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Note from the Chief Editor

There is no task more pleasant than writing for the launch of the online edition of the *Journal of the Department of English.* Our Department has been looking forward to the moment for quite a long time, the hiatus has not been idle either for the editorial team, seniormost to young contributions. Looking before and after, I can only marvel at this moment, when we stand at the crossroads of history. From words to bytes, from print to online mode, the momentous shift is hearkening back to the past, when the print replaced manuscript. The change in mode looks forward, unchanged in spirit, to future volumes to carry forward our inheritance, certainly a mixture of gain and loss. I thank everyone who has made this moment of the launch of the online journal so memorable. Twitching my mantle that has fallen upon me, I take my leave, wishing for our journal fresh horizons and pastures new.

Prof. Rangana Banerji
Head, Department of English
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Chief Editor, 2024

EDITORIAL

Writing an editorial of an academic journal had never been more difficult. Given the fact that the journal happens to be the *Journal of the Department of English,* University of Calcutta, whose prehistory spans more than the century, the task becomes unenviable. Branching out of the *Journal of Arts and Letters* of the University of Calcutta, it initially emerged as the *Bulletin of the Department of English*, finally giving way to the present *Journal of the Department of English.* Throughout the previous century and in the first half of the present the journal witnessed wars, devastations, jubilations, celebrations of every kind; but surely the present state of apathy that enwraps the world was certainly alien to it. In a world, immuned to the horrifying spectacles of violence and greed, any appeal in the name of intellectual sanity, is bound to fall on deaf ears. It is, therefore, heartening and refreshing to see an academic journal, with its unwavering commitment to academic excellence, is entering a new digital phase.

To inaugurate the first digital edition of the *Journal of the Department of English,* University of Calcutta, we have been blessed with some excellent academic contributions. To begin with, we proudly reprint a seminal article by late lamented Professor Arun Kumar Dasgupta, who had not only graced the Department of English for decades but has laid the foundations of understanding and studying European Renaissance in India. The article that we proudly boast of was originally delivered as a series of lectures in memory of Professor Amal Bhattcharji, back in 1973. The strength of the article derives from its sincere discovery and trust in the power of the Renaissance to transform us into committed and duly enlightened individuals who will, in turn, light up torches for many more years to come. The serenity and sagacity of Professor Dasgupta has left an heirloom that finds its reincarnation in Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri's exploration of Shakespeare's 'improprieties'. Delivered originally as the prestigious Mohini Mohan Bhattacharya Memorial Lecture 2023, proudly hosted by the Department of English, the article freshly awakens us to the 'glimpse of underwater animals' beneath the seemingly innocuous rhetoric of Shakespeare's plays. Our rich historical archives tempt us to reprint yet another article on Shakespeare, by Professor Dasgupta's charismatic senior colleague, Professor Jyoti Bhattacharya, who makes us think of Shakespeare's *King Lear* as 'Shakespeare's play of our time'.

The rest of the journal contains some thought-provoking explorations of literature and culture. Joyjit Ghosh explores D.H. Lawrence's flirtations with the European 'Futurism' of the mid-twentieth century with special emphasis on novels like *Women in Love.* Sayantina Dutta delves into Dutta the words and the world of R K Narayan, seeking some assuring moral visions. Arindam Ghosh investigates Samuel Beckett's complex and yet fundamental ideas of 'death' with special reference to his *Malone*

Dies. With Soumik Banerjee we travel back in time to the history of the performance of Rabindranath Tagore's *The Post Office* in Western Europe with an emphasis on the evolution of the relationship between Tagore and W B Yeats. The 'topoi' of the hotel rooms in the writings of Jean Rhys is the subject of Asmita Boral's interesting article. Arcaprova Raychaudhury explores the world of the 'subaltern detective' Byomkesh Bakshi with special reference to Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's story 'Calamity Strikes'. The first German Netflix series *Dark (2017)* which ran for three seasons is subject of Aritrik Dutta Chowdhury paper, where he chooses to 'interpret myths and paradoxes'. Our final inclusion is Bistriti Parveen's paper on Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's Bengali novel *Aparajito* (*The Unvanquished*), originally published in 1931, where she investigates the oppression of caste system in the early twentieth century Bengali society. A bouquet of such eclectic assortment of papers, we are sure, going to tease the intellect of the discerning reader. The responsibility for all the faults and disappointments, are squarely ours.

Dr. Debapriya Paul
Editor
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One should not falter to acknowledge where the debt is due. I am thankful to our Honourable Vice-Chancellor Professor Santa Datta (De) and our respected Registrar Professor Debasis Das. My heartfelt gratitude to Professor Sukanta Chaudhuri, Professor Emeritus, Jadavpur University, who has kindly allowed us to publish his Mohini Mohan Bhattacharya Memorial Lecture 2023. I am sincerely grateful to Professor Chinmoy Guha, Professor Emeritus, Department of English, Calcutta University, for his support and encouragement. I am grateful to the present and former Heads of the Department of English, Professor Rangana Banerji and Professor Siddhartha Biswas, for their strong encouragement and support. I owe my gratitude to all my departmental colleagues for making this happen. I am specially indebted to our former students Srilekha, Anamika, and their entire team for their collective effort of transcribing two old richly scholarly articles into new editable format. I express my gratitude to Shri Haridas Talukdar, Avijit Karmakar and the entire team of Rohini Nandan for giving this issue of the Journal its final shape. My sincerest apologies to those who remain unacknowledged.

CONTENTS

THE INTELLECTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RENAISSANCE*

ARUN KUMAR DASGUPTA

Author's note : *I am grateful to the editor of this Journal for publishing this article, which presents, In a condensed form, the contents of three lectures given in 1973 at the invitation of the Amal Bhattacharji Memorial Centre for European Studies in Calcutta. I have tried to preserve most of the first and second lectures, but have had to omit a great deal of the third. In spite of its ambitious title, Section VI of the present article is somewhat restricted in scope. It treats only some of the pertinent ideas of Nicholas Cusanus. If I had to include the three other major thinkers discussed in the third and longest lecture in April, 1973, I would have had to re-write this article. Published at last, this course of lectures given more than thirteen years ago would have gained, if its contents were thoroughly revised and also expanded. Unfortunately, this has not been possible. I have been able to add only a few notes and revise a few others. The lectures, therefore, appear in their present form with a grave omission. However, though familiar, the ideas discussed are by no means obsolete. They have, I believe, a timeless relevance. My attempt to put them together is prompted by deep respect for. Values I shared with my teacher to whose memory this is dedicated.*

"Let us put in order the heaven that *intellectually* lies within us *(che intellettualmente* è *dentro di noi)".*

Giordano Bruno, *Lo spaccio della bestia trionfante,* Opere ital. 439 (Quoted by E. Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy,* tr. M. Domandi, p. 122).

THESE lectures, delivered in March-April, 1973, were planned as a tribute to the memory of my teacher, the late Professor Amal Bhattacharji of Presidency College, Calcutta. The title calls for a word of explanation at the outset. It may be asked why I have chosen the "intellect" as holding the key to the meaning of the Renaissance. I have not used the word "intellectual" primarily to suggest that thirst for unlimited knowledge, which is popularly associated with the Renaissance, though it will be seen to have some relation to "the basic Faustian attitude" of the period.[1] The term is used here as it was used by the Platonists in the context of the speculative cosmology of the Renaissance. It assumes some knowledge of the basic distinction made between the two segments of the universe, the intelligible and the sensible, in

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order to accentuate that aspiration for the higher life of the mind or intellect which characterizes humanist thought and explains much of the art of the period. Like the word "intellect", "intelligence" is also used in the Platonic sense[2] in relation to the hierarchy of the incorporeal, though I have not ignored another meaning of this word in judging the quality of Renaissance *intelligence* as revealed uniquely in its power of bringing together the widest possible diversity of opinions, experiences, ideas, etc.[3] In all its varied senses, however, the term is a pointer to the concept which becomes the foundation of the new image of man in his freedom from a being that is given, capable of entering into all forms of being, thereby creating his own nature, in consequence of which life that is *human* comes to be thought of as a force rivalling that of cosmic potencies.

This concept of man may be explained with the help of the myth of Prometheus as the Man-making artist as treated in one of the major sources of contemporary mythography, Boccaccio's *De Genealogia Deorum.* Here the Adam motif merges with the Prometheus motif. The medieval thinkers seized upon the negative aspect of the myth, interpreting it as only a pagan travesty of the Biblical story of creation. The true maker, they affirmed, is one, not two, i.e., God, not man. In Boccaccio, by contrast, there are *two* creations, not one. The first calls into being the mere existence of man, his physical reality. The second confers upon that existence an intellectual content. Thus is created the specific form of man, i.e., of *homo* as *humanus.*

We have here a basic distinction between the physical or natural man, man as he issues from the hand of Nature and the *intellectual*[5] man, man as he is transformed by himself. The true significance of the creation of man lies in man's being not just a creature but also a *creator* in the likeness of God, the 'created God', in fact, a 'deus occasionatus'. This power of self-renewal is the inner meaning of 'renaissance'. The meaning is deepened further when related to the renaissance of nature, its redemption being brought about by man.[6] Consider what would happen, if human nature were removed from the created universe. There would be no such thing as *value*, a sense of the higher and the lower, of greater and lesser perfection. "God strikes the coins, but the human mind determines their values."[7]

When we see the contrast in the attitude towards Nature between the Renaissance and the Middle Ages, we also grasp the meaning of the conquest of space in Renaissance art through the application of the basically mathematical concepts of perspective and proportion. Man's descent into the sphere of the sensible is no longer an analogue of his fall. By so descending into the sensible, the intellect of man confers a value thereon i.e., on what merely exists. The kind of transformation it brings about is that of mere being into a vivid and palpitating life, answering in harmony to the rhythm of man's own life, the rhythm of ascent from the lower to the higher, from nature or matter to spirit or intelligence. Just as nature is raised up to God through the mediation of man as maker, so, during the Renaissance, human culture is dedicated to the task of visibly confirming or vindicating the freedom of the human spirit. "Now", as Cassirer puts it, "human culture has found its true theodicy".[8] Renascent man joins

renascent nature in a unified ascent to God, their Maker.

The turning of the chaos that unredeemed nature was into the clarity and depth of nature redeemed, as the transparent garment[9] through which the spirit shines in the cosmos of Renaissance art, is a visible proof, if any proof were needed, of the fundamental relation of Art and Intellect in this age. Through the mediation of art there is a perpetual cycle of "an ascent of the sensible to the intellect and a descent of the intellect to the sensible".[10] This centrally important aspiration towards higher things, the unremitting effort to grasp and render *visible* what is *intelligible*, is by nature indefinable and immeasurable. Here, in the realm of the authentic fulfilment of the Humanist dream of perfection, calculation fails. This intellectual freedom, essentially creative, probably sprang from an indefinable, mystic impulse common to an extraordinary number of men of genius, many of them conforming to the Renaissance ideal of *l'uomo universale*, men we admire for the range and quality of their mind.

The Renaissance in history would seem to bear some resemblance to that brief spell of intense life which all of us have known some-time in our individual lives : one of those "moments" that bring a simultaneous awareness of the fullness of the life of the senses and that of the spirit, which give a unique, though characteristically brief and concentrated, meaning to our existence, but remain unrelated to the relatively less illuminated zone of the past and the relatively more "enlightened" zone of the period that follows. The Renaissance, accordingly, may be regarded as a period of transition; an interim of effective freedom of the intellect between the scholastic authoritarianism of the Middle Ages and the rationalistic authoritarianism of the Age of Enlightenment It is one of the ironies of the intellectual history of Europe that experimental science, itself the child of a revolt against reason as identified with the tyranny of scholastic logic, fathered a new spirit of authoritarianism and formalism.[11]

A recognition of the intellectual independence of the Renaissance as a transitional period may save us from the danger of either over-stating the importance of "renascence" or of belittling it. We may also hope in this way to restore the term to its deeper meaning, one akin to the other term "Reformation", the common spiritual urge being an expectation of salvation, of redemption, the kernel of a notion of renewal of life,[12] outer and inner, of nature and spirit. This is reflected in the affinities of a whole range of terms like *renascor*, *renovare*, *reformare*, etc.[13] They all point to a common impulsive faith in the possibility of a renewal of form, a transformation.

We must view with caution the impulse to associate the term "Renaissance" with what is popularly regarded as the hall-mark of the modern age, its "anti-authoritarian" spirit.[14] As for the pagan élan, on the other hand, it seems at this distance that it was a mask worn for distinction: exclusive attention to it may be frustrating, because, however much we may be tempted to admire the mask, the mask serves as much to hide, as reveal, the face, the physiognomy of the Renaissance.

The over-inflated notion of "liberty" is a typical delusion of modern culture, suitably embellished with political overtones. It should warn us about the need of distinguishing Renaissance humanism from later self-styled brands of "Humanism".[15] Our understanding of Renaissance humanism is cramped by a tendency to regard it as a forerunner or counterpart of later similarly named movements. With all *our* "liberty", however, we lack the greatest freedom of all, "that centrally placed liberty", as it has been called, "of man as man".[16] To be "homo" is one thing; to be "humanus" is another. Our concept of liberty is the liberty of the alienated individual: unrelated, unlocated, absolute and totalitarian. But the Renaissance concept is that of man as man. *Libertas* is therefore, inseparable from *humanitas*. The primary purpose is to distinguish *man* as sharply as possible from the rest of nature, i.e., sub-human creation, animal and vegetable, on the one hand, and the human from the divine or supernatural on the other.[17] A brief survey relating to the uses of the term "Renaissance" may be helpful before we continue with this discussion of the two-fold distinction of man.

II

The term "Renaissance", at one time regarded as highly suitable for describing the intellectual, cultural and spiritual ferment or upsurge that began somewhat fortuitously with the Fall of Constantinople in 1453 and the consequent flight of Greek scholars to Italy and the rediscovery of classical manuscripts, has now raised doubts in the minds of many historians about its utility. At least they feel that it has a much wider span in human history. In fact they suggest not one, but several Renascences.[18] Croce in "The Positivity of History" refers to these birth-pangs of *renaissance* in the womb of time as the periodic upsurge of an impulse to oppose and escape from an old order to a new form of life. "In that act which is in labour to produce a new form of life the adversary who opposed us is in the wrong, the state from which we wish to escape is unhappy: the new to which we are tending becomes symbolized as a dreamed-of felicity to be attained, as a past condition to restore." In other words, at certain moments the dream of the future coincides with the dream of the past, necessarily a golden past. Within the historical limits of the period known as the Renaissance, the mode of transformation of the past is reflected in the attitude of the humanists towards classical antiquity as contrasted with that towards the Middle Ages in this way: the former was regarded as luminous, the latter dark.

Some, like Arnold Hauser,[19] have legitimate doubts about the conventional distinction between the Medieval and the Modern. They admit, accordingly, the notion of an indeterminate fluidity in the use of the term. As Huizinga[20] says, the Renaissance is either pushed back towards the Middle Ages, or pushed forward to the period of the Enlightenment: the real turning point is, possibly, the introduction of the idea of progress and industrialization. Identifying the beginning of the Renaissance, therefore, is a matter that depends on the particular feature or symptom that a particular historian chooses to isolate.[21] An obvious choice, for example, would be naturalism: the interest in the individual object, the search for natural law and the ideal of fidelity to life in art. This can be shown as having originated in the Gothic

period and Arnold Hauser has emphasized the influence of nominalism.[22]

C. S. Lewis understandably expresses his irritation with the habit of employing the term, rather vaguely.[23] The grounds of his rejection of the term are, however, questionable, especially when he says that, unlike other labels like "Antiquity" and "Middle Ages", it is a term without historical perspective, having been used by the people of the period itself. A strange objection like this should make us think whether the term has indeed outlived its utility.

Douglas Bush would give the term a very long life. He takes the Renaissance as that long process of re-education of Europe after "the decayed Roman empire was overrun by virile and uncivilized barbarians": the re-education of Christians as well as the education of the barbarians by Christians through classics. The beginning, therefore, he concludes, can be pushed back at least a thousand years and the end is not yet in sight, since the "modern" world is dominated by two impulses which have their origin in the Renaissance: rationalism and empiricism.[24]

Naturalism in art and literature, sceptical rationalism and empiricism in science and philosophy: these, undoubtedly, are the more immediately recognizable, the more spectacular ideas that we believe we have inherited from the Renaissance. But these may not take us very far towards an understanding of the Renaissance concept of freedom. It is even possible that we are cut off from the authentic source of its power. The significance of the "Renaissance" is inseparable from that of "humanitas". The pagan and the Christian elements of the thought of the Renaissance are related in a manner that suggests a vigorous alliance rather than hostility. Christianity, in a sense, instead of weakening the classical spirit, actually strengthened it. The Renaissance discovered a continuity of life which overcame the temporal barrier between the past and the present, just as it overcame the moral barrier between nature and spirit familiar in the Middle Ages. This continuity is, of course, twofold: of survival as well as of revival.

III

The meaning of the term *humanitas*[25] is a compound of two separate sets of antitheses: (1) classical: man vs. animal / barbarian; (2) medieval: man vs. God.

DIVINITAS FERITAS

HUMANITAS

Let us place the two terms *divinitas* and *feritas* at two extremes, with *humanitas* as the middle term to form a pair of oppositions so juxtaposed as to generate a perennial tension between two opposed movements stemming from the common base or centre, which is humanity: a tension between an upward movement and a downward movement, between ascent and descent, between aspiration or sublimation and corruption or degradation. This leaves an equal and free choice for man centrally placed between two possible changes of form or metamorphoses: between a continuity of ascent, apparently unlimited, towards a higher form of life, and a continuity of

descent towards a lower form of life or, rather, mere existence.

The Renaissance man used both these sets of antitheses as the, two wings, if I may say so, on which to fly in quest of self-discovery, of his true *humanitas*, so as to avoid the fate of Icarus. The fall of Icarus was one of the favourite myths used by Renaissance authors and artists. Two examples must suffice : from Marlowe and from Pieter Breughel.

The opening chorus of *Dr. Faustus* has the following passage:

> So soon he profits in divinity,
> The fruitful plot of scholarism graz'd,
> That shortly he was grac'd with doctor's name,
> Excelling all whose sweet delight disputes
> In heavenly matters of theology,
> Till swollen with cunning, of a self-conceit,
> His waxen wings did mount above his reach,
> And melting heavens conspir'd his overthrow ...
> (lines 15-22)

Notice the occurrence of "divinity" in the first of the lines quoted (line 15) and "heavens" in the last (line 22) with "heavenly matters" in the middle (line 19): the passage describes in mythical terms how a man who might have continued to profit in divinity is overthrown by the heavens because of his incomplete awareness of his humanity. The Renaissance man was aware of the danger of flying on the waxen wings of self-conceit. He chose, instead, to fly with the wings of mutually invigorating antitheses securely fastened to the cosmos of his *humanitas*.

The second example I have chosen is the picture "The Fall of Icarus", by Breughel: a striking illustration of the imaginative power latent in the traditional myth as seen in its masterly treatment by the great painter. The key to the painter's interpretation[26] lies in the broad, straight back of average humanity in the figure of the peasant in foreground, his legs firmly planted on the soil, his gaze unaverted from his humble but rewarding task, his hands engaged in precise and exacting labour, as obedient as the horse tied to his plough, his indifference to the inevitable fate of human aspiration as shadowed forth in the flying figure of Icarus above (at top left) and in the legs of the unfortunate aviator almost comically disappearing in the waves below (at bottom right), swallowed up by the inexorable logic of the law of nature, as it were, reflected alike in the imperturbable folds of his humble peasant's garment and the level furrows of the ground being tilled. The whole scene is framed in a kind of cosmic theatre, earth, sea, sky, human occupations and habitations, urban and rural, forming an appropriate setting for the theme: the quiet, dignified, unexalted reward of solid industry is implied in this attitude of fidelity to nature, just as punishment, at once terrible and ludicrous, is reserved for human conceit, if it dares transcend the limits of Nature.

A consideration of Breughel's picture may suggest what the Renaissance made of the medieval antithesis in constructing its notion of *humanitas*. It takes the shape of a becoming humility based on an understanding of the limitations of man as man: above all, of his frailty and fallibility, of the complexities, in fact, at once tragic and comic, of human nature, as distinct from the simplicity and purity of divine nature. This gives rise to an essentially Christian vision of human tragedy which is deepened by associating man's fallibility with his frailty. The tragic emphasis, in this view, is on guilt and expiation rather than on error and the price that has to be paid for one's folly. It is based on the implicit recognition of the complexity of human sin and may provide an appropriate framework for judging the tragic quality of a play like *Macbeth* and understanding, instead of half-regretting, Shakespeare's choice of *mochtheria* rather than *hamartia* in shaping the tragic characters in that play. Paradoxically, this apparently un-Aristotelian view of tragedy serves, indirectly, to bring the total experience very close to the Aristotelian demand for universalization of individual tragedy. By implication, the evil is not just located in the individual. This vision of evil is more, not *less* tragic, because simultaneously it evokes the larger, more inescapable fear that *this* evil is a part of the scheme of things, that it is *objective*.

This deeper understanding of man's frailty calls for a meek acceptance of his limitations: an attitude that characterizes the face of man when it is turned towards God. When, however, Janus-like, he turns about to face the rest of creation, man feels equally the need to overcome these limitations so as to hold his position in the centre. This is what the Renaissance assimilated from the classical antithesis between *humanitas* and *feritas* and the corresponding mood is that of human pride justified by man's superiority to beast or barbarian. In the exposition of the medieval antithesis I had used, to bring out its inner content, the classical myth of the fall of that unfortunate aviator, Icarus. To illustrate the meaning of the substance or content of the classical antithesis for bringing out the meaning of "renaissance", I shall now cite the brief speech of a modern aviator, also fictional: the cryptic speech of Guillaumet in Antoine de Saint-Exupery's novel entitled (in English) "Wind, Sand and Stars". The man had been lost in the Andes, almost given up for dead. Even the search for him had been virtually abandoned. When, therefore, he is found, and found alive, he is almost like a man re-born. The speech I quote is his first *intelligible* statement— it was as if he had unlearnt speech and learnt to speak it again —"I swear that what I went through, no animal would have gone through". "A speech", the author of the novel remarks, "admirable in its human pride". The true meaning of "renaissance" is here, too.

A cognate *human* pride comes out in the touching anecdote narrated by Panofsky[27] to whose exposition of *humanitas* I remain indebted. Nine days before his death Immanuel Kant was visited by his physician. "Old, ill and nearly blind, he rose from his chair, and stood trembling with weakness and muttering unintelligible words. Finally, his faithful companion realized that he would not sit again until the visitor had taken a seat. This he did, and then Kant permitted himself to be helped to

his chair and after having regained some of his strength, said, 'The sense of humanity has not yet left me-'". This was said by the great philosopher when deprived of nearly all other organic senses. Man *alone* can, we thus see, create and control his *sense* of humanity. That is how man is re-born, we might say, even while he is oppressed by his mortality. The whole process is vividly described: the ascent from anguished mutterings to intelligible speech displaying a concern exclusively *human*.

Similarly, we may remember, Lear, surrounded by *feritas* in nature, says to the Fool, as he stands on the heath before a hovel, his very reason about to give way, even as his old reverend head is exposed to the wild rage of the storm, to all that filial ingratitude and the ingrate heavens can inflict: "In, boy, go first. You houseless poverty-". His thought breaks off here (Lear III. iv. 26) and is resumed at line 28: "Poor naked wretches...such as these!" (28-32). There is a sign of redemption in the thought that follows: "O, I have ta'en / Too little care of this." This discovery, to which that touching gesture towards the Fool: "In, boy, go first" has been an apt prelude, is part of Lear's education. He, too, is re-born[28].

All these are examples of human pride rooted in human wisdom and heroic fortitude: in the ability, as Panofsky puts it, "to submit to *self-approved* and *self-imposed* laws", which quite sets him apart from, if not above, the conditions of his mortality.

Let me quote, finally, another remark which occurs later in the narrative of Guillaumet's heroic endurance in Saint-Exupery's novel: "What saves a *man* is to take a step, another step."[29] That, to my mind, admirably sums up the idea of human progress and the message of human salvation, of *rinascita*.

IV

In the foregoing exposition of *humanitas* the central reference was to human nature and its dual orientation. Our understanding of Renaissance humanism would, nevertheless, remain incomplete if we fail to grasp the relevance of the humanist's attitude to nature as well as to *culture*.[30] Tradition was, to the humanist, something real and objective, i.e., not something dead and past, but with a life or spirit capable of ensuring a continuity of culture, when assimilated. The idea of development or growth[31] reveals in fact nature and culture as allied and complementary processes, when life is interpreted in the humanist spirit. Tradition embraces both in this meaningful relationship so that it becomes not only something to be studied, but also to be reinstated. Turning to nature, man found much that was instructive. But what he found lacking in nature was human records as a supplementary source of knowledge and self-cultivation. The aim of the humanists was, thus, not only to reduce the chaos of nature, nature in the raw, so to speak, to an order founded upon observation as well as reflection, but also to reduce the chaos of human records, the fortuitously ruined and re-discovered remnants of classical antiquity. For achieving the second ordering of human experience, the cosmos of culture that lends meaning

and a human countenance, as it were, to the cosmos of nature the approved methods were imitation and assimilation. In fact, the two processes, imitation and assimilation were, as we shall see, one and the same.

The humanist, it will now be obvious, had to be a historian: archaeologist as well as antiquarian. The scientist-humanist, likewise, was his close ally. Interest in nature goes hand in hand with interest in culture and both have their origin in a quest for order or *cosmos*, a basic humanist impulse. The encyclopaedic ideal of the Renaissance is also revealed as not only the cause of collaboration between artist and scientist, but more significantly, and spectacularly, manifested in the coincidence of both in the same person not seldom. The Renaissance man, conceived according to this ideal of *l'uomo universale,* wanted to realize fully his own potentiality, as also that of his species. This is man's unique privilege as man, not as individual. The true meeting-point of the individual and the universal is in man. In the realm of nature, he alone is capable of the highest development of his individuality as well as of his species.

One conspicuous outcome of the new culture so conceived was the individual's desire for fame[32]; for self-perpetuation in a monumental style, for commemoration of antiquity as well as of self, especially when the two could be combined in a learned and urbane manner. The individual of the Renaissance and the cosmos of revivified antiquity strive to merge in one another and often graciously blend to give a unique flavour. The concept of virtue can no longer be restricted either to the exclusively moral or the Christian level. It is enlarged and embellished to express totally the individual's heroic resolve to leave an indelible mark on his time.

The Other Nature

Nature and culture were twin sources of humanist *paideia*, though the world of culture remained the domain uniquely human in the scope it offered for the demonstration of man's dignity and freedom. The freedom is realized when the human mind remains distinct and unattached in the exercise of the power, specifically human, of observing, even of entering into or seizing the forms of the objective world that surrounds him. The process of assimilation, therefore, implies this freedom of movement unrestricted by any ties that might bind the knower to the object of his knowledge. This dynamism, the freedom to 'rove', constitutes the specifically *human* consciousness of the subject that refuses to be immersed in the object, because it is so jealous of its freedom to remain apart. The process of assimilation implies this dual power of identification and of preserving the identity of the ego or subject; a uniquely human synthesis of sameness and difference. Humanist culture is assimilative precisely in this sense. The doctrine of imitation, intimately associated with the style *all' antica* was developed during the Renaissance with an emphasis upon the creation of "another nature and other fortunes" as if the poet were "another god"; Spingarn, referring to Scaliger in whom "this principle is carried one stage further" than in Vida, says, "Virgil especially has created another nature of such beauty and perfection that the poet need not concern himself with the realities of life, but can go to the

second nature created by Virgil for the subject matter of imitation". [33]

The relationship between nature and "the other nature" of man's making is well brought out by Petrarch in a passage in his *Familiar* Letters.[34] He begins by clearly distinguishing between the terms "similar" and "identical". *Similarity* he defines as not being of the kind that obtains between a portrait and a sitter (the praise earned being proportionate to the *likeness*), but rather of the kind that obtains between a father and a son.

The original formula, which is Quintilian's found by Seneca[35], describes the process with the traditional comparison of a bee *transforming* nectar into honey, or less picturesquely, but no less accurately, of the body assimilating nourishment. Seneca added the happy comparison of a family likeness, which Petrarch elaborated to bring out the *general* likeness and the *individual* differences between a work of imitation and its source or original (norm):

"Here" (i.e., in this affinity, as between a son and a father), "though there may often be a great difference between their individual features, a certain *shadow* as our painters call it, air (*umbra* quedam et quem pictores nostri *aerem* vocanj), perceptible above all in the face and eyes, produces that similarity that reminds us of the father as soon as we see the son, even though, if the matter were put to *measurement*, all parts would be found different: some hidden quality has this power."

Petrarch, therefore, perceives the source of this similarity as a hidden power, a *quality* to be felt rather than seen:

"So we, too, should take care that when one thing is like, many should be unlike, and that what is like should be hidden so as to be grasped by the mind's silent enquiry as intelligible rather than describable. We should therefore make use of another man's inner quality and tone, but avoid his words. For the one kind of similarity is hidden, and the other protrudes; the one creates poets, the other apes."

"Intelligible, rather than describable" how concisely this expresses the feeling produced by the ideality of the resemblance to life of the great portraits of Raphael, Titian, Holbein and others, and, again, of scenes of action and movement, of any representation, in fact, which makes us feel like saying, "How true to life 1" The difference between this ideal *resemblance* or "counterfeiting" and the *actual*, i.e., merely outward, likeness sought after diligently by the inferior sort of portrait painter, is well brought out by Sidney when he says:

".... the skill of the artificer standeth in that Idea or fore-conceit of the work, and not in the work itself."[36] For the Mannerists, as also for Sidney, beauty was not something derived or, rather, *diffused* from visible nature, but "something directly *infused* into the mind of man from the mind of God and existing independently of any sense-impressions.

In Augustine's theory of illumination" [37], too, the emphasis is on origins, on *idea*. Words, "in origin and in their best use"—only the latter recalls the former—

"have an internal... function". So used, they can be "audible and visible signs of a direct apprehension of invisible and inaudible truths". According to the Florentine Neo-Platonists, the philosopher, the visionary and the poet have such a direct and immediate apprehension of truth: of truth made visible, the Idea made flesh. This notion is also the basis of Leonardo's argument in the *Paragone* that painting is superior to all other arts. On a less exalted, but no less characteristic, level, this is the kernel of the philosophy of concept as image. This philosophy of images underlies hieroglyphs, emblems, imprese, rebuses, reverses of medals epitomizing philosophic and moral themes, and similar other devices common in Renaissance art. [38]

The general position might this be stated: "the idea in the artist's *mind* is the source of all the beauty in the works he creates." A clear echo of this may be caught in the celebrated answer given by Raphael when asked where in all the world he had found a model of such beauty as his Galatea's: "I had rather followed a certain idea in my mind."[39] Adumbration of the same Mannerist doctrine, according to which man's artistic activity is analogous to the process of God's creation, is found in this passage from Sidney's *Apology:*

"Neither let it be deemed too saucy a comparison to balance the highest point of man's wit with the efficacy of Nature; but rather give right honour to the heavenly Maker of that maker, who having made man to His own likeness, set him beyond and over all the works of that second nature: which in nothing he showeth so much as in Poetry."[40]

VI

Philosophical Basis of the Renaissance Idea of Man's Freedom

We shall now attempt a very brief exposition of certain speculative trends in Renaissance thought. For lack of space we can refer here only to Nicholas Cusanus and have to omit thinkers like Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Carolus Bovilius some of whose relevant ideas were discussed briefly in the lectures given in 1973. In spite of this grave omission we hope that the contents of this section may bring out more clearly the inner meaning of the term "renaissance" touched upon earlier. The focus will be on the concept of the nature of man, his progress from substantiality to subjectivity, and his unique privilege of free will, i.e., the exercise of his freedom to create his own nature, which, not having been bestowed upon him as a gift, must be acquired by his own effort, by art and virtue.[41] These ideas, converging on the deeper significance of the traditional likeness between man and his Maker, and suggesting (e.g., in the Bovilian system) a mode of escape for man from the necessity of a fixed station in Nature, deepen the significance of the term "renaissance".

The doctrines of Nicholas of Cusa, as Cassirer says,[42] constitute a focal point in which the most diverse rays of Renaissance thought are gathered. He is, besides, one of those universal scholars of the Renaissance: apart from being a theologian

and mathematician, he was interested in astronomy and cosmography, problems of Church history, political history, history of law and general intellectual history. He makes us realize that Italian culture has by no means its roots exclusively in the Italian soil. Cusanus was indebted to Italy but he paid back in abundant measure. The value of his contribution lies not in conclusions but in fertilizing tendencies: not in dogma but in initiating a new direction, a new orientation of "world-concept". His influence, accordingly, unconfined by the rigours of a school of thought, spreads in the shape of seminal Impulses of thought and crosses territorial boundaries: it is, like a subtle emanation, invisible but very, powerful.

His thought directs interest primarily to the lay world. This is a corollary to the Renaissance concept of versatility. The ideal Scholar was necessarily non-academic and frequently anti-authoritarian, e.g., Leonardo, Petrarch or Montaigne, who, in particular, came to typify the lay philosopher. The deeper meaning of versatility is here. It is not unrelated to the ease and nonchalance, the *sprezzatura* of Castiglione's ideal courtier,[43] which produces the Height of grace, avoiding artifice by cultivating the art of hiding Knowledge. With skill, ease and readiness the Renaissance combined, of course, prudence. The well-known maxim of prudence and skill, *festina lente*, is represented by emblems like the dolphin and the Anchor, the butterfly and the crab etc.[44]

The basic affinity of the significance of the kind of orientation we find in Cusanus to the meaning of the Renaissance as a return to the Sources is revealed in a classification of thinkers.[45]

First, we have the primitives, the first great original minds, who recognized only one model: *experience* or nature. Then came the imitators and commentators, abandoned Nature and slavishly Dedicated themselves to soulless *discorsi*, fine-spun, over-ingenious conceptual distinctions, a veritable spider's web. In the *third* phase, only a return to nature, i.e., a return to natural human understanding can set things right. Shakespeare's use of the Fool, 'Nature's Natural' as the antithesis of the doctrinaire, the 'wise man', "an ill-Roasted egg all on one side", as Touchstone puts it (*AYLI*, III. ii. 39), would seem to have some relation to this larger significance of the new lay culture: the return to common humanity.[46] The motley, I suggest, is a vividly imagined creation of what may well turn out to be much more than a side-issue of Renaissance anthropology. We may note, in passing, the visual concreteness of the style of the Shakespearean Fool at his best, and the apparently inexhaustible Store of empirical knowledge that he draws upon, the piercing home-truths that make him unassailable.

This mode of assault on received ideas is by no means an isolated development. The fine ambiguity of the humanist attitude towards antiquity, for example, is revealed, when we compare the works of Mantegna inspired by a genuine reverence for antiquity with a Work like Giovanni Bellini's *Feast of the Gods*, usually called "Bacchanal."[47] The latter follows the precedent of Lucian's Delicious irony, a subtle

process of deromanticizing, bringing the Gods down to the level of an embarrassingly common humanity. This kind of juxtaposition brings out in a delicately attenuated form the complementary, i.e., by no means conflicting, aspect of the Humanist attitude not only to authority but also to the staple theme of the 'praise of man'. "The denunciation of man", in Chastel's Words, "—the counterpart of metaphysical and generic praise Inspired a whole section of humanist activity."[48] In this complementary task of demystification the humanists discovered in irony an Instrument much subtler than over ridicule. Sebastian Brant's "Ship of Fools" and Erasmus's "Praise of Folly" are typical examples of a widespread tendency towards self-exposure in the familiar grab of Folly. The Fool in Shakespeare, a development in the same direction, uses irony as a rare instrument not merely for exploring the depths of humour itself, but, in the process, also for probing the depths of pain and anguish, uncovering, almost by a happy Accident, how the intensity of the one blends imperceptibly with the intensity of the other: in intensity, as in infinity, opposites are Equal. The most notable achievement in this direction is the poetry of the Fool's wit in *King Lear*, rich alike in fantasy and poignancy, which continually shows how anguish that is almost irremediable can find relief only in a grotesque externalization of itself.

The Fool emerges as the mediator and maker in Shakespeare's comic universe. It is tempting to suggest that there is something of the make-up of. The motley in the concept of the Bovilian man and the motley, in his turn, may be regarded as the Bovilian man in reverse. The freedom of man in turning his intellect in any direction Is the meeting point of the thoughts of Cusanus, Pico and Bovilius. The comic hero of Shakespeare, if we can so describe the Fool, can Place himself at any stage: "he's as good at anything"[49] He is at once the man of appetite, the sensual man, and the sage-man. Falstaff may indeed be regarded as Shakespeare's comic vision of *Homo sapiens*. The Fool, like the Bovilian man, is minimum in substance but maximum in meaning: in him the comic cosmos is fulfilled. Unlike the other characters in a play, he has no fixed station. He is not bound by necessity, certainly not by the necessity of playing a fixed role and yet he is everywhere by the sheer mobility of his wit. He permeates the play and the play finds its meaning in him.

This new ideal of lay knowledge that we find in Cusanus is a development parallel to that of lay piety, a doctrine he imbibed from The Brothers of Common Life. The anti-clerical idea of priests being taught by mystical laymen originated in Rhineland in the Tradition of the Ffauenmystik 'de-eroticized and intellectualized'.[50]

In *Idiota* the essential trait of wisdom is established: it is not confined to any institution and it is independent of any scholarly appurtenances. It can be found everywhere,[51] because the basic Power of a human being is that of measuring, weighing and counting. It is the foundation of all intellectual activity and man's uniqueness Lies in the power of conferring value on things. Instead of the traditional regenerative vision, the one associated with a return to the foundations of reason. The issue here is: how to stimulate the basic power of the human mind, and offer ample scope for its free and fruitful operation.

The metaphysical concept of value, as formulated by Cusanus, is Linked with the concept of proportion lauded as "the mother of Knowledge and the mother and queen of art".[52] Its significance is Visible in the radiance of redeemed Nature, in Renaissance art. Symbolically, it is the link between the higher sphere of being, i.e., Heaven or the Sphere of the Intelligible and the lower, i.e., the Realm of Nature. The link is forged by the value-conferring act of the human intellect.

We may pause here to reflect on the difference in philosophical method and aesthetic effect that may be associated with the later formulation of *concettismo* attributed to Giordano Bruno.[53] Bruno's substitution of heroic love for the Petrarchan amore, a love felt and Extended towards the universe, led to a coincidence of the theodicy of *concettismo* with the idea of the universe as an infinite network of analogies. Bruno and the theorists of the conceit used the Platonic principle of universal analogy as the basis of a poetic. Since the universe is a unity, a whole composed of the most bewildering multiformity, the most heterogeneous metaphors, the most violent yoking together of dissimilars could be justified as the expression of the underlying similarity of things. The characteristic difference between the art of the Early and High Renaissance on the one hand and Mannerist art on the other can be measured in terms of the difference in aesthetic value of the respective modes of apprehending the unity of the universe.

In his view of the relationship between God and man, Cusanus achieves a unique reconciliation of the incomprehensible infinity of the former and the finite comprehension of the latter. His theory of enlightened ignorance is an extension of the *theologia negativa.*[54] In a strikingly novel manner, however, it replaces the negative mood of defeat and despondency with a bold confidence, paradoxically affirmed by the undeniable ignorance of the limited intellect of man, in the mind of man as a valid medium of knowledge. The notion of reconciliation of contraries, of *coincidentia oppositorum*, is derived from Eckhart, and used to a novel effect by Cusanus's genius for synthesis. The three books of *Docta ignorantia,* as indicated in the plan set out in Bk. I, ch. ii, deal with a MAXIMUM: (i) with *maximum absolutum*, i.e., God, (ii) with *maximum contraclum* or the sum of limited things, i.e., the universe and (iii) with man in the universe as the mediator in whom the universe as a whole is fulfilled: it is man who links the world with its creator. Eckhart had been charged with having taught that man is God,Because he had explained that God the Father's act of expressing His own Being in knowing another (i.e., the Son) as Logos was a Kind of 'begetting'. He had expounded the human nature of the Incarnate word in these terms. In Christ there is an identity of *maximum absolution* and *maximum contraclum*. God's incarnation in Christ is the event which constitutes the centre of human history as interpreted by Christian theology. This *idea* of Christ provides the basis for the unique transformation of man's intellectual power.[55] Earlier, we had described how the human intellect had descended to the sensible to redeem Nature from the bondage of Sin. Now, according to this new vision, God or Pure Intellect descends, too, finds his own fulfilment.

Cusanus' idea of man and his dignity is characteristically expressed by his use of the analogy of the *centre of a circle* to define Man as mediator and maker giving form and meaning to the universe. For his idea of God, he uses the analogy of an infinite sphere whose *centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere*.[56] All objects in space are equidistant from God. The distance between each of them or all of them together and God is equal, being equally immeasurable. This is the equality conferred by infinity on things that are finite. They are all equal as objects of knowledge. In infinity, again, nowhere is everywhere. God, though nowhere visible in His Unity of Being, is, nevertheless, *in* everything. The centre, in this Sense, is everywhere. Every object becomes, symbolically, an image of God. Division itself becomes the condition for union. An Image, so interpreted, becomes 'a surmised shape', an expression of This yearning for union with the indivisible and invisible. This urge to make the invisible or the intelligible visible, as we have seen, constitutes the theodicy of art.

God, the absolute maximum, is beyond our comprehension in so far as the intellect in conscious of his difference, of its own complete 'otherness'. Cusanus accepts as his starting point the traditional notion of the limitation of the human intellect incapable, by its very nature, of grasping the infinite. Yet he achieves a remarkable feat when he contends that, in its 'knowledge of its non-knowledge', the Human intellect at least grasps itself in its sharp opposition to the Divine or the infinite.[57] This is the kind of fulfilment, paradoxical as it may appear, that the Individual could find, when confronting the universal. In his *De visione Dei*,[58] recalling the self-portrait of Rogier van der Weyden and its peculiar property, Cusanus shows How each individual may stand face to face with God, since the Same face, remaining stationary, looks directly at the viewer, no matter where he stands, moving in whatever direction, east or west.[59] Such is the relation in which motion and stillness are uniquely reconciled, between God and the individual being. The total unity of vision—the vision of the intellect[60] includes each of the individual views. It is, moreover, a synthetic rather than an aggregative whole. The truth of the relationship between the finite and the infinite lies in a kind of reciprocity, rather than hostility or mere opposition, in this mutual dependence of the subject, the knower (or viewer), and the object of knowledge. Every view of God is so determined by this kind of interpenetration of subject and object.

The Ego finds itself out by turning to the world, by making a continuous effort to draw the world into oneself. Bovilius, in fact, was to take this idea a step further in his own distinctive development of the concept of man's intellectual power or his 'wisdom' in *De Sapiente*.[61] Like Pico, he emphasizes the idea that man creates his own nature, having had none bestowed upon him and, having, thus, no fixed station, so to speak, *turns* in every direction: he sees all things in their essence in the mirror of his intellect, making his own the nature of all things and thus, in his versatility, the comprehensiveness of his own nature, becomes the vinculum and copula of the universe. The crucial significance of his humanity lies in the passage from potency to act. Bovilius resembles both Pico and Cusanus in developing the theme of the

dignity of man to Daringly speculative conclusions without abandoning the common mode of paradox or contradiction. He is more unequivocally Assertive than Cusanus regarding the extent of man's power of Knowledge, when, for example, he says, "The world contains but man *knows* totality." The world, Bovilius says, is maximum in substance while man is maximum in knowledge, though minimum in Substance. In all three thinkers, we have a consistent development of The Renaissance emphasis on man's endless power of self transformation. Man is ignorant, but potentially all knowledge is within him. Self-knowledge is the soul seen by itself as it turns in all directions, embracing the world and all its acts and species. Possession of Universal knowledge, *encyclopaedia*, becomes, logically, the ideal of The Renaissance man. It is thus that the idea of man as microcosm— Another traditional commonplace — is given a new depth of meaning And becomes the very model for Renaissance thought to adopt.

All things in the objective world are in act and their acts are their species. Man's mind is in potency to the same things. Each object that he faces inundates him with the brilliance of its sensible act. Man may be imagined as the focus in whom these innumerable rays of light are gathered. Like a mirror, he reflects the sensible species, and also transmutes each sensible act into *mundana lux*. He is, so to speak, a being transpierced with 'various light'.[62] He has two faces like Janus [63], one turned towards the objective world, gathering sensible species, and the other, turned inward, contemplating intellectual species within. The mirror of his mind is a *speculum volvens* which creates its own intellectual species.

VII

We can now understand that the individual's goal in the Renaissance was to become man in the widest sense. It was not his aim to become unique, but *universal*. Burckhardt's interpretation of the individualistic spirit or temper of the Renaissance could, therefore, be misleading. The difference between the 19th century approach to the Renaissance and ours lies precisely here. The former took the individual as the yardstick for measuring the outlook and achievement of the period. More recently, the interest has shifted to man and his place in nature, to man as microcosm. To the Renaissance mind, as to the medieval, only the devils in hell had no place in the great chain of Being. They suffered, accordingly, the isolation of the damned. Man's position in the Chain was central. The deepest feelings of anguish, as in *Dr. Faustus or Macbeth,* are evoked against a background of order divinely sanctioned. The lines expressing Faustus's frantic desire in his last speech to become anything but man present a kind of tragic reversal of the destiny reserved for the Bovilian man: endless capacity for self-transformation.;

Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Or why is this immortal that thou hast?
… … … …
O soul, be chang'd into little water-drops.

And fall into the ocean-ne'er be found.
(Sc. XIV, lines 163-4, 177-8).

The correct approach, therefore, to man as he appeared to the Renaissance mind should be by way of including him in the universe and including the universe in him. This, it will be seen, does not take away the importance of the individual. Rather, it merges with the dignity of man, the great theme of Renaissance thought.

The approach may be fruitful in our evaluation of the great works of Renaissance art as well. Each, be it a play of Shakespeare's or a painting of Titian's, is a *cosmos* in itself: not an object to be studied in splendid isolation, but one that enriches our experience All the more by unfolding, sometimes in a flash of quick' apprehension, sometimes with slow and graceful majesty, a whole world of thought. We discover, in other words, in the body of such a work the soul or the *intelligence* revealed in the shadowing forth of ideas with which the best minds of the age were familiar. The renewal of this feeling is the authentication of that sense of the plenitude of life so characteristic of the Renaissance. Behind every object in a world that was expanding, being explored by the travellers and voyagers and observed, too, in great empiric detail, the Renaissance mind detected a shadow, or rather, a twin shadow: a shadow of mortality and a shadow of immortality. These are the spirits that haunted the Renaissance mind.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] See Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, tr. Mario Domandi, Oxford, 1963, p. 69. As Cassirer says, "the proof of the mind's *specific* perfection consists in its refusal to stand still at any attained goal and in its constant questioning and striving beyond the goal".

[2] On the concept of the *intelletto* see R. J. Clements, *Michelangelo's Theory of Art*, London, 1963, pp. 14-20. The Greek word νοῦς (nous), as used by Plotinus to denote the perceptive faculties of the human mind in seeking beauty, became *intellectus* or *intelletto* in deliberations of the Italian humanists. In Latin *intellectus* denoted not 'intellect' but 'perception'. According to Ficino, the human faculty furthest *outside* the body is the *intellectus divinus sive angelicus*: this is what man shares with God. The use of the word is associated with the notion of *inner vision* ('visus interior'), which constitutes a part of man's Higher Soul, apart from *exterior perception* ('sensus exterior') contained in the Lower Soul. (See E. Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, New York, 1962, p. 136). The characteristic mode of hierarchic ascent is reflected in the order. The theme of liberation is implicit in the concept of *intelletto*. See the interpretation of Michelangelo's personal emblem in Clements, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

Ascent implies growth. "The human mind", as Cusanus puts it in 'a pregnant metaphor', "is a divine seed that comprehends in its simple essence the totality of everything knowable". The Idea of the *seed* that grows connects *intellect* with *culture*. Faith in ascent of man from crude beginnings to greater perfection (cf. Note 1 above) is the foundation of civilization. See also J. C. Nelson, *The Renaissance Theory of Love*, p. 95: "Man's intellect does not have a particular essence, but is all things in potency."

On the meaning of *Geist* and *Wissenschaft*. see the translator's foreword to Cassirer, *The Logic of Humanities*, tr. C. S. Howe, Yale University Press, 1961, viii. See also the *Intro*. to *Individual*

and the Cosmos, p. 3. the translator's footnote on the word 'intellectual'.

[3] See Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 54: "*Intelligere* means nothing but *intus legere*."

[4] *Ib*., p. 95.

[5] The close connexion between the "intellect" and the nature of "making" has been acknowledged since antiquity. Hooker, revealing the origin of the being of all things and their operation in almost exact order or law at the beginning of the First Book of *Of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (ch. 2. 3, p. 60, Folger Library edition, Harvard University Press, 1977) quotes Mercurius (Hermes) Trismegistus, 'The creator made the whole world not with hands, but by reason', and adds, 'Thus much confest by *Anaxago* and *Plato*, terming the maker of the world an Intellectual Worker.' The creation of man as an intellectual being is therefore the logical culmination of the process of making thus conceived. It also confirms the well-established analogy between man and his Maker.

[6] Cassirer, op. cit. p. 66.

[7] Ib., p. 44.

[8] Ib., p. 44.

[9] Re: this metaphor of the garment cf. Ficino, *Comm. on the Symposium*, tr. S. Jayne, Sixth Speech, ch. iv ("On the Seven Gifts which are given by God to Man through Median Spirits"), prg. 3: "...the souls, slipping down out of the milky way through Cancer into a body, are draped in a certain heavenly and clear wrap."

[10] Extract from Cusanus, *De coniecturis* quoted in Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 45 (footnote 58): "Intellectus antem iste in nostra anima eapropter in sensum descendit, ut sensibile ascendat in ipsum. Ascendit ad intellectum sensibile ut intelligentia ad ipsum descendit" (ii.16).

[11] H. Craig, *New Lamps for Old*, Oxford, 1966, p. 126.

[12] For the theme of self-renewal as used in Shakespeare's sonnets see, for example, Sonnet 56. This may also throw some light on the form and structure of Sonnets 1-126 as a perpetually self-renewing cycle and help us in understanding the Shakespearean mode of resolution of the conflicts and struggles, outer and inner, real or imaginary, that recurrently cast their shadow. The philosophical meaning of *shadow* as part of the Platonic vocabulary used without strictness by Shakespeare also exposes the irrelevance of crude biographical or psychopathological interpretations of the Sonnets. These latter, quite possibly, vainly struggle with 'shadows', i.e., images which have artistic validity and have also a fine suggestion of philosophic depth about them.

[13] Cassirer, *op. cit*., pp. 66-67 and note 39 (on p. 67).

[14] See Craig, *op. cit*., p. 127.

[15] P. O. Kristeller: *Eight Philosophers of the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1965, pp. 70-71.

[16] Craig, *op. cit*., p. 131.

[17] See the relevant remarks in the article, "Humanism" in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 1973, Vol. XI. p. 825.

[18] See C. H. Haskins, *The Renaissance of the 12th Century*, Harvard University Press, 1927, pp. vii-ix, 3-12.

Also W. K, Ferguson, *The Renaissance in Historical Thought*, Camb., Mass, 1948, ch. x, p. 331 ff. and "Conclusion", p. 389.

[19] A. Hauser, *Social History of Art*, tr. S. Godman, London, 1962, Vol. 2, Ch. 1 ("The Concept of the Renaissance"), p. 1.

[20] J. Huizinga, "The Problem of the Renaissance" in *Men and Ideas*, New York, 1959, p. 248, p. 278, pp. 281-87.

[21] See Ferguson, *op. cit.*, p. 389 ff. and "The Interpretation of the Renaissance: Suggestions for a Synthesis" in *Journal of the History of Ideas*. XII, 1951, pp. 483-95.

[22] Hauser, *op. cit.,* Vol. 2, p. 1.

[23] C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century excluding Drama* (OHEL). Oxford, 1954, p. 55.

[24] D. Bush, "Humanism and the Critical Spirit" in *Prefaces* to *Renaissance Literature,* pp. 2-4.

[25] Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind*, tr. T. G. Rosenmeyer, Oxford, 1953, Ch. 11, pp. 246 ff.

See also E. Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline" in *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, Peregrine Books, 1970, p. 24.

[26] O. Benesch, *The Art of the Renaissance in Northern Europe*, London, 1965, p. 113 and Pl. 58 facing p. 114.

[27] E. Panofsky, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

[28] The depth imparted here by Shakespeare to the theme of *re-birth* in terms of moral redemption may be contrasted with the rather pretty, exquisitely artificial treatment it receives in some of his early sonnets, e. g., Sonnet 3, line 3, wherein the theme of 'fresh repair' or 'renewal' is touched upon.

Compare, on the other hand, the mode used throughout *The Tempest* in developing the theme of 'freshly dyed weeds', of 'garments...rather new dyed than stained with salt water'.

[29] Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, *Terre des Hommes* (1939), tr. as *Wind, Sand and Stars* by Lewis Galantière, London, 1975, p. 34.

[30] E. Panofsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28.

[31] Isaiah Berlin, *Vico and Herder: Two Studies in the History of Ideas*, London, 1976, p.34 and p. 84. The derivation of *natura* from *nascimento* ('coming to birth') is to be noted.

[32] On the theme of being remembered by posterity ("There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality") see Browne, *Urn Burial*, extract beginning "Oblivion is not to be hired" in *Oxford Anthology of English Literature* ("The Literature of Renaissance England"), ed. Hollander and Kermode, New York, 1973, pp. 988-991. Mark especially a sentence like this (on p. 990): "But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature."

[33] J. E. Spingarn, *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance*, New York, 1912, pp. 133-4. See also Sidney, *Apology for Poetry*, ed. Shepherd, London, 1965, p. 100. The meaning of *human* freedom, as it merges with the poet's, can be seen here very clearly: "*Only the poet, disdaining to be tied to any such subjection* ... doth grow in effect into *another nature,* ... so as he goeth hand in hand with Nature, *not enclosed within the narrow warrant of her gifts* but freely ranging within the zodiac of his own wit." (Italics mine).

This passage is based on a few lines in Scaliger, *Poetics*, Ch. 1: "What is called poetry describes not only what exists, but also non-existent things as if they existed, showing how they could or should exist."

[34] F. Petrarca, *Le Familiari* XXIII, 19, 78-94. See E. H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form: Studies In the Art of the Renaissance*, London, 1966, ch. entitled "The Style *all'antica: Imitation and Assimilation*", pp. 122-123.

[35] Seneca, *Ad Lucilium, Epistulae Morales*, Letter 84.

[36] Sidney, *Apology*, ed. cit., p. 157. See A. Blunt, *Artistic Theory In Italy*, 1450-1600, Oxford, 1940, pp. 140-1.

[37] Sidney, *Ib*., *Intro*., p. 57. See in this connexion E. Panofsky, *Idea*, Leipzig, 1924, p. 39 ff.

On the superiority of painting see L. da Vinci, *Selections from the Note-books*, ed. I. A. Richter, London, 1955, pp. 194-202.

On the philosophy of images see A. Chastel, *The Age of Humanism*: Europe 1480-1530, London, 1963, pp. 80-81.

On the 'philosophy of mysteries' see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries of the Renaissance*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1958, *Intro*. ('The Language of Mysteries'), pp. 13-30; Ch. XIII ('Pan and Proteus'), pp. 158-175; also, p. 179 (on 'serio ludere') and *Conclusion*, p. 190.

[38] See also E. H. Gombrich, "*Icones Symbolicae*: The Visual Image in Neo-Platonic Thought" in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, London, Vol. 11, 1948, pp. 163-192.

[39] Bellori in his *Discorso sull'idea* (1664) quotes Raphael directly, "Raphael of Urbino, the great master ofthinking men, wrote to Castiglione about his *Galatea*: 'To paint a beautiful woman I would need to look upon many, but since there is a famine of beautiful women, I make use of a certain Idea that springs from my mind." See *Encyclopaedia of World Art*, Mc Graw Hill, London, 1966, XI, p. 866.

[40] Sidney, *Apology*, *ed. cit.,* p. 101.

[41] "Therefore, I believe, the power of acquiring wide fame in any art or science lies in our industry and diligence ('ogni *laude* di qual si sia *virtu*') more than in the times or in the gifts of nature." (Alberti, 'Prologue' to *On Painting*, tr. *J. R.* Spencer, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1977, p. 39). See also Hans Baron, "*Querelle* of Ancients and Moderns" in *Renaissance Essays* ed. Kristeller and Wiener, New York, 1968, p. 111.

[42] Cassirer, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[43] A new and "universal rule" (*una regula universalissima*) applicable to *all human situations and activities*: see Castiglione, *Il Libro del Cortegiano*, ed. V. Cian, Firenze, 1947, Libro Primo. Xvi, pp. 63-64, lines 16-50; Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, tr. Sir Thomas Hoby, (Everyman's Library)., Bk. I, pp. 45-46. Sec also A. Hauser, *op. cit*., p. 95 (Ch. 4:"The Classicism of the Cinquecento").

[44] Chastel, *op. cit*., p. 18. See also Wind, *op. cit*., Ch. VI ("Ripeness is all"), pp. 89-99.

[45] L. da Vinci, *Notebooks*, ed. cit., Section I entitled "True Science", Subsection I, "Experience", pp. 1-6.

[46] Cassirer, *op. cit.,* p. 56 (re: *Idiota*).

[47] See Fritz Saxl, *A Heritage of Images*,(Penguin Books), 1970 Ch.4, p. 68 ff.

[48] Chastel, *op. cit*., p. 32.

[49] AYLI V. iv. 110 ("Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? he's as good at anything and yet a fool.")

[50] L. W. Beck, *Early German Philosophy*, Harvard, 1969, p. 45. See also Cassirer, *op. cit*, p. 33.

[51] Cassirer, *Ib*., p. 49. Contrast the fable narrated by Cassirer on p. 73 re: Fortune, the 'roving and inconstant one': "To her … no single place is denied." Wisdom or *virtus*, man's weapon vs. Fortune, is constant and enjoys a freedom truly *human*.

[52] Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 51, note 9. Chastel, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-15; illus. from Luca Pacioli, *De divina proportione*, Venice, 1508 on p. 216 and note on p. 340. See also L. da Vinci, *Notebooks*, ed cit., pp. 202-3.

[53] See J. A. Mazzeo, "A Critique of Some Modern Theories of Metaphysical Poetry" in *Modern Philology*, Vol. 50, 1952, pp. 88-96.

[54] Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 23.

[55] *Ib*., p. 38.

[56] See Robin Small, *Nietzsche and a Platonist Idea of Cosmos: Centre Everywhere, Circumference Nowhere*, *JHI*, Jan. – Mar. 1983, pp. 89-104.

See also Browne, *Religio Medici and Other Works* ed. L. C. Martin, Oxford, 1964, p. 10, & p. 291; Wind, *op. cit*., p. 183.

Cited as being from Hermes Trismegistus by Rabelais, *Pantagruel*, iii, 13. "After the 12th century, the sentence ('Deus est sphaera infinita, cujus centrum est ubique, circumferentia nusquam'), often without the ascription to Hermes, became a commonplace." "In the definition 'sphaera infinita' was sometimes replaced by 'sphaera intelligibilis' or 'intellectualis' whence Browne's reference, in *Garden of Cyrus* 171, 26 to 'that intelligible sphere". See *OED*, s. v. 'Intellectual', a. 2.

[57] Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 39 ("But this resignation contains a positive element…it does grasp itself as something different from that unity…it does grasp itself in its complete 'otherness'.") See also pp. 22-23: "Everything conditioned and finite aims at the unconditioned, without ever being able to attain it…in this realm of the relative, there can be no exactness…all our empirical knowledge remains a probability". With this concept of 'probability', of 'conjecture', compare Sidney's argument re: the higher Truth value of 'an example', which 'only informs a conjectured likelihood' (*Apology*, ed. cit., p. 110, lines 25-26), of, as we might say, a 'surmised shape'.

[58] Cassirer, *Ib*., p. 31 and also note 29 on the same page. See also Wind, *op. cit*., pp. 178-180.

[59] Though the context is different and the mood is one of despair that arises from *contrast* in direction, Donne, *Goodfriday, 1613. Riding Westward*, lines 33-35 may be compared: Though these things, as I ride, be from mine eye, They're present yet unto my memorie, *For that looks towards them; and thou look'st towards mee.* (Italics mine).

[60] Cassirer, *op. cit*., p. 32.

[61] *Ib*., p. 88. Rice, *The Renaissance Idea of Wisdom*, Cambridge, Mass., 1958, p. 115. Chastel, *op. cit*., pp. 27-28.

[62] Cf. A. Marvell, *Thoughts in a Garden*, lines 43-46, 51-56.

[63] Wind, *op. cit*., p. 185. See also p. 173 on Pico's exposition in the *Commento* that man was "originally of a Janus-nature."

SHAKESPEARE'S IMPROPRIETIES

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Let me start with a passage of a kind that abounds in Shakespeare, but is carefully excluded from nearly all versions of the grand Shakespearean narrative. In *Measure for Measure*, the magistrate Escalus asks the pimp Pompey who has been brought before him:

How would you live, Pompey? By being a bawd? What do you think of the trade, Pompey? Is it a lawful trade?

and Pompey answers without a blush: 'If the law would allow it, sir' (2.1.204-6).[1] The law is reduced from a repository of social values to a chance construct, a random arrangement of words. It can be the opposite of its current form and still be equally the law, as both versions would be equally arbitrary.

Pompey's stand deconstructs the puritanical rule enforced by the deputy Angelo, making all extra-marital sex a legal offence. As Pompey proceeds to ask the magistrate, 'Does your worship mean to geld and splay all the youth of the city?' (2.1.210). To counter the natural humanity of such offences, Angelo makes the law an absolute suprahuman force, beyond the power even of its administrators to change it: 'It is the law, not I, condemn your brother,' he tells Isabella (2.2.81), whose brother Claudio has been sentenced to death for getting Juliet with child before marriage. They are engaged to be married, but this does not help Claudio. Thus Angelo makes the law no less of an empty word: it is the law because it is the law, invulnerable to both logic and humane compulsion. Angelo can therefore tell Isabella:

Be satisfied

Your brother dies tomorrow; be content. (2.2.105-6)

The monstrosity of such an utterance to the condemned man's sister clearly does not register on him.

Shakespeare has other passages on the emptiness of words. The best-known is Hamlet's riposte to Polonius' query 'What do you read, my lord?' – 'Words, words, words' (2.2.188-9). Falstaff's speech on honour in *1 Henry IV* is another celebrated

instance:

What is honour? a word. What is in that word honour? what is that honour? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? He that died o'Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. ... Honour is a mere scutcheon [an icon or emblem on a shield, an empty sign] ... (5.1.130-39)

Like Angelo against Pompey, there is a figure to counter Falstaff's concept of honour – Percy Hotspur, who declares:

> By heaven, methinks it were an easy leap,
> To pluck bright honour from the pale-faced moon,
> Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
> Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
> And pluck up drowned honour by the locks;
> So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
> Without corrival, all her dignities: ... (1.3.200-6)

For Hotspur, honour is a matter of 'dignities', external or ornamental distinction. Pursuing this chimera, Hotspur dies in battle. Falstaff survives – by pretending to be dead.

Falstaff roundly dismisses honour as an empty word, useless for survival. Pompey's view of the law in *Measure for Measure* is somewhat different. We cannot tell whether he is consciously evoking the arbitrary nature of the law; most likely he just sees it, naïvely but sincerely, as a fact of life, a tool for survival if he stays on the right side of it. His speech is not merely an abstract exposé of the emptiness of words. It is a very practical exposé of the social reality of the law.

Coriolanus offers a different but analogous example with a depressing resonance for our own times. In republican Rome, an aspirant to the office of consul had to supplicate to the plebeians for their support – as it were, solicit their votes. The arrogant Coriolanus recoils from the idea, while his supporters exhort him to steel himself and go through with the exercise. His mother Volumnia tells him he must speak to the people

> Nor by th' matter which your heart prompts you,
> But with such words that are but roted in
> Your tongue ... (3.2.54-6)

– in other words, empty and lying words. She continues:

> Now, this no more dishonors you at all ...
> I would dissemble with my nature where
> My fortunes and my friends at stake required
> I should do so in honor. (3.2.58-64)

Honour again: for Volumnia, to lie and dissemble is entirely honourable, to protect one's ambitions and class interests ('My fortunes and my friends'). What is truly

hollow is not the words but the intention behind the words. It is not a philosophical discourse on the emptiness of language but a practical exposure of human deceit and self-interest. And unlike the lowly Pompey in *Measure for Measure*, this venerable Roman matron knows exactly what she is talking about.

When Coriolanus finally does plead before the plebeians, his stand becomes still more problematic. By a crushing synecdoche, he sees the people before him as so many 'voices' – or as one might say today, votes. Their human entities do not matter: 'I will make much of your voices and so trouble you no farther' (2.3.102-3). He frankly declares that he did not fight battles to protect the citizens, but only to ensure their 'voices' in his bid to be consul.

> For your voices I have fought,
> Watched for your voices; for your voices bear
> Of wounds two dozen odd. ...
> Your voices? Indeed I would be consul. (2.3.119-24)

Initially, the simple plebeians grant him their 'voices', unable to see through his mountainous contempt. But their own leaders, the tribunes, alert them to the insult. Once the people realize this, they withdraw their consent and rise in revolt till Coriolanus is banished.

Shakespeare is not sympathetic to people rising in revolt. Sometimes he pushes them to a corner of the plot and forgets about them. (Do we even remember that there is a popular uprising in *Hamlet*, or one instigated by the Earl of Worcester in *1 Henry IV*?) More often, he dismisses the protesters as a disorderly rabble: wherever the blame for the situation may lie, the dramatist's sympathy never lies with them. The paradigm does not change from Jack Cade's rebellion in *2 Henry VI* to the crowd that lynches Cinna the Poet in *Julius Caesar* or, for good measure, the turbulent crowd addressed by Sir Thomas More in the pages attributed to Shakespeare in the manuscript play of that name.

Even in peaceful or joyful settings, Shakespeare is no sentimental democrat. He views common citizens in the mass as unwholesome beings in mind and body. When Coriolanus returns from exile in alliance with Tullus Aufidius to wreak revenge on Rome, the plebeians retract their stand in appropriately mindless terms: 'though we willingly consented to his banishment, yet it was against our will' (4.6.143-5). Menenius despises the plebeians with crude class contempt:

> You are they
> That made the air unwholesome when you cast
> Your stinking greasy caps in hooting
> At Coriolanus' exile. (4.6.129-32)

Cleopatra too speaks of 'mechanic slaves / With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers ... / their thick breaths, / Rank of gross diet' (*AC* 5.2.208-11).

By the professed if doubtfully observed standards of our time, Shakespeare was

politically incorrect to a disconcerting degree. The ending of *The Merchant of Venice* clinches a line of pointers all through the play to a default though not strident anti-semitism, deconstructing another set of pointers upholding a basic liberal humanity. A similar double design may be seen with respect to racism in *Othello*. Yet it would be preposterous to see Shakespeare as an ultra-conservative or reactionary. His total presentation of humanity is deeply radical. For every hit at disruptive populism, he has ten directed at what was, after all, the dominant political imbalance of the time: authoritarianism and the violence of the state.

In *Measure for Measure*, Isabella fumes against Angelo's tyrannical abuse of 'a little brief authority', culminating in a moral challenge:

> Go to your bosom,
> Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
> That's like my brother's fault ... (2.1.137-9)

As she will soon discover, she has precisely hit the mark: Angelo proposes to violate her, committing the same crime for which he has sentenced her brother to death. The same exposure comes in passage after passage of *King Lear*:

Lear Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar?

Gloucester Ay, sir.

Lear And the creature run from the cur. There thou mightst behold the great image of authority; a dog's obeyed in office. – Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand.

> Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thy own back;
> Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
> For which thou whipp'st her. (4.6.150-7)

In these passages, both Isabella and Lear are saying that everyone is evil, that the judge is no better than the convict. Lear's words also convey that the whipping is itself an expression of lust, no less than 'using' the woman would have been. All this makes for a bad world, but it is clearly and simply bad. There is a greater complication to come.

Even before the last-quoted lines, Lear has another of his hallucinations:

See how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark in thine ear. Change places, and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief? (4.6.147-50)

The implies not only that the judge and the thief are equally guilty as persons, but that the places they occupy are equal and exchangeable: the seat of justice is no more hallowed than the den of thievery. The value system itself is being challenged: we cannot tell what is intrinsically good or bad, cannot pass moral judgement.

We may thus conclude that all beings are equally evil; but equally, that no one is: 'None does offend; none, I say, none.' (4.6.162) Lear had declared this all-forgiving,

all-embracing humanity earlier in the scene:

> I pardon that man's life. – What was thy cause?
> Adultery? Thou shalt not die. Die for adultery?
> No, the wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
> Does lecher in my sight. Let copulation thrive,
> For Gloucester's bastard son was kinder to his father
> Than my daughters got 'tween the lawful sheets. (4.6.109-14)

Of course this is not the case. Gloucester's bastard son Edmund has treated his father no better than Lear's daughters have theirs. The evil in Edmund, as in Goneril and Regan, goes beyond mere excess of appetite. A simple reversal of convention, prizing bastardy over legitimacy, will not serve. There is a deeper evil at work here. The dereliction of values is total.

Even nature is not spared the indictment. Lear's remark about the wren and the fly, more tender than aggressive, finds a devastating extension in another play, *Timon of Athens*. The self-exiled Timon, deranged with misanthropy, extends his vision of evil and disorder to the natural world. A band of robbers come to his retreat by the seashore. This dialogue ensues:

> All We are not thieves, but men that much do want.
> Timon Your greatest want is you want much of meat.
> Why should you want? Behold, the earth hath roots.
> Within this mile break forth a hundred springs.
> The oaks bear mast, the briars scarlet hips.
> The bounteous housewife Nature on each bush
> Lays her full mess before you. Want? Why want? (4.3.408-14)

There is ironic play on the phrase 'much do want'. The robbers mean they are greatly in want; Timon, that they want too much. Neither Shakespeare nor the historical Timon could have known the Bhagavad-Purana's exhortation: 'Is there not fruit in the forest, and water in the streams, and the bark of trees to clothe one, and caves to house one? Why then should the wise man flatter the rich and powerful?' Shakespeare might have known of the ancient Roman statesman Camillus, who showed the same indifference to fortune in power and in exile. But Timon's own reversion to a basic, primitive existence projects not moderation and content but a radical rancour and discontent.

The bounty of 'housewife Nature' gives place to a saga of elemental pillage and corruption:

I'll example you with thievery:

> The sun's a thief and with his great attraction
> Robs the vast sea. The moon's an arrant thief,
> And her pale fire she snatches from the sun.
> The sea's a thief, whose liquid surge resolves

> The moon into salt tears. The earth's a thief,
> That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen
> From general excrement. Each thing's a thief. (4.3.428-35)

The supreme order becomes the supreme disorder. The interdependence of the ecosystem has collapsed into a conspiracy of survival by mutual plunder. The objects of nature do not sustain one another; each battens on the rest by depleting them. For Timon, nature is in a state of what we may call sustainable entropy.

This brings me to my central argument. Every age, every civilization, works out its own pattern of correspondences between the natural order and orders of human existence: the social, the ethical, the intellectual, and within the latter the verbal and the formal or structural. In a broad line of discourse running from ancient times to the Enlightenment and the present day, a chain of being in nature is reflected or reproduced in a hierarchic structure of society, as well as a hierarchy of moral states from extreme good to extreme evil. It is important to see these constructs of unequal elements as viable not despite the inequality but because of it: the evil is as integral as the good, in all degrees of both conditions, each in its place. A.O. Lovejoy postulates a 'principle of plenitude' whereby the design assumes

> a God who emphatically was not self-sufficient...: one whose essential nature required the existence of other beings, and not of one kind of these only, but of all kinds which could find a place in the descending scale of the possibilities of reality...[2]

Within this exquisitely detailed order, every element is in place.

Two points must be made clear. First, the order was not static in either time or space, and varied greatly in both nature and degree of detail. There was no such thing as a stable 'Elizabethan world picture': rather, a dynamic pan-European discourse unfolding over many centuries, a broad frame of reference that people adapted and interpreted as a context for their own ideas.

Secondly, it was emphatically not the case that any person, as it may be Shakespeare, had to be personally familiar with the texts underlying the notion, insofar as they can be specified at all. We may compare the function of Marxian or Freudian thought in today's intellectual milieu. These are ideas in the air, imbibed by various people variously and often vaguely or wrongly, but still providing a common frame of reference.

Shakespeare's classic exposition of this idea is in Ulysses' celebrated speech on degree in *Troilus and Cressida*. This 'degree' is a graded hierarchical order. Starting with 'The heavens themselves, the planets, and this center [i.e., the earth]' (1.3.84), it embraces and controls all human society:

> communities,
>
> > Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
> > Peaceful commerce from dividable shores. (1.3.102-4)

'Take but degree away, untune that string', says Ulysses, and nature itself will collapse, engulfing the human world in the process. Not only will evil triumph over good, but (as recounted in other plays we have seen) the very contours of good and evil will dissolve:

> Force should be right – or rather, right and wrong ...
> Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
> Then everything includes itself in power,
> Power into will, will into appetite,
> And appetite, an universal wolf ...
> Must make perforce an universal prey,
> And last eat up himself. (1.3.115-23)

This is Timon's vision too, and Albany's in *King Lear*:

> Humanity must perforce prey on itself
> Like monsters of the deep. (4.2.32.19-20)

There is a very similar line in the manuscript pages of *The Play of Sir Thomas More* ascribed to Shakespeare.

The natural and social hierarchies of 'degree' are reflected in the verbal and aesthetic orders. John Hoskyns's *Directions for Speech and Style* (c.1599) recognizes the capacity to create images within the mind and articulate their implications in language as a cognitive process: true eloquence is true understanding.

> The conceits [i.e., concepts] of the mind are pictures of things and the tongue [i.e., language] is interpreter of those pictures. The order of God's creatures in themselves is not only admirable and glorious, but eloquent; then he that could apprehend the consequence [i.e., sequence, arrangement, order] of things, in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly were a right orator[3].

Hoskyns quotes Cicero: 'No one can speak rightly unless he understands wisely.' The unquestioned assumption is of a stable order open to understanding, a mental order embracing the external or natural.

Such an order, both physical and intellectual, was incorporated in the structure of the Elizabethan playhouse, as demonstrated by Frances Yates[4]. More basically, it was read into the design and categorization of drama in both social and moral terms. The crucial source in the Renaissance was Aristotle's *Poetics*, regardless of how well, or indeed whether, Shakespeare knew it directly. In chapter 2 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle classifies the objects of imitation as 'necessarily either good men or bad':

> It follows, therefore, that the agents represented must be either above our own level of goodness, or beneath it, or just such as we are... This difference it is that distinguishes Tragedy and Comedy also; the one would make its personages worse, and the other better, than the men of the present day[5].

In *An Apologie for Poetrie*, Sidney castigates the drama of his day precisely for failing to observe this distinction: the result is 'mongrel tragi-comedy', 'neither right

tragedies, nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns'[6]. 'Clowns' covers not only jesters but all rustics or men of lowly station. To place them on stage alongside kings disturbs the true hierarchy, simultaneously social and artistic, whereby tragedies present kings and comedies common or lowly people.

In other words, these dramatists do not observe decorum. 'Decorum' could signify any kind of order or orderliness; its absence, therefore, any disorder, inversion or mismatch. In *Measure for Measure*, the Duke applies it to the lawless state of Vienna:

> liberty plucks justics by the nose,
> The baby beats the nurse, and quite athwart
> Goes all decorum. (1.3.29-31)

But 'decorum' was also a chief principle of rhetoric. Latin *decorum* means fittingness, aptness, hence the practice or conduct befitting a given situation or context. *Decorum* comes from the same root as 'decent'. Its root, *decens* (which also gives us 'decent'), is the word Horace uses in *Ars poetica* of the kind of style and diction appropriate to each genre: 'singula quaeque locum teneant sortita decentem' ['Let each style keep the becoming place allotted it']. 'Propriety' or *proprietas*, again, means 'property' in the sense of an intrinsic feature – from *propries*, fitting or proper, *ap-propriate*. An 'impropriety' offends against what is fitting or appropriate.

The point of my title might begin to appear at last. 'A theme for Comedy,' says Horace, 'refuses to be set forth in verses of Tragedy. ... Yet at times even Comedy raises her voice ...; so, too, in Tragedy Telephus [in a lost play by Euripides] and Peleus [in a lost play by Sophocles] often grieve in the language of prose, when, in poverty and exile, either hero throws aside his bombast ... should he want his lament to touch the spectator's heart' (lines 89, 93-8). Horace is citing a departure from the normal tragic register to match the special situation of a particular character – in other words, to extend the principle of decorum, not to flout it. But even this extended notion may not cover Hamlet's antic disposition, nor the dark comedy running through *King Lear*.

Or will it? In both plays, Shakespeare is projecting an imploded social and moral order. The rhetorical register of high tragedy would not serve: it cannot go beyond a strident, uncomplicated vindication of the human spirit in the teeth of destruction. The catastrophe threatening Hamlet is less the prospect of physical destruction than of intellectual chaos, against which irony and paradox are more appropriate weapons than grand rhetoric. 'Farewell, dear mother,' Hamlet tells Claudius, who corrects him:

> King Thy loving father, Hamlet.
> Hamlet My mother: father and mother is man and wife,
> Man and wife is one flesh, so my mother. (3.6.47-9)

There is a logic to this foolery. Hamlet is only mad north-northwest: his controlling intelligence is guiding his assault on the disorder around him. A total descent into the irrational, that we can only imbibe without explaining, comes in

King Lear, as when the King tells the naked Edgar:

> You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred, only I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian, but let them be changed. (3.6.36-8)

Can I be the only reader who finds this very funny, at the heart of one of the most trenchant of tragic scenes? There is an indomitable strength in the outcast Lear's delusion of power: 'Ay, every inch a king!' (4.6.107) 'Resilience' would be too weak a term: this is a newer, greater strength that he lacked when he actually was a king. In the reference to Edgar's Persian robes, this strength takes on a comic dimension. Incredibly, the demented Lear, lashed by a storm on the heath, is summoning up the energy to make us laugh.

> When we are born, we cry that we are come
> To this great stage of fools. (4.6.176-7)

Stage fools or clowns do not normally make the audience cry. The categories have disintegrated into the scrapheap of the absurd, a recycle bin of formal materials that have lost their original functions in the design. The breakdown of reason generates its own rationale of the irrational and bizarre, of ill-matched and unviable pairings that are nonetheless the only viable life-form in this failed human ecosystem: king and fool, a mad king and a bedlam beggar, the same mad king who has surrendered his kingship to his ungrateful daughters and a blinded nobleman robbed of his earldom by a treacherous son. As Gloucester says, ' 'Tis the time's plague when madmen lead the blind' (4.1.48). These are preposterous and obscene companionships, scandalizing decency and humanity, yet vindicating them where nothing else can.

This is Lear talking to his Fool in the middle of the storm on the heath:

> Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy? Art cold?
> I am cold myself. Where is stray, my fellow? ...
> Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee. (3.2.68-73)
> This empathy reaches out to all humanity:
> Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your looped and windowed raggedness defend you
> From seasons such as these? Oh, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this! (3.4.29-34)

This is an entirely rational sentiment, just as his pity for the Fool was a rational expression of sympathy for the suffering. In a milieu where all human structures have collapsed, such glimmerings of rational humanity re-emerge fleetingly as a response to the disorder but vanish again: that humanity chiefly finds expression not in such simple pity but in ironic immersion in the disorder, as in Lear's comment on the bedlamite's 'Persian' garments, or in this exchange:

LEAR Has his daughters brought him to this pass?
Could thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?
FOOL Nay, he reserved a blanket, else we had been all shamed. (3.4.59-62)

Here again is Lear talking to the blinded Gloucester:

A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears. (4.6.146-7)

Despite the contradiction in 'Look with thine ears', there is a logic to Lear's words, a desperate attempt to make sense out of moral chaos. These words come immediately before the puzzle of 'which is the justice, which is the thief'.

In a world where everything is ruptured, misdirected, misallied, the natural is unnatural, impropriety the only propriety. 'Be your tears wet?' asks Lear of Cordelia (4.7.68), as though describing a marvel. Later, reversing the patriarchal order, he tells Cordelia

When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness. (5.3.10-11)

The wet tears are a gentle pointer to an order where the natural has become so unnatural that as a rule, it can only be asserted through the excessive and unseemly, by some supreme impropriety:

Howl, howl, howl, howl! Oh, you are men of stones!
Had I your tongues and eyes, I would use them so
That heav'n's vault should crack! (5.3.253-5)[8]

The incongruity of a line like 'Howl, howl, howl, howl!' at the climax of a tragic finale is commonly noted. In the lines that follow, Lear berates the inertness of the bystanders where there should be a savage outpouring of grief. That natural reaction has been silenced by the monstrosity of events, even if by now the silence is the outcome of numbed shock and outrage.

'Howl, howl, how, howl!' is the ultimate subversion of grand rhetoric, to the point of abjuring language altogether. Lear is the consummate tragic anti-hero. Like all or most tragic protagonists, he marks the miraculous extreme of human resilience against a destructive force that seems implicit in the human condition. But unlike the stereotype of such heroes, present however transformed in Shakespeare's other tragic protagonists, Lear leaves the enigma of his destruction to tell its own tale: he does not embellish it with words, 'see[ing] himself in a dramatic light' in T.S. Eliot's phrase[9]. Lear, or rather his creator, thereby commits the supreme impropriety of tragic diction, a total violation of norms.

That would be a good note to end on, but I would crave a little more of your patience. This impropriety is not a one-off feature of a uniquely challenging scene of disorder even for Shakespeare. In less extreme form, a melding of hierarchies, not only social and moral but fundamentally human, reshapes the contours of Shakespeare's language in much of his late work. It is very much there in his last comedies, the so-

called romances, but more prominently in the tragedies preceding them: *Coriolanus, Antony and Cleopatra*, even *Othello* from a slightly earlier phase, certainly the even earlier *Hamlet*. It is little apparent in *Macbeth*, though the Witch scenes might give us pause.

Let me end with a sequence from *Antony and Cleopatra* following immediately on the death of Antony. To remind ourselves, Antony's final defeat and death repeat the pattern of his life with Cleopatra. 'Like a doting mallard', he follows Cleopatra's misguided retreat from a naval battle (3.10.19) against the Romans. Next day, Antony's own forces prevail on land, but he is again betrayed by her at sea, resulting this time in conclusive defeat. In her last bid to regain Antony's favour, she falsely gives herself out as dead; and when Antony kills himself after this double blow in war and love, she has his dying body drawn up on ropes, in a last indignity, to the tower where she has taken refuge. Here again is a supreme impropriety: this is not how a tragic protagonist should die, even if his last speech voices the conventional rhetoric of such a death:

> I lived the greatest prince o'th' world,
> The noblest, and do now not basely die,
> Not cowardly put off my helmet to
> My countryman – a Roman by a Roman
> Valiantly vanquished. (4.15.56-60)

Is Antony the protagonist (or even *a* protagonist) of *Antony and Cleopatra*? It does not end with his death: Cleopatra has the last act to herself, and it is her death which ends the play. The climax unfolds at unusual length, triggered by Antony's death but then projected exclusively through the living Cleopatra.

The final sequence of Act 4 rings the changes on a range of rhetorical registers, playing hide and seek with the decorum of tragic diction just as Antony's being hauled up on ropes flouts the decorum of tragic action. Cleopatra's rhetoric at the sight of the dying Antony down below her is grand enough:

> O sun,
>
> Burn the great sphere thou mov'st in; darkling stand
>
> The varying shore o'th' world. (4.15.10-12)

Yet when Antony talks of the 'many thousand kisses' he would shower on her if she descended to him, Cleopatra's response befits neither tragedy nor romance:

> I dare not, dear.
> Dear my lord, pardon! I dare not
> Lest I be taken. (4.15.22-4)

So he is hauled up instead, with a touch of their habitual banter: 'Here's sport indeed. How heavy weighs my lord!' (4.15.33). When Antony pleads 'Give me some wine and let me speak a little' (4.15.44), she cuts him short (leaving us guessing

whether he gets his drink) and rages against fate in true tragic vein, but with a novel earthy trope:

> No, let me speak, and let me rail so high
> That the false hussy Fortune break her wheel,
> Provoked by my offense. (4.15.45-7)

Fortune's wheel is reduced to a housewife's spinning-wheel. Was Shakespeare attempting a designedly reductive feminine rhetoric from a patriarchal standpoint? Whatever the dramatist's motive, the register of utterance has changed. It rises to grand heights after Antony's death:

> The crown o'th'earth doth melt. – My Lord?
> Oh, withered is the garland of the war.
> The soldier's pole is fall'n. Young boys and girls
> Are level now with men. The odds is gone,
> And there is nothing left remarkable
> Beneath the visiting moon. (4.15.65-70)

Yet even this high rhetoric is prefaced by a mundane note of dependency that may be read as stereotypically feminine:

> Noblest of men, woo't die?
> Hast thou no care of me? (4.1.61-2)

Another such admission follows, however compelling in sentiment:

> No more but e'en a woman and commanded
> By such poor passion as the maid that milks
> And does the meanest chores. (4.1.77-9)

But the pitch rises immediately to something like tragic hubris, though only as a possibility embodied in a trope:

> It were for me
> To throw my scepter at the injurious gods
> To tell them that this world did equal theirs
> Till they had stol'n our jewel. (4.1.79-82)

This is a step up from assailing the 'false hussy' Fortune; and by the end of the scene, this Egyptian queen is talking the Roman rhetoric of both her lover and her adversary:

> We'll bury him, and then, what's brave, what's noble,
> Let's do't after the high Roman fashion
> And make death proud to take us. (4.15.90-2)

The final act is full of these shifts of register: or to put it more correctly, there is no distinction of registers, rather a freely modulated access to the single seamless totality of the language. This happens so naturally that there is no sense of impropriety. Certain rhetorical barriers raised by convention have been quietly dismantled: that is all.

In his book *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language*, Russ Macdonald observes:

Shakespeare turns his attention from one kind of rhetorical device to another, discarding the more obvious formulae in favour of more subtle manipulations of language. One way of putting the change is to say that the poet internalizes the principles that underlie the obvious figures [of rhetoric][10].

I would put it differently: Shakespeare does not merely internalize rhetorical principles, he dissolves them to revert to the mother element of all rhetoric – the unsorted, undifferentiated mass of the structures and strategies employed in human speech *before* they are formalized into rhetorical figures and tropes. The speakers are not primarily articulating their defined thoughts to others; they are drawing on language inwardly, to define and project themselves to themselves. I would call this level of verbal negotiation 'deep rhetoric'.

The passage from *Antony and Cleopatra* that we have just seen, or, say, Macbeth's soliloquy 'If it were done when 'tis done' (*Mac* 1.7.1), is a like magnetic field of hard-packed rhetoric – both 'figures', word patterns or structures, and 'tropes', metaphoric language. These are charged with a density and plurality of function where conventional rhetoric would soon dissipate. The principle of decorum is irrelevant in such a context. The *proprietas* in question is not what is proper or befitting in the modern English sense but what is natural and authentic, the 'property' of the core experience.

In *The Winter's Tale*, a play even later than *Antony and Cleopatra*, Polixenes explains to Perdita how nature is improved by art:

> Nature is made better by no mean
> But nature makes that mean. So over that art
> Which you say adds to nature is an art
> That nature makes. (4.4.89-92)

Hence 'The art itself is nature ' (4.4.97) -- the perfection of nature, conjoining opposites, the high and the low:

we marry
> A gentler [i.e., nobler] scion to the wildest stock
> And make conceive a bark of baser kind
> By bud of nobler race. (4.4.92-5)

Nature, and the art that follows nature, is not simpler than any other art. Rather, it is vastly more complex; but that complexity is – well, *natural*. Its varied constituents do not appear as disjunct elements brought together by craft, but as an organic compound where they cannot be separated. Conventionally 'baser' and 'nobler' elements fuse in this compound.

In Shakespeare's later work, especially the later tragedies, language is in motion in sweeping, merging, undiscriminating profusion, within which the outlines of rhetorical forms can be glimpsed like underwater animals. They eschew definition, fixity, and conformity to any evident design. There is nothing 'proper' about them in any sense, archaic or modern. With the grand impropriety of an overlord, Shakespeare draws upon any and all of them as his unforced right.

NOTES

[1] All Shakespeare references to *The Norton Shakespeare*, 3rd edn, ed. Stephen Greenblatt *et al.*, New York: W.W. Norton, 2016.

[2] Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being*, 1936; New York: Harper, 1960, p.315.

[3] *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Brian Vickers, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999, p.399. Vickers prints Hoskyns's treatise under a different title, though he too refers to it as *Directions*.

[4] Frances A. Yates, *Theatre of the World*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969.

[5] Aristotle, *On the Art of Poetry*, tr. Ingram Bywater, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920, pp.25-7.

[6] Philip Sidney, *A Defence of Poetry*, *English Renaissance Literary Criticism*, ed. Vickers, p.383.

[7] Horace, *Satires, Epistles and Ars Poetica*, tr. H. Rushton Fairclough, Loeb Classical Library, Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA, 1970, line 92 (pp.458-9).

[8] Quoted from the Quarto text (*The History of King Lear*).

[9] T.S. Eliot, ' "Rhetoric" and Poetic Drama', *Selected Essays*, London: Faber, 1932, p.38.

[10] Russ Macdonald, *Shakespeare and the Arts of Language*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p.38.

KING LEAR: THE LAST FOUR LINES*

JYOTI BHATTACHARYA

IF *Hamlet* was the Shakespeare-play of the nineteenth century, *King Lear* seems to have become the Shakespeare-play of our time. The play seems to be strikingly relevant to some large experiences and tensions of our world.[1] It is not surprising that contemporary criticism of and commentary on *King Lear,* including certain stage productions, tend to become at the same time implicit critical observations and commentaries on our own world.

It is now well-established that the play is, among other things, the drama of a social crisis. Edwin Muir spoke of this crisis as that of a violent period of transition when 'the medieval world with its' communal tradition was slowly dying, and the modern individualist world was bringing itself to birth.' He also said, 'Of the great tragedies *King Lear* is the only one in which two ideas of society are directly confronted, and the old generation and the new are set face to face, each assured of its own right to power.'[2] John Danby found that the play dramatizes two views of Nature, and he related them to two societies, —the society of medieval vision, and the society of nascent capitalism[3]. Bernard McElroy, agreeing with Danby, states: "*King Lear* is, among many other things, a paradigm of the waning medieval hierarchy confronting the onset of pragmatic materialism.'[4] The social crisis has been described in various other terms by other critics. Usually, such a crisis has many levels and dimensions, and *King Lear* seems to include most of them within its titanic conspectus.

One aspect of such a crisis is a crisis in language. Language is not only a given medium of communication; it is also continually created by men in society. It is a social product. When a social order breaks down, or—what is often the same thing—, when a new social order is about to break through, the language of the community is also likely to suffer a process of disturbance and re-organization. I do not mean that people suddenly begin to speak an altogether new vocabulary or concoct a new grammar. But during such a crisis certain words do change their meanings and certain new words gain currency. The fissure in the society may sometimes be identified as a split in the meanings contained in a single word. Danby has shown this split occurring in the word *Nature* as it is variously used in *King Lear*.[5]

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But language is not only words. Language is also tone and gesture. It includes the modes and manners of speech. The crisis in language here is not primarily philological. At its root is a moral crisis, involving tradition and culture, politics and philosophy, belief, and conduct. If, echoing Bernard McElroy, we may speak of *King Lear,* in broad terms, as 'a paradigm of confrontation between two societies,' we may also speak of the play as equally a paradigm of confrontation between several modes of language. The more important words and collocations in *King Lear* have been by now thoroughly studied by a number of critics. Key-words, theme-carriers, images and symbols, undertones and overtones of meanings, syntax, verse-rhythms, prose-structures, phonetic effects, styles — such matters have been studied and continue to receive acute critical attention. But I venture to suggest, it has not been sufficiently stressed that modes of language are also under examination in this play. Although Robert Heilman did point out that the first scene of the play 'in one sense ... initiates a lesson in language,'[6] yet the point does not seem to have received further attention.[7] One result of the comparative neglect of this point is that the quieter lines of the play, the plain-looking ones, remain inconspicuous.

II

I now wish to comment on the last four lines of the play in the light of the foregoing general remarks. It appears to me that those last words, —

> *The weight of this sad time we must obey;*
> *Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.*
> *The oldest hath borne most: we that are young*
> *Shall never see so much, nor live so long.*

— are very important for this 'lesson in language' and for our understanding of the whole play.

Editorial comments on those last lines have been usually more concerned with a textual question about the speech-heading. The Quarto gives these lines to 'Duke,' i.e., the Duke of Albany, and the Folio gives them to 'Edg', i.e., Edgar. At one time some critics used to argue that the last speech of the play should be spoken by the person of the highest rank among the survivors, and according to that rule of 'decorum' the Duke of Albany should be the speaker. Others argued, quite rightly, that the words 'we that are-young' are more appropriate to Edgar, and the Folio is right. Shelden Zitner has recently provided a powerful argument against the criterion of 'decorum' being applied here.[8]

But that, I submit, is a minor matter, although not to be neglected. It is a mistake to think that we have done our work when we have agreed with the Folio-reading here. It is necessary to read this speech of Edgar as a summing-up of at least some of the major experiences of the play. Such a summing-up could come only from Edgar — who has lived through storm and thunder under threat of death in the disguise of a mad beggar and has emerged as the champion victorious over evil at the

moment when triumph of evil seemed to be complete. Edgar's speech, of course, does not sum up all the experiences of the play. No summing-up could do that. The play cannot be replaced by a string of statements. But the play does need a summing-up; it is a requirement of the dramatic form as well as of the content of this play. Edgar's speech, as I hope to show, 'rounds off the play by harking back to the first scene, and is perhaps the only possible summing-up of the play.

Those last words are peculiarly bare. They carry no images at all, no poetic ambiguity, no phonetic music — nothing at all to inspire the usual kind of critical eloquence. Perhaps that is one reason why they have not received much attention.[9] Even when they have attracted attention, they have not been found to be quite satisfactory. Some of the comments on those words, from very respectable and percipient critics, have been of an uncertain kind. L. C. Knights, for example, says —

> The play ends with those curiously hesitant and unemphatic lines of Edgar's — ... It is almost a confession of inadequacy of words, as though words no longer matter.[10]

'Unemphatic' these lines may be, but are they 'hesitant'? Maynard Mack seems to concede that these lines may possibly sum up the play, but he is, — may I be permitted to say? — 'hesitant.'

He says —

> (Edgar's) last speech in the play, if we follow the Folio text in giving the closing lines to Edgar rather than to Albany, is just possibly eloquent of what we arc to think has taken place in him. The words ring no longer with high conviction; their form has little of the sententiousness that has characterised him earlier; and if in a sense they still sum up the play, it is because they carry a minimum of commitment.[11]

Professor Mack's language is interesting. 'If we follow the Folio text', 'just possibly', 'if in a sense they still sum up the play' — a statement with such hedges around seems determined to 'carry a minimum of commitment' from the critic himself. And Mack's last sentence is quite wrong. These lines do not sum up the play by avoiding commitment; they carry a 'great commitment: to speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.

In the context of the play that bare line— 'Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say'—comes charged with tragic wisdom, wisdom that carries the burden of a vast world in travail, to use Bradley's memorable phrase. This wisdom is unconsoling, unafraid, -—but not arrogant, not strident, not pompous. The tone, and rhythm of these lines are unemphatic, quiet. But these words carry a commitment. It is at once a very simple and a very complex utterance, if we keep the whole play, especially the first scene of the play, in mind.

The New Variorum Edition of *King Lear* has preserved for us an explanation of Edgar's speech offered by Dr Alex Schmidt. According to this, the substance of what

Edgar says is that for the moment he is incapable of saying what he ought to say. I understand this to mean that Edgar is so overwhelmed by grief that he finds himself almost inarticulate.

This notion of good people being made dumb by excess of genuine and powerful feeling is found elsewhere too. In Bradley's portrait of Cordelia, we come across an incapability of speech similar to what Schmidt found in Edgar's last speech. About Cordelia in the first scene, Bradley said—

> Tender emotion, and especially a tender love for the person to whom she has to speak, makes her dumb.[12]

Bradley, of course, did notice that Cordelia is not quite dumb, not always tongue-tied. A little later, Bradley quoted her speech of nine and a half lines (I. i. 95-104) in reply to Lear's threat—'Mend your speech a little,/ Lest you mar your fortunes'. Bradley quoted that speech in full, and he was shocked beyond measure. He exclaimed—

> What words for the ear of an old father, unreasonable, despotic, but fondly loving...[13]

There surely never was a more unhappy speech, Bradley said, and he himself was extremely unhappy over it.

Thus, Bradley's Cordelia was not only occasionally dumb, she was also guilty of a wrong kind of speech— wrong in tone, and wrong in content. Bradley thought of other heroines of Shakespeare

> who could have made the unreasonable old king feel that he was fondly loved without a loss of self-respect on their part.[14]

Cordelia cannot, according to Bradley, because she is Cordelia. This incompatibility of character with the particular circumstance in which it is placed, constituted—as we all know, an essential ingredient of the tragic situation for Bradley. Cordelia is so created that she cannot say what she ought to say. That is her tragedy.

But at the end of the play, Edgar is saying that we should not say what we ought to say.

Something must be wrong.

III

Another version of this kind of dumbness of good people may be derived from the judgement that language is in any case inadequate for expression of genuine and powerful feelings or of 'ultimate' values. L. C. Knights's comment which we have already quoted suggested that Edgar's last speech is 'almost a confession of inadequacy of words, as though words no longer matter'. Winnifred Nowottny, in her illuminating essay on the style of *King Lear* remarked—

> The play is deeply concerned with the inadequacy of language to do justice to feeling or to afford any handhold against abysses of iniquity and suffering.[15]

Shelden Zitner's comments on the last speech of Edgar, containing much insight and valuable judgements, also contain this—

> With a paradoxy that the passage shares with much else in the play, language as literature, therefore language at the top of its bent, declares itself inadequate for the task it has just performed.[16]

The view that language may be inadequate for expression of certain powerful feelings is to be respected. To challenge the general validity of that judgement is not my purpose. But I do not see the relevance of that judgement to these last lines of *King Lear.* After all, Edgar is not saying that we cannot say what we feel. He is saying, 'We must...speak what we feel.' That is an injunction.

How can we speak what we feel, if what we feel can never be spoken? The other part of the sentence, 'not what we ought to say', does not mean that we should not say anything, but that we should not say what we ought to say. That is a paradox. It is a pity that Zitner, who is percipient of much that usually escape notice, and mentions a large 'paradoxy', does not deign to consider the paradox here.

IV

The 'ought' in that phrase 'what we ought to say' does not here mean 'ought.' How to explain that 'ought'? And, what has 'the weight of the sad time' got to do with this?

An explicit opposition between 'what we feel' and 'what we ought to say' is the axis of this paradox. Obviously, what 'we ought to say' is not 'what we feel' here, — and, therefore, not true, not morally right, and therefore, we really ought not to say 'what we ought to say.' This is a very difficult position.

There are types of people, — they should be familiar to us —, who never experience any difficulty in such matters. They are never aware of any possibility of any contradiction between what we feel and what we ought to say. There is the glib self-righteous man who claims that he always speaks what he feels. Of such stuff are made the Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida* and the Apemantus in *Timon of Athens* — railing knaves. There is also the character portrayed by the angry Duke of Cornwall in *King Lear*— This is some fellow.

> Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
>
> A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he.
>
> An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth: And they will take it, so; if not, he is plain. (II. ii. 96-101)[17]

Hardly a model of virtue!

At the other pole there is the conformist who is never worried by any feeling at all, —and therefore, is quite unaware of any possibility of any difficulty in saying what he, feels. He *always* says what he ought to say.

Edgar's speech is not for such people. In the meaning of that speech, what we 'ought to say' is governed by rules of decorum, determined by socially established modes and manners, sanctioned by tradition, culture, custom and, not the least, convention. In a happy state of society, decorum is inalienable from true speech; decorum and morality and true feeling exist in a stable unity in such a society. In such a society, if at any time what we 'feel' be opposed to what we 'ought to say', then we should not say what we feel, but reexamine our feelings and rectify them. Our feelings may not be always right, they may often be wrong and may need rectification. That is the purpose of education and culture and morality, —training of our feelings, disciplining of our sensibilities, inhibition of anti-social impulses, correction of manners. If we are always to speak what we feel, regardless of time, place, person, and occasion, regardless too of our own limitations of ignorance and incompetence, social life would become impossible.

But there may be a 'sad time', when a society is in crisis. Then the unity of decorum and morality breaks down. What we 'ought to say' falls apart from what we may rightly feel, becomes antagonistic to it. Then we must speak what we feel, not what we ought to say. To put it in another way, what we then ought to say is not what the established society thought we 'ought to say', but only what we truly feel.

In such a crisis not only is the unity of decorum and morality broken, but morality itself is split into two antagonistic codes. In a sense, Truth, and Beauty fall apart. And, a man must choose in this historic dilemma.

In the first scene of the play Lear put the question to Cordelia 'So young, and so untender?' 'So young, my lord, and true,' she replied. She did not deny that she was being 'untender'.[18] But she found herself in a crisis where it was no longer possible to be 'true' and 'tender' at the same time. Truth and tenderness had fallen apart.

Let us remind ourselves that tenderness is a virtue. Lack of tenderness is not a virtue; it is a grave defect. But our virtues and vices are also matters of social relationship. No man can be virtuous all by himself. Virtue and vice are meaningful terms only in a society. The absolutely isolated individual has neither virtue nor vice. As Arthur Sewell observed in course of a very cogent discussion on the character of Cordelia, — '... morally, we are members of each other.'[19] Danby had used the same phrase earlier, and had also observed that the 'central truth' of *King Lear* is that 'the good man needs a community of goodness'.[20]

In that first scene of the play, 'Lear himself and Goneril and Regan had made it impossible for Cordelia to be both tender and true. She made her choice—she would be true, jettisoning tenderness which is so much a part of herself.

Bradley felt very unhappy about this truth of Cordelia. He said—

> 'But truth is not the only good in the world, nor is the obligation to tell truth the only obligation. The matter here was to keep it inviolate, but also to preserve a father.'[21]

Bradley was, of course, quite right, —truth is not the only good in the world, and the obligation to tell truth is not the only obligation. The obligation of decorum, and the obligation of tenderness, are also there. These should not be easily dismissed as unimportant.

But Bradley did not seem to know the awful dilemma of the tragic situation where a man has to choose to be either true or tender and cannot be both, a situation where truth can only be harsh, unpleasant, painful, and involves a loss, a sacrifice of a part of one's own self.

V

The last four lines of the play thus hark back to Cordelia's moral dilemma in the first scene. However, the moral dilemma in the first scene was not only Cordelia's dilemma. It was also a dilemma for Kent. Robert Heilman has used the phrase 're-iteration plus variation' to point to an important feature of the dramatic technique of this play.[22] Most of the important themes or questions of the play, and some of the stage-actions too, are presented at least twice with some variation between the several instances, the variation itself serving the purpose of emphatic pointing. Cordelia's dilemma and the validity of her choice are sharply underlined, as it were, by Kent a few lines later—

> …Be Kent unmannerly
> When Lear is mad.
> …. To plainness honour's bound
> ... When majesty falls to folly, ... (I. i. 145-6, 148-9)

And he *is* unmannerly. Consider his two speeches at this point. He begins in a deeply respectful, formal, courteous manner. He is threatened by Lear, and at once sharply changes into plain, blunt, even rude address:

> Kent.
> Royal Lear, Whom I have ever honour'd as my King, Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd. As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —
> Lear.
> The bow is bent and drawn, make from the shaft.
> Kent.
> Let it fall rather, though the fork invades
> The region of my heart; be Kent unmannerly,
> When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
> Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak

> When power to flattery bows? To plainness honour's bound
> When majesty falls to folly. ...„. (139-49)

Angus McIntosh, in his short note on the first scene of the play, pointed out in a footnote—

> To an audience of the time, Kent's use of *thou* here – (McIntosh counted seventeen instances in the thirty-five lines from 146 to 180)-must in itself have conveyed a spine-chilling effect of *lèse-majesté.*[23]

The change from 'Royal Lear' 'my King' to 'thou, old man'—this 'thou'-ing the king in the open court, would be not only a breach of decorum, but even a declaration of rebellion. A half-century after the writing of King Lear, in 1657, the militant Anabaptist preacher Venner was interrogated by Oliver Cromwell himself. Venner and his companions refused to address Cromwell as 'you', that form of address being in their view an ungodly token of unchristian inequality among men. Bishop Thomas Edwards recorded his shocked feelings over this episode: 'they would not put off hats to him, thou'd him at every word they spoke to him.'[24] A couple of years before *King Lear* was written, in November 1603, was held the famous or infamous trial of Sir Walter Raleigh on a charge of high treason. Attorney General Coke had been addressing Raleigh as 'Sir Walter' and using the 'you'-form. But there came a sudden change:

> Ralegh. ... Here is no treason of mine done. If my Lord Cobham be a traitor, what is that to me?
>
> Coke. All that he did was by thy instigation, thou viper! For I thou thee, thou traitor! …[25]

Kent decides to be 'plain' and he is decidedly 'unmannerly'. Cordelia is not 'unmannerly' but she chooses to be 'plain'. 'Let pride which she calls plainness marry her,' says Lear, and although Cordelia never used the word 'plainness' or 'plain' for herself, the term is applicable to her nine-a-half-Iine speech beginning with 'Good my Lord,...'(95ff). She does not say what she 'ought to say.' Goneril and Regan do say what they 'ought to say'.

VI

At this point I find that I must dwell a little longer on the first scene before I can return to my comments on the last four lines. For I must justify that last sentence of the preceding section, and, —without much hedging, state what I understand to happen in the first scene. I am aware that I am making a very rash claim — that I understand what happens in the first scene of *King Lear.* Great critics have confessed that they are perplexed by this scene — some by Lear's conduct there, some by Cordelia's conduct, and some by the entire scene. Contemporaries like Jan Kott would say that the scene is as 'absurd' as a scene in a play by Durrenmatt.[26] Perhaps I am rushing in where scholars and critics have feared to tread. But how can one say

anything about any line in *King Lear* without some understanding of the first scene ?

Coleridge's remarks on the first scene of *King Lear* are well- known. These constitute an extraordinary amalgam of keen perceptions and some very potent misunderstandings. Among other things, Coleridge said—

> Let the first scene of the play have been lost, and let it only be understood that a fond father had been duped by hypocritical professions of love and duty on the part of two daughters to disinherit the third, previously, and deservedly, more dear to him ;-and all the rest of the tragedy would retain its interest undiminished, and be perfectly intelligible.[27]

Coming from Coleridge, this is somewhat breath-taking. Coleridge also said that the 'interest and situations' of the play are 'derived from the assumption of a gross improbability', and perhaps this was the basis for Kenneth Muir's comment : 'Coleridge complained of the gross improbability of the opening situation of the play'.[28] I would, however, prefer to believe that Coleridge was not exactly stating a 'complaint' of his own here but echoing an established opinion. It seems to me that, pleading for the whole play against the charge of improbability, Coleridge here was perhaps trying to put aside for the moment the rather inconvenient first scene in order to pursue his main argument. It is difficult to believe that the passage quoted above could be the considered opinion of the man who had a few lines earlier noted the 'forethought' and the 'significance' of the first four or five lines of this scene.

Yet, the passage remains. It is entirely wrong. If the first scene be replaced by a kind of prose-prologue giving this sort of a 'gist' of 'assumptions' to be made for what would then be 'the proper opening' of the play, 'all the rest of the tragedy' will suffer immensely, and, I do not think that it will be 'perfectly intelligible'.

But Coleridge's remark is even more misleading, because the 'gist 'of the first scene which he offered here is quite wrong. The facts given in the first scene are not what Coleridge here asked its to assume. ' I must assert that Lear is not 'duped by hypocritical professions' on the part of Goneril and Regan. I must further assert that the speeches of Goneril and Regan are not "hypocritical' ; they make the kind of speech that Lear has demanded, they say what they 'ought to say' ; the hypocrisy that is involved in their speeches is the ordinary hypocrisy of decorous speech ; they do not try to deceive, and Lear is not deceived by them. I have to emphasize this point in view of the persistence of the notion that Lear was deceived by the protestations of Goneril and Regan, and believed them and acted upon these speeches.[29] A full explanation of the first scene is beyond the scope of the present article, but even for the present purpose I have to state the 'facts of the case' as I understand them. It will be noticed that I am following a method which would be associated with Bradley and his predecessors, involving an attempt to narrate the 'events before the opening of the action' [30] and 'glimpses behind the scenes'.[31]

This method of interpretation involving speculations about what happened behind the scene or beyond the text has been condemned and ridiculed often enough. But, at this date, I do not think that I need to apologize for it. Drama is an image of human action, and charges of improbability or absurdity cannot be met except through some explanation of this kind. Moreover, *King Lear* is a play which almost demands such an explanation. Many of the actions of the play are explained later, and there are many invitations to look before and after.[32] The first scene, above all, requires to be explained, — the critical controversy about it being itself evidence of the need. As John Lawlor observed, 'So brief is this opening action and so tempestuous what immediately follows that it is often overlooked.'[33] It has been said that this is a major flaw of the play 'considered as a play. I submit that it is not a flaw but an indication that this is a very unusual kind of play calling for a specially alert attention. [34]

In a broad sense the play begins *in medias res*. As Coleridge pointed out, in the first four or five lines of the play Kent and Gloucester talk about the division of the kingdom as practically an accomplished fact. We gather that a formal announcement is all that remains to be done. What Coleridge did not consider necessary to point out but later commentators have noted [35], is the relaxed cheerful tone of the conversation between Kent and Gloucester. We are usually so put off by Gloucester's indecent gaiety that we do not notice the quiet elegance in Kent's speech. The point is that neither of them is worried at all about the division of the kingdom. Kent's surprise that the Duke of Albany has not been given a better share than Cornwall's does not carry any anxiety. They are very satisfied about the division, happy that Cordelia will have the 'most opulent' share. They do not question Lear's wisdom. For, Lear's decision, arbitrary as it is, is not unwise.

The Law of Primogeniture held in Lear's land (—Edmund makes this explicit, m I. ii. 2-6).[36] But Lear 'had no issue male him to succeed'[37] — he had no son. He had three alternatives for determining the succession: (a) he could leave the entire kingdom to the eldest-born of the three daughters ; (b) he could divide the kingdom equally among the three, or, (c) he could give the best third part to the most deserving and most beloved of the daughters. There could be other alternatives, but it is not necessary to consider them here. Shakespeare's Lear took the third course. It was Shakespeare's decision that his Lear should do so; for the sources give both the second and third alternatives, and Shakespeare had a choice.[38] Shakespeare's Lear also decided that Cordelia was the most deserving of the three daughters and she should be given the 'most opulent' share of the kingdom.

This was known to everybody. Not only do Kent and Gloucester talk about the division at the very opening of the action of the play they talk about the respective shares. It should be obvious that owing as they do about the respective shares of Albany and Cornwall, i.e. of Goneril and Regan, they also know that the best third part is being kept for Cordelia. And they are quite happy. But it is not only Kent and Gloucester who know this. Lear has told the two suitors or Cordelia's hand, the Duke of Burgundy and the King of France, that this best third part of his kingdom will be

Cordelia's dowry-to be given 'in present dower' (I.i. 192). Bradley pointed out that Burgundy knew this.[39] I do not see any reason for the assumption that only Burgundy was told and the King of France was not. There is also no need to assume that this was a 'dark secret known to only a few of the king's confidants. We should rather assume that this was known to everybody in and around Lear s court, and the daughters and the Dukes knew.

Lear's court in the opening scene in the play had been summoned to hear the public proclamation of the division of the kingdom. This was to be no more than a 'ceremony'. No one apprehended any complication over this. Lear was held in awe and his perceptions about, the respective merits of the daughters appeared to be quite sound.

But there was another matter to be decided and announced in the court,—Cordelia's marriage. Lear does put this on the agenda, —to use a modern jargon:

> The Princes, France and Burgundy,
> Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
> Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
> And here are to be answer'd. (I. i. 45-8)

'Here are to be answer'd'—this cannot be delayed any more. And, Cordelia's dowry will have to be announced as a part ofthe marriage settlement. This, I suggest, is the really urgent reasonwhy the kingdom had to be divided. Lear could not give the best third part of his kingdom to Cordelia as her dowry without dividing the kingdom. The words 'present dower' in Lear's question to Burgundy referred to above are to be noticed. [40]

In *The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir* the starting point of the action was the question of Cordelia's marriage. The king's problem there was how to pursuade Cordelia to marry. Shakespeare's Lear has no such problem. His problem may be how to decide between the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy,—but Shakespeare's play, before it may reach that point, moves off in another direction, and the decision is made by Burgundy's rejection of the dowerless Cordelia and the King of France 'seizing upon' the 'unpriz'd precious maid'.

Yet, the question of Cordelia's marriage and the settlement of her dowry survives in Shakespeare's version as at least one of the major items of business of the court in the opening scene.

It is Lear himself who created another problem. It seems that he somehow felt that a public justification of his decision to give the best part of his kingdom to the youngest daughter was necessary. He makes no secret that he loves this daughter most ('Now, our joy /Although our last and least' ; I.i.82-3). That should have been reason enough. But Lear decided on a 'stratagem' for making a 'ceremony' out of this. This was the truly 'dark purpose' he had in his mind. No one else knew about this.

I have used the word 'stratagem'. The word occurs in the source-play. In I.i. 78 of

The True Chronicle Historie of King Leir [41] Leir was meditating 'a sudden stratagem' ; at the end of his speech he spoke of 'my policy' ; and the scene ended with the 'good counsellor' Perillus observing, 'Thus fathers think their children to beguile'. I suggest that in the so-called 'love-test' Shakespeare's Lear was also employing a stratagem to beguilethe two elder daughters.

The phrasing of Lear's proposal of the so-called love-test is noteworthy. In the *True Chronicle Historie* Leir said,

> Resolve a doubt which much molests my mind.
> Which of you three to me would prove most kind ;
> Which loves me most, and which at my request
> Will soonest yield unto their fathers hest. (I. iii. 232-5)[42]

Shakespeare's Lear says—

> Tell me, my daughters,
> …… …… ……. ……. ….. …… …….
> Which of you shall we say doth love us most ? (I.i.48,51)

I emphasize the phrase 'shall we say'. Bernard McElroy has noted the reiteration of the words 'say' and 'speak' in the first scene, and has rightly observed that 'the emphasis of the entire contest is not upon loving but upon saying,'[43] Shelden Zitner has noticed that Lear's 'own words in the first scene are speaking that purposes not.'[44]

I suspect the phrase 'shall we say'. Ordinarily, it is a mere question- tag. Neither Lear's audience nor Shakespeare's audience would give any attention to it. But it may be an equivoque. If we stress the word 'say', the meaning becomes very different. Lear's question, then, is not about the daughters' love but about what Lear himself shall say. Shakespeare's Lear is a great believer in what modern linguists, following J. L. Austin, call 'illocutionary speech-acts'. He believes that he can make things happen by saying that they have happened, he can bring anything into existence and destroy anything by an utterance. In the question put to his daughters he is,according to my interpretation, declaring his intention to perform an illocutionary' speech-act. What the daughters may have to say is not material at all. What does matter is what Lear shall say.

I have said that Lear's audience would not notice the equivoque. But .that makes no difference, because they know Lear, they know that all the decisions about the division of the kingdom have been taken, and the daughters' speeches will not make him change his mind.

We should notice that the last line of Lear's speech putting the question (I. i. 54) is a short line. I think there should be a distinct pause on the stage at this point. This is a moment of big surprise for all in the court. I think also that for a moment, Goneril, invited to speak first, is bewildered. Then she gathers her wits together, and delivers the speech in reply. Stanley Cavell has suggested that Goneril's speech, as well as Regan's, should be spoken to the court.[45] The speech is a series of end-stopt

lines, stilted and stereotyped hyperboles —exactly the kind of speech called for by Lear. I think also that on the stage Lear should not pay the slightest attention to what Goneril is saying. He should be enjoying the joke, but he should be contemptuously inattentive. At the end of the speech Lear makes no comments on the speech, — the *Chronicle Historie* Leir does,—but proceeds to award the pre-determined share of the kingdom.

If this were a contest of any kind, whether a love-contest or an elocution-contest, it were unfair throughout. Not only were the results of the contest pre-determined, 'fixed' as we say nowadays, but even the pretence was not kept up. How did Lear know that Goneril's was not the best speech ? He did not wait to hear the speeches of Regan and Cordelia. How can you judge on the respective merits of contestants before the end of the performances ?

The opening words of Regan's speech are interesting:

> I am made of that self metal as my sister.
> And prize me at her worth. (I. i. 69-70)

I read between these lines something like this : 'Well, I know that you have already decided to give me a part of the kingdom which is exactly equal to the one given to Goneril. You want me to accept that and declare that is what I deserve. That is what I am doing. For, I also know that your decision will not be altered in the slightest by anything that I may say.' If, nevertheless, she proceeds to make even bigger hyperboles than the ones made by Goneril, that only shows her nature — why should not she try to put up a better performance than Goneril's in this meaningless game of words ? Once again, Lear does not wait, he makes the award, thus blatantly keeping the best part ofthe kingdom for the youngest daughter who has not yet made her speech. The question was not, 'Which of the daughters loved Lear most'. The question was, 'Who, shall Lear say, loved him most ?' It was a stratagem, not a contest, at all.

Lear was being too clever. And, therefore, foolish. For, he assumed that Cordelia would be an accomplice in this quibbling game of words, which, in the name and in the form of a 'ceremony',was a mockery of true ceremony.

That being the case, Cordelia's reply to Lear's question is entirely right. Gloucester in his feeble indecencies in the dialogue with Kent had already raised the suspicion that the society of Lear's kingdom is in a slate of degeneration. Lear, in his canny but frivolous play with ceremony and his show of 'some-form of justice' instead of justice,[46] confirm the suspicion. The older generation, inspite of their obvious positive qualities, can no longer be obeyed without untruth and hypocrisy. Cordelia raises the first voice of protest. Her reply is not a withdrawal, but a positive action.[47] I assert that Cordelia is faultless in her conduct.[48] She chooses to be 'untender', because that is the only way she could be 'true'. And Kent approves her speech, not only the content of the speech, but the manner too —

The Gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid.
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said. (I. i. 182-3)

Even her wo3rst enemies in the play, Goneril and Regan, consider that Lear cast her off with 'poor judgement', and can charge her with only disobedience ('you have obedience scanted'). Her disobedience is a fact. But it was a necessary disobedience. She had to disobey her father in order to speak 'not what she ought to say' but what she felt. Her 'Nothing' and her explanation of that 'Nothing' appeared to Lear as intolerable fault, and showed most ugly in her. Lear would later recognise that it was no fault in Cordelia. But there would be an intermediate stage when he would see this as a 'most small fault' :

O most small fault.
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place,... (I. iv. 275-8)

It was not even a 'small fault'. But, without doubt, there was a loss, a want of tenderness, which would be unnoticed and tolerable in others but did show ugly in Cordelia because she was naturally tender. And, it was not only Lear's 'frame of nature' which was 'wrenched from the fixed place' by Cordelia's act, the act involved a prior 'wrenching' in Cordelia.

The harshness in Cordelia's reply would appear to be ugly. It does so appear to most of the commentators. But the harshness is the harshness often apparent in the conduct of heroes and martyrs and revolutionaries. One recalls Bertolt Brecht's words in his famous poem *An Die Nachgeborenen* ('To Posterity') :

And yet we know well:

Even hatred of vileness
Distorts a man's features.
Even anger at injustice
Makes hoarse his voice. Ah, we
Who desired to prepare the soil for kindness
Could not ourselves be kind.[49]

VII

We may now return to the last four lines of the play. 'Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say' cannot be a rule of conduct for all times. It is a 'sad time' when we have to make that choice.

In our country some of the Upanishads preserve a pledge and a prayer[50]. The pledge is—

ṛtam vadisyami, satyam vadisyami

This may be translated as—'I shall speak what is proper, I shall say what is true.'

The word *ṛta* had various meanings and associated implications. Sometimes it meant 'truth' and would be synonymous with *Satya*, But the word often meant 'the cosmic order' and 'universal law of appropriate conduct'. In the *Rgveda* a famous *sukta* opened with :

satyenottabhita bhumih suryenottabhita dyouh
rtenadityasthistanti divi somo adhisritah[51]

which can be translated as—

The land is held up by truth *(satyena)*, the heaven above is held up by the sun, it is by *ṛta* that the shining ones stay in the sky pervaded by *soma*.

Rta then would correspond to 'Degree' in Ulysses' speech in Troilus and Cressida, I. iii.. and to 'speak rtam' would be to speak in correct accordance with appropriate order and decorum.

This rtam is true speech which is also beautiful speech. The prayer of the Upanishads which I have referred to is—

vang me manasi pratisthita mano me vaci pratisthitam

> 'Let my speech be situate in my mind, let my mind be situate in my speech'. This is a prayer for complete concord between the word of the mouth and the feeling in the heart. Such concord is not obtained easily or always. That is why one prays for it.

We ought to recall Seneca too. In one of his Moral Epistles, he wrote to Lucilius ,

> You have been complaining that my letters to you are rather carelessly written. Now who talks carefully unless he also desires to talk affectedly ? (*Quis enim accurate loquitur nisi qui vult putide loqui ?*) ...I prefer, however, that our conversation on matters so important should not be meagre and dry *(jejuna et arida)* ; for even philosophy does not renounce the company of ingenuity. One should not, however, bestow very much attention upon mere words. Let this be the kernel of my idea : let us say what we feel, and feel what we say *(quod sentimus loquamur, quod loquimur sentiamus)*; let speech be in concord with life *(concordat sermo cum vita)*.[52]

'Quod sentimus loquamur, quod loquimur sentiamus'. The Shakespearean line does not give us the other part of the chiasmus of Seneca, it leaves out 'let us feel what we say'. For, the emphasis in the play is on the 'sad time'. When the concord between truth and beauty becomes impossible, then it is a 'sad time'. That word 'sad', we may remind ourselves, meant not only 'full of sorrow' but also 'serious' or 'solemn' — close to the meaning of the Greek word *spoudaios*. Not all time is 'sad time' ; as the prophet in the Old Testament said, 'to every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under the heaven ; a time to keep, and a time to cast away ;... a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.'[53]

But when it is a 'sad time', its weight has to be obeyed, and at such times we must 'speak what we feel, not what we ought to say'. The final speech of this play, therefore, cannot be according to the usual rules of decorum. Edgar, as the spokesman of the new generation that has come to assume responsibility, can at this point only offer a homage to the older generation which has passed away. The first few scenes of the play did present a conflict of generations. But the criticism of and the opposition to the older generation came from two opposite camps within the younger generation. In the second scene of the First Act, Edmund appears as the most devastating critic of the older generation and all their customs and conventions. But it was Cordelia who in the first scene had protested against the hypocrisy of established manners and refused to obey. It is fitting that at the end of the play the older generation should be given its due. Even now Edgar does not use the customary language of obituaries. He states what are facts — 'the oldest hath borne most'. The younger generation shall not see so much, because such a 'sad time' shall not recur soon. And the older generation showed its capacity for endurance, for living 'so long'. — this long endurance making the extraordinary experiences possible. The younger generation is awed by the capacity to endure such experience, the capacity to suffer such huge sorrows. As Heilman commented, —

> After so much rage, so many reversals, so much agony, so much searching for truth, it is fitting for Edgar to close by saying, 'We that are young/ Shall never see so much,..' An epoch has ended; the next stage in the cycle will be quieter and less searching.[54]

The knowledge acquired through the sufferings of the older generation, however, can become a part of the common human heritage. Human consciousness has extended its boundaries, and the succeeding generations can know a little more than those who suffered so much, saw so much and lived so long.

Bleak flat monosyllables — that is how the style of these closing lines strike many commentators. It is not always noticed how these plain words gather a peculiar strength from the context of the whole play which precedes them. The lexical structure of these lines is made up of the words — 'weight', 'sad time', 'obey', 'speak', 'feel', 'ought to', 'say', old', 'young', 'borne', 'see', 'live', 'so much' 'so long'. The words 'speak' and 'say' obviously recall the first scene.

The word 'see' relates to the large structure of images, metaphors, and actions involving eyesight — what Heilman called the sight-pattern' of image and symbol in the play — with the blinding of Gloucester as its centrepiece. The verb 'feel' is also a major verb in the play. It occurs in Lear's 'Poor naked wretches' speech,— 'Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel' III. iv. 34) ; and in Gloucester's prayer, -'the superfluous .and lust-dieted man,/... that will not see/Because he does not feel, feel your power quickly ;' (IV. i, 67-9) ; there are other instances of this insistence on 'feeling' in the play. The explicit distinction made between 'old' and 'young' in Edgar's speech is unmistakably connected with the theme of conflict of generations',

and Edgar's speech is a speech of reconciliation between the two generations—a reconciliation between the positive good in the old and the positive good in the young.

Edgar's words, therefore, do sum up the play. But the weight of these words can be felt only through a sensitive reading of the whole play, a kind of 'reading and re-reading' which was suggested by Leo Spitzer.[55]

NOTES & REFERENCES

[1] Maynard Mack observed : 'In a number of ways, our own century seems better qualified to communicate and respond to the full range of experience in *King Lear* than any previous time, save possibly Shakespeare's own.'- Maynard Mack, *King Lear in Our Time,* Univ of California Press, 1965 pbk edn 1972, p 25.

[2] Edwin Muir, 'Politics of *King Lear', Essays on Literature and Society,* Hogarth Press, 1949, p 33.

[3] John F. Danby, *Shakespeare's Doctrine of Nature,* Faber, 1949, pbk edn196], p 52.

[4] Bernard McElroy, *Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies,* Princeton Univ Press 1973, p 146.

[5] Danby, op. cit. *passim.*

[6] Robert B Heilman, *This Great Stage,* Baton Rouge, 1948, rpt Univ of Washington Press, 1963, p 164.

[7] There are some exceptions which will be noticed in course of this essay, but Sheldon Zltner's essay '*King Lear* and Its Language' in Rosalie Colie & F. T. Flahiff (eds.). *Some Facets of King Lear: Essays in Prismatic Criticism.* Univ of Toronto, 1974, pp 3-22 should be mentioned at once.

[8] Zitner. op. cit. p 4 : "The passage itself is a conscious defiance of conventions. ... All the theatrical 'oughts' are rejected ... in favour of speaking what one feels. ... It suggests that the demands of form and decorum lead to untruths. ..."

[9] A recent example of inattention is provided by Joseph H. Summers: " ... Edgar (if we accept the Folio reading) concludes the play. We may, if we wish, assume that he will accede to Albany's request-that he is the new king, but he does not clearly state this decision, He only remarks that at this moment noble characters no longer speak according to their social and political, or *even moral responsibilities,* ..." 'Look there, look there ! The Ending of King Lear',

English Renaissance Studies Presented to Dame Helen Gardner, ed. John Carey, Oxford Univ Press, 1980, p 92-3. Emphases added.

[10] L. C. Knights, *Explorations 3*, Chatto & Windus, 1976, p 113.

[11] Maynard Mack, op. cit. p 63.

[12] A. C. Bradley, S*hakespearean Tragedy,* Macmillan & Go, 2nd Edn. 1905, rpt 1956, p 318.

[13] Ibid, p 320.

[14] Ibid, p 318.

[15] Winnifred Nowottny, 'Some Aspects of the Style of K*ing Lear', Shakespeare Survey 13,* 1960, p 52.

[16] Zitner, op. cit, p 4.

[17] The text, here and elsewhere in this essay, is from Kenneth Muir's New Arden edition of the play.

[18] It is interesting to recall how Bradley insisted on her 'tender emotion' and 'tender love'.

[19] Arthur Sewell, *Character and Society in Shakespeare,* Oxford Univ Press, 1951, p 113.

[20] Danby, op. cit, p 52, 209.

[21] Bradley, op. cit, p 320-1.

[22] Heilman, op. cit, passim.

[23] Angus McIntosh, *'King Lear,* Act I, Scene 1, A Stylistic Note', *Review of English Studies,* New Series, Vol. 14, No. 53, 1963, p 56.

[24] H. N. Brailsford, *The Levellers and the English Revolution,* ed, Christopher Hill, Cresset Press, 1961, p 42 if.

[25] Robert Lacey, *Sir Walter Ralegh,* Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1973, p 299.

[26] Jan Kott, *Shakespeare Our Contemporary,* 1961, Methuen pbk edn 1967, p 103.

[27] The quotation's from the footnote in Furness, New Variorum edition of *King Lear.* The passage can be seen in many other books, including Raysor, ed. *Coleridge's Shakespeare Criticism,* Vol. I, p 55. According to Ruth Nevo, 'Coleridge's conclusion...fathered a host of later vulgarizations of the tragic predicament'—Ruth Nevo, *Tragic Form in Shakespeare,* Princeton Univ Press, 1972, pp 262-3.

[28] Kenneth Muir, Introduction, *King Lear,* New Arden edn, Methuen 1952, rpt 1965, p.lxiii.

[29] The persistence of the notion can be seen in : Bradley, op. cit. p 281— 'Lear's 'complete blindness to the hypocrisy which is patent to us at a glance'; Jan Kott, op. cit, p 102—Lear 'does not see or understand anything : Regan's and Goncril's hypocrisy is all too evident. Regarded as a person, a character, Lear is ridiculous, naive and stupid'; Wolfgang Clemen, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Art,* Methuen, 1972, p 178—'Although he invited them himself, Lear takes Goneril's and Regan's hypocritical protestations of love for him as genuine...'; R. B. Heilman, op. cit, p 160, does not quite say that Lear is deceived, but he is of the view that Lear's 'demand for avowals of affection' was seriously introduced (Coleridge thought it was 'a silly trick') and, 'However the demand may have come up the fact is that Lear does act on it seriously', and 'our business is to see the symbolic significance of his action'. (Heilman's quest of 'symbolic significance' here is symptomatic of a powerful trend of contemporary criticism, which delights in finding symbolic significance or 'deep psychological complexities' in conduct or speech which is assumed to be improbable or incredible or absurd.) For the contrary view, see especially Ruth Nevo, op. cit, pp 261-6; Bernard McElroy, op. cit, pp 165-6; Zitner, op. cit, pp 7-8.

[30] The phrase 'Events before the opening of the action' is the heading for one of Bradley's Notes on *Hamlet,* op. cit, p 401.

[31] Ruth Nevo used the phrase 'glimpses behind the scenes which disclose the realities of state politics', op. cit, p 263.

[32] To take a few examples : Lear's fury in the first scene is explained by Lear himself in I. iv-

O small fault.
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show !

Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
From the fix'd place, ... (275-8)

Kent's reckless and violent anger against Oswald in II. ii is explained by Kent himself in II. iv-
And meeting here the other messenger.
Whose welcome, I perceiv'd, had poison'd mine.
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your Highness,
Having more man than wit about me, drew : (38-42)
The confession of loss of self-control explains his conduct which at the time of the event is puzzling.
McElroy, op. cit, p 164, 166-7, 171, points to the 'use of a specialized dramaturgy in which psychic antecedents of action arc withheld until after the action has been performed' and notes that 'it is only after the irrevocable action has been consummated that we begin to get essential information' about Lear or about Cordelia.

[33] John Lawlor, *The Tragic Sense in Shakespeare,* Chatto & Windus, 1960, p 154.

[34] In Bradley's view this is one of the faults of *King Lear* considered as a stage-play : 'The first scene is not absurd, though it must be pronounced dramatically faulty in so far as it discloses the true position of affairs only to an attention more alert than can be expected In a theatrical audience or has been found in many critics of the play.'—op. cit, p 251. *King Lear* of course demands a special kind of attention. But I would respectfully submit that the kind of attention demanded by most of the other plays of Shakespeare is not very different.

[35] Alfred Harbage, Introduction to the 1958 Penguin Edn of *King Lear,* included in Alfred Harbage (ed), *Shakespeare, The Tragedies,* Prentice-Hall Inc, NJ, 1964, pp 113-22—'the tone is casual, jocular, polite'; Maynard Mack, op. cit, p 93— The atmosphere of the first episode in the scene, as many a commentator has remarked, is casual, urbane, even relaxed'; Ruth Nevo, op. cit, p 263— '(The) conversation between Kent and Gloucester, which reveals, be it noted, no particular dismay on their part, regarding the proposed division,...'

[36] This and much else of what follows were noted by Ruth Nevo, op. cit, p 262.

[37] Spenser, *Faerie Queene,* II. x. 27 ; see Geoffrey Bullough (cd), *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare,* Vol. VII, Routlcdge & Kegan Paul, 1975, p 332 ; care is taken to mention this obvious point in Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia* (see Bullough, p311), Holinshed (ibid, p 317), and in *The Mirror for Magistrates* ('Because he had no sonne t'enjoye his lande', ibid, p 324).

[38] In *The True Chronicle History of King Leir,* Skalliger, the 'bad counsellor', advises unequal division according to respective merits of the daughters, but Leir firmly rejects this—'No more, nor lesse, but even all alike'. Of the earlier sources, Geoffrey's *Historia* suggested unequal division and the contest was 'to make Tryal who was the worthiest of the best part of his kingdom' ; Holinshed suggested that the 'trial of love' was to help Lear 'to understand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre hir whome he best loved, to the succession over the kingdome'; according to one of Kenneth Muir's footnotes to his Introduction to the New Arden Edition of the play (1952 edn, p xxxvi), 'Only two accessible sources suggest that there was to be an unequal division, the best share going to Cordelia'; but it will be seen that Holinshed does not suggest an equal division. *The Mirror for Magistrates* is somewhat cryptic—'He thought to give, where favoure most he fande',— but an unequal division seems to be implied. Spenser is explicit—'his realme he equally decreed/To have divided.

[39] Bradley, op. cit, p 249 : 'Cordelia's share, which is her dowry, is perfectly well-known to Burgundy, if not to France (ll. 197,245)'. Why not to France ?

[40] The words 'present dowry' occur in *Leir,* 440 ; see Buliougb, p. cit. p 348.

[41] See Bullough, op, cit, p 339.

[42] Ibid, p 343.

[43] McEIroy, op. cit, p 165, 'Love has very little to do with the goings on in the play at this early stage.' Ruth Nevo, op. cit, p 259, says, 'Love has only obliquely to do with the case.'

[44] Zitner, op. cit. p 8. .

[45] 'The Avoidance of Love : A Reading of *King Lear*'—Stanley Cavell, Must We Mean What We Say 7, Cambridge Umv Press, 1976, p 292.

[46] The phrase is used by the Duke of Cornwall before the blinding of Gloucester—II, vii. 25. The distinction between 'justice' and 'some form of justice'is unmistakable.

[47] Robert Heilman, agreeing with R. P. Warren in this, found Cordelia guilty of 'withdrawal from action', guilty of 'non-jurancy'. See Heilman, op. cit, pp 35-6.

[48] Not many would agree with this view. Starting with Coleridge, most of the commentators detect in Cordelia a touch of pride, or a grain of self-righteousness, or a coldness, or a sullen and resentful ovcr.rcaction to the falsehood in the speeches of her sisters. Of the few who hold her to be faultless, Harbage.Danby,and Dover Wilson (Cambridge New Shakespeare edn of the play. Intro,p xxv.'In Cordelia there is nowhere any fault')shou!d be mentioned. I do not accept Danby's thesis ofthe play being a Christian play with Cordelia as the Christ-figure. I would rather agree with Arthur Sewell, op. cit. pp 60 ff, especially with the comment; 'this is the crux of the matter—whatever she did, she would have had to ask forgiveness.' Ruth Nevo, op. cit, pp 258-267, rightly objecting to the usual cataloguing of Lear's sins, and the Bildadism 'so prevalent in the criticism of *King Lear*', stresses Cordelia's faults; 'cold rationality', 'Is not her truth—her "Nothing"—too much less than the truth ?', and observes ; 'The more culpable Lear is made to appear the more Christ-like Cordelia become, while the exculpation of Lear involves the incrimination of Cordelia'. S.L. Goldberg, An Essay on King Lear, Cambridge Univ Press, 1974, after pointing out that Cordelia is trapped in a dilemma' (p 19), would still say,'Coleridge was essentially right in his account of Cordelia's action (in the first scene)' (p 23) and would stress 'an unacknowledged weakness in herself—a need to feel and appear more righteous than her sisters' (p 22). In this connection, it is of some interest to recall that Goethe rejected the idea that Antigone in Sophocles' Antigone is in any sense wrong, while Hegel, whose view of tragedy influenced'Bradley so much and continues to influence many others, held both Creon and Antigone partly right and partly wrong. Ivor Morris, Shakespeare's God, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1972, pp 216-7, refers to these two views. The Hegelian view seems to fit rather neatly with the neo-Aristotelian 'hamartia-hunting' indulged in by most commentators on tragedy and ridiculed by A. P. Rossiter, Angel With Horns. Longmans, 1961, Ch 13, esp.p 263n.

[49] The English translation of the passage from Brecht's poem is by Michael Hamburger. The German text and the translation can be seen m Michael Hamburger (Tr & Ed), *German Poetry,* 1910-1975, Carcanet New Press, Manchester, 1977, pp 148, 149.

[50] The pledge and the prayer are in the opening invocation and also in the final benediction in the *Aitareya Upanishad.* The pledge is also found in the opening invocation in the *Taittiriya Upanishad.* Max Muller translated the Taittiriya pledge as— T shall proclaim the right. I

shall proclaim the true'; Max Muller, *Upanishads,* Part II, Sacred Books of the East, Oxford, 1884, p 45. Swami Nikhilananda, *The Upanishads,* Vol. III, Harper & Bros, New York, 1956, p 17, translated the Aitareya passages as —I shall think of the right; I shall speak the right' and 'May my speech be fixed in my mind, may my mind be fixed in my speech.' There is a whole body of literature on the various meanings of rta. The Sankaracharya school of commentators, generally followed by Swami Nikhilananda and other scholars of the Ramakrisna Mission, distinguish between rta and satya as between two kinds of truth,—rta being the truth of thought, the truth of the mind, the inner truth ; and satya being the truth of the word, the truth of correct speech. One may recall Kent's words about Cordelia in I. i. 183 : 'That justly think'st and hast most rightly said !' 'Just-thinking' may be ṛta, and 'right-saying' may be satya.But rta may equally be 'right-saying' and satya 'just-thinking'. In one of the ranges of its multiple meanings ṛta seems to be close to Greek *orthos,* Latin *rectus,* German *recht,* and English 'right'. Max Muller suggested that rta could mean Latin *ratus,* something 'fixed and unalterable',—Kaegi & Arrowsmith, *The Rigveda,* New Delhi, 1975, p 126, n92.

[51] *Rg-Veda,* X, 85.1.

[52] The English translation as well as the Latin phrases are taken from Seneca, *Epistulae*

Morales. II, Epistle LXXV, Tr. R. M. Gummere, (Loeb's Classics), Wm Heinemann, 1962, pp 136-9. I have, however, changed Gummere's 'cleverness' to 'ingenuity' and his 'harmonize' to 'be in concord with'.

[53] *Ecclesiastes,* iii. 1-7.

[54] Heilman, op. cit. p. 63.

[55] Leo Spitzer, *Linguistics and Literary History,* Princeton Unlv Press, New Jersey, 1948, passim, and esp. p 27.

"THE NEW HUMAN PHENOMENON" IN *WOMEN IN LOVE:* EXPLORING D.H. LAWRENCE'S CONFLICTED INTEREST IN ITALIAN FUTURISM

JOYJIT GHOSH

A close study of Lawrence's letters written in the month of June 2014 reveals that he was deeply attracted to Futurism, a modern European artistic and literary movement, the epicenter of which was Italy. In his letter to Arthur McLeod dated 2 June 1914, Lawrence alludes to his reading of "Marinetti's and Paulo Buzzi's manifestations and essays". By this he refers to *I Poeti Futuristi, con un proclama di F. T. Marinetti e uno studio sul Verso libero di Paolo Buzzi* (1912). Lawrence's letter also refers to *Cubismo e futurismo* (1914) of Ardengo Soffici, poet, painter and co-editor of *Lacerba*, a leading periodical of the Futurists (II 180). Lawrence does not here mention "Manifeste du futurisme" published in the Paris journal *Le Figaro* (1909) by which Marinetti began the Futurist Movement. And there is no direct evidence for his having read it. But he definitely read the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (May 11, 1912) as his letter to Arthur McLeod on 5 June reveals. He even translates a passage from this essay here. However, Lawrence's fascination with the movement is first expressed in his letter dated 2 June 1914: "It interests me very much. I like it because it is applying to emotions of the purging of the old forms and sentimentalities" (II 180). The question may arise: what does Lawrence mean by "old forms and sentimentalities"? The next letter written to Edward Garnett on 5 June 1914 gives us a clue to the understanding of Lawrence's loaded phrase. Lawrence here discloses his grave reservation against the "moral scheme" into which the characters of the novels by Turgenev, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky fit. Lawrence describes this scheme as "dull, old, dead". The letter also unfolds that Marinetti's idea of "an intuitive physiology of matter"[1] appealed to his artistic sensibility and inspired him to find the "non-human in humanity" (II 182). Lawrence made it an emphatic point that "the old-fashioned human element" making a character "consistent" did not suit his artistic purpose. But the tendency of the Futurists to dispense with the human aspect altogether and locate "the phenomena of the science of physics" in human beings provoked a strong criticism from him, and he described them as "crassly

stupid". In fact, Lawrence's attitude to Futurism, as reflected in his letters from time to time, is profoundly ambivalent. Thus, he writes, "They want to deny every scrap of tradition and experience, which is silly. … But I like them. Only I don't believe in them" (II 182-183). But it is undeniable that this radical artistic/literary movement fairly shaped his creative vision. The present essay basically attempts to explore Lawrence's conflicted interest in Futurism in connection with the conception of major characters in *Women in Love*.

Before I pass on to a detailed discussion on Lawrence's engagement with Futurism (when he was writing the "Wedding Ring" from which later developed *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*), I would like to point out that Lawrence himself gives us hints to the transitional stage in his fictional career in the letters. He writes to his mentor Edward Garnett on 22 April 1914: "All the time, underneath, there is something deep evolving itself out in me. And it is hard to express a new thing in sincerity" (II 165). Almost in the same tone Lawrence writes in the "Foreword" to *Women in Love* (1920): "Any man of real individuality tries to know and to understand what is happening, even in himself, as he goes along. This struggle for verbal consciousness should not be left out in art".[2] Lawrence's struggle for expression of "a new thing" through the medium of fictional art is strikingly evident in these quotes. The narrative technique of "accumulating objects in the powerful light of emotion, and making a scene of them" that he employed in *Sons and Lovers* is now discarded, and Lawrence clearly states that he has to "write differently" (II 142). So, for the purpose of writing "differently", the author, one may argue, borrows some of his ideas from Futurism although one should not miss Lawrence's guarded observation that his new book ("Wedding Ring") is "a bit futuristic – quite unconsciously so" (II 182). The phrase "quite unconsciously so" may speak of the author's anxiety of influence, but that is not the focus of the present essay. What I intend to examine here is how the innovative ideas of the Futurist artists (Marinetti in particular) gave a direction to the representation of characters in *Women in Love*, with a special focus on the evolution of a "new human phenomenon" (II 183). I exclude the analysis of the character of Loerke from the domain of the discussion because in my view, Loerke does not conspicuously represent this new phenomenon.

Over the years, Lawrence's dialogue with Futurism has attracted considerable critical attention. I would at this point refer to those essays/books in particular that would be relevant to my study. Mary Freeman in "Lawrence and Futurism" (1955) aptly shows how in spite of "the marked similarities of his technique to futurist techniques, Lawrence's characters remain human beings that are warm, vulnerable, and even when lost, seeking to find their way" (78). In Kim A. Herzinger's analysis in *D.H. Lawrence in His Time: 1908-1915* (1982), the major characters of *Women in Love* are depicted in "symbolic and imagistic terms", and Herzinger opines that Lawrence was motivated by an "impulse to find the 'unchangeable' – the 'carbon' … which derived, in great part, from his assimilation of Futurism" (140). Paul Eggert in his influential essay "Lawrence and the Futurists: the Breakthrough in

his Art" (1982) highlights how the Futurists, particularly Marinetti, gave Lawrence a direction in the transitional phase of his progression as an artist. In this context, Eggert cogently argues that Lawrence's clarification of the "dichotomy" between the two opposing forces – "the deadening" and "the liberating" and his "rejection" of the former and his determination to "grasp and explore" the latter (26) – largely explains "the breakthrough in his Art". Emile Delavenay's essay "Lawrence and the Futurists" (1985) brings home a fascinating point that although Lawrence was influenced by the revolutionary ideas of the Futurists in the portrayal of characters, he did not agree to Marinetti's prescription to "abolish man in literature". He rather wanted "to extend the field of psychology, to show a character according to what he is rather than what he feels: that is, has been educated to feel in the moral scheme" (149). Andrew Harrison's "Electricity and the Place of Futurism in *Women in Love*" (2000) is another leading title in this context. While speaking about Lawrence's indebtedness to Marinetti for his idea of the "physic – nonhuman, in humanity" (II 182), Harrison lucidly argues that the author's "futuristic struggle to articulate the 'life' of matter is evident" in his "significant attention … to electricity and to the language of electricity in *Women in Love*" (9-10). Harrison's *D.H. Lawrence and Italian Futurism: A Study of Influence* (2003) is indeed a significant contribution to the present domain of critical sources. The title of the monograph is self-explanatory. The book offers exhaustive research on the influence of Italian Futurism on Lawrence's novels like *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*. But it also finely illustrates the historical connections between Lawrence, Marinetti and Zola.

Yet none of these articles/books gives a focus on Lawrence's idea of "the new human phenomenon" from the perspective of the fictional representation of "inhuman will". But we know how integral is this concept to Lawrence's vision while he is writing the "Wedding Ring", and how he struggles to spell out this radical idea in his letter to Edward Garnett dated 5 June 1914. In Lawrence's conception, a character emerges as a "new human phenomenon" – when it represents "some greater, inhuman will". Marinetti states, "we must acknowledge that we aspire to the creation of an inhuman type"[3]. This seems to be the ideology of Lawrence too. A Lawrencian character is "an inhuman type" when he or she refuses to conform to "the old stable ego" and appears as "unrecognisable". Huxley wrote that Lawrence "could always perceive the otherness behind the most reassuringly familiar phenomenon" because he adopted "the uncommonsense view of psychology".[4] The observation compels conviction. The human phenomenon in Lawrence's fictional universe is often strange, unfamiliar and goes beyond a predictable framework. I would like to address all these points in the present essay, and in this connection, I would examine Lawrence's ambivalent response to the Futurist ideology as well.

Let us start our discussion with the analysis of the character of Ursula. Graham Hough observes, "It is often denied that *Women in Love* is a sequel to *The Rainbow* but both, at any rate, sprang out of the same conception; the continuity of the character of Ursula is real, and the later book does depend to some slight extent on knowledge

of the earlier" (72). This is an insightful observation. In fact, Lawrence envisioned the two novels as "an organic artistic whole" (III 459). So, we may briefly deal with the portrayal of Ursula in *The Rainbow* before we proceed to the analysis of her portrayal in *Women in Love*. Ursula in *The Rainbow* was a woman who was after her "own maximum self" (349). Throughout the journey of her life, she wanted to remain "her own responsive, personal self" (427). That constitutes the "carbon" element in her character. She failed time and again in her love-relation with Anton Skrebensky, an army engineer, because she was after something more permanent than mere sexual attraction. Her lesbian relationship with Winifred Inger, her class mistress, was also not a success and ended in a kind of nauseating disillusionment. Skrebensky reappeared in her life with a proposal of marriage towards the close of the novel but she declined that because she was possessed by a craving for "something impersonal" (527). At a critical stage, she discovers that she is pregnant. For the moment she questions herself: "For what had a woman but to submit?" (538). But she is "aware … of a gathering restiveness, a tumult impending within her" (538). The confrontation with the robustly galloping horses on her walk toward Willey Green may be a psychic representation of her awareness of the "tumult". It is pertinent to quote the words of John Worthen here: "Whether the horses are real or not, her experience at this juncture makes them matter internally, emotionally, psychologically, psychically" (71).

One may say that the wild agents of nature help Ursula break the frontiers of her socially determined self. She waits for the new liberation. Finally, she is able to achieve her vision of the rainbow:

> She saw in the rainbow the earth's new architecture, the old, brittle corruption of houses and factories swept away, the world built up in a living fabric of Truth, fitting to the overarching heaven (548).

The ending of *The Rainbow* is therefore positive and speaks of the emergence of Ursula as a woman who has the courage to look forward to a promising future. However, the Ursula whom we meet in the early section of *Women in Love* suffers from a state of despair.[5] She feels that she is "at the end" of her "line of life". Her life that she traversed "along the line of fulfilment" was "nearly concluded". If there is any next step, it is "the step into death" (260-61). She had already gathered "purely sensual, purely unspiritual knowledge" but her life remains "unfulfilled" (326-30). Hence, she wants "to be together" with Birkin in "happy stillness". For the time being she forgets that she "herself was real, and only herself" (320). But the old destructive self surfaces again:

> For a long time she nestled to him, and he kissed her softly, her hair, her face, her ears, gently, softly, like dew falling. But his warm breath on her ears disturbed her again, kindled the old destructive fires. She cleaved to him, *and he could feel his blood changing like quicksilver*. (329) [Emphasis added]

The informed reader may remember how in *The Rainbow* Ursula annihilates

Skrebensky when she is overwhelmed by the strange power of the moon: "She took him in the kiss, hard her kiss seized upon him, hard and fierce and burning corrosive as the moonlight. She seemed to be destroying him" (368). The language, one may note, is not only sensational but distinctly futuristic as well. The expression like "hard her kiss seized upon him", in this connection, must not escape the critical attention. In the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" Marinetti gives a call to "destroy syntax", "abolish the adjective", "abolish the adverb" and "abolish even the punctuation" in order to produce a "dynamic vision" (92-93).[6] Lawrence does not wholly follow Marinetti's prescription but it is evident that his linguistic experiment in this case tends to disrupt the normal syntax and produces "the jerks and bursts of style".[7]

The passage from *Women in Love* quoted above that bears witness to the change in the blood of Birkin is suggestive for another reason. The reference to "quicksilver" in particular may draw the attention of readers as it speaks volumes about Lawrence's fascination for a futuristic idiom. Marinetti writes, "Instead of *humanizing* animals, vegetables and minerals (an outmoded system) we will be able *animalize*, *vegetalize*, *mineralize*, *electrify*, or *liquefy* our style, making it live the life of matter."[8] Lawrence here liquifies his style to that extent that the readers get an immediate access to the "life" of the matter – the "quicksilver". Birkin becomes "non-human" for a moment as the change takes place in his blood. However, he can put a check on the passionate excess and maintain his balance: "He kissed her many times. But he, too, had his idea and his will. He wanted gentle communion, no other, no passion now" (329). This is how a character in Lawrence reveals his strength to pull himself away from the futurist whirlpool.

Let's go back to the analysis of the character of Ursula who has the courage to create her own destiny. It is important to note that at every step in her life, she decries everything that seems "dead" to her. In the chapter appropriately entitled "Woman to Woman", she bitterly criticizes Hermione because in her view the latter stands for "dead things", and because, her knowledge of love is only "dead understanding". Hermione is the "untrue spectre of a woman" to her (378). One may note that in a bitter quarrel with Birkin in "Excurse", stemming out of the reference to "jealousy" in connection with Hermione's name, Ursula describes Birkin as "foul", "perverse" and even "death-eating" (389). For a moment, Birkin finds himself in another kind of dilemma: "And was not Ursula's way of emotional intimacy, emotional and physical … as dangerous as Hermione's spiritual intimacy?" (391). This is Lawrence's amazing "psychologising of interpersonal gulfs", to borrow a phrase of Eggert (26). The internal monologue of Birkin reflects that he can neither accept Hermione nor Ursula because both of them represent the oppressive *other* to him. However, he soon realizes, "Ursula was the perfect Womb, the bath of birth, to which all men must come!" (391). This signals the triumph of Ursula – the Magna Mater. Birkin must come – must abandon to Ursula – at least for the moment. Finally, when he comes, it is a "release" for Ursula:

> It was all achieved, for her. She had found one of the sons of God from the

> Beginning, and he had found one of the first most luminous daughters of men.
>
> She traced with her hands the line of his loins and thighs, at the back, and a living fire ran through her, from him, darkly. It was a dark flood of electric passion she released from him, drew into herself. She had established a rich new circuit, a new current of passional electric energy, between the two of them, released from the darkest poles of the body and established in perfect circuit. It was a dark fire of electricity that rushed from him to her, and flooded them with rich peace, satisfaction (396).

The quoted paragraphs have provoked criticism from a fair number of Lawrence scholars, and most of them including Charles L. Ross and Mark Kinkead-Weekes deal with Lawrence's vocabulary. It is basically Ursula's experience that the novelist narrates at this point although the word "both" is unmistakably used here. Lawrence's "struggle" to articulate the ineffable is clearly visible in the passage. Charles L. Ross argues: "The rhetorical problem in such passages is similar to that of the mystic who paradoxically tries to describe the inexpressible".[9] This is indeed true. One may in this connection remember Lawrence's advice to Kyle Crichton in a letter dated 31 August 1925: "You've got to allow yourself to be, in some measure, the mystic that your real self is … before you can be an artist" (V 294). Lawrence trusts his "mystic" self while he portrays the profoundly intimate experience of the lovers.

Mark Kinkead-Weekes finds in the aforementioned extract "the psychic equivalent of the physical electricity which flows through but is not a property of the body which conducts it" (395). The observation is perfectly sensible and even profoundly interesting from a futuristic perspective. The "rich new circuit" that is established between the lovers and offers them "rich peace" and "satisfaction" is not a mere "property of the body", as Kinkead-Weekes justly observes. It is as much psychological as it is physical in its entity. In this context, one may recall Marinetti's coinage of the Italian word *fisicologia* in the 1912 text "Manifesto tecnico della letteratura futurista" which entails the "hybrid sense of physiology/psychology" (Jack Stewart 118). Kinkead-Weekes, however, does not invite a futurist discourse here. His contention is that "Lawrence wanted a new language of more-than-personal power" and "found it (strangely enough!) in Pryse's *Apocalypse Unsealed* and in Blavatsky". Kinkead-Weekes thus reads Ursula's experience in the light of Pryse's discourse on "the ancient Indian neurology, cosmic energy, *kundalini* … whose centre is the base of the spine; and how, in its full circuit through all the other ganglia or *chakras* and the brain (a nervous system both sensual and spiritual), the whole being can be flooded with illumination" (394-395). I, however, differ with Weekes at this point. Because Ursula's experience of "dark flood of electric passion" and tremendous energy "released from the darkest poles of the body" is after all not a spiritual one; it is thoroughly sensual, and it has nothing to do with the awakening of *kundalini* that leads to spiritual liberation.

Let me now take into consideration what Harrison in this connection

observes in his book *D.H. Lawrence and Italian Futurism*:

> Birkin and Ursula manage in this instance to attain a kind of new movement celebrated by Futurism: the movement of electricity through bodies which channel and direct the current. Gerald is unable to attain this new movement in his relationship with Gudrun. He may possess a futuristic vigour on the surface of things, but his expenditure of electrical energy achieves neither a new circuit nor clean destructiveness: it is spent in casual sexual liaisons and in the exercising of a will that is shown to be dictated by the forces of a tragic fate. (164)

The observation has a remarkable clarity. It is evident that Birkin and Ursula use "the movement of electricity" for a creative/transformative sexual relationship. The omniscient narrator indicates that this relationship involves "a perfect passing away for both of them, and at the same time the most intolerable accession into being" (396). At one level of understanding, this speaks of the lovers' "passing away" from mental consciousness and their cognizance of the new "being" that includes the impersonal – the "non-human" element. Birkin is able to locate the element of "electricity" in "the deepest physical mind" and he is capable of evoking a sense of awe in Ursula: "In a strange uplift of emotion she saw him, the being never to be revealed, awful in its potency, mystic and real" (401-402). Gerald wretchedly fails in this regard. He exercises his superhuman force while he takes Gudrun in his arms but it ends in futility and desperation because the latter remains "inert" and "motionless" in his embrace (493). We read in "Why the Novel Matters" that a sensitive reader can see in the novel, "when the man goes dead, the woman goes inert" (140). The statement throws a critical light on the pathetic aspect of Gerald's sexual encounter with Gudrun. A few sentences from "Continental" may be quoted in this context:

> The passion came up in him, stroke after stroke, like the ringing of a bronze bell, so strong and unflawed and indomitable. His knees tightened to bronze as he hung above her soft face, whose lips parted and whose eyes dilated in a strange violation. In the grasp of his hand her chin was unutterably soft and silken. He felt strong as winter, his hands were living metal, invincible and not to be turned aside. … She moved convulsively, recoiling away from him. His heart went up like a flame of ice, he closed over her like steel. (493).

This is Lawrence's representation of Gerald (and to a certain extent of Gudrun) as a "new human phenomenon". The "lyric obsession with matter" and to "divine its different governing principles, its forces of compression, dilation, cohesion, and disaggregation, its crowds of massed molecules and whirling electrons",[10] which constitutes an integral part of the futurist aesthetic, is poignantly reflected in the passage. Thus, the passion of Gerald is likened to "the ringing of a bronze bell" indicating how Lawrence discards old human feelings/sensations. Again, the expressions like "Gerald's knees tightened to bronze" and Gudrun's "lips parted and … eyes dilated in a strange violation" – point to the futuristic rhetoric in Lawrence's

narration of the event. So, Gerald's gigantic force meets its catastrophic end (the references to "winter" and "ice" are unmistakable here) as he fails to transmit the "electrical energy" (borrowing Harrison's phrase) in Gudrun.

An informed reader will remember that in the manuscript of "La Fondation du Futurisme et son manifeste" (1908), Marinetti originally had considered naming the new movement "Elettricismo" before he finally chose "Futurismo" for the said purpose.[11] The reason is obvious. The world discovered in electricity the new power and energy. Lawrence might be familiar with this manifesto. And in all probability Lawrence read Luciano Folgore's poem titled "Electricity" ("L'Elettricità"), that was included in *I Poeti Futuristi*. The poem speaks of the power of electricity to transform the world:

> O arm of the Electric
> Extended in every place,
> to seize life, to transform it,
> to knead it,
> with rapid elements …[12]

So, we may be sure that the futurist discourse, available in the manifestos and literary compositions, appealed to Lawrence's artistic vision while he was attempting with formidable energy to break away from the fictional mode of *Sons and Lovers*.

In his letter to Garnett, Lawrence speaks of his fascination for Marinetti's utterance: "it is the solidity of a blade of steel that is interesting by itself". He even agrees with Marinetti when the latter observes: "The heat of a piece of wood or iron is in fact far more passionate … than the laughter or tears of a woman." But he calls Marinetti "stupid, as an artist" when he contrasts "the heat of the iron and the laugh of the woman". Because in Lawrence's idea, it is the "inhuman will" or the "physiology of matter" that makes both "the laugh of the woman" and "the binding of the molecules of steel or their action in heat" really interesting (II 183). One may recall that Gerald's hands have been described as "living metal, invincible" and his "inhuman will" is alluded to by the expression: "he closed over her like steel." The use of the analogy of "steel" to suggest the mindless and mechanical force in Gerald is significant. In the penultimate chapter "Snowed Up" Gudrun revolts against it as she tells her partner: "'You are so insistent, and there is so little grace in you, so little fineness. You are so crude. You break me – you only waste me – it is horrible to me.'" It signals a rupture in their relationship, and we listen to the voice of the omniscient narrator: "His passion was awful to her, tense and ghastly, and impersonal, like a destruction, ultimate" (540-542). So, Gerald's "inhuman will" is integrally connected with his destructive passion.

In fact, Gerald is always possessed by "a furious and destructive demon" (302). He believes in "a new world" – "a new order" that includes not only "pure organic disintegration" but also "pure mechanical organization" (304-5). This is how Gerald is projected as an industrial man with futurist aspirations. As an "industrial magnate"

Gerald wants to subjugate to his own selfish ends not only "the inanimate matter of the underground" but the mind of man as well. His mission is to establish "a great and perfect machine" on the face of the earth and found a "pure machine-principle". He would not be at peace till his mission is fulfilled. "He had to begin with the mines. The terms were given: first the resistant Matter of the underground; then the instruments of its subjugation, instruments human and metallic; and finally his own pure will, his own mind" (301). The quoted sentences contain an implicit criticism of futurist ideology expressed in the "Technical Manifesto": "Matter is neither sad nor gay. Its essence is courage, will power, and absolute force" (96). Gerald exerts his "will power" and superhuman force while he exploits his "instruments" that include both the "metallic" and the "human". In other words, the success story of this industrialist depends upon dehumanization of labour. And the pity is that at last Gerald unconsciously sacrifices his "his own mind" at the altar of the machine. Thus, his tragedy is inevitable and his *hamartia* lies in his "inhuman will".

It is interesting to note that Lawrence portrays the "inhuman will" in the major female characters of the novel too. In most cases, it is reflected in their behavioural patterns. One may recall Hermione's weird behavior in "Breadalby" in reference to Birkin's statement that he copies the Chinese drawing in order "to know it". The conversation between them is interesting in this regard:

> 'But why do you copy it?' she asked casual and sing-song. 'Why not do something original?'
>
> 'I want to know it,' he replied. 'One gets more of China, copying this picture, than reading all the books.'
>
> 'And what do you get?'
>
> She was at once roused, she laid as it were violent hands on him, to extract his secrets from him. She *must* know. (145)

Lawrence, one may note, italicizes the word "must" in order to emphasize the "dreadful tyranny" (145) in Hermione's attitude. What F.R. Leavis observes at this point is illuminating: "her will is not her instrument, a power by which she commands: she is under its compulsion, the slave of a malign automatism that is inimical to life in herself as in Birkin" (188). So, Hermione is a "slave" of her tyrannical will, and her desperate craving for knowledge borders on the negative because it is antithetical to life.

Gudrun is also possessed by an "inhuman will" at times. The dinner scene in the "Continental" chapter, for example, bears evidence of it. We see the pairs of lovers in their holiday mood. They discuss their sense of belonging as well as detachment to/ from England. All on a sudden the gaze of Gudrun is drawn toward Gerald:

> She looked at Gerald. He was wonderful like a piece of radium to her. She felt she could consume herself and know *all*, by means of this fatal, living

> metal. She smiled to herself at her fancy. And what would she do with herself, when she had destroyed herself? For if spirit, if integral being is destructible, Matter is indestructible. (488)

Gudrun's gaze is unmistakably futuristic in spirit. Gerald at the moment appears to her as "a piece of radium". Through Gudrun Lawrence seems to reveal his own obsession with the idea of "matter". One may note that the word "Matter" begins with a capital letter in order to highlight its superiority to other words like "spirit" and "being". But the passage is also significant because it reflects on Lawrence's ambivalent attitude to the Futurist discourse. The reader will not miss the implicit suggestion that the "metal" by which Gudrun wants to understand and appreciate "all" is at the same time "living" and "fatal". But for the time being Gudrun is possessed by a will – a self-consuming will – to know Gerald. Even if it involves the path of self-destruction, she will not stop.

But this is not the path of Ursula. Lawrence makes a subtle point of comparison between the two women in love. The point is, Ursula also wants to know her partner but not at the expense of consuming herself. She rather wants to possess him with her indomitable will. The ending of the "Moony" chapter is an immediate reference here, where she demands "unspeakable intimacies" with Birkin: "She wanted to have him, utterly, finally to have him as her own, oh, so unspeakably, in intimacy. To drink him down – ah, like a life-draught" (343). This indeed evokes the image of a "man-devouring female", to echo the phrase of James Twitchell (25). Ursula knows that Birkin "would never abandon himself *finally* to her". Hence, she is "prepared to fight him for it" (343). The sentences quoted here may agitate the readers as they uncover layers of implicit violence in words and expressions. But they are interesting from a futurist angle too. Because they reflect what Ursula "*is* – inhumanly, physiologically, materially" (II 183). For this "inhuman" conception of character, Lawrence is indebted to the Futurist artists.

But Lawrence's disagreement with these artists starts when they disregard the human phenomenon and "even use their intuition for intellectual and scientific purpose" (II 181). From Lawrence's statement, it is absolutely clear that the characters in his fictions must not lose touch with their human dimensions. But at the same time, Lawrence emphasizes that the conception of his characters will not follow a conventional pattern. We may quote here Lawrence's observation in full:

> You mustn't look in my novel for the old stable ego of the character. There is another ego, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically-unchanged element. (Like as diamond and coal are the same pure single element of carbon. The ordinary novel would trace the history of the diamond – but I say 'diamond, what! This is carbon.' And my diamond might be coal or soot, and my theme is carbon.) (II 183)

This is a prophetic utterance. Garrett Stewart describes this as "the eccentric chemistry of lexicon and syntax in Lawrence's style" (173). The statement contains a grain of truth and unfolds that being an *avant garde* artist Lawrence here deliberately experiments with his style to emphasize how his novel breaks away from the convention of an "ordinary novel". "Allotropy" is a chemical term meaning the existence in the same state of more than one form of the same element with different properties (*The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*). The quoted passage thus reveals that the carbon is "the same pure single element" and diamond and coal are its different properties. This element of carbon is often "unrecognisable" when it passes through different "allotropic states". In the argument of Herzinger, the element of "carbon" constitutes "the elemental force prior to character" (140). The observation is critically engaging. One may be reminded of Lawrence's statement in the letter to Edward Garnett dated 22 April 1914: "In the Sisters was the germ of this novel: […] woman becoming individual, self-responsible, taking her own initiative" (II. 165). So, the "elemental force" in the character of Ursula (both in *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*) is that she is an "individual" and she is "self-responsible". The way she defies her father in selecting Birkin as her life-partner reveals that she can take her independent decision.

But the ego of Ursula is scarcely "stable" when we analyze it in the context of her relationship with Birkin. The "Continental" chapter reveals how Birkin is "attractive" and "repulsive" to her at the same time, and how she is torn between two contrary impulses: "Her impulse was to repel him violently, break from this spell of mocking brutishness. But she was too fascinated, she wanted to submit, she wanted to know" (505). It is profoundly interesting to note how Ursula's relation with Birkin bears a close resemblance to Lawrence's sex-theory propounded in "A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover": "Sex is the balance of male and female in the universe, the attraction, the repulsion, the transit of neutrality, the new attraction, the new repulsion, always different, always new" (504). Ursula is caught in the terms of "new attraction" and "new repulsion" for her partner. But her intuition tells her that Birkin can fulfil her unfulfilled desires. Already she has acknowledged "a perfect acceptance and yielding" to "a mystic, sensual reality that can never be transmuted into mind content" (403). The phrase "mind content" is pregnant with meaning. In this connection one may recall how Lawrence theorizes sex as "the deepest form of consciousness" in the chapter titled "Sleep and Dream" in *Fantasia of the Unconscious*:

> It is utterly non-ideal, non-mental. … It is the basic consciousness of the blood, the nearest thing in us to pure material consciousness. It is the consciousness of the night, when the soul is almost asleep. (171)

So, blood consciousness is far from cerebral consciousness ("mind content") and close to "pure material consciousness" in Lawrence's philosophy.

In the "Continental" chapter both Ursula and Birkin are possessed by this

material consciousness. Earlier in the novel Ursula wanted Birkin to "serve" her spirit. But now she wants to "submit" – to "know" "the whole round of experience." She must know "everything" including the "dark shameful things" (506). This new phenomenon of Ursula that brings home her "unabashed" self seems unfamiliar to the readers. Interestingly, Birkin as we see him through the eyes of Ursula, also appears as an "unrecognisable" phenomenon. One may read Ursula's interior monologue at this point: "Wasn't it rather horrible, a man who could be so soulful and spiritual, now to be so – she balked at her own thoughts and memories: and then she added – so bestial?" (505). Ursula's perception of the "bestial" being in Birkin behind his "most reassuringly familiar phenomenon" (Huxley xxiii) is enormously interesting. Lawrence's purpose is clear. He wants his characters to be purged of "the old forms and sentimentalities". These old and obsolete sentimentalities speak of a human discourse that was an anathema to Lawrence. Carrie Rohman beautifully illustrates the idea when she states, "To be soulful and bestial, to go the 'whole round of experience', this is the inclusive Lawrentian vision of the human animal. Ursula, in this utopic moment, is herself because she has expanded her subjectivity to include her animality" (123). Towards the close of the novel Ursula tells Gudrun, "I believe in something inhuman, of which love is only a little part" (534), and the readers are not obviously surprised because by now they are expected to appreciate Lawrence's ideas of love and sex based on "a primitivistic ideology" (Cianci 45). The "inhuman" here speaks of something that belongs to the realm of the "unknown" (534). The observation of Ginette Katz-Roy is perfectly insightful when she opines that the word "inhuman" with its "near mystical connotation" is "synonymous with all that is beyond man, the great mystery of life".[13]

But the ending of the novel may surprise the readers if they are not prepared to accept Birkin's sex-ethic that provides space for "another kind of love" (583). While commenting on the novel as an "open" text, Nigel Messenger lucidly observes, "If you are unsympathetic to Lawrence, this is a source of irritation; if you are sympathetic, it is the source of the novel's power" (102-103). The context is, Gerald has met his tragic doom. Birkin is sad beyond measure. The thought that Gerald "should have loved" him particularly when he "offered him" continues to haunt Birkin. A few sentences from the conversation between Ursula and Birkin may be quoted at this point:

> 'Did you need Gerald?' she asked one evening.
>
> 'Yes', he said.
>
> 'Aren't I enough for you?', she asked.
>
> 'No', he said. 'You are enough for me, as far as woman is concerned. You are all women to me. But I wanted a man friend, as eternal as you and I are eternal.'
>
> 'Why aren't I enough?' she said. 'You are enough for me. I don't want anybody else but you. Why isn't it the same with you?'

> 'Having you, I can live all my life without anybody else, any other sheer intimacy. But to make it complete, really happy, I wanted eternal union with a man too: another kind of love,' he said. (583)

This is the split in Birkin's personality. Ursula is not "enough" to her to make his life "complete" and "really happy". He states that he was always in search of "a man friend". The statement of Birkin is true. In "Man to Man", the readers are given an opportunity to peep in the mind of Birkin where he was contemplating on "the problem of love and eternal conjunction between two men." He always wanted "to love a man purely and fully". He even confessed to himself that he "had been loving Gerald all along, and all along denying it" (277). This reflects how he is caught in a terribly confused state. The question, however, is inevitable: why did he deny his love for Gerald "all along"? Is it that the man "as if fated, doomed, limited" caused always a dilemma in him? (278). The "Moony" chapter seems to confirm it when Gerald as "an omen of the universal dissolution into whiteness and snow" made him frightened (331). Still, he "offered" himself – body and soul – to Gerald. This is where Birkin's way of thinking is apparently perplexing, even "unrecognisable" to us. Borrowing Ursula's expressions, one may wonder whether it involves an "obstinacy" or a "perversity" or even a "theory" of man-to-man relationship that Lawrence through Birkin, his mouthpiece, wants to champion at the end of the novel.

To sum up, the characters in *Women in Love* under concern are fairly radical and, to a certain extent, even "illogical" in their conceptions (II 182). They defy old ideals and traditions in their quest for the unknown. They don't fit into the conventional "moral scheme". They are moody, impulsive and at times inconsistent in their attitude and behavior. This is where they are "a bit futuristic" (II 182). But they go beyond the periphery of scientific phenomena in their assertions of individual identity and being. They explore in their own ways that "the range of pure sensational experience is limited" (550). Gudrun thus can discard Gerald (who embodies the dominant futuristic values) because Gerald is not "capable" of "the last series of subtleties" (550). One may argue, the Futurists in their obsession with a scientific theory, sometimes fail to achieve artistic "subtleties", and this is exactly where Lawrence far surpasses them. His characters break the futurist paradigm in their ability to remain self-responsible in a world where everything is fearfully fragmentary and chaotic. Gerald accepts his fate with a calm resignation and Birkin has the courage to transcend the limits of dissolution and death as he proclaims: "The game was never up. The mystery of creation was fathomless, infallible, inexhaustible forever" (580). This optimistic note is Lawrence's own and it goes beyond the mechanistic doctrine of Futurism.

NOTES

[1] The original phrase is "an *intuitive psychology of matter*". See Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (May 11, 1912), p. 96. The phrase "an intuitive physiology of matter", used by Lawrence, has given birth to a lot of criticism among the scholars. What Emile Delavenay observes in this regard is worth quoting: "Marinetti's word, it should

be recorded once and for all, *was not "physiology"*, for which Italian has a word, *fisiologia*, and French also, *physiologie*. The 1912 Italian text and its original French version, both published from Marinetti's personal address in Milan, use *"fisicologia"* and *"physicologie"*, excluding all suggestion of a mistake. See Emile Delavenay, "Lawrence and the Futurists", in *The Modernists: Studies in a Literary Phenomenon*, eds. Lawrence B Gamache and Ian S. Macniven (London: Associated University Press, 1987), p. 145

[2] See the 'Foreword to Women in Love' in Appendix 1, D. H. Lawrence, *Women in Love*, eds. David Farmer, Lindeth Vasey and John Worthen (Cambridge UP, 1987), pp. 485-486

[3] F.T. Marinetti, "Manifeste des peintres Futuristes" in *Le futurisme*, préface de Giovanni Lista. (Lausanne: L' Age d'homme, 1980), p.111

[4] Aldous Huxley, Introduction. *The Letters of D.H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley, London: Heinemann, 1932 (rpt. 1956), pp. xxii-xxiii.

[5] Ursula's despair may be read in the light of the destructive spirit of war. One may remember Lawrence's utterance his letter to Lady Cynthia Asquith on 31 January 1915: "The War finished me: it was the spear through the side of all sorrows and hopes" (II 268).

[6] In the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" Marinetti lays emphasis on a "pressing need to liberate words, to drag them out of their prison in the Latin period!" (92). The contention of Nick Ceramella in the essay titled "But I like them. Only I don't believe in them" is that "Lawrence surely read Marinetti's Manifesto "Words of Freedom" ("Parole in libertà") and "The Wireless Imagination" (Immaginazione senza fili"), two fundamental books where Marinetti theorized on the necessity to abandon the logic of Latin grammar". See the essay in *Forum Italicum* at Stonybrook University (NY), 2011.

[7] *Poetry and Drama*, 1/3 (September 1913), pp. 321-325

[8] Ibid., 323

[9] Charles L. Ross, Introduction, *Women in Love*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1989), p. 42.

[10] F.T. Marinetti, *Selected Writings*, trans. E.W. Flint and A.A. Coppotelli (London: Secker and Warburg, 1972), p. 87

[11] For certain ideas of Futurism, I am indebted to the essay "F.T Marinetti and Futurism" by Marjorie G. Wynne and Luce Marinetti Barbi, *The Yale University Library Gazette*, April 1983, Vol. 57, No. 3/4 (April 1983), pp. 104-137, Stable URL: https://www.jstor.org/stable/40858814.

[12] Luciano Folgore, "Electricity", in *A Selection of Modern Italian Poetry in Translation.* Ed. and translation Roberta L. Payne. Quebec: McGill-Queen's College UP, 2004, pp. 56-59.

[13] Ginette Katz-Roy, "The Dialogue with the Avant-Garde in *Women in Love*", in *D.H. Lawrence's "Women in Love": A Casebook*, ed. David Ellis. Oxford UP, 2006, p. 257.

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REINVENTING ALLEGORY: THE PRAXIS OF COERCION, INJUSTICE AND HUMAN CONDITION IN THE NOVEL OF *R. K.* NARAYAN

SAYANTINA DUTTA

R. K. Narayan's stories are set in the enchanting fictional world of Malgudi. This imaginary town, the locale of Narayan's novels, reflects a true picture of India along with its normal and traditional life, its nuances and elements. The inhabitant of Malgudi thrives in this environment and is shaped at times under the influence of his caste and religion, the selection of his profession and the choice of his life partner and the problems and challenges that he confronts in everyday life. Narayan's fiction is best known for its simplicity of characters and story. They are everyday characters that the author came across in the milieu around him.

The stories of ancient mythology have always been a source of inspiration to the Indian authors. The influence of myth is seen through incidents in the early novels of Narayan. In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, first published in 1961, myth becomes integrated thematically and structurally. It is an outstanding work of fiction based on the mythological story of Mohini and Bhasmasura. This paper intends to establish that the novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is at once an exploration of the ancient Hindu myth and an allegorical tale of coercion, injustice and human condition in the society.

Myths that are inherited from the ancient times embody beliefs, concepts and ways of questioning, which appear quite different from the modern view of the world. But as myths are primitive response to basic human situations, they are also relevant to modern times. Weaving modern material on the pattern of ancient myth is supposed to be a new approach to antiquity with the aim of fusing it with modernity. Myths are reflections of a profound reality. They dramatically represent our deepest instinctive understandings. Narayan has created a mythical kingdom in Malgudi. The classical myths are Narayan's imaginative sources as well as those of the Malgudi people. They refer to the living mythology in different ways, always supposing the reality of gods and demons.

Narayan, a writer of realistic fiction, subverts or creates a displacement when he uses a myth in his novels to make it plausible, as myths are illogical and incredible

by nature. Narayan borrows the form of the novel from the West but in his creation, he subverts it from within by introducing elements from the Indian narrative tradition. This is particularly true of Narayan's symbolism. In his essay published in *Commonwealth Literature* Narayan declares:

> With the impact of modern literature we began to look at our gods, demons and sages, not as some remote concoctions but at types and symbols possessing psychological validity, even when seen against the contemporary background (*Commonwealth*, 122).

The Man-Eater of Malgudi has a definite mythical structure; this is stated by reference to the *Puranic* conflict between the *sura* and the *asura*. The novel can be read as an allegory; a symbolic expression of the way of life. It loosely follows the classical pattern of Sanskrit literature. The two main characters Nataraj and Vasu are in constant conflict with one another and illustrate the difference between the two cultures and invasion of one culture upon another. Nataraj rents out a room to Vasu only to have it overtaken by Vasu's lifestyle, values, and taxidermist profession. The contradiction between the two is clearly marked as opposition between gods and demons. The battle between them is a recurrent motif in Hindu mythology.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi tells the tale of a printer named Nataraj who lives in the fictional South Indian town of Malgudi. The novel begins with the first person narration by Nataraj, the printer of Malgudi:

> I could have profitably rented out the little room in front of my press [...] it was coveted by every would-be shopkeeper in our town; I was considered a fool for not getting my money's worth out of it [...] I could not explain myself to sordid calculating folk. I hung a framed picture of Goddess Laxmi poised on her lotus [...] and through her grace I did not do too badly. My son, little Babu, went to Albert Mission School and felt adequately supplied with toys, books, sweets, and other odds and ends that he fancied from time to time (*Man-Eater*, 7).

This suggests Nataraj's life – timid, placid, and non-intervening or non-intervened. Nataraj lives a quiet and contented life in Malgudi until he meets the eccentric and brazen Vasu, an aspiring taxidermist who disrupts Nataraj's daily printing business, forcibly moves in above the shop, and wrecks havoc around the town as he kills and smuggles animals to meet the demand for exotic stuffed pieces all around the world.

From the very first appearance, the novelist does not miss any single chance to suggest the inhuman aspect of the persona – 'tanned face, large powerful eyes under thick eyebrows, a large forehead and a shock of unkempt hair over it, like a black halo' (*Man-Eater*, 15). So, it is keenly suggested that the person is nothing but a demon, and equally suggestive is the response of Nataraj: 'My first impulse was to cry out, "whoever you may be, why don't you brush your hair?" [...] He came forward, practically tearing aside the curtain, an act which violated the sacred tradition of my

press' (Ibid). As Vasu aggressively seeks out exotic animals for his business, he comes across Kumar, a sacred temple elephant that he is determined to have as a prize for his collection. Nataraj must figure out how to deter Vasu from his mission to shoot the elephant at a sacred festival in town. The story with its pleasant twists features the metamorphosis of a quiet, timid and cowardly man Nataraj to rise up against the omnipotent Vasu.

According to some critics, *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is an allegory of good and evil. The good is represented by Nataraj; on the other hand, Vasu is an embodiment of evil. In an article, George Woodcock writes:

The complex *manoeuvres* by which the printer Nataraj and the temple-dancer-prostitute Rangi set out to frustrate him [Vasu] take on a faint aura of the great fight between good and evil forces in Narayan's favourite epic, the Ramayana, with Vasu in the role of the malign titan Ravana who once attempted to slaughter the divine elephants who guard the four directions of the universe (2).

The sociable, tolerant, passive Nataraj is unsettled for a while by the egotistical, destructive, intolerable and intimidating Vasu till the latter self-destructs, as demons are supposed to do, although in comic fashion, killing himself while trying to squash a mosquito which has landed on his forehead. This novel is after all the story of a man's (Vasu) pursuit after death and how Nataraj, the prototype of Shiva with the help of Rangi, the marginalized dancing woman, representing Mohini, enacted the mythical story of the modern Bhasmasura (Vasu).

R. K. Narayan told an audience at Columbia University in 1972:

> At some point in one's writing career, one takes a fresh look at the so-called myths and legends and finds a new meaning in them. After writing a number of novels and short stories based on the society around me, some years ago I suddenly came across a theme which struck me as an excellent piece of mythology in modern dress. It was published under the title, *The Man Eater of Malgudi*.... I based this story on a well known mythical episode, the story of Mohini and Bhasmasura (*Literary Criterion*, 47-48).

For the theme of the novel, Narayan's use of Bhasmasura myth was a piece of conscious endeavour. According to the legend, Bhasmasura is a demon who obtains a boon from Lord Shiva that anybody he touches will be burnt to a cinder immediately. Being powerful by this boon, the demon went on applying and tasting it indiscriminately, actually running after death. *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is the tale of a modern Bhasmasura, who obtained the boon of extraordinary physical prowess along with an extraordinary mental cruelty that makes him the allegorical representation of the legendary demon. Vasu had set himself as a rival to nature and was carrying on a relentless fight. The only villain in Narayan's fiction, Vasu is allegorically a demon on the *Puranic* pattern. Vasu arrives in Malgudi all of a sudden. He appears in a multiple capacity as an M.A. in History, Economics and Literature, a freedom fighter, a strong

man, trained under a *pehalwan* and as a taxidermist.

Bhasmasura misuses the boon of the blighting touch, given to him by Shiva by bringing a massacre of the innocents. He becomes a superpower almost untamable and even rebel against his creator Shiva and has a lust for Parvati, Shiva's consort. This component of the myth is largely elaborated in the novel, tracing meticulously the demonic traits in Vasu. Likewise, Vasu makes wrong use of his talent and is only engaged in depleting the forests of Mempi of all their creatures. He is an outsider who is symbolized as modernity bringing disorder in Malgudi.

This idea of the mythical demon and its destruction by his own ego is used with relevance to modern times in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*. The novel also unfurls some of the features attributed to the classical myths: the inevitable triumph of good and the destruction of evil, the law of karma, the time scheme of the gods and the specific stylized roles of gods, demons and sages. The older literary study treated image, metaphor, myth and symbol externally and superficially. They were viewed as decorations, rhetorical ornaments, and were therefore studied as detachable parts of the works in which they appear. On the other hand, the modern critic discerns the meaning and function of literature centrally present in metaphor and myth. Here, myth becomes a symbolic form of thought, the primordial emotion and the unmediated language of experience. The artist uses the mythical method to give shape and significance to the chaotic material of contemporary life.

The title of the novel is ironic, for the man-eater in the novel is no tiger, but a mighty man, Vasu, who not only kills a number of wild animals in Mempi forest but can also kill a man with a single blow of his hammer-fist. Vasu from the very wake of his career also proves to be the destroyer of his benefactors, which also quietly alludes to the thematic allegory of the novel, which is Bhasmasura-Shiva story.

> Since Sastri sees Vasu as a modern-day rakshasa, this opens up the possibility that Nataraj may be a contemporary Rama, albeit one who finally does nothing to defeat his Ravana (124).

But there is nothing heroic about Nataraj that justifies his comparison with Rama, making him an unlikely adversary for Ravan/Vasu.

Vasu had soon settled in the attic of Nataraj even without an approving word from Nataraj and what remains more interesting and surprising is that Nataraj's passivity, even when he understands a little later in the third chapter of the novel that 'his nature would not let him leave anyone in peace.' Soon we come to know Nataraj's own philosophy of life as he expresses his view: 'I had resigned myself to anything. If I had wanted a peaceful existence, I should have rejected Vasu on the first day. Now it was like having a middle-aged man-eater in your office and home, with the same uncertainties and the same potentialities' (*Man-Eater*, 26). The remark is very baffling and entangles into the multiple possible layers of meanings that the novel loads into it.

We do not fail to observe that the Nataraj-Vasu relationship is somewhat complicated by the deeply conventional printer's admiration for the hostile taxidermist. Far from being continually repelled by Vasu, Nataraj is at times attracted by aspects of the outsider's personality, which is very different from that of himself and his townspeople. Noting Nataraj's fascination for Vasu and repeated approaches to his difficult tenant, Meenakshi Mukherjee concludes that 'evil is not merely stronger but also more attractive than goodness' (155).

In the novel, the mythological parallels to the plot are described by Nataraj's employee Sastri, who identifies Vasu as a rakshasa, 'a demoniac creature who possessed enormous strength, strange powers and genius, but recognized no sort of restraints of man or God' (*Man-Eater*, 72). A rakshasa, Sastri adds, 'gets swollen with his ego. He thinks he is invincible, beyond every law. But sooner or later something or other will destroy him' (Ibid). He then recounts the myth which the novel re-enacts, the myth of the rakshasa Bhasmasura, who 'acquired a special boon that everything he touched should be scorched, while nothing could ever destroy him' (Ibid). Because of this gift, he caused suffering to others, until the god Vishnu took the form of a dancer named Mohini, to whom Bhasmasura was attracted. Vasu is indeed the perfect embodiment of the typical rakshasa of ancient Hindu mythology. Sangita Nagpal observes:

> The rakshasa so is always pictured as being of super human strength, ugly and ferocious in appearance, with cannibalistic propensities, incapable of affection, gratitude, sympathy, or regard for others and in fact revelling in inflicting pain; a nocturnal creature, a creature of the jungle, full of mystery; dirty and unclean in habits, and a being complete amoral; obeying no laws of God or man (21).

The interplay between Vasu and Nataraj indicates a larger theme, namely the contrast between two diametrically opposed attitudes to life, each shown to be disastrous in its own way. It is a contrast between the demoniacal, self-centred egotism of Vasu and the ineffectual, self-effacing altruism of Nataraj, between the impetuosity of Vasu and the timidity of Nataraj. Nataraj's altruism is as extreme as Vasu's egotism. For Vasu, everything in the external world must promote his own interest. Other people, society, human considerations – all exist to feed his egotism. Such an attitude to life is fraught with obvious dangers for both the individual and the society; such self-centredness must inevitably end in self-destruction, for, true to its nature, it must generate from within itself the force which destroys it. In his book *R.K. Narayan and His Social Perspective*, Ramteke comments:

> The excessive altruism is perhaps the result of an extreme congenital timidity and weakness in Nataraj. As he ruefully admits: "The trouble with me was that I was not able to say 'no' to anyone and that got me into complications with everyone" (71).

Everyone bullies Nataraj, right from the daredevil Vasu down to his own assistant Sastri who did not care whether he had time for food or not – Nataraj was a tyrant

when it came to printing labels; but there was no way of protesting.

The situation becomes all the more tense with the arrival of Kumar, the pet elephant of the temple managed by the Mempi villagers and Vasu takes it as an easy prey to ply on when strict vigil on the part of the forest officials has narrowed and dried up his source in the jungle itself. It is Rangi, the temple dancer and the town prostitute, who is instrumental in the destruction of Vasu. Rangi here corresponds to the Mohini of the original legend, who was the cause of the demon's death. She informs Nataraj in a near mystical appearance at a midnight about Vasu's intention: 'Listen: he is talking of shooting your Kumar tomorrow. Be careful' (*Man-Eater*, 116). After receiving the information from Rangi, Nataraj changes himself to act. He does not let Sastri to catch the train for Karaikudi and sends him to the binder. He can now say with the spirit of self-assertion: 'Nothing shall happen. I shall have Rangi and that paramour of hers in the police lockup.'

The character of Rangi, the promiscuous girl of the town, represents the demeaning position of women in the society and how they are suppressed in the name of protection of tradition. She is the temple prostitute, and in being a woman of the temple, she is technically married to the god of that temple, who is in this case Krishna. She is both the highest woman and the lowest woman. She is openly looked down upon. Rangi also makes a very important comment when she says, 'Sir, I am only a public woman, following what is my dharma. I might be a sinner to you. But I do nothing worse than what some of the so-called family women are doing' (Ibid. 118). She is so generous that she is even willing to risk her personal happiness for the sake of the temple by aiding Nataraj in his attempt to stop Vasu from killing Kumar. The deeply-rooted Indian tradition, such as the attitude about widowhood, the culture of dowry, the sati, the caste system and the state machinery established in the name of democracy are just like Vasu, powerful and irresistible, becoming the man-eaters, devouring the dignity or even the lives of ordinary people.

The Man-Eater of Malgudi is a story that explores multiple relationships, themes, and imageries that collide and conflict with the power of an individual to change the action of someone more powerful than he is. Although Narayan writes with a subtle hint of comedy, the novel questions the role of the colonized in accepting the entrance of the colonizing forces. The futility of Nataraj's attempts to confront Vasu, his lifestyle, and his line of work offer a microcosm of the larger issues of colonialism. Aggressive, overbearing, and selfish, Vasu, an outsider, is presented in direct contrast to Malgudi's inhabitants. He is deeply unkind and has no intention of making Malgudi a better or more sophisticated town, as the colonial narrative tries to explain. Vasu's motivations are purely financial and in the interest of himself. Nataraj ruminates: 'Anyway, why does he want to shoot the elephant?' I asked. 'He says it's more useful dead' (Ibid. 125). This narrative of Narayan describes the effects of European colonialism on the psychology and behaviour of the colonized Indian people. The effect of this subjugation includes a process through which members of the subservient groups are socialized to fit the needs and desires of the dominant

group. Both the dominant and subordinate groups are impacted and shaped by the experience of oppression.

In his appraisal on colonialism of India, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism*, Ashis Nandy draws a parallel between Vasu's demonic creed and the attitude of the colonizing British (111). Like the rakshasa, Vasu, feels no restraint in the town of Malgudi. He makes Nataraj's home his own and shows little respect for what he is given. Rather, he takes over the upstairs apartment, with his taxidermist profession breaking the sacred Hindu laws that his landlord practises. The silent and peaceful life of Malgudi gets disturbed with his sudden intrusion. He does everything he likes to and often bullies the people around him. Nataraj lets him stay through a mixture of feelings: fear, compassion and a spirit of hospitality. Significantly enough, we are made to note, repeatedly, that Vasu prefers 'the Queen Anne chair' (*Man-Eater*, 8) so much that it is referred to as 'his chair' for the rest of the narrative.

Furthermore, Vasu's penchant for hunting also hints at the habits of the colonial rulers. According to Ashok Bery, "Vasu represents forces associated with Western modernity, such as individualism, industrialism, and commercialism" (10). Vasu concerns himself with making profit through poaching and stuffing the sacred animals of the jungle. For Vasu, taking over Nataraj's home, stuffing his pets for practice, and planning to kill the temple elephant are all his rights in order to make a profit. He exploits his benefactor Nataraj to benefit himself.

Vasu knows that he has forcefully thrust himself on Nataraj and Nataraj does not claim that he is a landlord. Taking advantage of Nataraj's docility and submissiveness, Vasu brings a forest officer to his press who is desirous of getting a book printed and Nataraj is entrusted with the responsibility to execute the job for him. Nataraj is apprehensive of the financial gain as his intuition conveys the message that: 'There was going to be no money in it; I was positive about that' (*Man-Eater*, 29). This consciousness in Nataraj proves that he can be professionally strong and vocal but too much suppressed under the boisterous and vibrant Vasu.

The British people or the white-settlers came to India as infiltrators and gradually formed their colony. Then they started waging war against the Indian kingdoms, plundered the states and thereby confiscated the territories to form their strong foundation in India. They drained the raw materials of the country in order to cripple the stability of the place, both politically and economically. Against these atrocities of the imperial rulers, the countrymen woke up to oppose with the intention to dethrone the British settlers. Here Vasu is the colonizer like the British imperialist and Nataraj is colonized and suppressed under the powerful self of Vasu. Vasu subverts the ideals of Nataraj. However towards the end, one can observe the driving force in Nataraj against the domination and tyranny of Vasu.

In Narayan's *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* the fundamental discourse of postcolonial theory can be interpreted on the basis of the character delineations of Nataraj and

Vasu. Astonishingly, the entire novel is based on these two antithetical characters and their antithesis adds a new dimension to the novel. The crisis in the text emanates from Vasu's attempt to kill the temple elephant in the inaugural ceremony of the poet's publication of the epic poem on Radha and Krishna. Here the temple elephant symbolizes the culture, tradition and the topography of the space, Malgudi. Malgudi represents India at the microcosmic level. Vasu's attempt to kill the elephant is a bold step to destroy the culture and tradition of a space. Vasu, as a colonizer expresses his superiority over Nataraj. Nataraj opposes Vasu towards the end of the novel and tries to break free from the subversive forces of colonialism.

Here Vasu wants to establish his own identity in Malgudi as a whole. His attempt is to overrule the culture and tradition of Nataraj to establish his own ideologies in Nataraj's territory. The attitude of Vasu can be compared to the attitude of the British colonizers. In the mighty presence of Vasu, Nataraj's life is under subjugation and subordination, resignation and silence, resilience and neglect; even when he tries to resist and rise up, he feels bounded and defeated by his subject position. Besides subjugating Nataraj and flourishing his business of taxidermy, Vasu also expresses his interest in women; in his consideration, marriage is observed as a absurd and irrational institution. Vasu asserts: "If you like a woman, have her by all means. You don't have to own a coffee estate because you like a cup of coffee now and then" (Ibid. 38). There is a subtle metaphorical expression used by the author to show how women are considered commodities in our society. His attitude towards women is of course an attitude of a colonizer or a patriarch in the Third World countries.

In *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, there are two women characters – one is Nataraj's wife and the other is Rangi, the temple dancer and also Vasu's mistress. Nataraj's relationship with his wife remains traditional from patriarchal point of view till the discovery of his connection with Rangi. Rangi, the *devdasi* is declined a social status; she is looked down upon by everyone in Malgudi. Rangi, even though a socially ostracized figure in the novel and always subdued under the domination of Vasu, at last exhibits her strength by disclosing Vasu's plan to kill the temple elephant. Her extraordinary courage to challenge the authority of Vasu after being a marginalized figure is an exemplary action.

Nataraj is an ambiguous person as he can never totally defy Vasu and considers him as an incarnation of devil. At times, he admires Vasu for his potential, independence and tenacity and tries to imitate him in his thought process; at the same time he pours out his vengeance on Vasu when he claims that Nataraj has put his hard effort to make his attic inhabitable. Nataraj inwardly retorts at him in these words: "After all you are living on my hospitality; get out if you do not like it" (Ibid. 71). When Vasu could sense the revolt originating in Nagraj, he charges legally.

The existential struggle for independence, observed in Nataraj surmounts to the revelation of the postcolonial element embedded in the text. In the mythical construct of the novel, Vasu is associated with the demonic creature 'Bhasmasura' and

in reference to this, there is a philosophical statement of Nataraj: 'everyman can think that he is great and will live forever, but no one can guess from which quarter his dooms will come' (Ibid. 95). The novelist provides a graphic account of the fictional town of Malgudi as it is the locus of the novel and the printing press forms the central trope. The mythical construct also situates the novel against the postcolonial discourse as it ushers in freedom with the death or destruction of evil. The British settlers were the rakshasas like Vasu as they used their power to exploit the natural resources of the nation. The slaughter of innocent animals for personal profit is quite similar to the exploitation of Indian raw materials and merciless treatment of Indian people for their own pleasure. The death of Vasu epitomizes the death of the devil and it restores peace and freedom to Nataraj's life. The symbol of the rakshasa in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* thus serves as a symbol of colonialism imposed upon India.

Therefore, it can be perceived that the novel *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, based upon the Bhasmasura legend, becomes a conflict between the weak and the strong, the vice and virtue to a confrontation between the colonizer and the colonized. What is interesting is the way the novel sets up the dichotomy between Nataraj and Vasu. Vasu's brash and arrogant personality is set up as a foil to Nataraj's peace-loving and compromising nature; Nataraj is the weak and Vasu the strong. Perhaps it is for this reason that Nataraj both fears and admires Vasu. Vasu himself does not care much about Nataraj. Significantly, the narrative here seems to allegorise the colonial takeover of India. Vasu having first come to do business, like the West, stays back and takes over the entire attic above the press. Narayan, in the novel, clearly portrays Vasu as both colonialism and rakshasa, like the one who, 'carries within himself, unknown to himself, a tiny seed of self-destruction, and goes up in thin air at the most unexpected moment' (Ibid. 159). *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* then becomes a story focused on Indian independence.

Thereupon, this narrative of R. K. Narayan, based on an ancient Hindu folklore of the gods and the rakshasas, is a metaphor for the good and evil in the society, the freedom and exploitation, the coercion and the injustice; it also symbolizes the colonial British rule and the colonized India. *The Man-Eater of Malgudi* is a story that takes place in the town of Malgudi, at the backdrop of India with which Narayan was intimately familiar. Narayan was very much at home in his own society. Narayan's Indian microcosm Malgudi, his fictional world, mirrors the life of the sub-continent in all its diversity. Despite being traditional in his convictions, Narayan's fiction is an attempt not to idealize India but to explore its varied customs, conventions and manners along with all its oddity and peculiarity.

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NARRATIVE REGENERATION OF FLESH: THE TENSION BETWEEN DEMISE AND SURVIVAL IN THE AESTHETIC RECREATION OF THE SELF IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S *MALONE DIES*

ARINDAM GHOSH

Introduction: Blurring the Borderline between a Living Death and a Dying Life in the Works of Samuel Beckett

In our everyday life we view death basically as the termination of all biological functions that sustain a living organism. But philosophically speaking, death is ungraspable and exceeds both intentionality and the correlative structures of phenomenology. Truly, death resists representation. Representations of death are representations of an absence, a void that cannot be filled. Samuel Beckett's (1906-1989) work seems to be preoccupied with death. But not necessarily it invokes a sense of ending and horror. Quite contrary to popular imagination, Beckett views death in all its comicality and humour, an endless expanse that can even sometimes be merged with life. Indeed, the borderline between life and death is almost inseparable in Beckett. It undermines the very idea of any substantial difference between birth and death and at the same time it also mirthfully obscures the difference between a living death and a dying life.

I will argue in this article that Beckett's interpretation of death leads everyone to view it not as a terminal event, but rather as a process that must be endured if one is to reach that final stage of closure. The tension between beginning and ending, the beginning that always already incorporates an ending, and the ending that is always a new beginning, is an ever-recurrent theme in Beckett Studies. Beckett's attempts to "fail better," as he put it, are highlighted by titles such as "For to End Yet Again," From An Abandoned Work. Hence, it is now quite common to view Beckett's entire oeuvre as a work in progress. Hence, we can say that Beckett's texts inscribe the tension between demise and survival in the compositional process itself. Hence, this article approaches Beckett's poetics of going on, and not going on, through an examination of the convergence of text and existence, and looks at the way this convergence is

established through the material act of writing, as vividly exemplified by texts like *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*.

According to the author, Beckettian conception of death has its strong affinity with the Heideggerian notion of 'Being-toward-death.' For Heidegger, death is *Dasein*'s own most and innermost potential (part and parcel of Dasein), it is non-relational (nobody can take one's death away from one, or die in one's place) and it cannot be outstripped from *Dasein* or being. The "not-yet" of life is always already a part of *Dasein*: "as soon as man comes to life, he is at once old enough to die" (*Being and Time* 248). Hence, the notion of death cannot be compared with any other forms of ending in life. The "not-yet" of life is always already a part of *Dasein*: "as soon as man comes to life, he is at once old enough to die" (*Being and Time* 334).

The Beckettian conception of death, I think, his previously created characters appear and reappear in enigmatic ways which itself implies that he always wanted to attach the textual dimension of writing with the conception of the regeneration of being. *The Unnamable* refers to all the dying and dead characters of Beckett's earlier fictions (Murphy, Molloy, Malone, and other Beckett characters like Mercier and Camier) who claims to be born in the wake of their passing away. This gives us the impression of a serial subject continuing from one work to another. In *Mercier and Camier*, characters from Beckett's other fictions begin to appear, as if the creature of these worlds may have an extra-textual life apart from the 'regions' they inhabit. This is the endlessness of death as an end: a paradox Beckett iterates and reiterates in different ways. It is quite evident that Beckett already tended to equate writing with physicality, and specifically bodily functions, in the 1930s, he refers, for instance to two poems as coming together "one on top of the other, a double-yoked orgasm" (letter to Thomas MacGreevy, dated [12 September 1931]; quoted in Pilling 2004, 76). In 1953, he told Leventhal that the translation of "*Watt* is having a difficult birth but is expected out into the dark of day next week" (letter to Leventhal, 6 August 1953; quoted in *Beckett and Death* 10). So, it can be said that Beckett was very much aware about the existential materiality, or rather physicality of writing, and hence he sees the process of textual production as a part of living organism and through it he strives to defer unavoidability of the event known as 'death'. Quite appropriately, Paul Stewert in his essay "Sterile Reproduction: Beckett's Death of the Species and Fictional Regeneration" (collected in the volume, *Beckett and Death*) noted,

> Beckett's vision of death reaches into and beyond the anthropomorphism of traditional purgatorial narratives, it's a vision in which sexual reproduction is replaced by aesthetic regeneration as a means of creating out of nothing, quite literally out of thin air and out of the dark, a peopled world. By analysing the death of the physical we are confronted with an exploration of other deaths including the death of the mind, spirit and, ultimately for the writer, the death of language itself. Death within the physical realm constitutes only one of the many facets of mortality that Beckett explores, and it undoubtedly serves as an outlet into the more enigmatic regions of this much explored territory. (*Beckett and Death* 182)

Viewing Writing Process in Terms of Existence: The Notion of Textual Birth and Textual Death in Samuel Beckett

In a letter written to Jacoba Van Velde on 12 April 1958, Samuel Beckett declared: "There are two moments worthwhile in writing, the one when you start and the other when you throw it in the waste-paper basket" (quoted in Knowlson 446). On the one hand, this statement shifts attention to the compositional process rather than the published text; and on the other hand, it highlights Beckett's intriguing and eternal problem of "going on," the continual struggle with the ever-present threat (or salvation) of silence. This tension between beginning and ending, the beginning that already incorporates an ending, and the ending that is always a new beginning, is a very significant theme in Beckett Studies. Hence, it is now quite common to view Beckett's entire oeuvre as a work in progress. Beckett's own repeated insistence, during the first two decades of his writing career, that his books constituted a series, and were thus somehow interconnected, only adds further weight to this idea. Moreover, because of the emphasis on the idea of a work in progress, the boundary between draft manuscript and final text becomes unstable. Again, a title such as *From An Abandoned Work* alerts us to the fact that whatever is seemingly cast off remains alive. Beckett's pre-publication of extracts from many of his major works - including *Watt* and *Malone Dies*, for example - in magazines, essentially in a form differing from the final published version, further underlines the impossibility of separating Beckett's drafts and final texts in a problematic manner. Indeed, *Watt* ensures an afterlife for jettisoned draft notes in the addenda. Beckett himself donated many of his manuscripts and notebooks to archives and friends, which radically differs from the published texts. Indeed, the spectre of Beckett's unpublished drafts haunts his finally published texts in an uncanny fashion.

Now on one level, of course, the notion of textual birth and textual death is rather a simple one. At some point the writer sits down and starts to write, and at another, he gives up and throws the unsatisfactory draft in the waste-paper basket. The writing process comes to a different kind of end through completion and, possibly, publication. Perhaps more germane with respect to Beckett's writing is the way in which his texts inscribe the tension between demise and survival in the compositional process itself. Between what he called the "First and Last gasps" of composition, Beckett thus merges the two planes of writing and existence within a struggle to continue with both. Thus, this article approaches Beckett's poetics of going on, and not going on, through an examination of the convergence of text and existence, and looks at the way this convergence is established through the material act of writing.

Let us begin with the illustration of *Malone Dies*. Both the act of writing and the connection between living and writing are of course dramatized in *Malone Dies*, which foregrounds the material generation of text. At one point, Malone states: "I hear the noise of my little finger as it glides over the paper and then that so different of the pencil following after" (*Three Novels* 208). The statement is further established by the frequent references to Malone's pencil and exercise-book. The pencil is thus

afforded a loving description: "The pencil on the contrary is an old acquaintance. [...] It has five faces. It is very short. It is pointed at both ends. A Venus" (*Three Novels* 210). Yet already more than a decade earlier, such an emphasis on writing tools and conditions was recorded in Beckett's "German Diaries" of 1936/37: "Drop Tintenkuli [ink pen] right on its point, + now it can do no better than this, but perhaps will recover" (*German Diaries* 37, 13 March 1937). In *Malone Dies*, this potential failure to continue writing is amplified and fictionalized. As H. Porter Abbott has discussed, Malone's pencil dwindles in size and is lost, the exercise-book runs out of pages, falls to the floor, and is finally harpooned. As Abbott rightly states, the potential loss of the exercise-book produces a "metaphysical anxiety" (Abbott, 73). Indeed, as Malone loses his pencil, a hiatus of 48 hours occurs in which not only the text but his entire existence is threatened with erasure. Essentially, the novel contrives to establish a textual dimension in which writing is tied to being. As Malone states, "this exercise-book is my life, this big child's exercise-book, it has taken me a long time to resign myself to that" (Beckett 1959, 276). Just how far Beckett himself was implicated in this convergence between literary creation and life is illustrated by a comment to Pamela Mitchell: "I am absurdly and stupidly the creature of my books and *L'Innommable* is more responsible for my present plight than all the other good reasons put together" (*The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, vol.iv 357).

The, existential materiality, or rather physicality of writing is manifestly visible in any manuscript draft. Indeed, Beckett already tended to equate writing with physicality, and specifically bodily functions, in the 1930s, referring for instance to two poems as coming together "one on top of the other, a double-yoked orgasm" (letter to Thomas MacGreevy, undated [12 September 1931]; quoted in Pilling 2004, 76). A year earlier he informed MacGreevy that he had sent "three turds from my Central Lavatory" to the magazine *Experiment*. After the war, Beckett increasingly viewed the writing process in terms of existence, in that the sexual terminology of the 1930s is transformed into a complex web of references that are governed by the idea of sterility. In 1953, he told Leventhal that the translation of "*Watt* is having a difficult birth but is expected out into the dark of day next week" (letter to Leventhal, 6 August 1953, quoted in Knowlson 411). But thereafter textual production is frequently equated with abortion, something prefigured by the opening lines of the 1936 poem "Cascando" - "is it not better abort than be barren" (How It Is 29). Still later, a progression toward viewing the completion of texts as a kind of death is evident - Beckett thus refers to "struggling again to liquidate HOW IT IS" (letter to Leventhal, 1 February' 1963; quoted in Knowlson 503), and in a wonderful note, tells Leventhal that he had "got down first corpse of TV piece [*Ghost Trio*]," playfully adding "Only remains to bring it to life" (15 January 1976, quoted in Knowlson 621). The implication here is that the "textual death"- that is to say the completed, published text - threatens the "going on" of the writing process. At the same time, however, writing is also seen as a remedy for being, illustrated by a letter in which he stated there is "no dope like it" (Letter to Pamela Mitchell, 27 December 1954, Knowlson 357). Indeed, the late text *Company* is often referenced in Beckett's correspondence

as "company" (Letter to Pamela Mitchell, 27 December 1954, Knowlson 357). In a different context, he told Ethna MacCarthy that, similarly, he was alone with "the exercise-book that opens like a door and lets me far down into the now friendly dark" (10 January 1959; quoted in Knowlson 460).

Generally speaking, then, in his correspondence and elsewhere, Beckett viewed the act of writing as comparable, even concomitant with, the process of living. And with the passing of time, he would find it, as he stated, "increasingly difficult to put one word in front of another" (Letter to Ethna MacCarthy, 10 August, 1959 quoted in Knowlson 460). The living process of writing, if the analogy is upheld, is a journey that tends toward silence, something resembling both creative and textual death. The dissolution of text and existence is already inscribed in the ending of *Watt* - in the form of the fragmented quotation from Hölderlin's poem "Hyperion's Schicksalslied" - and is repeated in the conclusion to *Malone Dies*.

Now we will have a look at the way in which Beckett endeavoured to incorporate his own approaching death in the compositional generation of his final texts. Importantly, Beckett's creative endeavour culminates in an effort to "eff" the "ineffable departure" (letter to Avigdor Arikha, 27 April 1984; quoted in Knowlson 697). There are two crucial creative periods in this context. The first is the years 1977-82, which produced the late "trilogy" of *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said* and *Worstward Ho*, as well as a cluster of poems in French, the "mirlitonnades", and other poems in English, and then there is the period (1983 - 89) in which the last pieces of writing were penned, *Stirrings Still* and *What is the word*. In a genetic study of these late texts, with a focus on *Stirrings Still*, Dirk Van Hulle has explored the ways in which Beckett in the drafts tended to manoeuvre himself into compositional dead ends. Beckett's intense preoccupation with finding expression for waning life is illustrated by notes taken from his reading in 1981. In his essay ""Writing Myself into the Ground": Textual Existence and Death in Beckett", Mark Nixon (collected in *Beckett and Death* Edited by Steven Barfield, Matthew Feldman, Philip Tew) has categorically stated,

> ...these entries are characterized by a preoccupation with death, evident for instance in the line taken from *King Lear*, "unburdened crawl towards death." At the same time, there is a more abstract yet personal view of existence, inherent in Beckett's notation of a line by Petruchio from *The Taming of the Shrew*. "When is the life that late I led?". Shortly after recording this line, Beckett responded on the same page with a four-line poem hinting at a kind of afterlife:
>
> There
> the life late led
> down there all done unsaid
>
> As this poem suggests, much of the tension in Beckett's late work is essentially between leaving the last things "unsaid," and giving voice to the end. To be sure, from the outset of his writing career, Beckett struggled

> to find the adequate end to his character's lives - Belacqua, for example, is resurrected in the story "Echo's Bones," which was rejected by Chatto as the last story of *More Pricks than Kicks*. And he also struggled with the demise of Murphy, or rather the way in which the story was to continue after Murphy's death. (*Beckett and Death* 25)

Another example of this difficulty of ending is visible in the drafts for the play *Footfalls* (1975). In the first typescript of the play, Beckett tells the story of Haddon the general practitioner, who will be "dead soon after." Unhappy with this formulation, Beckett then corrected this to "soon to die". He subsequently noted three further expressions of Haddon's impending death: "with not long to live," crossed out, then "long past his best," before finally returning to "not long to live." In the left margin of the typescript, Beckett jotted an addition, "Made rather a mess of it," a remark that could refer to both Haddon's exercise in dying and Beckett's attempts at inscribing it (described by Nixon in *Beckett and Death* 25).

The search for the last words, through what he termed the "next next to nothing" (letter to Leventhal, 3 February 1959; quoted in Knowlson 461), remained Beckett's most intense concern during the final decade of his life. Beckett would, for the rest of his life both continue to write and to look for the words that would end it all, or rather tell it all. On 2 January 1989, the year of his death, Beckett wrote to Kay Boyle, employing an Irish word for sorrow and grief:

> "Time gentlemen please" as they used to say in the Dublin pubs coming up to
>
> 10 P.M.
>
> Ochone ochone
>
> Dead and not gone. (*The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, vol.2 726-728)

Malone Dies: Exploration of the Mind of a Dying Man

> …I have high hopes, a little story, with living creatures coming and going on a habitable earth crammed with the dead ...
>
> — Samuel Beckett (*Texts for Nothing 6*, 126)

Death, it would appear, is in the very marrow of Beckett's literature. Death dominates Beckett's writing from the early years right up until the period of his own demise. Much of the work illustrates that ardent desire to comprehend the meaning of death, and we see through the writing that continuing need to probe the boundaries between this life and the next (if a subsequent life exists) to uncover the true implications of mortality, and explore the mind's reaction to the imminence of physical degeneration. In this article on Beckett's 1951 novel *Malone Dies* I will try to unravel Beckett's poetics of going on, and not going on, through an examination of the convergence of text and life, and look at the way this convergence is established through the material act of writing. The notion of textual birth and textual death is

a very important theme in the Beckettian universe. Perhaps more important with respect to Beckett's writing is the way in which his texts create the tension between demise and survival in the compositional process itself. Between what he called the "First and Last gasps" of composition, Beckett thus merges the two planes of writing and existence within a struggle to continue with both. In this article I will show how both the act of writing and the connection between living and writing are dramatized in *Malone Dies*, which foregrounds the material generation of text.

Throughout *Malone Dies* (1951) Beckett explores the mind of a dying man, allowing us access to a place that is essentially private, as we witness the degeneration of Malone's physical and mental faculties. Once again Beckett's use of language provides a new complexity to this prose piece and, despite it being entitled *Malone Dies*, it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint the exact moment of the protagonist's death. Malone, similar to the Speaker in *A Piece of Monologue*, appears to be 'Dying on' (*Complete Dramatic Works* 426), thereby illustrating that death rarely occurs instantaneously and, similar to living, it too becomes a struggle. For Beckett, to be alive is to be necessarily in the process of dying. The one entails the other.

It is difficult to determine Malone's exact location and we question whether the room in which he now 'subsists' (*Three Novels* 302) is situated in a nursing establishment or indeed some type of sanatorium. Without clarification of his exact whereabouts, the room itself takes precedence and we realize that, within this enclosed space, Malone must ultimately face death alone. The proposal that people dwell above and below him highlights the idea that he resides in a kind of limbo, appearing suspended between two worlds, as the room resembles that in-between state of life and death. Beckett appears to represent death not as an ending, but rather as a further stage of being and, quite probably, an even more tortured one in which it resembles a 'finality without end' (*Three Novels* 112), and a birth into a more terrifying realm. Malone declares, 'I shall soon be quite dead at last in spite of all. Perhaps next month. Then it will be the month of April or of May' (*Three Novels* 179). Ironically, spring usually represents a period of renewal. Malone may therefore view it as being an appropriate time to die, as he imagines death to offer a welcome alternative to the pain of living. It is interesting that he says, 'I could die to-day, if I wished, merely by making a little effort. But it is just as well to let myself die, quietly, without rushing things' (*Three Novels* 179). Contrary to popular opinion, Malone's statement suggests that he himself is in control of death, consequently claiming ownership over a process in which we essentially have no control. Beckett's essay on Proust highlights this idea as he says, 'Whatever opinion we may be pleased to hold on death, we may be sure that it is meaningless and valueless. Death has not required us to keep a day free' (*Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit* 17). Subject to the influences of time and degeneration, Malone's quest for death takes precedence over his desire for life, and as he resolves to await death, acknowledging that he cannot determine the specific moment of his demise, he chooses to invent stories in an attempt to pass the time.

Here bodily death appears dislocated from mental decline, as the physical degeneration occurs more rapidly than mental deterioration, and the dualism of body and mind becomes highlighted. Malone is effectively paralyzed, unable and unwilling to move from the bed, which now incarcerates his physical being. The body is therefore useless and may be viewed as a hindrance, thereby appearing similar to a machine that has essentially broken down. As Malone says, 'My body is what is called, unadvisedly perhaps, impotent. There is virtually nothing it can do' (*Three Novels* 186). The Cartesian theory of, 'I think, therefore I am', is clearly highlighted throughout this text, and only with the demise of conscious thought will Malone effectively die. Striving to cope with the situation which now confronts him, Malone adopts the device of storytelling, in an attempt to occupy his mind, until the moment of release, when the mind no longer covets mental stimulation and essentially ceases to function. It is important that Malone chooses to transcribe his stories, thereby providing further stimulus for the consciousness and allowing the microcosm of his mind to take precedence before his eyes. However, the act of writing also provides confirmation of existence, proving more durable than the spoken word, which is subject to misinterpretation and fades instantaneously. The written word will endure the passing of time and therefore, even after his death, a small part of Malone's mind will continue to exist. And in the rest of the pages of the novel, Malone's "exercise-book" witnesses the process of creation and disintegration, seeming only to end with both pencil and narrator reduced to "[g]urgles of outflow" (*Three Novels* 305) by the novel's climax - if either of those terms, in turn, adequately describe either *Malone Dies* or its conclusion.

The Trope of Storytelling: Resisting Death through the Legacy of Consciousness

One may therefore argue that Malone's preoccupation with storytelling (a characteristic of many Beckettian protagonists) is an attempt to achieve a small portion of immortality, as the legacy of his conscious thought will transcend the degenerative nature of his physical being; hence we are consequently reminded of the ambiguity of the human attitude towards mortality. However, the desire to immortalize life through the act of writing is hampered by the dwindling of the pencil lead and we are reminded that everything is subject to degeneration. To write about another's life to comprehend the complexities of one's own, or as a means of escapism, suggests a crisis of identity and an inability to confront the difficulties of one's own existence. Malone says, 'And on the threshold of being no more I succeed in being another' (*Three Novels* 194). To tell one's own story through an imaginative character provides distance, thereby allowing us to examine our lives, while simultaneously denying that the narrative we relate exemplifies our own existence. But, Malone will destroy his thought's painful, vain efforts to represent a self, to say "I," and any thought of the temporal duration between a present in which he is symbolically dead and his body's death:

> Cowering deep down among them I feel nothing. It is there I die, unbeknown to my stupid flesh. That which is seen, that which cries and writes, my witless remains. Somewhere in this turmoil thought struggles on, it too wide of the mark. It too seeks me, as it always has, where I am not to be found. (*Three Novels* 186)

Malone's suffering ultimately articulates his isolation and the incommunicability of his experience. Malone intends his stories to be pure invention, deliberate fabrication rather than a muddled rendition of the past. Malone, on the other hand, consciously shifts between commentary about his current state in repose, and the creation of fiction. Malone claims to "live and invent" (*Three Novels* 194); writing is a "game" to pass the time before he dies. "While waiting I shall tell myself stories, if I can... Now it is a game, I am going to play" (*Three Novels* 180). The game he claims to have finally mastered is the game of fiction.

In Beckett, even the most abstract or conceptual invention is, to some extent, a maternal event, even when it is men who are inventing. As Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), Beckett's characters occupy a space outside gender which "is not simply bisexual, or between the two, or intersexual" but "transsexual"[1]. Note that Molloy wonders "if [Lousse] was not a man rather or at least an androgyne. She had a somewhat hairy face" (*Three Novels* 56). Again, Molloy is not sure what sex Ruth is: "Perhaps she too was a man, yet another of them" (*Three Novels* 56). Malone says: "There is so little difference between a man and a woman" (*Three Novels* 181). This can be Samuel Beckett's declaration about many of his male narrators, particularly when it comes to the issue of invention, or conception. Moran can be the fictional identity created by Molloy or this can be the other way round. The imagery of the head and the skull throughout *Molloy* reminds us of the episode of the Greek Mythology where the fully formed Athena emerged from the head of Zeus to encounter him in the battle. Joanne Shaw in her *Impotence and Making in Samuel Beckett's Trilogy - Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnamable and How It Is* (2010) asserts,

> Beckett does not allow us to forget the possibility of the male maker, or male mother. In *Malone Dies*, Malone insists that, while waiting to die, he is going to tell stories - another way of making via the head, a way of conceiving. He remarks: "To be able to conceive such a plan is encouraging" (*Three Novels* 181). The word "conceive", it should be noted, recurs throughout the trilogy. For example, Molloy, thinking that perhaps he is confusing several different occasions in his description of what happened, remarks: "I can't believe it. No, I will not lie, I can easily conceive it" (*Three Novels* 15). Again, Moran, forging his way through the snow "towards what I would have called my ruin if I could have conceived what I had left to be ruined", ruminates: "Perhaps I have conceived it since, perhaps I have done conceiving it" (Shaw 38).

Conception is the beginning of the process of making, and this process continues

with the making, in one of Malone's stories, of Sapo through his thoughts. As Derrida said, Sapo's "invention" is entangled with not only the past but also *l'avenir*, the future. For Derrida, the past is society's past, that of institutions, of common culture and history, so "the act of inaugural production" must be "recognized, legitimized, countersigned by a social consensus according to a system of conventions [to be] valid for the future (*avenir*)[2]." On the other hand, for Malone and for Sapo the past is purely a personal one, an individual one, but is linked, nevertheless, with the future and the other. Beckett's understanding of "invention" is like Derrida's in that the time-to-come is charged with a sense of "the hereafter" - of beyond the boundaries of conventional notion of life.

In Beckett, invention entails not only time beyond the normal, but also beyond the conventional notion of gender. Note, for instance, that Malone sees himself as not only "clinging to the putrid mucus" of his mother, but also "welling" and "[in] want of a homuncule" (*Three Novels* 181) - Malone is both old foetus and incipient mother[3]. Lying on his mother's bed, Malone, now "mother" himself, sees the murky light in the room "thickening" as a mother-to-be's waist would, and, as "foetus", is connected to her by the umbilical cord - the window of the room "in a manner of speaking [...] my umbilicus" (*Three Novels* 224). When he stares into the gloom, he sees "a gleam and shimmering as of bones" (*Three Novels* 226). The imagery suggests that some sort of birth is imminent. "Be born", Malone reflects, "that's the brainwave now" (*Three Novels* 226). Through the head (the "brainwave"), invention takes place. Malone decides to try and make "a little creature to hold in my arms, a little creature in my image" (*Three Novels* 226). He then goes on to talk about Sapo: "I slip into him [...] he is mine now, living flesh" (*Three Novels* 226). Of course, "slipping into" and "mine now", portrays Malone as the penetrative father; however, at the same time, "mine now, living flesh" casts him in the role of the receiving mother. This is another example of what Bryden sees in the later work and I would suggest is already apparent in the trilogy - namely, "the notion of a stable, determinate sexual identity [...] seriously disrupted and made subject to the vagaries of provisionally" (*Women in Samuel Beckett's Prose and Drama* 6).

The new invention that is Macmann has been made through a person who is neither completely male nor completely female but who has characteristics of both. Derrida, speaking in 1981, declares that "we are, presently, witnessing a radical mutation of our understanding of sexual difference which is revealed through the deconstruction of phallogocentrism[4]." Almost fifty years before, Beckett is already deconstructing phallogocentrism, revealing Malone as, reproductively, both mother and father.

Although Malone demonstrates a purposeful separation of fiction and introspection, inevitably his stories fold back upon himself. He is ultimately the subject of the stories he tells. Malone laments,

> But it was not long before I found myself alone, in the dark. That is why I gave

> up trying to play and took to myself for ever shapelessness and speechlessness, incurious wondering, darkness, long stumbling with outstretched arms, hiding...Perhaps as hitherto I shall find myself abandoned, in the dark, without anything to play with. Then I shall play with myself. (*Three Novels* 180)

This passage offers a structure of Malone's internal division. Having abandoned the quest to find his mother (as Molloy), and no longer on a quest to find a parallel version of himself (as Moran), Malone has lost the desire to animate himself with purpose or form. He takes for himself "shapelessness and speechlessness," and resigns himself to the game of fiction. Malone's game of fiction is a surrogate for his suffering, both as a means of distancing himself from the vicissitudes of his body, and as a means of bringing himself closer to the reality of death. Alone in the dark, he can scarcely fabricate a vision of himself, and he has great difficulty fabricating a vision of an "other" for his stories. Yet he is "wondering... with outstretched arms," and he claims to have "found himself.

Kathryn White in her book *Beckett and Decay* (2011) appropriately said,

> Through his stories, Malone attempts to confront the nature of death, and although they temporarily provide a release from the monotony of living, they do not offer escape from the inevitability of his own demise. Malone's creative mind is abundant with references to death and, although one may see the negativity of his apparent obsession, Malone himself views his chosen theme as liberating. He may not be able to control death within the macrocosm, but within the microcosm of his mind he becomes omnipotent, enabling him to control a force, which in reality he is subject to, and ultimately condemned by. Malone's figments essentially embody the dualism of life and death, and through his narratives we witness his preoccupation with the descent into the self, which Murphy similarly aspires to. (*Beckett and Decay* 47)

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> How is it I am not thirsty. There must be drinking going on inside me, my secretions. Yes, let us talk a little about me, that will be a rest from all these

> blackguards. What light! Foretaste of paradise? My head. On fire, full of boiling oil. What shall I die of, in the end? A transport of blood to the brain? That would be the last straw. The pain is almost unbearable, upon my soul it is. Incandescent migraine. Death must take me for someone else. It's the heart's fault... It's nothing, mere nervousness. And who knows, perhaps the first to fail will be my breath, after all. After each avowal, before and during, what swirling murmurs. The window says break of day, rack of tattered rainclouds stampeding. Have a nice time. Far from this molten gloom. Yes, my last gasps are not what they might be, the bellows won't go down, the air is choking me, perhaps a little lacking in oxygen. (*Three Novels* 273-274)

The images of mortality which occur throughout Malone's stories are indicative of the fact that life and death are not two separate domains, but must be viewed as analogous, with each one representing an incongruous state of 'being'. Pozzo reiterates this point, as he declares 'one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you?' (*The Complete Dramatic Works* 83).

It is interesting that, on the verge of death, Malone, who describes himself as an octogenarian, chooses to characterize himself as a foetus. However, the comfort of the womb has been replaced by the harshness of the room, which now incarcerates Malone's physical form, only this time he awaits the release of death, offering an alternative freedom from the release of birth:

> Yes, an old foetus, that's what I am now, hoar and impotent, mother is done for, I've rotted her, she'll drop me with the help of gangrene, perhaps papa is at the party too, I'll land head-foremost mewling in the charnel-house, not that I'll mewl, not worth it. (*Three Novels* 226)

This poignant image of unconventional birth is indicative of Beckett's attempt to continually equate life and death. Being described as an old foetus prompts one to view Malone as having never really been born, (a condition once proposed to Beckett by Jung), and indeed it may be suggested that, although he has experienced conventional birth, he has not yet been liberated by the new birth which occurs at the instant of death. To die is essentially a rebirth into yet another phase of 'existence' or non-existence, the latter appearing preferable to most of the Beckettian protagonists.

As death appears unattainable, Malone again uses the device of storytelling to portray his preoccupation with mortality. Sapo (perhaps derived from *Homo sapiens*) has assumed a new identity in the form of Macmann, who finds himself gaining consciousness 'in a kind of asylum' (*Three Novels* 257), labelled number 166. At this point of Malone's narrative we find ourselves questioning Malone's own location, due to the fact that, although Malone and Macmann's stories appear distinct, the similarities between the two soon become apparent, and we sense that Macmann's existence is indicative of Malone's. The number attributed to Macmann suggests that he is, perhaps, a prisoner. The implications of Macmann's imprisonment are reflective of Malone's current situation. Although Malone may not be incarcerated in the

conventional way, he is undeniably subjected to the confines of his physical form. However, his conscious mind also serves to incarcerate him within this existence, condemning him to function mentally within a body that declines to function physically.

Macmann's 'love' interest, Moll, epitomizes the degenerative nature of the physical form, successfully illustrating the absurdity of the body, and the grotesque constitution of the individual at the point of death: 'The sight of her so diminished did not damp Macmann's desire to take her, all stinking, yellow, bald and vomiting, in his arms' (*Three Novels* 266).

To live forever is often the aspiration of the young, oblivious of the effects of degeneration and the brutality of ageing. To linger indefinitely between this life and the next, as Malone is effectively condemned to do, forces one to confront death as a means of deliverance from the absurdity that we choose to call living. The desire to die, coupled with the need to go on, is the dilemma facing many Beckett characters. Malone's eagerness to complete the story of Macmann is symptomatic of his attempt to assert control over an existence in which he reigns supreme, and provide closure on a story which reflects his own. As he endeavours to consummate his narrative, it is evident that his life force is diminishing. The irony that his quest for death is nearly complete at a time when he strives for continuance is typical of the Beckettian protagonist. Beckett successfully illustrates, through the structure of the text, that Malone is slowly fading, as he implements shorter paragraphs which are indicative of Malone's struggle to transcribe his story. We may assume that Malone's energy is languishing, as the paragraphs appear laconic, suggesting an impatient desire to conclude, and an uneasiness that his life will be over before his story has been told.

With his consciousness continuing, Malone uses his few remaining breaths to provide closure for Macmann. As he details Macmann's excursion with Lemuel and the other inmates, we recognize once again Malone's ardent desire to confront the brutality of death. As Lemuel ruthlessly murders his patients, offering death to those who do not seek it, we may question Malone's desire to end his story in such a negative way. However, what we may perceive to be a cruel ending would, in Malone's eyes, be a liberating experience. Malone has confronted death within the mind and, as his characters die, Malone too embraces mortality. Although Beckett fails to stipulate the exact moment of Malone's death, we may assume that he has ceased to function, as the words are effaced. However, to assume that Malone has achieved total termination is somewhat problematic, because although his story has ended, his consciousness may continue to function, and he may subsist in an alternative state of being:

> I am being given, if I may venture the expression, birth to into death, such is my impression. The feet are clear already, of the great cunt of existence. Favourable presentation I trust. My head will be the last to die. Haul in your hands. I can't. The render rent. My story ended I'll be living yet. Promising

> lag. That is the end of me. I shall say I no more. (*Three Novels* 285)

In the midst of life there appears to exist only death, and only by confronting the implications of this reality may we comprehend our existence, as we continually question:

> Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul; Which long for death, but it cometh not; and dig for it more than for hid treasures; Which rejoice exceedingly, and are glad, when they can find the grave? (Job 3.20-22 from The Holy Bible 74)

Reaching the grave therefore becomes man's priority, as it constitutes that final 'resting place' in which termination is perhaps assured. To return to the earth from which we came may in theory suggest a relief from the suffering of being.

The Game of Death: Death as an Activity of Creative Playfulness

Unlike any other conventional representation of death for Malone, death is a creative activity and the experience of dying which involves an inclusion of playfulness in his narrative:

> Now it is a game, I am going to play. I never knew how to play, till now. I longed to, but I knew it was impossible. And yet I often tried. I turned on all the lights, I took a good look round, I began to play with what I saw. People and things ask nothing better than to play, certain animals, too [...]. I shall never do anything anymore from now on but play. No, I must not begin with an exaggeration. But I shall play a great part of the time, from now on, the greater part, if I can. But perhaps I shall not succeed any better now than hitherto. Perhaps as hitherto I shall find myself abandoned, in the dark, without anything to play with. Then I shall play with myself. (*Three Novels* 181)

In the second paragraph of *Malone Dies*, directly after the narrator's recognition of his imminent death, he introduces his decision that "now I am going to play" (*Three Novels* 166). It is interesting that dying is made analogous, right from the beginning, with the early stages of life. His situation strongly parallels the situation of an infant: he is bed-bound and seems to have regressed into an infantile state, and envisions further regression: "Perhaps as hitherto I shall find myself abandoned, in the dark, without anything to play with" (*Three Novels* 166). Dying and infancy, the ending and beginning of life, are blurred, and confused together, just as Winnicott suggests that our fears concerning dying relate directly back to our childhood when we found ourselves "abandoned [alone] in the dark."

Julie Cambell in her article "Playing with Death in Malone Dies" asserts,

> We can recognize something familiar in the unfamiliar: our infancy and dependency, as well as those feelings of omnipotence that were disillusioned as we matured, but can be returned to in play. Winnicott contends that: "Playing is essentially satisfying. This is true even when it leads to a high degree of anxiety" (1971, 52; emphasis in the original). "The unconscious," he

> suggests, "is something that each individual wants to get to know, and play, like dreams, serves the function of self-revelation, and of communication at a deep level" (1979, 146). Thus, we can play with our fears, even our fears concerning isolation, extreme disability and eventual death. […] We witness Malone dying, face our own fears of death, and experience death within the safety of our potential space. (Cambell 437)

Malone Dies foregrounds this narrative play. He is waiting for death and "While waiting I shall tell myself stories, if I can" (*Three Novels* 165). He writes about these stories as "play" (*Three Novels* 166). He is "going to play", going to create stories in order to pass the time while waiting for death. Malone, the narrator, of course, wants to represent his own act of writing as an act of ironical storytelling: "But what matter whether I was born or not, have lived or not, am dead or merely dying. I shall go on doing as I have always done, not knowing what it is I do, nor who I am, nor where I am, nor if I am" (*Three Novels* 226).

Malone does not give up trying to do something in order to take control of his dying. Language, not he, will be the producer of the interplay between irony and allegory. He can then forget his passive identification with language's actions by imagining that he is the character in his final story. He will finally die symbolically before he dies physically.

Recurrent Use of Grotesque Fantasy to Escape Death:

The recurring theme of Malone's self-appraisal is a terrified fantasy of dropping away from his pain, and himself, into death. The recurring image is of falling or breaking away: "I shall never go back into this carcass except to find out its time. I want to be there a little before the plunge, close for the last time the old hatch on top of me, say goodbye to the holds where I have lived, go down with my refuge" (*Three Novels* 193). Dropping away and falling for Malone signify death as a repetition or a passage, rather than an end. Death does not present itself as the end of a temporal space, but rather a rebirth into timelessness and spacelessness. Malone perceives this crossing through his physical pain, but his perception is confounded by the trauma and asymbolia that fragment his experience of pain. As such, death does not provide an eschatological meaning system for Malone, and pain fails to provide the ontological core of Malone's existence. That is, Malone does not understand death to be an end, and he cannot articulate a coherent self-image as one who suffers. For Malone, fiction and reality culminate in a grotesque fantasy of death as rebirth:

> A few lines to remind me that I too subsist... Grandiose suffering. I am swelling. What if I should burst? The ceiling rises and falls, rises and falls, rhythmically, as when I was a foetus... Leaden light again, thick, eddying, riddled with little tunnels through to brightness, perhaps I should say air, sucking air. All is ready. Except me. I am being given, if I may venture the expression, birth to into death, such is my impression. The feet are clear

> already, of the great cunt of existence. Favourable presentation I trust. My head will be the last to die. Haul in your hands. I can't. The render rent. My story ended I'll be living yet. Promising lag. That is the end of me. I shall say no more. (*Three Novels* 283)

To destroy the head is to destroy language, and to destroy life. But Malone is more than words, and his existence reaches beyond the things he is conscious of. Thus his story may end, but he will be "living yet." Unable to appreciate his "Grandiose suffering," he is not "ready" to find passage into death. For Malone, there is no oblivion, nor is there resurrection or redemption. Uncertain of his existence as body or as language, Malone finds ambiguity rather than an end. In this respect, pain asymbolia serves as model for how Malone perceives his pain, but derives no meaning from it. Malone longs for the passage into phenomenal nonexistence, but he cannot find the terms of his passage because the significance of his agony is lost. He cannot lay claim to his dying body because his suffering fails as a meaning system of bodily damage and mortality. Malone is at last impotent to express his suffering to himself, and impotent to experience his passage into the abyss.

The latency between Malone's painful experience and its expression in his stories constitutes a hermeneutical void of traumatic reflection. Trauma offers a model of how Malone is ontologically and spatially estranged from his agony: the distance between Malone's experience and the expression of his experience in fiction forms the basis for how pain is dissociated in space and time. In this scheme, Malone's grotesque death fantasy reifies the suffering body as a hallucinatory figure of language.

Malone's "play" and "game" of fiction work in similar fashion[5]. Malone's storytelling is a grotesque parody of his own circumstance, which is itself a grotesque satire of humanity's passage in dying. Malone's world, comprising both the world of his private room and the world of his imagination, emphasizes that which is ugly, debasing, and painful. Malone's grotesque storytelling describes the fragmentation between the sensory components and the emotional, cognitive, and behavioural components of suffering characteristic of pain asymbolia. In one comic example, Malone's satire of pain dissociation takes decisive shape in his character, Lemuel[6]:

> Flayed alive by memory, his mind crawling with cobras, not daring to dream or think and powerless not to, his cries were of two kinds, those having no other cause than moral anguish and those, similar in every respect, by means of which he hoped to forestall same. Physical pain, on the contrary seemed to help him greatly. And one day rolling up the leg of his trousers, he showed Macmann his skin covered with bruises, scars and abrasions. Then producing smartly a hammer from an inner pocket he dealt himself, right in the middle of the ancient wounds, so violent a blow that he fell down backwards, or perhaps I should say forwards. But the part he struck most readily, with his hammer, was the head, and that is understandable, for it too is a bony part, and sensitive, and difficult to miss, and the seat of all the shit and misery,

> so you rain blows upon it, with more pleasure than on the leg for example, which never did you any harm, it's only human. (*Three Novels* 267-268)

In Beckett's hands, the grotesque does not distance the self from society as much as it divides the self internally. This instance of Malone's grotesque game integrates pain asymbolia into a literary framework.

Malone is both actor and audience in the show of his fiction, and it is only by bearing witness to his own narrative limitations that he is able to envision his death and objectify his suffering. It is useful here to address how Beckettian pain is related to textual performativity, and how Beckett works against the aesthetic of realistic reference. In his discussion of Artaud[7], Leo Bersani suggests that the innovation of the modern theatre is its inversion of the priority of the written text[8]. The physical elements of traditional Western theatre are generally intended to serve or illustrate a written source text. The emphasis upon the written text reinforces the Western tendency to prioritize an abstract or figurative exemplar over a literal artifact. The modern theatre often works against the traditional model, offering instead a priority of the performance over the written source text. The physical elements of theatre need not represent a written text in order to be meaningful. Instead, the performance is meaningful on its own terms, as an immanent interplay of aesthetic formations. The work of art does not depend on, does not express anything that precedes it. Bersani's paradigm of modern theatre, combined with the satire of the grotesque, offer a model of how Malone experiences his dissociative pain, and how he presents his pain in writing. The theatrics of Malone's suffering on his deathbed resembles a modern theatrical performance. Malone's ailing body corresponds to a source text or script, while his suffering corresponds to a stage performance. The physical immediacy of his pain, the performative action of suffering, takes precedence over the body as the presumed "source text" of his suffering. His pain is a show that eclipses his body. This tension characterizes Malone's internal division between his body and his mental experience.

At the heart of Malone's deathbed theatrics is a simultaneous longing and rejection of derivation. In concealing the derivation of his stories, Malone unconsciously breaks the traditional model of theatrical performance as a repetition of a primary source text. Beyond storytelling, Malone wishes to end the cycle of derivation through the act of dying, which he conceives of, ironically, as rebirth into nonexistence.

Malone's Impotence to Make an End: Death as an Endless Fictional Entity in the Novel

Malone Dies is impotent to deliver its promise. Malone does not exactly die. We cannot know for certain what happens to Malone, though his narrative ends at a certain point. The last trace of his remains comes with "Gurgles of outflow" (*Three Novels* 287), and with the novel's final unpunctuated "more". Malone's last words are an ejaculation; he is impotent to make an end. Impotence looms ironically over

the trilogy as a generative force. Malone voices to this idea in his stories: "It was as though the Saposcats drew the strength to live from the prospect of their impotence" (*Three Novels* 188).

To form a model of Beckettian impotence, it is useful to recall his dictum on art found in the *Three Dialogues*, that there is "nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express" (*Proust and Three Dialogues* 36). The obligation for Beckett's narrators is rooted in their obligation to express their suffering. Expression cannot represent pain as such. Thus, the language of suffering is always inadequate and impotent; the words seeking to capture the experience of pain will always disavow that which they claim to record. Such is Malone's predicament in language: "my notes have a curious tendency, as I realize at last, to annihilate all they purport to record" (*Three Novels* 259). We find versions of this contradiction in language at every turn of the trilogy. A vivid instance comes in the final lines of Molloy: "I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining" (*Three Novels* 168). Impotence and obligation comprise the linguistic paradox that humanity cannot escape. Our expression of suffering is always impotent at its core. This is the dilemma that Malone enacts. Although Malone resorts to the game of fiction, he is unaware that he cannot truthfully express himself. Malone's fiction substitutes for his experience of pain; in kind, his suffering turns his stories inward. Malone's expression of pain is always a fiction. The inability to express suffering is the core of his impotence. Beckett understood that language and the arts, words and forms, always fail in a certain way to capture experience. Words and forms take meaning as they become the experiences of another. Malone's impotence is the impotence of every author prefigured in composition. Nothing epitomizes this predicament better than the attempt to represent suffering.

Malone's impotence in pain is different than his impotence in language. Malone has pain but cannot fully experience it; he is impotent to express his suffering to himself. Malone feels pain, yet the experience is hollow at its core, and impotent to produce a meaningful response:

> I have pinned my faith to appearances, believing them to be vain. I shall not go into the details. Choke, go down, come up, choke, suppose, deny, affirm, drown. I depart from myself less gladly. Amen. I waited for the dawn, Doing what? I don't know. What I had to do. I watched for the window. I gave reign to my pains, my impotence. (*Three Novels* 210)

Malone's pain fails to generate a figure of self, and it fails to situate being in time.

> Malone asserts,
>
> My body is what is called, unadvisedly perhaps, impotent. There is virtually nothing it can do. Sometimes I miss not being able to crawl around any

> more. But I am not much given to nostalgia. My arms, once they are in position, can exert a certain force. But I find it hard to guide them. Perhaps the red nucleus has faded. I tremble a little, but only a little. The groaning of the bedstead is part of my life, I would not like it to cease, I mean I would not like it to decrease. (*Three Novels* 186)

Here Malone resides, cognizant yet immured from his senses. Malone cannot appreciate the extent to which his body is failing. He identifies his senses as such, but he does not identify himself with them, or in them. Malone's body is both present and absent: he feels his bones, he concedes to his flesh, yet because he cannot appreciate his pain, his body comes to him as a figure of absence.

> Malone can prolong his life in words. He still has his stick surrogate, his pencil:
>
> While this was going on I was struggling to retrieve my pencil, by fits and starts. My pencil. It is a little Venus, still green no doubt, with five or six facets, pointed at both ends and so short that there is just room, between them, for my thumb and the two adjacent fingers, gathered together in a little vice. I use the two points turn and turn about, sucking them frequently, I love to suck. And when they go quite blunt I strip them with my nails which are long, yellow, sharp and brittle for want of chalk or is itphosphate. So little by little my pencil dwindles, inevitably, and the day is fast approaching when nothing will remain but a fragment too tiny to hold. (*Three Novels* 222-223)

An autobiographical note suggests that Beckett used an actual Venus pencil with six facets to write the trilogy in his notebooks. The play of writing, sexuality, masturbation, and impotence overlap to produce another figure of the diminishing self, dwindling inevitably to absence. As a phallic device, his masturbatory pencil stroking is both generative and degenerative. Malone's writing ironically produces the death of himself as a writer. By using up his lead, Malone both produces and destroys himself in language.

Malone's impotence is characterized by dissolution and the failure to produce form. Among the most beautiful visions of dissolution in the trilogy is Malone's "last effort" at composition.

> The island. A last effort. The shore facing the open sea is jagged with creeks. One could live there, perhaps happy, if life were a possible thing, but nobody lives there. The deep water comes washing into its heart, between high walls of rock. One day nothing will remain of it but two islands, separated by a gulf, narrow at first, then wider and wider as the centuries slip by, two islands, two reefs. It is difficult to speak of man, under such conditions. (*Three Novels* 286)

Dualism is the "gulf" of death. Unable to find meaning in his pain, Maione cannot formulate a coherent vision of himself. His last effort at fiction, and expression, is the

dissemination of "man": an island dividing "wider and wider" into two reefs. The figure of land divided by water is a variation of the image of dissemination. When the image takes the shape of two diminishing masses, Beckett is particularly satirical of dualism as a destructive force.

> In the end it seems that Malone's story appears almost like a recurring trauma, an endless voyage where death seems distant:
>
> For I knew it would be so, even as I said, At last! And I must say that to me at least and for as long as I can remember the sensation is familiar of a blind and tired hand delving feebly in my particles and letting them trickle between its fingers. And sometimes, when all is quiet, I feel it plunged in my up to the elbow, but gentle, and as though sleeping. But soon it stirs, wakes, fondles, clutches, ransacks, ravages, avenging its failure to scatter me with one sweep. (*Three Novels* 224)

Malone feels the hand ravage his particles only so that they may "trickle back into the same place." He is falling apart, but not gone. Unable to form a figure of self, he cannot form the figure of an end. Malone's death is indefinitely deferred. He lingers on in the darkness between speaking and hurting.

Conclusion: A Dying of the Death of Voice in Language

At the end of Malone *Dies*, Beckett dramatizes Malone's dying as a negation of negation, a dying of the death of voice in language: "Lemuel… Lemuel is in charge, he raises his hatchet on which the blood will never dry, but not to hit anyone, he will not hit anyone . . . any more… with his hammer… or with his pencil or with his stick..." (*Three Novels* 287–88). Malone repeats negations of negations, negations of endings, over and over. In this context, the failure of Lemuel's murderous hammer/pencil of negation appears:

…I mean never he will never
or with his pencil or with his stick or
or light light I mean
never there he will never
never anything
there
any more. (*Three Novels* 288)

Malone's "never…any more" appears to negate the temporal possibility of voice, thus affirming the death of voice. But his statement that Lemuel "will never never anything there any more" negates this apparent negation of the temporal possibility of voice. Language's "never never" repeatedly anticipates a death that it forever defers. Language can never speak, even silently, the death of its voices, just as the mind can never be conscious of the death of its consciousness.

Malone Dies suggests to us, our final genetic moment is not the entry into death.

Rather it is the entry into that unsettling stretch of time preceding death in which one's relation to desire, that fundamental category of Lacanian psychoanalysis, may be radically altered. For Lacan, all desire issues from an originary lack, one that is structural in nature. This lack one strives continually to fill. But as we see in Beckett's speculative fiction, perhaps there comes a time in our lives when such desire is not decisive and we do not even lament the loss of desire itself - or at the very least, desire plays a more minimal role. "In the old days," he reflects, "…I was time, I devoured the world. Not now, any more. A man changes. As he gets on" (*Three Novels* 226). A man's body - a woman's body - changes, and Malone refers to his body as if it had a mind of its own in this new period of his life: "My body does not yet make up its mind" (*Three Novels* 222). Malone continues his narration by saying, "Death must take me for someone else" (*Three Novels* 254).

Thus, we see how birth and death are not polar-opposites for Beckett, but facets of the same experience. For the Beckettian protagonist, everlasting life would represent a version of hell, offering a condemnation to an eternal state of being, and providing no release from the pain of existence. Unable to rot within this environment, which lacks moisture, the bodies are destined to crumble. The image of death presented in the texts of Beckett is undeniably horrific. The fate of the human body explored in 'Closed place' illustrates the worthlessness of the physical, and the inevitability of decline. Beckett forces us to view mortality as a process, which must be endured, if an end-point is to be attained and if indeed an end-point is attainable. The degeneration of the physical appears to not always constitute an absolute end and, only with the expiration of the consciousness, may 'nothingness' perhaps be achieved. By analysing the death of the physical we are confronted with an exploration of other deaths including the death of the mind, spirit and, ultimately for the writer, the death of language itself. Death within the physical realm constitutes only one of the many facets of mortality that Beckett explores, and it undoubtedly serves as an outlet into the more enigmatic regions of this much explored territory. If physical death does not constitute absolute termination within Beckett's world, we must therefore turn our attention to the representation of the mind, and explore the effects of decay within the microcosm. In Beckett, the phenomenon of death appears in its endless forms, going beyond the traditional narrative of termination of all biological functions.

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane, (London: Athlone Press, 1984) p. 77.

[2] Jacques Derrida, "Psyche: Inventions of the Other" [originally published 1984], in Reading de Man Reading, ed. Lindsay Waters and Wlad Gadzien, trans. Catherine Porter, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989,), pp. 28-9.

[3] Historically, the homunculus was an artificial humanoid, made by the alchemists without the aid of a woman; it was described by Paracelcus in the sixteenth century as being made from semen and blood nurtured by horse manure. But in the Middle Ages, there were two schools of thought about the baby developing in the pregnant woman - that the future baby

existed as a tiny, already-formed human being, enclosed in an egg, and that the homunculus was found within the sperm. It was William Harvey's theory of 1651 that proposed that the individual develops step by step from antecedents in the egg.

[4] Jacques Derrida, "Deconstruction and the Other", in *States of Mind: Dialogues with Contemporary Thinkers on the Human Mind*, ed. Richard Kearney (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) pp. 170-71.

[5] For an excellent discussion of Malone's game of fiction, see Richard Begam in *Beckett and the End of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996) p.125-130.

[6] Lemuel is a minor character in Malone's storytelling, yet he performs the eminent task of killing, with a hatchet, the staff at the asylum where Macmann resides, and then allowing the prototypes of Murphy, Watt, Molloy, Moran, and Macmann to drift out to sea. Lemuel's "hatchet" doubles for Samuel Beckett as the liberator and destroyer of these characters. See Leslie Hill, *Beckett's Fiction: In Different Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) p. 98. Beckett, aligning himself/ his character with the Jew under the name of Lemuel rather than Samuel, writes: "My name is Lemuel [...] though my parents were probably Aryan". See *Three Novels* p. 267.

[7] Antonin Artaud (1896 - 1948), was a French dramatist, poet, widely recognized as one of the major figures of twentieth-century theatre and is a main proponent of the "Theatre of Cruelty". In his famous collection of essays, *The Theatre and its Double* (1938), he attacks the traditional theatrical conventions and propounded that artists must assault the senses of the audience, and allow them to feel the unexpressed emotions of the subconscious. See Artaud's *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1958).

[8] Leo Bersani, *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1976) p. 259-263.

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[4] ---. *The Letters of Samuel Beckett (1966-1989)*. Ed. Lois More Overbeck, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Daniel Gunn, George Craig. Volume IV. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

[5] ---. *Three Novels:* Molloy, *Malone Dies, and The Unnamable.* New York: Grove Press, 1955.

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[10] Shaw, Joanne. *Impotence and Making in Samuel Beckett's Trilogy – Molloy, Malone Dies and the Unnamable – And How It Is*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010.

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PERFORMING *THE POST OFFICE* IN IRELAND AND ENGLAND: A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON A SIGNIFICANT EPISODE OF TAGORE-YEATS RELATIONSHIP

SOUMIK BANERJEE

Much discussions have been done by critics and scholars on the famous 'Introduction' written by William Butler Yeats [1865-1939] to *Gitanjali* (1912), the volume of poems for which Rabindranath Tagore [1861-1941] was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1913. In the extant body of literature focussing on the gradual development of the relationship of these two great poets of the twentieth century, the *Gitanjali* episode justifiably enjoys utmost prominence. That Yeats formally introduced another translated work of Tagore to the Western audience by writing a 'Preface' to it often remains unobserved by most of the critics and researchers. It should be remembered that, immediately after the publication of *Gitanjali* in 1912, Yeats revealed keen interest in the play *The Post Office*, translated by Devabrata Mukerjea[1] from the Bengali play *Dakghar* (1911)—the play which was written by Tagore just one year before the commencement of his much celebrated visit to Europe and America. Yeats's enthusiastic engagement with this play was not only limited to the literary appreciation of it, but he was also extremely eager to arrange a performance of it in front of the Western audience. Yeats's impassionate attachment with this play resulted in the enactment of it in both Ireland and England in 1913, as well as the publication of the text by Macmillan with a short 'Preface' written by him in 1914. The basic argument of this present essay is that, as Yeats's involvement with *The Post Office* engages both the *literary* and *performative* aspects of this text, the brief episode, engaging the performance of this play in Ireland/England and the initiatives taken by Yeats for the publication of it, significantly effects a turning point in the development of the later course of relationship shared by Tagore and Yeats—the relationship which, with its kaleidoscopic variations and intriguing nature, stands out as one of the most important instances of intellectual reciprocation taking place in the twentieth century.

Views of the Critics on the Tagore-Yeats Interface

R.K. Dasgupta, a renowned scholar of Indology and English literature, comments that the "history of his [Yeats's] relationship with Tagore is therefore a history of a friendship rather than of a creative literary partnerships" (29). Harold M. Hurwitz (1964) sums up the causes behind Yeats's immense predilection for Tagore, as revealed by his adulatory 'Introduction' to Tagore's *Gitanjali* (1912): (a) Tagore was in harmony with his own culture, and his poems reflected the true spirit of his country; (b) Tagore's poems seemed to possess the "unity of life" to a very high degree; (c) both Tagore and Yeats came from countries having long tradition of romance, history of folk legends and folk arts; (d) there was an affinity between the culture and civilisation of ancient India and Ireland; (e) both Tagore and Yeats were romantic, idealist and mystic in nature; and (f) finally, there was a striking similarity in the 'marginal' position—in political and social terms—enjoyed by both of them in their own countries (Yeats was a Protestant in Catholic Ireland, and Tagore was a Brahmo in a majorly Hindu society). Joseph Lenon (2003) argues that the image of Rabindranath Tagore, both as a poet and the persona, assisted the intellectual manoeuvring of Yeats in two ways: first, Tagore helped Yeats define the Irish past; and secondly, in Tagore Yeats found the ideal role of a poet in forging the national culture of Ireland (214).

In spite of mutual affection, admiration and enthusiastic collaboration during the preparation of the manuscript of Tagore's poems translated into English, the relationship between these two great poets suffered from unexpected hurdles which caused a gradual dwindling of the warmth that once instigated their friendship. Tagore, who once gladly handed over his poems of *Gitanjali* to Yeats for revising and editing them in July, 1912, did not approve the editorial alterations done by Yeats in *Fruit-Gathering* (1917). Referring to the poems of *Gitanjali*, Tagore approvingly commented that "the magic of his [Yeats's] pen helped my English to attain some quality of permanence" (Lago 1972: 346); whereas, three years later, he complained that the changes done by Yeats in *Fruit-Gathering* had "altogether changed the meaning" intended by him (Paul 7: 211). Yeats, on the other hand, was also inconsistent in his feelings and critical responses to Tagore and his works. In 1912, after going through the manuscript of *Gitanjali* for the first time, Yeats opined that "if someone claims to improve these translations, he knows nothing of literature..." (Paul 6: 315). Much later in the 1930s, he scathingly declared: "Tagore does not know English, no Indian knows English." (Mitra: 262). Not only about the linguistic capability of Tagore, Yeats also revealed his disillusionment regarding Tagore's poetic ventures, his philosophical and creative inclinations. Though the bitterness between them was slightly alleviated in the last phases of their life, the mutual fondness of their early friendship never resumed.

Mary M. Lago's 'The Parting of the Ways: A Comparative Study of Yeats and Tagore' (1963) is an in-depth study on the temperamental differences between Tagore and Yeats. Lago argues that, in the first place, Yeats failed to understand that

mysticism was just only one of the other elements poetically explored by Tagore in his poetry, and it was definitely not the singular defining feature of it. Second, Tagore's mysticism was completely different from that of Yeats in respect of its varied sources, its intrinsic nature and its relationship with 'magic'. Third, Yeats's idea about India, which was "romantically inaccurate" (13), affected his perception about Tagore and the critical evaluation of his poems. In the fourth place, Tagore believed that the East and the West should complement each other without sacrificing their distinct characteristics; but Yeats viewed the East and the West as antithetical forces and, being guided by his magical experimentations, he foresaw an Asian dominance over the world in future. In the fifth place, Tagore did not romanticise the peasant class and their culture for the sake of nationalist movement, exactly which was done by Yeats himself. Thus Lago attempts a theorization on the Tagore-Yeats friendship situating the history of it against the context of the different tenets of their intellectual and creative impulses.

In recent times, an attempt of analysing the Tagore-Yeats correspondence in the light of postcolonial theories has gained prominence; and in these critical endeavours more emphasis is generally given on the political situations of India and Ireland as 'colonies' of the British Empire. Joseph Lenon (2003) thinks that, though Tagore and Yeats shared a similar position as national poets in the colonised countries, the fact that Yeats could not transcend his sense of belonging to a European culture created undesirable hindrances in Yeats's complete identification with Tagore. Yeats had a fractured self driven by his dual allegiances to both the coloniser and the colonised. Ana Jelnikar (2008) identifies the 'historical' and 'personal' aspects in Yeats's approach to Tagore as the chief causes behind the inconsistency in the former's response to Tagore. Two significant forces, as parts of the 'historical' aspects, played pivotal roles in conditioning Yeats's perception about Tagore: Orientalism and Celticism. Jelnikar finds it surprising that Yeats, himself a colonised subject of the British Empire, was not able to free himself from the Orientalist trap of stereotyping the East—a trap ideologically deployed by the Western colonial power to offer a justification of their subjugation of the Asian and African countries. Michael Collins (2012), in his much detailed study of Tagore's political, social and historical writings, downplays the commonalities and affinities between Tagore and Yeats, which are generally over-emphasised by the other critics; and concentrates more on the obtrusive forces that contributed to the later breach between them. He argues that Yeats 'instrumentalised' both India and Tagore as the means of the cultural renewal of Europe: "Certainly, Yeats' approach to Tagore was to instrumentalise him: he [Tagore], or 'India' became a kind of box of delights that could be raided for the purpose of cultural renewal in Europe" (121).

However, in this essay I shall concentrate on a particular episode of the Tagore-Yeats interface, which, I would like to argue, demands more critical attention as being the index of the contradictory feelings of the boundless enthusiasm and an icy indifference reserved by these two great intellectuals for each other.

Tagore in America: Yeats writes about *The Post Office* in his letters to Tagore

During his stay in abroad in 1912-13, Tagore planned to visit America after spending almost four months in England (from July to October, 1912). Before that voyage to America, Saint-John Perse [1887-1975], the famous French poet, came to Tagore [17 October], seeking permission from him to translate his poems into French. As reported by Tagore in a letter written to Jagadananda Roy, Saint-John Perse told the former:

> We are waiting for a poet like you. We are only confined to the temporal in our lyrics; but your writings have eternal value—they negate the boundary of time and place. Come to France, we need you there. (Paul 6: 341)

On the very same day, Tagore met Yeats in the evening. In a letter sent to Jagadananda Roy, Tagore wrote: "Yesterday night I saw Yeats. He liked very much the translation of *Dak Ghar*. He is keen to stage the play in their Irish Theatre" (Paul 6: 343). This is the first time when Yeats is reported to refer to this particular play of Tagore.

However, Tagore's visit to America turns into a decisive moment in his literary career for two reasons: first, in New York he "wrote his first original serious prose in English" (Kripalani 127); and second, at that time he started delivering lectures in prominent American universities upholding the "ancient spirit of India" (Tagore, quoted in Kripalani 127).

In the meantime, in England, *Gitanjali* was published by 'The India Society' on 1 November 1912. Soon after the publication of this volume, the eminent newspapers in England started publishing favourable reviews of it. *The Times Literary Supplement* [7 Nov, 1912] wrote:

> …That divorce of religion and philosophy which prevails among us is a sign of our failure in both…But this Indian poet, without any obsolete timidity of thought, makes religion and philosophy one. He contemplates the universe as a primitive poet might contemplate a pair of lovers, and makes poetry out of it as naturally and simply. (Kundu 7-8)

This extract, representing the general tone of all the reviews of this book published in various newspapers, confirms that Tagore's poems were majorly seen as fine specimens of the mystic revelations and spiritual emancipation with the promise of a revival of those feelings in European mind. Nabaneeta Sen (1966) categorises the reviews of *Gitanjali* published by the English newspapers into three types: first, the reviews that "sang the traditional song of the strange, exotic, inaccessible Eastern mystical thought"; second, those which "claimed [that] Tagore's mysticism is not the so-called Eastern mystical renunciation of life, but the strong affirmation of life, giving it a new meaning, a new light of personal interpretation"; and in the third place, those reviews written by the "utterly self-confident Westerner who claimed Tagore was only returning what he had learned from the West, and that the genuine Western

mystics knew their jobs better" (11). However, all these reports on this volume were sent to Tagore by William Rothenstein [1872-1945].

During Tagore's stay in Urbana, he received a letter from Yeats, dated 14 November 1912, in which we find Yeats referring to *The Post Office*—the play depicting the journey of a sick child to the nearly approaching death:

> I have been reading the play and think there is much beauty always and that the Post Office should play well. Probably I shall ask your leave to give a performance in Dublin during the spring. (Chakravarty 146)

In this letter Yeats also quotes Lennox Robinson [1886-1958], the Irish playwright and the manager of Abbey Theatre, who, considering this play to be the "most beautiful", seemed eager to stage it. Though Yeats had already been familiar with the play, at the time of writing this letter "Yeats was re-reading the play (this time a copy sent to him by Rothenstein) with a view to producing it on the stage…" (Chakravarty, 'Notes and References': 161).

Not only *The Post Office*, Yeats also read *Malini* and *The King of the Dark Chamber* at the same time, but his preference for *The Post Office* was unparallel. On 1 December, 1912, Yeats wrote to Rothenstein:

> I do not think either 'Malini' or 'The King' [of the Dark Chamber] could play before any possible European audience…'The Post Office' is I think a masterpiece. It wants careful revision of the translation for the *monotony of the sentences* caused by Tagore's writing…I would much sooner Tagore's plays could first come to the English reader through this play alone. (ibid., italics mine)

It should be noted that, at the time of revising the manuscript of *Gitanjali*, Yeats unequivocally expressed his enthusiastic admiration for Tagore's English, but in this present context he seemed to be evidently sceptical about Tagore's linguistic proficiency. Ostensibly, he became more conscious about what he perceived as the 'weaknesses' in Tagore's English.

However, the year 1912 ended with the euphoric celebration of Tagore and his poems in Europe. The first letter written by Yeats to Tagore at the beginning of the new year [9 January 1913] bears immense importance because, in the first place, it contains significant references to some 'problems' confronted by Yeats in arranging the performance of *The Post Office* in Ireland; and secondly, it records Yeats's immediate reaction to the recently published *Gitanjali*. Yeats begins his latter thus:

> I thank you very much for your letter. I am hoping to play "The Post Office" in Dublin but there are some peculiar difficulties—our best romantic producer is away—and I am trying for a performance in London. I will do my best. (Chakravarty 146)

Bikash Chakravarty assumes that this "best romantic producer" might be Fred

O'Donovan [1884-1952]. Chakravarty further informs that, when Yeats was writing this particular letter to Tagore, the Abbey players were in a tour to USA. Tagore enjoyed the production of the famous play *Cathleen Ni Houlihan* (jointly written by Yeats and Lady Gregory in 1902) by the Abbey players at Urbana (162); and, highly impressed, he informed Yeats: "I cannot tell you how deeply moved I was, particularly by *Cathleen Ni Houlihan*. Its effect is still haunting me" (*The Selected Letters* 105).

This particular letter from Yeats also reveals his extremely annoyance over an 'undesirable' alteration of one of the sentences of the poem no. 52 in *Gitanjali* in its published version. The chief cause behind Yeats's irritation was that the revision was done by someone else without his knowledge and consent. However, later, in the Macmillan edition of *Gitanjali* [March 1913], Tagore restored the original sentence as suggested by Yeats during his collaborative attempts in preparing the manuscript of *Gitanjali,* perhaps with an intention to appease the latter. This is the only change taking place in the Macmillan edition from 'The India Society' edition of *Gitanjali*.

During Tagore's stay in America [December, 1912], six of his poems, along with an essay on him by Ezra Pound, were published in *Poetry*: "Perhaps the first journal in the West to publish his poems" (Kripalani 129). In America, Tagore started delivering lectures on the quintessential aspects of Indian civilisation and the possibility of forging a reciprocal relationship between the East and the West. While staying in Urbana, he gave four lectures [from 10 Nov to 1 Dec, once a week] in Unity Club where various prominent leaders from different sects delivered speeches on religious subjects on every Sunday. Some of these lectures presented by Tagore were later collected in *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life* (1913).

In Urbana and Chicago Tagore continued translating his Bengali poems into English, most of which were later included in *The Gardener* (1913) and *The Crescent Moon* (1913). Apart from poems, Tagore continued to translate his plays into English, such as *Malini*, *Chitrangada*, *Sharodotsav*. It is to be mentioned here that Tagore started to translate *Sharodotsav* (*The Autumn Festival*) after being inspired by his readings of some of the plays written by Yeats. He wrote to Ajit Chakraborty [4 January, 1913]:

> On the day before yesterday, after reading two of Yeats's short plays, I suddenly felt that my *Sharodotsav* is not a play with low merit. Being inspired, at that very moment I started translating that play and finished it yesterday night. (Paul 6: 372)

Tagore in England: Staging *The Post Office* in Ireland and England

After spending almost six months in America, Tagore returned to London on 19 April, 1913. In March, 1913, Macmillan published the cheaper edition of *Gitanjali* which was exhausted in no time. A letter written by Yeats to Tagore on 25 April, 1913 reveals that Yeats had received the manuscript of the poems later collected in *The Gardener*[2], along with a copy (yet unpublished) of *The Post Office* (Chakravarty 147).

Yeats needed a copy of the manuscript of *The Post Office* as he intended to stage it in Abbey Theatre in Dublin. In this letter Yeats also referred to the difficulties faced by him in 'improving' Tagore's English: "It is again the old difficulty 'the words that have not got their souls yet and the words that have lost their souls'". Bikash Cakravarty rightly assumes that it is a misquotation from a letter written by Tagore to Ezra Pound on 5 January, 1913: "I do not know the exact value of your English words. Some of them may have their souls worn out by constant use and some others may not have acquired their souls yet." (Chakravarty, 'Notes and References': 164-165). Perhaps Tagore wrote the same thing to Yeats. This sentence, quoted above, accounts for Tagore's apologetic attitude to his own skill in English—the attitude which is often divulged in Tagore's regular correspondences with his English-speaking friends.

In this letter Yeats also informed Tagore that he had delivered a lecture on Tagore in Dublin: "I lectured on your work in Dublin a few weeks ago and had a large and most enthusiastic audience. I read a number of your poems." (Chakravarty 148). A brief report on Yeats's lecture was sent by Tagore to Jagadananda Roy for publishing it in *The Modern Review*; and, as intended by Tagore, the report was duly published in that magazine in June 1913. In this lecture Yeats insisted on the greatness of Tagore both as a poet and as a saint, whose "religious lyrics were known and sung all over Bengal" (Chakravarty, 'Notes and References': 165). The rest of the lecture, replete with references to the notable "resemblance between the condition of India today and the condition of Ireland", unveils the most important reasons why Yeats needed Tagore at that time: not only did he seek for Tagore's assistance in resolving his own *poetic* problems, but the growing significance of Tagore's poetry in the *political* context of both India and Ireland also stimulated him to take refuge in it at that particular time when no European model in poetic sphere could serve him as an appropriate ideal to follow.

Another letter by Yeats to Tagore [11 May] confirms the date of the production of *The Post Office* in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin: "I am afraid that I never told you that we give our first performance, 'Post Office' in Dublin on Saturday next May 17…" (Chakravarty 148). On 17 May *The Post Office* was enacted in the Abbey Theatre in Dublin. P.H. Pearse's *An Ri* was also enacted with this play (Paul 6: 400). *The Irish Times* favourably reported on that performance [19 May]:

> Mr. W.B. Yeats and others associated with the Abbey Theatre have already expressed a high opinion of Tagore, and their judgment was confirmed by the appreciation and applause extended to the specimen of the author's art by Dublin play-goers, as it was presented in its English dress on Saturday night. It is not a very imposing play, but it has many attractive and, at the same time, pathetic features. (Kundu 17)

In a letter, dated 21 May, Yeats quotes the manager of the Abbey Theatre to give Tagore a comprehensive idea about the general reactions of the Irish audience to the performance of *The Post Office*: "The play was very successful with the house, which

was quite enthusiastic… Every one I have met liked the play but of course I left Ireland next day and so didn't see many people" (Chakravarty 149-150).

On the same day Yeats wrote another letter to Tagore where he informed the latter about his plan for arranging a performance of *The Post Office* in the 'New Court Theatre' in London: "We will put our best people into it and will take out of the cast those whose Irish accents proved too strong at the Dublin performance" (Chakravarty 150). He further informed that he had a talk with Lady Gregory [1852-1932]—one of the founders and directors of the Abbey Theatre, as well as a playwright and a close associate of Yeats—regarding this performance which, as believed by Yeats, would be considered by the audience to be "a fine performance".

On 10 July, 1913 Tagore's *The Post Office*, along with J.M. Synge's [1871-1909] *The Well of the Saints* (1905), was enacted in the Court Theatre in England by the Irish actors. On the next day, in its published review on those performances, *The Evening Standard and St. James's Gazette* pointed out the similarities between these two plays: "There was the same illusive atmosphere, and the same symbolic tendency of the plot. In both, also, there was the deeper significance that passed unnoticed under the attention of the casual observer" (Kundu 19). *The Globe* observed: "For ourselves we found it impressive, but thought it too tender, too ethereal a thing for the theatre" (19). *The Standard* maintained a nearly similar opinion: "Although the story could not be termed dramatic, it was full of cadences that charmed the ear" (20). *The Times*, defining the play as "dreamy, symbolical, spiritual play", reported: "It is a curious play, leaving to a certain extent a sense of incompleteness, since it ends before its climax, rich in poetical thought and imagery, as well as in a kind of symbolism that must not be pressed too closely." *The Westminster Gazette* did not give a favourable review of the performance, and the reporter wondered why did the Irish actors choose such a play which "was all on one note and never moved one inch" (21).

These reviews of *The Post Office* have two general aspects: first, it is evident that the symbolism or the allegorical elements of Tagore's play mostly attracted the European audience. In a way, Tagore's play was perceived as a critique of the late Victorian realism that was in vogue at that time. Secondly, the viewers attempted to identify the commonalities, apparently existing between *The Post Office* and the play of J.M. Synge. *The Times* wrote that the symbolism of Synge's play was complementary to *The Post Office*. This conspicuous tendency of searching for the affinities between these two plays can be interpreted as a distinct attempt of the English audience to locate the aesthetic cross-currents which accentuated a possible cultural connection between India and Ireland—the two colonies of the British Empire.

However, at the beginning of September, 1913, Tagore left England and sailed for India. On 10 December, 1913 the Nobel Prize was conferred on Tagore. On behalf of Tagore, the Prize was received by the British ambassador posted in Stockholm (Paul 6: 455). Almost all of the friends, associates and well-wishers of Tagore, both in India and abroad, celebrated this occasion and heartily congratulated him

for this honour, except Yeats. The curious silence from Yeats after the much-elated celebration over Tagore's being awarded with the Nobel Prize has been a matter for serious investigations for the scholars and researchers. Prasanta Paul assumes that Yeats was annoyed to find some changes in the final and printed version of *Gitanjali* which, he claimed, were done by someone else without his knowledge (6: 453). It is definitely not the sole reason behind this striking silence from Yeats, because—as we have mentioned earlier—Tagore, cordially accepting Yeats's suggestions after the publication of the 'India Society' edition of *Gitanjali*, made necessary amendments in the Macmillan edition of the same. Yeats's perceptible indifference to Tagore's enormous achievement was evidently not caused by any single event; rather it should be interpreted as an incidental index to the inevitable transformation of the former's perceptions and views about Tagore, and this signals Yeats's future cynicism for both the poetic endeavours of Tagore and the system of philosophy represented by him.

In the meantime, Yeats managed to procure the permission from the Macmillan for publishing *The Post Office* from Cuala Press. But *The Post Office*, translated by Devabrata Mukerjea, was finally published by Macmillan on 27 July 1914 (Kelly 174) with a short 'Preface' written by Yeats. In this play, Amal, a boy suffering from an incurable disease and confined in a small room of his uncle's house, has the only access to the outer world through a window which offers him a chance for conversing with the travellers on the road and asking numerous questions regarding the places he can only reach with his imagination. He eagerly awaits a letter from the King. This play, with beautiful dialogue and highly symbolical structure, portrays how the boy gracefully embraces death. Niharranjan Ray (2011) comments that this play, symbolising the "passionate cry for the far-away, for the Great Beyond", is "like a piece of music that vibrates in our consciousness long after it is silent, surcharging all our thoughts and emotions with a faint melody" (176).

While writing the 'Preface' for this short play which occupies a special forte in Tagore's worldwide reputation, Yeats denounced those viewers who had discovered "much detailed allegory" in this play and found that "the meaning is less intellectual, more emotional and simple" (*The Post Office*, 'Preface' v). With an outstanding brevity, Yeats identified the theme of this play as that of 'deliverance'. This play, according to Yeats, depicts a significant instant which "may come at any moment of life" when "I" or the individual self feels a deliberate urge for an absolute submission of it to the Supreme Being pervading the universe. Yeats explored Tagore's personal account of the genesis of this play as well as his lectures collected in *Sadhana* (1913) to substantiate this idea. We consider this short 'Preface' to be a fine specimen of Yeats's deeper understanding of Tagore's philosophical assumptions about the reciprocal relationship existing between the Individual and the Universal self. But, according to the observation made by Naresh Guha, Yeats "was already drawing away a little" from Tagore during writing this 'Preface' (79).

However, after 1914, a tone of bitterness started dominating the course of relationship shared by Tagore and Yeats, and the warmth once derived from mutual

admiration for each other was lost forever. The controversy regarding the *Gitanjali* poems and other external factors contributed to the rift between these two great artists of the last century. After this particular juncture, Yeats, in his letters and communications with the close associates of Tagore, revealed his sincere admiration for the prose works of Tagore—especially for his autobiographical prose (*My Reminiscences*) and his novel (*The Home and the World*), but he deliberately stopped praising Tagore's poems and other creative works. Apart from personal disagreements over different issues, the ideational differences between Tagore and Yeats in terms of their literary, political and spiritual or mystical inclinations affected adversely on their personal relationship. The historical significance of Yeats's sincere and animated engagement with *The Post Office* is immense, as, I would like to argue, this particular phase of the Tagore-Yeats correspondence is notably marked with last instance of Yeats's close and attentive reading of Tagore's dramatic work which is also intensely poetic in nature, and which bears much significance in Yeats's own literary experimentations with the dramatic form.

Notes

1. Devabrata Mukerjea, who taught in Presidency College and Oxford, translated Tagore's *Dakghar* in 1912. He was engaged as a Bengali tutor to Iseult Gonne in 1914. After returning to India, Mukerjea, the son-in-law of Yeats's guru Mohini Chatterji, involved himself in the nationalist activities and died prematurely (Chakravarty 169).
2. Though Yeats was also entrusted with the task of revising the manuscript of the poems to be collected in *The Gardener* (1913) by Tagore, the fact that Tagore had to depend more on Thomas Sturge Moore than Yeats during the process of revising and editing the poems of *The Gardener* signals the gradual intensification of Yeats's indifference towards Tagore, the feeling which conditioned the later phase of their relationship.

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[Translations from the Bengali sources, if not mentioned otherwise, are done by me.]

ROOM SERVICE: REFUGE-ING IN JEAN RHYS

ASMITA BORAL

In her unfinished life-writing, *Smile Please,* Jean Rhys recounts the way of life of chorus girls. When it was 'off-season' for the shows, most of the girls went home and saved on their living expenses for two or three months, but for a girl like her, who *had no home*, life was hard in those lean months, for there was little left over from the earnings of the previous ones. Both *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), and *Good Morning, Midnight* (1939), two novels that predate Rhys' claim to fame, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) by almost three decades, can be regarded as quasi-autobiographical. While the former is set in and around London, England, where its heroine, Anna, emigrated with her stepmother while still in her teens, the backdrop of *Good Morning* is Paris, its heroine slightly older and more worldly-wise. They are confessional in tone and yet unapologetically candid. Rhys' protagonists mirror versions of her own self at different stages of her life, or at least strike similar notes. Both these novels are diaries, in a sense, of new womanhood but cast into an old world, and can be read as entries into and exits out of rooms. The different rooms the protagonist occupies at different points in her life not only traces her ups and downs, but also the emotional and social status she enjoys in each phase. Sometimes, a change of room is all the control she can exercise over her life. The spaces she occupies define her life at any given moment. Almost like the 'red room' of Bronte's *Jane Eyre,* some of these rooms hold the key to her traumatic experiences. She responds strongly not only to the rooms she herself lodges in, takes up on rent, but also to the ones she visits, the rooms of her lovers patrons and accordingly interprets her standing in her lover's life and in her own esteem. Hotel rooms are a constant presence with their unacceptability, their sordidness, which translate not only into the squalor and seediness of the lifestyle, all that could be afforded by a girl in her late teens working to support herself, but also underline the misalliance they strike with their inhabitant.

In this essay I consider the role of rooms or enclosed spaces-one that has proverbially featured in the works of woman writers since the first innings of fiction writing-in two of Rhys' novels. In Gothic fiction, rooms have carried a sinister significance, and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* uncannily paved the way for Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. The role of rooms in fueling agoraphobia, neurotic self-confinement or in being used for Benthamite confinement as panopticon, assisting surveillance or for gaslighting to drive someone insane, is

undeniable. The increasingly sinister role played by Mrs. Danvers that amounted to abetment of suicide of the heroine in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* revolved around Rebecca's rooms in Manderley, just as mythmaking around the attic, the space of Bertha Mason or Antoinette's confinement, did for scaring Jane Eyre at Thornfield Hall or for that matter around the 'red room' at the Reeds' mansion when Jane was a child. Like Antoinette's reported degeneracy, Rebecca's reported sexual promiscuity lends the newly wed bride moral superiority, just as it does for Jane Eyre, elevating her on a pedestal. In Rhys' novels the heroines seem to be constantly searching for rooms yet coming across none that are able to provide the refuge or succour that they seek. The unavailability of a befitting space to inhabit, to call home or to contain the conflicts and binaries of virgin and vamp or virgin and 'whore' reconciled within the singular Caribbean women of Rhys' works, reverberate through her novels .

While being modernist spaces encouraging individual solitude rather than communion, providing privacy, that very important component of modern life, rooms, at the same time provide scope for brooding, neuroses. The enclosure of four walls is sometimes the only thing the heroine has any kind of intercourse with, cloistering herself up for days, the room becoming a hostile haven. She becomes the perfect victim of agoraphobia, a psychological condition symptoms of which include unwillingness to venture out, keeping oneself shut in a room, apprehensive of the outside where unknown fears lurk. If we consider Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* in its 1940 film adaptation by Hitchcock in this context, we see how the 'most beautiful room' in Manderley, the one in the West wing that was once its former mistress Rebecca's, comes to haunt the heroine, its present mistress who feels too small to fill Rebecca's shoes. She is strangely attracted to this forbidden room and must whet her curiosity, but it is a trap. Its spacious, open aspect does nothing to allay her fears, as she is led into it by Rebecca's faithful maid, Mrs Danvers. Further, it overlooks the sea and the sound of the sea fills it so that she can never forget Rebecca's death by drowning in the sea. What had been soothing and liberating to Rebecca is obviously oppressive to her, and she is, in fact, abetted to commit suicide by Danvers, who keeps telling her she can never take Rebecca's place and be mistress of Manderley.

The kind of gaslighting that gets committed in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, to some extent in *Rebecca*, is also anticipated in Rhys' novels, particularly in *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Most of the girls we encounter are significantly, orphans or estranged from parents, particularly missing a mother figure, and inadvertently falling for men who are much older, almost paternalistic. This makes way for infantilization of the woman, pervasive in a novella such as Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. The need to secure the woman as a child, to put bars on windows as in a nursery, is most evident here. In fact the very room chosen for a grown woman is actually the nursery in the house, rather than a room of her own choice. I contend here that the constant quest for the perfect room is an unconscious search for the comfort and security of the mother's womb, and a hunger to belong. Not only do the young women fall for older men, father substitutes, but they also lack maternal

presence in their lives. We hear nothing of the mother of *Rebecca's* heroine. Of *Gaslight's* Paula (played by Ingrid Bergman), we learn that she lost her mother at a tender age and her husband tells her that her mother had reportedly gone mad, and she is only following in her footsteps. Like Rhys' heroines, the incertitude into which she is thrust, her financial insecurity particularly, makes her fall prey to an older man. Rhys' heroines' relationships are short-lived, perhaps all the more so because there is financial exchange involved. In *Voyage in the Dark*, Anna's youth acts against her interests sometimes: some men are unwilling to get involved with so inexperienced a woman and feel guilty afterward. In fact, her very youth feels like a burden to her for she has to go on living, living, living. She longs to be rid of her dependence on men, which in turn is necessitated by her need for money—money for subsisting at a certain standard. To make ends meet, she willy-nilly gives in to the advances of a much older man, and then becomes his mistress, only to be thrust away, penniless, a few months later. She has to further undergo the ignominy of keeping the company of a few more men, getting pregnant, and borrowing money for abortion from the very lover who had cast her away, so desperate is her condition. There is nobody by her side as she undergoes the operation, which is botched up anyway, for she still has the baby, and it dies soon after.

As Anna's search for a mother fails, she also encounters failure as a generator of life, and is unable to keep her offspring alive. Nancy Chodorow says in *The Reproduction of Mothering* that it is an imperative impulse for women to re-experience the womb through conceiving a baby and mothering. It seems the absence of mothering in her life has left a void that grows into a gaping wound. As such, mothering is an alien concept to her and when she is about to experience motherhood, it is intimidating. She is afraid to take on the responsibility of a child, and even fears that the baby would somehow not come out right, given her myriad spurious attempts to abort it. While pregnant, she seems estranged from her body, the body that is about to betray her by experiencing motherhood. After her first delivery, the midwife, a self-professed expert, bandages her body so that it emerges unscarred and smooth after sometime, denying any signs of motherhood. In both novels, we curiously encounter dead infants: babies that threaten her, that die on her, that rip her of motherhood. The search for a mother, for mothering, and for motherhood getting ripped off, denied a sense of belonging, denied a home, denied the womb… all reverberate through the incertitude and discontent around rooms that refuse to recede from the lives of Rhys' heroines.

In case of Anna Sasha, the absence of a mother in her life, and the early death of her father, had virtually orphaned her. She has been subsisting on the grudging benefaction of her relatives, possibly cheated out of an inheritance by her stepmother and uncles, and constantly given the impression that she is imposing, asking for more than what was her due, and that she must be grateful for whatever little was doled out to her. While she did have a stepmother, she has not experienced being mothered. Mother substitutes came into her life but only loosely, among the household help.

Even those relationships involved race, class and master/servant barriers. She was an alien even in her native land, for she had none to call her own people. She suffered a double estrangement, as it were: the people she was 'at home with', the native Caribbeans, did not claim her as their own. She keeps looking for mother surrogates in older colleagues, friends who are buxom and have a maternal air, and tends to lean on them. In *Smile, Please!*, her unfinished autobiography, she thinks Meta, the nanny she looked up to as a mother surrogate, hated her because she was white. She was caught in the colonial dilemma of belonging and yet not quite belonging. She says what she saw in the eyes of a 'coloured' girl she thought very beautiful and wanted to befriend, was 'pure hatred'. The Caribbean Islands that she identifies as her homeland disowns her, in a way. Anna of *Voyage* does not have a way back. She has nothing to return to, for her father's plantation, Morgan's Rest, has been sold by her stepmother, Hester, an Englishwoman, for a pittance. She has received no inheritance, gets only a minimal sporadic allowance, and must fend for herself. So the Englishwoman has further rendered her homeless, and rootless. With financial solvency coming only with male support, she is caught in the vicious circle of dallying with men, mostly married, who take in mistresses for the short while that they are away from home.

Having taken up a living as a chorus girl, working in shows that toured the country, Anna leads an itinerant life, never really settling anywhere, so the lodgings she takes up are often on rent, or she stays at hotels. Her room is typically what is available at low cost, without frills and amenities, and often in seedy locations. In her life of constant flux, Anna fumbles to find solid ground beneath her feet. Things are worse for her than for her colleagues, all of whom look out for stability, for she has been cast off into a country she finds cold and hostile, from a tropical land she calls 'home'. Life in London, to her, in many ways registers a fall. Here she must live out the rites of passage of an immigrant, she must deal with the financial crisis she faces, the fall in status from her native land where she was the daughter of a plantation owner, a light-skinned Creole who were shunned by the darker-skinned natives and the whites alike, in a land that granted them mastery over the darker skinned people. From one sort of othering, non-belonging, she is now caught in another type of hybridity: in England, she is a Creole woman of mixed parentage pitted against Caucasian women. The founding premise of these settings is a sort of reverse exoticization, a foreign-ness attached to them, when the gaze turned on them is that of a Caribbean heroine. London and Paris are judged and inhabited, literally, with a tropical yardstick. Since the heroine of both novels, both Rhys' avatars, hail from 'a hot place' in the Caribbean, there lingers a sense of difference, a distance that she feels between herself and the people she comes in contact with.

The cheap, functional, sometimes lurid rooms she continually occupies and finds disturbing, are also a constant reminder of the comfortable circumstances that she was born and bred in, back in the colonies. As she finds herself leaving and entering strange rooms, none which she can call her own, she also keeps a toll on her faltering 'virtue', as it were. The descent into dark, cold, lurid hotel rooms surrounded by grey,

dreary streets, strike a sharp contrast with the hot tropics she hails from. In

Good Morning, Midnight, a sort of continuation of this saga, we find Sasha, too, often reduced to penury. She is forced to take up odd jobs that are far beneath her taste and intellectual calibre, and it is a struggle to accept the demeaning attitude that her superiors put on. Working as an usher in a clothing house in Paris, (at twenty-five, she is too old to be a mannequin), she must endure the sneering scorn of her employer for her poor French. All these women, Rhys' avatars, are unconsciously fighting a value structure that judges their virtue on the basis of their exchanges with men, that valorizes women on the basis of the wear and tear of their bodies, their age, race, colour, lines on their face and body. At the same time, they have to contend with cultivating what Betty Friedan termed the 'feminine mystique' in a post-WWII perspective, rather than the Victorian ideal of 'the angel in the house'. The trope of the 'madwoman in the attic' Rhys so richly rediscovers in *Wide Sargasso Sea* shifts to the modernist hotel room, often as unsavoury as attics, where Rhys' heroines are willy-nilly cooped up. The neuroses they develop- paranoia, agoraphobia, fear of the uncertain, nervousness, lack of confidence and self esteem- are brought on not only by the immediate physical spaces they occupy, their rooms, but also by the pressure to conform to social norms, attitudes, expectations. Another apt instance would be the case in Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*, where confinement in a hideous room with a wallpaper she finds revolting, proves fatal for the heroine, who is mysteriously sick, a sickness dismissed by her physician husband who nevertheless imposes several restrictions on her so as to not tire her out. Written in the 1890s, the story provides a telling sample of the condition universally labelled 'hysteria', seemingly affecting women of the times: an unnamed 'disease' with no definite line of treatment, and yet providing scope for all sorts of spurious experiments.

Acutely conscious of the abyss into which she is descending, Sasha goes hunting desperately, in *Good Morning, Midnight*, for 'a light room'-- one that would be spacious and open and sunny in its aspect. Though she is unable to convey exactly what she wants… a 'light' room 'with a bath' at a hotel, with just a hint of luxury, she finds she is already paying thrice its price for the room she lodges at, on the fourth floor of a building. She congratulates herself that it means that she has actually 'arrived', finally making her mark as a successful immigrant, maintaining a certain standard of living. In many ways, the hotel room or lodgings encapsulates the modern condition as the urban space that grants the solace of anonymity, yet creates loneliness amidst a crowd. While being objective, it is also impersonal, where no questions can be asked, no eyebrows raised, yet the rooms she inhabits do not allow her this freedom. The ones that do, are not 'respectable'; she does not find them to her taste. Services are provided at a cost, almost everything can be bought for money (yet another advantage of the urban milieu). As long as there is money to be had, no questions are asked. She finds, to her chagrin, money is indispensable as an aid to a life of 'respectability', and fulfil the need to keep up appearances, if only it is just to make one's way in the world. The streets are only as friendly as the amount of money in one's purse. In fact, in *Good*

Morning, Midnight, a little charade is played out by the newly married but financially distressed couple, Sasha and Enno, as to how she had obtained some money for themselves (she has borrowed 100 francs from an old patron and allowed him to kiss her in return). She fibs when he asks her, and in turn, finding Enno loaded with money a couple of days later, asks him no questions at all. Secure domesticity eludes her, and she leads a chequered life, often dependent on alcohol, sometimes exchanging sexual favours for a living. She takes a giant leap from 'virgin' to 'whore' and while it takes its emotional toll on her, she tries to reconcile with the fact that it might be her continual way of life. Typically for 'chorus girls' marked with an air of frivolity and identified as ones with loose morals, a life of so-called 'respectability' remained elusive.

Rhys does not make it imperative for her heroines to be extricated from their oppressive rooms, nor do they free themselves of agoraphobia. They grapple with a sordid and utilitarian reality that engulfs any hint of romance for no sense of belonging, of settling, is ever accorded. In fact, it was with great reluctance that Rhys altered the original ending of *Voyage in the Dark* in which Anna dies. Like Gilman before her, Rhys did not 'restore' her heroines to the patriarchal society of sanity, for madness is a refuge for them. Madness is their way of returning to the 'chora', a term Julia Kristeva adopts from Plato's *Timaeus*, that literally means, receptacle. She implies that the *chora* is the maternal womb or a space located within the maternal body from where an infant's drives originate and enter the symbolic realm, and I suggest that most of us possess a drive towards returning to the *chora*, to a stage before entering the symbolic realm becomes necessitated. This dropping off from the radar of the symbolic and semiotic, turning inward, when the outside gets oppressive, is read as madness. Patriarchal society systematically weans us away from the *chora*, as amply suggested by Luce Irigaray, too; so when we manifest tendencies towards this return, rejecting the semiotic codes imposed by society, men call it madness. I suggest that Rhys' Anna and Sasha, along with *Rebecca* and *Gaslight*'s protagonists, manifest this tendency through their agoraphobia, and obsession with the rooms they occupy. Rooms, closed spaces that are both frightening and yet a refuge, are in fact, this *chora* they fall back into. In the absence of mothers and mothering, when the world is hostile to one's idiosyncracies, rooms become womb-like havens, where one can free oneself of all consciousness.

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THE CHEMICAL DEFECT: SCIENCE, EMPIRE AND THE SUBALTERN DETECTIVE IN SARADINDU BANDYOPADHYAY'S "CALAMITY STRIKES"

ARCAPROVA RAYCHAUDHURY

In her introduction to *Detecting the Nation: Fictions of Detection and the Imperial Venture* (2004), Caroline Reitz notes that detective fiction "both served and challenged the interests of Empire in a more direct way than either its status as fiction or the scholarship that declares it as a minor genre wants to admit" (xiii). On a more careful examination, Reitz's remark opens up an interesting underside of the relationship between detective fiction and Western imperialism, namely its *ambivalent* nature. Such an ambivalence may as well nullify a broadly generalized perspective when it comes to understanding detective fiction narratives that lie on both sides of the imperial divide, namely the assumption that the ones rooted in Western imperialist principles reinforce whiteness as "an imperial instead of an insular identity" (xxv) at the cost of making villains out of people of other (non-white) races while those that originate in the colonial 'contact zones' are altogether resistant to such a portrayal and, through it, the Western imperialist enterprise. While the ideas of race, nation and empire, therefore, continue to remain central preoccupations of both types of detective fiction narratives, their catering to the above ideas may reveal severe anomalies as against what is almost traditionally believed. This stems largely from the fact that the idea of order and discipline as characterized by the non-Western mode of detective fiction-writing under colonial rule is not altogether different from that which is deemed necessary by the ruling powers; the orientation of the former, therefore, cannot go too far against the grain. As Christine Matzke and Susanne Mühleisen point out:

> Stories of order and disorder in the colonial era – in personal narratives, travel writing and the emerging genre of crime fiction – thus offered a particular perspective on the 'other' who could be seen both as a threat to and mirror of the imperial power. Order and discipline as primary colonial interests could then be affirmed through the investigation of crime and the reconstruction of a social stability so typical for the genre. (4)

While taking note of the fact that order and discipline were, in fact, 'primary colonial interests', Matzke and Mühleisen, by staying silent about whether such a purpose is a characteristic of the Western mode only, leave the possibility open for the complicity of the 'other' – namely the non-Western appropriations of the genre – to the same purpose, whether consciously or otherwise.

Saradindu Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi mysteries, written and set across the period covering India under twentieth-century British imperial rule to nearly two-and-a-half decades of independence, offer a significant scope for the understanding of the discourses that originate alongside the real historical issues they encompass, namely Western imperialism and colonial rule, the two World Wars, the arms race and the rise of modern science vis-à-vis modern warfare. While reading Bandyopadhyay's detective stories as texts embodying a subaltern resistance to the Eurocentrism underlining both the art of detection and detective fiction-writing, however, the short story "Calamity Strikes" (1935)[1] presents certain anomalies which affect the basic suppositions offered by the postcolonial critic's favourite Indian sleuth, Byomkesh Bakshi. In the story, Byomkesh's move to investigate the sudden unnatural death of his neighbour Habul's sister, Rekha, and his uncovering of the invention of a lethal poison by their father, the scientist Professor Debkumar Sarkar, who ends up killing his own children during his repeated attempts to murder his second wife with it leads to a greater, tragically underlined commentary on the banal impacts of modern science and its ever-increasing association with the twentieth-century imperialist programme – one that brought about a World War and would rest for only two decades before bringing about another more tragic, devastating one. In terms of nationalizing a quintessentially native, middle-class Bengali experience of witnessing the imperial project, Bandyopadhyay's story ends up affirming, as the Western imperial project intended, the established native sentiment harboured as well as attitude displayed towards modern science and its role in the imperial venture – an affirmation which problematically upsets the very answer to the question it investigates and interrogates as a mode of writing that emanates not from the centre of dominance but the margin of resistance as is generally presumed. Yet the study of such a take raises pertinent questions as to reality and represented truth, meanings made and unmade and their ties to the perceptions intended by the West and prevalent in the colonies which had to fall party to and suffer directly from its ventures, where the sentiments and attitudes of the trusted characters stand out as anomalously representative of a shared set of colonially intended values and beliefs which hamper significantly their anti-colonial counterpart hitherto and hereafter nearly presupposed.

While adhering to the dominant assumptions and interrogations of the popular Bengali detective story, Bandyopadhyay's Byomkesh Bakshi narratives embody what may be most compressedly referred to as the subaltern resistive practice of representation – the one that wrote back decisively to the white supremacist centre that classic detective fiction occupied. The rise of the indigenised detective or *goyenda*,

one that entered the popular literary scene as an alternative to rather than an imitation or shadow of the white European detective, was coincident with the socio-political challenges that the contemporary colonial scenario was met with, as well as with the Bengali *bhadralok*'s coming to terms with the implications of European modernity – one that the emergence of Bandyopadhyay's Bengali detective marks a definite historical moment in. As Shampa Roy observes:

> *Goyenda* fiction emerged during an epistemic break, when for the first time colonised Bengalis asserted their desire for a decolonised nation and identity through the idea of *swadeshi*. Racist and oppressive government policies created an atmosphere of simmering anti-colonial resentment from the last decade of the nineteenth century, and it finally exploded in what came to be known as *swadeshi* protests in Bengal that led up to and continued to simmer in the wake of the colonial government's arbitrary decision to partition the region in 1905. A revivification of the Bengali Hindu subjectivity, perceived as having weakened over the past few centuries, was felt to be needed by large sections of the *bhadralok*. Though fraught with regressive implications in terms of gender, caste and religion, this ideal helped express the colonised subjects' growing resentment against years of racial slights and injustices and the need to challenge the colonial regime. (125)

Crucial to the understanding of Bandyopadhyay's mysteries, therefore, is the identity of Byomkesh Bakshi as a subaltern investigator, representative of those characteristic, culturally shared values and ideals which render him as "always a subaltern alternative to Holmes" (Roy 17). As a character, Byomkesh embodies what Siddhartha Biswas calls the skilful construction of the detective as well as the Bengali personality (513), in which he stands out as a popular champion of Bengali anti-colonial – and eventually postcolonial – middle-class values as "a quintessentially *bhadralok* private investigator, who spurns that designation and prefers to call himself a truth-seeker" (Chakrabarti 259). The same anti-colonial response extends equally to his Watsonian counterpart Ajit Bandyopadhyay, the common man-turned-chronicler representing the native Indian literary intelligentsia free of Westernized enterprise and control, who aids and accompanies his friend Byomkesh Bakshi in his daily life and investigations and leads otherwise the quiet and peaceful life of a middle-class Bengali writer in the heart of Calcutta. The popularity of Byomkesh stems from this 'representative-ness' of being, i.e., the socio-cultural existence reflecting not the alienated – and therefore heroic – status of a superhuman champion of masculinity but the shared subaltern cultural sentiments of the native Bengali and, in general, Indian society under colonialism and later free of it – a society whose encounter with the Western imperialist agenda reflected most faithfully its brutal and long-standing consequences.

As regards the imperial question, Byomkesh as a trusted character of the Bengali popular narrative inhabits the status of a witness-inquisitor who often interrogates and reflects upon the consequences of the West's self-annihilating programme –

one that India, as a colony, was drawn into without consent owing to its status as a British colony, leaving deep-seated scars in the social and psychological fabric of the Indian society. The interrogations and reflections in this regard, characteristic of Byomkesh as well as Bandyopadhyay, reflect the popular native, urban middle-class notions prevalent amongst the majority of people in and around Calcutta and Bengal in general regarding the imperialist agenda. "The Death of Amrito" (1959)[2], for example, interrogates the contaminative tendencies of the imperialist project as the debris of a ruthless World War II, left behind by the white armies, now became the new weapons of aggression in a free India:

> Many foreign soldiers had set up camp in different parts of the country during the last world war; at the end of the war the foreigners left, and Indians earned the right to rule themselves. When the nation raised its head after the bloodbath of Independence, it discovered that the upper levels of the lake may be clear, but malevolent crocodiles were swimming about in its depths. The arms and ammunition that the soldiers had left behind had become the teeth and claws of these crocodiles. (97-98)

Byomkesh's understanding of the devastating nature of the imperialist programme is further augmented by his encounters with people who embody the actions and consequences of the same, namely former soldiers in the British Army such as Anadi Haldar and Keshto Das in *Aadim Ripu* (*The Basic Instinct*, 1955)[3] and black-marketeers of weapons left behind by the foreign armies in post-War India such as Bishu Mallik in "The Death of Amrito" – encounters which offer a significantly wide-angled view of the problem and its aftermath as would be perceived by an affected individual in an affected nation.

The perceptions and attitudes of Byomkesh and Ajit, however, betray a marked anomaly when it comes to understanding the greater question of scientific progress and the imperial question – a motif that recurs throughout the layered narrative of "Calamity Strikes". Written in 1935, when the shadow of another Great War was already looming across Europe and its colonies, the story brings the adventures of Byomkesh, as documented by Ajit, closer to the theatre of science and imperialism, addressing the question of arms race, the face of modern warfare and the growing efforts of modern science to create weapons of mass destruction. The problem in grasping the true nature of the events that are unleashed in the story – those beginning with an unnatural death and ending up shockingly revealing the abilities of modern science to mass-produce such unnaturality – arises undoubtedly from the subaltern detective's short-sightedness towards Western science and a critical undermining of the abilities of the non-Western scientist. The story, opening in Byomkesh's drawing-room, begins with a tone of aversion towards science which Ajit is seen to adopt as the news of the All India Science Congress taking place in Delhi seems to him, an engagement of scientists around India "in contributing to Delhi's pollution with the fumes of their obnoxious rhetoric", the very report of which in the newspaper "was enough to line [his] cranium with soot" (Bandyopadhyay 130). His expository remark

makes it clear that Indian scientists always seemed to have an excuse to hide their incapacities behind their drivel, having been unable to invent something like the steam engine, the aeroplane, or even an insect repellent that worked; their deliberations, he observes, contributed only to "[n]onsense of the first order" (130). He reads out, to an unenthusiastic Byomkesh, the lecture of their neighbour Professor Debkumar Sarkar at the Congress – one which, completely antithetical to Ajit's premise, upholds the glorious past of ancient Indian science and criticizes the popular perception of Indian scientists as incapable, before going on to address the plight of scientific research under British colonialism:

> The state does not patronize scientific research; nor are the wealthier sections of society very eager to spend money on research projects. We have to work within the constrained resources that a handful of universities and some meagre grants from here and there are able to afford us. Our success, too, is commensurate with our circumstances. Just as the mouse, in spite of all its efforts, is unable to carry the burden of an elephant on its back, we too are ill-equipped to make pathbreaking discoveries when the purse-strings are so tightly drawn. A famished mind cannot conceive the colossal. (132)

As Ajit moves on to Debkumarbabu's appeal, on behalf of the native Indian scientist, for funding, support, resources and proper credit for scientific research, Byomkesh stops him, visibly irritated: "We want this, we want that, we must have the other. I'm sick and tired of all this blustering. Really, the grass is always greener…" (133). He scoffs at the plight of the Indian scientific community, dismissing their work as unfruitful and their remarks mere nuisance, an attitude which Ajit lends his support to. The scientist belonging to and upholding the hardships of their own community becomes the object of their ridicule:

> 'Habul may look to be a simple-minded boy', he said, 'but he is quite intelligent. Being his father, how can Debkumarbabu go around dumping such gibberish on all and sundry like a veritable whatsitsname?'
>
> 'It isn't necessary for an intelligent boy's father to be smart. Have you seen Debkumarbabu?' I asked. (133)

Byomkesh and Ajit appear, in their act of ridicule and scorn, "to essentialise the Orientalist's conception of the Easterners' aversion to science and technology" (Roy 13). Their reading the article in the newspaper – an act which embodies, as a reading practice, the enactment of individual and community-based assumptions (Ashcroft et al. 186) – thus reveal a marked, colonially-bred apathy of the colonized towards the progress of his own community, favouring instead the signifiers of colonial modernity and Western notions of scientific development; contrary to Debkumarbabu's championing of the cause of Indian scientists, they both succumb to the colonizer's manipulative practice of what Ashis Nandy calls the releasing of forces within the colonized societies "to alter their cultural priorities once and for all" and helping, in the process, "to generalise the concept of the modern West from a geographical and

temporal entity to a psychological category" (xi) – a succumbing which leads them to embody, under the hood of a certain cynical outlook, the indifferent attitude of the intended colonized.

It is this fault in the understanding of the Bengali sleuth and scriptor alike which continues problematically into Byomkesh and Ajit's encounter with the unusual scenario which presents itself in the story with Habul's bursting into Byomkesh's apartment, informing them of the sudden death of his sister Rekha, the daughter of Debkumarbabu. Rekha seems to have died while trying to light the oven; the coroner suspects an unknown poison to be the cause, leading to Byomkesh fixing his investigation on Dr. Rudra, Rekha's neighbour and the father of Manmatha, whose demanding of ten thousand rupees as dowry led to the failure of the prospect between Manmatha and Rekha, triggering Rekha's desire for suicide. Byomkesh's suspicion here is not latent but manifest as he directs even Birenbabu, the police officer investigating the case towards the doctor:

> 'Can you give me some pointers as to which path I should follow right now? There have got to be some clues which will give me a lead.'
>
> Byomkesh thought for a moment and said, 'Why not start with Dr. Rudra? Perhaps he holds the key to the way out of this maze.'
>
> Birenbabu looked startled. 'Oh? All right – if you say so…'
> (Bandyopadhyay, "Calamity Strikes" 150)

Byomkesh's adventures, it might be noted, often lead to doctors standing out as suspects, red herrings or ultimately criminals, such as the homoeopath Anukulbabu in "The Inquisitor" (1932)[4], Dr. Palit and Dr. Jagannath Prasad in *Bahni-Patanga* (*The Firefly*, 1956)[5] or Dr. Bhujangadhar Das in *The Menagerie* (1953)[6]. In the case of "Calamity Strikes", too, Dr. Rudra is presented as a cruel, disdainful medical practitioner with a record of having killed a number of patients while testing his self-invented injection – a fact which makes him an immediate suspect; however, while this repulsive projection of Dr. Rudra may highlight a fear of practitioners of Western medicine, what renders the situation more probematic is the dismissal of Debkumarbabu himself as a suspect: Ajit laughs at his apparent all-rhetoric, comical outward appearance of an eccentric academic and his 'stupid' act of remarrying, and even Byomkesh seems to overlook the possibility of his being involved in the affair. While poison is almost immediately associated with Dr. Rudra, it does not happen in case of Debkumarbabu, although he is a scientist by training and is equally capable of inventing a poisonous substance – a marked instance of lopsided ignorance on the part of Byomkesh Bakshi the truth-seeker.

But why overtly criticize such a lopsidedness? Are instances of Byomkesh's missing out on important details – such as the possibility of Amaresh Raha's carrying a pistol in "Picture Imperfect" (1951)[7] – not utterly uncondonable, given that solution is ultimately reached? Is Byomkesh's ignoring the possibility of Debkumarbabu's

involvement an instance of individual irresponsibility or does it once again require a critical note on the problems of colonialism? Given the weight of such evidence already against Byomkesh, it can suffice, for now, to say that such an ignorance leads, although indirectly, to the loss of not one but two innocent lives in "Calamity Strikes"; Byomkesh and Ajit, while walking in College Square, suddenly discover Habul dead, an unlit cigarette between his lips and a matchbox in his hand. The solution now begins to dawn on the narrative – Debkumarbabu had coated matchsticks with a poison of his own invention and slipped them into his second wife's matchbox in order to murder her and collect the insurance money; fate, however, had intervened as the matchsticks had been lit first by Rekha and then by Habul, killing them. Debkumarbabu, now apprehended, surrenders his box of poisoned matchsticks with a grim warning:

> Debkumarbabu brought it out of his pocket and placed it before us and said, 'Here you are. But do be careful, it is a dangerous thing. Each and every matchstick has a poisoned flame. Once you light it, there is no escape…' (156-57)

The assessment of the murder motive and its consequences, however, seems to overlook the gravity of the situation: as Debkumarbabu now murmurs to himself about the possibility of changing the face of modern warfare with his lethal poison, Byomkesh's criticism of his motive brings it down to financial gain by attempting to murder his wife; even Ajit's sentimental portrayals of the 'corpse-as-signifier' (Plain 32) in case of both Habul and Rekha – namely the body as a site of understanding the conflicting discourse of daily life and the wrecking effects of modern scientific weapons – seem to label Debkumarbabu more a transgressor of family values than a dangerous scientist, a threat to international peace. He almost seems, in Byomkesh's eyes, to have invented the poison by fluke, and the truth-seeker cannot help expressing his disbelief at the possibility of Debkumarbabu's having done so to begin with as their understanding of his speech in Delhi comes full circle: "[H]ow were we to know that he had truly made a momentous discovery and that his speech contained oblique references to it?" (Bandyopadhyay, "Calamity Strikes" 160) He is projected, in Byomkesh's commentary, as a scientist incapable of handling his own invention – a thought which seems to justify the colonizer's intent to keep the colonized subject away from scientific knowledge – and having ultimately wrecked his own home in a bid to satisfy his own personal needs. The story concludes on a prophetic note – one which carries the sense of an impending doom that civilization would only continue to witness:

> The sophisticated weaponry that is, in great secrecy, being produced all over the world today, might one day serve to destroy the entire human race. Like the demon who sprung into being from Brahma's imagination, like Frankenstein's monster, it won't even spare its creators. (161)

Byomkesh, even in his grim foretelling of the imminent lethality of modern warfare, remains myopic; while he mentions Japan and France as modern war-mongering nations, he is seen to miss out the name of Britain, the most brutal colonizing power and one of the main architects of World War I, as one capable of using Debkumarbabu's poison – thereby doubly preserving the status quo and rendering the evaluation ethically and sentimentally problematic.

The actualization of Byomkesh Bakshi as a subaltern answer to the detective(s) of the Empire comes not altogether without the problems associated with it. In the mirroring of a popular middle-class Bengali attitude and outlook, the encounter with science and knowledge and its problematic relation to the Western imperialist enterprise betrays a problematic apathy and indifference which ultimately renders the very same social mirror considerably spotted. While investigating and commenting upon the motives and motivations that underline the act of crime in "Calamity Strikes", Byomkesh exhibits, both as a detective and a middle-class colonized subject, "the ideological motivation to return to a period characterized by social stability and order" (Scaggs 46) – an ideology, a social stability and an order that only ends up facilitating the agenda of the white imperialist while Byomkesh the truth-seeker remains myopic in his assessment and evaluation of the greater truth he comes to encounter, only to be somewhat ironically redeemed in "An Encore for Byomkesh" (1935)[8], the sequel to "Calamity Strikes", where the box of poisoned matchsticks are stolen from the courtroom by Byomkesh's old enemy Anukulbabu – alias Kokanad Gupta – from "The Inquisitor" who tries to kill him with it – an act which ultimately brings Byomkesh more clearly to terms with the talent of Debkumarbabu as an Indian scientist and the full extent of the horror of his invention.

NOTES

1. Published originally in Bengali as "Agnibaan" (1935).
2. Published originally in Bengali as "Amriter Mrityu" (1959).
3. Published originally in Bengali as *Aadim Ripu* (1955). For lack of an English translation, this article has followed the original Bengali version of the text.
4. Published originally in Bengali as "Satyanweshi" (1932).
5. Published originally in Bengali as *Bahni-Patanga* (1956). For lack of an English translation, this article has followed the original Bengali version of the text.
6. Published originally in Bengali as *Chiriyakhana* (1953).
7. Published originally in Bengali as "Chitrachor" (1951).
8. Published originally in Bengali as "Upasanhaar" (1935).

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INTO THE MYTHICAL VORTEX: RE-INTERPRETING THE USE OF MYTHS AND PARADOXES IN THE WEB SERIES *DARK*

ARITRIK DUTTA CHOWDHURY

> Let me go: take back thy gift:
>
> Why should a man desire in any way
> To vary from the kindly race of men
> Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
> Where all should pause, as is most meet for all? "Tithonus" ll. 27-31

Dark is a story of a person who tried to defy the normative and transgress the pre-ordained orbit of existence. But is it just that?

Alvin Toffler says in *The Writer and the Futurist* that "The illiterates of the 21st Century are not those, who cannot read or write, but those that cannot learn, unlearn and relearn."

Remember our childhood days of learning Computers and using Paintbrush? All we did was scribble on the white canvas and 'Undo' it million times. Never knew it would be an inspiration enough for an epoch-marking series called *Dark*. Here is a series that proudly ends after untying knots and creating inextricable ones; the more you seethe through, the more you are lost in the quagmire. The title of the series takes one back to the adage "ex nihilo" that defines the cosmos of the universe being created from chaos called the Big Bang. Well, is science fiction all about fiction? Are myths more fictitious than fiction, or are they facts brewed and garnered by the "survivors" of apocalyptic destiny and hence held credible by the eons to come?

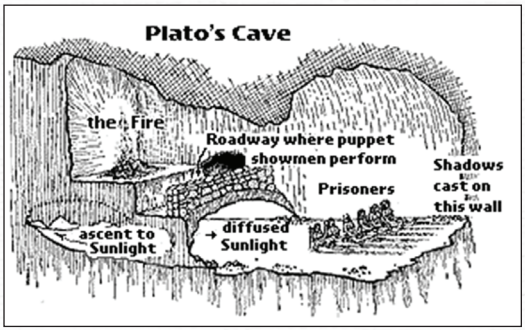
When God created the world and gifted man with prelapsarian innocence, he craved for a utopia. Before the Divine Fall of Man, owing to a mistake (often called the Biblical flaw) of not being able to resist the temptation of knowledge; man lived a life in Paradise. With the paradise lost, so was Utopia. What if in a post-apocalyptic story of man, a storyteller creates a Dystopia full of alternate realities where the Creation confesses that the process of creation was a mistake? That's where it all began. A glitch in the matrix. Jonas confesses: "We are the mistake".

The famous painting of "The Creation of Adam" has been used as a leitmotif to re-create the paintings of Adam and Eve, the expression of Adam unchanged, God replaced by Eve; taking the narrative to a level of Blakean Beulah where the Creator and His creation merge into one united whole. The latter often surpasses the other. The organ of pro-creation, covered by a deracinated lotus quickly flexes back to the oriental concept of the creation of the world where a lotus was born out of the navel of the redeemer, Lord Vishnu and within it sat Brahma; the creator of the Universe (Brahmanda = Brahma + Anda/Egg). However, the paintings do not seem to be in a mood of Sabbath, unlike the Biblical one, rather standing up front, ready to act and untangle the glitches.

There is, of course, an anachronism when we "read the Bible" as "something it is not traditionally perceived to be" by using modern forms or notions. Whether a reader decides to investigate this family resemblance depends on whether they believe it is appropriate to recognize a connection that is not merely coincidental. The Bible, Plato's Laws, The Republic, and other classical Greek works are often cited by scholars who study utopia as literature or as a philosophical idea. Garden of Eden has also had an impact on the development of the modern utopian genre. According to Manuel and Manuel, the idea of paradise is the "deepest archaeological layer of Western Utopia" and a "prolegomenon and perennial accompaniment to utopia." According to John C. Mohawk, "Utopian movements are not singular occurrences but rather an ascent of cultural memory." It is known that elements of a utopian ideology that originated in one time and place endure and may be followed by subsequent generations in very different situations.

The most important metaphor in "Dark" is the cave of Winden which acts as the transit between the worlds. This, uncannily, however, resembles the allegory of the cave stated by Plato in his philosophical renditions. Plato realizes that the general run of humankind can think, and speak, etc., without (so far as they acknowledge) any awareness of his realm of Forms. If we observe *Dark* closely, all the characters speak with their reasons, ethics, and validations until they realize, they are all part of a bigger game. The parapet can be compared with the cave passage to different periods.

Plato compares those who have not been instructed in the Theory of Forms to prisoners who are chained inside a cave and are unable to turn their heads. They can only make out the cave wall. A fire is burning behind them. A barrier exists between the inmates and the fire that puppeteers can traverse. Behind the inmates, the puppeteers are holding up puppets that cast shadows on the cave wall. The real items that pass behind the captives in the form of puppets are invisible to them. The shadows and echoes that the captives perceive are caused by things they cannot see. This is an illustration of Plato's Cave:



From Great Dialogues of Plato (Warmington and Rouse, eds.)
New York, Signet Classics: 1999. p. 316.

Plato's reference to prisoners in the cave can be compared with all the characters who are unknowingly tied in a game of time, unable to revert their decision because all of their deeds are destined. Such prisoners in Plato's allegory would mistake appearance for reality. They would think the things they see on the wall (the shadows) were real; they would know nothing of the real causes of the shadows. Plato's point is that the prisoners would be mistaken. For they would be taking the terms in their language to refer to the shadows that pass before their eyes, rather than (as is correct, in Plato's view) to the real things that cast the shadows. Some of the characters in *Dark* nrealize with time, with every cycle that the impending doom can be prevented while most of them remain in oblivion. The characters are shaken from their belief, sense, and rational justification to start believing in all the myths and promises. They tend to follow their leader who showed them the light.

The generic concepts of our language are not the "names" of the tangible things that we can see, according to Plato. They are names for things we cannot see and can only understand intellectually. By interacting with the shadows of books, the convicts may come to understand what a book is. But if they believed that the word "book" referred to something that any of them had ever seen, they would be misinformed. The characters in *Dark* apprehend before every move of theirs, they are unable to differentiate the difference between the truth and its shadow. They get molded once their beliefs take a toll. The characters get motivated when educated about a bigger role, they strive to fight for it and end all the remorse and pain once and for all. The characters feel once they are released from this never-ending cycle, they would have the free will to live life on their terms not guided by any destiny or Forms of theirs.

Dark, beyond a story of time travel and science-fiction bears obvious resemblances with the Biblical myths and prototypes which is too evident to need any discussion. The concept of God, Adam, and Noah are infallibly foreshadowed as a leitmotif to a story that deals with ontology and creation. But on microscopic analysis, one might often realize how deftly the nomenclature of these characters is done. The saint mentioned as a guide to the "travelers" (who presumably have appeared as outsiders to Winden aiming to disrupt the rhythm of the place) is St. Christopher. St. Christopher is best

known as the patron saint of travelers. The name Christopher means Christ-bearer in Greek or one who carries Christ. His legend is that of a tall ferryman in the third century who agreed to carry a child across a river. The heavy child turned out to be Christ with the weight of the world upon his shoulders. And on reaching the end of *Dark*, we know that Adam, the supposed helm of the 'travelers' is the Christ-figure in the story; or well, should we say an anti Antichrist in the dystopian world. We shall come to that soon-! Saint Christopher is believed to protect people from epilepsy, lightning, storms, pestilence, and floods. Now, something integral to the understanding of *Dark* is that it is a dystopian reality which would expectedly use the Biblical myths and motifs and intentionally subvert them to suit the context. So, the savior here becomes the mastermind behind the apocalypse, trying for redemption through destruction to the point of being Dionysian.

The Genesis flood narrative is among the best-known stories of the Bible. Noah is also portrayed as "the first tiller of the soil". Noah labored faithfully to build the Ark at God's command, ultimately saving not only his own family but mankind itself and all land animals, from extinction during the Flood. Even in this case, Noah remains a dedicated comrade to the mastermind, Adam, nevertheless trying to salvage mankind from extinction even at the cost of his own life.

Hannah was the mother of the Jewish judge named Samuel. Childless as one of the two wives of Elkanah, she prayed for a son, promising to dedicate him to God. Hannah as Jonas' mother needs no further elaboration in this regard if one has watched the series.

The name Jonas in Hebrew means "a gift of God". In Greek, it means "a sign". Jonas was a Hebrew Prophet used as a messenger bird by Gods and was sent by God to prophesy the destruction of Niveneh but he tries to escape the divine mission. The young Jonas, adopted by in the story is likewise used as 'a sign' or a trope between the two worlds and is used as an agent of destruction which he tries to resist till he is faced with the inevitability of multiple selves.

Mikkel/Michael is another obvious Biblical parallel in the story. Michael biblically was an archangel who leads God's armies against Satan's forces in the Book of Revelation, wherein the war he defeats Satan. An 'archangel' means the chief messenger or agent of God. Martha biblically is Lady Martha, also a sister to Lazarus (who came back from the dead). Mikkel could have been Lazarus- if Jonas was successful in bringing him back from 1986.

Augsburg's patron saint is Ulrich. According to legend, pregnant women who drank from his chalice had simple delivery, which led to his support of expectant mothers and straightforward childbirth. I can't think of a single incident in *Dark* where Ulrich was shown to have a sexual encounter without also becoming a father.

Latin in origin, the name Claudia is a female given name and means "lame; enclosure". She represents Jesus before Pontius Pilate as Pilate's wife. The term

"Claudico"—from which the name is derived—means "to shut or close," which is exactly what Claudia had been doing in an effort to put an end to the déjà vu.

Elizabeth is a feminine given name that is derived from a variant of the Hebrew name 'Elisheva', which, according to the Septuagint, means "My God is an oath" or "My God is abundance." She only commits to being and doing God, the Good; possibly as a result, she surpasses apocalyptic accomplishments and is the only significant figure envisioned in the future.

The Polish word for Bartosz is "farmer's son". Aleksander is not Bartosz' father, so this proves it. Someone else is doing it. When Paul refers to God as the Father from whom every family in Heaven and on Earth derives its name, he is alluding to this. In conclusion, these two pillars represent the lofty spiritual ideals that form the cornerstone of all existence: Jachin represents the Unity resulting from Being, and Boaz represents the Unity resulting from Love, which may have served as inspiration for the dialectics between Bartosz and Jonas in the story.

Jana (In Roman), is the wife of Janus who is the god of beginnings, gates, transitions, time, duality, doorways. This leads me to the conclusion that Tronte, her husband, is the one who created the doors and the hallways in the cave post-2019 after old Jonas had destroyed/created the wormhole.

Regina (means "queen") is the sole child of Claudia. Claudia after traveling through all the cycles acquired sufficient knowledge to find the key to how to end the entire catastrophe and hopefully end her child's pain. If not for Regina, the cycle would follow infinitely with the world starting anew.

According to the New Testament, Saint Peter, also known as Simon Peter, was an early Christian leader and one of Jesus Christ's twelve apostles. He received the honorific designation of "saint" from the first Pope of the Roman Catholic Church. He was laid to rest beneath Caesar after passing away. He is seen as guarding the entrance to heaven. Three times at the Crucifixion, he denied knowing Jesus. Christian tradition holds that Peter was the first disciple to whom Jesus manifested himself, counteracting Peter's denial and regaining his status (Denial to Noah and Helge).

As the season progresses and the story unfolds to narrate a dynamic plot-line, we are introduced to different characters each of whom has a goal to achieve. The epoch-marking season lays down the complex theory of traveling back and forth in time. It does not reveal what is the bigger game or what lies ahead for all the prisoners. It deals with how our past is connected to the future which directly affects the plan of action in the present. The season establishes four timelines across a century and responsibly puts the different puppets in different periods.

The second season directly shifts our focus to the post-apocalyptic world, a world where almost everything is destroyed in the town, few of the characters are alive and trying to make ends meet. The protagonist finds himself trapped in this world, unable to figure out the course of action. The director captures the attention of the audience with brilliant narratives and a tight screenplay. The protagonist eventually finds out

what caused the apocalypse and if there are any viable options to bring back life from the dead, only to decorate the mess unknowingly.

The third season, brilliant in its scriptwriting and screenplay engages us with the concept of quantum entanglement, alternate realities, and shakes our belief to the point where the simpler things become complex, and we are questioned with the basic understanding of the fourth dimension. The series is a tribute to all the theoretical physicists working on quantum theory, uses inspiration from some of their thesis and workings.

Newcomb's paradox, often known as Newcomb's conundrum in philosophy and mathematics, is a thought experiment involving a game between two players, one of whom can anticipate the future. The main characters, Adam and Eve, attempt to establish their prescience of the future as absolute, only to realize the absurdity of their existence. The expected utility principle and the strategic dominance principle are two game theory-based tactics that are offered for this game. Due to two assessments that provide contradictory solutions to the question of which option will maximize the player's payoff, the issue is known as a paradox. According to William Lane Craig, 'Retro causality' is a possibility in a world with perfect predictors (or time machines, as a time machine might be employed as a method for producing a prediction)(8). Events in the future will be having consequences in the past if a person actually understands the future and that knowledge influences their behaviour. The predictor's action will already have been triggered by the chooser's choice. Some have come to the conclusion that if time travel devices or flawless predictors are possible, then there cannot be free will, and decision-makers will follow their predestined paths. When taken as a whole, the paradox reiterates the classic claim that free will and determinism are mutually exclusive because determinism permits the creation of flawless forecasters. In other words, this paradox can be compared to the grandfather paradox since it assumes a flawless predictor, which implies that the "chooser" is not free to decide while also assuming that a choice can be discussed and decided. Some may interpret this to mean that the dilemma is a product of these incompatible presumptions.

Nozick's theory of knowledge - All the instruments (characters) employed by Adam and Martha eventually get sacrificed for the bigger price of salvation. His version of "Experience Machine" directly aims at Adam's ambition which he explicitly exercised to motivate people in joining his troupe and executing his plans to attain the ultimate goal.

In the alternate world, we find Eve with the same approach, aspiring the younger and adult versions of the population to fight for her cause. A striking similarity with Adam's intention but Eve has a different goal to achieve. While her counterpart seeks to achieve the apocalypse and bring an end to all the suffering and pain, Eve intensifies the show with a genuine concern to save her offspring.

Eve battles to keep her blood in the mortal world, seeks to achieve the apocalypse

in every cycle with the sole intention that the period of the cycle develops an infinite turn. Eve's child with Adam who goes with the name "Unknown" plays a cynical role of bringing demise to some of the characters both in the past and future.

An interesting concept explored in this season is the creation of alternate realities that are created at every moment of change. One can debate on this creation since we do not encounter the realities owing to minor changes but only the major ones. The penultimate season introduces us to alternate world's Martha after her form gets killed by Adam in the other world, the same event is narrated in the final season where the screen is split introducing us two realities, one in which younger Jonas gets saved by the Alternate world's Martha; while in the other reality, Jonas saves his life on his own.

The first reality lays down the entire plot of how Jonas transcends into the alternate world. Strategically, a mirror is used as a tool to induce the concept of lateral inversion. One observes how Jonas meets Eve. learns of her objective, tries to convince Martha for her goal but ends up giving his own life to the former. The cycle repeats henceforth with the creation of alternate realities again at this point, one which is not explored further at this point.

The second reality however deals with a far-fetched concept, most of which is debated off-screen but we are forced to believe in the reality owing to monologues and unfolding of certain events. In this reality, Jonas is saved against the apocalypse, he grows up into his adult version and comes back to Winden under the guidance of Claudia. In the turn of events, we find Jonas growing up to be Adam having no clue about the alternate world and no clue about his blood. The brutality portrayed in a particular scene where Adam gets to know that Martha is bearing his child, he stays firm and executes her in the attainment of his goal but all in vain. Enraged, he travels to the alternate world and guns down Eve only to start the cycle anew.

The final season which follows the introduction of the alternate world takes a sharp and drastic turn in the unfolding of events where we see a surge in the pace of story-telling and narrative. Time transcends from one period to another, giving us little scope to figure out which event follows the other.

According to Cartesian skepticism, everything that cannot be rationally justified should be questioned. Three arguments—the dream argument, the deceptive God argument, and the evil demon argument—are used by Rene Descartes to challenge our capacity for objectivity. Descartes suggests a creature in his "evil demon" argument that is capable of fooling us so thoroughly that we have good reason to distrust the veracity of anything our senses tell us. The Phaedo by Plato is the source of the classical emphasis. Plato held that the eternal Forms, of which physical bodies are only imperfect copies, are the actual substances rather than physical bodies, which are transient. Plato gives several arguments for the immortality of the soul in Phaedo, the most important of which is that the intellect is immaterial since 'Forms' are immaterial, and intelligence must have an affinity with the Forms it apprehends (78b4-84b8).

This affinity is so strong that the soul longs to be free of the body that has imprisoned it and to reside in the domain of Forms. It may take many reincarnations to attain this. Plato's dualism is thus more than just a notion in philosophy of mind; it is an intrinsic aspect of his entire metaphysics.

Darko Suvin calls Science fiction 'a literature of cognitive estrangement'. According to him, "Science fiction is, then, a literary genre whose necessary and sufficient conditions are the presence and interaction of estrangement and cognition, and whose main formal device is an imaginative framework alternative to the author's empirical environment." De-mystifying a series like *Dark* is a Sisyphean endeavour and the process seems to be analogous to the intentions of the makers of the series. The paper attempted to achieve darker depths and insights that would otherwise not be a pervasive arena to tread upon. The awe created by the grandeur of science and possibility, if not annihilates, definitely overshadows the profound literature and philosophy that stands like the rock-pillars of the script. And the deft use of the optimum inputs is the art of a chef trying to cook a perfect dish; unsure of the responses but definitely confident of carving a niche of his own!

The protagonists and their love- story used as apocalyptic bait are nothing but objective co-relatives to the representation of the two worlds that are so perfectly imperfect. Well, although like an obsessed lover Jonas claim, "You and I are perfect for each other, never believe anything else"; some union turn out to be nihilistic, the blasphemous child conceived of two worlds is a representation of the apocalypse, the creation of ultimate destruction: the anti - Christ. As they eventually realize, "Your lips, my lips, apocalypse"; they re-iterate John Donne's poem "The Good Morrow":

> Whatever dies, was not mixed equally.
> If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
> Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

The word 'if' throws open a world of possibilities and the audience is left with a final consummation of the reel and the real worlds and are coaxed into surrendering themselves towards a pursuit of the director. Echoing the words of Death- cab for Cutie:

> No blinding light or tunnels to gates of white
> Just our hands clasped so tight, waiting for the hint of a spark
> If heaven and hell decide that they both are satisfied
> And illuminate the no's on their vacancy signs
> If there's no one beside you when your soul embarks
> Then I'll follow you into the dark
> In Catholic school as vicious as Roman rule
> I got my knuckles bruised by a lady in black
> And I held my tongue as she told me,
> Son, fear is the heart of love, so I never went back…

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COMPLEXITIES OF CASTE IN BIBHUTIBHUSHAN BANDYOPADHYAY'S WORK: A STUDY OF APARAJITO

BISTRITI PARVEEN

A common theme that concerns many critics dealing with issues of power, agency and representation is the fact that knowledge is inevitably tainted with the interests of the producer of the said knowledge. Michel Foucault, in many of his works, explores the interdependent relation between knowledge and power (Mills 67). Gayatri Spivak in *Can the Subaltern Speak?* establishes that the process of production of knowledge (of the colonized East) itself is always implicated in its corruption for the purpose of serving the (Western) centers of power that make its production possible (Spivak 263). Similar concern about the nature of production of knowledge is iterated by Ranajit Guha when he exposes the 'elitist bias' of Indian historiography in his Preface to the *Subaltern Studies* (Guha vii). Attempts to rectify such 'elitist bias' in literature, specifically in relation to inadequate representation of caste has highlighted the importance of texts by Dalit writers, where the Subaltern speaks for itself. One important example of such a text is Manoranjan Byapari's *Interrogating My Chandal Life*. However, what remains to be adequately explored is the mechanism via which such elitist or casteist bias is created. In many Bengali texts of iconic stature produced during the colonial period biases surrounding caste can be observed. Caste biases inform texts that profess to be representative of life in Bengal. Through the simultaneous erasure of caste and it's construction as a benign or insignificant aspect of society the (upper caste) author constructs a world where the ill effects of caste are at once preserved in effect but dismissed from scrutiny.

In this paper I shall interrogate the erasure of caste in the iconic Bengali novel *Aparajito* by Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay. I shall also attempt a systematic comparison of the novel with *Interrogating My Chandal Life* by Manoranjan Byapari to explore the significance of diminishing the role of caste in the trajectory of Bandyopadhyay's hero. Expecting Bandyopadhyay's *Aparajito* to have adequate representation of various castes is crucial for it to be considered an authentic reflection of colonial life in Bengal as the novel covers a wide range of places and cultures as its setting thus potentially being a repertoire for the various castes within Bengal as well as outside it. In Apurba's künstlerroman we see him struggling through life,

floating from place to place, from his hometown Nishchindipur to Kashi as a young boy, to Burdwan as the son of a maid, to Monshapota again as a young priest, to Dewanpur for his studies, and then to Calcutta. After his studies he stays at various places both within and outside Bengal for his job like Chapdani, Delhi, Nagpur and Umeria. All these experiences enrich his inner artist and fuel his finer sensibilities. At the end of his long struggle Apurba emerges as a successful writer. Since he has been acquainted with a wide variety of places and people in very different situations in life, it is a realistic expectation that the people he meets would belong to various castes, instead of belonging predominantly to any particular caste. And yet we find that to not be the case. The miscellaneous assortment of people who nourish his repository of experiences largely come from the upper castes. People from the lower castes fail to find a place in his paraphernalia of experiences and the lived experiences of those people do not enrich the artist within Apu. Through his novel the author is creating a world where the lower castes simply do not exist. By doing so the author is also dismissing the positive role that caste has played in the fate of his hero. In light of this inadequacy of representation I shall compare this iconic Bengali novel with Manoranjan Byapari's autobiography *Interrogating My Chandal Life* that is set just a few decades after *Aparajito* but in which the protagonist Jeeban albeit being one from the lower castes comes from a similarly poor familial background as Apu and like him travels far and wide to emerge as an artist. The purpose for this comparative analysis is to examine whether and how caste plays a role in the life of Apu when compared to Jeeban. This in turn will determine the gravity of omission of varied caste representation in Bandyopadhyay's novel thus shedding light on the effect of implicit caste biases within established literary canon. The course of life for the protagonists of the two novels are starkly different even though they both start from similar conditions of financial hardship and have to move from one place to another to sustain themselves. The outcome of their long period of hardships is also very different for the two protagonists as is the significance of their fruitioning into artists. It is precisely owing to their caste identity, that is, the social capital bestowed by a higher caste identity and the hindrances put forth by a lower one that determines the course of life for the two characters.

In Akrur Sangbad Apu's departure from the idyllic village of his childhood takes place after his sister's death as his family leaves for Kashi. The bustling city of Benaras , a stark contrast to the picturesque countryside of Nishchindipur, is bursting at its seams with a myriad of people. Apu's stay in that city marks his first encounter with the larger world outside. He quickly becomes friends with some other boys. He also becomes acquaintances with other people like the kathak thakur, and the landlord. The author, however, does not show us Apu making friends with or interacting at length with anybody of lower caste even in the cosmopolitan city of Kashi. At one point the kathak thakur identifies himself as a kshatriya. The author never explicitly reveals the caste identity of Apu's friends but it is implied from their family's status and position as zamindars and government officers that they belong to the upper castes. After Harihar's death, they move to a rich household with her mother working

as a maid there. The household had required for a Brahmin woman, a "jaater meye" since she would be required to enter the house and help with the domestic works inside the house. There we see Apu becoming friends with Lila, who is the daughter of a mistress of that house. Bandyopadhyay paints detailed pictures of them spending time together and frolicking about the household. While the cordiality and kindness bestowed upon him by the mistress and her daughter is portrayed as the result of Apu's captivating charm and innocence, the curious, nature-loving and imaginative facets of Apu's character could have led him to become friends with the lower caste stable boys and other lower caste servants engaged outside who are not allowed to enter the house. However scenes of his friendship with them are not shown by the author even though their presence is acknowledged. We get a brief scene where Apu visits the house of one of his poor friends from the school he attends there. The author describes the dingy condition of the house with its low damp floor and lack of ventilation that had repulsed Apu and prompted him to leave. Similar to the previous instance, here as well, the reader is not introduced to his friend or any of his friend's family. Characters that can potentially be belonging to the lower castes are left out by the author from his detailed sketches. Interestingly, in *Aparajito*, Apu briefly encounters a Santhal nomad who wanders from place to place, sustaining himself by hunting small animals. His vagrant lifestyle stirs wonder in the adolescent Apu's mind inspiring in him dreams of adventure. It is notable that when the author finally introduces a character that is identifiably an outcaste, the difficulty of their life is elided by looking at their nomadic living through the lens of fantasy, by portraying it as a refuge from mundane domestic life. In *Aparajito*, after arriving at the city of Calcutta, Apu survives despite much financial hardship. There, Apu studies at Ripon College and later does clerical jobs. He is hardly able to sustain himself in the harsh city. With barely any money to afford himself, he hops from one cheap lodging to another. He only manages to survive with the kindness and sympathy of some other tenants. Even at this juncture of his life we do not explicitly see him developing acquaintance with people outside his caste. The kind wife of a fellow tenant at a cheap lodging who charitably washes his clothes is referred to as "Tewari bahu". Another woman who cooks for him after Aparna's death is a kin of Ganguly ginni- she belongs to his own caste. Even those of Apu's many friends from his college whose identities are revealed by the author belong to his own caste. At one point Apu tries to venture into business. He tries to gather insight into it by talking to shopkeepers at a busy market in Calcutta. However the author does not introduce us to the shopkeepers with their full name and thus their caste identities are left obscured. By refusing to impart detailed identities to lower caste characters Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay essentially creates a world peopled only by the upper castes. The lack of diversity in representation of caste in the novel becomes acutely apparant as Apu travels outside Bengal. As he travels to Delhi aimlessly, on his way he meets a Bengali gentleman and his wife. After visiting Delhi he decides to stay with them. Later he is offered a job by an acquaintance of the gentleman, a geologist to work in the side line of camps for a copper mine at Umeria. He accepts the job and relocates there from Calcutta.

For his new job he stays at a bungalow near the camping site. At the bungalow a caretaker serves him food at night. One day Apu goes out on a trip to explore Amarkantak. Lost on his way, he stumbles across a dak bungalow of the forest department. There he meets an elderly person who stays there. That person takes care of Apu and provides him food for the night. Every single person that is mentioned by their names in this episode outside Bengal belongs to the upper castes. The gentleman he meets on his way to Delhi and later stays with is named Abanimohan Basu. The geologist who offers him the job is mentioned as Mr. Roychowdhury. The caretaker of the bungalow is Ramcharit Mishra, and the elderly person at the dak bungalow who provides him shelter for the night is a "maithili Brahmin, Ajab Lal Jha". He does not meet any lower caste person even by happenstance. Bandyopadhyay's narrative refuses to acknowledge the existence of the lower castes. In this world that nurtures the artist-hero, where trials and tribulations of life are but mere turns of fate without deeper socio-political implications, and cruel turns of fate are but opportunities to discover people's mercy and kindness, where hindrances are but veiled opportunities for the hero to enrich his experience of the world and to cultivate his sensibilities, that the author constructs, he refuses to taint it with the existence of the lower castes, whose fates are the result of social evil, whose tribulations are not ephemeral. Unlike the world of *Ichhamati* that is more cruel and less fairytale-like, where the author's indifference to common people's misfortunes mark the narrative, where the lower castes exist within the village ecosystem, in both *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito* they are banished from the artist's nursery. But like *Ichhamati,* in *Aparajito* as well the story focuses primarily on the upper caste hero. In both these novels the author avoids sustained focus on the inner world of the lower caste characters. Bandyopadhyay's construction of such a world attains deeper significance when he admits the presence of the lowest castes in the metaphoric underworld in the narrative. They are introduced at the lowest point in the artist's trajectory of attaining artisthood. Introduced during the most barren period of Apu's artistic nature, acquaintance with these people are shown to result in his artistic sterility. After Aparna's death, heartbroken Apu moves to Chapdani. He takes up a job as a schoolmaster in a rural school and lives near the jute mill slums there. Here, for the first time the author introduces us to characters who are explicitly identified as lower caste from their names. Apu, to relieve his boredom, plays cards with the likes of Bhim Shadhukha, Mahesh Sanbui, Nilu Moyra, and Fakir Addi. And yet this episode in Apu's künstlerroman does not become a window to explore the lives and struggles of the lower castes. Instead it becomes an affront to his sensitive and imaginative temperament. His companions are shown to engage in lewd jokes and crude discussions that repulse Apu. Unlike the poverty of Monshapota that elicits tender pity, or the squalid lodging in Calcutta that was redeemed by the kindness of wives and matrons, the shabby streets and poverty-ridden stripped down lives of Chapdani, peopled by the lower castes were seen as something that strangles and numbs his artistic instincts. Instead of the sensitive and adventure-seeking Apu enthusiastically wondering at and exploring lives that are vastly different from his own, he is shown

to feel suffocated at this place. While at previous instances the Kathak Thakur's untidy house and the gluttony of one of his poor friends from college has raised in Apu pity and love, here the author does notarouse in Apu similar tender emotions at proofs of their failings. The narrative thus hrusts the lower castes and their lives into the metaphoric underworld. Like the pits of hell it chokes life out of the artist-hero rendering his sensibilities infertile. Unlike other instances of life's difficulties, Apu fails to extract anything positive out of it. The author denies the narrative of any positive connotation related to their acquaintance thereby reinforcing the covert biases around caste that inform Bandopadhyay's narrative.

By omitting the existence of lower castes in his narrative the author paves the ground for diminishing the role of caste in Apu's success. Although the readers are reminded of his caste at a few instances, by erasing the other side of the coin, that is, the lives of those to whom caste privileges are not available, the author is creating the implication that such caste privileges enjoyed by Apu is in fact natural and legitimate. In the second part of the paper I shall attempt a comparison between the life of Bandyopadhyay's Apu and Byapari's Jeeban to analyse the role that caste plays in their lives. Aparajito begins with Apu trying to find a job to free his mother of the exhausting manual labour at the rich household. While Apu only ponders on it and never actually has to quit his schooling to take up jobs, this prospect seems to be the default custom for Jeeban and his family. In Jeeban's life schooling is something of a rare opportunity and working odd jobs to feed oneself is an automatic expectation. On the very day that Jeeban was supposed to enter the government run school at the refugee camp it is shut down and news of the refugee camp itself closing down starts coming. Thus his hopes of education are dashed. Jeeban is not forced into doing menial jobs from a tender age to assist his parents but decides to do so to satisfy his own hunger. Such dire is their poverty that unlike Apu he can not afford to be driven by instincts of cooperation and sympathy but must confront difficult choices for the sake of self-preservation. Apu's mother, however is freed from this life of toil after a brief period as they again resume their domestic village life at Monshapota. This becomes possible as an uncle of Sharbojoya offers to give them shelter in his home in exchange that Apu would act as a village priest in his stead and share with him the alms collected from the devotees while the uncle himself stays in Kashi. Their return to Monshapota eventually sets Apu up to pursue systematic schooling and puts him on his path to academic success. Compared to this, no such luck strikes Jeeban or his family. They have no such "jyathamoshai" who can rescue them from their hardship. Kin of Jeeban's family, by virtue of belonging to the same caste as them, has no easy way to earn a living or to help each other. When Jeeban's uncle and his family flee from East Pakistan they could not be cared for by Jeeban's family who were struggling to make ends meet themselves. Nor is any of Jeeban's kin capable of rescuing them from their life of uncertainty and hardship in the refugee camp. Despite ties of kinship they must fend for their own selves. The difference in influence of their familial connections, which is a result of their caste identities, that these two families have, determines their separate paths and goals in life. Despite

his poverty Apu is ultimately able to overcome the hardships of life because of the institutionalised privileges as well as the implicit caste biases of the society. On the other hand in *Interrogating My Chandal Life*, the Namashudra Jeeban's family struggles with poverty for multiple generations and continues to do so even after they migrate to India after the partition. Unlike Apu, Jeeban's story does not end on a happy note, but with promises of continuing struggle. He does not achieve financial stability as a writer but only grows up to become smart enough so that he would not be cheated out of his wage any more. Neither his education nor his literary talent offers him any respite from the pains of poverty.

After Harihar's death in Kashi his mother is forced to take up a job as a maid in a rich household. This rather unpalatable job that saves Apu and his mother from destitution in the foreign land is obtained through their caste privileges. The masters of the household were specifically looking for a Brahmin lady whose entry into the household for doing domestic work would not render the house polluted .

> A way out was found after a couple of months. A gentleman from Kedar ghat informed the mission office that a rich family he is acquainted with requires a Brahmin woman, a woman of their caste who shall stay in the house and help with the domestic works. Whether the mission can find someone suitable. At last, with the mission's connection, the gentleman agreed to send Apu's family to that house.

Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay stresses on Apu's talent as a student as the basis for his later academic success. The scholarship he bagged prodded him on to complete his education. However the encouragement he received from his teachers for taking the test can not be attributed to either his fortuity or their benevolence. While announcing his marks one of his teacher remarks: " Such a bright boy, he has made our school proud. If boys like them do not study who else shall study, Keshto teli's son Gobordhan?" Implicit caste bias of his teachers who wanted the Brahmin boy to win over the son of a 'teli' contributed to his future success. Manoranjan Byapari's Jeeban, on the other hand, grows up unlettered. Instead of a school he later learns his letters in the jail. At Dewanpur's high school, when Apu can no longer afford to pay for his food and lodging from his scholarship money and has accrued debt with the washerman the "deputy babu" takes him to his home and offers him residence there while he completes his education. It is apparent that such kindness would not have been available to Apu had he belonged to Jeeban's caste. As observed previously where Shorbojaya was allowed to work as a maid inside the house because her touch as a Brahmin woman would not pollute the household, here in Apu's case as well he is allowed inside the house due to the fact that his touch could not pollute the headmaster's household. The fortuitous turns his life takes that on the surface seem to be the result of people's kindness towards him for his extraordinary talent are really the effect of social capital that his caste bestows on him. While doing odd jobs as a child labourer at Sealdah station, one time Jeeban manages to get a job as a cook at weddings . The only condition his boss tells him to follow is that he can not reveal

his caste identity as a namashudra to the people he is cooking for.

> But I belonged to the Namashudras, the lowest of the lonely communities. We were 'jal-achal'. A term which meant any water touched by us would be rendered unusable after that. We were untouchables. Entering the kitchen of a high cast was forbidden to us. [...] 'What's your name?' he asked me. On hearing my name, he said, 'Don't tell people this name. And if people ask about your caste, say it is Kayastha.

However, not surprisingly, one day their caste is revealed and they are punished by those who hired them.

> We could not keep up the facade and it was soon revealed that one of us was a Kaher from the south of Bengal and the other a Namashudra from the east. Both of us belonged to the untouchable community. [...] They made us hold on to our ears and do sit ups. They made us bend down so our noses touched the ground and were rubbed against it. This may have been simple fun for them but to us it was the ultimate humiliation. The next day at break of dawn, we stole away without telling anybody. Our minds were filled with such shame and inadequacy that we were unable to ask for our dues.

Untouchability and caste identity were of paramount importance at the time when Aparajito is set and continued to be so several decades after. Apu gaining easy access to people's houses is a privilege that is not available to all. Despite the author's insistence Apu finding acceptability and kindness among various spheres has less to do with his charm, innocence, handsome looks, or talent than it has to do with his caste identity. It should be noted that Apu himself is not innocently unaware of his own position in the caste hierarchy. While staying in the rich household one day after his "upanayan" Apu tells his mother in jest that he should not eat the leftovers on her plate since he is a Brahmin. Again while staying at Calcutta when a young woman asks to marry him, his first response is to dismiss it declaring he is a Brahmin. After completing his schooling from Dewanpur Apu goes to Calcutta to get his college degree. Although he no longer receives a scholarship there he manages to afford his own expenses by giving private tuitions. He is shown to be selected for his 'mark of distinction' in his appearance. One day the cook of the cheap hotel he eats at chides Apu for not paying his dues saying "You owe me the price of two months and seven day's meal. Anyway, I can't do this anymore, so do not come here again. I'll think the food was eaten by a gentleman's son. What else can I do?" The lower caste runaway boy Jeeban, dressed in rags and sleeping on the footpath would never be mistaken for a gentleman's son and therefore none would offer him food if payment is due or offer him jobs based on his refined appearance. In Siliguri, on his way to Assam Jeeban has to clean dishes in a shop in exchange for the day's food. Jeeban spends his adolescence doing menial labour to feed himself. Sometimes as a helper in tea shops, as a labourer who breaks coal blocks for railway engines, as an assistant to a cook, and sometimes as a coolie for merchants, he earns money to sustain his life. Unlike Apu

who had lived a sheltered life despite poverty, who, as a penniless student, manages to feed himself by visiting his friends or temples, but refuses to give up his dream of studying, Jeeban is spurred on by hunger itself instead of the thirst for knowledge. His close acquaintance with hunger and the cruelty of life has bereft him of any romantic sensitivity.

Both Apu and Jeeban possess literary talent, both of them brave through immense hardship and penury to successfully become writers towards the end of their narratives. However the stark difference in their subject matter and inspiration behind their literary endeavours seem to be informed by the respective caste positions each protagonist occupies and the way that has shaped their personal perspective. Apu's inspiration as a writer comes from his romantic sensibility that has preoccupied him since his childhood. Confronted with the idea of his own mortality upon witnessing the death of a telakucha creeper in a forest he is overcome by the urge to leave behind his legacy for the generations to come. He wishes to "capture with ink and paper the life he had witnessed, and all its joy and beauty. Until he had written it all down for others to read he could not rest in peace." He decides to write about ordinary people. "He had met such different people; in the streets, in markets, in villages, in the city, and on trains- ranging from holy man and teachers and singers to owners of shops, beggars, puppeteers, hawkers, even poets and writers. He would write about all of them." His choice of subject matter is imbued with a peculiar lack of political consciousness. Despite the narrative being set at a time when British India was at the peak of its anti-colonial struggle, we do not see Apu being affected by the political turmoil. Although he decides to write about the common folk, he still wishes to capture the beauty and joys of their inconspicuous lives instead of exploring their struggles and its causes. Apu's writing becomes a way for him to shield himself from any unpalatable harshness of reality and to indulge himself with spinning dreamy tales of languid rustic life. Jeeban's literary inspiration is the antithesis of Apu's. Jeeban is spurred to write by the need to convey the adversities he has witnessed in the battle of life that he and those around him had to endure. Compared to Apu who is drawn to stories of adventure in faraway lands, writers like Mahasweta Devi inspire Jeeban's literary spirit with their close resemblance to his lived reality - stories of the Naxalite movement and rape of adivasi women. His writing sheds light on the tribulations of those at the lowest rung of the social ladder instead of being a romanticised rendition of poverty. Unlike the Brahmin Apu who will always have his caste profession of priesthood to fall back upon despite his many troubles, and therefore never being required to form any concrete political opinion, Jeeban's life as a low caste Namashudra forces him to get intimately involved in politics which thoroughly influence his temperament as a writer. For Jeeban writing never becomes a respite from the real world. Instead it becomes an extension of his political struggles. Difference in caste identity and the life it bestows on the two writers plays the most crucial role in determining their trajectories as artists. Not only does it impact their subject matter but also the worldview their art inherits. When compared against Jeeban's life, it becomes apparent that caste had played a pivotal

role in Apu's life and journey towards becoming an artist. It appears to be the primary reason that Apu emerges as 'aparajito' or unvanquished.

Gerard Genette in his *Narrative Discourse* introduces the term 'focalization' to improve the concept of point of view. It refers to the extent to which the narrative information is restricted, that is, the 'cognitive,emotive, and ideological orientations of the narrator'. By removing the lives of lower caste characters from the focalization of the narrative the author effectively creates a world where the ill-effects of caste can be obscured. At the same time by concentrating the narrative focus on the upper caste hero's success while refusing to admit the role of caste in that success Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay creates a world where the divisions of caste can be legitimized. It is important to remember that Bandyopadhyay does not create a world where divisions based on caste find no mention. The readers are explicitly informed of the identity of upper caste characters. The upper caste characters pointedly receive favours and benefits owing to their caste identity. However, by refusing to linger on the lives of the lower caste characters, by not creating situations within the narrative where it would become necessary to linger on those who received the short end of the caste stick, the narrative simultaneously obfuscates the impediments of a lower caste identity and sanctions the privileges of a higher one. Bandyopadhyay uses a somewhat similar method in *Adarsha Hindu Hotel*. Although Hajari, a Brahmin cook is as impoverished as the low caste Kushum and receives help from her during his misfortunes, at no point does Kushum try to ascertain equality between them. From the very beginning the author makes Kushum willingly subservient to Hajari because of his caste identity, almost deifying him through the girl's devotion. Consequently, the favours that Hajari receives because of his position on the caste system are rendered justifiable. Here the author legitimizes caste hierarchy by creating characters that voluntarily submit to the caste system, posing no threat or challenge to it. Bibhutibhushan Bandyopadhyay's lack of commentary on the caste difference and its faithful observation by all characters exposes his attitude towards this practice. In Aparajito, employing the multipronged method of simultaneously minimizing the narrative significance of the lower caste and constructing a world where the privileges of the upper castes remain unscrutinized, the author effectively provides justification for the caste system prevalent in the society that his story supposedly reflects.

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