact, Lawrence attempts to alter the meaning of man as he alters the meaning of man's world. He twice shifts the ground of tradition; first, by exploring the definition of man's inner life to correspond with a malevolent universe; second, by praising the nature of universe precisely because it is traditional and massively alien. Through Rupert Birkin, he proclaims the alien nature of the universe to be a sign of hope:

> It was very consoling to Birkin to think this. If humanity ran into a cul-de-sac, and expanded itself, the timeless creative mystery would bring forth some other being, finer, more wonderful, some new some more lovely race, to carry on the embodiment of creation. The game was never up. The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible, for ever.[3]

Hence the very items of Hardy's and Conrad's distress: cosmic indifference to humanity is the focus of Birkin's praise.

Here the vision of Victorian novelists has been inverted. Lawrence takes over their meanings, but turns them smartly inside out. Man cannot sustain the weight of the universe, but his efforts to do so are not lost. They render him noble, tragic, the moral centre of an otherwise mindless mystery. Lawrence, however, refutes man's claim to moral superiority; he laughs at human posturing in the tragic mode. He faces Hardy's and Conrad's question and answers it with a significant counter-claim. How can the burden of reality be endured? It can be, easily and naturally, Lawrence proposes, because of the astounding power of human individuality. One life can balance out all the rest of the world.

This is an extraordinary assertion, totally, violently radical. It is nonetheless the claim that Lawrence makes reportedly in *Women in Love,* with insistent dedication through *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious; Fantasia of the Unconscious*. There is nothing beyond the individual life, Lawrence maintains, which is of such magnitude that a man's unelaborated selfhood cannot answer to it. In fact, all versions of matter or energy, all processes of creation of growth are secondary to individuality, which is primary in the universe. Thus, we meet in the *Fantasia of the Unconscious* the astounding doctrine that men existed before the rest of the universe, a claim which should back not only the scientific but also the mythic mind:

> There is only one clue to the universe. And that is the individual soul within the individual being. That outer universe of suns and moons and atoms is a secondary affair[4].

What does Lawrence see in solitary selfhood that urges so grand a claim? We must search for an answer in his language. Lawrence has an extensive range of metaphor to describe what he means by "individuality". Individuality is equivalent to a man's "soul"[5]. Although individuality is not accessible to speech because it unfolds itself as an experience, its power can be detected externally by others. Ursula's individual nature, for example, often described as though it were a fiery core of life, can be seen by Birkin as an intense "golden light."[6]

Lawrence's individuality is decidedly irrational. He angrily

discounts intellect as the basis of selfhood. Intellect, he insists,functions mechanically. Furthermore, ideas, because they are endlessly transferable among minds, are generic and, therefore, anti-individual. Of course, Lawrence rejects mind; he would have to do so by force of consequence, if not by temperamental bend, since rationalism leads directly to either a tragic or an absurdist definition of man. All the modern applications of reason allow twentieth century man two choices. He may choose to see his being as defined by moral meanings and mortal fortitude. Alternatively, he can accept his existence in the scientific universe as a disaster, a meaningless dilemna in a meaningless cosmos: since rationalism has produced so many disconnected understandings, no final view is possible. Lawrence heartily disliked both prospects and rejected both. Furthermore, he refused to centre man's nature on the processes of mind which had narrowed man's possibilities down to a choice between them.

For like reasons, Lawrence did not locate the source of individuality within man's spiritual capacities. The selflessness demanded by Christianity was itself an idea, a generic abstraction intended to eradicate distinctions among individuals. Lawrence felt that religiosity had become a mechanical mode; that is to say, it had become a systematization of feeling behaviour, which valued uniformity over singularity, repetition over spontaneity.

Similarly, for all his hymning of the flesh, Lawrence did not place final trust in man's physical nature. The body could be too easily captured by external forces; it too could become a machine, a mere tool for the application of the abstract, generic principles. It is well to remember that Gerald Crich, the fatalist lost soul in *Women in Love*, remains physically sound throughout his life, while the novel's Lawrentian truth-bearer, Rupert Birkin, suffers physical weakness, illness, repeated waverings of life on the verge of death. The body is not the final source of individuality.

Lawrence did not settle upon any of the traditional sources of human power. He delved below mind, spirit, body to another level of experience and centred his notion of human uniqueness in sensibility. By stripping spirit,body, reason from the individual, Lawrence pared below demonstrable qualities to subjective capacities and arrived at the abilities to intuit, to sense, to give off emotional and passive force to receive and reflect perception. The sum of these powers, sensibility, functions without regard to words

or explicit action; is autonomous and self-defining. Here Lawrence found the bedrock of individuality, here the source of vast meanings and divine potential.

To agree with Lawrence's understanding of individuality one must believe, as he does, that every human being is an absolute perfect in himself. Unlike selfhood conceived as the product of mind or spirit or body, which requires an outward turning of experience and craves completion in the outer world, Lawrence's stark and "unknown being" rejects connection as a determining condition. Isolation is the first principle of Lawrence's individuality, isolation received joyfully without fantastic submission or regret. Lawrence begins with the submission that each man is complete in himself. All connections with attachment to the world outside the self are, in turn, the results of the secondary processes, secondary in time as well as value. While body, spirit and reason look to the world beyond the individual, sensibility stands alone.

Therefore, Lawrence demands emphatically in *Women in Love* that men and women revolve back into themselves if they wish to become that which they naturally are. Likewise, Lawrence delivers to Bertrand Russell the astounding imperative,

> Do stop working and writing altogether and become a creature instead of a mechanical instrument. Do clear out of the whole social ship. Do for your pride's sake become a mere nothing, a mole, a creature that feels its way and doesn't think[7].

Lawrence fiercely denies the priority of the outer world and he tends to strip his characters of the connection with it. We can plainly see Lawrence's effort to enforce solipsism in his treatment of Birkin and Ursula in *Women in Love.* Throughout the chapter called "A Chair" Lawrence builds a contrast between reality at large and that reality of individual existence which Birkin and Ursula seek to rediscover. In the following conversation we can detect pure delight as the characters exercise their power to divest themselves of communal identity:

> "I don't want to inherit the earth", she said, "I don't want to inherit anything".
>
> He closed his hand over hers.
>
> "Neither do I. I want to be disinherited".[8]

Birkin and Ursula not only want to sever present roots, they intend to deny the very fact of rootedness.

In his devaluation of external and collective knowledge Lawrence sets himself against the majority of his contemporaries. Except for Mrs. Woolf and early Huxley, the creative minds of the early twentieth century acted to save collective truths. Eliot, Joyce, Yeats and Pound all assumed that man has no life apart from largely generalized forces. Even the inventions of Marcel Proust implied that a man's life must be referred outward for meaning toward his personal, if not his collective past. Lawrence would, however, deny such a power to any abstract external conception. Lawrence actively negates the reality of any externally extant abstract or collective orders of understanding. These remain human products, however, Lawrence refuses to admit that collectivities of truth, or tradition, or social form in their turn invent individuals. Language does not create a man; history does not determine his value; tradition does not originate the truths he must live by. Selfhood alone is the source of all creation. The outer world must not be permitted to invade inner existence; similarly, sensibility must turn away from itself, since it can cause the world's collapse from within.

In the course of the novel, sexuality serves as Gerald's means of salvation. Once again, instead of sinking downwards within his individuality, Gerald searches the world outside himself. His efforts are directed outward and through an external medium, in this sense, Gudrun Brangwen. Her body is to be the structure that will hedge and finally secure his inner world. Again, Gerald is impelled by the fear of the unreality and unworthiness of his own inwardness and again his outward striving works only to reduce his ability to survive.

Although careful discrimination is required here since throughout his life Lawrence preached sexuality as a path to self-renewal. Lawrence himself makes the necessary discrimination. He divorces the experience of sexuality from deliberate use of such experience. Sexual behaviour provoked by mind and or will, or desperation is obscene. Salvation is possible only when men and women live in passive accord with their own sensibility from which flow all natural and spontaneous impulses. Only when inner reality has clear priority over any form of action can the self dissolve the terrible power realized in coition. "Use" of sexuality is a misuse of that power, a sacrilege that promotes destruction.

Lawrence, the exponent of what Mrs. Woolf called "a mystical theory of sex",[9] parallels Mrs. Woolf in warning against experience that forces one individual to merge with another. Lawrence maintains that the sexual act, no doubt, can cast men and women on to a higher plane of experience but it can endanger both partners unless each begins assured of his or her own individuality. "Why try to absorb, or melt, or merge?" Birkin asks concludingly that "one must abandon oneself utterly to the moments, but not to any other being"[10].

Gerald Crich, however, loses his individuality to Gudrun. The security he seeks from Gudrun is one that is actually available to an infant in his mother's arms. His desire is infantile, but not innocently so. It is aggressively sinister and dangerously mad. "If there weren't you in the world", Gerald tells Gudrun, "then I shouldn't be in the world either"[11]. Within Lawrence's cosmos, such a statement is no mere instance of lover's hyperbole; it is revelatory of self-repudiation and destructive intent. Gerald has declared that his own inner states do not adequately support an individual existence. In effect, he confesses to Gudrun that at the core there is no Gerald. Moreover, his statements hint at a rapacious need to extract from another the verification he denies himself. Lawrence, of course, has indicated that sanity requires a conclusion exactly the opposite of Gerald's, namely, that the self is primary.

Here it is important to distinguish between Gerald's desperate re-enactment of infancy and solipsism that Lawrence promotes through Rupert Birkin; for Birkin's celebrations of primary awareness recommend a state of mind that is also extremely infantile. Nonetheless, Lawrence intends that Gerald and Birkin represent opposed attitudes, and that the opposition between them define his own subtle, culturally innovative concept of love. Accordingly, his use of infancy as a value is complex. His reduplicatory hyperbolic language, however, often clouds intended distinctions and suggests misleadingly that Lawrence adopts a position at the tag-end of an all-too-familiar Romantic tradition, which sees early childhood as a state of lost goodness and adulthood as a condition of permanent exile. Lawrence's vocabulary unfortunately repeats Romantic platitudes, and his rhetoric undoubtedly repeats itself.

Even so, Lawrence twice distinguishes his conception of infancy from traditional Romantic views. First, through his characterisation of Gerald Crich, he exposes a dark side of infancy

ignored by the Romantics. The empty blackness of Gerald's inner world shows Lawrence's understanding that along with innocence, greed, helplessness and desperate rage also define infantile awareness. Second, although he has Birkin search for a lost sense of completeness and centrality, Lawrence does not mistake regression for regeneration. He knows that infants necessarily enjoy their experience of primacy at the expense of others. In *Women in Love* Birkin fears those who, in adulthood, reassert infantile claims: their "love", he warns Ursula, reestablishes "a process of subservience"[12].

Despite the familiarity of his rhetoric, Lawrence's goal is not innocence, in Wordsworth's terms, or even in Blake's, since he sees all too clearly that impotence, tyranny and greed are implicit in the infant's defenceless condition. Instead, Lawrence has in mind a more profoundly difficult psychological task. He wants adults to retain the infant's sense of himself as good, full and complete, and yet at the same time to reject the dependence that produced the gratification of infancy. Whereas Wordsworth proposes, "The child is father of the Man", Lawrence urges adults to forfeit reliance on others while simultaneously retaining their infantile conviction that they are primary forces in a second world.

In Lawrence's view individuality is an evolutionary origin rather than a divine state and it contains the seeds of both degenerative and generative impulses. Therefore, a recapitulation of early childhood is doubly dangerous: first, it is as likely to replay destructive wishes as it is to engage a sense of fulfilment; second, because regression revokes development. Those, like Gerald Crich, who revert to infancy reject not only their current lives but a principle underlying life itself. On the other hand, those who no longer trust infantile experiences of safety, as Gudrun cannot, also violate the principle of development by alienating themselves from their own emotional origins. A denial of infantile awareness or a regression to infancy equally threatens Love.

As a defender of individuality, Lawrence seeks to preserve the creative impulses from destructive tendencies, whether psychic or cultural. Thus, he denounces submission to abstract ideals. Any practice that mistakes performance for self-acceptance diminishes individuality and thus serves death. Nonetheless, in itself, Lawrence's list of corrupting practices does not differ significantly from what traditional Romantic assumptions would suggest: the cultural agents

of Death deny nature and exalt machinery. Lawrence departs from the romantic tradition elsewhere, in his answer to the question, why do men find destruction attractive? Here Lawrence's contribution is striking and unusual. Unlike the romantics, he sees both the desire for life and the desire for death as originating in infancy which provides the bedrock for individuality. Furthermore, Lawrence suggests that destructive impulses often masquerade as their opposites within the adult mind; a seeming desire for life may conceal a wish for death.

Certainly Gerald and Gudrun experience as passion what is actually both a struggle to the death and, simultaneously, a striving for death. Gerald's infantile love devours Gudrun at the same time that it diffuses his identity.And Gudrun, no iess fearful than he of inwardness, loves Gerald in the same way. She experiences an ecstatic release under Gerald's fatal influence. Later when the attraction has reversed its field, her submission becomes homicidal intent; then her delight gives way to the following vision of her life as a machine-driven futility:

> The thought of the mechanical succession of day following day; day following day, ad infinitum. was one of the things that made her heart palpitate with a real approach of madness. The terrible bondage of this tick-tack of time, this twitching of the hands of the clock, this eternal repetition of hours and days ... oh God, it was too awful to contemplate. And there was no escape from it, no escape[13].

Just as a maddened understanding of his own inner disintegration succeeds Gerald's joyous experiment with technological destruction, so Gudrun's delight in her own annihilation now confirms itself in terror.

Within Lawrence's scheme of things inner experience determines individuality. If, as he has radically assumed, there is no time without "living experience", no sun or moon without individual lives, then a desire for death must coincide within a wish to destroy all that is. "Where the individual begins life begins. The two are inseparable, life and individuality"[14]. Inseparable, that is, in reality, but not so in the mind. Violence begins with a mental intervention, with the idea as - Lawrence says of Hermione Roddice - that "the ... inner life was a trick, not a reality"[15] . The feeling that the inner life

is valueless blocks the violent from greater knowledge; an escape from sensibility exiles them from innate, natural power for ever.

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[3]D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love* (New York: Viking, 1920), p. 470.

[4]D.H. Lawrence, *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious: Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1921; 1922; rpt. New York: Viking, 1960), p. 181.

[5]Ibid, p. 15.

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[8]D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 354.

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[10]D.H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, p. 301.

[11]Ibid., p. 336.

[12]Ibid., p. 144.

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MINA SURJIT SINGH

DIGGING FOR EXPOSURE : SEAMUS HEANEY

> The way we are living,
> timorous or bold,
> will have been our life.
> (FW, p. 31)

The first to establish himself of the Northern Irish poets and still the best known, Seamus Heaney has moved in from the edge to occupy the central position in British verse that was once accorded to Ted Hughes. Although his earlier poetry has taken something from both the 1950s rationalism of Larkin, Davie, Roethke, Nemerov on the one hand and the 1960s extremism of Hughes, Plath, Lowell and Berryman on the other, Heaney has moved into a new domain in which he has evolved his own metaphor for the condition of Ireland. Far from being "styiistically conservative and thematically unsurprising" [Brown: 172] or 'Victorian', as Alvarez defined it, his poetry is "often layered with obscure allusions;... that record the tremors and turmoils of its age" [Morrison: 13]. His own troubles are as much material for poetic concerns as are the Irish Troubles. A proper response to his poetry which is one of dispossession as well as of the reclamation of an authentically Irish landscape, therefore, requires a reference to his complex cultural identity.

Born in County Derry, a town of strong nationalist sentiment, in a family of Catholic farmers Heaney belongs to a British minority community that has Republican loyalties. He was conscious from the very beginning of such divisions which were inscribed not only in the local topography but also in his early 'Irish' and 'English' education. His later affiliations became even more complex on account of the diverse literary influences of Yeats and Joyce, Wordsworth and Hopkins and his awareness of a specifically Ulster literature that includes Patrick Kavanagh, Derek Mahon and Michael Longley. Born and reared Northern Irish, published first in London and a migrant to the Republic, his cultural identity is fraught with ambiguities and ambivalences. This is further complicated by his deep sense of betrayal of a strong, silent ancestry from which he has turned away to become a writer.

His first volume *Death of Naturalist* [1966] open with one of his most anthologised poems "Digging" (*DN*, p. 13-14) which initiates the notion of excavation (a notion that was to be always present in one form or the other) for exposure:

> Between my finger and my thumb
> The squat pen rests; snug as a gun.
> ...
> I'll dig with it.

The distancing from a father who 'could handle a spade/Just like his old man' accounts for the sense of shame that the poet feels at departing from his ancestral lineage. He has 'no spade to follow men like them' so he will turn his pen into a powerful, voluble implement that will perform some of the "same functions of passing on tradition, extracting 'new' produce (poems not potatoes) out of old furrows and enjoying an intimacy with the earth "[Morrison 27]. His poetry, then, will be a form of agriculture.

Another poem "Follower" (*DN* pp.25) records this same tension between desire and inability to meet his ancestry on common ground:

> I wanted to grow up and plough
> To close one eye, stiffen my arm.
> All I ever did was follow
> In his broad shadow round the farm.
>
> I was a nuisance, tripping and falling
> Yapping always. But today
> It is my father who keeps stumbling
> Behind me, and will not go away.

The poems of his first volume which recall Roethke's 'Greenhouse' poems, are not merely descriptive poems of "fidelity to his rural experience" [Morrison:17] or recapitualtive of "the soil-reek of Ireland, the colourful violence of his childhood on a farm in Derry" [Cox:638], but more remarkable in their implications than any mere act of observation and record could be. Most of the tension of these early poems derives from an anxiety to keep faith with family and tribe without wholly acceding to it, as well as from a concern with the

extent to which such fidelity is possible. Divide between his roots and his reading, between "words of the heart and hearth - language and the learned, public, socially acceptable language of school and salon "[Heaneya :397-9], Heany feels compelled to evolve a strategy that will be faithful to both community and calling. The community from which he came and to which he wished to express solidarity was one on which the pressures of silence weighed heavily. Heaney describes the Northern Irish Catholics as different from the witty, eloquent, untrammelled 'typical Irish'. His people are "quiet, watchful, oblique, shy "[Heaney:6] and look upon taciturnity as a mark of proficiency. Renowned like all rural communities for reticence and reserve his people had other obvious reasons for clamming up. "Whatever you say, say nothing" was a wisdom he had learnt from his mother. This was to become the title of a sequence of poems in a later volume entitled *North* [1975], in which he ascribes this silence to political and religious factors. In "What Ever You Say, say Nothing" (*N*, pp.57-60), mentioning the 'Irish thing' Heaney shows how in 'blasted street and home' where Catholics are always suspected of harbouring IRA activists, 'Smoke-signals are loud-mouthed compared with us'. His 'cabin'd and confined' people 'Besieged within the besiege, whispering morse' lived in a constant "Ministry of Fear":

> Those hobnailed boots from beyond the mountain
> Were walking, by God, all over the fine Lawns of elocution.
> Have our accents Changed? 'Catholics, in general don't speak
> As well as students from the protestant schools.'
> ....
> Ulster was British, but with no rights on
> The English lyric : all around us, though
> We hadn't named it, the ministry of fear.
>
> (*N*, pp. 63-65)

Death of a Naturalist closes with Heaney declaring in "Personal Helicon" (p.57) that henceforth the self-conscious business of writing poetry of fidelity is going to be a major theme. Having overcome his initial unease at abandoning the 'slane' for pen he intends:

> Now, to pry into roots, to finger slime,
> To stare big-eyed Narcissus, into some spring

Is beneath all adult dignity. I rhyme
To see myself, to set the darkness echoing.

The poem significantly is addressed to Michael Longley who along with Patrick Kavanagh and Derek Mahon helped Heaney become less self-conscious about drawing on his rural upbringing, encouraging him to think that Northern Irish parochialism might attain a kind of universality.

In *Wintering out* [1972], Heaney broods less on the private and is more preoccupied with the land and language that addresses itself to a territorial imperative. Understanding the power of Irish words and place-names which stand as prominent divisive demarcations, he attempts to explore through "the deeper structures of present hostilities, the way in which the divisions of the Protestant and Catholic communities are embedded in language and topography" [Morrison:39]. For Heaney words "seem to have more nervous energy when they are touching territory that I know, that I live with " [Brown:173]. Place-names form not only a "mythological etymology" as Heaney claims in *Preoccupations* [1980] but a more political etymology which uncovers a history of linguistic and territorial dispossession. In a poem as much expressive of personal as of racial quilt, Heaney writes :

Our guttural muse
was bullied long ago
...
while custom, that 'most
sovereign mistress',
beds us down into
the British isles.

We are proud
of our Elizabethan English:
'Varsity', for example,
is grass-root stuff with us;

We 'deem' or we 'allow'
when we suppose
and some cherished archaisms
are correct Shakespearean.

...
Shuttling obstinately
between bawn and mossland.
(*WO*, pp. 31.32)

Word-pronunciations are like explosions that throw open a social and topographical treasure-trove. "Fodder", "Toome", "Anahorish", "Broagh" and several other poems in this volume underscore the evocative power of land-language. The epigraph to "The Wool Trade" (*WO*, p.37) taken from Joyce states:

How different are the words "home",
"Christ", "ale", "master", on his lips
and mine.'

In yet another poem from the same volume, "Land" (*WO* p. 21) Heaney says:

I opened my right-of-way
through old bottoms and sowed-out ground
and gathered stones off the ploughing
to rise a small cairn.

These place-name poems helped resolve the divided loyalties of his early work. They convinced him that "one could be faithful to the nature of the English language... and at the same time, be faithful to one's own non-English origin, for me that is Country Derry" [Heaney C:65]

Heaney has also written a series of what have come to be termed as "Bog Poems", in which he affects a Dantesque descent into the Jungian peat-bog of Irish history, an experience which has affinities with the descent into 'The Pit ' in Roethke's "The Lost Son" [Roethke: 1961] sequence. These fen-fired, fen-sucked poems of the fen-land are described in "The Digging Skeletons" as:

Mysterious candid studies
of red slob land around bones.
...: flayed men and skeletons

...
Death's lifers, hauled from the narrow cell
And stripped of night-shirt shrouds, to tell:
'This is the reward of faith
In rest eternal....

...; our one repose
when the bleeding instep finds its spade.'
(*N*, pp.25-6)

In feeling off the layers of this history mummified by nature, Heaney feels like a guilty adult trying to shoulder:

... a kind of manhood
stepping in to lift the coffins
of dead relations.
(*N* p. 15)

These poems reflect his growing fascination for the peat-bog. With its preservative properties this mossland is seen as not only a kind of repository of past cultures and civilizations, but also as a symbol of beauty and atrocity. The natural world is presented here as a powerful organic fertility which combines erotic and religious impulses. In determining the nature of this organic structure Terence Brown Says:

> The bog is the primary reality, receiving, preserving so that history is a laying down of strata in a developing landscape whose form was determined in prehistory. The social landscape is enriched or complicated by the strata, as they are laid down by invasion and by linguistic and racial complications, but the fundamental structure remains the same. [Brown:176]

In an interview with O'Mohony Heaney has himself spoken of this natural-historical-religio-sexual complex which is his obsession:

> The bogs in Northern Europe in the first and second centuries A.D. contained the shrines of the god-or the goddesses of the time, and in order that the vegetation and community would live again after the winter human sacrifices were made, people were droned in the bogs and they have found these people. [Brown:176]

Heaney learnt of these from P.V. Glob's *The Bog People* [1969] which tells of the discovery, in Dabish bogs, of almost perfectly preserved bodies of victims of Iron Age sacrificial rites and tribal justice. By resurrecting these people in a sequence of 'Bog People' poems he explores parallels, between these victims of an ancient northern fertility cult and the victims of political violence and murder in Ulster, which bring out his strong sense of the tribal. Heaney consciously begins to express his feelings of identification with the victims and their shame, and with the agents of their indignity. Meant to evoke a deep sense of shame and horror at such barbarities, these poems there are subtly suggestive of non-violent means of social reconstruction. "Punishment" (*N*, p. 37-38) draws an analogy between a girl shaved, stripped and hanged for adultry and her body thrown into the bog and the 'betraying-sisters' of present-day Ulster, Catholic girls who have received similar treatment at the hands of the IRA for 'informing' or going out with British soldiers.

> I can feel the tug of the halter at the nape of her neck,
> the wind on her naked front.
>
> .... I who have stood dumb
>
> ...
> Yet understand the exact and tribal, intimate revenge.

The 'peat-brown head' of "The Tollund Man" (*WO*, p. 47-48) whose perfectly preserved body 'Reposes at Aarhus' is meant to be a reminder of a more recent outrage committed by the B- specials in the 1920s:

> Of four young brothers, trailed For miles
> along the lines.

In the same manner "the Grauballe Man" (*N*, p. 35-36) 'poured in tar' with his 'slashed throat' could belong to either the past or present. The appeal then is against this senselessness and insanity. Reading *The Divine Comedy* Heaney said, "is to go through a refining element, to be steadied and remained of the possible dimensions of life". [Morrison:82] Such poems emerge not from the impersonal unconscious but from the pain and complexity of experience which the poet has

accepted as his proper territory. These archaeological finds are not symbols of private instinctual probings but are attempts to relate a blood-stained, skull-capped, violent past to an equally violent present. These poems then become the chronological precursors of poems which deal more explicity with the 'Troubles' of Ulster and lay a new emphasis on moral responsibility.

"Exposure" [*N*, pp. 72-3], the last poem of *North* which Heaney describes as "the book that all books were leading to, thus underscores the purpose of his 'responsible *tristia*':

> For what? For the ear? For the People? For what is said behind-backs?
>
> ...
>
> I am neither internee nor informer; An inner emigre, grown long-haired And thoughtful; a wood-kerne
> Escaped from the massacre, Taking protective colouring From bole and bark, feeling
> Every wind that blows;

Heaney's poetry, then, is an exploration of myth with a definite political purpose. Ireland is his theme and his rich-textured poetic excavations are cultural validations aimed at repossession and reclamation. It pleads for forgiveness not revenge. Although Heaney does question the extent to which poetry, however committed, can influence the course of history, the crisis of a beleaguered Ulster did change his notion of what poetry should be doing:

> I think a poet cannot influence events in the North because it is the men of action that are influencing every body and everything, but I do believe that poetry is its own special action and ... has its own efficacy gradually, [Heaney d:5]

suggesting thereby that poetry is an effective medium for altering the structures of feeling. That such poetry could be responsible for the birth of nations governed by emancipating reason is the merit for which the Swedish Academy has bestowed on him the highest honour a poet could strive for.

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Iqbal Hasan

Tennessee Williams : A Study in Imagery

A student in Philadelphia once asked Tennessee Williams to explain the dream-like images of *Camino Real*. While answering this question, he remarked that 'we all have in our conscious and unconscious minds a great vocabulary of images as are our dreams' and declared that he hated the writing 'that is a parade of images for the sake of images'.[1] This remark of the dramatist makes it abundantly clear that he has not used images in his plays just to beautify his expression but, on the contrary, they serve deeper dramatic purposes and the meanings of his plays are not likely to be fully comprehended without giving thought to the recurrent imagery.

Though Williams failed to become an eminent American poet, he employed poetic images in his plays to suggest his ideas instead of stating them directly. The images are integrated with the dramatic texture of the story. Sometimes it appears that the pictorial words give an altogether new direction of meaning to an otherwise ordinary story of man's violent passions and his ultimate failure to get happiness. They also serve a still more significant dramatic purpose by showing us a path that may ultimately lead the beast-like man to arrive at some meaning of life after his fruitless struggle of existence.

Broadly speaking, these images may be categorised into five different groups. First, the images Williams has most frequently used are those which are associated with colour and may, therefore, be called the colour imagery. The second type of images are those that remind us of certain animals such as the dog, tiger, wolf, elephant, monkey, fox, cat, the 'nine-tailed catawampus' and the iguana. Some of these animals known for their beastliness suggest man's violence and his animal-like behaviour in contemporary world. All such references to the animal world may be termed as the animal imagery. Thirdly, the bird-images have been frequently used for different dramatic purposes. Williams seems to be so much fond of this image that he has repeatedly used it in his plays, poems and the only novel, *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone*. Nature imagery is the fourth category in which are included references to the beautiful flowers of different colours, the rocks, the mountains, the sky and the trees. Finally, the images generally associated with disease and medicine have been employed to suggest the physical ailments caused by serious spiritual crises.

Williams seems to be fond of blue and white colours. In the

Battle of Angles and in *A Street-Car Named Desire* the playwright repeatedly refers to these two colours. In the *Battle of Angles* we frequently come across expressions such as the 'blue', 'ectasy blue', 'white column', 'white-shirted bulge of belly', 'silver and white wedding slippers', 'the little white doves of the Lord', 'plain white pumps'. 'white evening gown', and the 'white dress'. In the plays, the white colour image is dramatically significant as it suggests the absence of a certain moral quality in the central character of the story. Cassandra Whiteside is introduced to the audience as 'a girl of the oldest and richest Delta family who has been 'going-out' for ten years and is still unmarried, which is enough in itself to destroy a girl's reputation. It is not only strange but poignantly ironical that such a girl has a particular fondness for white colour. Williams suggests that Sandra's excessive love for this colour which symbolizes purity and chastity is actually the outter manifestation of her painful realization that she is devoid of these moral qualities. By making repeated references to the white colour, she expresses her own moral dilemma. She told Myra that she could not wear the shoes Eva refused to pay for but expressed her desire to see a pair of plain white pumps and asked Balanche whether the white doves of the Lord were not beautiful. Throwing a side long glance at Val, she asked her if she supposed that she (Sandra) would get like that if she remained a virgin.[2] How poignantly is this white colour image contrasted with Sandra's 'destroyed reputation' that has already been described earlier? Her tragic predicament becomes all the more painful when she is compared with Vee Talbot who ultimately succeeds to see the picture of Jesus. Vee's vision is quite significant for the proper understanding of the play.

While talking to Beulah and Dolly, she described the vision she saw at the time of painting the picture of Christ. Dolly reminded her that once she said that she would never paint the Lord until she had actually seen Him face to face. She told her that she had this vision while she was on the way to the church. She had been on a fast since Ash Wednesday to clear her sight when she saw what she herself describes thus:

> Veils seemed to drop off my eyes. Light _____ light! I never have seen such brilliance. Like needles it was in my eyes; they actually ached when I stopped out in it. (*Battle of Angels*, III)

This graphic account of the vision adds a new direction of meaning to the life of Vee Talbot while Cassandra Whiteside of the *Battle of Angles* is unable to experience this kind of happiness as her very life is completely devoid of spiritual values. This inner bliss radiates as the only ray of hope in the dark and gloomy world of the drama. This seems to have become Williams' article of faith. The repeated use and the artistic developments of the white colour image through the play may be conveniently associated with the values of life usually termed as 'spiritual'.

Balanche in *A Street-Car Named Desire* has some kinship with Whiteside of the *Battle of Angels*. Her first appearance on the stage is preceded by the following description:

She is daintily dressed in a white suit with a fluffy bodice, necklace and errings pearl, white gloves and hat, looking as if she were arriving at a summer tea or a cocktail party in the garden district.

(*A Street-Car Named Desire* Sc. 1)

The recurrent use of the white colour makes the audience unconsciously associate the virtues symbolized by this colour with the character of Balanche itself. When this impression of her character is shattered, the audience's conception of virtue received a severe jolt. The frequent use of the expressions like 'snow white', 'white shirt' and Blanche's talk about her being born under the sign of Virgo serve deeper dramatic purpose by suggesting the lady's immortal longing for the virtues she does not embody in her character. It is, however, quite interesting to note that in the plays of Williams the white colour image is usually associated with those *dramatic personae* who are completely devoid of the quality it symbolizes.

Blanche's suppressed desire for virtuous life is poignantly contrasted with Stanley's beastliness by the repeated references to this colour. Their attempts to get happiness prove futile and Blanche becomes insane. This is a sufficient evidence to conclude that the means she adopted to discover the lost meaning of human existence were not fair. The repeated references to the white colour seem to make the audience rather painfully realise that since she is devoid of piety and chastity her paths could not have led her anywhere else except madness.

Williams' employment of the colour imagery enhances and further deepens the desired dramatic effect initially suggested by the elaborate stage directions. In one of the scenes of *A Street-Car...* the dramatist uses expressions like 'green and white stripes' and the 'scarlet stain robe'. In the context of the story the references to the green, white, scarlet and blue colours seem to suggest Blanche's immoral sexual behaviour, her soul's desire to rise to spirituality and the painful realisation of the complete negation of the values suggested by the white colour. Blanche makes a vigorous attempt to redeem herself. It is with the desire to forget the past and to start a new life that she comes to stay with her sister but her fate wills otherwise. Her brother-in-law's beastliness proves to be a sufficient temptation for her as the consequence of which the meaning of her existence is lost in the heat of Stanley's passion. The only means of getting happiness known to Blanche is through love but the love that is merely based on the satisfaction of her physical desire ultimately fails to remove her loneliness. Consequently, she painfully realizes the futility of her endeavour towards the end of the play when she talks about the washed grapes and the chiming of the cathedral bells.[3] The same sound is heard again when she expresses her death-wish. These dramatic touches are the culmination of the idea frequently suggested by the white colour image.

For the woman of romantic disposition the world of contemporary reality is an impossibility and her imaginative vision of life is her only source of comfort. She says that she does not tell the truth but what ought to be true and repeatedly asks not to turn on the light which is suggestive of the fact that she cannot bear reality. Her fondness of the white colour and, at the same time, the absence of the quality in her moral make-up often suggested by it indicates Blanche's desire to live happily in the world of reality and her inability to do so. The realization of her failure dawns upon her painfully as the consequence of which the life of illusion became the only reality for her. She waits for the distant call that is never received. The acceptance of the world of illusion as the only known reality makes her insane.

Williams associates men with the animals, like the dog, the elephant, the tiger, the fox, the cat and the inguana. These images serve two dramatic purposes. First of all, the implied kinship of men with the animal unconsciously makes the audience think whether man's behaviour

is better than that of an animal. Secondly, man's violence, his beastliness and his excessive indulgence in satisfying the desires of his body are suggested by these images. In one of his plays, it has been described that someone peers awkwardly behind at the hem which dangles across the floor like a big heavy dog trying to catch its tail.[4] Human beings have often been described as a 'pack of haunds' and as 'a herd of elephants straining at a rope.' The attempts to withstand the tension and violence raging in the human nerves has been compared to the act of taming a tiger. The references to the animals manifest the dramatist's utter disgust with man who claim to be their best form but, on the contrary, instead of being better, is much like them. Williams suggests violence in contemporary American life through the images of the animal world.

Benjamin Nelson in his book on Tennessee Williams has competenly argued that the fox imagery in the plays symbolizes Lawrence's fox.[5] Williams, like the great British novelist, seems to believe that sex is a great force that needs awakening but, at the same time, he couples it with destruction. Though the references to the animals are discernible in all his plays, in *A Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *The Night of the Iguana* the animal imagery is aptly related to the motifs of the plays. In these two plays, the animal images are not merely stage decorative devices but become the part and parcel of the dramatic texture of the story. In *A Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* Margaret's dilemma and her longing for a child is suggested through the image that constitutes the title of the play. There debased man and the uncomfortable state of the girl's mind who prefers to be called Maggie, the cat. According to the instructions of Elia Ka zan, the play's director, the playwright had to recast the third act of the play. In the revised third act the dominant animal image has effectively served the dramatic purpose by creating the desired effect. Big Daddy visualizes human beings as God's creatures in their cages and refers to a female in the next cage 'permeating the atmosphere about her with a powerful and exciting odour of female fertility'.[6] This seems to be the culmination of the process that was initiated in the earlier part of the play. Margret's love of life and her intense desire to enjoy it in all the possible ways is further intensified with the arrival of Gooper and his wife. Maggie's desire to give birth to a child is increased when she comes to know of Gooper's 'five little no-neck monsters'. Big Daddy's large cotton plantation cannot be given to Brick because he has no child. Maggie

wants to conceive but, as her husband is a 'liquor problem', her desire is not fulfilled. Big Daddy is dying of cancer. Margaret is, therefore, in a hurry to give birth to a child so that she may be entitled to get property. This situation intensifies her zest for life expressed in her following speech:

> Born poor, raised poor, expect to die poor unless I manage to get us something out of what Big Daddy leaves when he dies of cancer. But Brick?..... Skipper is dead. I'm alive. Maggie, the cat is..... alive. I am alive. I am.....
>
> (*A Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, Act I).

In this brief speech Maggy identifies herself with the cat image. The dramatic justification of this image becomes so self-evident that the similarity between her intense desire for life and the common superstition about a cat having nine lives hardly need to be emphasized.

The cat image is further strengthened in the audience's mind by the following dialogues exchanged between Brick and the Big Daddy:

Big Daddy	:	That woman of yours has a better shape on her than Gooper's, but somehow or other they got the same look about them.
Brick	:	What sort of look is that, Big Daddy?
Big Daddy	:	I don't know how to describe it, but it's the same look.
Brick	:	They don't look peaceful, do they?
Big Daddy	:	No, they sure in hell dont.
Brick	:	They look nervous as cats?
Big Daddy	:	That's right, they look nervous as cats.
Brick	:	Nervous as a couple of cats on a hot tin roof?

(*A Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, Act II)

The cat image is consistently developed and artistically interwoven with the dramatic texture of the story. What Brick says about Gooper

also seems to be the manifestation of his own mental agony. The cat image, besides intensifying the painful situation of Maggie, enables the audience to visualize the plot of the drama.

The Night of the Iguana is another instance of the dramatist's employment of the animal image for the dramatic purpose. The iguana image, like that of the cat, has been steadily maintained throughout the play. When Hannah heard 'that constant, dry scuffling sound beneath the verandah', she asked Shannan what the cause of the sound was. Shannon told her that it was a kind of lizard which the Mexican kids had caught and tied up. Hannah's repeated request for cutting the rope loose was an apparent realization of the similarities between her mental agony and the iguana's state of capavity. The identification of the dramatic situations with the lizard's miserable plight becomes quite clear by the following dialogues exchanged between Shannan and Hannah:

Shannon : Can you look at me and tell me truthfully that this reptilian creature tied up down there, does mostly disturb you because of its parallel situation to your Granpa's dying-out effort to finish one last poem, Miss Jelkes?

Hannah : Yes, I...

(*The Night of the Iguana*, III)

The iguana image has been used to present the tragic dilemma of Hannah, Shannon and Nonno, the poet, who is living to complete the unfinished poem. Hannah suffers from a terrible sense of loneliness and intensely feels the necessity of building a bird-like nest but soon realizes that it cannot be done on a falling tree because in this decaying world, the idea of building a home for rest appears to be impossible. She is living with her old grandfather who is more than ninety years of age. Hanna's life is so closely tied up with the old poet that she cannot breathe in freedom unless, like the captivated iguana, she is set free. The poet cannot die in peace without completing the poem and Shannon is constantly being dragged like the iguana by Hannah and Maxine who cannot afford to miss this opportunity to remove her loneliness. When the giant lizard is set free, the poet

completes the poem and Shannon decides to run away with Maxine. Hannah's loneliness cannot be removed as for a lady of certain ideals there is hardly any possibility of a happy life. With the death of her grandfather, however, the days of her captivity are cut short. Since she is conscious of the diseased world, she cannot build a nest. Hence, to live a bird-like peaceful life is absolutely impossible for her. She stands out of all the characters as a lonely woman who is reconciled with the idea that happy life is not meant for her. That the dominant image is so closely related to the theme of the play sufficiently proves its importance. The images of the cat and iguana do not only intensify the tragic situations but also suggest the dramatist's vision of life.

While the animal images suggest man's beastly traits, the recurrent bird image symbolizes the delicate aspect of man. This image serves two dramatic purposes. For most of the men and women in Williams's plays this world is unbearably sad and the bird image points out their keen desire to seek an escape from the world of contemporary reality. Sometimes the references to the birds being set free to make them sing and fly are made during the moments of great spiritual crises. Lastly, but not the least, the bird image in the plays seems to be closely related to, what Francis Donahue calls, the theme of the 'destructiveness of time.'[7]

The Glass Menagerie, Sweet Bird of Youth, Suddenly Last Summer and *Orpheus Descending* are some of the plays in which the image of the bird has been repeatedly employed to achieve more than one dramatic purpose. *The Glass Menagerie* is an auto-biographical memory play which, more than any other play, deals with the softer and delicate aspect of human nature. The tender aspect of Laura's character has been suggested by the image of the glass and that of the bird. There are specific references to the bird in the play. Laura says that she went to the art museum and to the bird-houses at the zoo. Amanda also refers to the same image when she talks of the old spinsters as the 'bird-like women'. Tom also suggests the same image when he says that 'extra money would be needed to properly feather the nest and plume the bird'. The association of the bird-image with Laura's character suggests the delicacy and tenderness which is further strengthened by the repeated references to the glass image symbolizing the lonely woman's desire to build a peaceful nest.

In *Orpheus Descending,* Val speaks of a kind of bird without legs which

always stays on its wings in the sky. The lady identifies herself with such a bird. Williams exploits this image in the play to suggest man's desire to run away from the corrupt world but escape in the world of Williams's plays is an impossibility and salvation can be achieved only after suffering and atonement of the past sins. In the *Sweet Bird of Youth* references have been made to 'the soft, urgent cries of birds' and 'the sound of their wings.' In *The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone*, the bird image has been used in a still more beautiful manner :

> After a moment's reflection, Paolo nodded, barely visibly, and then he leaned all the way down with open lips; but already, before he had completed that gesture, her arms and her head had risen as if the moon on the water had turned to a bird that sprang skyward....
> (The Roman Spring of Mrs. Stone, p. 57)

The bird in the *Sweet Bird of Youth* stands for the youthfulness of man's spirit but the playwright is sad because it quickly passes away. The merciless passage of time had always haunted the imagination of Tennessee Williams. He is reported to have thought life as a process of burning oneself out and time is the fire that burns us. He always considers the spirit of man as a good adversary.[8] The playwright's own fear of time is best reflected through this image in some of his plays. In *Suddenly Last Summer* there are, however, two different uses of this image. On one occasion Williams writes:

> At the same instant a bird sings clearly and purely in the garden and the old lady seems to be almost young for a moment.
> (*Suddenly Last Summer*, Sc. I)

Here the bird image has been used for the youthfulness but the dominant image of the flesh-eating birds is an attempt to show the savage face of God whose image Sebastian Venable, the poet, wanted to see. Numerous references to the feeling of commotion and restlessness among the birds resting in the bushes, in fact, suggest the anxiety of the man who has failed to get the desired kind of happiness from the material advancement of human life.

The images of the hill, the mountain, the sea, the tree and the flower have been repeatedly used in the plays to suggest the beauty of Nature.

Though these images have been quite frequently used in almost all the plays, in *Camino Real* and in *The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore* the central images are those of the hills, the mountains and the seas while in the *Battle of Angels, Orpheus Descending* and in the *Summer and Smoke* the central image is that of the tree. In the plays like the *Glass Menagerie* and *The Rose Tatoo* the flower image has been used to suggest the tender and the delicate aspect of human nature and also to indicate man's passionate desire for love.

In the foreword of his play, *Camino Real*, Williams tells us that it was his desire to give his audience his own sense of something wild and unrestricted that ran like water in the mountains, or clouds changing shape in a gale, or the continually dissolving and transforming images of a dream.[9] In *Camino Real* and *The Summer and Smoke* the central image of the fountain is closely related to the dramatic texture of the story. Absolute emotional and spiritual exhaustion is suggested by this image but Williams hopes that the water will start running in the fountain. Kilroy ultimately succeeds because he is a man of golden heart whose sincerity cannot be bought by any amount of wealth. Towards the end of the play Quixote reports that the Violets in the mountains have broken the rocks. This is enough indication of the possibility of the spiritual regeneration even though the dramatist has the painful realization of contemporary life being as barren as a rock. In *The Milk Train...* the references to the mountain together with those of the animals, like the bitch and the dog, suggest the cruelty and indifference one comes across in the world of material considerations, Mrs. Goforth, as suggested by the name itself, wants to die in peace but her soul is like a train that cannot be stopped in the world anymore. She suffers from her own desire to discover or invent God. The repeated references to the wide sea and sky suggest the existence of something greater than the suffering man. Whenever these imagcs are used, the significance of man and woman struggling for their happiness appears to be belittled. In *The Milk Train...* the sky and the sea have been described 'to turn the same colour, dissolving into each other'. Towards the end of the play the sea is reported to have been heard under the mountain and the meaning of the sound is a complete mystery:

Blackie : The sea is saying the name of your next mobile.

Chris : Boom
Blackie : What does it mean?
Chris : It says "Boom" and that's what it means: no translation, no explanation, just "Boom".
(*The Milk Train Doesn't Stop Here Anymore*, Sc. VI)

This is a complete mystery. Sea in the *Suddenly Last Summer* vaguely stands for some kind of a mysterious force that can save 'the hatched sea-turtles' from being completely destroyed by the savage birds. The helpless and the unhappy man intensely feels the necessity of surrendering himself before someone who may save him from the cruelty of the world. We may call Him God or Nature which is the only source of solace and comfort in the world of harsh reality.

The image of the tree is identified with Myra in the *Battle of Angels* when she talks about a big tree in the back of her courtyard that never bore any fruit but once in spring she discovered the first little fig on it. The possibility of removing the barrenness of her life has never been greater than ever before after her meeting with Val. John's anatomy lecture in the *Summer And Smoke* is an attempt to visualize man in the form of a tree and to coalesce the images of the tree and the bird. John delivers his anatomy lecture before Alma, which is the Spanish for the soul:

> Hold still. Now listen here to the anatomy lecture. You see this chart? It's a picture of... tree... with three birds in it. This top bird is the brain. The brain is hungry, He is hungry for something called Truth. He doesn't get much, he's never satisfied with it, he keeps on shaking his cold and weak little wings and saying "cheep. Cheep"... This bird underneath is the belly. He's hungry, too, but he's the practical bird, just hungry for food.... And down here's the lowest bird... or may be, the highest, who knows?... Yes, take a look at him, too, he's hungry, too, hungry as both the others and twice as lonesome.... What's he hungry for ? Love
> (*Summer and Smoke*, Sc. VIII)

John is unable to realize the smoke-like existence of the soul because it is not indicated on the chart. He comes to understand that love is not

only a physical desire but it is required for the fulfilment of his soul's desire that he wants Alma. This realization dawns upon John when it was already very late. The young man is conscious of his soul's necessity suggested by the beautiful image of 'a water lily on a Chinese lagoon.'The images of the tree, the bird and the water lily are closely related to the central theme of the play.

The corrupt and unhealthy world is reflected through the images which are associated with the disease and medicine. The references to the diseases like neuraligia and neuritis, allergies, bursitis, pleurisy, sleeplessness and the poisoning of the blood have been repeatedly made in the plays. These physical ailments cannot be cured by administering the prescribed doses of drugs because they have their sources in the spirits of men. This medicines that have been referred to by the playwright are luminal tablets, morphine, menthol inhaler and kleenex. The problem of Mrs. Goforth, Princes Kosmonopolis and Mrs. Stone are not simply physical ailments but the diseases referred to in the plays are the manifestations of some deeper spiritual disorder that deserves to be immediately set right. These images along with those of the violent animals project what appears to be Williams's dismal view of contemporary life. Williams believed that violence did not solve any problem and the decline of the Western world began with the invention of the wheel. I think that these two factors are greatly responsible for the bleak picture of the world which is projected through these images. Williams, like a representative writer of his age, faithfully depicts his time and contemporary reality but it will not be fair to dismiss him as a pessimistic playwright. The ray of hope is indicated by the white colour image and the frequent references to the ringing of the bells on the top of the mountains. Williams's predicament is something like what Dante has suggested in *Inferno*:

> In the middle of the journey of our life I came to myself
> in the dark wood where straight way was lost.

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[5]*Nelson, Benjamin, Tennessee Williams*, pp. 54, 88.

[6]*A Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*, Act III.

[7-8]*Donahue, Francis, The Dramatic World of Tennessee Williams*, p. 227.

[9]*Camino Real* (the foreword), p. IX.

CHIRAMEL P. JOSE

BURKE & LESSINGS ON UT *PICTURA POESIS* TRADITION IN CRITICISM

The remark of Edmund Burke about words and poetry in his *A Philosophical Enquiry* and of Gottfired Ephraim Lessing about poetry and painting in his *Laokoon or the limits of poetry and painting* have been considered to be the staunchest criticisms ever levelled against the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* or the pictorial tradition.[1] A short survey of the relevant remarks of these two writers in this regard and a brief evaluation of the survival of the pictorial tradition even after their time are purported in this study.

The whole of the seven sections of Part V in *A Philosophical Enquiry* deals with word and poetry. Burk argues that the common effect of poetry is not by raising ideas of things. Although he does not use the phrase *ut pictura poesis*, he maintains that poetry is not strictly an imitative art whereas painting is an imitative art[2]. Concerning words Burke said:

> They seem to me to affect us in a way different from that in which we are affected by natural objects or by painting or archtitecture; yet words have as considerable a share in exciting ideas of the beautiful and of the sublime as may of those and sometimes much greater than any of them.[3]

Then he speaks of compounded abstract words such as honor persuasion, virtue and the like that they do have their power on the human passions but at the same time do "not derive it [the power on passions:] from any representation raised in the mind of things for which they stand."[4] What Burke does in this work is neatly summarised by Ciceley Davis in the following observation: "Even Burke, since he starts from the same assumption that beauty is inherent in objects and chiefly visual, speaks of poetry and painting together as imitative arts. But at the end of his essay, when he studies more fully the effects of words he denies that poetry is directly imitative."[5] Burke admits that poetry when it is merely dramatic is strictly imitation in the sense that it describes manners and passions of man which their words can express. He affirms:

> But descriptive poetry operates by substitution: by the means of sounds. which by custom have the reallties.

Burke's admittance of this operation of poetry by substitution of realities by means of sounds speaks in favour of the pictorial or imitative nature of poetry. As far as the words are able to represent or substitute realities by means of sounds, it is comparable to the sister-art, painting in which substitution of realities is achieved by means of lines and figures. This means that a total denial of the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* is not attained by Burke's remarks. Neither did Burke intend them to be so, although his remarks were taken by the critics for a criticism on the pictorial tradition or the tradition of *ut pictura poesis*. Moreover may be due to this lack of cogence and exclusiveness in his arguments, we see a picture of continued adherence to the tradition of *ut pictura poesis* in poets after him, like Blake, Keats and D.G. Rossetti and the poets of the picturesque school, whose poetry, if anything, was predominantly pictorial and imitative. William Blake went to the extent of noting down in his *Annotations to Reynolds* that Burke's treatise aroused contempt and abhorrence just as the works of Reynolds did on him: "I felt the Same Contempt & Abhorrence then that I do now. They mock Inspiration and Vision. Inspiration & Vision was then, & now is & I hope will always Remain my element, my Eternal Dwelling place; how can I then hear it Contemned without returning Scorn for Scorn." [7]

G.E. Lessing's *Laokoon* published in 1765 has been considered to be the most consistent attack on the *ut pictura poesis*-tradition. Lessing maintained that even though the plastic arts, like sculpture and painting do indeed present an ideal, it is limited only to the physical and not extended through the physical to the spiritual and therefore cannot be considered as a norm or ideal for all the arts. "For if painting as the art which imitates bodies on plane surface, is now generally practiced with an unlimited range of subject, certainly the wise Greek set her much straiter bounds. and confined her solely to the imitation of beautiful bodies."8 Explaining further, Lessing stated:

> although even a portrait admits of an ideal still the likeness must be the first consideration; it is the ideal of a certain man, not the ideal of a man.

What, in fact, Lessing opposed is a condition in the arts where painting had become excessively literary and poetry excessively pictorial. Lessing undertook to undo the confusion in theory and practice in respect of the relationship between poetry and the graphic or plastic arts which according to him was rooted in an uninquisitive acceptance of Simonides, maxim that "painting is a dumb poetry and poetry a speaking picture." In the preface to *Laokoon* Lessing argues that the true element in the dictum of Simonides is so illuminating that we are inclined to ignore what in it is false or doubtful. But the ancients did not ignore it. Rather, whilst they confined the claims of Simonides solely to the effect of the two arts, they did not omit to point out that they were yet distinct, both in their subject and in the manner of their imitation in spite of the complete similarity of the effect.

Condemning the extravagance of Simonides dictum's application, Lessing wrote:

> But entirely as if no such differences existed many of our most recent critics have drawn from the correspondence between painting and poetry the crudest Conclusions in the world. Now they force poetry into the narrower bounds of painting and again they propose of painting to fill the whole wide sphere of poetry.
>
> Indeed, this newer ' criticism has in part educed the virtuosos themselves. It has engendered in poetry the range for description, and in painting the range for allegorizing. In the effort to turn the former into a speaking picture without really knowing what she can and should paint, and to turn the latter into a silent poem without considering in that measure, she can express general concepts and not at the same time depart from her vocation and become a freakish kind of writing.
>
> To counteract this false taste and these ill founded judgments is the primary object of the pages that follow.[10]

Evidently Lessing was not bent on annihilating the tradition of ut *pictura poesis*. Far from it. What he really aimed at was to fulminate on the excesses and errors of that tradition, and to reinstate it into its proper realm. He argued that Poetry and Painting

should live contendedly each in its own borders:

As two friendly reasonable neighbors, will not at all permit that one of them shall make too free with the most intimate concern, of the other, yet will exercisein things of less importance a mutual forbearance and on either side condone trifling interferences with one's strict rights to which circumstances may give occasion, so it is with Painting and Poetry.[11]

According to Lessing, the austere simple, nude beauties of ancient marble are allowable painting, but not the baroque motion or baroque allegory. On the other hand, in poetry, action, full-blooded, expressive, and even violent must predominate. This constitutes the main difference between poetry and painting. Poetry consists of a sequence of articulate sounds in time rather than forms and colours fixed in space. Instead of being limited to a static but pregnant moment as in painting, the special power of poetry is the reproduction of progressive action.

It should be particularly noticed that Lessing does not deny the imitative nature of poetry. On the contrary, he asserts that the formula '.....' imitation (*Nachahmung*) is for the poet, the attribute which constitutes the essence of his art, He observed that, ". . . in the first imitation the poet is original, in the second he [the painter] is a copyist. The former is a part of the general imitation which constitutes the essence of his art, and the works as a genius...[12]. The important thing is, in poetry the decorum of natural beauty is to be eliminated and word-painting discouraged, Lessing firmly deplores the use of the word 'picture' in connection with the discussion of *enargeia*. 'Picture' suggests that the poet's images should be so present as to be fully presentable, whereas *enargeia* stands for achievement in verbal discourse of a natural quality or of a pictorial quality that is highly natural. Lessing paid great value to *enargia* and recognized that its literary manifestation has very close resemblance to the visual illusion of painting. But not more than that. In other words, the poetical pictures need not conform to all the specification of actual picture.

Though he laments the use of the word 'picture', Lessing concedes at the same instant that the poet has the power to set forth picturesquely the most unpictorial data. In his own words:

> We are merely misled by the ambiguity of words if we take the matter otherwise. A poetic is not necessarily that which can be transmuted into a material painting; but every feature, every combination of features by means of which the poet makes his subject so perceptible that we are more clearly conscious of his words is called pictorial, is styled a picture, because it brings us nearer to the degree of illusion of which the material painting is specially capable and which can most readily and easily be drawn from the material painting.[13]

Or again, "does not Poetry lose too mush if we take from her all picture of physical beauty? who wishes to do so?" [14] And in his practice, as Robertson has pointed out, "caught up by the new demand for a greater truth to nature and life, he [Lessing] applied this criterion to the drama of the past and of this own day."[15] Thus Lessing himself seems to have accepted much of what is central in the *ut pictura poesis* or the pictorial or mimetic tradition. Lessing's attack and criticism of this tradition which seems to be vehemently hostile, turns out, in fact to be only a reorientation. As W.G. Howard has rightly observed "the poet and painter could not but profit by the caution that Lessing offered them concerning the limits of their respective arts." [16]

The immediate effect of Burke's and Lessing's critcism on the *ut pictura poesis* tradition was an avalanche of critical theories in the place of the long-lauded mimetic tradition. These traditions have been summarized as follows by M.H. Abrams:

> (1) Pragmatic tradition concentrating on the aim of the poetry; (2) Expressive or Expressionist Theories with Wordsworth's tone of poetry as spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings, and emotion recollected in tranquillity and John Stuart Mill's "Poetry is the expression or uttering forth of feeling'; (3) Objective Theories considering the work of art in itself. [17]

Abrams also establishes the influence of the German Expressive theory of *Ut Musica Poesis* on the English Literature, [18] Of all these, the Expressive Theories in its various forms had the maximum way over the critics. Herder in 1769 turned to "music as earlier critics turned to painting, in order to specify the character of poetry." [19] As

Nancy M. Goslee has pointed out, though Herder had credited sculpture with great power, with Lessing, he agrees that poetry is by far the most powerful of all the arts; it comprehends all the other and unprompted by a single sense integrates with its energy the work of all the senses.[20] The expressive theory which substituted painting by music ultimately led to the expressive or creative theory of Wordsworth and other Romantic Poets.

By the first half of the present century the critics still held one or the other form of the expressionist theory. In the words of Leo Steinberg:

> Art though it operates through the sense, is yet a spiritual activity. The artist's effort is to give the expression of his spirit to viability to match and challenge that of organic life. For whatsoever lacks the quality of life must fail to hold our interest, except as instrument and means.[21]

Steinberg, of course, speaks about all the arts, poetry included. Speaking precisely about poetry E. Vivas has observed:

> What it [a poem] means is not a world it reflects, or imitates, or represents in illusion, in the sense of a world as envisaged by the mind prior to the poetic activity in the manner in which it is envisaged in poetry. What the poem says or means is the world it reveals or discloses *in and through* itself, a new world, whose features, prior to the act of poetic revelation, were concealed from us and whose radiance and even identity will again be concealed from us the moment our intransitive attention lapses and we return to the world of affairs and things in which we normally live.[22]

Emphasis is here given to the world revealed by the poem as a result of the poetic activity, as an expression of the poet's assimilation of the reality. By the 1960s a sort of dovetailing of mimetic and expressionist theories gathered momentum. Neither the mimetic nor the expressionist theory alone is the sole criterion. Theodore Greene argues that the final and highest test of literature as an art should be "the extent to which the ideas and images which the words express and the emotions and moods which those ideas and images evoke are truly revelatory and memorable. A poet who has

nothing to say is no poet, however exquisite his verse or felicitous his prose.[23] A poet while imitating nature and life should also add or impart his own interpretation to it, if at all his description is to have any value as a poem.

By the 1970s again there was tendency to consider art for art's sake. A poem or a painting or any piece of art is an autonomous entity. It is subject only to internal laws which derive from universal formulae of aesthetic phenomenology. "A work of sculpture need not refer to anything; that form need be significant only to itself."[24] This is held to be equally true in the case of poetry or of any other art. Regarding poetry, this view is best codified in Riffaterre's *Semiotics of Poetry*. He argues that the various forms of a semantic indirection, namely, the expression of concepts and things by indirection which is one constant element in poetry, cohere to "threaten the literary representation of reality or mimesis."[25] Riffaterre calls this peculair coherence 'significance' whereas the information conveyed at the mimetic level (the direct relationship of words to nothings) is termed, meaning' by him. By 'Semiotics of Poetry' he means the process by which a reader moves from meaning to significance. "Everything related to the integration of signs from the mimesis level into the higher level of significance is a manifestation of a Semiosis."[26] This is what Peter Abbs meant when he said, in another context, of course, that even though the mimetic imagination lies at the heart of all art disciplines, "under the power of the mimetic imagination the work of art transcends its specific historical context and become 'modern', a symbolic energy in the mind now."[27] Elsewhere, in his essay, "The Self-sufficient Text", Riffaterre has tried to prove that the mythology we need for the text of William Blake's "The Sick Rose" is "entirely encoded in the words of that text."[28]

Though there is some truth in the Semiotic theory, the extreme position that mimesis is merely a hurdle to be overcome by the reader to prepare the way to Semiosis is to be avoided. Pointing out the examples like Milton's "On the late Massacre on Piedmont," Dylan Thomas's "Do not go into the Goodnight," and Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*, C.E. Reaves affirms that in these poems,

> the mimetic is much more than a lucid occasion for poetic semiosis, that the mimetic too is part of a poem's meaning *qua* poem. This view does not deny unity - organic or otherwise - but,

rather, claims that the 'Semantic indirection' Riffaterre celebrates is excessively and unjustifiably valorized and, further that the semiotic process, though inevitable in the reading of poetry, does not fully displace mimesis.[29].

This argument holds good concerning any argument or theory raised against the *ut pictura poesis* theory.

The critical theories poised against the mimetic tradition ever since the remarks of Burke and Lessing could not completely displace the mimetic aspect of any art. And as stated above, "the picturesque" school arose only after they had written, and in Blake, Keats and D.G. Rossetti who lived after them, some of the greatest pictorial effects found expression. Those theories become relevant for us only in so far as they pointed out that the poet is not merely presenting a photo-copy or duplicate or life-like reproduction in and through his poetry, but that he is revealing or expressing what he discerns through an act of creation. "If all the artist does is represent or imitate, if he does not constitute, if he does not create in the act of discovery, all he can do with his language, at best, is to add an external adornment to the object of imitation."[30] Once we admit this, how we phrase what the poet does is of no radical difference. And this realization from the part of the critics was what Burke and Lessing wanted to pinpoint, by highlighting the excesses in the adherence to Simonides, dictum.

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R.L. BHATTACHARJEE

A CRITICAL ESTIMATE OF TED HUGES' NEW POEM 'PLAYING WITH AN ARCHETYPE'

The poem under discussion is a new poem of Ted Huges published in the English Weekly *The Spectator* of September 24, 1994. The poem deals with a kind of subject matter which can be said, in one sense, a very common one, while in the other, a very extra-ordinary too. Since the very poem has not yet come out in any anthology or collection of poems, so far as my knowledge goes, the text of the poem is being included in the very body of this article for the ready reference of the readers.

Playing With An archetype

While they gambled for their clothes
It was amusing.
Soon he lost every last stitch.

When they gambled for body privileges
It was exciting
Even when she won his last hair, to do as she liked with.

Seeing the possible gains
And thinking : Nothing more to lose -
He gambled on.

He hadn't reckoned
Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars were still to be lost -
They went in one throw.
She put them into her bag.

The Past and Future - one throw.

All attendant and invisible worlds -
One throw.

She put them into her bag.

So he hung there, echoless, in nothing,
The simple cry of his loss
Nailed where the moment he occupied
Crossed the single place he occupied.

And now, with a finalizing smile
She won his cry

Louder and louder he unravelled it for her
And worse and tearing worse, and on and on
Endlessly into her bag.[1]

Scholars of English Literature and particularly those who are interested in Modern Poetry and specially in the poetry since 1970 know that the Poet Laureate Ted Hughes was influenced by the poems of Hopkins in his early years of writing, and in particular, by the later poems of W.B. Yeats. However, the poet is more acknowledged for "his anthropological sense of history and of nature"[2], as unique, through his major poems. Here, as the very title suggests, the poet has embarked upon a subject matter for poetic treatment which has anthropological as well as mythological overtones. The poem `Playing With An Archetype' raises a fundamental question : that is, whether it is only the Male Archetype playing with the Female Archetype or, both the Male and Female Archetypes are playing a game of contest. Either of the ideas, however, does not seem coherent with the very first line of the poem since in that case readers will have to imagine that Eve and Adam as Archetypes are at the game which mythologically or even anthropologically would not only appear illogical but also ridiculous. Besides, the words "clothes" and then "stitch" in the very first stanza of the poem would nullify any of the above stands.

Therefore the idea that the act of playing with 'An Archetype' leads one to think that the parties in the game have not been seen by the poet as archetypes rather they are the prototypes of Archetypes and are at play, each in his/her own way driven by an urge which is Archetypal in nature and inherent in both. That is, the prototypes of the Male and Female Principles/Archetypes are at the game being prompted by the Archetypal Urges of Procreation and Sex. Accordingly, one may read that the point of emphasis right in the very title is on the archetypal nature of the play - a game which has the prototypal parties. Since the nature of the game in question relates to its

vicissitudinal pattern, therefore it is likened to a gambling game. There can, however, be many archetypal urges under the Sun but amongst them all, *Hunger, Sex* and *Procreation* are the prime Archetypal Urges. In this poem, the poet's main concern appears to be with the Archetypal Urge, Procreation, working through another Archetypal Urge, Sex, exhibited by the poet metaphorically as a kind of gambling *game* being played between the two prototypes of the Archetypal Principles.

The opening statement in the poem draws the attention of the readers towards a scene of the game in which "they" - the Male and Female - are seen engaged in the moves like those of a gambling game. As the two gamblers in a gambling game stake their money and valuables etc., unlike them though, here the opponents are seen putting on stake their clothes instead; and in the final count of the deals made in the first stage of the game, the Male loses "every last stitch" of his clothes to his opponent, the Female. The loss of all stitches on the clothes of the Male symbolises Male's loss of complete normal behavioral pattern since passion, as scissors, has cut all the *stitches* or restraint. The other way round, "he lost every last stitch" may also refer to the release of all his restrained passions after putting on stake (off) his clothes in the *game*. And this release of passion can as well poetically be taken as "lost...stitch". Further, in spite of the loss of all stitches, the game seemed to be "amusing" to both equally. Here a worth - noting point is this that the word 'amuse', besides its various shades of meanings, also comprises an inherent sense of such insensible activities which may make others smile or even laugh at. Therefore, the use of the very word "amusing" by the poet, here in the second line of the poem, appears intentional to underline the poet's emphasis on the childish sort of behaviour on the part of both at the initial stage of their game. The game metaphorically also suggests the game of life which the two parties as young opponents yet partners have just begun, and hence "amusing" to them.

The next stanza of three lines brings in the metaphor, "body privileges," symbolising the physical enjoyment through cohabitational behaviour which also appears "exciting" to both. And here, too, it is the Male again who is eventually "won" by the Female to the extent that "she won" even "his last hair" in the second stage of the game. The winning of the "last hair" of the Male is indicative of the Female's complete psychological control over the Male. And then, once the Male is in the heart of the game, and having lost everything on stakes, and there being for him nothing more to lose anew in this game, while

still having an option to continue it, he prefers to continue the game in the hope of some future gains. Therefore the drama in the poem is not halted, and "He gambled on"; since caught in the mire of sensuality in the game of life, the Male had no other go save to steer himself on and on in the self-opted life of sensuality. Surmisingly, still the heavenly bodies were there to be staked on, of which he had not taken any cognizance earlier but now having "reckoned" their worth that they could as well be used as *bet*, he staked them and eventually lost them too to the Female in a single "throw". The imagery of the loss of these terrestrial bodies can as well be interpreted, at the psychological level, as the loss of the Male's various high ambitions and aspirations which he cherished once. The phrasal image, *owning the Moon and Stars*, has been extended by Ted Hughes in this poem to its maximum poetic functionality.

The progression of the game described in the next line shows that the losses of the Male in the game are put into her bag by the Female. The "Past" and the "Future" are also lost in the game of the *present*. Since the time he got involved in the amorous game of the present, the period spent in Heaven by the Male, in spiritual sense, is the "Past"; and as a result of his continued pursuit of this game in life, his return to Heaven even in "Future" is also blocked. It is in this sense, according to the poet, that the Male's "Past and Future" both are lost in a single go. Thus the image reflects the idea of man's complete separation from the spiritual world coming into effect without any hope of regaining it in future. Further, the Male now having lost all exterior contacts, i.e. with the spiritual worlds is perforce confined to his gambling-shell, the earthly abode. Philosophically, not only the religious and spiritual "invisible world" the Male had lost but also the "All attendant" in this game. However, Ted Hughes does not mention whether the Male's loss of the spiritual and religious worlds ultimately got transformed into the *spiritual and religious gains* for the Female or not, though the poet does mention that the losses of the Male are "put into her bag by her. Logically, therefore, one can argue that the religious and spiritual worlds now being her gains, the state of the Female ought to become automatically higher, in spiritual sense, absolving her of any sin committed by her and making a definite possibility for her re-entry into the Heaven. But the poet does not show any such possibility in her favour, may be because according to Christian Mythological belief, since Eve, the Female Archetypal Principle, was made up of a *rib* of Adam, the Male Archetypal Principle. the poet does not see the

possibility of the Female entering Heaven singly and without reaching the Male!

So these spiritual and religious losses of the Male though become the gains of the Female, but strictly it is to be interpreted in material sense and cannot be extended to the spiritual level. Notwithstanding, still at another level it can be said that the poet brings in this poem the *idea* that, since Mythologically the very precreational urge of Female Principle -Eve, drew Adam, the Male Principle to her, which became the cause of their fall from Eden, so here too, their involvement in the procreational activity through the *game* precludes the return of both into Heaven. Further, the loss of "All attendant", meaning the loss of material comforts etc., on the part of the Male, may also in religious sense, refer to the loss of the *attending angels* on the individual souls of human beings; and if it is understood so, then interpreting this loss in isolation with regard to the Male becomes problematic again, unless the above *ideational rider* is used to put the balance equal.

In literal sense, therefore, whatever occurred as losses of the Male accrued as all gains for the Female, and she went on collecting them into her "bag". The word "bag" has been metaphorically used by the poet to denote woman's womb. Eve, the Female Principle in Nature, had successfully allured and made the Male Principle, Adam, act the way she wanted in order to fulfill her desire of procreation. Likewise here, too, the Female wins in all her *moves* upto the penultimate stage in the *game*. Further, she is so potent that at the penultimate stage of the game, the seeding act, she devours even the "cry" of the Male; the "cry" is the cry of the male for the "loss" of Male seeds: in physical sense, orgasm. Thus the Female has "won" even the "cry" along with the seeds of the Male. The profession of the game, however, continues but now onwards pellucidly palpable is the inertia of the game played, only to the Female. The Male seed, the symbol of the Male Principle, is now dormant in the "bag" of the Female and is physically unseen, lying soundlessly and almost as "nothing" hanging within- "so he hung there, echoless in nothing". The fertilizational act being thus complete, the Female draws a smile of victory and satisfaction on her face.

As in gambling game, there occur a turning point and change in fortunes, the readers may find, in a way, some such idea here too in this game but at the psychological level only. Her victory now being over, the poet shifts the emphasis on the word "cry" in the final stage of the game. And the word "cry" becomes a key-word to unravel the

meaning of the last stance. In order to give a new meaning to the word "cry", the poet raises it to an ideational level by effecting its transfer from the Male to the Female without poetic displacement. The "cry" now onwards no more remains the "cry" of the Male, rather, it is mingled with his *seeds* now in the "bag". The "cry" sent forth by the Male during the penultimate stage of the game and received by the Female is evidenced even now but with a change in its place, intensity and motif too. The "cry" and the seed of the Male seem to have become one and the same in the "bag". The seed in the "bag" now starts evolving gradually; and while evolving secretly in the crucible of nature, it gives its feel to the owner of the "bag" till the time it comes to its fuller form. And genially, "he", the Male Principle in the creation of both - "it", the foetus, makes "it" forcefully and tearingly to move out of her "bag"-the womb; and she, the Female Principle, then perforce echoes the same "cry" she had "won" once in the game. But now the "cry" is louder in intensity and magnitude than what she had received before. This shift in the generating and gender agent of the "cry" is brought by the poet to symbolize the birth - giving throes of the Female. Further, "he unravelled it", is the unravelling of the "cry" and the foetus as one entity, i.e. "it", by the Male Principle "he" working together with the Female Principle as a phenomenon in the "bag". The presence of "he" as the Male Principle in the foetus in the "bag" is also made conspicuous to the Female. The unravelling is the physical unravelling of the *Causative Male Principle* - "he" working all the time with the Female Principle till "it" is completely "unravelled" in the arrival of the new-born -"it".

The last one and a half lines in this poem sounds more like an epilogue-statement with regard to the game by the poet himself"..., and on and on/Endlessly into her bag"; and this statement of denouement with regard to the game is suggestive of the idea that the last stage of the game is accompanied with throes and pains for the Female. However, the Procreational Urge in both does not deter them from participating in the game again and again, and thereby make her to collect her gains from her opponent/partner into her "bag". It is also interesting to note the game pattern as depicted by the poet which reveals another truth that the apparent loser in the game till the penultimate stage, however ideationally though, starts emerging dominant and a gainer too by the end of the last stage of the game. And therefore, one can say that at the psychological level both "he" and "she" are gainers at their own individual psychological plane.

And thus the process of procreation goes on and on, "endlessly" and eternally through this Archetypal Urge, Procreation, in the game of life being played by men and women. It is in this sense that the poem *Playing With An Archetype* focuses on the theme of playing with the Archetypal Urge -- Procreation.

When we come to analyse the language used in this poem by Ted Hughes, we may, for a while, take the remarks made by Robert Stuart which are in a way applicable to most of the poems of Ted Hughes, "For Hughes, language is an intrinsic part of his vision, an organic monitor to record the gradual disintegration of society and civilization. With such a view of the world, it would seem best to remain silent but ever alert, as Hughes suggests, for the `new world'."[3] But then, with a theme as is the case in this poem where mythologizing effort of the poet is anew at worlk, the *new words* are essentially the common words but with new dimensions of meaning provided by their syntactical form. Besides, the subject matter here in this poem is altogether different from that of the *Crow* series of poems, where the Crow desires to become a man but fails to fulfil its ambition. This poem deals with the theme of *procreation* under the veneer of mythology as well as anthropology at the psychological plane of sensuality. It is in this light that the interpretative problem, an essential corollary, is made further complicated due to the *new words* in the poetic diction. "The tensions set up in the language, though often threatening obscurity, are not the result of an excited over-indulgence, a sort of perverse linguistic filibustering"[4], rather they are there due to the dictional demand of the thematic structure, to express the drama - like events, by using words' multi-dimensional potentiality through common yet commentary-like syntactical order providing depth and density to the poetic language in this poem.

Accordingly, therefore, the poem presupposes a problem in the use of language; for the poet had to use a kind of language and diction which ought to cohere properly and contribute poetically to the unhindered development of the Archetypal theme. And in order to do so, the poet has ingeniously loaded the words of parlance with extra-dimensional meaning and thrust in his free verse pattern. Poets of all time, have had continuously been in search of new metaphors; and, Ted Hughes too in this poem, provides the common words with altogether new colour and meanings, and thus has created new metaphors to serve his poetic diction for a very uncommonly common kind of theme, albeit in his own unique way. One may perceive in this

poem that the force or new meaning to an individual word has been provided by its cardinal positioning and placement, and each in turn contributes in making the diction pleasant while as a matter-of-fact, at places almost inexplicable, nevertheless yet unprosaic. For example, the words such as, "gambled", "clothes", and "stitch" in the first stanza; "body privileges", and the expression, "she won his last hair", in the second stanza; "possible gains", in the third stanza; and again the line, "Earth, Sun, Moon and Stars were still to be lost", and "one throw" and "bag" etc. in the fourth stanza; and then again, "The Past and the Future" in line 14; "All attendant and invisible worlds",. in line 15 and many more such words used in the poem, are the words which appear in common talk, but here in this poem they are past their general dictionary meaning, and have been pressed into function as symbolical expressions charged with extra-dimensional meaning tuned structurally to the basic theme of the poem. The words, the phrases and even whole sentence all are the uniquely placed in the poetic structure, to function in a sentence or a stanza strictly according to the new assigned meaning by the poet in congnizance with the main theme of the poem; it is the Archetypal Urge - Procreation-which is fructifying itself with the hero of another Archetypal Urge - Sex, through the agencies, the prototypes of the Male and Female - Archetypes/Principles. Thus Ted Hughes has once again shown his keen interest to reinterpret with the tools of his unique inventiveness the mythological and anthropological subject matters.

Yet again, because of the poet's dexterity in exploring a word's unexplored regions of potentiality which provides newness to the texture of his seemingly common language, the problem of understanding and analysing the text deepens further once a reader comes to lines 18, 19, 20 & 21. Here, line 18 has to be read with line 20, and line 19 with line 21 in order to catch up with the development of the idea of the procreational process as it happens in nature. Besides, the word "cry" in line 23 is to be read with the first ordinally placed "louder" since here it has a different meaning as is explained before from the ordinally second "lourder" in line 24 joined by a conventional conjunction "and" making the following clause a coordinate one to the main clause in line 22. Again, in the same clause the pronoun "it" does not represent the mere "cry" in line 19 or 23 either, rather here it represents an *ideational-mix* of the Male's "cry" coming out perforce from the Female. The heightening of the thematic development is achieved in the last three lines of the poem where the words "unravelled", "worse

and tearing worse" are indicative of the birth-giving process accompanied with all physical pains and throes of the Female.

While evaluating a poem of Ted Hughes, one is reminded of the fact that some readers of Hughes over a period have developed a kind of love-hate relationship with his poems due to his unconventional use of words & phrases, and in particular for his stance of insouciance "On the perennial question of 'violence' in his poetry"5, (Ref. *Crow* series of poems, *Hawk Roosting, Wind & The Jaguar,* etc.) and "Still, it is common, even fashionable image of Hughes to see him wading bloody-toothed-and-clawed through the detritus of a collapsed civilization with a wry grin of satisfaction on his swarthy face."[6] The reason of the violent images and symbols frequenting his poetry could however be found in the famous interview by Fass of Hughes quoted by R. Stuart in his study about the poems of Ted Hughes, along with his own comments:"... illustrating from Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*: Venus... if one reads between the lines eventually murdered Adonis... she murdered him because he rejected her. He was so desensitized, stupefied and brutalized by his rational scepticism, he didn't know what to make of her. He thought she was an ethical peril."[7] This psychological mental built-up of the poet might have not only contributed towards the hardening of his poetic language but also could be the valid reasons for the images and symbols of violence appearing in many of his poems, which are otherwise masterpieces in the annals of modern poetry.

It may not be out of place to mention that in this discussion, it is worth bearing in mind that though the poet is successful in his mythopoetic efforts with regard to the theme of procreation in this poem, however, his psychic disgust and slant towards the rampant sensual pattern of life in the modern civilization is also evident running as an undercurrent through out this poem of twenty-six lines. Byond agreeing on this point, one can as well argue that in this poem, the vehemence of violence, to some extent, is subdued; and, whatever symbols and images of violence are there, they do contribute towards the true depiction of nature's essential aspects, always occurring whenever there is metamorphosis. And so, as the poet had expressed long back to create "out of a world of malicious negatives a happy positive"[8], it has been achieved successfully as is also in some of his earlier poems, (Ref. *The Bull Moses, Full Moon and Little Frieda* and *The River in March* etc.). Another point of import is, in this new poem of Ted Hughes, the readers may find his fastidiousness with language

and the trenchant use of words in diction though, yet "One can admire the deriving originality of Hughes's imagination and his reluctance to surrender the least meaning that might diffuse the energy of his perceptions. The compressed and highly charged metaphors seem to want to enthral rather than illuminate us with the awesome forms they invoke and upon which they gradually, almost tentatively, come to focus. The focus is kept teasingly blurred.... In many ways, the density and unconnectedness of the metaphors explain his artistic predicament, acknowledging as he does the extraordinary fertile ground of his new imaginative experience but simultaneously discovering the inadequacy of language to give it direct and coherent expression."[9]

Finally, therefore, though this poem, in a way, a poem of motion, does not take a reader to experience poetic sublimity or lead one to a state of "philosophical orgasm"; the uniqueness, however, of the poem lies in the poet's imaginative excursion from his mundane plane into the Jungian World of Archetypes which one may even extend to the Christian Mythological World of Eve and Adam. The guise of the gambling- like game, representing the game of life, equals to a kind of drama; and by the time a reader reaches the end-lines of the poem, he finds that the poet has logically rounded up the theme of procreation to its deterministic level. Here in this poem, his imagination and fancy working hand-in-hand on this archetypal theme, cirss-crossed, dissolving the Coleridgean ray-line of divide between the two. And again, psychologically, the truth of inventive excursion of the poet being also his imaginative excursion, and as the "true imagination is a kind of logic"[10], the logical denouement of the drama - like events under the guise of the *game*, as has uniquely been drawn by the poet, is also undisputably the natural consequence. And as is often seen in many poems of Hughes, here too, he has successfully mythologized anew, in the field of human history, a theme concerning no more than a mere mundane activity, by harnessing his quality of *inventiveness*.

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