VOLUME 25
2003
NUMBERS 1 & 2

THE ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Editor
M. M. Adnan Raza

DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH
AMU, ALIGARH

THE ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
(BI-ANNUAL)

Statement under Section 19-D Sub-section (b) of the Press and Registration of Books Act read with Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspapers (Central Rules) 1965.

1.	Place of Publication	:	Aligarh
2.	Period of Publication	:	Bi-annual
3.	Printer	:	Aligarh Muslim University Press
4.	Publisher	:	M. M. Adnan Raza
5.	Editor	:	M. M. Adnan Raza
	Nationality	:	Indian
	Address		Department of English Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh - 202002
6.	Owner	:	Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

7. I, M. M. Adnan Raza, declare that the above-mentioned particulars are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

M. M. Adnan Raza
Publisher

Reg. No. 29062/76

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Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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The ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES is edited by M. M. Adnan Raza and published by him on behalf of the Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh-202002, India. AJES aims at bringing out, twice a year (April and October), critical and research articles dealing with subjects in all the main areas of English studies. Contributions, addressed to the Editor, should adhere to the MHRA style sheet, be neatly typed and double-spaced, and with notes and references at the end. Articles on floppy disk [(3.5") 1.44 MB, MS-Word format along with a hard copy will be a great help in processing. Articles could also be e-mailed to us at the following addresses:

editor_ajes@yahoo.com
dept_english@rediffmail.com

Annual Subscription
Rs 120 / US $ 10

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Sarika Bose

Salome and *Mrs Warren's Profession*: Fear and Anxiety in the Theatre of Reassurance

'I say, Archer, my God, what women!'

[R. L. Stevenson to William Archer in response to Shaw's *Cashel Byron's Profession*.[1]]

Stevenson's famous exclamation sums up the nineteenth-century reaction to women such as Salome, Kitty Warren and Vivie Warren. Oscar Wilde's *Salome* (1892)[2] and George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893)[3] made a rather flamboyant entrance into the English drama of the 1890s. *Salome* was decried as 'an arrangement in blood and ferocity, morbid, bizzare, repulsive and very offensive,'[4] while *Mrs. Warren's Profession* was declared 'immoral and otherwise improper for the stage.'[5] Though the women in the two plays were familiar enough 'types' of conventional drama, their actions were considered too shocking and repulsive for public consumption. Denied representation on the English stage until the following century, the plays were made available to the public only in printed form. However, even though they were physically banished from the stage, *Salome* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* created a

great deal of controversy as they attacked the conventions of contemporary theatre. The reasons why they did so lie in the conditions of that theatre.

The theatres of the period were under the control of actor-managers, such as George Alexander and Charles Wyndham. These managers were shrewd enough to recognize the fact that nothing is as entertaining or as attractive as a fictionalized portrait of oneself and one's own world. Because they wished to attract fashionable audiences, the actor-managers presented them with a flattering mirror of their elite world. Naturalism being the vogue in Western theatre at the time, the world of the elite was recreated on the stage with meticulous attention to details of setting, manners and costumes (although, according to Shaw, upper-class manners were unsuccessfully realized by the actors). Audiences nodded approvingly when presented with a 'real' drawing-room as opposed to a palpably theatrical approximation of a real drawing-room, and waited for the stage costumes to lead trends in fashion.

The plays that were written for these audiences came to be known as society drama, and formed the theatre of reassurance. The two most prominent playwrights in this field, Henry Arthur Jones and Arthur Wing Pinero, scored a huge success with plays such as *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894) and *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893). The theatre of reassurance began by providing the audience with a familiar world in which it felt comfortable and at home. This world was populated by characters who spoke and

dressed like the cream of society, but their morals were distinctly middle-class. The actor-managers desired fashionable but, above all, respectable audiences in their theatres, and the playwrights wished to elevate drama so it would be accepted and respected as a serious art form. They felt that the only way of being taken seriously was to insist on a high moral tone which meant rigid loyalty to conventional attitudes. Society drama owed more to straight melodrama than it cared to admit; it employed the same unsophisticated good-bad dialectic as melodrama, except that the villain was not quite as crudely evil nor the hero as vacuously good as in melodrama. As in melodrama, the 'good ended happily, the bad unhappily' (*The Importance of Being Earnest* II, p.275)[6] in society drama, providing the audience with a clear-cut moral model. It was reassuring to be presented with a world that was a counterpart of one's own in which moral problems were clearly laid out and moral decisions to be made about the problems clearly indicated. The audience did not have to cope with conflicting choices or with disconcerting encounters with a character that could be all shades of the rainbow rather than black or white. A stable world, in which all expectations are met, was at the heart of the theatre of reassurance.

Good triumphed over Evil in the theatre of reassurance. The idea of 'good' and 'bad' in society drama had evolved from melodrama in that the good were those who upheld and protected the conventional order of society, and the bad were those who challenged this order in any way. The good could be renamed 'Convention', and the

bad as the 'Opponent.' The theatre of reassurance gained its power by presenting conventions that came under threat but were successfully defended. The order of things could continue confident in its assertion of rightness, its strength affirmed by the victory in battle. The stridently self-righteous moral tone of the drama determinedly inspired the audience to reject those who had transgressed the rules of conventional morality. The audience was brought together in solidarity to keep its world from invasion by unconventional individuals. The *demi-monde* which was often presented in these plays was another element of reassurance. The audience gained a voyeuristic enjoyment from watching a world forbidden to it—especially to the women—and remained safe from the taint that association with this world would mean in the real world.

The Opponent was usually a woman who, by her challenge against convention, threatened the order of things. The figure of the threatening woman dominated the stage of the 1890s, not only in English plays but also in European plays, such as Dumas Fils' *La Dame aux Camellias* . The social climate of the 1890s must be considered as perhaps a partial explanation for the interest in threatening women: this was the age of women's movements for liberation from the centuries-old constraints that denied them equal opportunity in political, economic and social fields. A conflict between the sexes was underway in the public world and the theatre could hardly remain untouched by its rising passions. Those passions found their focal point in the persona of the woman

who dared to stand up against conventional female roles and thereby threatened the fabric of society.

Contemporary dramatic imagination created two types of the Threatening Woman, one that I may term the Conventionally Unconventional woman and the other the Unconventionally Unconventional one. Though one was the antithesis of the other, their challenge to society was the same insofar as they attacked the basic conventions and the received wisdom about the role of women in society as prescribed—narrowly and rigidly—by the dominant standards of morality. They stood against the approved wife-mother roles and thus challenged and violated the very institution of marriage. Jones' *raisonneur*, Sir Richard Kato, offers the last word to the Threatening Woman:

> [There is an immense future for women] At her own fireside. There is an immense future for women as wives and mothers, and a very limited future for them in any other capacity. While you ladies without passions - or with distorted and defeated passions - are raving and trumpeting all over the country, that wise, grim, old grandmother of us all, Dame Nature, is simply laughing up her sleeve and snapping her fingers at you and all your new epochs and new movements. Go home! Be sure that old Dame Nature will choose her own darlings to carry on her schemes. Go home! Go home! Nature's darling woman is a stay-at-home woman,

> a woman who wants to be a good wife and a good mother, and cares very little for anything else[...]don't worry the world any longer about this tiresome sexual business, for, take my word, it was settled once and for all in the Garden of Eden, and there's no more to be said about it. Go home! Go home!
>
> (*The Case of Rebellious Susan* III, pp. 153-154)[7]

To use Barbara Bellow Watson's words, here we have the doctrine that, 'the order of society[. . .] is tantamount to the order of Nature.'[8]

The Conventionally Unconventional Woman was the more common type in the theatre. This was the Bad Woman or the Woman with a Past. In the case of a few women, such as Mrs. Cheveley in *An Ideal Husband*, the past contained some crime such as theft or blackmail. However, in the majority of the cases, the offence was of a sexual nature, usually a liaison outside the sacred bonds of marriage. Whether it had been in the distant or recent past, or whether it had been a single act or a series of acts, no distinction was made by society which roundly condemned the 'adventuress' for stepping outside convention. Once a woman had 'sinned,' or digressed from the standards of morality, there could be no clemency for her. Those who forgave or accepted her risked the taint that would naturally result from association with a traitor to the order of things. Even if she attempted to change her ways, the Bad Woman

was forever cast as the Opponent and thereby spent her time trying to conceal this role.

Unlike Wilde's Mrs. Arbuthnot, most of the bad women in late nineteenth century plays flaunt their sexuality, and, in one way of another, challenge the institution of marriage. Jones's Lady Susan Harrabin snaps her fingers at her husband, asserts the meaninglessness of marriage, and proves it by having an affair. Mrs. Erlynne, rejecting her wife-mother role, runs away from her husband and child to have an affair, and thereby drives her husband to his death. In the theatre of reassurance, such acts of defiance, on the surface very much like Nora's in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* but actually lacking in Nora's motivation, result in a one-dimensional classification of the 'adventuress.' No motivation, other than a sexual one, can be conceived by the dramatists as strong enough to make a woman reject the comforts of convention. Agnes Ebbsmith in Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* delivers one of the hardest blows to the institution of marriage by choosing to live with a man to whom she is not married, and makes it worse by justifying her action. Pinero's Paula Tanqueray is perhaps the classic 'Woman with a Past,' who finds that even the acceptance by a respectable man cannot erase her classification as a Bad Woman. Though these women were glamorized and treated by their authors with a sympathy Shaw found unethical, they all had to be defeated by the end in such a way as to leave no doubt in the audience's mind of the dangers of opposing society's rules. From the responses of critics such as Clement Scott, spokesman in chief for

convention, and managers such as Wyndham, to a play like *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, it is clear that the punishment was often not considered harsh enough.

The second type of Threatening Woman was the Unconventionally Unconventional New Woman. Sexually untainted and posing no danger of sexual allure for hapless males, she nonetheless menaced the established power structure by trying to bulldoze her way into it under the banner of equality. Not that the true extent of the menace she posed was fully understood. In fact, the drama of the 1890s did not allow her the same prominence as the bad woman, nor given the same highly serious treatment. Instead, the weapon used to defeat her was ridicule. The New Woman was typically ugly and unfeminine: 'a raw, self-assertive, modern young lady, with brusque and decided manner' (*Case of Rebellious Susan* I, p.120). Jones's Elaine Shrimpton is a good example of the stereotypic New Woman presented on stage, whose chief characteristics are unattractive clothes, loud voices chanting endless slogans, and a hatred of men. Needless to say, her marriage is a failure because she cannot find solutions to even the most trivial domestic problems, and she spends all her time organizing 'The Clapham Boadicean Society for the Inculcation of the New Morality among the Women of Clapham' (*Case of Rebellious Susan* II, p.132). The New Woman is thus presented as a thoroughly unpractical creature; if she cannot take care of her own home, how can she improve the order of the universe? This made her both silly and ineffective, reassuring audiences that her posturing

could be laughed away, except when she is also a bad woman. Pinero's Mrs. Ebbsmith, a more sympathetically drawn character, is a composite of this sort, a bad woman who has elements of the New Woman in her. She wears unattractive clothes, and her past as a platform lecturer is dragged up by the Duke as a scandal, of which he expects her to ashamed. Both her 'unfeminine' attire and her political activities are viewed as ridiculous by the men in the play, which robs her of any power or dignity. Yet her New Woman affiliation added to her Bad Woman life doubles the threat she poses to all that seems good and decent to contemporary British society.

Against the figure of the threatening woman was set the standard of the good, conventional, womanly woman, whom Shaw despised. She fulfilled her prescribed role of loyal wife and did not attempt to overreach her position in society. This earned her the respect that the threatening woman had to forego. The good woman was not to associate with the bad woman, lest the latter's taint rub off on her, which is why in Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* Frank's mother leaves town when she hears of Mrs. Warren's visit. The Good Woman was shown to be a realist, on the side of reason. She could be a mature woman, such as Jones's Inez Quesnel, or Pinero's Mrs. Thorpe, who gives advice to the bad woman. Often she is placed in a youth vs. maturity contest, the good woman representing youth and the bad woman standing for age, in order to present the conflict between innocence and experience. There never is any doubt about the outcome of this contest. Innocence inevitably

wins, and chastened Experience slinks off to exile on the Continent. In this case, the Good and the Bad are often placed in a mother-daughter relationship as in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and *A Woman of No Importance*.

But the stability and balance to which this theatre of assurance aspired soon began to be shaken. Its genteel world of predictable manners and outcomes was infiltrated by women of a disturbing power, as in Wilde's *Salome* and Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. These are plays that rest on the foundation of conventional drama and yet set those conventions on their head. There are, for instance, parallel pairings of mothers and daughters in these plays. Innocence is set against experience. But the action of the plays is definitely not set in drawing rooms. Both plays are set in the outdoors – the terrace of Herod's palace, and the garden of a country cottage – though one is always aware that these outdoor spaces are hardly free from society's control, defined as they are by man-made fences or walls. However, at least the action takes place outside the drawing room of the palace or cottage and in both plays the daughters prefer to be outside.

The worlds of both these plays are ruled by lust and corruption, though one is a pre-Christian kingdom and the other, contemporary England. Plays in which the standards of society itself – of conventions and morality – are seriously questioned have no place in a theatre of reassurance, but that is precisely the challenge that drives these two plays.

The theatre of reassurance is shattered by this reversal of the role of society, from good to evil, for it implicates the majority in its corruption and injustice, a particularly disturbing idea especially in *Mrs. Warren's Profession.* If society cannot be the guide for moral behaviour, then the individual must set the standards himself or herself. None of the actions of the characters can then be predicted, and the morality they choose may be a violent rejection not only of the social conventions of their play world, but of the audience's world.

The two pairs of threatening women in these plays are mothers and daughters. Both Salome and Vivie have sexually sinful mothers who have not only sinned in the past but are unapologetically continuing to live their sinful lives. The mothers, Herodias and Kitty Warren, both started their life of sin through compulsion or necessity. Herodias was not given any choice in her 'incestuous' marriage to Herod, and Kitty Warren could only choose prostitution to survive. However, they are now in complete control of their lives. They feel no guilt and do not consider discontinuing their present lifestyle of luxury. Mrs. Warren presents the reality of the shame:

> Well, of course[...]it's only good manners to be ashamed of it: it's expected from a woman. Women have to pretend to feel a great deal that they don't feel...But I cant stand saying one thing when everyone knows I mean another. What's the use in such hypocrisy? If people arrange the

> world that way for women, theres no good
> pretending it's arranged the other way. No:
> I was never a bit ashamed really.
> (*Mrs. Warren's Profession* II, p. 248)

In their refusal to have a conventionally moral response to their sins, even when they are pointed out—by Jokanaan and Vivie, respectively—Herodias and Mrs. Warren flaunt the codes of 'our little parish of St. James's' (*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* I, p. 95).[9]

Each mother is associated with a powerful man, Herod and Sir George Crofts, who attempts to persuade her to secure for him her daughter's sexual favours, even though they are in paternal relationships, respectively, to Salome and Vivie, though not technically related to them. This adds to the perversity of the sexuality that is present in the plays. The incest motif is strong in both plays. This is a topic that the theatre of reassurance shied away from, and certainly could not make as obvious to the audience as Wilde and Shaw did. What is especially shocking in the treatment of the incest theme is the indifferent response of the women to the incestuous advances made by the men. Herodias may not have a peaceful relationship with her husband, but the issue of incest is only brought up by Jokanaan, and is not pursued by Herodias. Even when Herod shows obvious interest in Salome, Herodias's ire seems more to be aroused by jealousy than by revulsion towards Herod's incestuous inclinations. Mrs. Warren coyly flirts with Frank Gardner, the son of a former lover, when she knows he is her own

daughter's suitor and that she is in a maternal relation to him. She is also not shocked by Sir George's offer for Vivie, and rejects him, not for the incestuous nature of his offer, but because she does not consider him good enough for Vivie. Neither are Salome and Vivie shocked by the suggestion of incest in their relationships with men. Salome is perfectly willing to allow Herod his sexual fantasies as long as she gets what she wants. Vivie is indifferent to both Sir George and Frank, and assures the latter that the validity of Sir George's claim had nothing to do with her rejection of him. Neither mother has any control over her daughter's actions. Salome completely ignores and seems to deliberately oppose Herodias's pleas to refrain from dancing for Herod. At this moment, Herodias may seem to be on the side of the conventional morality displayed in the theatre of reassurance, but her subsequent approval and delight at her daughter's choice of reward demolishes any such illusion. However, her own interpretation of Salome's wish for Jokanaan's head is clearly shown to be a misinterpretation, as Salome's action springs exclusively from Salome's own will: 'I do not heed my mother. It is for mine own pleasure that I ask the head of Jokanaan in a silver charger' (*Salome*, p. 342). Mrs. Warren's desire for a (theatrically) conventional mother-daughter relationship is eventually denied by her wholly pragmatic daughter, who sees that they have nothing in common. Mrs. Warren is as shocking a mother as Herodias because she suggests at the end that she regrets bringing up her daughter as a sexually virtuous woman as that means that Vivie is barred from all association with her.

Both Herodias and Mrs. Warren are versions of the Conventionally Unconventional Woman. To the theatre of reassurance they are shocking enough as it is indicated that their sins will continue beyond the action of the plays. However, Salome and Vivie are the really threatening women, as they contain elements of the Unconventionally Conventional Woman. They are similar in some basic aspects. They both reject the 'womanly' woman's roles of self-sacrifice and obedience to convention. Unlike the Conventionally Unconventional Woman, who wants desperately to be forgiven by society even as she opposes it, neither Salome nor Vivie care the least what society thinks of them. On the contrary, they thoroughly reject society, deliberately isolating themselves from it. Both are equally oblivious to the romantic voices in their worlds, to the Young Syrian and Praed, who offer them a gentler alternative to the harsh choices they make. Both remain virgins, though Salome is symbolically deflowered by Jokanaan, and Vivie's affair is not specifically declared as unconsummated. But they do have certain qualities of the conventional Opponent. They are both desired by an older man and a younger man, but are eventually rejected on moral grounds by a young man. Salome is involved with three men: Herod, the young captain, and Jokanaan. The first two desire her, and the last rejects her, as Frank rejects Vivie because of her mother. Throughout the action of the respective plays, Salome and Vivie are isolated from the other characters, with whom they are in constant conflict. Each of them follows her own desires in the face of opposition from everyone else. In the end, each is virtually left in isolation, which re-emphasizes

her isolation. Salome is left on the darkened terrace of the palace from which all the court has fled, to mutter alone to her trophy. Vivie too is left alone on the stage in the last scene, having successfully cut herself off from conventional society.

In their self-inflicted isolation, both Salome and Vivie Warren represent the fate of the Unconventionally Conventional Woman as outsiders, and as individuals whose motives cannot be plumbed by the perceptions of conventional social morality, that is, the rules of a man's world. As figures of a menace not fully understood, they are crystallizations of men's fears. Each, at first glance, is the epitome of a 'type'. Salome can be seen as the ultimate Bad Woman in her obviously sexual power. Vivie is very much the stereotypic New Woman, though her treatment is sympathetic and detailed. Both, in being such extreme stereotypes, are almost at the level of symbol. The character of Salome can then be seen as a crude symbol of uncontrollable sex, while Vivie can be seen as an equally crude symbol of heartless rationality. Each follows a path that she must tread regardless of the rules of convention. There is no compromise possible for them even though they are both offered alternatives to their choices, and this dictates their isolation.

Aliens as these women are in their world, they are not altogether strangers to the theatrical formulas of the time. Salome may be a character set in a Biblical world, but she has been adapted by a nineteenth-century writer also writing

society drama at the same time. Though she is very much a *symboliste* heroine, influenced by Maeterlinck's *La Princesse Maleine* as well as other literary works in the symbolic mode, she has more in common with the Bad Woman of society drama than is suspected at first glance. Like Paula Tanqueray or Lady Susan Harrabin, she is young, beautiful and wilful. In *The Romantic Agony*, Mario Praz has pointed this out, claiming that she is nothing more than a *femme fatale* from society drama. Like the Bad Woman, she has an excessive attraction to sensual pleasure. But from this point on, the character develops beyond the expected and therefore acceptable boundaries of misdemeanor. Though she technically remains a virgin, her desire for Jokanaan's body and hair, and the final wish to kiss Jokanaan's lips could not be more damning a proof of her perverted sexual desire: what is truly shocking to the English theatre is the repeated desire to carry out that wish right on stage, as is clear from the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner's letter to a friend:

> It is a miracle of impudence[. . .] (Salome's) love turns to fury because John will not let her kiss him *in the mouth*— and in the last scene, where she brings in his head—if you please—on a 'charger'—*she does* kiss his mouth, in a paroxysm of sexual despair.[10]

He goes on to call the play 'half Biblical, half pornographic.' The indiscretions of the Paula Tanquerays and the Mrs. Danes are at least off stage, and though the

indiscretions are known of, they are hardly brought out as blatantly as in *Salome*. The series of images that accompany each of the three requests by Salome to Jokanaan are extremely sensual and leave no doubt as to the sexual nature of Salome. It is bad enough that a young virgin is seen to be making such blatantly sexual advances to a man, but when this is combined with the fact that the man in question is actually a religious figure, Salome's actions become completely unacceptable on the Victorian stage. Salome is thus drawn as a woman so completely ruled by her animal passions that she overleaps moral and even religious barriers.

The cast of characters again shows traces of contemporary dramatic convention. The voice of reason in plays of the time belongs to a *raisonneur* figure, and though Salome turns a deaf ear to that voice, Herod's status as a quasi-*raisonneur* figure is firmly maintained. Like the *raisonneur* of Jones and Pinero, Herod is an older man-of-the-world who is the voice of Society. The *raisonneur* is often considered to be the voice of the author, a suggestion that seems to be validated by Beardsley's interpretation of Herod as Wilde himself. In this case, the *raisonneur* figure is quite aptly the representative of society as he is the head of it. He is the voice of common sense and caution. He does not wish Salome to give in to her perverse desires and is very cautious in his own attitude towards the prophet. He pleads with Salome to make a reasonable choice, a choice her world will approve. He offers her treasures that any woman with any sense would eagerly accept: the equivalent of Sir Richard

Kato's Bond Street offer that Lady Susan must accept in order to stay within society and to prove her submission to its standards. That even jewels will not sway her indicates the intensely sexual nature of Salome. Jones's Sir Richard Kato and Pinero's Cayley Drummle both advise the bad women in their world to sink their pride and give in to their husbands' requests for reconciliation. Compromise is the only choice open to them if they wish to survive in a society with strict rules. A woman's wish for sexual freedom is seen as completely irrational, even unnatural. In the case of *Salome*, of course, the specific nature of her demand – for the head of Jokanaan – is indeed horrific. She is seen by Herod, and by the audience, as insane in her single-minded pursuit of her desire. In this she is more extreme than her sisters in society drama who at least make an effort to take the *raisonneur's* advice.

The bad woman in society drama is often paired with a young(er) and, of course, virtuous man. She is seen as launching a desperate plan to 'catch' the young man who is an aristocrat with a brilliant career in front of him. Association with the bad woman would ruin him in both his social and his political life, a fact that the *raisonneur* emphasizes to both parties. The bad woman tries to deny this to herself and to the *raisonneur*, but eventually realizes her folly. Agnes Ebbsmith leaves Lucas barely in time for him to save his career, just as Lady Susan parts with Lucien, while Paula Tanqueray, seeing her husband deserted by his society friends realizes that 'the future is only the past again entered through another gate' (*The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*

IV, p. 149). In her sexual desire for the man and her impulse towards ruining his life, the bad woman becomes the female demon of folklore. The devouring self-absorption of the stereotypical bad woman is only heightened in Salome, who brings about the ruin of two young men at the height of their powers. The Young Syrian had begun a promising career only three days before. This is destroyed, as is his life, by Salome's refusal to play the idealized role he had imposed upon her in his mind. Jokanaan too is a young man with a brilliant future of sorts. He is famous, and commands fear and respect even from the Tetrarch. He is even more directly destroyed by the brutal force of Salome's sexual desire. She is the ultimate female demon, and seems to be interpreted as such in Beardsley's drawings. She is associated with the moon, whose goddess, Cybele, is a harsh, man-hating goddess. The moon is a physical indicator of her inner nature as it slowly turns blood-red. She dances in the blood of the man who sacrifices himself to her in order to taste the man who does not worship her. As the opposite of the angelic (obedient and controllable) womanly woman, she is a frightening figure to her male-dominated world, personifying man's deepest fears of the death-dealing sexual powers of woman.

An important departure from the Conventionally Unconventional Woman is the complete lack of shame or guilt, or of any conviction of sin on the part of Salome. Though she feels uncomfortable with Herod's obvious sexual interest in her, she has no scruples about using it to her advantage, even in the face of her mother's displeasure. The

words of condemnation Jokanaan hurls at her lustful inclinations have only the effect of hurt pride. Even in the end, when she is holding the physical proof of her crime in her hands, the only regret she feels is that 'he didst not look at me' (*Salome*, p.347). She feels none of the horror at the death that is felt by Herod and the court. The ultimate Bad Woman, she refuses to fit even into that role, for unlike the average bad woman, she does not learn a lesson.

The *raisonneur*, sympathetic as he may be towards the bad woman, is in a protective relationship with the young man. It is his duty to save the young man from the harm that the bad woman can do to him. This is possible in the theatre of reassurance, but not in *Salome*. As already noted, the Young Syrian takes the role of the young man with a brillliant career in danger from the bad woman. The point of the requirement of the brilliant career is to emphasize the fact that he is valuable to society, unlike the bad woman. Her attempt to forge an attachment with him then becomes truly criminal as this would mean rendering him worthless to society. Herod may be responsible for Jokanaan's imprisonment, but he genuinely attempts to protect him from Salome. He offers Salome the treasures most precious to him, proof of the value to him of Jokanaan's well-being. Like other *raisonneur* figures, he fears the harm the bad woman will do not only to the young man as an individual, but to society as a whole by depriving it of his talents. But with no amount of reasoning can Herod turn Salome away from a choice governed solely by emotion and sexuality. In more common plays of the time, such as *Mrs. Dane's Defense*,

the *raisonneur* succeeds in purging society of the proverbial bad apple and society breathes a sigh of relief in having so narrowly escaped the taint it would have acquired from continued association with her. In *Salome*, Salome's actions are uncontrollable by the representative of society and they build to a horrific climax in which not only she, but the complacency of her world is destroyed. A world whose standards are of cruelty, lust and corruption is bad enough. The idea of a figure wicked enough to shock even this world is terrifying. This lack of control over an opponent of the order of society is a deeply disturbing realization for the theatre of reassurance.

The discomfort that the uncontrollable woman causes takes a different track in *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. If Salome is animal, Vivie is machine. Vivie is the opposite of Salome because she has reason without sexuality or emotion, while Salome has sexuality without reason. She is stereotypically the 'unsexed' New Woman of *Punch*. She goes to the opposite extreme of Salome in her complete rejection of sexuality and the pleasure of the senses. The hater of art-galleries can have little in common with a woman who throws herself into an ecstasy of sensual pleasure:

> Thy mouth is redder than the feet of those who tread the wine in the wine-press[. . .] Thy mouth is like a branch of coral that the fishers have found in the twilight of the sea, the coral that they keep for kings![. . .] There is nothing in the world so red as thy mouth[. . .] Let me kiss thy mouth.
>
> (*Salome*, p.328)

In the same way that Salome's extreme femininity is physically emphasized by the Dance of the Seven Veils, Vivie's sensible clothes and comically firm handshake emphasize her lack of femininity. Vivie's approximation of masculinity is further emphasized by the pleasures she professes as her own:

> I like working and getting paid for it. When I'm tired of working, I like a comfortable chair, a cigar, a little whisky, and a novel with a good detective story in it.
>
> (*Mrs. Warren's Profession*, pp. 216-217)

Vivie is described as:

> [. . .] an attractive specimen of the sensible, able, highly educated young middle-class Englishwoman. Age 22. Prompt, strong self-possessed. Plain, business-like dress, but not dowdy.
>
> (*Mrs. Warren's Profession* I, p.212)

The similarity with Elaine Shrimpton is obvious. She is like the New Woman in her masculinity and in the rejection of her sexuality, being 'permanently single[. . .] and permanently unromantic' (*Mrs. Warren's Profession* IV, p. 270). However, she does not hate men as does the popular stereotype of the New Woman, nor does she participate in the Women's Movement.

Salome uses her sexuality to persuade; Vivie uses logic. Both are equally effective. Like Salome, Vivie does not listen

to the *raisonneur* figure, Praed. In a twist from the usual *raisonneur's* character who asks that emotion be tempered by reason, Praed pleads with Vivie to temper reason with emotion. Here again we find a subversion of a formula of the time. Vivie is, after all, a young ingenue. As the representative of innocence, she should be sweet and easily shocked but she is brusque with everybody and is not scandalized by her mother's profession. She may be acting with conventional propriety in cutting herself off from her tainted mother, but her motive is not a conventional one. She suspects her mother of being hypocritical about the rightness of choosing prostitution, and despises her. Her argument in the end for rejecting her mother is one of logic – that their lifestyles were too different for them to live with each other. The desirable young fiancee with whom the traditional ingenue is rewarded in the end is also rejected by this ingenue.

Vivie is a chilling figure to the theatre of reassurance because she cheerfully rejects all its dearest values. She brusquely dismisses the sentimental notion of an instinctive bond between mother and daughter. Though her logic is unarguable, she comes across as harsh and cold. She cuts herself off from the 'civilizing' influence of culture. And. she cuts herself off from love, not as a sacrifice for Frank's sake, but because she prefers to work. There is no place for emotion in her life. She declares to Praed and Frank:

> There are two subjects I want dropped, if you don't mind. One of them (to Frank) is

> love's young dream in any shape or form: the other(to Praed) is the romance and beauty of life.[. . .] You are welcome to any illusions you may have left on these subjects: I have none.
> (*Mrs. Warren's Profession* IV, p.270)

To a theatre of reassurance the indication that her upbringing may be responsible for her present disposition is no excuse for her behaviour. She is a frightening figure to a male-ordered society because she brushes aside the concept of women's dependence on men. The men are told to their faces that they are unnecessary for her well-being or survival as she needs neither love nor money.

In society drama the opponents of convention are finally its victims. As Martin Meisel points out, death or banishment is the required punishment for the 'courtesan (or) magdalen.'[11] Paula Tanqueray and Audrie Lesden die by suicide or consumption and Mrs. Cheveley and Mrs. Dane are cast out from society's drawing-rooms. Society stays healthy and whole in being rid of them. Salome too is punished by her society with death, but her society is the physical cause of her death, rather than a psychological cause, and it never succeeds in subduing her. In this particularly, *Salome* exaggerates to the point of subversion the themes of society drama. The bad woman in society, who defies all its codes and tries to harm some member of it due to her selfish desires is transformed by Wilde into a visibly sorceress-like creature. Her desires are portrayed through graphic images as well as actual actions. The social death

with which the bad woman threatens the young man becomes real death in *Salome*. The pressures of the bad woman's situation (arising from her society's moral restrictions) which cause her suicide or fatal illness are here personified in the force of the soldiers present on the stage. They, the guardians of social order, finally crush Salome's life out of her, as social restrictions symbolically crush the vitality out of the bad woman in society drama. On her part, Vivie too is something of a victim at the end of *Mrs. Warren's Profession*. As the New Woman she may have independence, but she is cut off from emotion, and is shown to be much less human than her mother, the Conventionally Unconventional Woman. Though Shaw tries to be sympathetic to her, Vivie is eventually given a dehumanized fate.

The important difference from the theatre of reassurance is that Salome and Vivie succeed in jarring their societies out of their complacent attitude towards the order of things. They deliver a shock because it is they who reject society, and not society that rejects them. They are the cause of disorder and confusion in their world. Salome's death causes the death of romance (the Young Syrian), religion (Jokanaan) and of authority, as Herod swears not to be absolute in his oaths anymore, and questions the meaning of kingship. Salome's harmful impulses cannot be controlled before they take effect. Vivie too, shakes the complacency of the world by negating the value of parental bonds (Mrs. Warren) and traditional morals, of religion (by not going to church), of romance (Praed), and of love (Frank). Vivie's will is as indomitable as Salome's, and as uncontrollable. Though each pays a price, each does achieve her desire.

Society's inability to control those who challenge and threaten its order demolishes the foundation of a theatre that attempts to reassure its consumers that all challenge to it can and will be repulsed.

Though Wilde claimed to be indifferent to whether or not he shocked audiences with *Salome*, Shaw deliberately used shock as a tool with which to grab the attention of the complacent theatre-goers of the 1890s. The worlds of *Salome* and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* are certainly shocking to the theatre of reassurance. Salome's world may be amoral, but it is just as vengeful towards any opponent as is the world of Vivie Warren. The only difference is that Vivie's world justifies vengeance under the guise of morality. The world of lust and vengeance that is graphically reproduced by Wilde is not tolerable by the audience of the time, despite separation by time and location. Shaw's message is that this world exists in the 1890s and is called England. Furthermore, he names every member of the audience as a citizen of this world of moral ugliness, declaring that 'my aim is to throw that guilt on the British public itself' (Preface to *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, p. 199). Members of the audience are damned as even worse sinners than the members of Salome's world because they seek to deny their relation to such a world by hiding beneath a veneer of artificial morality.

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Kaniz Khwaja Ahmed

The Glass Menagerie and its Dream Technique

The genesis of modern drama is often ascribed to a determined reaction against the Well-Made Play of Scribe, Jones, Pinero and Sardou; a repudiation of traditional moral absolutes; the naturalism of Zola; the ravages of post-war disillusionment; freedom from outmoded conventional covenants, and the collaboration and almost inspired theatre of Ibsen, Strindberg, Gorky, Hauptmann, Chekhov, Shaw and Pirandello. The dialectics vary but the fact remains that modern drama and, in particular, post-war drama is singular, compelling, even revelatory and shocking in its manifest response to real life. Traditional paradigms of tragedy and comedy disappear. The single hero or heroine is replaced by plebeian groups that lead pedestrian existences in a banal world. And, as this drama progresses, and assimilates the dreary coarse brutality of sheer human predicament, it perceives conventional dramatic modes quite inadequate to transmit its essential truth. In order to accommodate this excruciating sensibility, modern theatre has embarked on bold experimental strategies in stage technique. The ultimate aim is to make the presentation extremely novel. Thus, adaptation and authenticity become

the shibboleths. Real life as motivational subject requisitions itself through the fourth wall.

Victor Hugo's diktat of total freedom of subject, form and style, in dramatic depiction of reality marks a watershed in the history of theatre. Modern drama which commenced from the latter half of the nineteenth century is a statement of protest, revolt, thorough discontent and utter disenchantment. . Constantin Stanislavky, Andre Antoine, and Duke George of Saxe Meningen have revolutionized theatre through innovative strategies. The enlargement of subject and freedom of form, the radical shift of paradigms and the interplay of disparate representational modes have culminated in a blending and reconciliation of dramatic techniques. A persistent search for novelty heralded a pastiche and cohesion of forms, and naturalistic, symbolistic, expressionistic depiction of reality often became juxtaposed in play after play.

Theatre in America in the early twentieth century was inundated with analogous trends in style and content. Boundaries of dramatic themes were broadened through translations of continental drama. Effective theatre practices were explored. Hence post World War–I drama in America was also fashioned by rapid advances of production design, stage experimentation, reorganization of script, spectacular use of sound, light and movement. Dramatists such as Elmer Rice, Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams, essayed with forms, devising novel dramaturgy to synchronise the subject and its execution. Rice structured the jack knife set to reveal his play in retrospect. *The Adding*

Machine is a seven-scene play amalgamating expressionistic and impressionistic techniques. O'Neill restlessly experimented with varied theatre formulae to enunciate his vision of life. Miller progressed from the controlled realism of *All My Sons* to a flexible symbolistic expressionistic structure in *Death of a Salesman*. Dramaturgic empiricism and its effective rendition characterized the works of all major playwrights. Continental influences like Strindberg's dream-technique, Brecht's alienation-effect, Ibsen's realism, and even Freud's psychiatry became ascendant devices in most juxtapositions. Plays of O'Neill, Miller, Rice, and Williams defy classification because of these fusions. This article proposes to analyse Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* for its use of innovative dramatic techniques to project his theme.

Like his contemporaries, Tennessee Williams served a long apprenticeship, writing scenarios and plays for small community and independent theatre. Williams' deep insight into post – war trauma mirrored his readers' anxieties, and the innate freshness and originality of his early plays elicited favourable response. Appropriating the Plantation Myth he countered the decadence of the South against the prosperity and aggressiveness of the affluent North. This particular play depicts the nostalgic withdrawal of a gracious civilization, its ideal of glorious living, and its code of personal honour. The playwright's predominant themes stem from a pervasive fear of haunting loneliness, the characters being hounded by breakdown of correspondence and harmony. Williams defined the basic premise as the

source of artistic impulse. He claimed that his own premise encompassed the requirement to understand and exhibit tenderness and patience for those who were victims of circumstances.

The Glass Menagerie graphically delineates the stifling and helpless predicament of an impoverished lower middle class family, its gradual emaciation beneath relentless pressures, and near collapse of emotional and verbal communication. The play juxtaposes insubstantial fantasy against the destructive mechanical reality. In this construct, Williams interpenetrates subtle conflicts : harshness counters dream; ideal is pitted against real; individual aspiration jostles with strict social norm, and the ensuing cultural crisis is assailed by nostalgia, infirm hope, and regret. Assimilating within it strong auto-biographical parallels, the play was an emotional purge for the dramatist.

The antecedents of *The Glass Menagerie* can be traced to *Stairs to the Roof* and *The Battle of Angels* which contain the earliest vignette of Laura Young as a 'sick young, faded Southern belle'. Loosely knit but deeply engrossing the play revolves around four characters, tracing their life in retrospect through a collage of fragmented memories. The kaleidoscope appears as a tribute to the past that haunts Tom Wingfield, the narrator - participant. In a span of seven-scenes, in which Tom makes five appearances as commentator, and seven as protagonist, Williams charts the mental and emotional map of the entire family. Strengths, weaknesses, retreats, longings, and the inimical forces menacing the family become manifest. Each member

subsists in a private world wholly estranged from the other three. Tom Wingfield chafes and rages against his querulous, nagging parent's incessant caveats, and his own thwarted ambitions. Escape to movies and make-believe offer him some deliverance. Amanda, rejected by her husband and alienated from social reality, pathetically clings to a past of gentlemen callers, Blue Mountain and jonquils. She obsessively confuses the past with her present. Laura is an emotional and physical cripple. Taciturn, and introverted, she hides herself within self-created, abstruse confines. Jim O'Connor the only visitor to this beleaguered ménage enters as a messenger from reality, but unwittingly disturbs the already jeopardised equation and retreats to his own safe haven. The four characters are thus firmly ensconced in opaque, inviolate self-domains and any likelihood of interface appears remote. Williams mirrors this acute psychosomatic crisis through the psyche of a person integrally involved in the plight. Selecting Tom Wingfield as prime-mover in the play's dramaturgy the playwright opts for an admixture of forms. The technique is influenced by the rarefied nature of the subject. Consequently, realism apart, there is expressionism where the subconscious is revealed by a deliberate disjunction of reality; symbolism, which blurs and softens realistic dramaturgy through symbols, silence and pauses; then there is impressionism, where forms melt into each other; and finally the employment of the dream-technique with its emphasis on casual fleeting images, memory and dream. The device of narrator is appropriated from epic theatre. The textual

substratum was therefore very tenuous and compels Williams to observe in the Production Notes:

> Being a memory play, *The Glass Menagerie* can be presented with unusual freedom from convention. Because of its considerably delicate or tenuous material, atmospheric touches and subtleties of direction play a particularly important part. Expressionism and all other unconventional techniques in drama have only one valid aim, and that is a closer approach to truth. When a play employs unconventional techniques, it is not, or certainly shouldn't be, trying to escape its responsibility of dealing with reality or interpreting experience, but is actually or should be attempting to find a closer approach, a more penetrating and vivid expression of things as they are [...]truth, life or reality is an organic thing which the poetic imagination can represent or suggest, in essence, only through transformation, through changing into other forms than those which are merely present in appearance.[1]

Williams commences the play explaining his plan of execution, or dramatic strategy. He asserts in the authorial comments before Scene One :

> The scene is memory and is therefore non-realistic. Memory takes a lot of poetic license. It omits some details, others are exaggerated according to the emotional value of the articles it touches, for memory is seated predominantly in the heart. The interior is therefore dim and poetic. (GM, p.12)

Being a memory play *The Glass Menagerie* does not require classic structure. The canvas is limited and the vision purely personal. Joseph W. Beach had emphatically dismissed the genre of drama 'as a comparatively thin medium by the mere fact of its complete and inveterate objectivity[2] ',and Percy Lubbock agreed, stating that 'the dramatic scene is vivid and compact; but it is narrow, it can have no great depth, and the colour of the atmosphere can hardly tell the space[3]'. But drama, is not merely external action. If subjectivity in the guise of fears, doubts, aspirations can be represented on stage, the limited point of view gets authenticated as the point of reference. Experimental drama establishes the controlled canvas or the limited point of view. Its depiction necessitates new styles of theatre-production.

Williams' preamble confirms that the setting of the play is an impressionistic dream-world and events occur in Tom's mind. There are a series of impressions, sudden appearance and disappearances, enveloping and coalescing of past and present, symbols, sounds, silence, pauses, music and poetry. Dramatic exigency makes his psyche the controlling discipline of these elements. It also projects on stage, seven significant moments that return to haunt Tom through memories. Observing no sequence or chronology, the fragmented instances precipitate from his consciousness. Jostling of impressionistic and expressionistic devices accommodate the intangible subject and dream technique fuses form and feeling with the experience. Edward Groff postulates:

> The dream sequence in drama represents a limited point of view, for what we see on the stage exists only in the consciousness of the dreamer[...]the playwright who adopts the dream form must use the curious associative logic and symbolism of dream life [...] the dramatic action is located in a single consciousness but it is consciousness of a different order – a kind of shorthand record of experience kept by the dreamer. Because of the nature of dream life with its contempt for [...] natural laws, the playwright who uses this form [...]expends the conventional approach to the dramatization of human relationships. These relationships are, of course, the substance of dreams and dream plays, but they are seen through the prism of a drama.[4]

The acting area contains some basic symbols. There is Laura's sofa, the what-not with her glass animals, the father's smiling photograph, and the faded portieres which function as the curtain behind the imaginary fourth - wall. Every convention in art assays to depict its version of truth on stage only to be upstaged by new techniques of presentation. By the end of the nineteenth century it came to be recognised that theatre could exhibit the fragment and slice of life only behind the fourth wall. The proscenium arch or the fourth wall constituted, in its entirety, the acting area. It was psychologically and geographically distinct, separate and independent of the audience. However, theatre of illusion, or theatre of fourth wall is unable to accommodate the singularly elusive images of Strindberg's *Dream Play,* O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones,* and William's *The*

Glass Menagerie. It is because the play's form in each case, is subjective, and the stage is concerned with representation of objective reality. Appropriating the convention of narrator from epic-theatre, Williams breaches fourth wall illusion, enabling Tom Wingfield to emerge on stage to address the audience as commentator. His five appearances in Scenes One, Three, Five, Six and Seven are employed to deliberately destroy stage-illusion in semblance of Brechtian alienation-technique. Each time Tom steps out as narrator, a distance is created between the present of his being, and, the past of his reminiscence. Two planes of comprehension become simultaneously operational. One, the plane of reality at which the speaker functions, and two, the plane of retrospect, where memory is the driving force. It also establishes the fact that performance between his two appearances is dream. Dislocating the progression of thought, the commentator views reality with the double perspective of, 'Now' and 'Then', which Williams employs as theatre strategy for illusion and reality :

> Tom: Yes I have tricks in my pocket. I have things up my sleeve. But I am the opposite of a stage magician. He gives you illusion that has the appearance of truth. I give you truth in the pleasant disguise of illusion. (GM, p. 13)

Discourse on memory play remains incomplete without reference to Strindberg and Freud, whose direct, or subtle influence is evident in its multidimensional dramatic experience. In endeavoring to capture the fluidity

of dream, Strindberg did not designate scene or act demarcation. Manifest pause in the flow of scenes itself connotes a temporary termination of action. Fusion is achieved through transformations, competent use of light, and supplementary stage devices. Together, they achieve the effect of uninterrupted action. Williams differs from Strindberg in assigning scenes, yet the effortless homogeneity is similar. Despite the playwright's conscious suspension of illusion through *verfremdung* the flow of action is unimpeded.

As Laura constitutes the pivot of *The Glass Menagerie*, the seven scenes revolve around her. Scene One introduces the motif of the gentleman caller. The dramatic interplay of Scene Two decides on his viability as suitor for Laura. Scene Three depicts Amanda's obsession with the gentleman caller, and consequent altercation with Tom. The following scene administers Tom's apology and assent to bring a gentleman caller. Scene Five dramatizes the annunciation. The last two scenes illustrate his visit and departure. The disjuncted images and distorted reality of Tom's preparatory address situates the drama within a social setting. Controlling the strings like a puppet master Wingfield mentally assembles his family. Scene One establishes the metaphor of discord and the motif of the gentleman caller. Three simultaneous images of Amanda emerge ' She sometimes appears as a patient, noble and admirable mother, at others as a driving, hectoring, lecturing woman, and on some other occasions as a woman fixated on her gorgeous girlish past' (Kataria p. 56). Tom's boredom is just

as evident as Laura's helpless resignation. The movements are imaginary, almost pantomimic. Fiddle music, light, placards and images are used as dramaturgic devices. Though Laura occupies centre stage, Amanda's image as a - young - girl - on - the - porch, greeting the seventeen gentleman callers of Mississippi Delta, on a Sunday morning, at Blue Mountain, affirm the import of the original motif. The girlish mannerisms, pantomimic gestures, airy movements, liquid music, soft colours reinforce the impressionistic purport of melting forms. To coordinate with earlier action the first light on Amanda is soft and dreamy. After her fugitive departure behind the portieres, the shaft of light disconcerts her, provoking the statement 'Not one gentleman caller? It can't be true.' The scene concludes with Laura's apologetic reminder:

> It isn't a flood, its not a tornado, Mother I'm just not popular like you in Blue Mountain. Mother's afraid I'm going to be an old maid. (GM, p. 18-19)

Action unfolds in a series of scenes dissolving into each other. The characters live the emotional content of the play. With shadowy walls, imaginary movements, the functional and symbolic use of light, a mellowness and sensitive liquidity is imparted to the action. The light employed is faint, unearthly, semi-real in accordance with the dream material. There is also an occasional spotlight on Laura even when she is not the focus. Williams says:

> The lighting of the play is not realistic. In keeping with the atmosphere of memory the stage is dim. Shafts

> of light are focused on selected areas or actors. For instance in the quarrel between Tom and Amanda in which Laura has no active part, the clearest pool of light is on her figure [...] the light on Laura should be distinct from the others, having a peculiar pristine clarity [...]. A free imaginative use of light can be of enormous value in giving a mobile plastic quality to plays of more or less static nature. (PN, p. 10)

Gassner observes:

> Appia and Copeau fought naturalism by stripping the stage bare, moulding the character in light treating acting as mobile sculpture, making inner realism necessary. By disengaging the actor from the decor they made him centre of attention. More reality rather than less was bound to be required of a performer on a so-called plastic or space stage.[5]

Theatre language in modern drama integrates verbal communication, pauses and silence. However, playwrights actively involved in staging their own plays, enlarge the dramatic space through additional component of notes and instructions. Beckett, O'Neill, Miller, Williams provide extensive stage - directions about the background, mood and characters of their plays. Modern drama explicitly spells out visible and symbolic details through authorial comments, or stage directions, in order to help perceive the atmosphere, or mood the playwright wishes to create. In plays like *The Glass Menagerie* stage-directions run parallel to action complementing the dramatic design. Form, content and

feeling fuse to convey an additional dramatic dimension or space. For illustration, scan these directions from Scene Four of *The Glass Menagerie* -

> As Tom enters listlessly for his coffee, she turns her back to him and stands rigidly facing the window on the gloomy grey vault of the areaway. Its light on her face with its aged but childish features is cruelly sharp, satirical as a Daumier print.

Music Under: Ave Maria

> Tom glances sheepishly but sullenly at her averted figure and slumps at the table. The coffee is scalding hot; he sips it and gasps and spits it back in the cup. At his gasp Amanda catches her breath and half turns. Then catches herself and turns back to window.
>
> Tom blows on his coffee, glancing sidewise at his mother. She clears her throat. Tom clears his. He starts to rise. Sinks back down again, Amanda coughs. Tom raises his cup in both hands to blow on it, his eyes staring over the rim of it at his mother for several moments. Then he slowly sets the cup down and awkwardly and hesitantly rises from the chair. (GM, p. 36. The underlining is mine.)

The directions subsume evidently all primary and secondary movements in the performance.

Williams appended additional stage devices to explicate the ambiguity of his dramatic component. In his production note the dramatist has referred to this stage equipment. Though the set is sparse, and only the bare

essential props engender the appropriate ethos, the playwright makes specific mention of 'images' and 'legends'. Image is a representation of an idea or concept, and, legend can be manoeuvred explanatorily, and also as a table of symbols. Williams explains:

> These images and legends projected from behind were cast on a section of wall between the front room and the dining room area [...] The purpose of this will probably be apparent. It is to give accent to certain values in each scene. Each scene contains a particular point (or several) which is structurally the most important[...]The legend or image upon the screen will strengthen the effect of what is merely illusion in writing. (PN, p. 9)

Scene Two has four images : a swarm of typewriters; Jim as a high school hero bearing a cup; winter scene in the park; blue roses; and the legend 'the crust of humility'. Five motifs convey the quintessential vision of the scene, which began with the statement. 'Laura Haven't You Ever Liked Some Boy?' The scene opens with the semi-impressionistic presence of Laura sitting in a delicate ivory chair, clothed in a soft violet kimono washing and polishing her glass animals. Soft fading music and a backdrop of rare blue roses sustain the aura of unearthliness. Noise from the door presages, the entree of the cheaply clad grim visaged Amanda. Laura quickly crosses over to sit in front of a diagram of the typewriter keyboard. Her endeavour is reinforced by the image 'swarm of typewriters' a global symbol of drudgery and hard work. However Amanda is not deceived because she is armed with the knowledge that Laura had eschewed

attending the Rubicam Business College. Tearing the Gregg's Alphabet chart Amanda admonishes her for truancy. The succeeding image 'winter scene in the park' encompasses montages of alternate places visited by Laura. The Art Museum, the bird houses in the Zoo, the glass house of tropical flowers, is each a separate haven symbolically linked to Laura's predicament. She lives on the threshold of a real-unreal world. With a vacuous inane life, divorced from all expedience of fuller existence her withdrawal into herself is complete. Laura's psychological, and emotional maladjustment lay in her sense of inadequacy and strangeness. The debilitating pleurosis, and physical disability are manifestations of her deep sense of insufficiency. Marriage appears as convenient option, as the legend 'the crust of humility' also indicates. It triggers the image of 'Jim as the High School Hero' and also answers the query with which the scene began. Incidentally Jim O'Connor, the messenger from reality becomes Laura's one and only gentleman caller. This technique of images and legends in practiced through out the play.

The collocation of stage-images, explanatory captions, labels and placards enabled the dramatist to abbreviate his content. The unconventional devices-stage-manoeuvres, sound and light, lend an audiovisual, cinematic effect to the play. Images are manipulated to harmonize with the premise which regulates their deployment. Though the dramatist enjoys the latitude to exploit any object, the actual application depends upon cogency of generated response, and its extent of assimilation into the fabric of drama. The melody of *The Glass Menagerie* is utilised as

theme music, and songs from the dance -hall, church music, sound of the rattle, the Dardanella, Ave-Maria, and 'All the world is waiting for the sunrise' also punctuate the dramaturgic content at regular intervals. Williams explains:

> The *Glass Menagerie* is used to give emotional emphasis to suitable passages. This tune is like circus music not when you are on the grounds, or in the immediate vicinity of the parade, but when you are at some distance and very likely thinking of something else. It seems under these circumstances to continue almost interminably and it weaves in and out of your preoccupied consciousness, then it is the lightest most delicate music in the world and perhaps the saddest. It expresses the surface vivacity of life with the underlying strain of immutable and inexpressible sorrow [...] It serves as a thread of connexion and allusion between the narrator with his separate point of view in time and space and the subject of his story. (PN, p.9)

Dictated by the exigency of the dream material, Tom Wingfield is made to convert the dramatis personae into symbols. He himself becomes one-with-a-difference because of his role as a link between objectivity, which distances him from the action, and subjectivity which concedes participation. Jim O'Connor, a symbol of nameless, unrealised expectations represents reality. The glass menagerie itself, the leitmotif, is Laura's collection of delicate colourful animals. Though contiguous to Laura's own private and fragile world, it also embodies within itself three separate self-enclosed worlds. Each habitant is alienated and seeks escape: Amanda to the past; Tom to movies; and Laura

in music. The limp which bestows her a sense of oddity, is also a correlative of Laura's psyche. Her one-horned unicorn, a fabled creature with healing power, forfeits the prized horn for collective identity with its kindred. The incident is symbolic of Laura's interlude with Jim O'Connor. The unicorn's sacrifice and her own timid flirtation with reality are both rebuffed with scorn, because tender dreams that people the anima of Tom and his family are destined to crumble when confronted with harsh reality. Williams embellishes the dramatic fabric with a surfeit of symbols. The father's smiling photograph, Wrigley's Building, Jolly Roger, the rattle maker, movie tickets, the victrola, jonquils, the moon, blue roses, the encumbering garments worn by Tom, the coloured glass bottles, and the candles, are some of the many symbols Williams weaves to impart the dream effect.

The characters of *The Glass Menagerie*, driven by individual despairs and self-pity, emerge from an unreal atmosphere of simulated dreams, which dramaturgy sets on stage. There is no final solution, neither is there any reconciliation of conflict, because the playwright's concern is existence, being, circumstances, and survival. As a chronicle of just-a-segment-of-life it emphasizes the fragmented nature of reality, and, the conclusion therefore remains open - ended.

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Nikhat Taj

The 'Prologue' as a Narrative Device in Angus Wilson's *Late Call*

Angus Wilson's fifth novel *Late Call* (1964) represents a watershed in his career as a novelist. Most traditional of the novels (written in the mode of liberal humanist tradition) it is toned with narrative effects which evidence

> His development as a writer[. . .]representative of some major changes that have taken place in the English novel since the war.[1]

Coming a generation after the great experimental novelists of the early twentieth century, Wilson's keen interest in the development of the contemporary novel and the serious concern he paid to the problems of method of fiction, made him aware that the English literary tide had begun to turn against the novel of 'interior monologue' or 'stream of consciousness'. Elaborating his views on fiction in an article titled – 'Experimental' (1955) he wrote:

> The time has come when a perceptive critic might assess the value of the ill named "psychological novel" without regard to the tedious and false distinction of "experimental" and "traditional" novels which has befogged any discussion upto now.[2]

His developing attitude as a critic and reviewer had made him eclectic 'to profit from the example of Dickens without dismissing that of Joyce'. [3]Conscious of the new bearings in the novels at the level of narrative structuring, fictional techniques and narratology, Wilson tried to assimilate the traditional with the new tendencies.

In *Hemlock and After* (1952) and *Anglo Saxon Attitudes* (1956) his first two novels, Wilson makes a deliberate attempt to bring back into English fiction the social breath of nineteenth century. But in *The Middle Age of Mrs. Elliot* (1958) he attempts to combine nineteenth century diversity with modernistic depth. However by mid 1960s, Wilson had come to recognize as he himself expressed the 'essential problematic nature of fictional form in our times' and hence 'attempted to introduce into his fiction various alienating devices and self referential features designed to call attention to the fictive nature of the text'[4]. Just as his interest in diversity and depth is related to his ambitions as a socio – moral novelist, the anti roman techniques provide Wilson a fictional course that would take him beyond the traditional.

> I think my positon has been greatly modified, even strongly changed by my own development as a novelist. My feeling that the traditional form was inhibiting me from saying all I wanted to say. To some extent I tried to move out of it [. . .]although shall always probably remain imbued with certain qualities derived from Nineteenth Century novel. [5]

It is important to remember that Wilson's fondness for new fictional devices and anti roman features remain

subordinate to the traditional concern of the novel. His attempt is not to subvert the realist text but to be seen as an effort of a self conscious narrator who wants to convey a sense of the fictional world as an authorial construct setup against a background of literary tradition and convention – a representation of moral situation in their social context. *Late Call*, is a wonderful manifest of this aspect of Wilson's writing. In an interview given to Michael Moorcok, Angus Wilson observed:

> I use traditional techniques and modern techniques [. . .] I work in and out from the world as it is supposed to be, the documented world as we know it [. . .] into my interior world and into a world of expressionism and so on, but increasingly I've felt free to do these things and not mind what people say.[6]

The aim of the present paper is to analyze and interpret the 'prologue' in *Late Call* as a narrative device employed by Wilson in the exploration and exposition of the chief thematic concern of the novel. The 'prologue' creates the 'apport' (to use Wilson's own word) or atmosphere to become the indefinable spirit informing the novel. The novel's prologue and the parallels between it and the body of the text set claim to its aesthetic priority in the schematic design of the narrative. Wilson could have written the novel with a simple plot structure, couched in straightforward narration or possibly with a flashback into the past. The change of method - of incorporating varied narrative modes in his novel affects and emphasizes the fictive nature of the work and adds a new dimension to his art of writing.

The 'narrative of the hump-backed' –bizarre and extraneous to the story, is introduced as an alienating technique to disturb the ever smooth relationship between the writer and the reader of the traditional novel. However, it becomes an indirect adjunct to the understanding of the prologue (which is lying abandoned ever since). The suggested time - shift between the present (hump-backed's tale) and the past (prologue) and back again is handled with structural neatness and dexterity. The old hag's tale is a brilliant display of creative ingenuity that helps forge the prologue with the main narrative schema but also harmonize it with the climactic scene (storm scene) of the novel. To collocate the prologue with the storm scene, Wilson relies on the assurance that reading is a cooperative activity and *Late Call* demands this extra from the reader - writer contract.

The exigesis of the narrative intention and design lies in the prologue. Along with the 'hump-backed's tale' it gives us a glimpse into points of view and helps to coalesce and map the lost years of Sylvia Calvert's (protagonist) life between the 'hot summer of 1911' and the storm scene of the 1960s. The time span of the unaccounted fifty years (till now a source of worrisome anxiety for the readers) gains in meaningful context. The need is not only for Sylvia but for the reader as well to 'return across time to that early crisis in the woods[. . .]' This meaningful actualization takes place in the mind of the reader in collaboration with the author. Success of *Late Call* hinges on this tacit understanding. The prologue and the old hag's tale as fictional devices act synergistically with the expressive and communicative concern of the novel.

Angus Wilson conceived the novelist as a humanist and the novel as a work of art dealing with human beings and human emotions, in the 'Dilemma of the Contemporary Novelist' articulated thus:

> Those who speak so blithely of the disappearance of the novelist [. . .]are usually anti humanist [and] have not very strong feelings about human individuals as such.[7]

Committed to this constructive concern, *Late Call* like his earlier two novels *Anglo Saxon Attitudes* and *The Middle Age of Mrs. Elliot* becomes a study in the 'dynamics of evasion'. Working out Sylvia Calvert's crisis of personality - the dislocation between the inner world of her individual/ subjective needs and the outer world of societal pressures and conventional norms.

> At a strategically situated point in their lives, that last chance to locate the right direction despite a tangle of wrong turns behind them, his people are put to the test of awareness. They must rediscover the past in order to confront the unfound future. [8]

Sylvia Calvert of *Late Call*, like Meg Elliot of *The Middle Age of Mrs. Elliot* has to seek in her childhood (prologue) the source of her deepest fears; like Gerald Middleton of *Anglo Saxon Attitudes* stirred by the pressures of consciousness, she too has to engage in a research of her own history through which she has sleep walked. She must open up to changes, have courage to face the truth of herself and make something more of her remaining life.

The ageing protagonist Sylvia Calvert (in her sixties) is introduced to the readers as a recently retired manageress of small hotels. She along with her husband moves to the 'progressive' Carshall New Town to live with her widowed son Harold and his teenaged children. Hitherto her busy life schedule had kept her at a distance from self knowledge and the realization of the greyness of human situation. Her retired life thrusts her into a realm of awareness where she must not only adjust to sharply reduced circumstances but also come face to face with the inner reality of herself – her carefully built detachment, her deep seated loneliness and pattern of denial and evasion. Sylvia's initial hopes of coming to terms with her new mode of existence – a life of extreme bonhomie, naïve enthusiasm and abundance of civic amenities – however come to a nought.

> Sylvia Calvert, simple, passive, weighted by shame and a sense of worthlessness must drown in a life of simple ritual activity, activity which seems to control her and thus abolish her .[9]

Her son's house becomes a prison to her; and life is reduced to a 'dark nothingness' and 'dreadful silence.' 'The weeks, the years ahead' that 'stretched out in front of her in empty usefulness' become 'dead weights upon her spirit'. Plagued by 'dark desolate thoughts' Sylvia sees herself as 'an ageing woman humiliatingly pulped into nullity.' Feeding her own morbidity she finds self images in all that she reads – 'the reviled old mother in Osborne's play; the Jewesses going to the gas chamber'; in the victim of the gruesome murder. Thus nagged by her feelings of unappeased loneliness,

pervasive depression and a sense of waste she begins to take walks out of Carshall Town into the countryside. She thought, perhaps to weave all the threads together again she needed to return to the country world of her childhood'. [10]

It is at this juncture, the prologue, which seemed to have been completely subsumed, begins to evoke some tacit memories both in the readers and the protagonist. However before a complete connection is worked out between the eschewed prologue and Sylvia Calvert's existence, the ' old hump-backed's tale' as an alienating technique is woven into the narrative structure.

> But as the narrative went on the woman's physical presence was completely swallowed up in her words. Although there were many places and people that were unknown to her, and although the woman's sing song foreign accent was not at all easy to follow, she found herself quite carried away yet when the story was ended she felt only torn and sad .[11]

In this seemingly unpredicated digression (Sylvia's encounter with the hunchbacked woman) affects in her a 'wondering respect for someone who had been through so much.' The paranoid convictions of the little old hag induce Sylvia to reflect on her own life – her obsession with death and decay; her continued avoidance of facing life. In the old humpbacked she discovers a grotesque image of herself – a 'jumbo size Humpy without the hump.'

Now begins the explanation of the protagonist's smothered nature. Sylvia's life which had been an enormous 'frozen moment' in a game of grandmother's step begins to stir and finds resolution in the climactic storm scene. When

the storm breaks out the terrified Sylvia flees to the safety of an open field, only to return back into the copse to drag a screaming hysterical little girl to safety - away from the oak tree , minutes before it is struck by lightning.

> There, herself shivering with the cold drenching rain and with shock, Sylvia held the small trembling girl to her until they seemed to merge into one sodden mass .[12]

This instance becomes the 'epiphany' or the moment of realization for Sylvia when she gains in' however fleeting the actual moment of imaginative fusion, a sustaining sense of continuity, wholeness and completion'.[13] She transcends her fear and revulsion of the body as sin, instilled in her so long ago[...] the crippling childhood incident in the life of the eldest Tuffield girl (read Sylvia Calvert) in the prologue.

Returning across space and time to the 'hot summer day in 1911', Sylvia reenters the flow of time to reenact and revert it. Herein is emphasized the aesthetic priority of the prologue. Till now substrative to the body of the novel, it emerges to identify and integrate with the life and person of the protagonist. Sylvia identified as the Tuffield girl (at the age of ten), on that hot summer afternoon had abandoned the dull chores on her parents run down farm for a joyous ramble into the woods with Myra Longmore (a little girl - daughter of a paying guest on the farm of the Tuffield's). However her experience of carefree abandonment and joyous freedom – of 'lying back in the warmth of the leaf dappled sun shine'; of paddling and her

splashing in the brook ;of dancing and singing is short lived. On returning back Mrs. Longmore confronts her with half-veiled insinuations that something 'rude' had transpired in the woods. Mrs. Longmore delineated as a 'fake liberal' had encouraged in the Tuffield girl a sense of being special – to 'feel free' and to experience 'the force of her joy.' This feeling leads the child to break free and venture out from the duty bound restrictions of her home when persuaded by the spoilt and self- absorbed Myra. But Mrs. Longmore's 'prurient' reaction to her afternoon of innocent joy dismays and mystifies the child:

> The farmer's wife [. . .]dragging the eldest girl by the arm [. . .]made of back to the farm. The eldest Tuffield girl looked back once; she had shed no tears, only she was shivering a little; Mrs. Longmore began to smile a little smile of comfort, but something in the girl's eyes froze the smile[. . .] [14]

The incident evokes in its details the repressive atmosphere in which Sylvia's childhood is shrouded. The trauma of this experience leaves her emotionally and psychologically scarred to lead a life of emotional starvation and self denial.

The storm scene an ironic inversion of the childhood excursion, becomes an extended variation of the earlier experience. It evinces the protagonist's process of regeneration and renewal. Re-contacting her childhood past, Sylvia rediscovers a pulse of feeling and a desire to live again. Having returned to that moment in her past, she makes contact with her history and emerges out of the 'woods' this time like a heroine. In the earlier encounter she had

been humiliated, severely beaten and sent to the isolation of her bed. This time she is rewarded with sensitive and sensual display of affection and gratitude - Amanda climbs into her bed and Mrs. Egan kisses her thanks.

The symbolic mode of the climactic scene is carefully modulated back to the realistic mode of the novel. The ensuing events further indicate the working of the restorative process in Sylvia. Having suffered a stroke in the storm she soon returns to normal and begins hesitatingly to assert herself and assume an identity of her own. Under the continuing influence of the Egans, she makes a successful transformation. Amanda's persistent demands for accounts of her childhood days result in a 'constant transfusion of Sylvia's childhood memories.' She resurrects her past and reties the broken threads of her life – 'she did remember them more and more[. . .]memories that came from she couldn't really tell[. . .]' [15]

The storm scene acts as an auxilliary to relocate and realign the prologue with Sylvia Calvert's existence. From being a disjunctive piece of narration (for the course of nearly two-third of the text) it transcends to assume a significance consummate with the life of the protagonist as well as manifest the thematic interest of the narrative. Wilson's strategy to 'orphan' the prologue and let it fend for itself is a master-stroke of the author's creative ingenuity. To allow the origins of Sylvia Calvert to remain unknown as well as the identity of the Tuffield girl hidden till the storm scene is a successful artistic ploy which adds to the narrative interest of *Late Call*. The prologue as a narrative device endorses

Wilson's claim – 'the novelists take what they will, where they will and when they will.' It remains for the reader irrelevant, disconnected and lost until it becomes exigent for him to seek out the muted details from memory and assimilate them with the body of the novel.

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Shahla Ghauri

Identity Crisis In Paul Scott's *Staying On*

Paul Scott's *The Raj Quartet* has secured a prominent place for him among such novelists as Rudyard Kipling and E.M. Forster who have written about the British Raj. But, unlike Kipling, who captures 'a sense of pride in British accomplishments' and a faith in the success of 'imperial purpose',[1] Scott recreates the decline of the power and the glory of the Raj in his novels on India. He minutely scrutinizes the closing years of the British rule in India in the *Quartet* but his last novel *Staying On* (1977) which reads as a 'sad comedy', is the culmination of the mood of desolation and the sense of alienation he has so elaborately traced in his *Quartet*. In this sense his last novel is a sequel to his better known work. Unfortunately, within the corpus of critical works on Paul Scott, almost all attention is focused on the *Quartet* while *Staying On* is almost neglected in comparison. One of the reasons for this shorter novel being overshadowed by the *Quartet* could be its style which borders on the comic in contrast to the solemnity of the *Quartet*. Apparently it is light, humorously derisive and full of innovation but the resulting pathos poses serious issues concerning identity crisis on more than one level.

The identity crisis in *Staying On* results from Scott's ultimate view of the absurdity of the situation when Lucy

and Tusker Smalley, an elderly British couple, choose to stay back after the departure of the British from India. They are vestiges of the fast fading identity of the Raj. In the first novel of the *Quartet, Jewel in the Crown,* Miss Edwina Crane's decision to stay in pre-independence India, even after the departure of the Nesbitt-Smiths, leaves her feeling isolated amidst the brown natives. She experiences angst and feels herself terribly dwarfed, 'famished in the spirit, pressed down by the tremendous weight of the land'[2]. Her individual identity is put to question among the strangers. The decision of the Smalleys in *Staying On* to stay in independent India even after the expiry and obsequies of the Raj, reflects with greater force the consequent anguish and loneliness in trying to adjust to an alien culture and in identifying their own selves. As their very surname suggests their overall diminution, the Smalleys becomes a metaphor for the degraded social types of the Sahib and the Memsahib.

In Pankot, of post independence India, the retired and aged Colonel Tusker Smalley and his almost as aged wife, Lucy Smalley now live in 'genteel poverty' at the Lodge, the annexed part of the Smith`s hotel, owned by the lustful and money-minded Leela Bhoolabhoy and Mr. Francis Bhoolabhoy, her cowardly and timid third husband. Before moving to the Lodge, the Smalleys had lived in Mabel Layton`s beautiful Rose Cottage. The Rose Cottage itself is an elaborately drawn significant image which can be viewed as Scott`s conceptualisation of the ideal British India in the *Quartet*. The transformation of the Rose garden into a tennis court reiterates the lost identity of the British in the country. Likewise, the Smalleys also lose their individuality as they

no longer are the owners but have become only poor tenants. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy`s complete authority over the functioning of the Smith`s hotel acts as a perfect foil to the feigned authority of the Smalleys over their faithful but irresponsible servants – Ibrahim and Minnie. Long after the end of the Raj, the Smalleys try to assert their identity as 'pakka sahib' and 'memsahib' of the heyday of the British rule through their eccentricities and idiosyncrasies especially with their capricious threats of sacking their servants Ibrahim and Minnie and later reappointing them. Their vain attempts to reassert their authority, makes Ibrahim call them 'pagal'[3] (*Staying On* p.50) outright.

Tusker Smalley's love for the 'canna- lilies' in the garden of the Lodge brings out his extreme aberrant behaviour so much so that when the landlady intentionally sacks the 'mali' and the garden is left unattended, Tusker falls sick. One of the terms of agreement between the Smalleys and the Bhoolabhoys is that the garden should be maintained shipshape by the owner. The 'Operation Mali' which follows is Lucy's attempt, assisted by Ibrahim, to improve the state of the garden and thereby help Tusker recover his health. She takes up the trouble of hiring an orphan boy named Joseph, at her own expense, to cut down the grass with the tools secretly supplied by Mr. Bhoolabhoy. Lucy tries to deceive Tusker by concealing the true identity of the person who brought in the new 'mali'. She makes him believe that it is the landlady who has finally arranged for the 'mali'. This deception on her part further aggravates the identity crisis in the novel. Unconsciously, Lucy is

asserting Mrs Bhoolabhoy's identity as the owner of the Smith's and in contrast getting herself disguised in obscurity.

Staying On, Scott's final novel, suggests a period of transition in his reconstruction of the end and aftermath of the Raj's end in India as some of its last representatives fade away and their demise is symbolized by the fate of Smith's hotel, shrunken beside the Shiraz. Scott, poignantly enforces the point that the Smalleys are like Smith's beside the towering Shiraz : small, insignificant, expendable, looked down upon by the upper section of the society. Since Independence, the fluctuations in Pankot's popularity affected the fortunes of the Smith's, but now it was getting drowned in a tide of progress.

In exposing the very personal experiences of the Smalleys, Scott subtly brings to light their degraded position. His humorous portrayal of the 'viceregal thrones' meant for Lucy and Tusker becomes symptomatic of their lost identity. Flush-toilets, which hold the 'status of shrines' for the English and were considered 'part of the Christian religion', were denied to the Smalleys.

> Flush toilets had been fitted at the main hotel. Below these thrones (at the Lodge) were only sanitation pans which the sweeper removed through a hole in the outside wall. Mrs. Bhoolabhoy could sit to her heart's content on a pakka loo. Sahib and Memsahib had to make do with these thunder- boxes. (*Staying On*, p.36)

On one occasion both Tusker and Lucy are forced to take up their thrones together 'to perform the functions of a suitably Rabelaisian ceremony', and it is when they both have diarrhoea:

> Actually it had only happened once, the time they'd both eaten something that disagreed with them. She'd always sworn she'd never undergo the indignity of sitting on her loo while Tusker was sitting on his. But, this once, she'd been driven to it, and halfway through the performance Tusker had begun to laugh and after a while she had begun to laugh too, so there they had been, enthroned, laughing like drains.(*Staying On*, p. 214)

The novel ends depicting Lucy sitting alone beside the empty 'throne' lamenting Tusker's demise. Through this recurrent image of the 'viceregal thrones', Scott depicts their identity in post- independence India.

Going back in time, Scott vividly describes how Tusker once played the role of a gesticulating clown in the 'Holi-party' of Colonel Menektaras. His identity has been reduced to a clown whose duty is confined to entertaining the Indian people at parties. His own personality has gradually undergone a change through the years and in trying to adjust himself to this situation of inverted hierarchy, he knows that he will have to act according to what the situation demands:

> There he was, in the garden of the oldest and most beautiful bungalow in Pankot, a gesticulating clown, coloured from head to foot and giving a performance that was not so much attracting attention as forcing laughter from the immaculately dressed and well- behaved Indians whom he was haranguing, or telling some unseemly story to.(*Staying On*, p148)

However, Lucy unlike Tusker is more conscious of their dignity and therefore feels more embarrassed and out-of-place in that party. She tries to figure out the thoughts of her hosts in their attitude towards Tusker's role as a clown: 'it was obvious to Lucy that Coocoo was thinking: "yes, you're nice, you can be fun, you make us laugh, you're always welcome, but you're an Englishman so you represent the defeated enemy".' (*Staying On*,p146). The reversal of roles becomes more evident with the authority along with the airs and graces of the departed rulers manifesting itself in the Indians of modern Pankot. The Smalleys are left clinging to the illusion of still being the 'pakka elite', consequently trying to keep up the family's aristocratic style of living. They try to keep on attending parties, spending on drinks, sumptuous dinners and zealously maintaining the landlady's garden of canna lilies. The reality, on the contrary, is that Tusker's monthly income is insufficient for even meeting the routine expenses of housekeeping.

Lucy's love for movies mirrors her dull and subdued life. She frequently goes to see a movie in Electric Talkies, sometimes alone and sometimes accompanied by Ibrahim. Her unsatiated desires in life force her to look for fulfillment in the experiences of other people. She completely identifies herself with the heroines of the movies she goes to watch:

> She could be anything and anyone she wished. Within the darkness of her closed eyes and enfolding palms she was suddenly — how strange — Renée Adorée running after the truck

> taking Jack Gilbert away to the front in *The Big Parade* (*Staying On*, p167)

Similarly she tries to break free from the monotony of life by listening to songs and dancing with an imaginary partner. Even in her old age Lucy is haunted by memories of her first amorous experience with a young man called Toole, her uncle's driver. Her existence at the domestic front, on the whole, is equally disappointing. Her identity as Mrs. Smalley is as insignificant as her fantasies. Scott makes an ironic probe into the thwarted married life of the Smalleys, comparing and contrasting their present with their past. For Lucy, Tusker 'had always been something of a disappointment'. There was no love lost between the two. The fact that their love was mechanical even in the early days of their married life is brought out in the following passage:

> Subsequently he scarcely seemed to notice her at all. He went through the motions. Of these motions, so he had worked it out over the months and years, there was an average of thirty. His climax was not so much a climax as a sigh, after which he collapsed as if pole-axed, rolled away and slept. (*Staying On* p.74)

She feels distanced even from the man with whom she is identified in society. Being lonely, she further engages herself in such futile activities as getting her grey hair blue-rinsed to hide her age. She somehow manages to strike a 'cut-rate deal' with one of her acquaintances, Susy Williams, for her hair treatment at the Seraglio in the new Shiraz hotel.

After the treatment, the new colour of her hair does nothing to make her feel better she remains the same 'old Mrs. Smalley' with her troubles and her lost individuality.

When Lucy compares her present position with Susy Williams, the Eurasian woman, she is seen as having come a long way but her search for true identity in this country still continues. She realizes that nothing has changed for her and that she and Tusker had become for the 'new race of sahibs and memsahibs of international status and connection almost as far down in the social scale as the Eurasians were in the days of the raj'.(*Staying on*, p.181). She is going to invite Susy to dinner although she had never shown any hospitality to her before. She almost comes of age when she makes this identification and realizes the true nature of their position in a foreign country. She yearns for her roots back in her native country but finds herself 'caught in a tangled web'. Many a times she regrets Tusker`s decision to stay back after the British left India.

Tusker's death acts as a final blow to Lucy. The letter sent by Mrs. Bhoolabhoy asking Tusker to seek alternative accomodation elsewhere, proves fatal to him and he dies while Lucy is at the saloon in Hotel Shiraz getting her hair blue - rinsed. Back at the Lodge, she is haunted by his memories and when the darkness of the night envelops the Lodge, She realizes the intensity of her loneliness with a force never felt before and she wails aloud disconsolately:

> Why did you leave me here? I am frightened to be alone, Tusker, although I know it is wrong and weak to be frightened– –but now, until

> the end, I shall be alone, whatever I am doing, here as I feared, amid the alien corn, waking, sleeping, alone for ever and ever and I cannot bear it— —Tusker, I hold out my hand, and beg you, Tusker, beg, beg you to take it and take me with you. How can you not, Tusker? Oh, Tusker, Tusker, Tusker, how can you make me stay here by myself while you yourself go home? (*Staying On* ,p216)

In her cry lies the desperation, loneliness and desolation of her entire being. The implication of the word 'home' in the above context is quite obvious but Lucy could not afford to go 'home'. Her 'staying on' has alienated her from her own people and her own country. Her estrangement from her native place is evident through the few letters she writes and receives during the course of the novel. She could never feel affinity with the Indian people or become part of the Indian culture. The identity crisis in the novel results inevitably out of this vicious circle in which the Smalleys are caught and Scott ironically 'entertains' the readers through their various ordeals. Of course there is a lot more to the novel than what a study of the identity crisis might possibly suggest. Its impact lies in its details which are too many to be listed here but it is these details which make the novel a poignant document of human suffering laced with dark comedy and sardonic laughter.

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Masoodul Hasan

Twentieth-Century Indian Response to Omar Khayyam

Best known today for his poetic quatrains, Omar Khayyam (1048-1123) enjoyed long-lasting reputation in the Middle Ages primarily as a scientist and philosopher. In his history of philosophers (*Tarikh-al Hukama*), al-Qifti (d. 1248) noticed him as 'the greatest scientist of his time, an astronomer without peer', while Ibn Khaldun (1332-1406), the pioneer of Arab historiography, acclaimed him as the greatest mathematician/geometrician.[1] Even in the early twentieth century Shibli Numani (d. 1941), the great Indian scholar, while appraising Khayyam as a poet, admired him especially for his philosophic thought and scientific achievements. Shibli compares him to Avicenna, and gives credit to the Europeans for his poetic revival rather than to the enthusiasm of his own countrymen and coreligionists. Bibliographical accounts also show that Khayyam owes his current popularity mainly to his English translator, Edward Fitzgerald (1809-1883), whose English version of the *Rubaiyat* had an important India connection. Fitzgerald's translation was largely based on the transcription of the Calcutta manuscript of the *Rubaiyat* owned by the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, and it was provided to him by his friend E.B. Cowell in June 1857 who was the Professor of history at the Presidency College (Calcutta).[2] The following brief

extract from an article in the *Calcutta Review*, incorporated in the preface to Fitzgerald's first edition of the *Rubaiyat* (1859) reflects the indifferent attitude to Omar Khayyam in the pre-Fitzgerald phase:

> For whatever Reasons, however, Omar, as before said, has never been popular in his own country, and therefore has been but charily transmitted abroad.[3]

Subsequently, the English version of the *Rubaiyat* scaled unprecedented heights of popularity in the years that followed. Though Khayyam had been casually noticed as a mathematician and astronomer in Europe in 1583, his quatrains received a passing notice only in the seventeenth century in England from Sir Thomas Hyde, the Professor of Arabic and the Librarian at Oxford. H.G. Keene attempted a translation in 1816. But for a fuller and lasting recognition the *Rubaiyat* had to wait till 1859 when Fitzgerald diffidently produced his anonymous, 'transmogrified' version in English. For some time it remained unsold until by a quirk of luck it caught the attention of A.C. Swinburne, D.G. Rossetti, William Morris and John Ruskin. From then on the quatrains have been in popular demand. Some other and fuller versions followed and the 'Omar wave' was born that has swept across the Atlantic shores. Ambrose G.Potter, the bibliographer, has listed 410 English language editions, and more than 700 books and articles on Khayyam and his poetry during 1859 and 1929 alone. An 'Omar Khayyam Club' was formed in England in 1892 with famous men of letters on

its rolls. Edmund Gosse, the mentor and literary patron of Sarojini Naidu, was president of the Club for a number of years. The club holds annual meetings/dinners, and is still active. Another Khayyam Club was founded in America in 1900, and lasted till 1930. Well-known book illustrators, like Dulac, did plates and illustrations for various English and American editions of the *Rubaiyat*. The Omar-cult was sometimes reflected in the choice of pen names. For example, H.N. Monroe, a member of the Bloomsbury Group, called himself 'Saki', and an American poet was named Omar Pound.

Though the Perso-Indian literary heritage provided a congenial background, the early 19th century yields little evidence of any active interest in Khayyam's poetry in India. Some manuscripts existed in private collections, but they saw the light of print only in the closing years of the century, probably inspired by the spurt of translations in the West. Later, in the 20th century English 'rubaiyat' were prescribed in literary courses for the undergraduate classes along with pieces from Milton, Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning. Examination-papers invariably included questions on Fitzgerald's/Omar Khayyam's pessimism and philosophy of life. Standard anthologies of English poetry carried a choice of Khayyam's pieces. The generations brought up on this literary menu were bound to respond actively to the new, exotic oriental recipe. Interest in Omar Khyyam's was aroused through English, activating editorial and critical scholarship and translations in the indigenous languages. Indian response to the Persian poet is best represented through the large number of Indian editions of the *Rubaiyat*,

and translation in all the major languages of the country. In the early years translations or Persian texts were published from Allahabad, Amritsar, Bombay, Delhi, Hyderabad, Lahore and Lucknow. The Nawal Kishore Press of Lucknow brought out a number of editions in Persian and Urdu.

Among the Persian editions done by Indian scholars Mahfoozul Haq's edition of 1939, deserves special notice. It gives a scholarly account of Persian calligraphy, and discusses the genuineness of some quatrains. There is a brief discussion of the five miniatures found in the manuscript in the Bihzad style. Some other editions enlarged and sought to determine the Khayyam canon. The *Tarana-hai-Khayyam*, edited by Syed Raghib Husain (Lucknow, 1960), however, gives only 200 Persian 'rubais' with a brief, informative introduction. Husain maintains that Khayyam was the first Persian poet to introduce ethical and philosophical subjects in the 'rubai' genre. He acknowledges the European contribution to the revival of interest in Omar Khyyam. Obviously, for reasons of cultural affinity and because of the pervasive Persian influence, the largest number of translations appeared in Urdu. They are generally in verse form of the original Persian style; but invariably the translators have consulted Fitzgerald as well. A few translations were done in prose too, while some others were bilingual. Jalaluddin Ahmad Jafri's text and commentary is a good specimen of the latter type. He reproduces 908 Persian 'rubais' along with their translation, and a detailed biographical memoir. The principal themes are classified, and textual and philosophical points explained. Maulavi Imamuddin edited 921 quatrains of Omar Khayyam, and

published them from Amritsar with a critical introduction. He refers to Fitzgerald's first edition, and discounts the charge of hedonism against Omar Khayyam, and from internal evidence proves that Omar Khayyam was a man of sound faith. Imamuddin interprets wine as a metaphor for the divine nectar. Many fragmentary translations appeared in various Urdu journals too. Another translation (1924) by Mir Waliullah of Abbotabad comprises Urdu translations in verse, a brief introduction, and a commentary. The Mir traces the course of Fitzgerald's first translation of 75 quatrains, and dismisses his mis-reading of Khayyam's Sufic intent as carousal and sensuous love. *Mai-e-do Atisha* (Hyderabad) compiled by Shaukat Bilgrami received some good reviews in the press. *Do Jaam* (Delhi, 1960) was a translation of fifty 'rubais' by a leading Urdu poet of the day, Abdul Hameed 'Adam'. The translation was highly rated for its sensitive rendering and evocative idiom. *Taaj-ul Kalam*, an Urdu translation by Muhammad Laeeq Husain Naqvi (Delhi, 1964) also received favourable reviews. These are only a few references to some better-known Urdu translations of Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, whose comprehensive listing is not possible here.

Omar Khayyam evoked respect and tribute of translation from scholars and poets in other Indian languages too in a fair measure. Harivansh Rai 'Bachchan', a trend-setter in modern Hindi poetry, created his most famous work, *Madhu Shala* (1935) from Omar Khyyam's *Rubaiyat*. The Hindi version has run into several editions and reprints, and 'Bachchan' – himself a University teacher of English – has openly acknowledged Fitzgerald's text as

his original source. At least seven other translations are known to have been made in Hindi – some of them by noted poets like Rahguvansh Lal Gupta, Sumitra Nandan Pant and Maithli Sharan Gupta. All these translations owe a direct debt to Fitzgerald. A multilingual selection of the Rubaiyat (in 30 languages of the world) was compiled by Mohsen Ramazani from Tehran in 1964, and it includes specimens from Gujarati, Hindi, Marathi, Sanskrit, Tamil and Urdu. Mirza Qalish Beg, a prolific Sindhi writer and poet, translated 125 quatrains into Sindhi and published them as *Rubaiyate Umar Khayyam* in 1904. Nine separate translations appeared in Tamil, the first one in 1937; and all of them are based on Fitzgerald. However, Tamkevyal Lokidasan's *Umarkayamun tathvankal* (Madras, 1980) is claimed to have been done directly from Persian. Menon (1916) and Madhusankaran (1932) made Malyalam translations based on Fitzgerald's version. Upandranth Jha 'Vyas' also translated the 'rubais' from English into Maithili. This illustrated edition came out from Patna in 1966. A Kashmiri translation in verse of 150 quatrains was made by, the Sahitya Academy awardee, Ghulam Nabi 'Khayal' and published as *Rubaiyat-e-Omar Khayyam* (1961). It carried artistic sketches by a noted Kashmiri painter, Mohan Raina. 'Khayal' has consulted the English version of the quatrains by Fitzgerald and Robert Graves in addition to the original Persian text.[4] A larger edition (of 200 quatrains) is to be published shortly with multi-color illustrations done by Iranian artists.[5] Some other Kashmiri translations have been done – and published – by Mirza Aarif, Abdul Ahad Khan and Ghulam Rosool 'Nazki'. Indeed, these translations are

said to have promoted and popularized Khayyam in Kashmir.

Swami Govinda Tirtha (V.M. Datar) rendered 1067 'rubaiyat' into Marathi in 1933 from the original Persian text edited by Musharraf Jung Fayazzuddin Khan (Hyderabad, 1893). The Swami retranslated them from Marathi into English in 1941. Probably, because of the cultural climate of the then Nizam's state of Hyderabad, several Telegu scholars also attempted some translations of the quatrains -generally from Fitzgerald's version. B Ramakrishna Rao joined the band with a translation of 30 'rubais'. Among the other translators mention may be made of Sri Rama Sarma, Kasturi Gopalarao, Muddu Krishan, C.Narayanrao, Sivasankra Sastry, Douthi Reddy and Anandam Krishna Murthy. Fuller translations were undertaken by Duvvori Rama Reddy (*Pan sala*), Adibhatta Narayandasu (*Madhu Kalasam*), M..B Sundarama Sastry (*Omar Khayyam*) Chalam (*Omar Khayyam Bubailu*), M. R Apparao, (*Omar Khayyam Rubaiyat*) and M.Balarama Acharya (*Omar Khyyam Amala Geetalu*).[5] All these works were based on Fitzgerald's version. But Umar Ali Shah's pieces from Khayyam were rendered directly from Persian.

The first scholarly and detailed notice of Omar Khayyam occurs in Shibli's *Sheir-ul Ajam* (Azamgarh; 1912; pp. 201-213). Shibli refers to his unorthodox views repugnant to the conventionalists, which almost cost Omar Khayyam his life. Quoting Behaqi, an early biographer of philosophers, Shibli also credits Omar Khayyam with making a miraculous meteorological forecast. Shibli also analyses his poetic merits and commends the freshness of his style and

wit. Omar Khayyam's favourite themes are analysed, and scholars' comments on him are quoted judiciously. Shibli's is a discerning account of the poet, but not much is said about his contribution to science. This deficiency was, however made good by Shibli's equally illustrious student and successor, Sayyid Suleiman Nadwi in his scholarly book on Omar Khayyam (1933). The book has the additional merit of incorporating Omar Khayyam's six unpublished dissertations (*Rasail*) and some new quatrains. Nadwi rightly claims to have rediscovered and highlighted Khayyams's philosophical and scientific contribution that had been over shadowed by his later recognition as a poet. Nadwi, however, finds the quatrains tepid in poetic merit, and attributes their overassessment to the zeal of the western scholars. He observes:

> Whatever might have been Khayyam's original rating in the past, today his fame rests only on his Persian 'rubais'. People are drawn to him only as Europe shows interest in him because of Fitzgerald's translation, though in the East he never received any high rating as a writer of 'rubais'.[6]

Nadwi also analyses the prosodic feature of the quatrains, and comments on problems of interpretation and misascription of verses. One chapter deals exclusively with the poet's mystical predilections and he accepts Omar as a man of sufic persuasion.

Notes and articles on Khayyam appeared from time to time in several Urdu periodicals. It is neither possible nor necessary to attempt any comprehensive survey here. But a brief random reference to a few of them may illustrate the

nature of Urdu writers' response to him. The monthly *Aajkal's* (Delhi) issue for June 1956 carried a brief bibliographic history of Khayyam's English translations. *Adab-e-Lateef* (Lahore) was a reputed *avant-garde* journal of Urdu. Its annual number for 1941 carried an article 'A Pen-Portrait of Omar Khayyam' about his character and achievements. A short review of a translation *Mai-e Khan-e Khayyam* also figured in the same issue. *Nigar* of Allahabad, a highly respected literary monthly also published several pieces on Khayyam. The noted scholar, Imtiaz Ali 'Arshi' published some newly discovered 'rubais' of Khayyam in its issue for February 1931, and its editor, Niaz Fatehpuri, contributed a short insightful essay on the Persian 'rubais' in the October 1950 issue. Abid Raza 'Bedar' also wrote on the subject in its March 1956 issue. A comparative study of the quatrains of the saint-poets Abul Khair and Sarmad and Omar Khayyam appeared in the same periodical in June 1959. Another scholarly journal, *Ma'arif* of Azamgarh published some research pieces on Khayyam's biographical sources (in the issues for 1922, 1928, 1948 and 1950). It had published earlier notes on some rare Omar-manuscripts (in the issues for 1930), and a comparative assessment of Khayyam and Hafiz (1920). Several articles by Shabbir Ahmad Khan Ghouri on Khayyam's neglected scientific and mathematical contributions appeared in various issues of the magazine for 1951 (June, October, and November) and 1964 (January, February and March). Ghouri had also critically examined Khayyam's early biographical accounts at intervals in the issues for October, November and December 1962, July 1964 and June, July and August issues

of 1968. These articles were later collected and published - along with his other writings - in book form by the Khuda Bux Oriental Public Library (Patna). *Islamic Review* (Hyderabad) published some articles on Khayyam's canon (July 1929), his distinction as an astronomer and mathematician (July 1937), and a comprehensive review by Husain Ali Khan of the English translations of *Rubaiyat* (January, 1948). These are only a few samples of periodical contribution to Omraniana in India in Urdu and English. Presumably, considerable work has been done in other languages as well, and awaits research.

English works on Omar Khayyam by Indians generally treat him as a sufi and mystic. This is in peculiar contrast to Fitzgerald's interpretation, the source of the 'Omar Vogue', who was more than skeptical about the mystical import of Rubaiyat. J.E. Saklatwala's two monographs- *Soul Gospel of Omar Khayyam* (Bombay, 1926) and *Omar Khayyam as a Mystic* (Bombay, 1928) - treat him as a Sufi. Two other learned works - each by a man of God deeply steeped in the Indian spiritual lore - see the Persian poet as a seeker of divine love. Swami Govinda Tirtha, mentioned earlier, had translated *Rubaiyat* into Marathi at the behest of his Guru who saw Khayyam as one of 'the Lord's beloved ones'.[7] The Swami named his Marathi works, accordingly, as *'Guru Karunmitra - the 'Nectar of Grace'*. His English book (*Nectar of Grace*, Allahabad; 1941) is a significant and valuable addition to Khayyam studies in India. With the help of astrological calculations he worked out that Khayyam was born at sunrise on 18th May, 1048

A.D., thus confirming Nadwi's conjecture made earlier on the basis literary evidence.

Another Swami of modern India, the widely-travelled Paramhansa Yogananda (b. 1893) makes copious reference to Omar Khayyam in his *Autobiography of a Yogi* (1946), and incorporates excerpts from *Rubaiyat* in his work *Moments of Truth*. He offers a two – level interpretation of the quatrains – Spiritual Interpretation and Practical Application in his edition of *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*. Each explication is prefaced, and the pattern is sampled below with reference to the following quatrain:

> Ah, my Beloved, fill the Cup that clears
> Today of past Regrets and future Fears – Tomorrow?
> Why, Tomorrow I may be
> Myself with yesterday's Sev'n Thousand years.

Glossary

Beloved; The soul; God's Image in man.

The Cup that clears: The blissful consciousness of the soul, which delineates all unhappiness.

Past Regrets: Sorrow over evil actions already performed, and their probable, dire results.

Future Fears: Dread of repeating evil deeds under the influence of the law of habit, and of the evil that might impend from further misdeeds.

Yesterday's seven thousand years: The infinite past, which embraces the numberless dead.

Spiritual Interpretation

O my soul! Fill my consciousness with ambrosia of bliss, flowing from the cask of ecstasy. Naught but that divine communion can dispel the haunting memories of past errors and the fear of future wrongs, with their yield of evil consequences. I dare not wait to find the all-freeing Cosmic Beloved! Tomorrow I may die with time's infinite yesterdays. Today I will intoxicate myself with the love of the Beloved. Today I will make Him my own.

Practical Application

We must fill this life that we love so dearly with the nectar of perpetual soul-peace. Otherwise we can never be free from the consciousness of long-past errors and foreboding of future misfortunes. Let us be happy now, today; then it matters not if we die tomorrow and join the procession in the corridors of the past, colonnaded with the countless years. For we shall carry with us priceless soul-treasures of peace, faith and happiness to light our long journey toward the Beloved. [8]

In a new translation of the *Rubaiyat* with a commentary by Robert Graves and Omar Ali Shah (Cassell., Lond., 1967), both the translators/commentators uphold the Sufic reputation of Khayyam. The India-born Ali Shah rejects Fitzgerald's glimpses of atheism and hedonism – later endorsed by A.J. Arberry as well – in the Persian quatrains, and adds a fresh point, quoting an oral family tradition concerning Khayyam's sublimation of his frustrated personal love into divine love. According to this legend, Omar loved Halima Begum, the daughter of an official at Alp Arslan's court, whose hand was denied to him because

of her earlier betrothal to another man in her infancy. Ali Shah concludes: 'So Omar asked no more than the love that he drew from spiritual union with Halima. He is said never to have betrayed this love by any unguarded word or deed.'[9] This historically unsubstantiated tradition runs closely parallel to a more famous story about Ibn-al-Farid the great Arab mystic and poet of the 12th century whose unrewarded passion for his master's daughter inspired him to compose the *Nazm-al Sulook*, a mystical poem of a very high order.

Although Omar Khayyam was primarily known as a scientist and astronomer in his own day and in the succeeding ages, and even Fitzgerald introduced him as an 'Astronomer-poet', this aspect has received precious little attention in India, the home of many seminal postulates of mathematics and astronomy. Reference has been made above to Shabbir Ghauri's articles on Khayyam's contribution to science. To this short list may be added a recent article in Urdu by M.A. Pathan on Khayyam's algebra published in the *Tahzib-ul Akhlaq* (Aligarh). George Gheverghese Joseph of Kerala has recently noticed Khayyam's work in his history of mathematics *The Crest of the Peacock: Non- European Roots of Mathematics* (Penguin Books, 1994). Joseph salutes him as the precursor of modern mathematics. He refers in particular to Omar's 'triangular array of binomial coefficients known as Pascal's-triangle, and as the conceiver of some fundamental ideas that led to the concept of real numbers (p. 310) Joseph also discusses Khayyam's geometric solution of cubic equations (pp. 324-332).

Modern India has responded warmly to the poetry and personality of Omar Khayyam. He has fermented the romantic imagination, and, at times, teased the mind with

the seeming ambivalence of his thought. He has contributed to the vogue of the 'rubai' in Urdu. The genre was not a total stranger to India before the rise of the Omar-vogue, but his model deepened the interest, and inspired some excellent writers of the 'rubais'. Raghupati Sahay 'Firaq', Jagannath 'Azad', Yagana Changezi and Akhtar Ansari my be cited as the genre's master-practitioners. All of them were well - acquainted with English literature - in fact 'Firaq' was a senior teacher of English at Allahabad University. Khayyam has deeply touched some aspects of Indian sensibility and imagination. Writers have taken him variously as a metaphor for idealism, hedonism, or spirituality according to their own inclinations. Kota S.R. Sarma, an Indian poet of English, equates him with the Alexandrian lyricist, Palladas, and takes him as the embodiment of the *carpe diem* theme in his highly allusive and metaphysical poem on the human soul - *The Return of the Rambler* (1981) Sec. IX. Mumtaz Shahnawaz in her English novel, *Heart Divided* (1974) sees him as a visionary, for Rajendra, a progressive social activist, quotes one of the 'rubais' of Khayyam to Zohra, the heroine of the novel (ch. 27) to express his resolve to create a radiant India. Mohammad Husain a noted Urdu critic and scholar concludes his novel on the Urdu poet 'Majaz' (*Aie - Wahishat - e - Dil*, 2003) referring to Khayyam as a symbol lyricism and supreme sacrifice to Bacchus - a prefigurement of 'Majaz'. Such passing and spontaneous references show how deeply the Omar - phenomenon has sunk in the Indian psyche. Many other writers quote his verses without acknowledgement in their writings. Khayyam has also been

the subject of research studies in universities. [10] At a more popular level people borrow his name in a variety of spheres. A popular Urdu poet of North India, Syed Rashidul Hasan (b. 1946) has adopted the penname 'Saghar Khayyami'. His brother calls himself 'Nazir Khayyami' as a token of their regard and love for the Persian poet, even though Khayyami is not their family name. It is also not unusual to find cafes and studios named after Khayyam.

Khayyam's popularity in modern India is sometimes reflected in pieces of visual and performing arts. Numerous illustrated Indian editions of *Rubaiyat* carry miniatures and plates. Most of these illustrations naturally follow Persian motifs and figures, but one of these editions calls for special notice. Asit Kumar Haldar of Shantiniketan, an illustrator of Tagore's works, has given some genuinely Indian touches in his paintings done for the *Rubaiyat*. The Indian Press of Allahabad brought out in 1941 an edition of Fitzgerald's first version (1859). The publication carried 12 plates done by Haldar with a foreword by the famous British art connoisseur, E.B. Havell, who complimented the painter in these words:

> There have been many illustrations of the Rubaiyat Indian and European, but none have caught the delicate flavour of the poetry with more spontaneity and sureness of touch. While following the best traditions of the Moghul court – painters in his technique, Mr. Halder has stamped each subject with his own creative fancy and fine feeling for rhythmic beauty.

The tribute is well-deserved, and a scrutiny of the plates bears out the truth of the statement. For example, in the plate relating to the quatrain 'And the delightful Herb whose tender green' the features of the reclining damsel are unmistakably Indian. So also in the plate for 'The Moving Finger Writes' eyes of the first maiden on the left are dreamy and less slanted, and her bosom is slightly more developed than the usual Persian/Mughal paintings. This is true of the maidens in no. 2 ('Look to the Rose'). So also in the plate on 'And lately by the Tavern' the maiden on the left has her hair tied into a tuft at the nape unlike the usual wayward tresses of the Persian beauties. Her rear lower potion is fuller and more rounded. This feature recurs in the plate for 'Now the New year'. This suggests a partial adaptation and indigenization of Persian imagery.

With his charismatic personality and greatness as a poet – scientist, Khayyam could not fail to catch the eye of the cine-world. Accordingly, a full-length film on his life was made in 1946. *Omar Khayyam* was sponsored by the Murari Pictures, and jointly scripted by K.A. Abbas and Baboo Rao Patel. Originally V. Shantaram was to direct the film in 1941. But finally it was produced under the direction of another veteran, Mohan Sinha, with the unforgettable K.L.Saigal and Surayya among its cast. [11] The only other film made in India on a poet of Persian connection was *Mirza Ghalib*. The choice was not a fortituous act, it speaks for Bollywood's genuine and considered response to Omar. Even though it took five years to produce the Khayyam film, the Indian film industry seems to have led the way to Hollywood venture. The Paramount Pictures of U.S.A also did an

English film on Khayyam in 1956, scripted by Barre Lyndon and directed by William Dieterle.

While discussing Indian response to Omar Khayyam, it may not be out of order to take some notice of his likely connection with Indian philosophy and science. Khayyam himself acknowledged his acquaintance with Indian mathematics, and considered his own work as a continuation and furtherance of the Indian legacy. In his *Risala fil brahin 'ala masail'l al-jabr w'l-muqabala* (an algebraic work) he observed.

> The Hindus have their own methods for extracting the sides of squares and cubes based on the investigation of a small number of cases, which is [through] the knowledge of squares of mine integers, that is 1,2,3 and so on, and of their products into each other, that is the product of 2 with 3, and so on. I have written a book to prove the validity of the methods and to show that they led to the required solutions and I have supplemented it in kind."[12]

Omar's likely acquaintance with some ancient works of ethics and poetry is suggested by Swami Govinda Tirtha. He lists at least 12 parallelisms between the *Rubaiyat* and the *Hitopadesh*, and eight echoes of Bhartarhari. With characteristic scholarly circumspection the Swami concludes:

> As mysticism is the birth right of humanity, the same thoughts are expressed in the same modes, as in the case of epigrams of *Panchtantra* and *Bhartarhari* there is some reason to infer that Omar may have had access to their translations either in Arabic or Persian literature. [13]

This was, probably, the first and the only attempt to trace Indian connection in Khayyam's works.

The aesthetic and intellectual nature of India's response to Omar Khayyam has assumed added relevance today, as our own psychological climate is not quintessentially different from Khayyam's. He wrote in the face of the Assassin dread - the dubious ancestor of the present day terrorism and violence. In his age the Abbasid empire showed incipient signs of decay and disintegration. The crusades presaged a violent clash of faiths and cultures. The clop clop of Tartar horsemen foreboded the upheaval of civilized and cherished values. Corruption, intrigue and lust for pomp and power sapped the moral stamina, and corroded human dignity. Sectarianism raged, and the saint and the formalist clashed for control over people, mind and behaviour. In this turbulent weather Omar kept the scientific quest aglow, and strummed the notes of peace, tolerance - *suleh-e kul*- and love variously interpreted as sensuous or divine. The present scene is a replay of the old plot with

modern stage property. Our need of Omar's vision and message is as sharp as ever; our response to him may shape accordingly. His relevance today is aptly summed up in a hilarious short poem by Paul Ableman, 'Omar Khayyam in the Third Millenium, and recited at the annual meeting of the Omar Khayyam Club (London) in May, 1999.

So brothers, fill the cup and drain the wine
Toast the millennium. It will be fine
For making friends and cash and higher tech toys.
But Omar's words still give deeper joys.[14]

4/1348, Sir Syed Nagar
Aligarh 202002

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 25, No.1 & 2. 2003.pp 90-108

Jalal Uddin Khan

Literary Culture of Mountains in English Romantic Poetry and the Celebration of the Fall of Napoleon in Wordsworth's 'To—On Her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn'.

'Great things are done when men and mountains meet;/ This is not done by jostling in the street.' So said William Blake, one of the first great English Romantic poets. His gnomic verse is intended to suggest the inspirational value of mountainous landscape and its powerful operation on the poetic imagination. Blake proved to be entirely true when all the other major Romantic poets such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron and Shelley did in fact produce great poetry upon 'meeting' mountains. They were all fascinated by the power, grandeur and magnificence of high mountains just as they were also fascinated by the other large natural phenomena like oceans, seas, rivers, lakes, the sky and the moon, clouds and stars, and woods and trees, all of which acted as a source of their spiritual contemplation and imaginative reflection. They felt an exaltation of mind and liberation of spirit in contact with mountain scenery—wild, rugged, inaccessible, awe-inspiring, majestic and sublime.

The Romantic poets thought that the sight and memory of the powerful objects of nature were necessary for the full

development of their vision and imagination. That is why they very often embarked upon long walking tours through the mountainous English Lake District and Scottish Highlands and traveled through the French and Swiss Alps. The Alpine peaks such as Snowdon, Simplon, Mont Blanc, and Jangfrau, the Euganean hills near Venice and the British mountain tops in the north such as Ben Nevis, Loch Lomond, Scawfel, Langdale, Helvellyn, Skiddaw, and Great Gable, exerted great influence on the individual Romantic poets. They wrote great poems or poetic passages to express their experience of the picturesque and the sublime in climbing and crossing mountain ranges with their snowy peaks, misty pikes, steep cliffs, dark passes, shadowy glens, profound vales, terrifying crags and rocks, cataracts and waterfalls, glaciers and avalanches, torrents and precipices.

To express his pride, arrogance and freedom from the tedium of the common and conventional, Byron said that he was not suited to level roads and flat lands[1]. Since his boyhood he talks about 'the freeborn soul,/ which loves the mountain's craggy side,/ And seeks the rocks where billows roll.'[2] He was fascinated by the majesty and magnificence of mountains, saying that 'high mountains [were] a feeling' to him while 'the hum/Of human cities' was a 'torture' (*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, III:72). Together with *The Prisoner of Chillon*, this Canto of *Childe Harold* draws heavily on the Alps near Geneva for its inspiration and is full of the Wordsworthian quiet and fresh mountain scenery. The characteristically Byronic treatment of nature in its wild and rugged aspects finds its way into the first two Cantos. In fact most of the poem is a

journey through mountain rocks and crags. Byron sets his wild and inexplicable dramatic poem *Manfred* in the horrifying steep cliffs of the higher Alps just as Shelley's lyrical drama *Prometheus Unbound* is set in the mountains of the Indian Caucasus. The Alpine setting provides the fitting background for the typical Byronic hero Manfred's varying moods of melancholy, egotistical pride, pain and suffering with the consequence of suicidal attempts by hurling himself headlong down.

Even John Keats, one of the last great Romantics, who was not temperamentally very inclined to enjoying mountains, did not fail to make the connection between poetry and mountain tops:

> O Poesy! For thee I hold my pen
> That am not yet a glorious denizen
> Of thy wide heaven—Should I rather kneel
> Upon some mountain-top until I feel
> A glowing splendor round about me hung,
> And echo back the voice of thine own tongue?
>
> (*Sleep and Poetry*, ll. 47-52)

In providing a quick impressionistic survey of the history of English literature at the opening of Book IV of *Endymion*, Keats suggests that it all began in the mountains:

> Muse of my native land! Loftiest Muse!
> O first-born on the mountains! By the hues
> Of heaven on the spiritual air begot:

As he journeyed through the English Lakeland to the north to Scotland during July-August of 1818, he was impressed by the grand beauty of Loch Lomond and climbed to the top of Ben Nevis, the highest in the British Isles. He wrote a letter and a

sonnet on his ascent describing how blinded and confused he was by the mist and craggy stones upon the top of Nevis.[3] His experience was totally opposite to what other Romantics might have felt—a state of wonderment and exhilaration resulting in imaginative release and expansiveness. However, Keats was much struck by the spectacular 900-feet high Ailsa rock fifteen miles off the Scottish coast, which inspired him to write a sonnet describing it as 'craggy ocean-pyramid,' whose

> life is but two dead eternities,
> The last in air, the former in the deep!
> First with the whales, last with the eagle-skies!
> Drown'd wast thou till an earthquake made thee steep,
> Another cannot wake thy giant size!

Keats wondered why the mountains of Arran 'did not beckon Burns to some grand attempt at Epic.'[4] His tour of the Lake District and Scotland helped him with the imagery of the terrifying landscape, which forms the background for the colossal figures in *Hyperion*. The tour not only acquainted him with the varieties of the sublime but also made him gain self-knowledge and deepened his imagination.

Of the Romantic mountain poems, Wordsworth's *Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey* with its setting in the Wye valley, Coleridge's *Hymn before Sun-rise, in the vale of Chamouni* and Shelley's *Mont Blanc* (subtitled 'Lines Written in the Vale of Chamouni') and *Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills* are well-known. Coleridge had never been to the valley of Chamonix, in what is now southeastern France, and based his poem on a German ode and his own knowledge of the mountains of the English Lake District, just as J.M.W. Turner used a storm over the Yorkshire Moors to paint *Hannibal*

Crossing the Alps.[12] As a result, critics have noticed some weaknesses in Coleridge's attempt on the sublime in the poem, which describes both the awe-inspiring and lesser glories of the landscape and which has been alleged by Wordsworth to have descended into 'the Mock Sublime.' As Watson says, 'Apart from one or two distinguished lines, it lacks a convincing sense of the external world which it attempts to describe'.[6] Anyway, Coleridge attributed the wonder of the valley of Chamouni to God and thought that it reaffirmed his belief in God. In his note to the poem, he exclaimed, 'Who would be, who could be an Atheist in this valley of wonders!' He was answered in the negative about a decade and a half later when Shelley, addressing the Mont Blanc, the highest mountain in the Alps near the French border with Italy by being actually present in the same location, said that he would and could be an atheist in the presence of such wonders of nature. Shelley's *Mont Blanc* was composed, in his own words,

> under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untameable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.

To repeat, Shelley's poem imitates the alternating 'wildness' and 'solemnity' of the scene and its striking features just as it alternately describes the mountain landscape both as a powerful symbol of desolation and death and a serene force for truth:

> Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
> Large codes of fraud and woe; not understood
> By all, but which the wise, and great, and good

Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

As mentioned in *Norton Anthology*, *Mont Blanc*

> belongs to the genre of the ' local ' poem, a descriptive-meditative presentation of a precisely identified landscape. In this respect it resembles Wordsworth's *Tintern Abbey*, the major influence on *Mont Blanc*. Shelley's poem, like Wordsworth's, poses the question of the significance of the interchange between nature and the human mind; he proposes, however, a very different answer to that question.[7]

In Shelley's view 'the landscape is equally capable of instilling a Wordsworthian faith (in the possibility of reconciling humans and nature) or the "awful" (i.e., 'awesome') doubt (that nature is totally alien to human ends and values).'[8] In Wordsworth, 'Silence and solitude' never are and can never be a 'vacancy' because it is indeed in those conditions that the creative faculty of the poet interacts rather powerfully with nature, as suggested not only in his reflections about the 'steep woods and lofty cliffs' in *Tintern Abbey* but also in the Alpine mountain passages in *The Prelude* (1850, 14.63ff.). While Shelley does not deny this and has in fact remarkable parallels to this in *Mont Blanc* (ll.37-40), he concludes the poem by casting doubt on the possibility of the interchange between the human mind and nature as he contemplates the possibility of nature being remotely withdrawn, inaccessible and indifferent if 'silence and solitude' were indeed nothing more than mere 'vacancy.' Ironically, Mont Blanc, which meant so much to Shelley, meant nothing to Wordsworth. While the experience of crossing the other mountains of the Alps such as Snowdon and Simplon proved to be highly inspiring to him, the sight of Mont Blanc turned out to be literally blank, 'soulless image on the eye,' as

he called it, meaning the halt to the working of the living imagination.

Wordsworth, the father of English Romanticism and the supreme poet of nature from the mountainous English Lake District in the north bordering with the Scottish Highlands, began his poetic career with his tour in the Alps when he was only twenty years old. The tour in the Alps produced one of his earliest works, *Descriptive Sketches*, published in 1793 and written in the style of the aesthetic picturesque. Later, in his great autobiographical poem *The Prelude*, which is about the growth of his mind as a poet, he would remember and describe the same visit but with less attention to the actual picturesque details of the scenery for its own sake, giving more importance to the great moments of the spontaneous rise of the imaginative power that 'with a flash' revealed 'the invisible world'. When he discovered, with disappointment, that he unintentionally crossed the visible world of the Alps without realizing it and without more encounters with high peaks to come, his physical senses sank to a lower level letting the visionary and transcending power of the imagination take over. Still the withdrawal from the sensual delight in landscape cannot be complete; in fact, the grand landscape which gives rise to imaginative vision effectively controls it and continues to be described in terms of:

> The immeasurable height
> Of woods decaying, never to be decayed,
> The stationary blasts of waterfalls [...]
> Winds thwarting winds, bewildered and forlorn,
> The torrents shooting from the clear blue sky,
> The rocks that mutterd close upon our ears,

Black drizzling crags that spake by the way-side
As if a voice were in them. (1805, vi, ll. 556-64)

He concludes the picture by describing such objects of nature as 'Characters of the great Apocalypse/ The types and symbols of Eternity,/ Of first, and last, and midst, and without end'[13]

As Wordsworth grew up in his English Lake District, he attributed his noble and high-minded interaction with God and Nature to the lasting influences of mountains, lakes and cataracts, local as well as Alpine. He views nature as a moral teacher educating him in love, beauty, goodness, fear and humility and as such links it with the growth of his mind as a poet. He says:

Ye Mountains and Ye Lakes,
And sounding Cataracts! Ye Mists and Winds
That dwell among the hills where I was born.
If,[...] I [...] have liv'd
With God and Nature communing, remov'd
From little enmities and low desires,
The gift is yours [...] (*The Prelude*, 1805, ii. 440-8)

Wordsworth combines great poetry with high mountains, enjoying them not only for their natural beauty, power and grandeur but also for the fact that it is necessary for the poet to come in contact with mountain scenery as a background for his imaginative development and visionary expansiveness. The solitude of mountains first awakened his physical senses and then lifted his inner soul to life while putting his bodily awareness back to sleep at the same time. In addition to sensually experiencing the picturesque play of light and shade on the mountainside, he led the way of how the fellow

Romantic poets would feel a liberation of spirit and exaltation of mind on mountaintops allowing them an escape from gloom and despair.

Wordsworth's *Guide to the Lakes* is not just a tourist guide but, much more than that, an immortal and eloquent tribute to his native Lake District. In addition to a lyrical description of an excursion to the top of Scawfel, he describes the mountains of the Lake District and their appeal to the mind and understanding of the traveler rather than to his judgement, which makes him compare scenes. Modifying the traditional picturesque, Wordsworth describes the Lake district mountains thus:

> Their *forms* are endlessly diversified, sweeping easily or boldly in simple majesty, abrupt and Precipitous, or soft and elegant. In magnitude and grandeur they are individually inferior to the most celebrated of those in some other parts of this island; but, in the combinations which they make, towering above each other, or lifting themselves in ridges like the waves of a tumultuous sea, and in the beauty and variety of their surfaces and colors, they are surpassed by none.[14]

He also discusses the natural operations of geology and meteorology in the mountains. As such the art, science and culture of mountains become an all important message in his prose and poetry, making him a vital part of the living environmentalist tradition of the world.

Among the countless descriptions and references to the local Lake District hills and mountains in Wordsworth, mention must be made of his famous *Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey*, result of his visits to the Wye valley in 1793 and

1798. It is a great Romantic lyric in blank verse in the characteristic mode of integrally related description, meditation and conversation addressed to his silent auditor Dorothy, his sister. Briefly discussed above in relation to Shelley's *Mont Blanc* in the same genre, *Tintern Abbey* describes, among other things, the view of landscape, especially the 'steep and lofty cliffs' on the banks of the Wye with the second visit constituting the present in it.

> The puzzling difference between the present landscape and the remembered "picture of the mind" (line 61) gives rise to an intricately organized meditation, in which the poet reviews his past, evaluates the present, and (through his sister as intermediary) anticipates the future; he ends by rounding back quietly on the scene that had been his point of departure.[15]

The poem is a miniature *Prelude*, describing the various stages of the poet's development in terms of his evolving relations to the natural scene. First, there was 'the young boy's purely physical responsiveness' to nature, in his own words, 'The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,/ And their glad animal movements.' The second stage was the postadolescent stage at the time of his first visit to the Wye valley in 1793 when he was twenty-three. It was marked by 'equivocal passions,'

> [...] when like a roe
> I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
> Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
> Wherever nature led: more like a man
> Flying from something that he dreads, than one
> Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then ...
> To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
> What then I was. The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,

The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love
That had no need of a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye. (ll. 67-83)

As the poet sums up, this second stage was the stage of 'aching joys' and 'dizzy raptures'. The third and present stage, in which for the first time he adds thought to sense, begins on the occasion of his second visit to the scene in 1798 when he was twenty-eight. At this stage he does not mind or mourn the loss of his previous joys and pleasures for he believes 'other gifts/ Have followed' bringing with them 'Abundant recompense'; for

[...] I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity ... (ll. 88-91)

In his mature state Wordsworth owed to the pastoral landscape of beauteous forms and its remembrance not only 'sweet sensations' with the effect of 'tranquil restoration' in times of crisis or weariness but also

[...]another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things. (ll. 36-49)

The English Lakeland mountains such as Scawfel, Langdale, Skiddaw, and Great Gable worked magic on Wordsworth's imagination. But perhaps Mount Helvellyn worked even more wonders on him so that it occupies a special place in his poetry by virtue of its many appearances in his poetry. When Keats would describe him as one of the living 'great spirits' sojourning on the earth, he would do so with a reference to the mountain:

He of the cloud, the cataract, the lake
Who on Helvellyn's summit, wide awake,
Catches his freshness from Archangel's wing:

The mountain forms the subject of a poem by Wordsworth entitled 'To—On Her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn,' one of the later poems by Wordsworth, written in the post-Waterloo period, has hardly been critically examined in the past and will therefore be the focus of the concluding part of my paper.

In his later poetry, Wordsworth makes certain political statements, usually Burkean and conservative, through his artistic response to the elements of nature. Traditionally, the world of nature is above or beyond politics, offering wisdom and solace in times of crisis and contemplation. While Wordsworth's treatment of nature is well inclusive of that traditionally accorded significance, taken deeper through his romantic insights, its appeal in his poetry of the post-Waterloo period lies in suggesting how objects of nature may also allow for different kinds of political statements to be made. In this context, I note how the mountain poem on the Helvellyn may

be read as having a political content or argued as having been composed as a political poem.[16]

Helvellyn was a mountain that, among other heights in the Lakes, Wordsworth loved to climb frequently with his close companions and celebrate so very often in his poetry, most famously in the description of the summer rustic fair by its side in *The Prelude* (Bk. VIII) and in "Musings Near Aquapendente" (1837).[17] Just after Waterloo, in the years 1816 and 1817, he climbed the mountain several times, as his Fenwick note to the present poem (see below) and his letter to Henry Crabb Robinson, dated June 24, 1817, bear evidence. Standing north of Grasmere, Helvellyn is the second highest (3, 118 ft.) in the Lake District after, Scawfell Pike (3, 210 ft.). It is of the greatest eminence in the eastern group of the Lakeland mountains, offering from its smooth and level summit a majestic, panoramic view of the Lake country, with the great hollow of the Red Tarn below and Coniston Water and the sea beyond.

One of the first group of poems written after Waterloo and published in the *River Duddon* volume in April 1820, 'On Her First Ascent to the Summit of Helvellyn' is uncommon in being remarkably buoyant in mood. It was written at some point around or soon after the publication in May 1816 of the *Thanksgiving Ode* volume, which was composed in celebration of the British triumph over the 'audacious charlatan and remorseless desperado.'[18] The poem gives voice to the thrill and excitement of climbing lofty and lonely places like Helvellyn and belongs to 'one of the major species of Romantic nature poetry.'[19] The significance of the emotions of rapture and exuberance that accompany mountain-climbing and the

glorious sights it offers knows no bounds to the operation of the faculty of imagination in Wordsworth. Unlike his past expressions of the visionary wonder at the infinite mountain prospects, 'On Her First Ascent' forges a response to the historical turning point at Waterloo and gives expression to a great exhilarating feeling at being spiritually as well as physically transported to the top of the mountain. The poem relates to the joy at the crushing defeat of Napoleon, *which Wordsworth, Southey and others did indeed express by climbing Skiddaw at night.*[20] The crumbling blow to Napoleon's Satanic impulse had paved the way for a new regenerative beginning, which is suggested by explicit reference to Mount Niphate on which Satan confirmed himself in evil and to the post-Deluge startover by Noah and his followers

> [. . .] or halt,
> To Niphate's top invited,
> Whither spiteful Satan steer'd;
> Or descend where the ark alighted
> When the green earth re-appeared; [...]

The dwindling 'woods and meadows' (l.9) and 'a vast abyss' (l.10) as visualised from above 'a thousand ridges' (l.14), the power and majesty of mountainous heights to cause a great outpouring of human emotions at a political, moral and military victory over a formidable foe, and the suggestion that it is time to start life anew—all this serves to intensify the poet's sense of exaltation. While the dancing rhyme and rhythm of the poem suggest a warm celebratory tone, its stanzaic form, like that of the political verse of Southey's and Shelley's, is connotative of

its political content against the background of the greatest public and political affair of the time – the rise and fall of Napoleon.

In 'On Her First Ascent,' the mountain may be seen as providing the poet with an opportunity to glorify the freedom and liberty of spirit made possible by the rolling back of the French military expedition and symbolized by the 'natural' and 'visual sovereignty' of the mountain-top reaching out toward the sky. The poet and his addressee feel 'wed, delighted, and amazed' (l.4) as they imagine themselves to be ascending aloft on the basis of an actual climb they just had.[21] Helvellyn proves to be so inspiring that the poet and his companion take on the wings of imagination to all the distant and exotic places around the world, suggested by 'Alps or Andes' (l.18). While describing the spreading of the news of the Waterloo victory in a series of metaphors in the *Thanksgiving Ode*, Wordsworth says that the news 'found no barrier on the ridge/ Of Andes.' Just as the persona of the Prologue to *Peter Bell*, in an ironic reference to Coleridge's *Ancient Mariner*, dreamt of supernaturally voyaging to similar far-off places in his magic little boat, so the poet and his fellow climber are encouraged by mountain liberty to embark on an imaginative conquest powerful enough to reduce Napoleon's empire into trifles and overcome the bondage of his military ambitions. In presenting great and noble aspects of nature that the human mind can perceive in its state of enthrallment, the poem contrasts with the painful political confinement that the nations were subjected to or were threatened with by Napoleon.

Thus, 'On Her First Ascent' commemorates the release of the spirit of joy and liberty after being threatened to lie helplessly stagnant as long as the political landscape

of Europe was determined at the will of the French forces under Napoleon. With the fear of aggression over, the 'watch-towers of Helvellyn' (l.3) exercise a potent spell and permit an absolutely unencumbered imaginative flight which embraces 'blue Ether's arms' (l.7) and encounters 'the untrodden lunar mountains' (l.27). What is new about the poem is that it recognizes an intense impact of the physically restorative and psychologically therapeutic influences of breathing in the mountain breeze primarily in the context of the decisive containment of the sickening counter-influences at Waterloo.

All Romantic poets (and painters such as William Gilpin, Claude Lorrain, John Constable, Richard Payne Knight, Uvedale Price, Salvator Rosa, Thomas West, Samuel Palmer), regardless of their political or religious beliefs, believed in the culture of mountains and their contribution to the growth of a poet's mind as part of the influence of external nature on the progression and development of a personality. They felt a sense of wonder and grandeur especially in the midst of mountains. The ability to perceive the glory and power of mountainous scenery was a mark of the Romantic poet. As such all of them were mountaineers, either feeling humble or proud but certainly creative, liberated and expansive in contact with the magnificence and sublimity of the mountains and their awe-inspiring eternal presence.

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Notes and References

1. See his letter to Augusta, Leslie A. Marchard, ed. *Byron's Letters and Journals* (HUP, Harvard, 1976)

2. *Hours of Idleness*, Byron's first published work

3. Keats was not physically well to undertake such a climb. He was weakened by a severe cold and sore throat before, he along with his friend Brown, started climbing. See his letter to his ailing brother Tom on August 3, 1818.

4. *The Letters of John Keats*, ed. H. E. Rollins, (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), vol. i., p. 331.

5. J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry* (London: Hutchinson Educational, 1970), p.119

6. Watson, p. 120.

7. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th ed., Vol. 2, 1993, p. 666.

8. *The Norton Anthology*, p. 668.

9. The closing lines of the passage on crossing Simplon Pass, 1805 text, vi, ll. 570-72; 1850 text, vi, ll. 639-41.

10. *Wordsworth's Guide to the Lakes*, ed. W. M. Merchant (London, 1951), p. 27.

11. *The Norton Anthology*, p. 136.

12. The poem can also be read as a glorification of the English Lake District, as part of Wordsworth's indirect elaborate response in the *River Duddon* volume (1820) to Byron's 1814 slight of the Lake Poets as 'the Pond Poets' — a slight that was in circulation in the Wordsworth circle through James Hogg and Mary Barker. For details, see *Wordsworth: Shorter Poems, 1807-1820*, ed. Carl H. Ketcham (Cornell University Press, 1989).

13. The other less well-known poem connected with Helvellyn is ' Fidelity ', which, along with Walter Scott's 'Helvellyn', was the product of their climbing the mountain in 1805, both dealing with the sad local incident of a traveller who fell to his death from one of its steep cliffs and his accompanying dog's faithfulness to him.

14. Napoleon; see Wordsworth's letter to John Scott, February 22, 1816 in *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth: The Middle Years, 1812-1820*, ed. Moorman & Hill (Oxford, 1970).

15. Fred V. Randel, 'The Mountaintops of English Romanticism', *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*

23 (1981). The essay does not include any discussion of these poems. It is a discussion of `what it means to be on the top of a landmass that juts up above its surroundings' with reference to the following: Wordsworth's account of Simplon Pass and Snowdon in Books VI and XIV respectively of *The Prelude*, Coleridge's 'Hymn Before Sunrise,' the first two Acts of Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, and Keats's 'On First Looking into Chapman's Homer.'

16. See Hunter Davies, *William Wordsworth: A Biography* (New York: Athenaeum, 1980), p. 265.

17. The Fenwick note says, 'The lady was Miss Blacket, then residing with Mr. Montague Burgoyne at Fox-Ghyll. We were tempted to remain too long upon the mountain; and I imprudently, with the hope of shortening the way, led her among the crags and down a steep slope which entangled us in difficulties that were met by her with much spirit and courage.' Eric Walker discusses her identity in details in 'Wordsworth, "Miss Blackett," and Montagu Burgoyne,' *Notes & Queries* 34 (March 1987), . 26-27.

The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 25, No.1 & 2. 2003.pp 109-117

Raihan Raza

Sylvia Plath's 'Daddy' and 'Medusa': Cutting of the Umbilical Cord

Of all the poems of Sylvia Plath, 'Daddy' is the most widely known. It is also one of the most heavily commented on. The critical reception of this poem has been very intense and complex.

It belongs to a group of poems exploring the father fixation or Electra complex, such as 'The Lament', 'Letter to a Purist', 'The Colassus', 'Ouija', 'Electra on Azalea Path' etc. As the title indicates, the poem deals with the father figure as viewed by the persona. The poem basically delves deep into the persona's mind and presents her problems. Her father is the focus of attention since his memory is constantly haunting her. In this connection Plath herself said

> The poem is spoken by a girl with an Electra complex. Her father died when she thought he was god. Her case is complicated by the fact that her father was also a Nazi and her mother very possibly part Jewish. In the daughter the two strains marry and paralyse each other __ she was to act out the little awful allegory once over before she is free of it.[1]

Perhaps that is why George Steiner says that 'it is the Guernica of modern poetry.'[2] Just as Picasso was inspired by the bombardment of defenceless towns in 1937,

so is Plath inspired by the Nazi image. The Nazi image and the father fixation coalesce into a complex image of ambivalence. Neither was Plath's father a Nazi nor was her mother Jewish. These images/references not only impart an element of universality, they also give Plath a fabulous opportunityto express her rebellion against authority and certainty. The poem begins with an address:

You do not do, you do not do
Any more, black shoe
In which I have lived like a foot
For thirty years, poor and white,
Barely daring to breathe or Achoo

The black shoe is an overt symbol for the phallus, the father would not do, yet it is she who does it actually or imaginatively. The black shoe image also indicates Plath's entrapment by the father's memory for a long time and all her attempts to recover him have been futile:

You died before I had time _____
Marble - heavy, a bag full of God,
Ghastly statue with one grey toe
Big as a Frisco seal

And a head in the freakish Atlantic
Where it pours bean green over blue
In the waters off beautiful Nauset.
I used to pray to recover you.
Ach, du.

The above lines recall Plath's piecing together of the mutilated parts of the colossal father statue in 'The Colossus'. ' The Colossus' however ends with the sad realization that the father figure which also symbolizes the poet's fragmented self cannot be recovered whereas 'Daddy' only begins with this realization and records the persona's indignation. This is so because the father- daughter relationship is described in terms of the victimizer and the victimized. The relationship assumes historical and political significance when the daughter identifies her father with Nazis and herself with Jews. She describes herself as a Jew being taken off to the concentration camps:

An engine, an engine
Chuffing me off like a Jew.
A Jew to Dachau, Auschwitz, Belsen.
I began to talk like a Jew.
I think I may well be a Jew.

The father is depicted as a fascist, a brute, an authoritarian with frightening appearance:

Not God but a swastika
So black no sky could squeak through.
Every woman adores a Fascist,
The boot in the face, the brute
Brute heart of a brute like you.

The boot image is an effective image for the obsessional nature of the daughter. Later in the poem Plath explains how she was always afraid of him and she identifies herself

with the Jews. But hatred is not the only emotion she has for daddy. The persona in 'Daddy' loves the father. Like any ambivalent person, she refers to how they buried her father when she was ten, and we find in another poem, 'Lady Lazarus' how she tried to reunite with him every ten years. The father's colour is black, the colour of the sea and hence blackness always symbolises her father. The cleft in the chin is the penis as well as the cleft in the vagina and the whole imagery refers to sexual congress:

> You stand at the blackboard, daddy,
> In the picture I have of you,
> A cleft in your chin instead of your foot
> But no less a devil for that, no not
> Any less the black man who

Plath also refers to her attempt at suicide and her marriage to her husband who, she thinks, has tortured her. She was tortured for seven years. At this point in the poem the image of the father and the husband co-lease, are so dove-tailed together that they both become her oppressors. One oppressed her by dying while she was still a child and needed him badly. He let her down in this way and betrayed her. That was her father. The other, that is her husband who betrayed her in real life also appears as a victimizer, a vampire, a blood sucker. He was to provide her security, the security that she had missed as a child when her father died. Since the two, father and husband co-lease she will succeed in killing them both, if she kills one of them:

> If I've killed one man, I've killed two ____
> The vampire who said he was you

And drank my blood for a year,
Seven years, if you want to know.
Daddy, you can lie back now.

Since her father was responsible for all her troubles she ends him up like a vampire :

There's a stake in your fat black heart
And the villagers never liked you.
They are dancing and stamping on you.
They always knew it was you.
Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through.

Plath's love – hate relationship with her father finds bold and terrifying expression in 'Daddy'. It is no doubt confessional and autobiographical but Plath's handling of the theme, imagery, and atmosphere impart universal appeal to the poem. Historical as well as personal victamization are dramatized in this poem. The fact that 'Daddy' is a dramatic monologue also imparts an element of objectivity to the poem. Plath uses the techniques of caricature , parody and hyperbole to distance the speaker from herself . Freudian clichés, historical events, racial stereotypes, literary echoes and personal experiences are all rolled into one.

The poem is a remarkable technical accomplishment of Sylvia Plath; here she makes a deft use of vowel sounds in the ending of the lines. The rapid, pulsating beat contributes to the passion in the poem. The poem vividly invokes the atmosphere of Nazi atrocities and the horror of war. The colour scheme is also highly suggestive. The

predominance of black – black shoe, black telephone, black man etc. – is suggestive of masculine vigour and sexuality apart from contributing to the eeriness and horror underlying the poem.

'Medusa' is a poem which explores Plath's relationship with her mother. It has the same stance in relation to the mother figure as is found in 'Daddy' in relation to the father – figure. According to Jon Rosenblatt, 'Medusa' corresponds in Plath's work to 'Daddy': both represent the search for freedom from parental figures.[3] Just as there is a complete exorcism of the father figure in the last line of 'Daddy', 'Daddy, daddy, you bastard, I'm through', likewise Plath severes all connections whatsoever with her mother 'There is nothing between us'.

Medusa is a jelly fish. Medusa is also one of the gorgons with the miraculous power of turning the beholder into stone. Medusas in the poem represents the mother figure into whose tentacles the speaker is caught.

The first three stanzas vividly describe the strangle hold of the mother on the daughter. The central image here is that of Medusa, the jelly fish with its 'stony mouth plugs' and ears cuffing the seas incoherence. The penetrating hold of the mother is revealed in the lines:

> Your stooges
> Plying their wild cells in my keel's shadow,
> Pushing by like hearts,

Plath feels the inseparable all- consuming relationship of her mother whose presence haunts her all the time:

In any case, you are always there,
Tremulous breath at the end of my line,
Curve of water upleaping
To my water rod, dazzling and grateful,
Touching and sucking.

The central image in this stanza is that of fishing or angling. Throughout the poem Plath employs marine imagery skillfully. The poem takes on an autobiographical colour when the poet makes a pointed reference to the unwanted visit of her mother to England disturbing her married life:

I didn't call you.
I didn't call you at all.
Nevertheless, nevertheless
You steamed to me over the sea,
Fat and red, placenta

Paralyzing the kicking lovers.

The lines bring out the dislike of the daughter for the mother who has exerted a suffocating influence:

Squeezing the breath from the blood bells
Of the fuchsia. I could draw no breath,
Dead and moneyless,

Reacting angrily against the mother, the daughter rejected the mother and bursts out in pointed jabs:

Who do you think you are?
A communion wafer? Blubbery Mary?
I shall take no bite of your body,

Bottle in which I live,

Ghastly Vatican.
I am sick to death of hot salt.
Green as eunuchs, your wishes
Hiss at my sins
Off, off, eely tentacle!

There is nothing between us.

Here we find Plath's penchant for employing the myth and then demythifying it. The myth of Medusa applies doubly to the mother and the daughter; one exerting the influence and the other becoming vulnerable to it. But in the final rejection of the mother by the daughter Plath departs from the myth.

The diction of the poem is remarkable. Plath employs phrases of religious significance: 'Jesus hair', 'Communion wafer', 'Ghastly Vatican' etc. which render a special force to the nature of the relationship between the mother and the daughter. We find a turbulence in the rhythm which brings out the stormy relationship of the mother and the daughter.

By rejecting the father and his dominance as she does in 'Daddy', the mother and her control as she does in 'Medusa', Plath intends to establish and define her own identity. No doubt her personal life served to provide raw material for her poems but what we read is not simple autobiography as the above analysis makes clear. This is

her rebellion against authority. In these poems she cuts the umbilical cord through and through. The' poor and white' foot can now have an independent existence.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 25, No.1 & 2. 2003. pp 118-127

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Orphic Elements in Neruda's Poetry

Pablo Neruda, like Dante, Milton, Whitman and Hugo, is a poet of the great Orphic tradition. Orpheus was a pre-Homeric bard, so gifted that, with the power of poetry he caused rocks, stones and trees to move. The myth of Orpheus has been interpreted to mean that poetry has power not merely over thoughts and words but also over natural objects and their behaviour.[1] This dynamic expresses itself in literature through the tradition of inquiry and of reliance on the prophetic powers of poetry. The myth is statement, question and method at the same time.

Neruda's poetry, spontaneously, breaks 'the wall of silence round crystal, wood and stones.'[2] Like Emerson's poet he puts eyes and tongues into every dumb and inanimate object. Childhood years spent in the frontier town of Temuco, a pioneer region in Southern Chile, helped to develop a sensibility that modulates itself to suit poetry of absent depths, empty spaces, of nature, and later even the austerity of anti-poetry. In 'Too Many Names', a short poem written in 1958, he says:

> I have a mind to confuse things
> unite them, make them new born,
> mix them up, undress them
> until all the light in the world

has the oneness of the ocean
a generous, vast, wholeness
a crackling, living fragrance.

Just as theology is inseparable from the works of Dante and Milton and the concept of democracy and progress cannot be delinked from the poetry of Hugo and Whitman, the poetry of Neruda derives its energy from his visions of justice and equality on Earth.Such visions are frequently comparable to Shelley's visions.

Neruda stayed in Temuco till the age of sixteen after which he moved to Santiago. Nourished by a virgin landscape of which he was a lonely discoverer, unhampered by social, academic or religious conventions, he could imbibe impressions and experiences like the primeval man and be led to discover his talent of poetry:

[...]Poetry arrived
in search of me. I don't know, I don't know where
it came from, from winter or a river
[...] and I wrote the first faint line,
faint, without substance, pure
nonsense
pure wisdom
of someone who knows nothing,

'Poetry'

The young Neruda lived in a perpetual state of wonder, listened to the voices of nature and natural history, deciphered the silences of stones and rocks and listened to the secret tongue of the River Bio Bio as it slithered through the forests. These were the oracles that

inducted him into the mysteries of life and were later to conjure for him the key to human destiny :

> Now talk to me Bio Bio,
> [...] you gave
> me the language, the night-time song
> mingled with rain and foliage.
>
> 'Canto General'

Neruda's collection *Twenty Poems of Love* published in 1924 is characterized by high energy and also by a proliferation of images. The poems deal with the discovery of the universe knowledge of sex and of the poet's own sense of estrangement in his confrontation with women. Women merge into nature, become metamorphosed into mist or earth, and generally defy coherent analysis. The poet facing them as explorer and interrogator experiences loneliness and dejection. Woman was always to recur as a symbol of cosmic nature in his poetry.

In 1935, Neruda put forward his own theory of poetry which he chose to describe as 'impure poetry':

> A poetry impure as a suit of clothes, as a body, soiled with food, a poetry familiar with shameful, disgraceful deeds, with dreams, observation, wrinkles, sleepless nights, presentiments, eruptions of hatred and love, animals, idylls, shocks, negotiations, ideologies assertions, doubts, tax demands. [....][3]

The lengthy manifesto goes on to include melancholy, sentimentality, forgotten human potentialities, the light of

the moon, the swan at nightfall. The very style of the manifesto is in accordance with the Orphic mood of his early poetry.

However, the poetry of the next period exposes a dearth of Orphic powers. The poet, between 1924 and 1934, served as a consul in the East. Cut off from Spain, suffering from acute loneliness and the indignities of impoverished respectability, he could no longer address an oracular universe, which could pliably yield to his interrogation. The poems of this period expose hopelessness and record sense impressions that are strangely futile and bleak –

> I do not want to be the inheritor of so many misfortunes
> I do not want to continue as a root and as a tomb,
> as a solitary tunnel, as a cellar full of corpses,
> Stiff with cold, dying with pain.
>
> 'Walking Around'

One of Neruda's postings as Chilean Consul took him to Madrid in Spain. Here he happened to meet poets like Rafeal Alberti and Lorca,who had a clear recognition of their relationship with the common man. The Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936. Lorca was assassinated and Neruda lost his post as consul because of his involvement in the political struggle. During the rather fanatic period that followed, the poet rediscovered inclinations towards Marxism and the Marxist politicization of art. He joined the Communist party soon after the Second World War and his changed attitudes registered themselves in his poetry.

The new anti-poetry, which was a product of the Second World War, had its origins in the acute distrust of the conventional norms on which lyrical poetry thrived. The anti-poet required that poetry should communicate as directly as prose. Stepping into the new mode, Neruda, like Brecht, conditioned his sensibility to this austerity and began to regard his poetry not as an elite pursuit but as a statement of human solidarity addressed to simple people.

In a lecture on 'Obscurity and Clarity in Poetry' (1953) he announced that he wrote for 'ordinary people, people so modest that very often they have not learnt to read.' He advocated 'Poetry like bread that can be shared by all'. Yet, he admitted, not without a sense of regret that 'It was a great effort for me to sacrifice obscurity to clarity'.[4]

Neruda made genuine efforts to strip his poetry of all bourgeois effects. However, unlike Brecht, Neruda did not succeed in stripping his poetic self and subduing his poetic personality and the struggle between the obscure and the clear styles continued even after the rhetoric and the vatic gesture had been discarded.

Canto General, a Chilean epic, is a fifteen section poem which was first published in 1950. During the long period of its composition Neruda had become a militant. Under threat of arrest he was forced to move secretly from house to house, sheltered by workers and country people. One of the sections entitled *El Fugitivo* deals with his experiences of the period. The language used is of the brand

preferred for oratory or ceremony. Neruda breaks away from the lyrical tradition, to practice the art of rhetoric. The long poem includes description, polemic, satire, eulogy, insult, panegyric and lament. Throughout, the poet is present as the protagonist who talks to the reader, persuading through his own example, seeing, showing, touching. 'I question you, salt of the highways', Look at them now, touch this substances' 'I saw you, night of the sea'. He draws upon his childhood experiences to unfold the secret methods and patterns of natural history. He narrates the story of the two Americas, explaining their geography and geographical divisions, the sufferings of the land and its people in the hands of successive conquerors and dictators and finally concludes with his own story.

The poem presents a powerful and coherent vision of Nature and history. They are the oracles, which communicate the secret of human destiny. This treatment heightens their occult significance and yields the answer that the material of progress can also be the instrument of exploitation and that man is the architect of his destiny. In 'The Heights of Macchu Picchu' (Section XI, *Canto General*) Neruda, powerfully re-enacts an Orphic archetype. While commenting on the Inca fortress, which for hundreds of years, has been concealed in the midst of the Andeans ranges, Neruda contemplate its vast, mysterious and rather impenetrable architecture. Under the influence of his poetic vision, the past comes to life and the stones speak of those who built and laboured. The protagonist is the witness, the

man who has seen, and understood and now transmits the truth to posterity :

I see the ancient being, the slave, the
sleeping one,
Blanket his fields – a body, a thousand
bodies, a man, a thousand
Women swept by the sable whirlwind,
charred with rain and night.

Canto General also touches upon the moment of genesis.The poet describes the emergence of the consciousness from heavy darkness and the birth of language and the universe. In a later poem 'The Flaming Sword' (1970) Neruda was to theorize upon the genesis. He reshaped the genesis myth to include the variation, that after the Original Sin, at the moment of expulsion of the principal pair from Eden, the death of God occurred and man and woman come to Earth armed with the realization that they were the true gods of their own destiny. In *Canto General* Neruda frequently refers to this privileged moment which delinked destiny from the cycle of nature. The Orphic voice of *Canto General* goes on to define the future of mankind. A curse will fall upon the betrayers, and they will be annihilated. The downtrodden and the underdog and the just will be exalted and will find their rewards through rebirth and the opportunity to reshape destiny :

[...]the faces of men appeared
issuing from the matrix of islands,
born from the empty craters
their feet entwined in silence.

They were the sentinels and they closed
The cycle of the waters that surged
From all the wet domains.

'Rapa Nui'

Neruda married Matilde Urrutia in 1955 and settled down in Isla Negra. After years of wandering, the traveller appeared to have reached his destination and this once again registered a change in his poetry. He became an intensely Orphic poet, entering into an almost devout communion with the natural world. In the poetry of 1960s Neruda, in a sense attempts to return to his essence. Neruda had always been autobiographical but now his range extends to include the mythical as well as the fabulous. He wishes to restore the spirit of wonder and the sacredness of the natural order. His new-found personal happiness takes him to a universe hitherto unknown to man. He describes it eloquently in ' Fiesta's End' (1961) :

[...]I stripped in the light,
I let my hands fall to the sea,
And when everything took on transparency,
Under the land, I was at peace.

Neruda left Isla Negra for Paris in 1970 to serve as Ambassador. In 1971, he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Unlike Sarte, he accepted the award for he believed that the acceptance was consistent with his view of the poet's role as the spokesman of the people.

Neruda's last poems, of the 1970s, incorporated an ironic reversal. Early in 1973, he published a volume entitled *Incitement to Nixonicide and Celebration of the Chilean*

Revolution. The title expresses a certain political fury. The poems, however, are probably the most lyrical of his entire career. He chose the traditional 'song and broadsheet' format, which has been used by the Classical as well as the Romantic poets against the enemy. The work, significantly, is replete with reference to other poets and their works, especially Alonso de Ercilla y Zuniga, the author of the first Chilean epic.

Neruda died on 23 September1973, drawing to a close the many phases and facets of his remarkable poetry. 'Estravagario', a poem published shortly before his death, contains a rather intuitive, prophetic epitaph that is a greeting to death and the last utterance of the great Orphic Voice :

> a syllable or an interval of silence
> or the unstifled noise of a wave
> leave me face to face with the truth
> and there is nothing more to interpret,
> nothing more to say; this was everything.
> Closed were the forest doors.
> The sun goes round opening up the leaves
> The moon appears like a white fruit
> and man bows to his destiny.

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