

QUEST

*An
Adventure
of
Ideas*

Editors: Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Amlan Datta

ARTHUR KOESTLER

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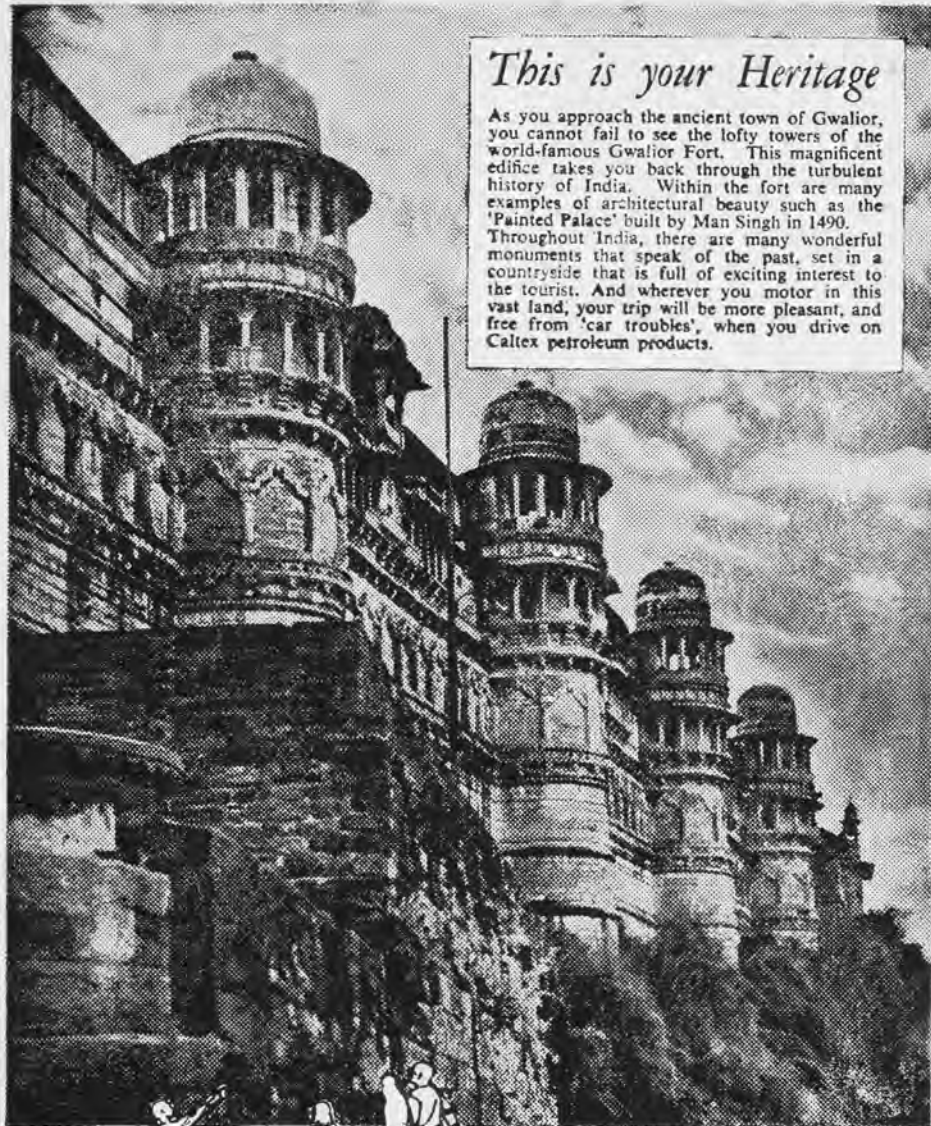
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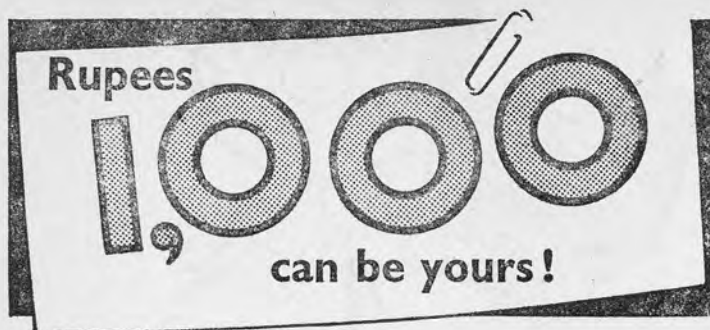
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FORM IV

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|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|---|
| 1) Place of Publication | Bombay | 5) Editor's Name | Prof. Abu Sayeed Ayyub
and Prof. Amlan Datta |
| 2) Periodicity of its
Publication | Quarterly | Nationality | Indians |
| 3) Printer's Name | Miss Sheela Singh | Address | 5 Pearl Road, Calcutta 17 |
| Nationality | Indian | 6) Names and addresses
of individuals who
own the periodical
and partners or
shareholders holding
more than one per
cent of the total
capital. | Indian Committee for
Cultural Freedom.
Army & Navy Building
148 Mahatma Gandhi Rd.,
Road, Bombay 1. |
| 4) Publisher's Name | Miss Sheela Singh | | |
| Nationality | Indian | | |
| Address | 148 Mahatma Gandhi Rd,
Bombay 1 | | |

I, Sheela Singh, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to
the best of my knowledge and belief.

February 28, 1959

Miss Sheela Singh
Publisher & Printer

Q U E S T

A Quarterly of Inquiry, Criticism and Ideas

Edited by ABU SAYEED AYYUB and AMLAN DATTA

Advisory Editors : NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI, SUDHIN DATTA, LAXMANSHASTRI JOSHI

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QUEST IS SPONSORED BY THE INDIAN COMMITTEE FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM

Reviews Editor : A. B. SHAH

Business Manager : MISS SHEELA SINGH

All contributions, which must be type-written with double spacing, and correspondence regarding contributions should be addressed to THE EDITORS, QUEST, 5 PEARL ROAD, CALCUTTA 17. Contributions will be returned in case of non-acceptance only when adequate postage is enclosed. For subscriptions and other matters please write : THE BUSINESS MANAGER, QUEST, 148, MAHATMA GANDHI ROAD, BOMBAY 1

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Edited by STEPHEN SPENDER and MELVIN J. LASKY

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Literature and Ideology

By ARTHUR KOESTLER

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

In 1942, I knew a young fighter pilot, Richard Hillary. He had been shot down in flames in the Battle of Britain when he was not quite twenty. His earlier photographs showed him as an extremely attractive young man; when I met him, his burnt and shrivelled hands were like birds' claws and his face a mask of plastic surgery. He was given a job by the Ministry of Information, published a book 'The Last Enemy', which instantly became a bestseller, had an attractive mistress, and led a pleasant life in London. Yet after a couple of years of this, he tricked the Medical Board into certifying him fit for active service, returned to flying and was killed a few months later by an accident while training to become a night fighter.

His letters from this last period described a kind of double existence which he was leading at the aerodrome. During the day, his burnt body suffered from the intense cold, he was bored, frightened, irritated, a prisoner on the trivial plane of life. But at night—as he described in a letter—'it is curious psychologically that I have only to step into an aeroplane—that monstrous thing of iron and steel just watching for its chance to down me—and all fear goes. I am at peace again. . . There are the Circles of Peace again. . .'

We discussed this dualism of experience; my letters to him were lost, but he summed up what I was trying to say better than I could have done. In a letter to a third person, he wrote:

Koestler has a theory for this. He believes there are two planes of existence which he calls the *vie tragique* and the *vie trivial*. Usually we move on the trivial plane, but occasionally in moments of elation or danger, we find ourselves transferred to the plane of the *vie tragique*, with its non-commonsense, cosmic perspective. When we are on the trivial plane, the realities of the other appear as nonsense—as overstrung nerves, and so on. When we live on the tragic plane, the joys and sorrows of the other are shallow, frivolous, trifling. But in exceptional circumstances, for instance, if one has to live through a long stretch of time in physical danger, one is placed, as it were, on the intersection line of the two planes; a curious

situation which is a kind of tightrope walking on one's nerves... I think he is right.'

So far Hillary, the pilot. But there is another type of person condemned to walk on the intersection line of the two planes: the artist. For this meeting of the trivial narrative of life with its tragic essence (a meeting which in the average citizen's curriculum only occurs in a few solemnly catastrophic moments of danger, death or unhappy love) is the very essence of art. Art is the gift—or curse—of perceiving the trivial objects and events of everyday experience *sub specie eternitatis*; and conversely, to express the absolute in human terms, to reflect it in a concrete image. John Donne's sonnet to the Virgin Mary 'Immensity cloistered in thy dear womb' succeeds in doing this in a flash. 'The infinite is made to blend itself with the finite; to stand visible, as it were, attainable there. Of this sort are all true works of art; in this we discern eternity looking through time' (Carlyle).

NOW THERE ARE various ways in which literature can become such a window in time, in which the intersection of the two planes is achieved. The tragic or cosmic plane of experience may be more or less conscious, more or less articulated. It may, for instance, be projected into the symbols expressed in the archetypal images of myth, folklore and religion. It may be felt and not stated: the actual words may be not more than the vibrations of a tuning fork, which makes the reader resonate without knowing why. Lichtenberg said that the works of the protestant mystic Jacob Boehme were 'like a picnic where the host provides the words and the guests provide the meaning.'

On the opposite end of the scale, we have the articulate type of narrative literature in which the tragic or cosmic plane manifests itself in the shape of an ideology. I am using here the word 'ideology' in the broad and, I believe, legitimate sense as a system of coordinates, a grid of perception, a hierarchy of values derived from certain beliefs about the ultimate nature of reality and the meaning of existence. Again, this ideology may be stated explicitly or merely implied on various levels of consciousness. Allow me to quote an early example of ideological literature: the Biblical story of Jonah and the Whale.

Jonah is described in the story as a quite ordinary and decent fellow who has committed no crime to warrant his dreadful punishment. At worst he has a streak of common vanity for he is said to be 'very angry' when, at the end of the story, God does not raise Nineveh as Jonah had prophesied at God's own bidding, who thus makes Jonah appear as an imposter or fool. Now this very ordinary person receives, at the beginning of the story,

a sudden order from God 'to go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it'—which is a rather tall order, for Jonah is no professional priest or prophet. He understandably prefers to go on leading his happy and trivial life. So, evading the call from the Tragic Plane, he buys a passage on a ship to Tarshish; and he has such a clean conscience about it that while the storm rages and the sailors cry 'every man unto his god' and throw the cargo into the sea, Jonah himself is peacefully 'fast asleep'. And therein precisely lies his sin—in his normality, in his complacency, in his thick-hided triviality and refusal to face the storm and God and the corruption of Nineveh; in his turning his back on the tragic essence of life—therein precisely lies his sin, according to the narrator's idea, which must be punished by journey in the belly of the whale, 'the belly of hell'.

The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth . . . closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head . . . *yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God.* When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto Thee . . . *They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.*

This savage punishment of complacency is perhaps explained by the fact that in none of the ancient or modern civilisations was the tension between the Tragic and Trivial Planes more intensely felt than by the Hebrews. The first, the tragic plane, was represented by an unending succession of catastrophes, by the exacting presence of Jehovah and of his apocalyptic prophets; the trivial plane by the rare periods of relatively normal life which the overstrung spiritual leaders of the tribe condemned as abject. For, I repeat, Jonah's only crime was trying to lead a normal life and to disregard the uncomfortable, unjust, terrible voice from that other plane of existence. Melville understood this when in the great sermon in 'Moby Dick' he made his preacher sum up the lesson of Jonah in this unorthodox moral:

Woe to him who seeks to pour oil upon the waters when God has brewed them into a gale! Woe to him who seeks to please rather than to appal! Woe to him whose good name is more to him than goodness! Woe to him who, in this world, courts not dishonour!

Contrast this with the moral at the end of Voltaire's *Candide*: "Let us cultivate our little garden", or with the Buddha's "Middle Way". The astonishing thing is that both ideologies seem equally plausible, convincing, self-evident—because they are not propaganda pamphlets but works of art. But let us have no illusions about the 'objectivity' of art. There is always an ideology behind it, however indirectly stated, because all art attempts to answer a tragic question and each answer implies a programme—or at least an attitude to life.

Let me take a second example from a period more than two millennia later. I shall read you a passage from the great peroration of Ulysses in the

first act of Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida'. I hope you will agree that the passage is poetically strong and expressive, but I fear that you will also find it rather confusing and meaningless if you are not familiar with the ideological framework behind it:

The heavens themselves, the planets, and this centre,
 Observe degree, priority, and place,
 Insisture, course, proportion, season, form,
 Office, and custom, in all line of order:
but when the planets,
 In evil mixture, to disorder wander,
 What plagues and what portents! what mutiny!
 What raging of the sea! shaking of earth!
 Commotion in the winds! frights, changes, horrors,
 Divert and crack, rend and deracinate
 The unity and married calm of states
 Quite from their fixture! O, when degree is shak'd,
 Which is the ladder to all high designs,
 The enterprise is sick!.....
 Take but degree away, untune that string,
 And, hark, what discord follows! each thing meets
 In mere oppugnancy: the bounded waters
 Should lift their bosoms higher than the shores
 And make a sop of all this solid globe:
 Strength should be lord of imbecility,
 And the rude son should strike his father dead.

Well, you may ask, what is all this excitement about, what is the cause of this apocalyptic vision, what is the valiant Ulysses so afraid of?

The key word of the passage is the word 'degree': 'The heavens themselves, the planets and this centre (the earth) observe degree, priority and place'. And later on: 'O, when degree is shak'd, the enterprise is sick'. To us the word 'degree' is rather abstract and unpoetical, but to the Elizabethan audience in the theatre it was a familiar allusion to a view of the world, a philosophy that was taken for granted. It was a view based on Christian doctrine, Neoplatonic philosophy and Aristotelian cosmology — the universe as Dante, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan poets see it.

It was a walled-in universe like a walled-in mediaeval town. In its centre was the earth dark, heavy and corrupt, surrounded by the ten concentric crystal spheres of the moon, sun, planets and stars, each repre-

senting a higher degree of perfection, up to the abode of God. To this hierarchic order of *space* was attached a hierarchy of *rank* and *value* which stretched down like a ladder or graded scale from the supreme ruler of the universe, through the hierarchy of angels, which keep the crystal spheres of the stars spinning, down to man. Here on earth, the *cosmic* ladder continued as a *social* ladder with its hierarchy of kings, barons, knights, commoners, and serfs, then down through the *animal*, *vegetable* and *mineral* kingdom into inanimate nature, and further down into a conic cavity in the earth, around whose narrowing slopes the nine hierarchies of devils are arranged in circles duplicating the nine heavenly spheres.

In this rigid, static, petrified universe (whose affinities with the caste system I need not stress) every *change* that would confuse the order of the cosmic ladder was regarded as a universal catastrophe because, owing to the rigidity of the system, the disturbance would immediately spread both up and down the ladder: 'O, when degree is shak'd, the enterprise is sick. . . What raging of the sea! . . . frights, *changes*, horrors'. Notice that the word 'change' stands between 'frights' and 'horrors' and was regarded as a synonym in that fear-ridden age.

I would further like to call your attention to the passage 'Take but degree away, untune that string, and hark what discord follows'. The musical imagery here is not just a poetical metaphor but a concrete allusion to another ideological concept: the harmony of the spheres. This concept originated with Pythagoras in the sixth century B.C. and was again much in fashion following the Platonic revival of the Renaissance. The harmony of the spheres was supposed to be a celestial music produced by the planets as they swish through space, each at a different speed. According to legend, Pythagoras was the only man who was actually able to *hear* the music of the spheres, because ordinary mortals are too grossly constituted. That both Shakespeare and his audience were familiar with this concept can be gathered from a number of similar passages. Thus, for instance, in the 'Merchant of Venice,' where Lorenzo explains it to Jessica:

... soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony...
Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patiness of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings...
Such harmony is in immortal souls:

But, whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

If you are interested in this particular subject, I would refer you to Professor Tillyard's 'The Elizabethan World Picture' and to my own forthcoming book 'The Sleepwalkers'. The purpose of my quoting these examples was to demonstrate that even the most timeless works of literature, without any apparent ideological bias, will reveal under the X-ray camera a scaffolding of well-defined moral values and philosophical assumptions. *There is no game without rules of the game, and there is no work of art without some working hypothesis behind it.*

In this sense, but only in this sense, all literature is committed, is a literature *engagee* (engagement). This leads to two opposite dangers: *firstly* the literature *engagee* may degenerate into a literature *enragee* (enragement) as it happened with the Marxist literature of the thirties and again recently in the French existentialist circus. *Secondly*, the yearning to escape one's ideological chains may end in escapism, the evading of all worthwhile problems.

Concerning the first of these dangers, we know that the artist's mission is not to solve but to expose, not to preach, but to demonstrate. We are aware of the difference between art and propaganda, between the universal and the topical—but it is not always easy to draw a line between the two, and even a Tolstoy did not always succeed in doing so.

The second danger—the flight into the ivory tower—is very much in evidence in the contemporary English novel. Our Book Society choices are still teeming with young ladies in old country houses who skip or amble through mellow gardens with a tennis racket in one hand and a volume of Proust in the other. However competent the practitioners of this domestic craft are, after some two hundred pages of ultra-sensitive or charmingly dotty dialogue, the reader suddenly feels a barbaric itch to ask the young lady just what she thinks about the hydrogen bomb. To avoid all misunderstandings: I, the reader, do not expect the young lady—let's call her Clare—to discuss this subject with her young man; it would be most embarrassing and annoying if she did so; but I do want to know what kind of person Clare is. *Either* Clare knows about the hydrogen bomb and the mortgage on the country house but nevertheless continues serenely with her Proust—then this fact gives me an important clue to her character. Or Clare has never heard about those things—then this fact again provides me with a clue of an opposite kind. In both cases, Clare's relations—or absence of relations—to the relevant problems of her time are clarified and put into

perspective. That is what matters to me and this is the kind of information which I expect the author to convey to me. I do not miss the hydrogen bomb in the *dialogue*, I miss it in the author's consciousness. Clare need never to have heard of the Bomb, she need not even know how babies are made—but the author must know it. *To create innocence, one must have awareness of guilt.* To define the position of a point in space, one must have a system of coordinates. And every system of coordinates has the curious attribute that it embraces the whole infinity of space.

And thus at the end I am back at my starting point. All true art is a tightrope walk on the line of intersection of the tragic and trivial planes of existence. When the acrobat slips, art degenerates into propaganda, or escapes into a bloodless cloud-cuckoo land, it ceases to be art. Walking the tightrope is a very tricky profession.

Evaluation of Creative Literature

By DAYA KRISHNA

LITERATURE, like art, is an attempt to catch and articulate the significant moments of one's experience and, at a deeper level, to explore the depths and dark recesses of experience with the help of the symbol and, at a still deeper level, to detach, re-form and re-shape experience into an autonomous, self-sufficient, significant whole whose filiations to that from which it has been de-tached, though certainly there, are irrelevant in terms of significance. The symbol always goes beyond that which it symbolizes. It does not merely articulate but it explores and creates.

The symbol is the dividing line between the arts; their use, the dividing line between the arts and the sciences. Each type of symbol sets problems of its own—the problems of technique in the arts. Mere technique marks the craftsman. One who articulates, explores and creates is the artist.

Word—the written Word—is the symbol that marks out literature from the other arts. The strength and weakness of literature lie in words. The whole world of semantic reference is its bane and its delight. Its perennial use for indicative, persuasive and imperative purposes is the greatest temptation to which it is constantly exposed. Always in danger of slipping into the pedestrian uses of language, it has at its command, resources of such richness as none of the symbolic media used by the other arts can ever dream of.

Lingering over moments surcharged with

significance,—that is Memory. It is the primary art-form—the attempt to hold what was significant, to circumvent the irreversible process of Time, to clip its wings and freeze it into an ever-alive but immobile Present. But Memory is no mere memory. In circling round the significant moment, in lovingly fondling the images that arise, it subtly changes the contours of sense and feeling and colours it in tints more appropriate to one's own sense of significance and form. Imagination, thus, is never far from Memory. In fact, it is already implicit in it. The so-called falsifying function of Memory is its imaginative aspect which people decry because of their excessive preoccupation with the veracity aspect of it.

Image, common to both memory and imagination, is caught by the symbol and given a fixity and depth which it did not possess before. The image is too much in the present and too much floating on the surface. The symbol gives it an anchorage and a dimension and all that was submerged behind the image is caught in the net and gradually revealed by the symbol. Striking deep into the past, it projects into the future also and, thus, bends the straight line of time into a closed circle where everything returns to itself and the whole is self-sufficient unto itself.

The symbol touches experience at many points and many levels. Experience, however, is too ambiguous a word and means all sorts of things to all sorts of people. To

many, the only experience is sense-experience or, at least, experience in its fullest sense, the paradigm for all other 'experiences'. But sensory experience or any other experience is always 'lived through', and that which is 'lived through' is hardly understood either in terms of concepts or meaning, significance and value. The attempt to understand in terms of generalized, inter-related concepts leads to science on the one hand and philosophy on the other. The attempt to understand in terms of meaning, significance and value leads, on the other hand, to art and religion in different directions. Concerned with these, the arts and religions have meaning, significance and value in themselves while the conceptual constructions of science and philosophy are interesting only in so far as they help us in understanding the phenomena.

The development of experience beyond the sensory level is accomplished through the symbol. But the primary use of the symbol among men is not in the articulation, exploration or creation of new levels of experience but in a constant interchange of thought and emotion at the ordinary level, or for influencing the thoughts, feelings and actions of men in the desired directions. The artist treats and uses the symbols in a different way than either the scientist or the philosopher or the common man. They are intrinsically important for him as for none other and he uses them, at the deepest level, to de-tach experience from all the irrelevancy in which it is embedded and with which it is surrounded. The symbol is the living tool with which the artist creates a pure world of experienced significance. Art is not 'the imitation of an imitation' as Plato thought. Rather it is the distilled essence of experience more alive than experience itself. The distillation, however, is not in terms of concepts where Plato thought essences to lie, but in terms of significance and value caught in the

concrete image which may be considered as the feeling-counterpart of the conceptual universal.

The symbol, in the hands of the artist, does not *primarily* serve for purposes of communication as many have thought. Its function rather is to abstract, articulate, explore and create. Art, ultimately, can only be contemplated. Its contemplation can only lead to the re-living of another's experience, the becoming aware of shades, nuances and aspects one had never suspected in one's experience before, the participation in experiences one had never known. Art dissociates feeling from desire, emotion from impulse, sentiment from action. Its measure of failure is its failure in effecting this dissociation, so difficult to achieve. The perversion of art is the other way round: to influence feelings to arouse desire, to en-flame emotions to arouse impulse, to strengthen sentiment to arouse to action.

The perversion is not felt as a perversion by many who seek sensation or instruction or moral elevation or religious exaltation or political passion. These, and many besides these, are worthy ends of human action. But the person obsessed with a single value tends to treat all others as instrumental to its realisation. This, though an understandable weakness, is fundamentally wrong; for, values have an autonomy which is realised only by those who pursue them. The integration of values which are intrinsic and autonomous cannot be achieved, as many seem to think, by the hierarchic subordination of some to some other. It can only be achieved by an acceptance of their autonomy and equal validity at the personal and social levels simultaneously. Each has to be understood in its own terms and not in those of any other.

This simple and obvious truth has been profoundly misinterpreted in the slogan 'Art for Art's sake'. As a protest against the perversion of art, it is amply justified. As a re-

call to the immanent, autonomous values in terms of which alone any work of art can be relevantly judged, it is perfectly all right. But as suggesting that art has got nothing to do with world or life or experience, it is supremely mistaken. Art is an approach to world, life and experience co-ordinate with other approaches. It can neither supplant them nor be a substitute for them. But neither can they, singly or collectively, be a substitute for it. Science and Philosophy, Art and Religion provide approaches that cannot be exchanged for one another. Art is no ivory-tower; but neither is science nor philosophy nor religion, though many seem to think so. But science or philosophy or religion is not social reform or moral pursuit or the production of utility-goods. But neither is art any such thing, though many well-meaning people want otherwise. And didn't somebody say that the way to some nasty place is paved with good intentions?

Words are tricky tools, too much loaded in one direction. They declare, cajole, persuade, command, interject, express, arouse. To turn them to the use of art is to bend them against their inclination, to make them forget their function. Or, to make their normal function serve unwittingly something else, something deeper, something different. The story of literature, like that of man, is the story of the Temptation, the Fall and the occasional Resurrection. Not so occasional as in the realm of the spirit, still it is not as frequent as many imagine. The subtle transformation of Temptation into the lure for horizons, of the Fall into the thrust down into the deep of the roots for the sap to turn to the skies and beyond is the secret alchemy both of life and art.

Word is the most pervading symbol man has created. It touches experience at all points and penetrates at all levels. The feeling that glides softly like a breeze, the

passion that rages like a storm, the ambition that stings into feverish days and sleepless nights, the dull, drowsy-heavy-laden boredom that settles like a stupor on the heart and turns everything into a dusty haze with sand-particles crinkling under one's tongue, the daily round of a dozen cares, the Moment that leaps across and spans the horizons, the quiet strength of the mountains, the stately grace of trees that stretch their arms to the loving wind, the losing depth of the seas, the resplendent light of the sun, the gladdening madness of the moon—all these and a million other things that move the human heart and the human mind to song and tears and laughter and aspiration, it touches and penetrates and envelops and illumines.

The conflict between one good and another good and the awareness of something beyond all goods permeates the human situation. The private and the public good, the good which is neither private nor public and the good which is no good but rather a state of being, haunt perennially the human mind. Action always *seeks* a value and through seeking gives unity, meaning and significance to time in which our life is inextricably involved. Contemplation does not *seek*; it only contemplates and, thus, stills time. Between action and contemplation, art inclines to the latter though the natural inclination of the word is in the direction of the former. The dialectic between time and the timeless is the essence of human experience. The action-oriented person treats the contemplative as an escapist dweller in some cloud-cuckoo land. The contemplative just contemplates the sweeping beauty of motion and immortalizes it in some cosmic dance of Shiva. But the man of action does not dance. Rather, he is the Absolute on the white charger whose beauty can be seen only by the eye of the artist which contemplates it. Gross is the field of action; the subtle escapes it. External are the ends of

action; an inner transformation of consciousness, the ultimate goal of contemplation.

The continuous transformation of the temporal into the time-less is the essence of art. But the temporal is many-faceted and multi-dimensional. The stream that flows as conscious experience has depths unrevealed on the surface. Art not only makes us aware of those depths but makes us *hold* them in the clear light of consciousness. The stream not only has depth but flows on towards the sea, to become the ocean it aspires to be. This ocean, art attempts to embody and sometimes comes miraculously close to it. Of the arts, literature is perhaps the one that attempts this most often and in its greatest creations comes close to realising what experience is always trying to be.

The truth of experience is the only truth that art or, for that matter, life knows. Science and philosophy seek truth in terms of theoretic coherence; art and religion in terms of realised experience. The poet's moon does not exist in the scientist's world and the moon which the scientist knows is irrelevant to the poet's world. The love that makes the heart beat and the world glow with a suffused wonder is unknown and irrelevant to the physiologist, psychologist and sociologist who try to grasp it in their different ways. But, equally, what they say is irrelevant to the lover as he lives through and feels his experience. Love, in this, is akin to art and religion. Like them, it uses memory and imagination to create a world of experienced significance which has little relation to the world as explored, articulated and understood by science and philosophy. Unlike art, however, it is never, even potentially, a publicly shared experience. Unlike religion, on the other hand, it is never the affair of a solitary which religion ultimately and essentially is. A semi-conscious creation between two persons, the others are irrelevant to it. They may help or hinder or be indifferent

but, in no case, may they be invited to participate in it. Their participation is an intrusion that breaks the charmed circle and if the participation be helped by one of the lovers themselves it gives rise to what is known as jealousy.

Science creates the elements through nuclear fission and the compounds through synthesis in the laboratory and the factory. Art parallels this in the world of experienced significance through what may be called symbolic dissociation and symbolic synthesis. The former disintegrates the feelings associated with the familiar symbols; the latter recombines the familiar into a novel pattern. Both are present to some degree in every work of art, but the emphasis is always varied and different.

Art, as we have already said, is concerned with human experience in terms of its experienced significance. Literature as an art form is, however, primarily concerned with experience as an interaction between persons. The feeling for Nature has inspired some great poetry, but landscape-painting catches it even better. On the other hand, even the greatest portraits of Rembrandt epitomising the experience of a life-time seem inadequate as a medium when compared with what literature can do in the field. The greatest triumph of dramatic illustration in stone and paint seem to fall short of the achievements in the field of literature concerning the same themes. The triumphs are, in fact, of a different order and in a different direction.

The interactive experience between persons is the central theme of human life as lived and literature celebrates this to the utmost extent. Love, jealousy, ambition, rage, hatred, lust, sympathy, tenderness, sorrow—the whole gamut of emotions between persons is its joy and its delight. The curve of the emotions is its curve; their dynamic, its dynamic. The drama that goes on between persons daily is its theme; their

anguish, its anguish; their ecstasy, its ecstasy.

Moral values pervade this realm, the realm of inter-personal interaction. It is thus that all great literature centres around moral conflict. The essence, however, lies not in morality but in conflict. Literature does not moralise; it only illuminates the moral conflict. The saint who has never been tempted hardly interests the literary artist. The Buddha seated in deep meditation may challenge the chisel of the sculptor or the brush of the painter, but never the pen of the writer. The man who is tempted but does not succumb to the temptation interests the writer only a little. It is the one who falls and yet, in falling, redoubles his grandeur that fascinates the literary artist. Or, subtler still, falling externally one who achieves internal redemption or falling internally, one who achieves external success fascinates him still more.

Literature, to the moralist, therefore, almost always appears immoral. It is not partial to good as the moralist would like it to be. Rather, it is fascinated by evil and wants to explore its innermost processes and understand how it overcomes and is overcome by good. To the living man, however, it is the most fascinating of all the arts as it alone gives him an insight into his life as lived and experienced and, in the process, takes him beyond the conflict of good and evil.

Politics, in the strict sense, has never concerned literature. The business of government is mostly left alone by it. Only as drama does it ever concern itself with it. The kings and their battles or loves or adventures—it has written about in the past.

More recently, the betrayal of values, the subtle intertwining of good and evil, has been its theme. Masses in revolt, the struggle against injustice, the wars and revolutions—whatever it writes about, it is always the drama in the minds of men or the drama outside them or the subtle intertwining of the two that it is concerned with.

Literature as an art-form, thus, serves neither morals nor politics nor truth as sought in philosophy or science. In its evaluation as a creative art-form, therefore, they are utterly irrelevant. But in providing a background understanding for critical evaluation of some types of creative literature, they are indispensable as an informational framework without which the first steps in intuiting the sense cannot be undertaken. This is particularly true of those literary works which presuppose a philosophic-religious background or which ostensibly concern themselves with socio-political issues that agitate their own times. With morals, on the other hand, what is required is a deep lived experience of the values that agitate one being and pull it in different directions.

These, however, are only the pre-requisites of the task of critical evaluation of creative literature. They do not provide the criteria in terms of which it is to be judged. These can only be found in the intensive depth, the extensive comprehensiveness, the creative novelty with which the lived experience is articulated, explored and created in the literary work that is to be evaluated and judged: Any other criteria will either be purely technical or extrinsic to the work and, thus, be irrelevant.

Is Literature Enough?

By NISSIM EZEKIEL

I HAVE entitled my paper, 'Is Literature Enough?'. This is perhaps too cryptic to be satisfactory as an indication of what I am going to say. Rather than explain it at length, I hope it will be clear as I go along that this theme falls properly under the subject of our Seminar. Even if it does not appear to, at first glance, I shall try to treat it in such a way that it becomes relevant to the relation between Literature and Belief.

I would like to begin with a personal episode which illustrates the problem for me. It occurred when a literary friend asked me to lend him a book on ethics which I was reading. I expressed surprise that he should want to read it, considering the intensity and all-embracing nature of his interest in literature and the arts. His reply was that as he grew older (he was at that time twenty-five) he felt the need for something more 'substantial'—as he put it—than poetry, fiction and drama. "Surely," he said, 'I need some sort of a philosophy of life, something in which I can believe'.

Evidently he had not found in literature, whatever other pleasures he may have derived from it, something in which he could believe or, at least, not enough. So far as I can remember, I never lent him the book. It was *Five Types of Ethical Theory* by Prof. Broad. I don't suppose he ever read it. If I *had* lent it to him, I would not have done so with the feeling that it would help him to find something in which to believe. I doubt if I found something in that book to believe in. I was not reading the book as part of my search for viable

beliefs. I saw the study of ethics and philosophy as part of a larger interest in what I can only call knowledge. I think I told him so, and he dropped the matter, but not before I had read out to him the following passage from Prof. Broad's preface to *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. I quote:

'It is perhaps fair to warn the reader,' says Prof. Broad, 'that my range of experience, both practical and emotional, is rather exceptionally narrow, even for a don. Fellows of colleges, in Cambridge at any rate, have few temptations to heroic virtue or spectacular vice; and I could wish that the rest of mankind were as fortunately situated. Moreover, I find it difficult to excite myself very much over right and wrong in practice. I have, e.g. no clear idea of what people have in mind when they say that they labour under a sense of sin; yet, I do not doubt that in some cases, this is a genuine experience, which *seems* vitally important to those who have it, and *may* really be of profound ethical and metaphysical significance. I recognise that these practical and emotional limitations may make me blind to certain important aspects of moral experience. Still, people who feel very strongly about *any* subject are liable to overestimate its importance in the scheme of things. A healthy appetite for righteousness *kept in due control by good manners*, is an excellent thing; but to "hunger and thirst" after it is often merely a symptom of spiritual diabetes.' (Italics mine).

That cooled my literary friend's ardour for finding something to believe in with Prof. Broad's help. The imaginary spectacle

of the whole of humanity, which Prof. Broad conjures up for us, without temptations to heroic virtue or spectacular vice, practising righteousness with a proper regard for good manners on all occasions, did not appeal to us. If our acquaintance with literature as a mirror held up to nature gave us any insights into human behaviour, it was certainly not because of any incapacity to be excited over practical problems of right and wrong. Our beliefs, such as they were, unquestionably took their strong colours from our feeling that the fate of the tragic hero, or the pathetic picture the Fool presents to those around him, involved us and affected us. To that extent the beliefs of authors and the beliefs of the characters they created, exercised their profound influence on us. Was that enough to give us something in which to believe?

Recollecting the episode now, I feel I was essentially right, that my friend would not have found an answer to his difficulties by reading those books of ethics and philosophy which formed part of my studies. Nevertheless, I feel I was wrong to turn him away empty-handed. I had a lurking suspicion that there were certain books of moral philosophy which would indubitably have helped him at least to define his problem. I could have recommended the Nicomachean Ethics. I suppose I could similarly have mentioned Plotinus, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius, Confucius, the Gita and many others of that class. Among the sources of my beliefs, I might conceivably mention these, and an exhaustive list would not be difficult to compile. My friend would not, at any rate, suffer by reading these classics on human behaviour and spiritual experience. Yet, somehow, I had the inescapable feeling that to make him embark on such a venture would equally be letting him down, unless I did something to restore his faith in or repair what I cannot help considering his faulty understanding of literature.

It might even confirm his obscure sense of a fundamental lack in literary interests, which were 'all very well in their own way' as the saying goes, but needed to be supplemented by what may be called the Literature of Belief.

The Gita, at least, has the advantage of being a poem. The other examples I have mentioned have distinguished literary values, to put it mildly. One may without hesitation, recommend them to students of literature not as philosophical substitutes nor as complementary essentials for having one's beliefs properly shaped, but as an inherent and indispensable part of the study of literature, like the Bible. Or so it seems to me.

I feel I ought to have tried to define on what grounds and in what different ways the study of literature is enough to provide one with that central source of belief which so many fail to find in it. I could have warned him, at the same time, against shifting the focus from poetry, fiction, drama and literary criticism to what he mistakenly thought was more 'substantial,' that is, ethics and philosophy. I could have told him that it would be quite profitable for him to make periodic forays into neighbouring territory, provided he returned to literature and related what he found outside its strictly literary limits to the activity of mind and emotion which was his proper concern inside. The absence, as a rule, of communicable doctrine in literature and its obvious strength and clarity outside it need not be intimidating. When we say 'didactic' in literature, we suggest a distinctly lower order of literary creation. Social, political and moral assumptions are implicit in literature and can be brought to the surface in study, often revealing a coherent pattern of belief which is not unimpressive. Of course, it may be theatrical or superficial, but it is there. Part of the understanding of literature is the conscious rejection of the 'message' view

of it and the development of the capacity to understand the morality of the artist and his creations as distinct from the conformist morality of the average man, a keener sense of key moral terms such as loyalty and obligation. There is a sense, which non-literary persons often misunderstand, in which novelists are the most obstinate of moralists, clear and bold in their knowledge of society and its problems. That this knowledge is not available in sociological terms is not its weakness but its strength. A good literary education conveys a feeling for social and moral problems for which there is hardly any substitute.

At this stage, I must guard against giving the impression that I am going to defend the view of literature as the highest expression of the human soul, as sublime utterance surpassing all other human achievement, as the voices of genius, as monumental, imperishable creations in which is enshrined all that is noble and good and great. That sentimentalism never fails to disappoint when one begins to read a literary classic, than which no experience appears duller, to some people at any time and to most people at least occasionally. Nor am I in favour of championing pure literary values, pretending that questions of language, form and structure, have some high aesthetic and cultural significance, whereas content is the accidental result of fortuitous circumstances which need not detain us more than temporarily. I do not believe that we can simply disagree with the author's point of view, reject his 'content'—the word has an almost contemptuous ring—and proceed to enjoy the fictional qualities of the piece, undisturbed by moral, social and political issues. Another extreme point of view is to emphasise literary history, surveys, trends, analyses of historical contexts, environmental and biographical studies, concentration on 'data,' as it is called, which invariably eclipse the work of literature as a totality, a

vehicle for a specific communication with endless implications and nuances.

I am assuming, of course, that the hypothetical reader, for whom these questions of literature and belief are being raised, is seriously, that is, by temperament and will, interested in literature i.e. he enjoys reading, for its own sake, a novel, a poem or a play, that he turns to it as naturally and as avidly as he takes up his daily newspapers, with more expectation, though, of spiritual nourishment. This statement I feel compelled to make. The absolutely fundamental premise on which my discussion is based is that I am trying to locate and describe the problems of the relation between literature and belief for an ideal, hypothetical reader, whose whole being is oriented towards it, to change the metaphor, who has his roots in literature. I am aware that there are other classes of readers, to whom literature is not the major interest. To discuss their problem one would have to take a different point of view. What one can or cannot get out of literature does not matter very much unless one is intimately in touch with it. In that sense, belief seems to be the very last thing for which you would go to Shakespeare or Jane Austen. There seems to be more, in that line, elsewhere.

A distinction seems in order here between a basic pattern of belief worked into a sensibility, expressed in a mode of moral judgment and demonstrated in a way of living, and contrasted to it, the formation of convictions and opinions subject to wide fluctuations according to the spirit of the times. The former is the outcome of an individual's response to the civilization of which he is a part, the greatest single influence within it being religion. The prohibitions and exhortations of parents and teachers play their major role in determining his moral values. He believes in a great many things before he becomes conscious of belief as a problem. The history of his country

shapes his racial memory and makes him alive to his national heritage. He develops favourable complexes, or deep-rooted antagonisms which may or may not be overcome by a larger humanist faith, a strand of which inevitably runs through the culture of which he is an heir. Even the social manners and graces become an important part of his beliefs, which run into the sea of his life from innumerable cultural tributaries of past and present. If I may again change the metaphor, to suit my purposes, the leaven in this amalgam, from which it operates as a vital force, is the literary interest.

The word literary, it is perhaps necessary to insist, is not a limiting, but an enlarging one. In the admirable words of F. R. Leavis ".....a real literary interest is an interest in man, society and civilization, and its boundaries cannot be drawn". Here then is the answer to one whose awareness of his own literary interest was devalued by an undefined faith in something outside it as a source from which a philosophy of life could be derived. Literature in its special forms crystallises responses to man, society and civilization, embodying beliefs among other things which in turn give to the reader, with the inevitable personal resonance, the same range of interests.

It is true that the writer's beliefs constitute only one of the elements which matter in literature. It is also true that these beliefs lose much of their potency when abstracted, as beliefs, from works of literature. It is one of the improper uses of literature to carry out this process of abstraction and to prejudice or confuse the issues raised in a novel or play by confronting the reader with an epitome of its ideas separated from their concrete articulation. Response to these

beliefs can never be the same as response to literature. The generalisation is a pointer rather than a fair summary of the writer's beliefs. Very little can be gained by saying: "This writer believes so-and-so", which belief I share with him or which I reject. The belief and the quality of it as evidenced in the language and imagery, are largely implicit. They illuminate the work from within, and that is their main function. Outside it, they are at most intelligible, often not even that. At the same time, paradoxically, the writer's beliefs give the literary work a considerable part of their significance. It is possible to enjoy a novel and detach oneself from the beliefs expressed in it. It is far better to enjoy it, if it can be enjoyed, and come to grips with its beliefs, to measure the extent to which they are the making of the novel or its ruin, discover their relation to the reader's beliefs and allow them to be modified in the process. In this way, works of literature make a total impact and provide the greater part of what a man may need to shape his own ideas. In this connection, a statement by T. S. Eliot is relevant: "Those who talk of the Bible," he says, "as a monument of English prose, are merely admiring it as a monument over the grave of Christianity And the fact that men of letters now discuss it as literature probably indicates the *end* of its literary influence." With this view, I concur. Appreciation of the Bible's literary values should be through the complex of beliefs which make those values powerful. And our conclusion from this can only be that we should take our literature as an integrated whole and not nibble at it for beliefs or aesthetic pleasure. To do so is to devalue it and to deprive it of the role which it can play in our lives.

The New Orthodoxy in Criticism

By V. V. JOHN

“THE work has been done, the re-orientation effected, the heresies of ten years ago are orthodoxy.” So wrote F. R. Leavis in the opening chapter of his *Revaluation*, published in 1936. Though he was referring specifically to T.S. Eliot’s work in rehabilitating the Metaphysical poets, the words would seem to apply generally to the techniques and theories of the new criticism of which both Eliot and Leavis are, in different ways, reputed exponents.

As a critic T.S. Eliot has long been accepted at his own valuation. Even in pointing out the defects of his criticism, he has himself helpfully shown the way. In laudatory assessments of his criticism, one often comes across tolerant references to the rather ‘pontifical’ manner of his early critical work. The phrase was supplied by Eliot himself, who in the preface to the second edition of *The Sacred Wood* handsomely deplored their ‘pontifical’ manner, even though this did not induce him to revise the text. The playful verses, “How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot,” have helped in spreading the common impression of his austere and meticulous utterance:

“his conversation, so nicely
Restricted to What Precisely
And If and Perhaps and But:

How unpleasant to meet Mr. Eliot.”

Presumably, and on his own admission, here is a plenitude of the meticulous and the unintelligible—which, as everyone knows, are the staple of academic existence.

On closer examination, however, it may be found that Eliot’s criticism is not quite so formidable; it could often be imprecise,

and fallaciously, though pleasantly, downright. This may be illustrated by his theory and application of the ‘objective correlative,’ which according to Eliot himself is “one of the two or three phrases of my coinage which have had a success in the world astonishing to their author.” It is, to quote Eliot again, one of ‘a few notorious phrases which have had a truly embarrassing success in the world.’ In criticism, as in everything else that admits of two sides to a question, it must be pleasant to have it both ways. It happens however that, whatever be the service that the phrase ‘objective correlative’ has rendered to modern criticism, the Master himself, on the first occasion when he employed it, did it in such a way as to confuse and mislead the reader.

Here is the original passage, which occurs in Eliot’s essay on ‘Hamlet and His Problems’: “The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an ‘objective correlative’; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula for that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.” The same idea, in simpler terms, was expressed by Eliot in his essay ‘On the Metaphysical Poets’: “(The Metaphysical Poets) were, at best, engaged in the task of trying to find the verbal equivalent for states of mind and feeling.” That this verbal equivalent would be other than direct statement is implied in both passages. Another implication is

the so-called 'impersonality' of art. The poem is sufficient unto itself, and, for communicating its significance and producing its effect, should not need the adventitious aid of biography, historical background and a study of the intentions of the poet. It is an invitation to look closely at the 'words on the page' and to ignore all else. The poet has laid his egg, it is committed into your hands for consumption, and no further reference to the chicken that laid it is called for.

ALL THIS is simple enough and would have been helpful but for the ministrations of the searchers of subtlety and the explicators of the obscure. These officious individuals cannot bear the thought that any concept in criticism should deliver a meaning to the common reader without their midwifely ministrations. The confusion has been assisted by Eliot himself who, on two separate occasions, made statements that leave the reader in doubt as to what he meant by the 'objective correlative.' The first of these was in the very essay in which he first used and explained the phrase. Of *Hamlet*, he says, "So far from being Shakespeare's masterpiece, the play is most certainly an artistic failure." Expressed in terms of the theory we are dealing with, it would seem that *Hamlet* is an inadequate objective correlative of Shakespeare's emotions on the theme. The chief evidence that Eliot finds for this inadequacy is that "Hamlet (the man) is dominated by an emotion which is inexpressible, because it is in excess of the facts as they appear." "Hamlet is up against the difficulty that his disgust is occasioned by his mother, but that his mother is not an adequate equivalent for it; his disgust envelops and exceeds her. It is thus a feeling which he cannot understand; he cannot objectify it, and it therefore remains to poison life and obstruct action. . . . To have

heightened the criminality of Gertrude would have been to provide the formula for a totally different emotion in *Hamlet*; it is just because her character is so negative and insignificant that she arouses in *Hamlet* the feeling which she is incapable of representing." This amounts to saying that Gertrude was an inadequate objective correlative of *Hamlet's* emotions: (we are transplanting to life a term which we had agreed to use for denoting a function of art). *Hamlet* therefore is frustrated, bewildered and he fails. So, the argument seems to be, Shakespeare fails. One should have thought that if Shakespeare set out to depict a man who could not find in action the equivalent of his emotions, and did depict a man who fails in this way, that would not be considered an indication of his (Shakespeare's) own failure, but of his success. An objective correlative of bewilderment, frustration and failure cannot be a success story.

The second occasion when Eliot created difficulties for us in using the 'objective correlative' as a helpful critical theory, occurred in his lecture on 'The Frontiers of Criticism.' In that lecture he commends the exegetical exercises contained in a volume entitled *Interpretations*, in which twelve of the younger English critics analyse and interpret twelve well-known English poems. "The method is to take a well-known poem . . . without reference to the author or to his other work, analyse it stanza by stanza and line by line, and extract, squeeze, tease, press every drop of meaning out of it that one can. It might be called the lemon-squeezer school of criticism. . . . I imagine that some of the poets (they are all dead except myself) would be surprised at learning what their poems mean: I had one or two minor surprises myself, as on learning that the fog, mentioned early in 'Prufrock,' had somehow got into the drawing room. But the analysis of 'Prufrock' was not an

attempt to find origins, either in literature or in the darker recesses of my private life; it was an attempt to find out what the poem really meant—whether that was what I meant it to mean or not. And for that I was grateful.' Again, 'The analysis of *'Pru-frock'* to which I have referred interested *me* because it helped *me* to see the poem through the eyes of an intelligent, sensitive and diligent reader. That is not at all to say that *he* saw the poem through my eyes, or that his account of it has anything to do with the experience that led up to my writing it, or with anything I experienced in the process of writing it."

It is difficult to reconcile this benign encouragement of the younger critics with the theory of the objective correlative. For that theory had a value only if it is maintained that the emotion that the poet experienced could be evoked by the poem which is the "formula for that particular emotion." It was bad enough to have seemingly limited the function of the poem to the evocation, in the reader, of the original emotion of the poet. It would now seem that any emotion, even other than that of the poet, would do. To use my crude metaphor again, the poem is an egg laid by the poet, which you may boil or scramble or poach or hatch as you deem fit; it would not even matter if, on close examination, you decided that it was a fruit or a precious stone.

The exegetical school is however not to be laughed at. They are a welcome reaction against the excesses of both the judicial and the impressionistic schools of criticism. (The magisterial manner, however, has not quite disappeared from criticism; some of Dr. Leavis's antipathies are expressed in terms reminiscent of Dr. Johnson at his worst.) There still are people who think that the best approach to poetry is with the half-awake mind. To them, poetry is an indulgence like a pipe of tobacco or a cup of coffee. Ella Wheeler Wilcox and the les-

ser Tennyson will answer their needs. But great poetry is a challenge to a man's whole being, and the method of close analysis helps very often to awaken our whole being to the value of a poem. Poetry being words packed to the utmost with meaning, it is not to be expected that it will yield its meaning readily to the casual reader. With difficult modern verse, the need for exegesis becomes even more evident.

It would be far-fetched to suggest, as Peter Viereck does in the following lines, that, encouraged by the vogue of close analysis and exegetical criticism generally, poets have started writing exclusively for the critics:

"FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE METICULOUS
Dante: We were God's poets.
Burns: We were the people's poets.
Mallarme: We were the poets' poets.
Today (preening himself): Ah, but
we are the critics' poets."

The search for 'ambiguity' or 'paradox' or multiple significance (or Freudian overdetermination) has produced interpretations which are as much revelations of the critic's own personality as the old impressionistic school produced. Often the critic succumbs to the "rage for saying something when there is nothing to be said." At other times, the interpretations are so far-fetched that the reader is left gaping at the critic's ingenuity rather than at the beauty and the meaning of the poem. One may recall Empson's interpretation of Marvell's 'The Garden.' This produced quite a Marvell boom in English criticism, and several critics followed up Empson with highly intricate and ingenious explanations of one or other of Marvell's poems. Pierre Legouis, who had done some scholarly work on Marvell before the new critics had pounced on him, wrote last year a paper on 'Marvell and the New Critics,' in which he dealt with the extravagances of the new exegesis. Here is a passage from his comments:

"It was to be expected that a religious and sexual ambiguity, or a religiously sexual, or a sexually religious, ambiguity should be extracted from some part of the poem. The stanza selected for this treatment is the fifth and especially its final couplet:

Stumbling on Melons, as I pass,

Insnared with Flow'rs, I fall on grass.

Mr. Empson wonders whether admiring readers "have recognized that the alpha and the omega of the stanza are the Apple and the Fall," since "Melon... is Greek for apple". Indeed I had not. Nor had I noticed that the stanza "is a triumph of Marvell's attempt to impose a sexual interest upon Nature". I had fondly imagined, so far, that the poet had left, for a time at least, the 'sexual interest' behind him, in London Cavalier society, and explicitly sacrificed women to trees in stanzas *iii* and *iv*. But now I am quite prepared to reconsider these 'Melons' in a new light. Only I must ask myself why Marvell also placed them (erroneously or not) on the soil of the Bermudas: is it to 'ensnare' the Greekless Puritan emigrants who foolishly thank God for them? He 'throws the melons at our feet.' Indeed I wonder why nobody has yet (to my knowledge) given a psychoanalytic explanation of these 'melons': in Greek they are apples. Mr. Empson reminds us, and in French 'pommes' is sometimes applied, in very informal style, to those globular charms that have made Marilyn Monroe and Gina Lollobrigida famous in our time. As a result no doubt of repression, the English Puritans, presumably in a dream, find these instruments of the Fall of Man enticing them to 'fall on grass.'" (*Review of English Studies*, Nov. 1957).

In this and many other examples may be seen a certain dissociation of understanding and enjoyment. Eliot himself has come to realise and deplore it. In a letter to one of the new critics, he is reported to have acknowledged that one of the penalties of

being a professional literary man was that one could no longer read anything with enjoyment. The best that could be said for the exegetical school has been said by G. S. Fraser in the chapter he contributed to *Interpretations*. His chapter, 'On the Interpretation of the Difficult Poem' begins with a linguistic analysis of Denham's lines, "O could I flow like thee." and adds:

"Let me admit that in the first section of this essay I got considerable pleasure from taking an aptitude out for a ride... but I do not think these pages have anything at all to offer to the young student who merely wants to understand and enjoy Denham. They have something to offer, perhaps, to the young student who wants to understand, by seeing a kind of slow-motion film of its workings, the machinery of a critical mind. What I was doing was merely making explicit a number of responses, evaluations, tactful uses of background information and consequent quasi-instinctive weightings of words, which work, on the whole, more efficiently if they are not made explicit... The point in fact of all criticism is to get us to closer and more intelligent grips with an actual work of art. A great deal of what is speculative and theoretical in modern close critics is like scaffolding which we can quite safely pull down and have carted away, once the critics have finished helping us to build our own houses."

This eventual dispensability of criticism is perhaps the only excuse for the unattractive quality of a great deal of modern critical writing. It is this quality that occasioned Ben Ray Redman's complaint of "academic critics, engaged in a loveless marriage to literature, whose verbal researches, conducted with extraordinary ingenuity, have blanketed our culture with a blight of neo-Alexandrine sterility." Of the same tribe, Quiller-Couch wrote: "Our professional critics take the conventions of their trade

with such a depressing solemnity that they dismiss as negligible the beautiful art of gay writing in which our literature has constantly excelled."

Two other trends in criticism, besides the technique of close analysis, have contributed to the aridities of modern critical writing. One is the effort to import into literary discussion rigours borrowed from the methods of the physical sciences. The other is the effort to find in the surmises of psycho-analysis an explanation of the creative process.

Prof. L. A. Sherman of the University of Nebraska counted the number of words per sentence for all five volumes of Macaulay's *History of England* and demonstrated a "consistent numerical average" of 23.43 words per sentence. "Here, then," concluded the Professor, "in this 23.43 was the resultant of the forces which had made Macaulay's literary character." More recently, Francis Berry, in his *Poets' Grammar: Person, Time and Mood in Poetry*, has used the method of grammatical analysis as an adequate critical instrument, and makes such claims as that "the whole mass of Shakespeare's work could be fruitfully approached in terms of the tension between the two Grammatical Moods," the subjunctive and the indicative. I quote two sentences from him, which are fairly representative of his pronouncements: "Lady Macbeth well knows her husband's disposition to move into the Subjunctive and so brake the wheels of indicative action." "We saw that Keats, from a base in the Indicative, made pioneering, though short-lived, settlements in the Subjunctive, that he believed (as though his poetic life depended on it, which it did) in those settlements with the intensity necessary for their becoming true; that, in becoming true, they became, though for a moment only, Indicative." There is a point up to which concordances and verbal statistics could be of use; but carried beyond that point, the methods of the physical sciences

produce only a weird type of unintended humour.

And here is William Empson trying to profit by the new mythology of psycho-analysis: "Wordsworth frankly had no inspiration other than his use, when a boy, of the mountain as a totem or father-substitute, and Byron only at the end of his life, in the first cantos of *Don Juan* in particular, escaped from the infantile incest-fixation upon his sister which was till then all that he had got to say. As for Keats's desire for death and his mother, it has become a byword among the learned." F. R. Leavis, an archpriest of the new faith, had but one objection to the learned simplification of Wordsworth's sources of inspiration. In his *Revaluation*, Leavis points out that the principal document in the matter is Book II of *The Prelude*, "and Wordsworth there stresses the mother; he explicitly and at length relates the mode of experience celebrated in the famous central passage of *Tintern Abbey* (that analysed by Mr. Empson) to the experience of the child in its mother's arms." In a subsequent edition, Dr. Leavis adds a footnote; "Mr. Empson has replied that there is, he thinks, both the father and the mother in Wordsworth's nature." Mr. Empson's sweet reasonableness has thus averted a quarrel; in the new Lilliput, the high priests have agreed to crack the egg at both ends; and we need frankly be in no further doubt about the nature of Wordsworth's inspiration.

The passage about Byron (in the sentence quoted above from Empson's *Seven Types of Ambiguity*) also encountered a difficulty. Empson says in a footnote in the third edition of the book: "Byron I understand did not meet his half-sister at all till he was grown up. It seems no good trying to improve this paragraph, and I still think that the last sentence summing it up is sufficiently true." After the cocksureness of the original assertion, this is an extraordinary

footnote to write. But incest-fixations, preferably infantile, are such a staple of the new criticism that it would be a pity to let mere facts interfere with them.

Twenty-five years ago, the editor of an Oxford anthology of twentieth century critical essays, describing "the present chaotic state of criticism," observed that "our catholicity has helped to abolish principles as well as prejudices." In the last three decades there has been a change in the state of criticism. Not that order has replaced chaos; the isle continues to be full of noises. Catholicity has however been abandoned in a search for principles and formulae; and with them has come a whole crop of new prejudices. The oversimplifications of psycho-analytical criticism are a manifestation of the new tendency. The same narrowness may be observed in Allen Tate's theory of 'tension,' in Empson's search for 'ambiguity,' in Ransom's theory of 'structure' and 'texture' in poetry.

It is interesting to watch the new critics excommunicating one another for heresy. In a famous essay, Wimsatt and Beardsley commented on the habit of exploring the mind of the writer instead of concentrating on the words on the page;

they called it "the intentional fallacy." The same critics, on another heresy hunt, condemned the pre-occupation with reader-reaction. They called it "the affective fallacy." David Daiches joined issue with them, for insisting on the close study of the words of a poem to the utter exclusion of all biographical psychological and historical investigation. He called it "the ontological fallacy."

The truth is that the great poem still remains a miracle. A poem can be studied as a technical achievement or as a historical phenomenon. But nothing that has gone before, nothing in the contemporary scene, nothing in the metre and diction, can quite account for the miracle. It would however be wrong to suppose that information about background and technique would be profitless in understanding the significance of a poem. As Prof. James Sutherland once said, there is no branch of studies that the student of literature would find profitless. I may add to this what David Cecil says in his essay on "The Fine Art of Reading:" "To enjoy literature as it should be enjoyed is a task of immense difficulty; requiring, in addition to common sense and uncommon sensibility, faith, hope, charity, humility, and most of the other Christian virtues."

Tamil Writing To-day

By KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM

THERE is quite a large amount of writing being done in Tamil today, but it is doubtful whether the larger part of it can be called literary in any sense of the term. The Tamil press, as well as the publishing world, the learned as well as the popular elements are busy trying to equip the Tamil language with the primers and text-books of modern knowledge, in an attempt to equip it adequately for all contemporary needs. An ancient language with a continuous tradition of nearly twenty centuries, its development during the modern period has been more or less dependent on political and other factors till the beginning of the 20th century and it is only in the last fifty odd years that the Tamil language has been making valiant efforts at becoming adequate for all modern needs.

There are discernible pedantic and journalistic trends in the past fifty years, and especially in the past twelve years of Independence with which it is necessary to deal in a summary manner before we proceed to assess literary developments.

The pedantic and academic trend in Tamil is more or less purist and insists upon the rapid and almost immediate assimilation and use of the Tamil language for governmental, educational and other public purposes. The movement against the so-called Aryan and other alien influences in the Tamil language, life and literature is at least as old as the Century if not older. In the pre-Independence period this necessi-

tated a certain requisite purification of the language and an approximation to the spoken rhythms of the people; but since Independence the tendency among the purists and the Dravidians has been to keep the language traditionally pure and to overweight it with words not now in use and to keep it at a jingoistic and often chauvinistic level of nostalgia, looking back upon a past which is by no means definitely proved—if we are to believe scholars of the undoubted calibre of the late S. Vayapuri Pillai. This harking back to a past for cultural inspiration can be salutary within limits but in large doses is likely to be harmful, as it is tending to become of recent years.

What is purely Dravidian in Tamil writing today is more or less negligible, for most of it is inspired from outside and is in character largely derivative. For instance the work of the doughty leader of the Dravidians, Mr. Ramaswamy Naicker derives from the work of Charles Bradlaugh and Ralph Ingersoll and other rationalists of the European 19th century. Mr. C. N. Annadurai and his devoted variety of Dravidians derive much of their writing in a negative manner from the classics of the West and of India itself. Annadurai has written on the loves of the wives of the Twelve Caesars of Rome as well as on the loves of the Gods and Goddesses of Greece and Rome and India. The books of these two groups dealing with the contemporary situation or with the past of the Tamils present an exaggerated and one-sided picture of the whole scene and have rarely if

at all any merits beyond the vigour of virile prose.

Apart from this purely Dravidian writing, there is a set of academic writings that are also Dravidian-inspired, if not often self-confessedly so. The so-called learned world in Tamil, the Universities and the Colleges and the educational institutions are full of persons deep in this Dravidian inspiration. Most of this writing derives from a purist mould, a code of moral and human behaviour based on what might be loosely called the Sangam classics in Tamil of about two thousand years ago—from the maxims of Thiruvalluvar or the subjective poems called *Aham* or from the social poems of that age called *Puram*. Many of the professors and lecturers in Tamil write on the fringe of what might loosely be called literature, expatiating upon the old virtues and words and traditions, commenting with all ingenuity on the inexplicable, and expounding to admiring audiences the glories of a remote and by no means certain past. Their vocabulary is almost always shorn of Sanskrit elements although it is extremely difficult to think of Tamil language shorn of the elements of Sanskrit even in the remotest antiquity available to us. Some of the masterpieces of the middle period in Tamil like Kamban and the by no means equally meritorious *purana* called the *Periya Puranam* come for large comment and exposition. The work of Prof. R. P. Sethu Pillai, T. P. Meenakshisundaranar, and nearly a hundred other stalwarts in this field deserves mention as being characteristic of this school of writing which believes more in the past than in the present or the future of the Tamil language. Their work has been on the increase both in volume and the influence it exerts on the public since Independence.

This pedantic output influences in a

large measure the so-called literature of knowledge as well as scientific and other writings with which the Tamil language is trying to arm itself fully just now. Schools and school text-books apart, the major work in the literature of knowledge in the post-Independence period is to be seen in the launching of the complete and definitive Encyclopaedia in Tamil, called *Kalai-Kkalan-chiyam*, projected in ten volumes of which five have been out so far. Inadequate as an Encyclopaedia, it is however a laudable pioneer attempt to equip the Tamil language for all modern purposes and goes definitely a part of the way in the requisite direction. Obvious defects such as the ruling passion for an exaggerated version of Dravidianism cannot necessarily be got over in the Encyclopaedia, but within its acceptable limits, it has been worth while.

Writers of scientific books at a popular level who can be mentioned are Appusamy Iyer, R. K. Vishwanathan and the late Rajeswari Ammayar along with many others who starting at scratch have produced a really impressive mass of work since the twenties of the present century. Educational and other necessities have been accelerating the process of equipment, but a politically-inspired purist movement is holding it back considerably. It might well be decades before the Tamil language becomes sufficiently equipped for higher scientific educational purposes. Anti-Sanskrit, anti-Hindi, anti-English influences have been steadily at work against the rapid improvement and implementation of an adequate scientific terminology in Tamil.

AS against the purist and pedantic, the journalistic development necessary in the modern age has been rather rapid though not always consistent. Journalistic development is a necessary feature of all

modern cultures, and the Tamil language is very well developed in this respect. From the earliest, the press has been a major influence in shaping the Tamil language and since the twenties in the Gandhian era, the Tamil press made rapid strides towards adequacy. In linking the Tamil people with the movements in the world at large, in imparting the knowledge of political, polemical and international affairs to the Tamil people, the Tamil press has done yeoman service. In fact it is the proud claim of the Tamils that some of the best journalists that India has produced in the modern era belong to their linguistic area, even though they might not always have written in Tamil.

Journalistic writing in Tamil in the modern period reached a new and a great height in the writings of Kalki, the late R. Krishnamurthy. He built up two weeklies with large circulations which I am told are among the largest for Weeklies in Asia. The rapid rise of the teenagers periodical, *Kumudham*, appearing thrice a month is a sign of the times and from a literary point of view is alarming, working towards an acceptance of amateurish and adolescent values in writing, but in itself is satisfactory. And *Kalaimagal*, a literary monthly in the thirties and the early forties has during the post-Independence period become a magazine which caters to a large public and its demands. These four papers, among many other lesser rivals, reach almost every literate home in Tamilnad and make for a kind of writing that is journalistic in character.

The periodical press has standards of its own and demands of its own. It publishes by far the largest amount of fiction long and short and the informative essay. It has necessarily to be geared to the lowest common factor of intellect available to the public and it often succeeds in making even a glorious idea merely escapist and romantic. It often tends towards the pedantic and

the academic, for that attitude looks much more viable to the journalist than the vaguely unrealisable demands of what can be called serious literature. The periodical press in Tamil, as no doubt in the other languages in India, has helped the rapid development of various fields of writing, keeping an eye on good and readable writing, in the short story, in the long novel and in commenting on the old. The periodical press has been effective in spreading the demand for a literature of knowledge.

The growing press has affected in no uncertain measure the demands on the writings for the day and of the day. Kalki in himself combined all the qualities necessary for the best journalistic writing and he has left at least a score of followers who tread in the path that he has chalked out so ably. All fiction has necessarily to be escapist for the popular press and all literature diluted to the level of vaguely humanistic comment for a particular purpose.

The press in Tamil has also been effective in spreading the approach to the past as well as the present. The Tamil people have an uncommon flair for holding festivals and fairs, and press reporting of these fairs and festivals (often in the name of poets and writers and philosophers, like Kamban and Valluvar and Subramanya Bharathi) are a common feature. Subramanya Bharathi who is identified with the renaissance in Tamil letters is the major figure as far as these fairs are concerned. Kalki built him a memorial in his birth place, and year after year now for over twelve years festivals in his honour have been celebrated at this memorial as well as at other places. Politicians and journalists (this year the cine artists also) congregate for singing the praise of Bharathi, sometimes also not forgetting his literary contribution which does not reach as wide a public as the periodicals or the cinema.

The rapid rise of the periodical press in Tamil has brought to bear upon modern

Tamil writing a pressure, a pressure which has kept the large quantity of writing done in Tamil today at a strictly popular level and aimed at a literate but by no means literary-minded public. The consequent escapism, the vaguely idealistic outpourings of a humanistic nature, the acceptance of a mildly revolutionary social standard of behaviour and the insistence on the virtues which the Indian National Congress stood for in earlier days are discernible in the vast quantity of writing done for the press today in Tamil. The periodical press builds up the pleasing as against the original, the commonplace as against the out-of-the-way, the stale and the worn-out as against the bold and the experimental, the accepted as against the serious, the meretricious but expedient as against the meritorious and artistic, the sentimental as against the classical in a strictly Greek sense, and the topical and the temporary as against the enduring or the eternal. That in spite of a powerful periodical press the opposite exists and is sometimes even talked of in that very press, is evidence of the high earnestness and literary tenaciousness of the serious writer in Tamil.

But before speaking of the literary writing that is being done in Tamil today, let me talk on two other influences that are shaping modern writing. I shall speak briefly of translation and the scheme of prizes and emoluments that go with writing in Tamil.

With a well-developed periodical press, it is no wonder that payment for material is often comparatively good. From personal experience I can say that it is surprisingly as good as British standards, though not as good as American standards. But apart from regular payments, since Independence, there have been a series of incentives for the Tamil writer. Annual prizes are awarded by institutions like the Academy for the growth of Tamil, the Sahitya Akademi, the monthly Kalaimagal, by Kalki, by Ananda

Vikatan and a number of other periodicals. The amounts offered are sometimes as generous as the offer of Rs. 10,000/- for a novel by Ananda Vikatan, though in the final result the prize money was divided between two novelists. Currently Ananda Vikatan has offered as much as 20,000 rupees for plays. All this induces a lot of activity in writing in Tamil and is sometimes productive of surprising results, often enough not exclusively literary.

OF TRANSLATIONS THERE have been plenty in Tamil since the beginning of the renaissance, Bharathi himself and V. V. S. Iyer the pioneers having led the way. Almost imperceptibly too many of the second rate masterpieces of the world have found their way into the Tamil language. Since Independence there has been increased activity in translation in Tamil, though largely confined to fiction. Other languages of India like the Bengali, the Hindi and the Marathi as well as Malayalam have contributed their quota, and European languages like the Scandinavian, the Russian, the French, the German and the English have contributed largely enough as can well be believed. Of late years, the Communist camp and the American camp through the USIS have come up with their quota of translations to the Tamil language. Of the Communist-backed translations it can be said on the whole that their output is well done though the original often lacks merit. With the American-inspired translations the opposite would be true. The Southern Languages Books Trust had an ambitious programme but it has on the whole been insipid and fallen flat, while the Sahitya Akademi scheme in translations is yet to be felt, if at all.

I COME now to the strictly literary activity in Tamil since Independence. I have already recorded that there are practically no

little Reviews in Tamil and there is practically no group activity as such in Tamil. Most of the serious writers have had to depend on the mass-circulating periodicals for their rise to popularity and recognition. This the serious writer in Tamil has done with various effects and not always with grace. Each writer has had to write as best as it is in him against a largely indifferent public which is not seriously interested in non-escapist writing. The characteristic virtue of most of the serious writing done in Tamil today is its insistence upon values precious to the individual. Accepting the context of his social existence he is still able to function as an individual and therein lies his greatest virtue. One or two of the modern writers, like La Saa Ramamritham in his short stories and Thi Janakiraman in his novel have tried to portray the weakness of the individual in a modern social set-up, but even their preoccupation is with the individual and his values.

In the novel of Chidambarasubramanyam entitled *IDAYANTHAM*, *The Voice of the Heart*, we meet a musician who is pre-occupied with the necessity of preserving his spiritual dignity and independence against a sea of material obstacles. In Ka Naa Subramanyam's *Oru Nal*, *One Day*, you meet a man who has been all over the world, but a day in his village brings home to him the fact that life as lived by his aunt and his uncle in the village is much more full of significance than anything else that he has seen. In the later short stories of Naa Pichamurthy who has come to writing again after nearly fifteen years of silence we see how the individual is up against the miracle of everyday life and is often conscious of the miracle only just a little after it has happened. In the novel *Mohamul - The Thorn of Passion*,—Thi Janakiraman pits the life of a seemingly hopeless lover achieving the seemingly impossible as against the deeper satisfaction of a life of art and reali-

sation. In the short stories of Ka Alagirisamy we meet the wholesome individual in a by no means special setting of social and larger interests. In Thi Janakiraman's short stories we meet a large spirit of irony that is individually developed and dissolves often in an act of sacrifice. In La Saa Ramamritham's short stories we meet the individual trying symbolically to preserve his individuality even at the cost of being called morbid.

If in this context I have instanced only a few writers of the modern period, it does not by any criterion argue that these are the only worth while writers. These are the writers I am able to discern standing tall athwart the level ground. There might be others visible to other eyes and criteria.

BUT THE LACK of literary criteria and standards in the recent period in Tamil has been working havoc with the literary output itself. It is largely a sense of the necessity of literary criticism that impels creative writers like C. S. Chellappa, Chidambara Raghunathan, Ka Naa Subramanyam among others to take to literary criticism. Ka Alagirisamy has been doing some literary criticism in the recent period especially about the lesser classics of the later period in Tamil. The impetus for what might be called the new criticism in Tamil comes from the earlier and pioneering work of men like the late T.K.C. and the late Vaiyapuri Pillai. The body of modern literary criticism inspired by and informed with the spirit of the West is being felt today though whether it will yield the necessary results is not to be guessed yet. Criteria of a purely literary kind have yet to be applied to the old writings of the Tamils and there has been very little activity in this field, though commentaries in the old traditional manner are to be met with in the work of P. Sri Acharya, Ki Vaa Jaganathan, Mu Varadarajanar, T. P. Meena-

kshisundaranar and others. The literary criticism of A. S. Gnanasambandam stands by itself being of a text book variety inspired partly by Tamil and partly by English standards. Literary criticism in Tamil has to go a long way before it can become creative in the sense in which the Tamil short story and the Tamil novel have become effective and creative.

In the drama, in the essay, in speculative writing and the like, there is a large activity in Tamil though all of it is not of high literary standards. Poetry in Tamil tends to be overweighted with a traditional past and often reaches slightly reminiscent moods but no great insight or rhythm. Since Subramanya Bharathi there have been no major

poets in Tamil, it will have to be confessed, though many minor poets of promise have been active of late. The Tamil stage is convention ridden and takes itself seriously only as a competitor to the Tamil Cinema; neither is very good. The radio too makes a lot of noise but even as entertainment it is often low-brow, not even rising up to the standards set by Tamil journalism.

But in fiction long and short and in literary criticism, there is promise and promises fulfilled amply. Cunningly and often in exile away from a clamorous public, the serious writer is busy forging his works of art. As an individual he is respected and his work when finished can get a hearing. What more does a serious writer need?

Religion and National Unity in India

Religious Roots of Communalism

By PAUL DAVID DEVANANDAN

SINCE Independence increasing attention has been rightly given to foster a sense of national coherence in the country. This has been felt necessary because of the persistence of many divisive forces which make for disunity among our people. One of the potent factors in this tragic situation is religion. Our disunity is in great part due to the prevalence of many religions in the land. It is inevitable, of course, that their adherents should differ from one another in their religious beliefs and practices. But the general tendency is also, in consequence of such differences, to be separate and isolated in cultural outlook and social customs. Several reasons have contributed to this result. For one thing, Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam came into India from outside. All through these centuries they have maintained a sense of apartness from Hinduism, partly out of self-defense and partly because Hinduism would have nothing to do with them either socially or culturally. Hindus who became Christians and Moslems, whether by persuasion or coercion, were put out of the Hindu fold; they were culturally and socially outcaste. For another thing, religious communalism developed unwholesome group prides and prejudices, especially after India became subject to foreign domination, first to Moslem rule and later to the British raj; so much so that when we did achieve Independence it had to be at the price of the parti-

tion of the country on the score of religion.

Communalism within Hinduism

Differences between Moslems and Hindus apart, Hinduism itself has been somewhat loosely bound together, so that even within the composite whole of the Hindu population communalism has been rampant. The social and cultural differences between Brahmans and non-Brahmans, between caste and outcaste, as well as among caste folk themselves, are fertile sources of disruption.

In South India, the Dravida Kazhagam is decidedly a communal movement, however anti-religious in its emphasis, making the preposterous claim for a separate Tamil Nad. The Madhya Pradesh Enquiry into Christian missionary activities was undoubtedly due to the uneasy suspicion that Christians were the prime movers in the proposal for a separate State for the hill tribes. The repeated echoes of the insistent demand that the Sikhs should be also given a separate State is obviously inspired by religious communalism. Similarly the conversion of a large number of *Adhivasis* to Buddhism, under the leadership of the late Dr. Ambedkar, was due to communal separatism.

Humanism as a corrective

The fact remains that religious pluralism, with its consequent cultural and social divisive tendencies, creates a problem for

national unity because it does make for group isolation. One of the first things that needs to be done is to reckon with this fact as a reality. For there are some national leaders who are still not willing to admit this. To that extent they under-estimate, if not ignore, the very real difficulties brought about by religious communalism. The next thing for us all to accept is that this religious aspect of the problem of Indian unity is not easy of solution. The common fallacy is to take it for granted that the larger interests of the nation will inevitably subsume all local loyalties.

The deep hold that religious loyalties have on the minds of people at large is not sufficiently recognized by many national leaders who have themselves no religious predilection and so tend to assume that, at any decisive moment, for a loyal citizen the claims of the nation must naturally come first. The third thing that we need to bear in mind is that the unity of the nation is best built on fundamental loyalties that bind men together in terms of a common humanity which after all is the basis of all community. Consequently there needs to be a determined effort to build a sense of belonging, of a togetherness of those who strive to maintain and preserve human rights. A wholesome humanism seems to be the best rallying ground for religious understanding and for national unity.

NATIONAL UNITY AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Recent history in our country would give the impression that the answer to the religious aspects of the problem of national unity has been sought in terms of three possibilities: one is to make most, if not all, people in India adhere to one common religion, to Hinduism which is in fact the religion of the majority: the other is to do

away with religions altogether by denying the validity of all religion; the third is to work for a secular state which would recognize all religions, and yet give no preference to any one religion. It would be well to consider the relative merits of these three possible solutions.

Unity by uniformity

A very large proportion of the Indian population is Hindu by religious profession. It is therefore natural to think that a sense of unity can be realized if we all accepted the Hindu view of life. This would be wishful thinking, because it is open to question whether there is an underlying common *view* of life to which even those who are described as Hindus can subscribe. In putting this statement so bluntly the writer is aware that he is treading on controversial ground, being himself a non-Hindu. It is quite possible that such a common credal basis may be evolved, but it would take time and effort. What seems more feasible is a common Hindu *way* of life which can be acceptable to all, and can provide a unifying force. For Hinduism is not only a religion but also a cultural heritage. Possibly a clear cut formulation of this distinctive way of life, characteristic of our heritage, would lead to an appreciation of the many diverse elements that have contributed to the making of our composite culture through the ages. Such cultural synthesis would however be not the same as religious syncretism of which some non-Hindus are afraid, for in syncretism the amalgam is of religious doctrines not of culture-patterns of social behaviour.

It is inevitable that in a country where over 80 percent of the population describes itself as Hindu by religion the trend should be in the direction of stressing Hindu social observances and every-day practices

in social relations. But the Hinduization tends to be a religious rather than a cultural process. It is becoming increasingly popular for public functions to open with religious exercises which are definitely Hindu. Public offices and places of general assembly are increasingly decorated with appurtenances that have decided Hindu religious significance.

On the occasions of Hindu religious festivals some amount of embarrassment is caused to non-Hindu sections of the population because they find it difficult to participate, especially if such festivals are celebrated under the aegis of local authority in public institutions. Hindu public opinion is apt to be censorious of non-Hindus who find they cannot emotionally enter into these festivities. Sometimes it is not conceded that conscientious objections prevent them from taking part.

Secularizing religious festivals

To be sure, festivals can be occasions for making people emotionally aware of their national background. Apart from the usual merry-making that goes with the idea of festivals and the opportunity they provide for the expression of the national art, drama, music and the like, they are occasions when there is a general let down of barriers among classes and castes. People literally mix at festival times. In many lands of post-Christian culture, Christmas is celebrated by everybody because in a sense Christmas has become secularised, making it possible for non-Christians to enter into the festivity with an 'emotional awareness' of belonging to a common culture, though they may not be able to enter into the religious significance of Christmas.

Is a similar development possible in our country? Are there not certain Hindu festivals which are more of the nature of occasions of popular rejoicing, when manifest

expression can be given to the national solidarity of the people, rather than purely religious observances? Of course, such festivals would have a Hindu religious background, but the question is whether they can be 'secularised' without giving offence to Hindu religious sentiment and made acceptable to all people in our country as public festivals in which everyone can participate. Perhaps it is the responsibility of our generation to single out such occasions and consciously direct our energy to create public opinion which will make them over into national festivals. Once public imagination is aroused and people become 'emotionally aware' of the significance of such occasions as demonstrations of our cultural solidarity, then such festivals could be increasingly creative of a sense of community and national coherence.

Unity by denial of religion

It would be a sad day for the nation should it be agreed that national unity can only be achieved by suppressing all religions. As a people we in India have been incorrigibly religious for centuries. Our country has been the birthplace of at least three major religions—Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism—not to mention the many religious movements which have periodically risen to stress one or other of the many aspects of the Hindu *dharma*. But this fact of our past history is no sure guarantee that the nation will always continue to cherish the things of the Spirit. On the other hand the spread of secularism, the advance of technical culture, the influence of communist ideology and the advocacy of rationalism are all dangerous indications of undermining revolutionary forces in contemporary Indian life and thought. If unchecked they can lead to serious consequences, especially because these forces have easy access to the thought and imagination of im-

pressionable youth. And their chief appeal to youth is their claim that that through their means national unity can be achieved, and religious divisions overthrown in consequence.

But if the price of national unity is to sacrifice all religious beliefs and practices, it would be a costly price indeed. Such violent totalitarianism is opposed to our national genius. It offers a solution to the problem at the heavy cost of denying our heritage. Moreover, it would mean not the answer to our difficulties but an added menacing factor endangering our national coherence. There is no doubt that any move in our country to root out all religions would itself be creative of serious national disturbance. True, there may be no compulsion of people that they must adhere to some one religion or another. But at the same time, the State must also recognize the freedom of those who may not want to subscribe to any religion at all, or, at best, would insist on holding to a set of beliefs which may not be regarded as religious. This turn of events would create another rift in the already complex situation. At least until now we have not been faced with a nationally organized propaganda for atheism and irreligion.

The Secular State ideal

It was indeed a wise decision on the part of our constitution makers when they made it clear that the ideal we should strive for is a Secular State. In such a state the primary objective is to safeguard and foster human values. It is only in as far as religions contribute to that end the State is interested in them. If, at times, the State gives the impression of being indifferent to and even critical of any particular religious belief or practice, it is because the State regards such

belief or practice as an hindrance to the human values which it seeks to realize. A Secular State can never be anti-religious. Nor will it show any partiality to any particular religion, especially if in that State there are citizens who are adherents of many different religions.

Unlike a State which is committed to the theory that all religion is a disvalue, and therefore a deterrent to the fulfilment of the human person in society, the Secular State concedes the truth that religion can contribute to the realization of human values in the here and now. So that the neutrality of the Secular State in matters concerning religion is not to be misconstrued as a policy based upon the belief that matters of the Spirit are of no vital concern. The secularism of State is really founded upon the conception that whatever one may or may not believe about other-worldly values, the State is profoundly interested in the realization of this-worldly values. To that end it works with all creative forces, religiously motivated or otherwise.

One thing is certain. The whole ideal of the Secular State has to be more clearly defined in our generation. Perhaps here is an area of usefulness in which those responsible for university education should be more actively involved. It is not only in the understanding of the nature of the Secular State that our duty lies, but also in helping the idea of the Secular State take root in the political soil of our country. It may be that in so doing we will find, in the present context of our times and in the historical situation in which we are placed, that people of all religions can contribute to a renewed understanding of the nature of the human person in the net-work of human relations which constitute Society; and better comprehend the rights and obligations of loyal citizenship in the political community which we call the State.

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS INVOLVED

Some consideration may be given here to certain specific difficulties created by religious conflicts which mar national unity. There is no doubt that such occasions are charged with emotion. People get easily worked up where a clash of religious interests is involved. Feelings are easily roused, especially when there is widespread propaganda. Frequently leaders of public opinion, people who exercise considerable hold on popular imagination, take advantage of such situations to inflame prejudice. Not seldom it results in disorderly conduct and damage of public property. It seems necessary, therefore, that an informed public opinion should be cultivated, and the responsibility of local leaders to preserve harmonious relationship among people of different religious persuasions should be enforced. This would mean a determined effort through helpful literature to create in the minds of people informed respect for other faiths. Such literature can rightly be of the nature of popular journalism, and not necessarily heavy scholarly productions. This is perhaps one of the serious obligations in any programme of social education.

Issue of religious freedom

A great deal depends on our understanding of the principle of religious liberty. It is natural that in the early stages of our political development we should be somewhat hazy on the exact nature of all that is involved in religious freedom. Our Hindu heritage has a conception of tolerance which is based on the assumption of the validity of all religions. Unfortunately it is sufficiently realized that to find support for religious tolerance on the plea that all religions lead to the same goal is to enforce a dogma as the price of religious freedom.

Christians and Moslems in India rightly or wrongly hold to the belief that their religion alone is true. It is not in the province of the State to effect a compromise by suggesting that in the interest of national unity they agree to the dogma that all religions are true. In a Secular State a man should have the freedom to freely believe, or not to believe, what he holds to be true or not true where religion is concerned. Also he should have the freedom to be able to convince others of his belief; and if they are convinced, those others should be also free to accept or reject what is commended to them.

Problem of Conversion

This leads us to a consideration of another vexing problem, the problem of conversion. This has been the source of much misunderstanding, and consequent strong difference of opinion in India. A great deal of misapprehension in this matter is bound up with an unnecessary feeling of insecurity and fear. It is suspected that all conversion is made by unfair means, in the hope that such change would result in material advancement and social progress. Perhaps some religious proselytism in our country is due to such efforts. Christian mass movements have in the past been guilty of such a charge in a measure. More recently however, such mass conversions have been discouraged. No unfair allurements are offered to prospective converts. In view of the willingness on the part of missionary religions to play fair any attempt to enforce legislation to regulate religious conversion is, to say the least, not helpful. On the one hand it causes unnecessary fear in the minds of the religious minorities, and in the case of the religious majority it arouses an undue sense of power which is apt to miscalculate its reach and under stress of emotion

take the law in its own hands. In any case friendly understanding is made impossible in an atmosphere of mutual suspicion.

Meaning of propagation

One other term that needs clarification in our present age of confusion is 'propagation of religion' as it is used in our Constitution. Here again, the Hindu understanding of that right to propagate one's faith should be stretched to accommodate the meaning that 'missionary' religions like Islam and Christianity give it. To propagate is their 'mission,' and that 'mission' is at the core of their creed. What needs to be watched is whether the methods they adopt in fulfilling that 'mission' violate human rights, cause public disturbance or endanger the sovereignty of the State. To provide safeguards for this in their legislative measure or additional constitutional directives is to take a negative attitude. Only by positive efforts to create informed understanding and national togetherness can we develop a sense of moral responsibility so that in the exercise of this most precious right of freedom to propagate one's religion we also uphold the reign of law.

Education and common worship

The proposal to build confidence among people of different religious groups by introducing a system of education in which provision can be made for instruction in religion may not be very helpful. If religious

instruction is given on a communal basis, it is apt to exaggerate the very isolation which we want to remedy. On the other hand, if such instruction is intended to drive home the truth of all religions, that again would create difficulty. This does not mean that the teaching of religion should not form part of any programme of education at all; but that in introducing religion in the curriculum, the main intention should be to develop informed understanding of the beliefs and practices of all religions, so that it leads to respect for what others believe and practise.

In the Basic System of education the practice of holding common services of worship is enforced. It is good that youth should be encouraged to give reverence for the things of the Spirit. Whether children can be *taught* to worship, and whether such common worship can develop a sense of national unity are debateable claims. If the object of common worship is to foster reverence for the Divine, then it would be necessary to dissociate it from all connection with the teaching (overt or implicit) that common worship is based on (or intended to cultivate) the belief that all religions are the same. It is because of this fear that some religious minorities have expressed serious dissent to giving prominence to common worship in Basic Schools. They do not say that such worship in which people of various faiths (and no faiths) participate is valueless or invalid. Their objection is to making it a matter of routine rather than a spontaneous self-expression and to using religious worship as a means to an end. This objection should be given the consideration it deserves.

The Quest for an -Ism

By C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

IT is not only capitalism and communism that worship the same gods, but socialism too kneels at the same altar of industrialisation and, what is more, like communism believes in utilising the power of the State over every individual.

What was Gandhiji's -ism?

His -ism can be briefly described as the -ism of trusteeship: every one who holds a position, and every one who owns property, should hold them as trustees for all those who have dealings with them and for the Community at large. If you are a trader you are a trustee for your customers; if you own land you are a trustee for your family, for your tenants and for the Community; and so on in every case.

Trusteeship imposes a duty "to act according to the high standards which a man of the most delicate conscience and the nicest sense of honour might impose upon himself". I am quoting from a judge's definition of the duty.

This social doctrine of trusteeship is not a new conception. It is as old as all our *shastras* and it is this same conception that is involved in the biblical injunction to be merciful to your beasts. "A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast" (Proverbs 15-10) i.e. he should regard himself as a trustee of his oxen's lives and health. Modern civilization with its complexities has greatly increased the number of situations which this sound relation of trusteeship must govern. Every human action, no matter how intimate and personal, is affected with

a public interest and 'attracts' the principle of trusteeship. The outdated but obstinate doctrine of enlightened selfishness should be substituted by this doctrine of immanent trusteeship.

As for the means to make men follow this as a way of life, Gandhiji's example as well as precept may be summed up in the word *dharma*. He never approved of pigeon-holing religion. The spiritual must weave itself into every material activity of life, including social and public life. Institutions to spread doctrine did not appeal to him. Influence must move from person to person and so the good life must spread itself. William James's words may be recalled: "I am done with great things and big things, great institutions and big success, and I am for those tiny, invisible, molecular moral forces that work from individual to individual creeping through the crannies of the world like so many soft rootlets, or like the capillary oozing of water, yet which, if you give time, will rend the hardest monuments of man's pride."

This may at first sight appear to be a long road. But it is not really so long as that, if we remember that all the religions of the world have shaped the way of life of all the nations of the world in this very direction. If but we do not wreck the spiritual achievements of the past by thoughtless attacks on their foundation, we can build thereon, more effectively and more rapidly than we may imagine it to be possible, following the advice given by William James.

The Muse of Love

A Study of Laurence Hope

By SUNANDA K. DATTA-RAY

AN intense looking young woman stared at me from the pages of the biographical reference. A truculent mouth, heavily rounded chin and masses of dark hair. It was Laurence Hope. I had expected a young romantic with something of Rupert Brook's ethereal beauty or the slim gilt soul walking between passion and poetry that Oscar Wilde ascribed to Lord Alfred Douglas. Instead, I was faced with the wife of General Nicolson, aide-de-camp to Her Majesty Queen Victoria! Portraits of poets are often disappointing. It is difficult to reconcile James Elroy Flecker's stolid respectability with the rose-tinted domes and minarets of Baghdad and Samarkand or Constantine Cavafy's seedy, clerical appearance with the love drenched fabric of Alexandrian life yet both have written of their subject with an understanding and a poetic insight that belies their unimaginative exteriors. So it was with Laurence Hope for beneath the facade of the General's lady lay an impetuous soul that found its true metier in the Orient.

"Memsah'bs" in India have, as a rule, been an uninspiring lot but Laurence Hope was the one glorious exception. Briefly then, this is her life. Adela Florence Cory was the daughter of an Indian Army Colonel and married another in 1889. The couple settled down in Madras. In time, her husband, Colonel Malcolm Nicolson, became a Lieutenant-General and, between the years 1891 and 1894, he served as aide-de-camp to the Queen. General Nicolson died in a

Madras nursing home called Mackay's Gardens in 1904. Violet Nicolson (her husband's name for her) lived 'a lonely and smouldering life' for two grief stricken months, bursting at last 'into the passionate flame of death' by swallowing perchloride of mercury. She was buried by her husband's side in St. Mary's Cemetery, Madras. Her first volume of poems, *THE GARDEN OF KAMA*, was published in 1901, followed in 1903 by *STARS OF THE DESERT*. She was dead already when *INDIAN LOVE* and *SONGS FROM THE GARDEN OF KAMA* made their appearance in 1905 and 1908. Hope's torrid swinburnian verses were exceedingly popular and some of them were set to music. "Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar" was a favourite with drawing room sopranos and radio tenors and old recordings of the song still exist. The anthologies themselves were reprinted every year from 1903 to 1930 for though much of Laurence Hope's work is emotional doggerel, some of it has a lyrical beauty that conceals not a few rare gems of wisdom.

Realists will condemn Hope for the fantasy of her extravagant poetic imagery for, like Flecker, she ignored the East as it was and wrote instead of the Orient as visualised by Europeans in centuries past. But, perhaps, this was not mere romantic effusion. Perhaps she realised that the soul of the Orient had not changed even though the glamour and glitter had given way to a drab urban civilization. In either case, it must be remembered that the landscape of

gleaming marble palaces and jasmine scented purple nights, the silver jets of fountains playing by moonlight, the hennaed hands and kohl stained eyes serve only as a backcloth for the message she conveys. Her theme is love.... a lover's aim for destruction of self-consciousness in union with the object of his desires.... but the unashamed paganism of her language robs the poems of all sense of guilt. No wonder then that she had to publish under a masculine 'nom de plume'! One can imagine the raised Victorian eye-brows and the royal lady's tight lipped "We are not amused!" at lines like:

What matter the price? We would pay
it again,
We have had, we have loved, we have
known!

As it was, the anthologies were highly popular and generally reviewed as the work of a male poet.

It is tempting to compare Laurence Hope with other European Orientalists. Edwin Arnold and Sir William Jones delved, in their scholarly fashion, in Hindu religious literature. Lady Hester Stanhope was merely an adventurous eccentric and both Mira Behn and Sister Nivedita were drawn by the personal aura of the man they wished to follow. But Laurence Hope was different. She shared Romain Rolland's romantic concept of India and one or two of her poems echo the voice of Rudyard Kipling. Not the much maligned author of the oft-misquoted and completely misunderstood 'Ballad of East and West' but Kipling who wrote 'Mandalay', 'The Story of Purun Bhagat' and 'Without Benefit of Clergy'. All three reveal the streak of romance that was latent in Kipling's nature. But it was of the ill-fated Mata Hari that Hope's poetry really reminded me. Mata Hari with her intense awareness of India, her dreams of granite altars in the temple of Siva and her dabblings in the occult in incense laden

salons in Paris. Love and lust and then.... the rifle range at Vincennes.

ENGLISH critics were puzzled by the passionate temperament of Hope's poems and vaguely ascribed them to 'the world of Islam and the Persian poets.' The General was an accomplished linguist and the originality of his wife's work has also been questioned. She was probably influenced by the Persian poet Rumi who writes of the mystical union that transmutes love and beloved into the Universal Essence of love and the Sanskrit poet Bhartrihari whose Epigrams have been translated by P. E. More. Gertrude Bell's POEMS FROM THE DIVAN OF HAFIZ were also available and Hope reflects in places the philosophy of the Divan. But, of course, she lacks the greater depths and the subtler nuances of feeling that distinguish Miss Bell's translation. Her plagiarism, however, does not amount to more than interpreting a traditional Indian outlook in Western poetic forms. For it is seldom remembered that it is only recently, and under the aegis of Victorian liberalism at that, that the Land of the Kama Sutra has adopted Puritannical blinkers on a national scale. Our temple friezes, frescoes and miniatures all proclaim a not so distant past when bourgeois European morals and values had not permeated Indian society!

Laurence Hope completely submerges her own personality into that of the narrator and is equally convincing as queen or dancing girl, lusty warrior or adoring slave. The General's lady simply ceases to exist. The only false note is the bi-sexual attitude that this sometimes entails, suggesting a hint of inversion to the reader who is unaware of the poet's sex or identity. In the duologue 'Devotion of Aziz to Mir Khan', Aziz adores his master's strength and beauty and offers his own life as a supreme sacrifice

at the altar of his love in what would be called typically feminine devotion! It may possibly be that Hope is unable to divorce herself completely from the feminine point of view but I am inclined to think that she intends to illustrate that the essential quality of love, as understood by the ancient Greeks, is the same regardless of the sex of either party.

UNIVERSALITY IS A recurring theme. The emotion is the same whether painted in an Indian palace, on the streets of Casa Blanca or against the walls of Pekin. It cuts across all racial barriers and, like Kipling, she too recognises the purity of the "illicit" love an Indian woman and a British soldier have for each other. Hope has too deep an insight into human nature to be subject to the ordinary laws of society and is, as the true artist should be, free from all artificial conventions. As the Rani says to her assembled maids in 'The Court of Pomegranates':

How like we are, how all the same,
We think one thought, we play one game,
Beneath one sceptre bend.
To careless slaves or curtained queens
Love is our most delightful means
To a delightful end.

My favourite is the unusual theme of 'Droit du Seigneur'. Roles are reversed and the peasant girl pleads with a reluctant lord to exercise his immemorial rights. There is something infinitely pathetic about the futility of her life ('serving boors and raising sons to them') and the frustration of being born with more feeling and sentiment than her station warrants. Almost panic-stricken, she asks for:

'An hour's dalliance in thy life, Seigneur,
And an eternal memory in mine!'

Stars of the desert, ranging from rice fields in Korea to the white walled city of Rabat, shows a greater mastery of rhythm and a firmer intellectual grasp of her subject than the first volume without, however, losing any of its intensity. But the prevailing note is sadness. The advice "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may" underlies many of the poems and love stalks hand in hand with death.

To have yielded up one's life in an ecstasy,

And then, in the very climax of love, to die!

Eleven months later she was dead. A minor poet, but one of considerable charm and virtuosity. It is fashionable today to denigrate straightforward emotion; abstruseness in a writer is admired and poetry is as warped and twisted as the age itself. Laurence Hope with her simple message has no place in the gallery of poets whose work is a flow from the sub-conscious. She performs no ballet with words, she does not whirl to dizzy heights of intellectual fancy and she does not require a specially conditioned mind as the outpourings of so many modern poets do. Her appeal is that of Fitzgerald's translation of the RUBAIYAT. Sweeping aside the trivialities that cloud our vision, she reaches out for the ultimate reality.... happiness through a spiritual union with the beloved. Philistines and middle class housewives may gush over her but that does not detract from the eternal truth of the message, nor the simple sincerity with which she puts it across. Both were summed up in her epitaph:

'If Fate should say, 'Thy course is run,
It would not make me sad;
All that I wished to do is done,
All that I would have, had.'



BUDDHADEV BOSE welcoming the delegates to the *Quest* Seminar
 L to R: Prabhakar Padhye, Gangadhar Gadgil, Nissim Ezekiel, Ka Naa Subramanvam,
 Daya Krishna, Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Humayun Kabir (President)



ARTHUR KOESTLER delivering the inaugural address.
 3rd from the left: Kainikkara Pillai; 2nd from right: Amaresh Datta



GULABDAS BROKER reading out his paper at the Seminar. Jayaprakash Narayan is seen at the head of the table



Jovial and Pensive
Gangadhar Gadgil, Pierre Fallon, Nissim Ezekiel, Kazi Abdul Wadood, Arthur Koestler

REPORT ON THE "QUEST" SEMINAR

Belief and Literature

"The Relevance or Irrelevance of Philosophical, Moral and Political Considerations in the Evaluation of Creative Literature"

CALCUTTA, Feb. 13, 14 & 15, 1959

This report is based on personal recollection without the aid of notes, and is therefore entirely subjective, leaving out whole speeches and many individual points of view, and possibly misrepresenting the ideas of some contributors owing to the distortions of memory.

AT THE PUBLIC INAUGURAL SESSION OF THE SEMINAR, held in the University Institute Hall, after the eminent Bengali littérateur Sri Buddhadeva Bose had welcomed the delegates to the Seminar in a brief speech, Prof. A. S. Ayyub introduced the issue: can literary value be independent of all extra-literary values? If so, literature is amoral and without any truth claim. It seemed to him, however, indisputable, that there must be some connexion between the greatness of a drama or novel and the degree to which it "makes us more keenly sensitive to good and evil, and enables us to apprehend, however unscientifically, some aspect of reality". On the other hand, "is it not shocking to treat literature itself as a means to social good and historical progress or for expanding the frontiers of our world-consciousness?" Even though final solutions were not to be expected to such problems, the Seminar would more than fulfil its purpose, if it did no more than increase our understanding of our own and others' approach to them.

The distinguished guest from abroad then inaugurated the seminar with a paper in which he set forth a difference of kind between creative literature and other writing. Mr. Aurthur Koestler first established a distinction between "la vie tragique" and "la vie triviale"—two "planes of existence"

with no common ground. The tragic life is cosmic (he was frequently to insist), and when we are on that plane our day to day pleasures and disappointments seem of no importance,—just as the fact of death seems irrelevant to our intent preoccupations of normal living. Most of our life is passed on the trivial plane. But the artist, he contended, lives continually at the intersection of the two planes (the following morning he held two books at right angles to show how literally he meant this). Then taking Nietzsche's image, he compared the artist to a tightrope walker suspended over the abyss. His danger is twofold: he may sway too far to one side or the other. In the one case he will plunge into social commitment, in which case his "littérature engagée" quickly becomes a "littérature enragée", i.e. mere propaganda. But if he turns too far away from practical issues, he retires into an ivory tower, and so equally escapes his role. Inevitably, Mr. Koestler thought, a work of art has an ideology behind it. He quoted a passage from "Troilus and Cressida" (read in Australian by Prof. Gibson) which assumed as its "scaffolding" a hierarchic order of nature. Mr. Koestler thus left the issue fairly open, but excluded the use of literature as an expedient or a refuge. A work of art must avoid both explicit ideology and absence of ideology.

Sri Humayun Kabir, the Union Minister of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, then delivered his presidential address. In the midst of his innumerable engagements and piles of work he had apparently no time to prepare a written speech or even notes on which he could base his speech. Spoken extempore, his address was well received. Amongst other things Prof. Kabir emphasised that great art had a message but that message could not be separated from the expression of it. Different people interpreted it in different ways, conditioned by the experience and personality of the receiver. The function of art was to heighten human consciousness and to expand the range of human experience. As such it was spiritual in the truest sense, for it enabled men to escape from the bondage of the material. Art not only liberated men from the bondage of the material, it also liberated an individual from the fetters of his individuality. "It was an area of cooperation and not of competition".

The following morning when the Seminar proper began with Sri S. H. Vatsyayan in the chair, Prof. Amalendu Bose of Aligarh University began the discussion with an elegantly phrased speech in which however he did not seem to have made any striking points. At any rate those who spoke after him hardly made any reference to what he had said—in his support or in opposition to him. Next came Sri Ka Naa Subramanyam the eminent novelist from Madras. He too did not clinch any issue, though he spoke in a very different vein from the previous speaker, very much in the vein of a creative writer. Mr. Ayyub, as one of the convenors, had suggested in the beginning that at least for the first Session, it would be a good idea to treat the topic as a whole from three different points of view—that of literary criticism, of creative writing and of the

philosophy of literature. After the literary critic and the creative writer had spoken, he himself chose to play the role of the philosopher. Mr. Ayyub elaborated the point that a great work of art cannot be treated as a mere configuration of sonal or pictorial elements. It is that no doubt but it has to be regarded as much more than that, or else much of the high value which we attach to great works of art would be left unaccounted for. Explicitly or implicitly a work of art, particularly of literature, presents an aspect of the world seen from a certain specific focus, and a set of values embodied in it. Must we therefore share the beliefs and values of the author in order to appreciate the work? Mr. Ayyub decided that in his case he found necessary a "minimum compatibility" between his views and values and those behind the work of art. He could appreciate the poetry of Tagore for instance, without adhering to the full philosophy behind it, because no fundamental conflict of outlook or values was involved. On the other hand, he could conceive a work written from a viewpoint (say, the Nazi ideology) so antagonistic to his own that he must reject it out of hand, masterly though its technique may be. He was immediately opposed by Mrs. Ellen Roy and Mr. Nissim Ezekiel, among others, who averred that they were completely able to enjoy the work of artists whose ideologies were obnoxious to them, say, Knut Hamsun or Dante.

In the afternoon Mr. Ezekiel re-affirmed his standpoint: "One must expose oneself naked to literature." Such attitudes recalled the "aesthetic" approach to literature which Nietzsche castigated in David Strauss as "Culture philistinism". Similar declarations of faith, both in the morning and the afternoon, came close to nineteenth century positions, reminiscent of Pater, holding your work of art like your glass of wine up to the light, in reverence and receptive anticipation. This piety was reflected in such

speeches as made some indefinably sacred quality called "beauty" the only touchstone in judging literature. Even Dr. Rashbehari Das, the following morning, took this line for purposes of clarity, but on second thoughts confessed to "lingering doubts" whether truth or moral values could be so easily separated from "beauty". One speaker attempted to compromise by declaring the whole world of experience open to literature, whose role is to embrace fearlessly any subject, however new, provided the intention is wholesome. Mathew Arnold's "criticism of life" was cited in support. "Wholesome?" queried Mr. Koestler; "You make me think of English cooking—boiled cabbage and potatoes."

The first day of discussion was somewhat confused, with contributors frequently talking at cross-purposes, presenting pre-established points of view, sometimes not closely related to the development of the argument. There was a great deal of discursive abstraction, insufficiently backed by concrete examples, much sweeping talk of *Weltanschauung* but little clear definition in terms of authors. Finally Mr. Koestler, whose impatience had shown increasingly, spoke up with some petulance. Let us be realistic, he said; I have jotted down a list of authors, which will force us to define our positions: Baudelaire, de Sade, Nietzsche, Celine, a Japanese epic—he did not recall the name—based on a blood-feud code of honour, Françoise Sagan, Evelyn Waugh (who allows a child to be eaten by cannibals), Graham Greene, Ezra Pound, and others... Let us be "democratic"—we will vote on them: are they moral, immoral, or amoral? if immoral or amoral, are they great? It may be mentioned parenthetically that this session was especially devoted to the discussion of moral considerations in the evaluation of creative literature. Mr. Koestler's proposal was met with the start-

led silence that ultimatums provoke, and the chairman for the afternoon, Father Fallon, suggested that Mr. Koestler's names be discussed over coffee and biscuits.

When the session was resumed a quarter of an hour later, there occurred the only awkward pause of the Seminar, for nobody was willing to accept Mr. Koestler's challenge, and the idea of a vote was not taken literally. To relieve the embarrassment Dr. Amalendu Bose was persuaded to talk, though with some reluctance for since he had not come prepared to speak in the concrete manner of Mr. Koestler, his argument relied again on a logical chain, persuasive but unapplied. It remained for Father Fallon, when he wound up for the day, to take up Mr. Koestler's list. He was prepared to make confession. We would be surprised to learn, he revealed with smiling temerity, that he, a Jesuit priest, "loved" Baudelaire. Yes—it was a fact! But his ground was safe: for Baudelaire had a sense of sin, and "Les Fleurs du Mal" take life's moral issues seriously. But "poor little Françoise Sagan", skilful though she may be in presenting the way her friends live, has no sense of right and wrong. It is all very clever no doubt, but how could he be expected to give his serious attention to a writer for whom adultery is no more significant than drinking tea? That a great artist might be immoral, he granted, but not amoral. Gide, he thought, by his deliberate amorality, had made himself so much less great. So the day ended with at least one voice of concrete commitment, but Mr. Koestler was not entirely satisfied: "There is no bringing these people down to earth," he was heard to comment on the way out.

The following morning Mr. Koestler was closeted with Sri Jaiprakash Narayan, and sent a message in which he left the philosophers (the subject was the relevance of philosophical considerations) to fight it out amongst themselves. In some contrast to the

previous morning, the debate was vigorous, clear and stimulating. Dr. Daya Krishna opened with a distinction between life as lived and life as understood. Literature, he declared, caught "the significant moments of experience"—images of "revelation"—and "fixed" them *as lived*, through symbols. Philosophy, on the other hand, dealt only in concepts. As far as literature was concerned, Mr. Koestler's distinction between the tragic and the trivial did not help our enquiry, because both planes belonged to life-as-lived and were therefore equally removed from the judgements of philosophy. Dr. Daya Krishna agreed that technique alone cannot produce great art, but found that the moral values which gave his moments significance, were organic, part of the living process itself, hence outside the scope of crystallised thought. Each reader recreates the work. This process is passive: art does not stimulate action. At this point Dr. Daya Krishna quoted directly from his paper, where he had distinguished between good and bad art in terms of neat antithesis: "Art dissociates feeling from desire, emotion from impulse, sentiment from action. Its measure of failure is its failure in effecting this dissociation, so difficult to achieve. The perversion of art is the other way round: to influence feeling to arouse desire, to enflame emotions to arouse impulse, to strengthen sentiment to arouse to action." Thus Dr. Daya Krishna established that art is moral, but that its morality cannot be questioned or exploited by philosophers, moralists or politicians. "The continuous transformation of the temporal into the timeless is the essence of art." "What is eternity?" he had countered a philosophical objection on the previous morning—"Have you never been in love?"

In his defence Prof. Ayyub denied this distinction between life as lived and as understood: living is understanding and thinking is experiencing—the two processes

are inseparable. The act of writing philosophy is a lived experience, just as the act of writing literature involved an understanding of experience. Nor can a word be divested of its conceptual quality. As soon as you say 'The sky is blue,' 'blue' becomes an abstraction. Between Dr. Daya Krishna and Prof. Ayyub lay perhaps the essential dichotomy of the Seminar. Few present seriously denied that moral values enter somehow into art, but many disputed the qualification of the theorist to judge art on these values. Successive speakers took either side, a majority favouring the autonomy of a work of art. But none could finally disprove Prof. Ayyub's fundamental contention that the use of words as symbol necessarily involves some reference to what lies beyond the symbol, to the symbolised. And what can the symbolised be but some aspect of the Real? The question of the adequacy or appropriateness of the symbol is a question of the validity or truth of its reference, and therefore opens the way to philosophical considerations in literature. Dr. Daya Krishna admitted that if you denied his distinction between life as lived and life as conceptually understood, then you refused the premise on which his whole argument rested. The two agreed to differ, and sat back to hear their supporters and their opponents.

In the general give and take which followed, Mr. Prabhakar Padhye, with many a persuasive glance and gesture, illustrated the case for the configurationists from Hemmingway's 'The Sun Also Rises'. He showed how its 'truth' lay in the harmony of the whole—the inter-relationship of characters, action, imagery, rhythmic pattern, and so forth. He also referred to Mr. Koestler's passage from 'Troilus and Cressida,' and denied that its excellence depended on the ideological 'scaffolding'—do we leave the scaffolding when the mansion is finished? The reader is not required to share any belief

in a cosmic hierarchy, but only to accept its meaning in the context. Prof. Sibnarayan Ray subsequently argued a similar case for judging literature by its formal qualities alone—'sonal' and 'pictorial'. As the Chairman, Dr. Rashbehari Das, was restricting speakers to five minutes, and Prof. Ray was speedily approaching ten, he was persuaded to be patient till the afternoon, when he was scheduled to address the final session. In the afternoon he modified his extreme position of the morning by admitting that a work of literature should embody those human values which are 'perennial'—he objected to the word 'eternal' (Dr. Daya Krishna had called them 'recurrent'). The beliefs of the author need not agree with his own. He could not deny his admiration for T.S. Eliot whose religious agnosticism was hateful to him, or for Ezra Pound, whose politics he deplored. Towards the close of the morning session, Dr Amaresh Dutta confirmed the opinion that the 'truth' of a work of art, which some presume objectively definable and of general application, is in fact integral, and can only be judged within the structure of the work itself—its values are interior, not exterior; it sets its own standards.

It cannot however be said that the philosophers were presumptuous in the opposite claim. Aware of treacherous ground, they had stepped with evident circumspection. Prof. Ayyub was ready to concede a great deal of autonomy to artistic truth; while Dr. Punyasloka Ray approached the problem of 'Truth in Criticism' with painful caution, finding that there are at least five types of truth 'sometimes in harmony with one another, sometimes in contradiction,' presenting the sincere soul with a dilemma which can cause 'even agony'. And the morning ended with the 'lingering doubts' of Dr. Rashbehari Das.

afternoon, the philosophers were even less sure of themselves. The opening speaker, Mr. Gulabdas Broker, glanced with frequent apprehension at the head of the table, as if to detect signs of impatience, fearing perhaps that his lucid and sensible paper contained too few concrete examples—though he drew on Tolstoy, in whose 'War and Peace' he found the imposed ideas an 'aberration' which the reader may safely ignore in order to concentrate on the literary essence. After some desultory worrying of this point, Mr. Koestler was called on for his conclusions. Leaning forward in a business-like manner and pulling at his notes, he roundly declared that the Seminar included 'too many professors and not enough writers'. He referred to the situation in America, where books are written about books, and feared similar tendencies might gain the upper hand in India. Mr. Broker was heard to protest mildly that he at any rate was not a professor.

Mr. Koestler began with support for Prof. Ayyub. He thought that if a reader exposed himself naked to literature, 'all that will happen is, that he will catch cold.' Discrimination is necessary; in fact no one should force himself to appreciate an author who repels him. He next turned to Mr. Kazi Abdul Wadud's contention that as literature is one aspect of civilisation, and as civilisation embodies human truth, which is moral truth, it was therefore the business of literature to tackle the moral problems of life. No, Mr. Koestler decided, literature is not an instrument 'to hammer question marks into exclamation marks'—as he had stated before, its ideology is implicit, not 'enragee'. Professor Gibson, on the other hand, had asked: 'Is eternity necessary?' Mr. Koestler understood that some critics in England believed that a literature of pure entertainment on the social level was possible, as in the novels of Ivy Compton Burnett, from which eternity is excluded, but that in his

With the return of Mr. Koestler in the

view art is invalid without cosmic awareness: art must lie in the perspective of eternity.

After this brief skirmish with the theorists, Mr. Koestler withdrew to home ground; 'Let us look at things from the workshop point of view'. He hoped there were a few young writers present to whom he could give a little practical advice. In the first place, he said, it is better to write for one reader in a hundred years' time than for a hundred readers today. Then, don't set out to write a masterpiece—aim at something just less than a masterpiece, within the best you think you can do. And don't extend your sympathy further than your imagination—write only about people you can imagine yourself to be; (he mentioned the lack of knowledge of feminine psychology he had found in many of the Indian stories he had read—young women wooden as puppets). Next, self-discipline: (this from Hemmingway) the writer must be something of a masochist—he must cut out all those brilliant aphorisms, telling phrases, purple patches and acute insights of which he is so proud, and however much his heart may bleed, store them all away in a book marked 'titbits'. And finally, a reminder for us all: 'The only way to write is to sit down and write'.

Towards the end of the afternoon, after Prof. Sibnarayan Ray had again asserted that the function of literature lies outside the achievement of social and political goals, Mr. Szimansky was finally persuaded to speak. He had attended more than two hundred writers' conferences in Poland, he began, but never one like this. For in his country they always discussed the relevance of a particular work to a particular subject, and never lost themselves in such abstraction, which he found very difficult to follow. Thus far he agreed with Mr. Koestler, but no farther. For how can the writer remain

indifferent to the starvation, poverty and injustice he sees all about him, if he feels he can in any way alleviate this suffering? He would far sooner write a book that would be read by as many people as possible now, than wait to be appreciated in a hundred years' time. What did he care if his book was forgotten in ten years' time! It was better to write a bad short story that did immediate good, than a masterpiece which nobody will read till he's dead. In his reply, Mr. Koestler spoke with pleading conviction in his anxiety to persuade Mr. Szimansky that there was really no disagreement between them: Mr. Szimansky did not really mean what he had said in preferring a bad short story with a good effect to a work of art; for a bad short story simply would not be so effective as a good one. Furthermore, the contrast between Mr. Szimansky's conferences and this Seminar was only a difference of emphasis: the pendulum swings from excessive concern with social problems, such as Western Europe had experienced in the thirties, to excessive concern with ultimate problems, which is our present emphasis. On this note of reconciliation, the Seminar came to an end.

Attendance throughout had been high and contributions unflagging. A variety of complex issues had been somewhat clarified, even after having been momentarily obscured, enabling protagonists at least to see where their differences lay. Mrs. Ellen Roy, who presided over the closing session, wisely drew no conclusions, and the secretary, Mr. Sinha, thanked the participants for their interest and trouble. The Seminar had in fact 'more than fulfilled its purpose.' There can be little doubt that discussion of the topic continued unabated in private rooms and railway compartments.

Santiniketan
21.2.1959.

D.J. McCUTCHION

Bhagavan Das — Philosopher of Swaraj

By P. C. CHATTERJI

DR. BHAGAVAN DAS who passed away on the 18th of September 1958 at the ripe old age of ninety, represented a generation which is now no longer with us. He was born in the same decade as Rabindra Nath Tagore, Brojendra Nath Seal, Hiralal Hal-dar and Swami Abhedananda, the first group of Indians to attempt to interpret Indian philosophy to the West through the medium of English. Like his progenitors of the Indian Renaissance, Bhagavan Das had not only assimilated Western ideas but had rediscovered our ancient wisdom. He could write about it with a simple and infectious enthusiasm very far removed from the pretentious nonsense associated with such writing today. In this sense the passing of Bhagavan Das brings to a close an important chapter in the intellectual and cultural life of our country.

Dr. Bhagavan Das tells us that his interest in philosophy began in the year 1880 when the death of his grandmother made a profound impression on his young mind. He studied philosophy in college at Banaras and discussed the eternal questions with his English teachers and the yogis and rishis who have from time immemorial haunted this sacred city. Then in the year 1887 he seemed to find the first glimmerings of an answer to his questions. In this connection it is worth noting that the Theosophical Society, which had been founded in New York in 1875, shifted its headquarters to India and finally located itself in Adyar early in the eighties. That Bhagavan Das' faith had something to do with the work of the Society in India is undoubted, though

whether he had come to the same conclusions as the theosophists on his own it is difficult to pronounce. Suffice it to say that he became an ardent Theosophist and with the encouragement of Mrs. Annie Besant began giving formal expression to his views and books at the turn of the century.

His literary activity continued for over fifty years and apart from pamphlets and articles his books in English alone number at least a dozen. Among the objectives of the Theosophical Society are the study of comparative religion and philosophy and investigation of the occult. As a true theosophist Bhagavan Das' work dealt largely with these themes as the following titles illustrate: *The Essential Unity of all Religions*, *The Science of Peace*, *The Science of Social Organisation* and *Ancient Psycho-Syntheses versus Modern Psycho-Analysis*. Incidentally the last-mentioned volume, a detailed study of the doctrines of Freud, Jung and Adler which appeared in 1949, admirably shows how open-minded and vigorous he was even at eighty.

Bhagavan Das described his philosophy as Atma-Vidya or the Science of the Self. The cardinal principles of his philosophy he states as follows: "(1) Infinitely countless individual selves or souls; (2) their rebirths, evolution and involution, in and through evolving and involving, integrating and dis-integrating, forming and dissolving, material bodies and surroundings; the passing of each self, through all possible experiences, in infinite time, space and motion; in (3) cycles and circles of time and space on all possible scales of duration and extent, in

which the processes of rhythmic evolution and involution manifest themselves; in (4) one All-including all-pervading, ever-complete, timeless, spaceless, Universal Soul or Spirit or Self, which is Absolute and Changeless, which is also identical with and includes within Itself all the countless individual selves, and whose eternally changeless, and yet also ever-changing, Ideation the entire world-process of all souls and bodies is."

This is not the place to go into the merits or demerits of Bhagavan Das' metaphysical beliefs. Suffice it to say that he was not unaware of the weaknesses of his position and in fact his extreme humility may be considered one of his outstanding virtues as a philosopher. An indication of this may be found in the preface to one of his major works, *Science of Peace* published in 1904. He tells us that after the manuscript was completed, one hundred inter-leaved copies were prepared and sent to philosophers at home and abroad. In a covering letter Bhagavan Das requested them, in case they found the manuscript not entirely worthless, to jot down their thoughts or correct his errors, exaggerations, falsifications and so on!

But apart from his work as an ardent advocate of the Theosophist creed, Bhagavan Das must be remembered par excellence as the person who provided the philosophical framework of India's freedom movement. And the award of the Bharat Ratna in 1955 should be taken as a recognition of his service to the country in this context. In 1910 Bhagavan Das wrote one of his most important books, *The Science of Social Organisation or the Laws of Manu*. In this book which provides a complete social philosophy, Bhagavan Das contrasts modern ruler-politicians of the west with the Indian philosopher-kings, the sages or their archetype Manu. His point is that

present-day rulers are merely opportunists, their actions are designed to ward off the troubles of the moment, like uncoordinated moves on a chess-board. But Manu and his assistants act differently. "Their practical politics are always dominated and governed by high ideals, by a complete theory of life, its origin, its end, its purpose." (p.10). And, "It is obvious that, according to him (Manu) the spirit which should animate the social organisation is the spirit of the joint family, of the broadest humanism, in modern days termed socialism but socialism guided and administered by the wise, not by the mob". (p.334). And finally, "Manu's scheme is the nearest and only approach that has (been) tried in our race and that succeeded for thousands of years". (p.335).

With these ideas as to the role of political leadership in our country it was not surprising that some ten years later he should be involved in a newspaper campaign on the content of Swaraj. These articles were subsequently collected and printed in a small booklet entitled *The Philosophy of Non-Co-operation and of Spiritual-Political Swaraj*. These were the early days of the non-co-operation movement. Bhagavan Das felt strongly that there must be a positive content to non-co-operation. The Irish Home Rule revolutionaries, he contended, had come to grief because the idea of freedom could not mean merely the pulling of political strings in Dublin instead of Whitehall. Subsequent events nearer home have underlined the wisdom of his thought. It is not surprising therefore, to learn that it was Bhagavan Das who drafted the *Outline Scheme of Swaraj* which was subsequently circulated in 1923 over the signature of C. R. Das. With characteristic modesty Bhagavan Das remained in the background, even in respect of the authorship of this vital document which has left its imprint on the constitution of free India.

POETRY

SUMMER IN CALCUTTA

Marble-still
Are the artificial lakes,
Their grassy banks parched and shrivelled
Like the desolate earth of some volcanic valley, marking the end
Of a traveller's journey,
Unforgiving;
Restlessly shuffle
The bloated cars, vain kings;
American saloons,
One or two shameless tourers,
Cycles and phaetons,
Hawkers of almonds and ice-cream vendors,
The tricycle of the Happy Boy or Esquimo Pie.
If ever the wind blows
And the dust clouds up from the macadam! —
The heat stifles.
In the Hogg market the crowds thin out;
Beneath the forbidden luxury of the Krishnachura trees,
In the pale gold of the Gul-Mohur,
One can hear the dying gasp —
Here and there, on all sides,
In the hysteric traffic of Chowringhee
And in the deserted bazars;
Beyond where the dirty river,
Silent, slides in the glittering sun,
The sirens weep no more.
No forgiveness.
There is no forgiveness wherever you are.
In the cool, conditioned air of the cinema,
If only one could sit and breathe,
Gaze at Ninotchka smiling — smile and then sneeze.

Unforgiving time, hard and deathless;
 Time unforgiving.
 Villages burn like furnaces,
 Breath ceases in their dead drooping orchards,
 In the dingy smoke, the moss and weeds, the dirt, their broken bone-set commons
 Where the hairless, festering streetdogs roam;
 In the ruined cloisters, among the roofless temples,
 The parched rivers, still canals and weed-clogged tanks;
 In the quarrels of rival fairs, where the Union Boards bargain
 Over unsunk tubewells.
 There is no peace in nature; peace has settled
 Upon the burrasahib's jute mills.
 And so I greet you from the distance, my Bengal, lovely Bengal!
 O forgive and forgive — fill these hard-dying lives with song!
 My song floats in the meadows, in paddy fields, upon the waters,
 Sowing the *Aus* seeds* with arms raised in rhythm.
 Summer releases her rich-hoarded triumph
 In the rain-flood which threatens the railway embankment.
 In thunder, songs burst from the soil, the river flows,
 The earth gives life, and hope shines through the thunderous, lightening rain,
 The rich soil we plough with visions of reaping,
 Knowing that our motion of sowing will pass into the rhythm of the sickle.
 The summer knows no forgiveness, deathless time stands heavy,
 Unforgiving, Godlike. In history, in that great palace,
 On the various floors and apartments wanders the swift spy of time,
 Quick, furtive, and ubiquitous; the Favourite meditates
 In silence — perhaps it is to her room that the King's messenger
 Will come — the best of the seven queens, freshly culled
 In her youth, so she thinks; but the spy goes on,
 Enveloped in his own concentrated search,
 That unblushing grin knows no forgiveness —
 In the impending stroke there is no forgiveness. Time holds
 The imperial ensign, uniform over the entire world and the seas,
 Impending doom. Yes, yes, I know, that is why there is no peace
 In this sweaty, sultry heat; men with merchandise, clerks,
 Accountants wander restlessly, in their maniac greed,
 Driven by mad selfishness in this desperate hour,
 Like old beasts on their way to lonely death.

*For the late rice crop

Unforgiving, I return home back to the
 Squalid suburbs in the north, lured by the dark cage,
 A foreman, not quite labour, but skilled, almost gentry —
 I return and sing, O death you are dead!
 And in the distant air floats over flags, in broken snatches, the same refrain.

BISHNU DEY

(Translated from the Bengali verse (1938) by the author)

SUBMISSION

Drinking scalding tea from a thick and side-chipped cup
 At a still stale ~~canteen~~ table,
 Talking lousily and loudly;
 Filthy perhaps; hollow rather.
 She walks with proud reserve
 Some ten feet away,
 Her sari tight about her.
 Flushed face over hearkening heart —
 And she does not look at me
 But stiffly at her feet
 And only happens to see me as she turns her head,
 Far too casually,
 She forces a smile —
 Or forces her smile to be forced —
 And walks away (too casually)
 Dreading to be stiff but walking stiffly all the same.
 And I look at her
 And I smile
 And my heart is soft
 At her childish maturity.
 And then, with a sigh,
 I reach for more tea.

J. N. HATTANGADI

MRS. GRAZIANO

There will never be a mother
 As kindly as Mrs. Graziano.
 She was old like a battered piano,
 Full of dissonant chords
 And broken arpeggios; her voice
 Was a bellows full of noise;
 She had the ancient eyes of a fish,

Of a warm and friendly fish.
 Mrs. Graziano's cheese and macaroni,
 With just a pinch of pepperoni,
 Was better than her minestrone.
 Bettina was her *bella bambina*;
 She was her darling baby,
 A big full-bosom'd baby.

Mrs. Graziano lived on a cloud,
 In pearly dreams and abstractions,
 Loving her baby, whose eyes were olives,
 Big round dark Sicilian olives.
 And in the evenings, on the front porch,
 Near the lone melancholy juniper
 Mrs. Graziano would wait, wait, wait
 For Bettina of the lovely eyes to return.
 Her baby would be out,
 Out with the boys
 In the rink or in the poolrooms:
 She was the queen of the poolrooms.

Bettina loved the boys
 Who were to her
 Like so many toys—

Mrs. Graziano would mutter *Carissima!*
 When in the small hours she'd spy Bettina
 Under the melancholy, dew-dripping juniper.
 And thus the months tumbled from the calendar
 And again August became September,
 Its evenings dropping like leaves.

"Baby, don't go with them boys no more,"
 Pleaded the lonesome mother
 With an emphatic *Sacra vacca!*
 But Bettina, of the lovely eyes, knew better.

Bettina loved the boys
 Smart, beautiful boys.
 With them she'd drive away
 To the rink and the speedway;
 To the smoky poolrooms
 And also to other rooms.

Then one evening there appeared
 Under the lone melancholy juniper
 Not Bettina but another
 In a uniform of blue.
 "Mrs. Graziano," he said,
 "I have bad news for you."
 Mrs. Graziano shuddered.
 "Is she all right?" she said,
 "She's fine," he said,
 "Only she's in the clink
 After she'd had an encounter
 And got herself mixed up
 With a tough character
 In the skating rink!"

"*Mamma mis!*" cried Mrs. Graziano,
 Like a chord on the battered piano.

Now Mrs. Graziano waits and waits,
 With her ancient eyes of a fish,
 On the porch, by the melancholy juniper,
 For her *bella bambina*,
 Her baby, the lovely dark-eyed Bettina.

R. DE LOYOLA FURTADO

SHORT STORY

Flashes in the Night

By ARON TAMASI

THE world is in ferment.

Only when winter dies in the birthpangs of spring does the silence grow so tense over the mountain plateau. Even the birds sense it as they wait in the sheltering, primeval forest; the prowling four-footed beasts who do not prey are tense too, and filled with profound anticipation.

The leaven of spring silently moves the world.

Only the waters of the Kukullo roar in the distance. Even without rain, the river is swollen; fierce and head-long, its force abates as it cuts through the forest. Its power is drained by the delicate leaves so that, as it reaches the plateau, its voice drops to the whisper of luxuriant spring mist.

The dog's pointed ears scoop up the distant noise. Right, then left, he gently cocks his head, bright eyes peering into the woods. The pointed funnels scoop in the sound of rushing waters.

"What are you watching, Mop?" his master asks.

As though the river had stopped its sound, the dog abandons the far-off noises. His coat trembles joyfully at the sound of the man's voice. Nimbly he hops around and yelps as if he wished to push loyalty to the point of heart-break. Shining eyes fastened on his master, he waits, ticking like a wound

clock, everything about him astir with expectancy.

Indeed, the dog is much like a living mop, his head blunt, his body thickset, the root of his tail black, and behind his forelegs a ribbon of black that looks as if nature had harnessed him in black hair. But for this he is all white, or would be, were he not sooted by winter smoke. Well, he thinks, am I supposed to stand here for nothing? He yelps again, reproachfully.

"What do you want now?" Benke asks.

His master is Benke Kulu, who works in a flimsy shed that has only three sides, but a good roof. Benke tacked the sides together and shingled the top, and this flimsy nothing is new and can be called a building, if you choose to call a butterfly an animal. The wood is so fresh it still reeks of pine resin. Nevertheless, the shade serves as a workshop, just as wild flowers will do if there are no hot-house ones.

Benke Kulu is a carpenter, not just an ordinary one, though that would be nothing to be ashamed of since Saint Joseph himself honored that trade. Since that time, however, the world has moved ahead and Benke, too, has moved ahead of the carpenter of Nazareth: he can do almost anything with wood. He can make barrel staves,

various tubs, boards, any size panniers, firkins, beetles, or toughs, and most happily, cradles which rock gently. At the moment he is making shingles, sitting in his tent-like shop planing and chamfering the wood. On the sides and the rear, a butter-colored wall of boards guards him from intrusion, but in the direction of the setting sun, the shelter is exposed freely to the forest. Green grass sighs in the meadows, wan with milky dew, breath-like wisps swaying with the surging force of the world.

The dog waits.

Firmly, wisely patient, he watches his industrious master; if he must wait, then he might as well put the time to use, but what can a dog do during the lonely hours? He looks at his master to see if the royal portrait he carries in his loyal brain needs a bit of retouching here and there. He looks at his mane which, unlike his own, so far has neither black spots nor white streaks, but is an unruly shock of hazel wool. The man's forehead is bony as if the tanned skin covered a small crag; each eyebrow is like a toppled ear of grain; and the mustache, the crown of a small hay-cock which, wafted from somewhere by the wind, has settled under his nose. His chin, obviously carved of oak, might have been reduced by a few shavings, and the planing might have been smoother. His neck was also done in the rough. He is as he is, the dog decides.

Meanwhile, under the dog's eagle eye, Benke vigorously cuts and shapes shingles. Hundreds are piled on the floor, each more like its neighbour than itself. The multitude of sameness grows as the astonished minutes fly by; only the shavings stretch, some rustling softly, others fiddling like locusts asleep.

The dog waits. His hind legs quiver, telling his heart: you're mad with loyalty but there's a limit to patience! If only he'd look my way once. But no, he just moves back and forth, forever stooping to pick up shingles and put them in piles; his work bench is drenched with pine shavings. He might at least look outside once in a while to see

the meadow waking and the house sitting in its lap like an orphan mushroom, not a three-sided house like this tent of boards, but a good warm house, smelling of food. And in it, like a violet in a bouquet, his mistress and the sooty kettle over the fire with their dinner. The dog yelps urgently. The food must be ready.

"Well," Benke cries, "what is it?"

Mop stamps on the poor young grass and seems to invite him to the house; indeed, he does just that, though he doesn't dare turn away from his master lest the promise of those few words should disappear, and may all the canine saints preserve us from that! Not taking his eyes off Benke, he makes tiny, backward movements; but that should be enough for any sensible man.

Indeed, Benke Kulu gets up from his work and says, "All right, all right!" The sound of his voice is like some warm loaf, browned to the color of joy, fresh from some faery oven. Mop whines with excitement, his joy knowing no limits. Now, we will go to the noon meal. Though who can tell? Maybe the master doesn't really mean to go and was merely talking. Often, these restless human beings toss mere words to dogs.

Benke brushes the pine shavings from his clothing and steps out of the tent. "Forgive me," Mop barks. Contritely, he bends his blunt head to the ground, sorry that his faith had wavered in a weak and hungry moment. His head hangs repentant, but his voice sounds joyously to the heavens, like smoke curling upwards from Abel's burnt offering. To encourage its rising, he fans it vigorously with his tail.

Off they go through the green fields.

But suddenly, heaven knows why, Benke stops. Maybe he's seen an insect or a field mouse that survived the rigors of winter? Apparently not. He is looking up into the capricious cloud-filled sky. Now what's up? At dawn the sky was pure innocent blue, unmottled by clouds; in fact, all morning

whenever he looked up from his work, the heavens were flawless. Now, though, the clouds have converged from all directions, looking like tattered wool torn roughly to shreds and scattered pell-mell, ash-grey mingled with white, sullen-grey with blue.

"Something's up," Benke says.

The dog looks at the young grass and then at his master, as if to say, yes, yes, but let's go. Kulu doesn't move, however. To the East he sees endless forest and everywhere in the sea of trees, gay green hope strives confidently against the grim darkness; to the North, marked by thinning trees and grassy hills, green still calls to the woods; to the West, a village mottles the great mountain slope in the distance; to the South, the earth, in restless patches of light, sinks below the horizon.

"Let's go," the dog urges. Because his master doesn't move immediately, he waves his tail, declining further responsibility. Then he goes on alone, slowly, wondering whether he shouldn't turn back after all. But he doesn't look around; he simply flattens his ears to catch any sound of movement behind him. Listen! he moves!

"Hold on, Mop," he says.

Gladly, the dog stops, tail beating a tattoo of pleasure. But suddenly the spring snaps again; his master has stopped once more. Intently, he listens, eyes searching, trying to find where the sound comes from, a strange sound like the muted hum of a distant stream, but also like the endless song of horned beetles in flight.

"What can it be?" Benke squints. His sharp eyes scan the whimsical spring sky and suddenly he sees a convoy of man-made birds streaking across the clouds. They gleam like silver between the serried ranks of cloud, wings flashing in the noonday sun. There seem to be nine of them flying from East to West.

Benke Kulu grows serious. "Come on, now," he says to the dog. Off they go again, Mop ready to rejoice if anyone will rejoice with him. Noting the lack of response, he watches his master who must have seen something important in the giddy spring

sky. With grave face and lowered head he walks home. And what's this, his left leg has developed a decided limp? Sometimes he does walk with a slight limp but now, with each step, he limps more heavily on his left leg. Though no one but the dog can see him, Benke treats his game leg with due respect. After all, the leg deserves it; it kept him out of the war. Here, in these isolated hills, he sometimes forgets to show his disability but he had better wake up and limp as hard as he can. The war is far from over; the planes still fly in battle formation. Benke almost becomes a cripple.

But for all that they make good progress. The breeze catches at the smoke rising from the house. Benke is all wrapped up in the war which for five years now has burned the globe at the German's fiery whim. Every so often the dog looks ahead, as if eating up the remaining distance, but mostly, he looks at his master, his eyes on the limp.

In front of the house the wash is drying, the clothesline bent beneath its weight. Although the clouds are wind-swept, here below, the wind is gentle; even the pots and pans on the kettle tree do not clank; the chicken feathers lie where they have fallen; only the spry sunlight moves on the hog trough. There is no sound from the house, which nestles in its pale green setting like a mottled giant bird's egg.

"Aniska," Benke calls from outside.

No answer.

Running ahead the dog leaps through the open door, and returns to stare at his master. Benke's nerves tingle, his heart thumps; he forgets the war, forgets he ever limped across the field. He hurries into the house, his face lighting up. The woman is lying on the bed. Her dress hides her youthful body which, though frail, is graceful despite her large, round belly. Her golden-brown hair falls in orderly waves on the white, green-edged pillow. Like moons, her velvety eyes shine in her pale face. She holds a branch of nodding white flowers.

"Is it very bad?"

"It's part of it," she whispers.

Well, Benke thinks, it's not so easy for a woman either, especially at this stage. The child puts a strain on her blood, and all the rest of her strength, so she grows weak, joy and torment clashing. Nature plunders her. It's amazing how she stands it.

Eagerly the dog waits, looking from master to mistress. What's up now? It's getting late.

"Is the food ready?" Benke asks.

"I think so," Aniska says faintly.

Benke walks to the small, thrifty hearth. He had chosen the stones for it himself from along the river bank and put them together here with his own hands. True, the smith made the pronged irons at the sides and the crosspiece and hook for the kettle, but then, he has to make a living too. "Well," he says, "let's have a look." He pokes the embers, peers into the kettle, stirs the bubbling stew. "What a delicious smell," he says, his words almost prayer-like.

Then he looks around. The smoke floats upward towards the roof. The room is warm, and the royal odor of rabbit stew fills the air. "Let's eat, Aniska," he says.

The woman sits up on the broad bed, covered with a pale yellow quilt. This is too much for her, but she manages to get to her feet. Just as she is about to walk, she has cramps and doubling up, eases herself gently back on to the bed. "Eat," she says.

Benke adjusts the covers and strokes her face. He woos her with words too but though his voice tries to soothe, the syllables are rasping. The dog helps him, whining softly.

"Eat," the woman repeats.

"Do you want some?" Benke asks.

She shakes her head and fans her face with the branch as if to banish the odor of the meat; indeed, she smells the fragrant flowers several times.

Well, that's life. Benke carries the table

outside, gets what is necessary, unhooks the kettle, and settles down to dinner. The dog sits at his feet, impatiently waiting. Benke tastes the food, then feels bound to give the dog some too. It is only right that Mop should get an equal share. After all, he bagged the rabbit yesterday, a poor scrawny thing it was too, as rabbits are in spring, but however mean the prize, the credit goes to the dog.

He throws Mop a leg. Together they do justice to the meal, Benke sucking every bone and mopping up the gravy, while the dog feasts on the scraps.

In the interim the sun disappears and lowering clouds whirl through the skies. Grass sways, chicken feathers skip, and the wash on the line swings in the wind. The womb of silence grows restive.

"Benke," the woman calls. Her tone is not soft and gentle, as it was before, but forceful with the strength of pain and fear. Her man hurries to her. "What day is it?" the woman falters.

"Sunday," Benke answers, "the last day of April."

Anguish reduces her face to the color of bone, her eyes bright, the leafy branch clenched in her fist. "We counted wrong," she says heavily.

The days and months rush through Benke's brain like clouds in the sky. Driven by winds of fear they flash memories without answering the question of whether or not they really have miscalculated. They couldn't have. In his soul the sure tree of certainty blooms which had promised their first child for the end of May. Aniska has been saying that too. "We still have at least three weeks," Benke said.

"No," the woman said.

"But that's what you've been saying yourself all along."

"I was wrong."

Upset, Benke bends his head, uncertainty flooding him. Helplessly, almost pleading, he looks at the little mountain house as if expecting some miracle. But on the hearth the embers are dead; through the breathing cracks in the board wall, the wind plays

games with the light; the roof shingles warp mutely in the silence; while from the post, instead of sides of bacon, the rich future hangs in the balance.

But worry will not wait.

Benke goes out in front of the house and like a tree which trouble has carved into a cross, stands beneath the spring sky. The grim clouds incite themselves and each other to anger, and the wind hones its teeth on his luxuriant hair. The sun dips behind a dark cloud and even the light of heaven grows anxious. The wash flutters white; the wings of birds tremble; sullenly, the forest cowers; and the air grows tense. Care presses down relentlessly.

Bewildered Benke goes back into the house and asks, "Now what?"

The woman lies trembling and says nothing. She fixes her great pleading eyes on Benke until, painfully brooding, they fill with tears. Benke sits down on the bed and buries his face in his hands. With a heavy heart he floats between earth and sky, wracked by anxiety, able to tell himself no more than that he has done all a man can do. And so he has, for he had bargained with the midwife to come to the mountains in mid-May; then, too, he'd taken on the shingling of a whole building so that the money might precede the child.

But they had misjudged the time.

"I'll go," he says at last, "and somehow I'll bring the midwife here."

"When?" the woman asks.

"Now," Benke replies.

He gets right up, tosses his coat over his shoulder and takes a long-handled axe for the journey. He kisses the woman and is about to start when Aniska, anxiously, speaks up: "When will you be back?"

"It's thirteen kilometers to the village. We'll try to make it by morning."

The wind gives the roof an angry cuff, and gloom edges through the door. The woman's face turns from hope to dismay and she stretches her arms out to Benke. "Don't leave me alone tonight," she pleads.

Benke goes back.

"What's that you're saying?"

"I'll die."

Benke grits his teeth until they grate. Outside, the sky lowers over the fields and the wind, in waves of wrath, breaks over the roof.

"Take me with you," she asks.

"In my arms?"

"In the small cart."

They shouldn't have sold the old horse this winter after all, Benke thinks. Or at least he should have broken the colt. But those damned shingles took all his time. Now, unbroken, he is afraid to hitch up the colt, especially with life and death sitting in the cart behind, waiting to see which will triumph.

Or should he chance it?

"Good," he says happily, "I'll hitch up the colt!"

The reassuring strength of action suffuses him and he almost rejoices that now, at last, he can harness Jomag, the colt. Confidently he readies the cart, softening its lap with hay and pillows. The wind no longer roars but seems to tumble recklessly among the racks of cloud. Lightning flashes wildly in the south but no thunder can be heard.

Like Benke Kulu, such is the world.

He carries the woman out in his arms and with great care puts her in the cart. He hitches up and they set out. The colt takes great whiffs of the stormy air, its feet almost not touching the ground, looking back often to see what it has been entangled with. Then he yields himself to this game of pulling a load and in a surge of young spirits, skins silkenly along. Benke leads him from the left, holding his bridle. The wind ruffles the colt's mane and his own hair but in his present mood he'd put his head into the rumbling clouds themselves. Sometimes he calls out to the dog who friskily watches the road for them, and looks back again and again, reassuringly. Sometimes Benke asks his wife a question and her answer comes to him with a happy sound.

They move southward.

The clouds hug the earth, the sun sets and in the churning dark, the plateau is lost. Man and beast halt at the roadside. Benke takes council with himself — perhaps Mop does too — for the road here dips sharply into a pine forest that guards the mountain side from being carried away by wind and water. The forest guards the roadway too, arching a canopy above it, and providing a mat of pine needles.

Benke makes one wheel fast lest the cart ram the colt on the sharp grade. "Let's go, Mop," he calls to the dog. Firmly, he reins the colt and with flattering words, eases him downward. The cart makes no sound because the road is soft, though very narrow now that night has fallen, and the clouds increase the gloom. But Benke knows each twist and turn, and the dog watches before them too, wisely sticking to the center of the road, and signalling constantly with short barks for the cart to proceed.

If only the storm doesn't strike, Benke thinks. At that moment, the sky-borne terror comes growling out of the South. Thick murk shrouds the pines, which quiver and moan. The air above rumbles ceaselessly, blinking more and more brightly, until the forest is flooded with light.

"We'll die," the woman shudders.

"Don't be afraid. We'll live, even here," Benke cries.

He holds the colt firmly though Jomag, with astounding courage, doesn't seem too restless in the face of the celestial fire and the ceaseless terrestrial rumbling. "At last, we can see," Benke says.

"We can see, but we'll die," the woman says, trembling.

But they go on, descending into the fire, until they reach a brook in the valley. Beyond, Benke stops the colt, mops his sweating forehead, and stooping over the brook, drinks long and deep. Then he goes back to his wife, adjusts her covers, and says: "See, the sky lights its candles to safeguard you."

She clasps Benke's neck with her frail arms, and in the tender embrace, bursts into tears. "Oh, I won't die, will I?"

"We won't die, but we shall increase," Benke says.

The dog drinks at the brook too, quenching his thirst with rapid licks. The winding brook gleams silver. One could stay and wonder at the rainbow play of light here in this eternal solitude, but the dog urges Benke on. As they set out once more in the flashing night, the forest begins to thin. Clearings appear, then old solitary trees, then finally what seem to be grassy meadows. The cart wobbles and sometimes jolts, for the road grows worse. The colt stumble on some of the unexpected ruts, and the woman cries out in pain.

"The road is bad," Benke says.

He speaks so softly that only the dog could answer him but Mop has his own worries on the bumpy road. Along with the jolts, the sky grows angrier, the wrath of the West crosses with the ire of the South, and jagged bolts slash the dense air. Huge raindrops pelt the road. The world groans, the forest roars, the trees shudder, A bolt of lightning crashes.

"We'll die, Benke," the woman wails.

Benke doesn't answer. He sees plainly that the four corners of the earth have pooled their anger. He tries to figure out what shelter he can find. Perhaps the canopy of some huge tree would be better than this open road, or a ravine which would at least give them some protection.

"There's nothing wrong at all," he cries with sudden gladness. He speaks so suddenly that Mop whirls and his wife, in the cart, raises her head too. "We'll go to the sheepfold," he cries. True enough, a Marton Zadog's sheepfold is in the neighbourhood. He begins to check his bearings. In the maddened night he cannot see, but luck still smiles on their dire need, for there, on the left hand side of the road, at the edge of a young forest, he sees a fire. He guides the cart towards it.

And they are at the right spot. As they make their way toward the fire, a dog barks. His voice is deep and hoarse and rushes closer. Mop stares at his master. What now? But the night admits no reply. It would be too late anyway because the savage animal has already torn into Mop.

"Stop that!", Benke cries. He tries to kick the dog aside but he see no more than a fierce swirl of fur. The wild dog's throat rattles: Mop's teeth grate.

"Hey, Mortarl!" a voice cries. With a lighted branch in his hand, a young lad comes, probably the shepherd. Benke doesn't know him. Again, he shouts the dog's name and swats him with the flaming torch. The beast slinks off, almost slithering along the ground. Then the boy brings his torch near the cart and, seeing the woman in it, asks Benke: "What do you want?"

"We are travellers, as you can see," Benke says.

The boy scratches his head. Something strikes him and his face fills with wonder. He runs with his flaming torch toward the sheepfold. The house is not far off and his voice carries clearly as he cries, "Saint Joseph is come, and Mary, with a colt."

Benke laughs at his transformation into Saint Joseph. "Do you hear that, Aniska?"

"Yes," the woman replies gently.

The farmer is already on his way. Squinting in the torchlight he comes near, and at once recognizes the family. "That you, Benke?" he asks.

"It's us," Benke says.

"Is your woman ailing?"

"She's with child."

The old man is about to take Aniska in his arms but Benke forestalls him. He carries her into the little house himself while the farmer's wife hastily makes the bed. He places her among the pillows where she sighs deeply, drinking in the redolence of milk in the room around her.

"Well, this too is done, thank heaven!" Then Benke asks the old woman: "Aunt Illa, you know anything about midwifery?"

"In case of need."

"She could run a hospital, if it came to that," old Marton adds.

Well and good. They leave the women to themselves. The cart is guided to the edge of the woods near the hut, where the herd slumbers by the fire. Benke unhitches the colt, ties him to a sapling. The old man puts more wood on the fire. The two dogs sidle over at a respectful distance from each other, and plump down with their noses toward the fire. The storm, too, begins to abate.

The two men sit by the fire on bundles of straw. They light up and stare at the mounting flames beneath whose graceful curving the wood crackles and sighs. They sit and wait. Behind them the colt gaily, and with constant whinnying, munches hay; the two dogs breathe hard and eye each other but they've quieted down and no longer bare their fangs. The herd, with legs sprawled wide, sleeps and from the roof of the hut big water drops plop on their hides. The clouds are breaking. It must be well past midnight.

"What would you like?" the old man asks. "A boy," Benke says.

The old man nods but doesn't answer. Benke glances at him but can't decide whether the old man would be pleased or not. Such an old face is deep and mysterious; passions shrivel into wisdom on it as green grass turns to hay. "Well, isn't a boy best?" he asks finally.

"For the parents, maybe," the old man replies.

The moon's growing sickle innocently appears in the heavens. Slowly, the trees rise out of the dark of night.

"Doesn't the child belong to the parents?" Benke asks.

"So they say," the old man says.

"Just say?"

"In a way of speaking, for the child belongs to the world and the world is full of trouble, much trouble, all of it caused by men who want the sun and stars; and under their striving feet, the earth is ravaged. Yet we live here on this earth, man's home, and if it is to be a home, we need a blessing on

it: warmth, joy and smiling fruit." The old man falls silent, his eyes wet. "Girls are what the world needs!" he says at last.

Benke strives with himself. Without knowing why, he feels it would be good to be able to cry. But he can't. The fire blazes and the moon, like a young girl growing up, smiles. They wait.

Finally there is a commotion around the little house. Aunt Illa joyfully cries that a baby girl is born. The old man's face brims with pleasure at the news. Benke raises his head with a start and at last the tears well up into his eyes.

"Don't cry," the old man says kindly.

"I'm not," Benke says.

He leaps up and starts to run toward the house. As far as one can see he doesn't limp a whit, just runs like someone in great fright or overcome by joy. From across the fire the old man looks on smiling, and as his eyes follow Benke into the distance, he notes the first movement of light at the foot of the sky.

He gets up.

Happy as a child, he looks at the May dawn, his heart alight with a faith that joy may yet come to the world after all.

(translated by Alexander Harsanyi)

DISCUSSION

I. The Place of English in Free India

By S. KANT

PROF. A. M. GHOSE'S article on 'The Necessity of English in India' as well as his rejoinder to Mr. A. S. Ayyub's observations on it in *Quest* (OCT.-DEC. 1958) were all very interesting and thought-provoking.

The status of English in free India has been a matter of hot debate particularly since the publication of the Report of the Official Language Commission. The discussion has not always been objective, but it has more frequently been evasive, full of digressions, trying to be more indirect and less positive, and taking 'covers'. It so appears that our vision is too befogged to permit a dispassionate and rational look at the issue. The whole question has a very pungent emotional flavour which has affected even such eminent personalities as C.R. It has let loose passions which have endangered our national solidarity.

The cementing force for national solidarity is obviously the medium through which all members of the nation can converse together. The question, for our purposes, is not one of English or Hindi or any other language for that matter, but is that of a language which can be understood by all the people and if not by all, at least by the largest number of people so that the fewest numbers may have to be initiated in it. It

is primarily a matter of convenience that we have to choose a particular language to serve us as a common medium of expression throughout the country. To give it any other twist is simply not desirable.

Prime Minister Nehru did strike at the root of the problem when while expressing his gratefulness to the English language 'for what it has taught us', he stated very plainly that 'at the same time it created a gulf between us who knew English and those who did not know English and that was fatal for the progress of a nation'. He insisted on choosing an Indian language as the official language of India although he himself was educated in England and is perhaps more anglicised in outlook and culture than any of the protagonists of English in the field, and took pains to explain the views of Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, on this delicate issue. He said, "Now the first thing he (the Father of the Nation) taught us was this: that while English is a great language—and I think it is perfectly right to say that English has done us a lot of good and we have learnt much from it and progressed much—nevertheless no nation can become great on the basis of a foreign language. Why? Because a foreign language can never be the language of the people, for you will have two strata or more

—those who live in the thought and action of a foreign tongue and those who live in another world. So he taught us that we must do our work more and more in our own language.... Secondly, he laid stress on the fact that language should be more or less a language of the people, not a language of a learned coterie—not that that is not valuable or to be respected, we must have learning, we must have poets, great writers and all that; nevertheless, in the modern context, even more than in the past, no language can be great which is divorced from the language of the people..... The last thing in this matter to which the Father of the Nation drew our attention was this, that this language should represent the composite culture of India”.

It would be pertinent to note here that Democracy and Welfare State are our twin political and economic goals. The democratic form of government calls in all the people to take part in the conduct of administration. And in a Welfare State, the activities of the State are, so to say, to pervade the life of the whole people in all its aspects. Ours is a vast country and it is but natural for her to have a multifarious pattern of culture and language. The modern means of communication have brought us all together. We need a medium through which we can make all the people participate in the administration and realise the benefits of Welfare State, and also through which we can make ourselves understood to each other—we can all feel one and consider ourselves to be members of one great family. We need a people's language for that—a language which the people can pick up with ease, which is akin to what they speak, with which they are already more or less acquainted, and for which, therefore, minimum of schooling is required. Surely, no foreign language, be it English, can serve this purpose because only a microscopic minority is acquainted with it. It may be the language of a few intellectuals, but it is not, and can never be, the language of the vast majority of people. While 20 Indians out of every 100 can read and write

some Indian language only one in 100 knows English, and that while they learn the Indian language from the cradle as their mother-tongue, they learn English entirely in the school as a foreign language. It is only too plain that English cannot fulfil the role of a people's language for India, not even for any of its regions.

We need a language of the soil to serve our purpose. All the Indian languages have some inherent unity and we have it on the authority of Grierson that ‘although Assamese differs widely from Marathi and a speaker in one will be unintelligible to the other, a man could almost walk for twenty-eight hundred miles from Dibrugarh to to Bombay and thence to Dravidistan without being able to point a single stage where he had passed from one language to another’. That's why there will be comparatively far less difficulty for the people in picking up any Indian language, and also in attaining any degree of literacy in it in addition to the mother-tongue, than a foreign language. Moreover, more important for our purposes is intelligibility, and not literacy, in the first instance.

Hindi is the spoken tongue of nearly two-fifths of the total population of India while no other Indian language, not to speak of foreign English, is of even as much as one-tenth. The findings of the Official language Commission also show that ‘apart from the 42% people of the total population returned as speaking this language as their mother-tongue, it is understood to a considerable extent in areas outside the Hindi-speaking areas, in the market-places in cities, at Railway stations and in places of pilgrimage where persons hailing from different regions of India and not knowing English have occasion to converse. Besides, owing to the proximity of this language to certain others like Marathi, Gujarati, Oriya and Bengali, it is to a further considerable population a language relatively easy to acquire’. It means that it is already understood, and also used, by more than 10% of non-Hindi-speaking population. On a very

modest estimate, nearly 50% people of India are already acquainted with Hindi and in all parts of India including South India, persons knowing Hindi far out-number those knowing English. The numerical superiority, the wide extent over which it is spoken, and the fact that it has already been working as a sort of *lingua franca* all over India, have provided it with the necessary preliminaries to grow as the people's common or national language in India. And, moreover, even at present it is considered to be the third most important language of the world.

The question is, in fact, not so much of banishment of English as it is of giving Hindi its due recognition and that too, out of convenience and not concession or aggression. When we say that English should go, it simply means that English should be brought down to its proper place, that it should no longer keep our people slaves of the administration and maintain the formidable barrier of language between the ruler and the ruled in the present set up when at least in theory we have done away with that distinction by adopting the democratic form of government. It has been suggested that the injunctions of Government in English may be conveyed to the people through a translation bureau at the Centre. But this contrivance may with far greater economy and advantage be applied in the case of Hindi being the official language, and therefore it does not in any way strengthen the case for English.

The protagonists of English say that we should have a foreign language so that all Indians may be placed at equal disadvantage, otherwise there are chances of people from the Hindi-speaking areas predominating in the Services. And among the foreign languages, English is the obvious choice. In fact, the only anxiety is as regards Government Services which have been the sole monopoly of the English-knowing handful for the last hundred years or so. The question is not being viewed from the point of view of the country, her people and her constitution which declared her to be

the 'Sovereign Democratic Republic of India', but it has been viewed from the point of view of a particular class which has vested interests in English and which enjoys a sort of assumed superiority over the large masses of the people. The English-educated Indians consider themselves to be 'the Brahmins of the modern age' and all others as merely Shudras. However, if the proposition of the Englishites is to be taken seriously, we should adopt a language as our common and official language which none in India so far knows so that none may have any advantage. There is no logic in giving an advantageous position to a bare 1% in preference to 42% (or more correctly 50%) and as against 99%; and though 42% is not 100%, by no stretch of imagination can 1% equal 42%!

English has, no doubt, done immense good to India as well as to several other non-English-speaking peoples of the world, but for those like the Indians who had fallen a prey to British imperialism the good has been more inferential than direct. The colonies and erstwhile dependencies of Britain were taught for centuries to acknowledge the superiority of English over their own languages in a bid to complete political subjugation by mental and cultural subordination, and the ingrained habitual slavery prompts them even today to give English preference over their mother-tongues. And although the number of English-knowing in the now-freed dependencies of Britain does not even represent more than 1% of the total population, they wield the greatest influence in administration and pose as voicing the views of the other 99% who are totally ignorant of English. That is the fallacy of the whole case.

There is not and there should not be any animus against English. English ought to be taught as one of the foreign languages in free India. And since during the past hundred years English has made so much ground as to serve our international purposes, it may even be made a compulsory subject of study at the higher stages of education and

continue to be a window on India till we are able to develop Hindi or any other Indian language to do this job for us. But it must be *dethroned* in the wider interests of the country and in a bid to make our country have real democracy and freedom. In fact, after the English domination is over, English has not, and should not have, any more value for us than have German, French, Russian or Chinese.

Prof. Ghose also wants us to believe that 'a couple of centuries of foreign rule has surely de-Indianized us.' If we have been de-Indianized then what are we? He is also opposed to re-Indianization. Then what should we remain? Aliens in our home! Of course, the meaning of de-Indianization and re-Indianization is not quite clear. We cannot break from our past—our history and our culture, nor can we declaim all our legacies. The glories of the past are of course not to be revelled in, and should not make us complacent, inert and inactive; they should act as inspiration for hard work in present so as to make our future still more glorious.

It is also not at all correct to say that ancient Indian contributed nothing to positive sciences, as made out by Prof. Ghose. The fact is otherwise, and such statements smack of our ignorance of our heritage. While the Europeans could connect their modern discoveries with their past heritage, we have tried to ignore our heritage. In fact, the achievements of our forefathers have been brought to light by others. Laplace says, 'It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by means of ten symbols, each symbol receiving a value of position, as well as an absolute value; a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit, but its very simplicity, the great ease which it has lent to all computations, puts our arithmetic in the first rank of useful innovations; and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes, and Appollonius, two of the greatest men produced by

antiquity.' It is also no secret that Western science owes much to the Arabs who, in their turn, derived much of their scientific knowledge from India.

In fact, our history needs to be rewritten. The British designed the history of our country from their own point of view. It is now to be made positive and national—not a distortion but a clear appraisal in the correct perspective which may be elating and also such as to elicit respect for our heritage. Unfortunately during the last eleven years of our freedom no such history has yet been written. Nor has Indian culture been treated in a very rational manner. That is the reason for misgivings about Indian culture in our minds. Indian culture is not something represented by casteism or shutting ourselves from this world. But it is something which gives an understanding into human behaviour and provides ground where we can live together despite all our differences. It is dynamic and not moribund; it is living and progressive and not morbid or stagnant. It would not do justice to it to treat it in a couple of sentences. It is, however, very strange that misguided contempt for our history, culture and heritage should constitute an argument in favour of English.

It would do good to remind here that Hindi is not to be imposed, it has to be adopted as a matter of convenience. If Hindi is to be the common language of India, it does not at all mean that all other languages of India will simply be effaced. The other languages will continue to progress and give a variegated pattern to Indian linguistic and literary scene. India will remain multi-lingual as hitherto but she will have one of her languages to serve her people's common purposes and needs as do the Union Government or the Indian Armed Forces.

English is also not to be banished, but it has to be brought down to its proper place. It is to be accorded the treatment that it receives in Japan which imbibes Western science and thought through it and also gives her best to the world through

it but retains Japanese as her language of day-to-day business, and in other self-respecting non-English-speaking nations which benefit from English without sacrificing their own language and culture.

Let us consider the whole thing in a dispassionate way—from the point of view of people and not classes, from the point of view of the whole nation and not certain vested interests,—and as a free people who have a long history and possess their own

languages which have a literary tradition behind them going back to several centuries. The growth and development of these languages depends upon the intellectuals of Free India. Our intelligentsia has to take to these languages of the people in order to fulfil its duty to educate the masses which is possible only through a medium intelligible to them. Otherwise democracy will be in our Constitution and Welfare State in our Plans, but not in reality.

II. The Necessity of English in India

English et al

By P. MAHADEVAN

THE article entitled 'THE NECESSITY OF ENGLISH IN INDIA' and the correspondence dealing with it in the Oct-Dec. issue of *Quest* are riddled with so many assumptions, generalisations and *ipse dixit*s that it is difficult to restrict oneself to the merits of the main question. The title of the original article is at once so innocuous sounding as to command general assent and so dogmatically intended as to provoke violent dissent. It is a pity that there is no awareness in the articles of the historical role of language in the crystallisations of cultures in the past. Those who swear by the ubiquity and indispensability of English today would have done the same thing by Persian at the height of the Muslim rule in India, of Latin in the history of Europe, of Greek in the classical world and of Sanskrit in our own past. And yet, how came it about that all these claimants to a world-status and a world-view flourished for their brief days and ceased to be exactly like men? In theory, nothing militates against the resuscitation of any of these for the purposes of reviving the life of the peoples who flourished under them in the past; but this obsession of some backward countries like ourselves and China and even Russia tends to throw into the shade the notable attempts

made by other modern languages to come to terms with the modern predicament without that degree of dependence on English which many in this country predicate as a precondition of our further progress. Italy, Japan, Germany and the smaller countries of Europe affiliated to either the Teuton or the Slavonic stock have solved this problem by enriching their own national media without having to go abegging to foreign sources. Viewed in this light, the nature of our problem will be found to assume an altogether different complexion. First and last, it has long remained and bids fair to remain as long, a question of giving our people universal modern education.

Mr. Ghose's classification of the linguistic pundits in the country into various groups has therefore not even a statistical significance; nor is he quite fair or accurate to the most extreme of them in his ascription to them of obscurantism etc. The only illustration which he could muster in support is the alleged pronouncement of some religious heads about the defilement of the Kashi temple because of the entry of Harijans into it. If they are taken as representative, then Mr. Ghose's assertion that we have gone pretty far in our Westernisation is seen to be a piece of wishful thinking; if

on the other hand, these mutts-heads are delirious themselves, why give them merely a debating importance?

What are the legacies of the West? And who are the people determined to defraud us of them? Secondly, is not Mr. Ghose's definition or description of culture tendentious? There is a faintly astringent or musty aroma of Marxism in a definition which glorifies the economic aspect and fades out the social and cultural influences. To be sure, Mr. Ghose makes somewhat belated amends later in the article by a grudging reference to them, but the mischief having been done, the effect of the later modification is lost.

Many of our current slogans are admittedly characteristically 'Western'; but the content we have put into them is indigenous and oriental of the deepest dye! Our democracy worships a pair of bulls and the ballot-box, as frequently reported at the time of elections, is filled with flowers and offerings of small change as in the hundies kept in our temples. The Congress party has been making an insidious and astute exploitation of the Gandhi cult to perpetuate itself in power. I do not admit that secularism—whatever it may mean—is western any more than longitudinal; but let that pass. We sport a number of gadgets and take the pleasure of children in using them. If the democracy that has come to stay with us is to the taste of Mr. Ghose, I tremble for the spiritual welfare of our intellectuals.

Mr. Ghose next vaticinates and doubts that we can make any enduring show of our revivalist attempts. I am not aware of any cultural pattern having endured for ever. If each type serves a limited purpose for the time being and assists in its evolution to something else, that will have justified itself.

By the way, I must defer for separate consideration the significance of the two terms: *Revivalism* and *Synthesis*. Here, I would like to make but one observation on each. I see that there is a widespread and irresistible fashion to sniff superciliously

at 'revivalism' as a sort of belated infantilism. But I also see that you, in common with all the other organs of *avant garde*, are so bemused with admiration for Mr. T. S. Eliot as to hang on his every word and comment on his lucubrations with the reverence usually shown to Messiahs and their evangels. And yet he is, vis-a-vis European culture, as rank a 'revivalist' as any of the anonymous brood amidst us who rouse the ire of Mr. Ghose and his tribe. Mr. Eliot wants the revival of the medieval outlook reinforced by a generous dose of *varnashrama Dharma* as a solvent of a predicament which is confronting the whole world with the Hobson's choice of communism! By a parity of reasoning, he ought to be listed among the old fogeys who are engaged in putting the hands of the clock back. Instead, he is being treated as a classic by those who are hypnotised by everything that comes from beyond the Suez Canal.

As for synthesis, I defy Mr. Ghose or any one else to show whether history furnishes a single example of it conceived, initiated and concluded consciously and purposefully? Shelley spoke of the impossibility of any man sitting at his desk and saying: 'I am determined to be a poet.' This is even more true of the ways of synthesis. Like the wind it bloweth whither it listeth, and all that the most perspicacious of men can do is to spot it out after the event. Invoking the name of Rammohun Roy is like saying that one swallow makes a summer; and the fact that except for a microscopic minority of the English educated minority in the country, the great bulk of the Indian people neither know nor care anything for this worthy man is proof of the ineffectiveness of his role in the so-called renaissance or synthesis said to have been begun by him.

I don't know what Mr. Ghose means by saying: 'the whole of the modern world is rapidly being westernised.' (p. 53). Even the West is being westernised? That would be delicious. And what is this westernisation? Is it a chemical or biological or pick-wickian metamorphosis; and if so what are

its stigmata? The symbol of zero is alleged to have been invented by ancient Hindus, but has since been adopted all the world over. Would it be true to say that as a result of it all the world was hinduised by it? Is there any pre-emptive or patent-right arising from the provenance of ideas and processes and technique? An Indian surgeon performing a major abdominal operation cannot be surely described as having been westernised because he uses the tools of his trade. At that rate, we would have to affix a variety of bewildering labels to the handiworks of men through the ages.

But the humour of it is that Mr. Ghose is least certain when he is most assertive in claiming that we are getting more and more westernised. If so the entire controversy becomes an act of supererogation.

Then he lists our eternal Aunt Sallies such as our caste system etc., to prove that we deserve to be de-Indianised as quickly and drastically as possible. Granted, but what is language in general and the English language in particular going to do in that galley? A masterful dictator like the Ataturk may—given a long enough rope—succeed in indoctrinating a generation or two with a new set of doxies on pain of utmost penalties. Even then, it is doubtful if a nation or an individual can manage to get out of their skin and function normally and healthfully. Mr. Ghose labours under a fallacy in supposing that the Christianity which overthrew the Roman empire is the Christianity of today. On the other hand, it was a more barbarous, anarchic and world-denying form of psychosis which working on a decaying system, hastened its decease. The Roman system was dying through inanition and surfeit like all ripened cultures, and the role performed by the Christianity of the Catcombs answers to the Sanskrit dialectic category known as *Kaaka taaliya nyaaya*—a matter of pure coincidence,—no more!

As for the foundation of the physical sciences, we do not trace our present progress in them to the ancient Greeks but to the Renaissance spirit which was the

complement of the Aristotelian deductive method. Otherwise, Mr. Ghose would have to give a convincing enough explanation why there ensued an interregnum of nearly a thousand years before science really got a move along.

No one to my knowledge is for 'abandoning English' as Mr. Ghose avers. All that is pleaded is a rearrangement of our priorities—the mother-tongue taking the place of English and English or any other modern language studied as auxiliary second language. The present imposition of English on all the country is an intolerable incubus, the more so as it is being done by us out of defective knowledge, divided aims and a love of the *status quo* which convicts us all of rank reaction. The imposition of English for a century and a half has brought us to this *cul de sac*; reversion to natural norms would mean an economy in the nation's energies of incalculable potentialities. The bogey of our Unity in danger is raised by those who either do not believe in it or who set little store by it. There is diversity, even dissension, only in life, while there is unity of a kind only in death. The latter sort of unity need not be striven for, for it will come and claim us in the fulness of time.

I cordially agree with Mr. Ghose when he says that the tasks of the educationists have not even begun yet; I would go one step further and make bold to add that we have not yet a *corps* of the elite to undertake the task of teachers. Mr. Eliot, to quote whom is considered *chic*, has laid it down as a major task that we should engage ourselves in 'purifying the language of the tribe' as a basic preliminary to the evolution of cultural pattern. Science has nothing to do with it, or so little as to deserve to be ignored. The soul of our people whether shaped by the past or the present can only find its reflection in its own speech—not in English; for in the latter case, the purification of the language of the tribe becomes a meaningless rubric. Our ancients called the result of their labours Sanskrit—exactly what Eliot also has in mind today. We must do it again or vegetate.

But what I fail to understand is the tone of frantic urgency which Mr. Ghose has imported into the discussion of this problem. There are certain natural processes that refuse to be hustled. A child still requires about ten months to be conceived and brought forth. Not all the wizardry of science and technology (Western) has as yet succeeded in abridging the extent of the duration. A gratuitously false perspective has been and is being promoted by demagogues and their cultural camp-followers who make it appear that we stand or fall by the imperious vaguenesses of our plan-

ning schemes, and that our salvation lies in planning and blue-printing and squandering our resources more and more prodigally the more demonstrably our past attempts prove to have gone awry.

Finally, there is a good deal to be said for the view that we are perhaps dead as a nation, and that it does not matter greatly what is being done with or on or about us by our *soi-disant* saviours. For we gave up our ghost about sometime after Asoka, and not all the dictators nor all the dreamers can ever hope to set us up again.

III. Reply—The Necessity of English in India

By A. M. GHOSE

THE difficulty with the protagonists of Hindi or those who want dethronement of English is that they refuse to see what I call 'cultural issues' involved in the question. Language, as one correspondent says, 'is primarily a matter of convenience'. I do not agree with him. On the contrary, I think, language is intimately connected with the way a people think, feel and act. Language, in other words, is not only a vehicle of these human activities; it, perceptibly or imperceptibly, determines them. What I wanted to say is that since we are thinking and feeling and acting in ways that are different from the ways in which we used to, till a couple of centuries ago, why not discard the language or languages that served as vehicles of those thoughts and feelings? And I feel that as we discard our old beliefs, institutions and ways of thinking and absorb or imbibe new ideas and ideals, it will become increasingly difficult for us not to discard our old languages. It is in this sense that English is destined to stay. I added that there are visible in this country strong revivalistic tendencies,

Some of the protagonists of Hindi are revivalists. They should be opposed for the sake of the larger interests of the country. And those protagonists of Hindi who are not revivalists (I believe there are some) are merely requested to think afresh. The question I put before them is: will it be possible for us to absorb (as, I think, we should in increasing measure) modern scientific, political, economic, even literary and philosophical, ideas and ideals, by discarding English? My answer is that it is not possible.

I give below my replies to the two correspondents. In such controversies enumeration of points by the correspondents immensely facilitates the task of the author. However, here are my observations in response to Mr. S. Kant.

(1) The correspondent holds that 'the cementing force for national solidarity is obviously the medium through which all members of the nation can converse together. I am afraid there are too many assumptions behind the statement. Let me state my doubts in the shape of questions,

Is India a nation in the sense in which the word is required to be understood in the statement? Secondly, aren't there other more important cementing factors for national solidarity in India? I believe we can safely say that India has yet to emerge as a nation in the true sense; to build the nation is precisely the task before us. To the second question the reply is that language is only one of the cementing factors and in our country today surely not the most important factor. If, however, there is any language which serves as a cementing factor it is, in my view, English.

(2) I do not agree with the correspondent when he says that language 'is primarily a matter of convenience.' I am tempted to quote what Aldous Huxley once said. He wrote, 'A mere matter of words' we say contemptuously, forgetting that words have power to mould men's thinking, to canalize their feeling, to direct their willing and acting.' (Quoted in 'Language in Thought and Action.' By S.I. Hayakawa)

(3) The English language, it is said, has created a gulf between those who know the language and those who do not know it. I have discussed the question in my article.

The knowledge of a language (or its ignorance) perhaps creates a gulf when there is otherwise a homogeneity in the thoughts of the people. But in the modern world and particularly in our country the reason which brings about disaccord is difference in ways of thinking. When there is a rigid stratification in the domain of thought, language, I believe, does not succeed in bridging the gulf. I am not only referring to the two obvious strata of thoughts, one dynamic and occidentalized and the other lethargic, reactionary and oriental, but one scientific and entirely European and the other humanistic, partly westernized and partly indigeneous. I may say that with increasing specialization there is a genuine fear of cultural disintegration.

(4) 'Democracy and welfare state are our twin political and economic goals.' But

why should we need 'a people's language'? We don't need 'a people's language' any more than we want 'a people's medicine' or 'a people's science'. I can imagine a state of social evolution when there are, for example, 'a people's medicine' and 'a people's science'. But changes take place everywhere. Language too changes. Anybody acquainted with the history of mathematical symbols will find it easy to follow my point. The changes that have taken place in the languages of science, mathematics and logic are indeed remarkable. I am also anxious to refer to the dividing line that almost invariably exists between the literary language of a people and what is called the 'people's language'. I should like to add that with the progress of science and the imbibing of scientific ideas the literary language too will undergo notable changes. It was Stuart Chase, I believe, who said that in the long run, relativity may prove a more important factor in language than in physics.

(5) The argument that 42 per cent people in our country speak Hindi is not sufficiently convincing. More than 42 per cent of our people, for example, are superstitious or, for that matter, poorly clad. But we never want those superstitions to exist, nor do we like the people to remain poorly clad. We want a language which is rich, rich not only to express our feelings and sentiments but legal terms, scientific, mathematical and philosophical concepts and symbols. Unfortunately no Indian language is rich in that sense while English is and hence that language should not be 'dethroned'. To say that Hindi is 'the third most important language of the world' is like saying that Chinese is the most important language and French, the sixth important in the world. Incidentally, as far as I know, in the matter of numerical strength the first three positions are occupied by Chinese, English and Russian.

(6) About the contribution of the ancient Indians to positive sciences I cannot say anything at length here. I may refer the inquisitive reader to an article entitled 'Sci-

ence in Modern India' published in the Oct.-Nov. '57 issue of this journal.

This is an issue to be decided by the historians of science. That is, until it has been historically established that the contribution of India is rich it is no use saying that we are 'ignoring our heritage'. We have to wait till scholars, for example, like Benjamin Farrington, George Sarton or Joseph Needham, write reliable Histories. Once A.L. Kroeber wrote, 'A satisfactory history of science in India cannot yet be written.' I am also reminded of what Charles Singer says in the concluding chapter of Vol II of 'A History of Technology'.

He says, '...evidence of technological influences of India on the west is as yet extremely hard to find.' And it would be wrong to say that they are all uncharitable to India.

(7) 'Our history needs to be rewritten'. But we must at all cost resist the temptation of wielding history as a stick to flog the sense of national self-respect. The courses of events are not only determined by the past; our ideals and purposes, our hopes and aspirations, may be a more potent factor in shaping history. Such 'miracles' have often happened in the history of the world.

(8) The example of Japan is not illuminating. Japan has a rich and dynamic indigenous culture. In fact, as intelligent observers have said, there are two Japans, the Japan occidentalized and the Japan oriental. The Japan that has not been occidentalized, we are told, is not moribund.

(9) Lastly, I agree with the correspondent that we should 'consider the whole thing in a dispassionate way... from the point of view of the whole nation and not certain vested interests...'

With regard to the second correspondent, Mr. Mahadevan, my initial observation is that he would have helped everybody to think more clearly had he chosen a style less florid and more lucid. But let me state my views.

(1) When I said that English is necessary

in India today I did not make any prophecy. I simply said the absorption of new ideas necessitates a new language. The point has been explained above. Those who want to abandon English, let me repeat, will perhaps be responsible, without their being aware of it, for snapping off the bond that exists not only between the restless and creative west and the placid India but also between the generations that have just vanished and the ones we see. I believe our negligence of Urdu, Persian and Arabic has not helped us in any respect. If Rammohun is not known so widely it is partly because much of what he wrote are in those languages. This is merely to give an illustration.

(2) I don't know if my description of culture has a 'musty aroma of Marxism'. I said, 'A country's cultural life is inextricably connected with her political ideals and economic goals'. This is surely not Marxism. Moreover, let me add, an economic interpretation of history does not invariably amount to Marxism. Such an interpretation of history may be inspired by the social theories prevailing in the 17th and 18th centuries in France and England.

(3) I, it has been said, am wrong in thinking that democracy has come to stay in India. Whether it has come to stay or not is not the important point. The point is that we have chosen the path of democracy. (And I think we are right in the matter of choice.) The initial difficulties in the adventure need not dishearten us.

(4) I never said that cultural synthesis can be 'conceived, initiated and concluded consciously and purposefully'. But would not the correspondent agree with me when I say that culture can be reflected upon, that is, can, at least, be partly brought to consciousness? If 'culture is the one thing that we cannot deliberately aim at' or if 'culture cannot altogether be brought to consciousness,' then why Eliot, who uses these words and with whom the correspondent seems to be in agreement, wrote anything at all? Why did he regret 'the gradual closing of the mental frontiers of Europe'? Talking about Eliot I am remind-

ed of the correspondent's calling the poet a 'revivalist'. I don't know what leads him to believe that Eliot is a 'revivalist', Eliot writes, 'what is wanted is not to restore a vanished, or to revive a vanishing culture under modern conditions which make it impossible, *but to grow a contemporary culture from the old roots*'. (Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p. 53. Italics mine)

(5) To say that Rammohun Roy is known to a microscopic minority, I think, is not true. The ignorance of the majority, moreover, is not the criterion to judge the contributions of Rammohun to India's cultural life.

(6) When I said that 'the whole of the modern world is rapidly being westernized' I meant that the western world-views are rapidly sweeping away the oriental and orthodox religious world-views. As I have said, 'in the fields of science and technology, politics and economics, we are overwhelmingly indebted to the west.'

(7) I do not agree with the correspondent when he says that 'the Christianity which overthrew the Roman empire... was a more barbarous, anarchic and world-denying form of psychosis...'

I wonder if he is thinking of the Egyptian anchorites of the 3rd century. But there was nothing 'barbarous' and 'anarchic' in them. Had the Christian religion of this period been 'barbarous' it could not have assimilated the teaching of the Roman jurists, that all men were by nature free and equal; it could not have condemned slavery and could not have set itself against infanticide, abortion and the sexual aberrations characteristic of Hellenic practice. There were, no doubt, the wordly and intolerant prelates like the Alexandrian bishops of the 5th century. But by their side stand figures of Basil and the Gregories, of Martin of Tours, of Origen and Athanasius, of Ambrose and Augustine. How the fifth-century councils regulated monasticism is, however, a different story.

(8) I don't know why the correspondent raises the question regarding the founda-

tions of the physical sciences. There are a large number of scientists and historians who hold that the beginnings are to be found in the Greek science. I am not only referring to Benjamin Farrington. 'There are,' writes Heisenberg, 'especially, two ideas of early Greek philosophy which today still determine the course of science, and which are therefore of special interest to us: the conviction that matter consists of minute indivisible units, the atoms, and the belief in the purposely directive power of mathematical structures.' (Philosophic Problems of Nuclear Science, p. 53; Faber, London, 1952) I may also refer to chapter I of 'Science and the Course of History' written by P. Jordan and published by the Yale University Press. Many other authorities could be quoted, but that is a separate issue.

(9) 'The imposition of English for a century and a half has brought us to this cul desac.' The statement, I fear, is too cryptic to convey any clear sense. I believe our acquaintance with the English language is primarily responsible for our present progress. English, in other words, has singularly helped us to leave our medievalism behind.

(10) I fail to agree with the correspondent when he doubts the usefulness of planning, a fashion of thinking borrowed from T.S. Eliot, it seems. We may not be able to hasten the process of nature always; but in certain spheres nature seeks human assistance. Without involving myself in a metaphysical discussion about the meaning of nature we can hold that planning may and often does assist nature. Our making mistakes in planning is no defect of planning itself. History offers many instances of how planning has altered the course of events. If the correspondent abhors the word, if he smells totalitarianism, I hope he will approve the more pompous (and perhaps slightly antiquated) expression, self-determination. Were we to leave everything to nature our struggle for freedom would have been unjustifiable.

(11) The correspondent seems to believe

that we ceased to live as a nation 'about sometime, after Asoka'. I cannot say anything about this ingenious interpretation of Indian history. I for myself do not believe that we are dead as a nation, nor do I believe that darkness descended upon this subcontinent 'sometime after Asoka.'

Before I close this letter I should like to raise a point which I have discussed rather cursorily in my article. That is about cultural emancipation. Without cultural 'swaraj' political freedom is believed to be incomplete. The acceptance of an Indian language, perhaps Hindi, it is said, will symbolize the inauguration of a new age. The space at my disposal being limited I will refer to two difficulties. For one thing,

cultural emancipation—the true import of the phrase, I feel, is yet to be ascertained—cannot be so easily achieved as we often persuade ourselves to think. For another thing, cultural emancipation may easily lead to a kind of cultural intolerance, a danger with which, we must confess, we are acquainted.

Synthesis in the sphere of cultures presupposes, let me reiterate, a highly dynamic and rich indigenous culture. Since vanished cultures cannot possibly be revived we have to energize the contemporary culture. Infusing energy into the composite culture means accepting those ideas and institutions which have life and force. English is a remarkable vehicle we have at our disposal.

REVIEW ARTICLE

The Naked God

By ELLEN ROY

THE title of Howard Fast's latest book carries association with an old folk tale in the collection of Hans Christian Andersen. The story goes that a king had been taken in by a jesting or fraudulent tailor, who had offered to make for him a set of such fabulous clothes as only the righteous people could appreciate, while bad people could not even see them at all. Now, the fact was that the tailor was a cheat, and the king wore no clothes at all. Because, what the tailor spread out before the king as precious garments was entirely invisible, for the very good reason that there was no such thing. But, having trusted the boasting tailor and actually made himself believe his miracle-mongering claims, how could the king admit that he was not a good man? So he donned with all the gestures of make-believe something that was in fact non-existing. But when he walked through the streets thus attired, followed by his admiring subjects, none of them would admit that they saw no clothes on the king's person. For, they either shared the general superstition and were horrified to discover that their bad thoughts and deeds were thus found out; or even if they did not doubt the evidence of their reason and their senses and began to suspect the deceit, they would yet not admit it for fear of what the others might think of them. The effect was the same: both types of people shouted loud their admiration for the king's beautiful clothes, perpetuating by their pretence, cowardice and stupidity the scandalous swindle. The story ends with a little child calling the bluff by mocking the king and

laughing out loud that the king was going about naked.

WHY DID HOWARD FAST choose this title for the book in which he explains his break with Communism—or, at any rate, with the Communist Party of America—and why it came so late in the day? The answer must be found in the analogy with the Andersen tale; otherwise, there would not seem to be any special significance in the nakedness of gods, which the Greeks took wisely for granted, as any type of garments would have subjected the Olympians to the undignified vagaries of fashion—a deity of much later vintage. The substitution of a god for a king, on the other hand, is in analogy to 'The God That Failed,' to which earlier book Howard Fast's is a sort of elaborate postscript. It is significant enough that in both cases ex-communists refer to the object of their disillusionment as to a god or a creed, something super-human, transcending reason, a faith betrayed and at last abjured. There is implied in the choice of naming the object of their former faith an element of the irrational and religious. And while this may have been in the case of the earlier book rather a literary device of sophisticated intellectuals to avoid such old-fashioned naiveties as 'ideals' or 'causes,' Howard Fast makes it explicit that this irrational and religious element plays a prominent part in the cult of Communism. He has a whole chapter in this book on the use of magic, including sympathetic magic, divination, thaumaturgy, incantation, etc., in the ritualistic practices of the Communist

Parties, which is a not unrewarding intellectual game that could be spun out entertainingly to any length, if not to much purpose. But the most irrational of all is the deep-rooted superstitious belief in the infallibility of The Party and the consequent fear of excommunication, which makes the biblical hell fire appear as child's play in comparison. The 'god' is the Communist Party, and the infallibility of the party is like the king's clothes—deceitfully claimed, passionately pretended, and non-existent—superstitions both and hence both surrounded with magic ritual and irrational fears.

The Naked God has not had a very friendly reception from those who precisely could most sympathise with the author, having themselves gone through similar experiences before him. Howard Fast has left the Communist Party not in anger, but in despair, very much with a whimper, full of regrets for the past and not as if he felt now free to make up for error and time lost with something better to do in the future. Hence the book leaves one with a sense of depression and even disorientation. He has broken with the Communist Party. But he leaves one in doubt if he has yet broken with Communism—not with that Communism which was a bright white hope forty and still thirty years ago; but the Communism as it has come to be known and practised since then. Howard Fast had been aware of the clay feet of his god almost since he became its devotee in the thirties and an initiate in 1943. But he 'refused to see', refused to let the awareness penetrate his rational consciousness. He actually said so himself in an interview with Martin Agronsky, an American radio and television commentator, after the publication of *The Naked God*. This interview is very significant for Howard Fast's whole attitude. Agronsky asked him how he, a writer deeply concerned with freedom, could join the Communist Party as late as in 1943, when men like Ignazio Silone, Stephen Spender, Andre Gide and others had left it disillusioned already by 1939.

"Well", said Howard Fast in reply, "in

1943 we were in a war against Fascism; also, I did not come to Communism in 1943 as a stranger. I had been close to this, known Communists, read communist literature, ever since 1933."

"And believed it?" asked Agronsky. "Believed it and disbelieved it. Because in 1939, I broke with all my communist friends over the Soviet Pact with Hitler. In 1941, I thought otherwise, I saw the whole world joining with Russia... By 1943, I felt that the next step was to join the Communist Party."

Thus, Howard Fast joined the Communist Party deliberately, after believing and disbelieving for full ten years. There is a lack of spontaneity in his joining as in his break with Communism. Yet he was not half-hearted. Once in the party, he went wholehog; he did not spare himself, was always in the forefront of all struggles, went to jail and sacrificed a good deal, professionally, as a writer, and as a human being by violating his conscience and his self-respect, and probably also his style. He traces in this book the whole sorry tale of the party bureaucrats trying to break, shape and utilise for their purposes a public literary figure—one hesitates to call him an intellectual, one of those whom Communist Parties are always specially keen to exploit, while full of contempt for intellectualism and intellectuals as such. One hesitates, firstly, because Howard Fast was one of the few leading figures in American Communism with a pucca proletarian background; and secondly, whether to be an intellectual is considered a good or a bad thing, Howard Fast did not behave like one, so that the party could have rightly been proud of him. For, whatever other definition may be given to the intellectual, one of his characteristics, and for which precisely he is suspect in Communist Parties, is that he thinks independently and insists on judging everything by his own scale of values, and in the light of reason and intelligence. But Howard Fast, having "believed and disbelieved" for ten years what the Communist Party said and did, joined it when he "saw

the whole world joining with Russia," and stuck to it in spite of everything.

In spite, for instance, of Silone's break with the Communists, and in that connection, he says:

"I will admit that for years I pondered over the case of Silone, the proof of Silone. But Silone himself was willing to work closely with the Italian communist leader Togliatti, and there was an enormous respect between these two men in the post-war years. I said to myself: 'Well, there's no open and shut case here. This is a question of movements, of beliefs, of disbeliefs, of accusations, of lies, of slanders.'

Silone did not convince him. He believed and disbelieved, but he was not sure, not of anything, not at least for a long time. But were there no facts? were there no standards in his mental and moral world by which to judge his politics also? Did he never feel that 'here is the limit'? His answers are revealing:

"When Russia declared a thing was a slander, I believed it was a slander. Because I rested on the fact that total proof was lacking'.

But:

"Total proof came for me entirely at the moment when the General Secretary, the nominal head of the whole communist movement on earth and the actual head of the Soviet Union's Communist Party delivered a secret report in which he not only swore upon his oath that every slander and accusation made in twenty years against the Soviet Union was true, but in addition dragged out a series of crimes, a record of terror, of bestiality, of bloody murder and torture, that even the worst enemies of Communism had never thought of'.

Howard Fast believed the facts known to all the world—and he had more access to such knowledge than most—only when he got, so to say, the green light to believe, to see the truth, by the High Priest of Communism himself. He admits that too:

"What I have done today, I did on the testimony of the Soviet leadership."

Why did he not see before? The question must indeed go on his nerves by now; it is so obviously the first to rise in everybody's mind. In reply, he oracles:

"You ask why I didn't see. You must accept that there were deep reasons why I refused to see'.

Agronsky pounced: "You used the phrase:

I refused to see. Did you not go through life, Mr. Fast, with blinkers, self-imposed?" —"Of course I did."—But he weakens this frank and brave statement by enlarging on it with heated generalities. "The horror of our time is that everyone does. You too. Everyone does. We all wear a set of blinkers. What a wonderful world this would be if we had the ability to see, to look around us, to practise some sort of broad understanding and tolerance. I had my blinkers, other people had their blinkers. Today it's incomprehensible to me that I could go on year after year accepting these things."

This being so, Howard Fast need not be surprised that others find it at least as incomprehensible as he does, if not more so, which explains the reserved and even cool and critical reception of his book by those whose ranks he has now joined—as it were, awkwardly and reluctantly, 'a captive not quite freed', as one reviewer put it.

By way of further reasons why he made up his mind so late to break with the Communist Party, he explains that he is slow to be convinced and equally slow to be unconvinced, and having believed for so long that the Communist Party was the only means to all the good ends, to leave it was as good as the end of everything. "That has always been the greatest weapon of the party", he told Agronsky, "this exclusiveness—that only through the Communist Party could the goals of brotherhood, of understanding, of social progress and advancement be reached or achieved—this exclusiveness which you begin to believe; you find yourself trapped in believing and then are unable to shake loose from it."

Again the analogy with the religious, the irrational, the comparison between Communist Party and Popish bigotry; no salvation except through the Church, and the only alternative to blind belief is excommunication.

"The Communist Party is a pseudo-religious organisation. The terror which it exercises, where it has power with execution, torture and death as in Russia, is exercised in countries where the party is not in power, with a fear of excommunication.

The Communist Party says in effect: When you leave, or when we expel you, we will destroy you and your reputation, your standing, your mortal soul—for your life time, for your children's life time and for generations'

—Just like the jealous and wrathful God of the Old Testament. And elsewhere:

'You cannot leave the Communist Party and remain a decent human being'.

Howard Fast was indeed trapped in this belief, trapped for thirteen years of his party membership. Has he been able to shake himself loose of it the moment he ended that membership? The question might appear unfair, but for the spontaneous outburst in reply to Agronsky's question how he felt now after the break:

"I feel rotten," was the reply. No doubt, the decision to break with the party must have been agonising—Howard Fast's 'own purgatory' (again!). But once made, should he still feel 'rotten'? In the two-hundred pages of this book he makes it clear that he must have felt rotten all throughout those thirteen years:—'the day one enters the party one begins to leave it', he says somewhere. But does he himself perhaps still wonder after all whether he can remain a decent human being after the break? Is there perhaps still left an unconscious element of guilt, of the fear of hell fire? Or is it only what others will think and say of him, those others who were his friends till yesterday and who still are today enmeshed in the error from which he emerged only the day before? The self-righteousness of the right believer is still fresh in his memory, and the calculated hurts and insults of which he will now be the recipient must be well known to him. Perhaps he was not one of the worst to inflict them on others when he was still in the fold. He should be given the benefit of the doubt, because some of his own doubts certainly date back a long time. Ten years before the break, in 1947, he quotes himself as saying to two friends who were 'Communists many more years than I: Then, how does one remain in this movement? How does one go on?' And again on some other occasion he asked his friends: "What does one do when

he is part of a movement the leader of which is either an idiot or a madman?"

And what do you call one who does remain, to allow himself to be led, knowingly and deliberately, by 'idiots or madmen'? Till at long last came the day when he read the Khrushchev report at the Twentieth Congress, and:

'at long last I was released. I came awake. The fear stopped. I had left the Communist Party, and I had awakened from a long and terrible nightmare'.

Yet, why then should he still have felt 'rotten'? Is it because the fear has not really and altogether stopped? That fear of which he says in the beginning of Chapter 23.

'In the end there is fear—the kind of fear that could not possibly exist if the Communist Party were only an organisation... the deeper, more awful fear of one who has given himself to false gods, and given himself too well. When a communist walks out of the Communist Party, he must travel through a special purgatory that no one other than he who has come through before can possibly understand.'

That is of course the trouble with men who, like Howard Fast, instead of pursuing their ideals rationally and purposively, give themselves to some gods—and all gods are false. Nor is it the fault of the gods, since gods are made by men. Nor, without belittling the wrench of a torn loyalty, of the break with an organisation as exacting and self-exalted as the Communist Party, is it quite such a mystic-mysterious horror. A not inconsiderable number of other not inconsiderable persons have gone through it before without dramatising the emotional aspect quite so much.

That is what leaves one with the impression that the spell and the fear of the false god is not all over yet for Howard Fast and that there remains a lurking, sneaking sense of guilt. That is bound to happen in the case of people 'who, having lost sight of the end, dedicate themselves to the means,' which is Howard Fast's own definition of a fanatic, and might be a fair description of what he himself must have been like during his thirteen years of party membership. Because those who stayed on with

an unquiet conscience were, as a rule, the loudest and fiercest against those who said earlier what Howard Fast now writes in *The Naked God*. And this may also explain the element of irritation found in a number of reviews of this book. Howard Fast is certainly right when he says that it is not all that simple—the decision to leave the party and the cause of that decision and the process by which it was arrived at, and why so late. But it adds to the irritation when he says:

‘Truly the simpletons say, ‘But we have always known the truth about the party; why did it take you so long?’

Of course, nobody has ‘always’ known the truth about the party; but why is he a simpleton who points out that others have seen the truth twenty and thirty years earlier? When Howard Fast now says what they said with a time lag of so many years, who would then appear as the greater simpleton?

‘What truth?’ anyway, he goes on to pose a counter-question. ‘Even in this brief book,’ he says, ‘I have put down a picture that few people outside actually understood and in the party it is overlaid by a complex of hundred thousand threads.’ Why this mystification about the truth about the party? This whole book describes in detail why no self-respecting and freedom-loving human being could and should remain in a Communist Party; no mortal born potentially rational should admit the need to be humiliated, slighted, broken, insulted, brow-beaten and hurt in all his natural human sentiments instincts and reactions (condemned as subjectivism) in order to achieve the ideals of human brotherhood, equality, justice, progress and freedom, or whatever it is for which people join Communist Parties. This is absurd; and that is *the truth*. That is what happens to most people of the more developed kind who join Communist Parties. The cases, in fact or literature, of men debasing themselves for the greater glory of their ideal, disowning their reason and better knowledge, falsifying facts and distorting truth, betraying their friends,

their dignity and their conscience for the sake of The Cause, The Revolution, The Party—they are morbid exceptions of a perverted heroism. The truth is that this is a violation of human nature and a rape of reason, and if a cause demands this of a man, it is not a good cause.

HOWARD FAST has escaped this fate just in the nick of time. Although he had his share of the neurotic fears and compulsive blinkered loyalty that Communist Parties inspire, he is not really the type that makes tragic heroes. From these pages he emerges rather as a pathetic figure. And that is not said to belittle him or the act of his break with the Communist Party. But it is pathetic to face the fact that one was fooled for so long, to have shouted in ecstasy about the king’s wondrous clothes when all the time he went naked for all to see; and the book comes too late to allow Howard Fast the role of the bright young thing blurt ing out the truth in naive revelation. Of course, it is never too late for the truth about Communism and the disfigurements which a great ideal underwent in the logic of its own inherent fallacies and on becoming galvanised into a creed. But what is perhaps most pathetic about Howard Fast is that he nowhere comes to grips with the creed itself. He says somewhere that it is not his task in this book to argue with the theory of Socialism — the word Communism does not appear once, he being still under the magic spell of the word-taboo. Throughout he wrestles only with the Communist Party — not with the creed, not with the “god” itself, but merely with the priesthood. The ideals for which he suffered so much indignity for so long are vaguely enumerated here and there as brotherhood, understanding, progress and social advancement, etc. These may be the things for the sake of which Howard Fast became a Communist, but that is not what Communism is about. If he remained for thirteen years in the Communist Party, he must have espoused and expounded the whole doctrine: Marxism Leni-

nism, dictatorship of the proletariat, economic determinism, class war and all the rest of it, and nowhere in *The Naked God* does he confront these basic issues and attempt to clarify his position towards them.

The god, the target of his attack, the devil of the whole drama — it is not the creed, not a system of ideas, a doctrine: it is always only the Communist Party, and more particularly its leadership, and that too mainly only at the top. Also pathetic (and very endearing) is *the esprit de corps*, the truly affectionate loyalty he displays, and obviously feels, for his former colleagues and friends in the lower ranks of the Communist Party. He pays them the handsome compliment that:

"knowing intimately only the Communist Party of the United States, yet, of this tiny organisation I can say honestly and forthrightly, and under oath if need be, that never in so small a group have I seen so many pure souls, so many gentle and good people, so many men and women of utter integrity."

And he continues:

"Unless you are ready to accept this as the truth, coming from a man who has broken with them and cannot call them comrade again, you will not even begin to understand the most complex and incredible situation of our time—and perhaps of any time in all human history."

Here Howard Fast touches a very profound, intriguing and disquietening problem. There are these people than whom there are none gentler and better, and in the name of all that they hold sacred they go and connive at and defend, and would probably commit themselves, in discipline and dedication, the most inhuman and unworthy acts. This is indeed a symptom of the malady of our time, from which not only Communists suffer, this lack of wholeness and integrity of the human personality, this disharmony between man's thoughts and actions, this discrepancy between his ideas and his behaviour. But even though Communists are not alone to suffer from this malady, they probably suffer from it worse than others.

This is due to the excessive magnification of the Communist Party as the indispensable, the one and only, and hence infallible

means to the end of Communism, and of Communism as the *summum bonum*, the end in itself, exclusive, immutable, the final truth, the product of Marxism exempt from the operation of the Marxian logic and doctrine of dialectical change. Again, in this it presents itself like any other religion, indeed more Popish than the Pope. In fact, even the Vatican is said to have officially recognised Communism as a kind of religion, though of course of wrong believers. But when end and means are so indissolubly identified as are Communism and the Communist Party as instrument to its achievement, and when that instrument is totally condemned, then one is justified in saying that there must be something wrong with the end also which is unattainable except through such a means. Howard Fast evades this issue in *The Naked God*. I think that is the greatest defect of the book. Nowhere does he say so, but the conclusion might easily be drawn that, if only the communist leadership of the party was a better leadership; and indeed, if perhaps only a better man had been in the place of Eugene Dennis, may be in the end, after all, Communism might yet be alright. But it so happens that in the ever changing internal set-up of all the known Communist Parties, the only permanent figure are precisely those Eugene Dennises, the Ulbrichts, the Duclos, the Rakosis—the imitation Stalins. The conception of the Communist Party and its role as laid down in Marxism-Leninism-Khrushchevism demands this type, makes room for no other type of leadership. The defect is basic and it must be faced.

It is not suggested that Howard Fast refuses to face it even now, or evades it on purpose. But even if he could not possibly say everything about everything in this first book after the great break, it is a serious defect and significant lapse, more significant than the 'shoddy language' in which it is written and the lack of structure and coherence which have been adversely commented on by many literary critics. The structu-

ral defect of the book may be due to the fact that it was not originally conceived as a book, but started with one essay and went on growing by way of answering more questions and remembering more arguments. As regards the language, I have to make a confession: though Howard Fast's books went into best-selling printing figures, I have never read one of his books except the *Citizen Tom Payne*, and that too only in search of some historical data; and hence I don't have a standard of comparison for his style of writing, before and after. Incidentally, he has some very definite ideas about language: 'The same numb, senseless, tired language,' used by Communists in their discussions, is commented on in one place; and in another he writes: 'Communists who have both a sense of their own language and an affection for it have long bewailed the mammoth string of wooden clichés used to preach Party dogma... They are fostered out of the laziness and pervading sense of magic that underlie Party ritual. The pages of Party publications are filled with the word 'hence,' an outmoded form almost never used in modern speech or writing, hallowed by tradition into a meaning beyond that of the words 'therefore' or 'consequently.' Take this from 'whence' it comes, which is all I can do.'

The last sentence is clearly not a piece of art, and I for one find nothing wrong with the short word 'hence' used in the flow of an argument. But then, Americans find so much of English archaic. At the same time, Howard Fast himself uses in one place the word 'forsooth' for 'surely' which is too archaic even for my taste and really sounds a bit silly.

However, if I have not read Howard Fast's earlier books, that is partly because I seldom get to reading novels at all, though I would like to, and largely because of my own set of blinkers which I wear against ideological *belle lettres*. And since communist writers, unless or until they cease to be communist writers, must always write with a view to the approval of The Party, they all conform to the monotonous pattern of a General Line and of a philistine theory of art, and after having tasted some samples of approved communist novels, I gave

it up. I like my novels apart and my ideologies apart. Of course, a writer's ideas will always find expression in whatever he writes; but in communist literature they put it on too thick and leave nothing unsaid to allow scope for the reader's imagination or to draw his own conclusions. Still, now I shall want to read some of what Howard Fast has written before, because, even though he wrote so obviously in terrible earnest and out of a revolutionary soul, the Party played such hell with him for what he wrote. That is one of my reactions to reading *the Naked God*, even if I do find its language gawky in places and in others declamatory. But then, the writer was severely handicapped by having to express passionate and unhappy emotions, too fresh, too raw and seething to be dealt with in artistic detachment. As a matter of fact, though lack of humour is one of the mortal sins, his very earnestness and engagedness make the author more sympathetic. He is so patently sincere, and there is nothing slick and smart about him. He is not sophisticated and gives himself no airs. If he has not thought out his thoughts to the end by a long way yet, at least he nowhere tries to whitewash or disown his responsibility as an influential writer or the harm done by his awakening having been so belated. The occasional attempts at mystification are surely ('forsooth?') due to the whole thing being as yet none too clear in its implications to himself, and still looming too big and too painful.

THE mere reading of the book is painful. It is painful for good Communists and bad Communists, for fellow-travellers and anti-communists. But it is necessary to read it, for all of them. Because Howard Fast is scrupulously fair and honest and does more than justice to the God that failed him even while abjuring his faith. And it is precisely this decency of his which makes the book such painful reading: There goes that big, lumbering, good-natured fellow, already a recognised author and joins the

Communist Party, lends his name and prestige to it and is found in the forefront of every fight like a plain party volunteer—and gets treated like mud for his gains by the most boorish bosses I have ever heard of in any of the world's Communist Parties. 'If any reader imagines,' he writes on page 14:

'that out of the act of joining the Communist Party there comes either eternal peace or happiness, he is mistaken. In all truth, one sells his soul, accepting the proposition that thus will mankind be redeemed . . . neither individual indignity nor hurt is of any importance. . . The pride, passion and independence of the individual are described as 'bourgeois baggage,' and it becomes an important admission of a lack of 'proletarianism' to admit to them. My entire background of the working class, of poverty and hunger, did not help to make me 'proletarian.' Only the ignominious retreat of my spirit could prove my faith.'

And again: 'I may have been a fool not to have known of the terror,' he writes in a letter to a Russian friend after the excommunication, 'but I did not know.' That was the experience of the man Howard Fast. The writer, if possible, fared even worse.

'No one in the party leadership . . . ever showed the slightest interest in what I was writing or in reading any manuscript of mine. . . Interest came only when my 'bourgeois literary sins' were unearthed by the specialists in the field and brought to the attention of the leadership. By accident the manuscript of a play of mine fell into the hands of a petty party functionary. After he had read it, he called me on the telephone, demanded that I come to a certain place to meet him, and there, arbitrarily, in terms of savage vindictiveness, ordered me to change the third act of the play. He told me quite bluntly that he was very close to the then General Secretary of the Party, Perry, and that, unless I made the changes he demanded, he would see to it that Perry expelled me from the Party. He also let me know that Perry would in no way be displeased to have an excuse for taking that action. I made the changes.'

And why not? When Khrushchev danced the Gokak!? For one of his novels he was charged by the party leadership with 'anti-party action' because he depicted an Irish worker as getting himself drunk in the face of overwhelming personal problems. For another novel, he was accused of 'Jewish bour-

geois Nationalism.' For yet another novel, *Freedom Road*, he was accused of 'white chauvinism' because he let someone refer to a Negro as a nigger, which was the realist thing to do; but in party literature that word had to be spelled n-r, which again fits into the picture of the taboos and superstitious practices which Communism shares with primitive magic, and the spirit of mediaeval bigotry and the Inquisition, which denoted the name of the devil with three crosses.

But the limit is the fate that the Party reserved for what Howard Fast himself believes to be his best book. 'Only another writer can understand what went into the making of *'Spartacus'*, a book I had dreamed of writing for years,' and a theme that has appealed to many revolutionary writers. Howard Fast's *'Spartacus'* was so revolutionary that seven publishers refused to publish it.

'Unable to endure the humiliation of further rejections, I decided to publish it myself,' he writes, 'and finally the miracle of a book published by myself—editing, printing, packing, distributing—turned into a best seller of 35,000 copies in a few months. . . For two years and more I had laboured to produce a book that would be an epic of the oppressed, a paean to liberty and the high conscience of mankind. . . But the lashing tongue of the Commissar informed me otherwise: I had written a study in 'brutalism' and 'sadism,' and he said: 'I think it is a bad book, an evil book, a rotten book!' Another charge against *'Spartacus'* was that it 'contained psychoanalytical words.' The phrase 'inner struggle' in particular was seized upon. And the following is quoted from the 'definitive' review of the book in the party organ, *'Daily Worker'*, of February 7, 1952. 'Fast's conclusion is not believable. . . It is true that individuals from a decadent class can press beyond their class into the higher realm of the advancing class. . . What we have here is a reverse from the class theme. . . Can we imagine a Nazi pleading for the love of a Russian Woman? (Can't we?) . . . We get something very close to the sexual reconciliation of the classes. . . The incursion is felt here of the destructive influence of Freudian mystification concerning the erotic as against the social basis of character. . .'

This is surely hard to beat. In the end, says Howard Fast: 'they could not destroy *'Spartacus'*! The petty

shame of party periodicals rejecting reviews they had asked to be written because these reviews praised the book, was drowned in the excitement of Communists who read it—and it sold through edition after edition. Yet, that night I could hear only one thing—that my life and work and talent, as embodied in that book, had to be destroyed. I had sinned, disobeyed: I had created as I thought I should create—and all that was criminal. The commercial book publishers hustled me out of their offices because I was a Communist. The Communist Party had established its discipline because I was a writer. In the life of every writer, there is one work that he will some day write out of the bottommost(!) wells of his passion... For me, 'Spartacus' was such a book—the book of my being... I sat down that night and wept, because it was the end.'

Poor wretch. He not only wept, he even says he did. He is not even bitter, he only feels rotten. This attitude is almost great, greater for that he broke so late, having to regret and to confess to so much more condoned and connived at, as time went on. Some of the more plausible explanations he gives for why:

'my learning was so hard and slow—too hard and too slow for an explanation of why I remained—were pride: you could not run away when the movement was under fire; and stubbornness too, for I hate those who push me around, outside the Party as well as inside of it!'

But the most important point, I believe, to explain how he could bear so long this standing violation of his conscience and self-respect, are the hard facts of his own social background and early experiences, which were much like those that gave rise to the ideas of Socialism and Communism themselves. Describing how he came to Communism, in the early thirties, he writes:

'At the age of eleven, pressed by the need of utter poverty, I went to work as a newspaper delivery boy. The fact that thereby I gave up all the joy and laughter of childhood to embark upon long years of physical and mental weariness, the particular weariness of doomed children—is important only in its very broad social sense... The reader must comprehend the full meaning of the surrender of childhood that poverty still imposes on millions of children the world over... I was lucky. I always found work... I was large and strong, iron-muscled, youthfully indestructible, for I had

already survived and made my peace with every bestiality and indignity that poverty exacts. I was the product of the gutter and the gang, the lousy, bedbug-ridden railway tenement, the burning streets and the empty lots. I had carried brass knucks and used them, and in my animal world, I was beaten and beat others. I had no mother and my father was unemployed for months at a time, aging, his back broken... To this day I cannot pass a beggar, a broken man, a homeless wretch crouched on some side-walk, without saying to myself: 'There—but by the grace of God...'

Most writers know this stark side of the reality which has produced Communism only from hearsay, and become communists only after they have already been writers, and when their conscience as writers drives them to a position where they want not only to reflect and describe the world as it is, but influence its shaping with their art. But for Howard Fast, this was part of his own life; he became a communist because of it and a writer in spite of it. That makes a difference. Because of this difference I felt reluctant to review this book. Because, unless a reviewer confines himself to express his like or dislike of a book, by implication he sets himself up as a judge, as one who may or may not be able to write a book himself, but who knows all about it and knows it better than the author himself. I hate to do that, and would hate it more in the case of Howard Fast's *The Naked God*. Because this book is not a piece of literature. *It is a piece someone has torn out of himself*. The morale of the story is, when we remember why we are against Communism, never to forget why people become Communists. Communism is incompatible with freedom—individual, social, political and even economic. But so is injustice and poverty. And there is a disquietening reluctance or inability on the part of the progressive democratic Left to evolve a new and better alternative. Without that, the most passionate declaration of love for freedom is not enough to offer a new orientation, to evoke purposive dedication and to remove the causes that drive men like Howard Fast to Communism—and then to break with it at the cost of so much disorientation and suffering.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Poverty of Historicism

THE Poverty of Historicism' by Karl Popper, the author of 'The Open Society and its enemies', is an important book for the light it throws on the theoretical questions like the nature of social sciences and the methods appropriate to them as well as for its practical social implications. The basic ideas of the book were published in an article of the same title in *Economica*. 1944, and these can also be found in 'The Open Society'.

Historicism is a characteristic approach based on the doctrine that historical prediction is the main aim of social sciences. Historicists, beginning from Plato down to Marx, Spengler and Toynbee, believe that this is obtainable by discovering the rhythm, pattern or law that underlies the evolution of Society. Popper is concerned to show not only that historicism is a poor method unable to yield the results it promises but also that by misconceiving the task of social sciences historicism diverts our attention from the problems that can be studied and tackled successfully and is thus responsible for the chronic backwardness of such sciences.

There are two main varieties of historicism: anti-naturalistic and pro-naturalistic. Both varieties believe and aim at historical prophesy, but with this difference. Anti-naturalists are against the use of scientific method in the study of social problems while pro-naturalists are for it. Both of course are mistaken as to what the method of science really is. Let us see in brief the main characteristics of these two varieties.

THE POVERTY OF HISTORICISM by Karl Popper: 168 + XIV pages, (Published by Routledge and Kegan Paul. Price 16sh.)

Anti-naturalism: The method of sociology cannot be the method of physics (which historicism wrongly supposes to be long-term generalisation based on uniformity of nature) for reasons like, organic character of social wholes, novelty and complexity of social phenomena, lack of objectivity, non-objectivity of artificial isolation and so on.

What is needed is an entirely different kind of approach, that of intuitive understanding as to how and why an event comes about and method, that is, essentialism. We have to penetrate beyond the manifestations of social life of a group to its very essence if we wish to understand the significance of social occurrences and this essence or spirit of the group, as it were, can be studied only through its history. The object will be to fathom the historical forces inherent in social life and on such knowledge construct a theory of social development. Such a theory will enable us to enter into large-scale prophesies as regards impending social changes and the shape of things to come.

Pro-naturalism: Sociology is a science, theoretical and empirical, based on observation of historical phenomena and like any other science its business is to explain and predict with the help of universal laws. Just as astronomy can predict eclipses, sociology can predict revolutions, although not with the precision of astronomical forecasts. But the sweep and significance of historical prediction must compensate for its lack of precision. This universal law of course is not an ordinary law of social life which is unobtainable because of the relativity of historical occurrences to certain periods. It must be a law of social development which link up successive periods. Sociology must

be based on social dynamics—the theory of social movement as determined by certain driving forces and tendencies underlying history. To penetrate through the thickets of conflicting occurrences to the roots of history, to divine the pattern of its developmental forces, to formulate the laws of social change and then to predict the occurrences of distant events are the tasks of a social scientist.

Popper has done a good service to the cause of social sciences by his systematic exposition of historicist doctrines and attitudes to social problems and their detailed criticism. For such doctrines and attitudes stand in the way of the application of what Popper would call 'the scientific method' to the study of social problems. There is no doubt that historicism has great emotional appeal to people because of its holistic and totalitarian orientations and this is why it is very important to lay bare the fallacies involved in this position. Popper questions all the presuppositions of historicism and denies that there is any fundamental difference between the problems of social and physical sciences. Not that there is nothing in the historicist idea of 'trends'. Historical trends are certainly observable. Only they are dependent on certain initial conditions and must not be treated as absolute laws as done by historicism. In fairness to historicism it must be admitted that something analogous to laws are needed for the interpretation of historical phenomena just as hypothesis are needed for the study of scientific phenomena. Only what we do have are not developmental laws, arrived at by intuition or observation but points of view from which interpretations are carried out, and there may be several points of view from which the same assemblage of events may be looked at. What I find particularly interesting in this book are: Popper's emphasis on the unity of method as used by physical and social sciences and his advocacy of piecemeal planning.

The scientific method whether it is used in physical or social sciences is the hypothetico-deductive method. Science does not

start with observation and then arrive at a general law by using the inductive method. It starts with a problem and some sort of a hypothesis or theory as to its explanation. The scientist then designs experiments or plans observation in the light of the theory and checks his results with what follows deductively from the theory. What is characteristic of science is the critical attitude which induces the scientist to look for falsification rather than confirmation. For it is easy to find confirmation of our pet theories if we look for it, as historicism evidently does. So the scientist relies not on simple corroboration, but on selection through elimination and deliberate effort at falsification. But the theory which stands the tests of selection etc. still remains a hypothesis and the scientist keeps an open mind as regards future possibilities. Another important feature of the scientific method is its interpersonal character which is the best check against prejudice rather than the impartiality of any individual scientist. The belief that we cannot conduct experiments with social problems is a prejudice. Not only are social experiments possible, sometimes on a large-scale, like the New Deal, the introduction of social insurance and unemployment benefit and so on, we already possess a great deal of experimental knowledge about social life, even if that only says what we cannot do rather than what we can do (Popper says that the situation is essentially the same with physical prediction). The difference between an experienced and unexperienced business man, politician or teacher is a difference of experimental knowledge.

It may be felt that social experiments are useless for it is impossible to repeat social phenomena under similar conditions. But in science what appears to be similar conditions may turn out to be dissimilar as a result of experiments and certain basic regularities may be found in conditions which appear to be very dissimilar. Such things as what conditions are similar or dissimilar can be told in social sciences also as a result of experiments and cannot be decided upon

apriori. As regards social phenomena being relative to periods the historicist overrates the differences between historical periods. There is no reason why it will not be possible to frame general sociological theories which hold for all periods in spite of certain differences between them, in the same way as we can frame physical laws which hold for such widely different regions as Crete and Greenland.

What we should aim at is a technological social science rather than a historicist one. Instead of trying to find out the laws of social development we should look for those regularities that impose restrictions upon the construction of social institutions. Instead of indulging in large scale forecasts and prophesies about coming social changes, we should resort to small predictions as to what is to be expected as a result of reforms we wish to introduce and compare the results arrived at by experiments with the results expected and then modify our pre-suppositions accordingly. Social experiments have so far been carried out with practical rather than scientific aims in view. There is no reason why these methods should not be improved upon and ultimately replaced by a more scientifically minded technology. We need more systematic and conscious approach in the same direction based on critical thought as well as experiment.

While historicism advocates that we should plan the reconstruction of the whole society along the line dictated by historical forces, technology says that piecemeal tinkering combined with critical analysis is the way to practical results. Social sciences develop mainly through our attempts to find out whether or not some particular action is likely to produce an expected or desired result, neither through speculation on the nature of the whole society nor through blue-prints for total reconstruction. Even though a social scientist may cherish ideals which concern society as a whole the method he would use would be small adjustments and readjustments which can be continually improved upon. A piecemeal engineer can keep an open mind and learn from

mistakes while an utopian engineer would wish to change human beings to fit them into his scheme if his scheme would not fit them (as is inevitable with a total scheme). A piecemeal engineer would look for undesirable consequences of any reform introduced and devise ways and means to combat them. An Utopian engineer would be unable to admit that any change brought about according to scheme can be undesirable.

Although I entirely agree with Popper's contentions as set forth above, there are one or two points I would wish to make. In his zeal to draw our attention to the unity of method as used by physical and social sciences he perhaps tends to overlook some of their differences. Although, as Popper says, concrete physical phenomena are as complex as concrete social phenomena, objects studied by physical sciences are relatively more amenable to isolation from complicating factors than are those studied by social sciences (this of course is no reason why we should not carry on with social experiments). No doubt, as Popper says, it is only by experiments that we find out what degree of isolation is necessary or achievable, yet it seems to me that because of what Popper himself calls 'the waywardness of human nature' it will not be possible for us to carry isolation, in connection with most social problems, to the point where formulation of laws in exact quantitative terms becomes feasible. Take for instance the introduction of the free method in education. The result may be on the whole encouraging, as expected. But individual children will not only react in different degrees but also in different ways in face of the same stimulus. Certain or even most children may learn better under the stimulus of freedom while some with a different sort of make-up may do better under greater guidance. Again freedom may work when carried upto a certain degree beyond which the result may be negative, and this degree may vary with individual children. The hypothesis that children learn better under conditions of freedom which we may well

accept as a pedagogical law may lead to dogmatism in practice if we believe that its character as law is just the same as the character of a law in physics. Certainly even a law in physics is a hypothesis, subject to falsification by future events. Yet, when and as long as it continues to be accepted as a law, we may rely on its power to predict the behaviour of particulars covered by it. We cannot place the same degree of reliance on the efficacy of a social law—because of its lack of exactness—to predict the behaviour of particulars (even when the prediction is a negative assertion rather than a positive one).

Of course what Popper is interested in is the use of the hypothetico-deductive method in studying social problems and not in the exactness of social laws. Yet he does not make it quite clear, as I think it ought to be made, that the scientific character of social sciences lies not so much in the exactness of the laws obtained (the characteristic popularly associated with the term 'scientific') as in the method used. The term 'science' as used to describe the study of social problems should not lead us always to expect quantitative measurements but prepare us for a continual revision and modification of our presuppositions and theories in the light of investigations undertaken to falsify them.

As regards planning it seems to me that Popper tends—or at least the language he uses tends to produce that impression—to make a fetish of piecemeal planning and of muddling through. Of course if any planning which is not a part of totalitarian planning is called piecemeal then the only planning to be recommended is piecemeal. Yet when he lends his support to the idea of muddling through it looks as if his planning is to be really piecemeal, *i.e.* one problem is to be tackled at a time (even though it may be a problem on a large-scale). Now, even if this method is a suitable one for advanced societies, like modern western societies, it is doubtful if it must be the only method in dealing with problems of societies that are backward. A social scien-

tist must recognise relevant facts of social significance before he can embark on any engineering and it is a significant feature of backward societies today that their members are not prepared, psychologically speaking—however wrongly one may think—to muddle through centuries to come upto the standard that has already been attained by western societies. One may condemn totalitarian planning, for it leaves no room for effective criticism and opposition which perform vital functions in social life. Yet one may believe, with regard to backward societies,—for a scientist would be prepared to vary his beliefs depending on the material he has to deal with—that at certain stages of social life it may be advisable to try to coordinate several aspects of social life, treat the main problems involved as inter-related and attack them from a certain vantage point. Undoubtedly there will be dangers involved in doing so. Yet if such planning is undertaken within the confines of democratic institutions, so far as a particular society at a particular stage is concerned, it may be less dangerous, in terms of human cost, to do so rather than resort to what would really be piecemeal tinkering. But this criticism concerns not what Popper says or denies in so many words but what he may be interpreted as saying or denying.

PRATIMA BOWES

SOCIALISM and SARVODAYA (Marathi):
Acharya S. D. Jawadekar: Sulabha Rash-
triya Granthmala, Poona 2. Rs. 2.50)

ACHARYA JAWADEKAR was three men rolled in one. He was a great *bhashyakar* of modern India. His monumental *Adhunik Bharat* is as yet unsurpassed in its comprehensiveness and deep insight into the ethos of modern India. He was one of the foremost social thinkers of the first generation of Gandhites, and throughout major part of his life acted as a friend, philosopher and guide to the socialist youth of Maharashtra. Besides, he was active in social and political field as a teacher, editor, and social worker.

Early in his life he was deeply influenced by four thought currents: spiritual nationalism, liberal democracy, Gandhian thought and Marxist socialism. This made him a great protagonist of synthesis *per se*. It had one other significant effect. His approach always remained open, non-dogmatic, and that of a seeker of truth. It is a merit of all his writings that though he wrote most of the time about politics he never lost sight of the ethical values, which alone give meaning to man's life. He was deeply immersed in Indian philosophical tradition, especially the Upanishadic thought and the radical mysticism of the saints.

Though he never claimed originality for his thought his philosophy of life is distinctly his own. It is an integrated and an eminently rational outlook on life. Indian philosophical idiom became his nature and he used it with ease which had both simplicity and power. It has a quality of purity, free of all dogma, orthodoxy, and an holier-than-thou attitude commonly found in persons arguing from that viewpoint and in that idiom.

He held the view that man's life had four aspects: individual and social, material and spiritual. He stressed their close interdependence and the underlying unity between them. For him the ultimate aim of human life is the deep religious and spiritual urge in man. The spiritual and religious urge embodies man's search after truth, Goodness and Beauty. It is the same urge which makes man seek a relationship of Love with the universe around him. An intellect dedicated to the realisation of truth, a heart full of love, and a life full of chastity and purity—that is the ideal human individuality. To make possible the realisation of this ideal aim it is essential to bring about a radical and total transformation in the economic, social and political organisation, as well as a transformation of values. Jawadekar accepted the social ideal of spiritual anarchism as of Kropotkin and Tolstoy, which first gained recognition in modern Europe with the revival of the Christianity of Jesus Christ as against the Roman Catholic

Church during the Reformation. Jawadekar rightly says that here Gandhi and Marx both draw inspiration from the same source. It is the ideal of the classless and stateless society of the free and equal, where exploitation has come to an end. It is the ideal of establishing the Kingdom of Kindness on this earth.

But Jawadekar is a fine combination of a spiritual idealist and a political realist. He realises that given man's imperfectibility the ideal of spiritual anarchism will always remain beyond the realm of possibility. But, he says, with great wisdom, that it is the lodestar, very much essential as a guiding principle. The troubles of the twentieth century world are mainly to be traced to the non-existence of this lodestar.

Jawadekar quotes Gandhi as saying: 'The nearest approach to purest anarchy would be a democracy based on non-violence'. This is also Jawadekar's ideal. To this he adds socialist principles of economic equality and socialisation of ownership of means of production. And he qualifies it with two things: satyagraha and decentralisation.

Non-violent democracy is distinguished from liberal democracy in two aspects. The essential principles of liberal democracy are, the freedom of individual, the rule of law, sovereignty of parliament elected through adult suffrage, and the right of the minority to propagate its views and organise into political bodies. The two underlying assumptions are that man is essentially a rational being and that the unhampered pursuit of his enlightened self-interest by the individual would automatically lead to the good of the society. Liberal democracy failed because these assumptions proved to be only half truths. We must add to this, Jawadekar says, the socialist principle of economic equality and social justice. The incentives of service and cooperation, and not profit and competition, should form the motive behind human action progressively.

Much more important is the attitude taken up by Jawadekar towards the nature of the individual. He says that the individual must *continually* cleanse his intellect of

selfishness, hatred, base passions, and attachment. The intellect must become selfless and dedicated to the good of all. Freed from vices the intellect can single-mindedly pursue truth, which is the ultimate aim of life. Then only freedom will not be an empty shell as it is today but a meaningful term.

The assumption that you can revolutionise society through mere intellectual argument is rejected as sorely inadequate. A good deal of small and big reforms can be brought about through the parliamentary democratic set up. But mere intellectual argument is not enough when the aim is to bring about a radical and comprehensive change in the fundamental structure of society. Here the problem is that of transvaluation of values in the whole of society and also that of overcoming the vested interests of some as well as unprepared for change of the masses.

The way of social change is three fold. (1) Ideological and attitudinal change. (2) Change of heart. (3) Environmental and institutional change. The method of change is to be completely non-violent, no compromise being acceptable. This is the way of *satyagraha*.

Satyagraha has two other functions. A people must have the right to seek redress of their grievances through extra-parliamentary methods even under a democratic government. Because, whatever the political complexion of the government, it is bound to commit acts and pursue policies in violation of the ideals it proclaims to serve.

The cultivation of the spirit of *satyagraha* is essential to progressively reduce the sphere and amount of violence from social life and the affairs of the state and activate the masses so as to make their participation in the democratic process real and effective.

Satyagraha is a way of life and action which aims at the non-violent transformation of the existing social order towards a stateless society based on truth, love and non-violence. It is essentially a means of revolutionising individual and social life.

The above-mentioned is essentially the

sphere of work of a *satyagrahi loksevak*. While it is the function of the political parties to accept the minimum amount of violence and inequality inevitable at the present time to maintain law and order and run the economic system productively and smoothly, it is also their function to work democratically and promote the goals of individual freedom and social justice.

Jawadekar also advocates a constructive programme based on 'areas of agreement' between the different democratically oriented parties under non-partisan auspices. Only by this method it would be possible to go on correcting the deficiencies in the present democratic set up which is today internally threatened by rigid formalism and hardening of the arteries.

Apart from the main argument in the book there is a brilliant Vedantist interpretation of the development of Indian nationalism written at the time of the founding of the *samanvaya ashram* at Bodhagaya by Vinobaji in 1954. There is also an authoritative exposition of Vinoba's view that the salvation of the modern world lies in the union, between the way of Vedanta and the way of *ahimsa* and compassion of the Buddha.

Analysing the reasons why European society today finds itself on the verge of destruction after the brilliant start in the 16th and the 17th centuries he advances two reasons: (1) Originally the cultural renaissance was motivated and deeply influenced by the spiritual urge as embodied in the life and teachings of Christ. But later on it came to be replaced by self-seeking materialism under the false colours of a supposedly scientific and rational outlook. Jawadekar would say that the scientific and rationalist outlook is really not in conflict with the spiritual urge and the religious impulse. On the other hand, he maintains that one without the other leads human society to stagnation and decay or destruction. (2) The reason why the stagnation and decay has taken such a destructive and violent form is the adherence to violence by the Western world since the times of the

Reformation. We would do well to ponder deeply over this analysis.

Strangely enough Acharya Jawadekar's analysis is defective on two points, (1) his ambivalent attitude to Marxism, and (2) his unqualified insistence on the socialisation of means of production. It is strange because he is fully aware of the totalitarian implications of both Marxism and state ownership. The only explanation (no justification is meant) one could advance is that it was through Marx that Jawadekar first became aware of the need of a social and economic revolution in society. Marx also made of him a social realist. This fact that Marx was his *guru* at a decisive point in his life made his attitude to Marx undeservedly liberal.

About ownership of means of production it would seem that pressed for clarification he would have rejected complete state ownership as far as one can judge from his general approach. But for a man like Jawadekar it is a serious mistake not to state it explicitly.

Most of these essays were written with direct bearing on topical political and social events. Throughout the book he discusses political philosophy in relation to current affairs. He had great hopes that the Congress, the P.S.P. and the Bhoodan movement, as represented in the personalities of Nehru, Jayaprakash and Vinoba, would work cooperatively to realise Gandhi's dream of non-violent democracy. All the three movements, unfortunately, have belied his hopes. His death in 1955 spared him a grave disappointment.

VASANT PALSHIKAR

MODERN INDIAN POETRY: Edited by A. V. Rajeshwara Rau: Published by Kavita Series, Pp. 144, Rs. 10.00.

SINCE the coming of independence in this country culture on the Government level is being served in a big way. What with the delegations, the folk-dances the musical concerts, the ballets and the pantomimes, the learning and arts of yore are

having the time of their life. Literature has not escaped the *Midas* touch of professional culturists. Literature from one language is hastened into another and literatures from many languages into English. It has still got to be English, they ruefully admit.

Modern Indian Poetry is a part of the same feverish pursuit of culture. It is a solid looking volume, edited by A. V. Rajeshwara Rau and foreworded by Humayun Kabir which seeks to gather within its covers representative specimens of poetry from fourteen major languages of India, including English. The volume is almost elegantly got up. The covers are clad in striped swadeshi of sombre blue. The paper is of considerable weight and misses the gloss by an hair's breadth. In fact, everything that is 'materially' possible is done. The bricks are streamlined but what of the straw?

Such anthologies and collections do serve their purpose of:

'contributing to better understanding and communication not only among Indians speaking different languages but also between Indian and peoples of other countries'.

What they try to obviate in a barrage of introductory platitudes is the fact that there is no Indian literature; there are Indian literatures, each as different from and as similar to another as the English is to the French and the French to the German. Therefore such literary pot-pourris, served in the shape of cultural delicacies, are not be gulped straightway.

This is not to suggest that all such anthologies are engaged in a wild-goose chase. As collections of poetry from different languages, they have their modicum of usefulness. But when they outline a plan of selection and explain the development by stages of Indian poetry as a whole, not merely the main trends but the historical development, one is forced to be wary. It should be noted that the writer of the foreword to this anthology strikes a sober note. He is alive to the many difficulties of compiling such an anthology, but cannot be wholly free from a desire to do good culturally.

In the preface the editor states:

Modern Indian poetry is half a century old. It has had a chequered career but no proper direction. The unsettled social and political conditions in the country are responsible for this. (One fails to know how?) (1) The first quarter of the century saw the Romantic Revival. Platonic love with bohemian outlook was the fashion among its devotees. (One wishes a few examples were cited.) (2) With suppression at the hands of an alien power, patriotic sentiments flared up. (In this anthology, it is difficult to feel even the faintest patriotic warmth, let alone the fire!) (3) In the thirties, Indian poets came in contact with European poetry, particularly that of France. As a result a new search for freedom began in metrical innovation and thematic construction. (When will we cease to read such close English parallel in the development of the literatures of our own country?) (4) Came the first World War, the vision of a new world and the dream of socialism, giving rise to the poetry of political fervour and propaganda. (After the first World War, socialism, at least in Indian literatures, was far way off) (5) Second World War and Independence—a sentiment of national pride but alas! the creative upsurge on the decline a big gulf between the dream of the poet and the reality around him; a sense of material want and spiritual loneliness; the intelligentsia thrown by the wayside and poetic beauty judged by the view of the majority. (This is a home-truth, and bitter, because it pinches.) (6) The poetry of our generation is passing through a critical period. The old-timers are unable to adjust themselves to the modern spirit. The alternatives open are, either to toe the line of mediocre taste or to surrender to the existing socio-political pattern.

After knowing the above generalisations, it is necessary to forget them if one wishes to enjoy the poetry. One is beguiled in the beginning by the naive attempt of fostering unity among the fourteen languages by printing the poems one after another irrespective of the language from which they are taken. They are arranged to illustrate neither the developments outlined in the preface nor the themes that are referred to in it.

The foreword points out that "to present through the medium of English poems written in different languages is no easy task", and that "it becomes more difficult when the languages concerned have such different

backgrounds and associations as English and any Indian language." This is proved by several pieces. Take the first lines of Mahendra Bora's 'love song—'

Last night I had no sleep
for, streaks of moon-beam
trickled, filtered through the mists
and glittered over my silken bed-sheet.

As Jean Cocteau remarks, 'It is not enough for translation to be a marriage, it needs to be a love match.' A laboured love match is so much of labour lost. There are a few matches instinct with love at first sight. Mention should be made of 'path', 'today me, tomorrow you', 'sinking deep in your eyes profound'. But however fine the translation, the lyrical nuances which often consist of subtle rhythmic patterns, cannot be carried over into another language. One should compare the original of Vinda Karandikar to its translation 'to you it was a native art' to find this out.

The themes are many. There are mystic musings of the traditional kind ('One and Two') or songs of 'transcendent love' (Mahadevi Verma). There are the inevitable love lyrics, dainty like the 'breeze' or striking a deeper note like 'remembrance'. Some like 'partings' are precise and prosaic like a sugar cube while others like 'a parting' stir a most sophisticated feeling. There is 'sailing to England' rendered in modern idiom with suspended dialogue put in single inverted commas which tickles your fancy but defies detailed understanding, and there is the high-souled 'advice to a young writer' put in jaded poetic words.

A mordant awareness of reality which one expects from poets of modern India is seen in a few poems only, like Kunja Bihari Das's 'is not this thy prayer' or the simpler one of Niranjana, 'famine and after'. One is therefore surprised to come across Amrita Pritam's balladic lament on the heart-rending plight of the Punjab.

Where can one see the influence of the West and of France on Indian poetry? Is it to be sought in the imagistic patterns of Rege's 'ship'? or in the muscled granite solidarity of S. S. Rao's 'a poem'? or in sym-

bols that arouse disgust like the 'rats'? or in the frenzied ejaculations of a self-reproaching soul as in 'thirty two'? One would rather seek it in the quivering sensibility that captures the layered lineaments of a moment with the exquisite beauty of a splintering raindrop. 'listen to me' has something new and sad and beautiful.

Mohan Sing's 'the present' and Jigar Muradabadi's 'a poem' are striking. The latter possesses the succulent sadness of a typical Urdu poem.

The editor in 'thanksgiving' describes his endeavour as hurried and slightly exciting. Hurried it seems but hardly any exciting for us.

M. D. HATKANANGLEKAR

THE ENEMY: Tibor Meray: English version by Edward Hyams. Secker and Warburg—London (1958): 10s.6d.

THE power motive in politics has compelled many a person to compromise his principles, which brings in its trail—at least in the initial phase—a sense of guilt. The pattern of behaviour of the communists is, however, qualitatively different from this, in that the fanatic religious faith to the party develops in a communist the capacity for committing the most atrocious of deeds without a prick of conscience. Nemeth, the hero of Tibor Meray's novel 'The Enemy', was a member of a cell in the communist Party. He was promoted to the post of the head of his department, but along with his departmental responsibilities he was also assigned the task of unmasking 'The Enemy' in his staff. It was agonising to him to realize that he would have to find out the enemy from among his four comrades. For one of them was Amelia, an elderly maiden, who was a devout catholic; another was Weber, an old member of the Party with a rare record of service and sacrifice; the third, Pista, a trusted friend from childhood and the fourth was Wanda, his fiancée. Party loyalty, however, enabled him to get over his *petti-bourgeois* sentimentalism and he started practising the usual communist

methods of espionage. The novel is an autobiographic narration by Nemeth, who has given a vivid account of the working of the hero's mind intent on finding the enemy. Once the perverse activity was set into motion, he stopped at nothing and his diseased imagination made him sense *counter-revolution* and treachery in the simple, innocent words and deeds of his companions.

Amelia was the first victim because Nemeth was convinced that she was luring her companions into churches and boring the Party from within. To his great astonishment, after her dismissal, he got proof of her innocence. However, he made no efforts to undo the wrong done to her but doubled his efforts to discover the enemy. He then removed Comrade Weber by unscrupulously dubbing him as a *class-enemy* who, being beaten in the open, was infiltrating the 'bosom of the party.' Then came the turn of Pista, and Nemeth saw in his taste for good life a certain proof of anti-party feelings. He made a back-door accusation and Pista was sacked. Wanda, who was—Nemeth's betrothed, was shocked at this indecent and dishonourable behaviour and called Nemeth 'a brute, beast, a monster'. With her flood of words came the revelation to Nemeth, that his earlier victims were innocent and that he was led astray by the girl, who was a Russian, but a white Russian, a Tsarist Russian.

Wanda committed suicide and the truth dawned on him that the original sin was his own *petit-bourgeois* heritage. He decided to atone for it by continuing to work for the Communist Party. The novel begins with the declaration by Nemeth of his decision to commit suicide and ends with the declaration of his resolve to live, to put an end to the last vestige of his heritage, such as his love for his parents, and to take to the path of pain and ordeal, of working for the Communist Party.

The characters of all the four victims are drawn with a broad brush but are quite life-like. The incidents describing the beginning and the end of the love between

Nemeth and Wanda are captivating and poignant.

Tibor Meray, who was associated with the communist party for a long time, has ruthlessly exposed the terrible atmosphere of suspense which has stifled the life of people in Communist countries. His satire on *stakhanovites* through the character of comrade Bobolya is, however, rather cheap. The alternate periods of anxiety and tranquility in the mind of Nemeth appear at regular intervals and one feels as if the device has been overdone.

The main flaw in the novel is that Meray has not succeeded in establishing the fact that the heinous deeds of Nemeth were an inevitable consequence of his Communist philosophy. The impression one gathers is that Nemeth's actions flew from the conspiratorial methods of the Communist Party. Meray has occasionally come very near to making the reader realize the indivisibility of Communist philosophy and Communist tactics, but he appears to have taken it for granted and wasted the opportunity of giving through an autobiographic narration a fundamental analysis of the motivations of a Communist.

G. P. PRADHAN

THE GUIDE. R.K. Narayan: Methuen & Indian Thought Publications. 1958. Rs. 4.50.

A CREATIVE work of first rate order can be produced by an author in his mother tongue alone. Consequently, it follows only in works executed in such a language can a true picture of a nation or a people be discovered. No wonder therefore that the two hundred years of Indo-British partnership have not brought forth a single novel in English which succeeds in depicting the Indian character and life with a penetrating and deep understanding, or with a magnificent sweep.

With this reservation in mind, it could be said of R. K. Narayan that he is the best of the Indian artists writing in English currently.

The Guide, his latest work of fiction, is an account—as most of his other novels are—of a sensitive individual (this time a tourist guide) who values love and beauty

and religion and wishes to have the maximum possible advantage of all of them. The story is placed—again, as most of his other stories are—in the village Malgudi. As usual, both the plot and the characters seem a bit unreal, since destinies are promoted and demolished a triple too arbitrarily. There is also the usual touch of mysticism, of irony, and of a vague sense of heroism.

Raju, a poor but clever hut-dweller is infatuated with the wife of one of his rich clients (whom he escorts, showing them places of interest in and around Malgudi) and in due course they become lovers. The husband, a crazy scholar of ancient history, does not make any violent scenes about it but he refuses to live any longer with the unfaithful wife. The woman, called Rosie (she is a Hindu), walks into Raju's hut as his mistress and devotes herself to the study of dancing, of which she has always been a great admirer. She becomes a raging celebrity as a dancer and soon Raju and she are rolling in wealth. The cuckold husband has not yet finished with them though. He manages to entrap Raju, through the latter's folly, and Raju is sent to jail for forging Rosie's signatures on an important document. On his release from jail, after two years' he, unwillingly, becomes a swami and is worshipped as such by the inhabitants of a remote village.

Thus from hovel to palatial prosperity, from palatial prosperity to criminal conviction in a court of law and from there to monkhood, this is the rapidly moving narration of *The Guide*. In *The Bachelor of Arts*, *Mr. Sampath*, *The Financial Expert*, and in his other books, R.K. Narayan displays a similar ingenuity and resourcefulness in pushing his story forward.

But if he were to be judged on the strength of this alone the author does not measure very high (there are writers, like Khushwant Singh or Kamala Markandaya, for instance, who acquit themselves much better as story-tellers). Narayan's charm lies elsewhere. It is in his deep sense of humour, the ability of his characters to laugh at themselves, his grip of the

mundane and comic side of life that he rises to the best of his abilities. Indians, like the Germans, are well known as a grim race. They have thousands of years of history of fearful philosophising, but works like *Pickwick Papers*, *Don Quixote* or *The Good Soldier Schweik* are unheard of in their tradition. Though Narayan does not possess such a brilliant tone, most of his novels have a sparkling, refreshing quality around them of a similar nature.

He brings home his effect in a most unexpected, almost romantic manner. When you are the least expecting it, when his men and women are seriously lost in their lust or their vanity or their vainglorious search after truth, a casual remark or a chance utterance would send ripples through reader. It was said of Henry James that one would go through page after page of his (often tiring) prose to light on a sharp description, a sentence, or a mere turn of the phrase which illuminated one with flooding beauty. The same credit could be given to Narayan, though he is never academically boring.

To illustrate (from *The Guide*). Raju is talking to Rosie. They are alone and he does not wish to lose this opportunity of advancing his suit and telling her how passionately he is fond of her. He is excited and does not know how to proceed in the matter. He refers to her husband, to see how much attachment she has for him. She tells him they often quarrel. He goes on:

'Until it is night again,' I said.

'Yes, yes.'

'It's unthinkable that anyone should find it possible to quarrel or argue with you — being with you must be such a bliss.'

She asked sharply, 'What do you mean?'

I explained myself plainly. I was prepared to ruin myself today if need be, but I was going to talk and tell her, if she wanted to kick me out, she could do it after listening to me. I spoke my mind. I praised her dancing. I spoke out my love but sandwiched it conveniently between my appreciations of her art. I spoke of her as artist in one breath, and continued the next as a sweetheart of mine. Something like, 'What a glorious snake-dance! Oh, I keep thinking of you all night.

World's artist number one! Don't you see how I am pining for you every hour?'

It worked. She said, 'You are a brother to me,' ('Oh, no,' I wanted to cry).....

Even in a topical work, *Waiting for the Mahatma*, he must have his laugh at the ludicrous. Sriram, the principal character, is a recent convert to the Gandhian way of life. He discovers a petty shopkeeper selling accidentally some odd 'English' biscuits. He is scandalised to see him being so faithful to these imperialists. He kicks up a noisy row with him, and a crowd collects. When the man assures him in all earnestness that he has no stock of such biscuits and requests him in all humbleness not to fight with him, Sriram shouts back, "It is a non-violent fight." He is pacified only when the poor shopkeeper gives him the solemn pledge: "No, sir, I swear by the goddess in that temple....and all that is holy....I will fling into the gutter any biscuit that I may see anywhere. I will kick anyone who asks for an English biscuit." But while Sriram is giving such a display of his nationalist, right in front of him a huge anti-Gandhi meeting is being held. He feels he should go and stop it, but he doesn't. He realises he is a bit too hungry and food is his first need.

There is this picaresque, droll touch almost everywhere in Narayan. However, what sets him apart from the other Indian novelists writing in English is that he is fortunately free of the clutches in which they abound. There are no lengthy descriptions (presented most often quite out of context); no hackneyed portrayals of hunger and misery; no pictures of Lord Krishna on walls (which somehow inevitably crop up); no wallowing in incest and sexual morbidity. In addition, he saves himself from the temptation of conveying the 'home' atmosphere by merely either reproducing Indian catch words in his text or by blandly translating them into English equivalents. (To read a story by Mulk Raj Anand, who specialises in this sort of jugglery, is a nauseous experience.)

It is gratifying to see R.K. Narayan being

so favourably taken notice of by such reputed literary periodicals as *The Times Literary Supplement* and *The New York Times Book Review*. But when some of these gracious critics refer to his 'grandeur of the Indian scene' and his understanding of the 'modern India,' it appears they do so out of charity or ignorance.

Narayan has undoubtedly all the qualities of an eminent creative writer. There is unlimited kindness in his work which marks almost every one of his characters. Man is essentially good, essentially noble, he often repeats through them. The good sense with which Raju accepts most of the situations in which life places him (he goes on a fast unto death to avert drought simply because it is expected of him) seems to be typical of all of them. But nevertheless he fails to fill up an awe-inspiring canvas. Often, one has a feeling that he is skimming the surface alone, unable to pierce through certain barriers. A superfine blend of technical perfection with intuition and comprehension almost escapes him. It is regrettable that he does not write as assiduously in his own vernacular. Otherwise he could well have been one of our truly great geniuses.

C. L. NAHAL

RAMAYANA: Shudha Mazumdar, Published by Orient Longmans (pp 536 Rs. 10)

A NEW English translation of Ramayana is always an event, especially so when it is written in simple readable prose. Shudha Mazumdar's Ramayana is a translation of the Kritibasa Ramayana and as such has many of the virtues as well as the faults (if they can be called faults) of the original.

This version will be a surprise to many who have not much acquaintance with old Bengali literature. Rama, Lakshmana, and even Ravana are persons who are more prone to sentimental tears than heroic action. Some of the rakshasas actually drip with devotional piety.

Rama's sorrow at the loss of Sita pays more tribute to the heart of a tender lover

than to the firm mind of the Godly chieftain of Ayodhya.

'Sita Sita! called Rama. Sita where are you! Tears choked his voice. But alas, there was no reply. Lakshmana. O! Lakshmana, how can I live without my Sita? wept Rama' A little later the 'two brothers wept bitterly' for Jastayu who told them of his vain bid to rescue Sita. 'Rama's tears flowed afresh' that night. And so it goes on....

On the battlefield, many if not all rakshasas are true devotees of Rama and fight against him only to gain 'moksha'. Taruni for one dies 'with folded hands and his severed head murmurs Rama, Rama, Ramal'

Noteworthy is the meeting between Ravana and Rama. Ravana who usually personifies Evil says 'If death comes to me at Rama's hands, I shall surely go to Vaikunta. Why then should I be sad or sorry?' And later, 'I shall be blessed indeed if I am slain by Rama. My speech must not be pleasant for he will become kind and not kill me.' His boastful words anger Rama who hurls the 'great death' weapon which pierces him through and through. Then the ten headed king flung away his weapon and folding his hands, with burning eyes, he worships Rama with love and reverence chanting a hymn of praise! This in itself took this reader by surprise but Rama's reaction went one better. 'Touched by Ravana's devotion, Rama cast aside his bow and arrows, and sitting sad and silent in his chariot thought, I shall go back to the forest, for how can I slay Ravana who is so devoted to me.' (Shri Chartanya's influence is clearly seen in this incident as in many others.) Naturally enough, this compassion was little to the liking of the Gods who send Saraswati to produce boastful and abusive language in Ravana's mouth. The fight therefore continues.

Mrs. Shudha Mazumdar's style has a very pleasant, free and easy readability. There are some passages where the prose is most moving and some where it has an almost lyrical quality, with light tripping vocative touches.

The monkey hordes in search of news

about Sita come to a forest where the beautiful Swyamprabha (Her skin was like the golden champa) permits them to feast on the fruits of her garden.

'Grateful and glad the monkeys bounded out and leaping on to the trees, began to devour the fruit. The hungry hoards nibbled and munched, peeled and sucked and flung away the seeds on every side. On tops of trees and under; they swarmed all over the ground, and ate till they could eat no more.'

One could compare this book to Rien's translation of the Iliad and not find it wanting. One is greatly tempted to do so because of the striking touches of resemblance between these great books. Rama is atonce Achilles and Menelaus. Ravana is of course Paris but is Priam too. Like Paris, he abducts the beautiful young maiden though here without her consent. But like Priam, he weeps and faints (Ravana the mighty warrior is rather weak in this respect) over the loss of his sons and brothers as they die in

quick succession in the battle which leaves the city of Lanka, like its prototype Troy, completely devastated. Most of the Gods are however on the side of Rama. This makes more perplexing the question why Rama and Lakshmana are almost killed more than once. If the story is taken as an allegory, the point becomes clear. The struggle between good and evil is a hard one; good seems to be going down and under many times; in the end good (monogamy?) prevails and evil (polygamy?) is vanquished for ever. But in this version evil is first converted and then vanquished.

Leaving aside this oversentimentalisation of the incidents and characters, which deprives them of the firm dignity one usually associates with them, the book is definitely worth reading. Parents of story loving children (which children are not?) will find it a great boon unless their children are the type who ask too many questions.

K.B. RAO

Books for review, book-reviews and the correspondence regarding book reviews should be addressed to the Reviews Editor, 148 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay-1.

—Editors

Our Reviewers

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C.L. NAHAL is a frequent contributor to **Quest**.

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE GREATNESS OF FAIYAZ KHAN

Dear Sir,

In the Arts section of the October number of your *Quarterly Quest*, I find an article, "Fyaz the Romantic" by Shri Jagannath Banerji. The article raises some very important issues about the music of the great master. I take this opportunity to point out certain relevant facts that ought to be considered seriously by all discerning lovers and critics of his art and personality. The writer in his warm-hearted and sincere appraisal of Faiyaz Khan's music, makes certain comments that might be misunderstood. I hasten to correct them because I know they are only errors of judgement, of a well-meaning though incomplete verdict.

Faiyaz Khan belonged to his age and embraced it passionately and yet he belonged to an infinitely more glorious past of our music and its traditions. The roots of Hindustani classical music are its traditions—traditions of a living music built up by generations of musicians, the exponents of style, technique and execution. Deviations were natural and even indispensable to the advancement of art, but the character and genius of our music were not materially affected by these deviations.

The Gharanas have played a vital role in the development of style, technique and interpretation. Each outstanding and recognised Gharana left an indelible stamp on its musicians who transmitted the heritage to their descendants through generations of pupils and followers. Any popular dissemination of music without a background of the traditions embodied in these illustrious families would fail to achieve success. While there is a great need for popularising the Shastras, I believe the greater need is to preserve at least the remains of the masters. Our music institutions, to-day, despite their feverish activity in the cause of the

popular dissemination of classical music with the help of text-book notations and other scientific aids, are cut off from the heritage of the gharana, consequently from our ancient traditions.

The Delhi, Gwalior and Agra gharanas have also produced our greatest musicians. The last two are the more living and vigorous, and had established bonds of kinship between themselves. Ustad Faiyaz Khan was the ultimate flowering of the genius of the Agra style. He summed up in himself the finest traditions of his gharana and was its greatest exponent in recent times.

The Gwalior gharana for many decades, was considered the most original and the most authentic of all the gharanas of khayal singers, and was held in high esteem for evolving a style noted for its high technical excellence, vigour and superb rendering of Asthai and Antara, the very life of a first-rate khayal style. Musicians treated this style with great reverence and found it difficult and inimitable.

The Agra style also had set much store by simplicity, dignity and restraint and with these classical virtues it combined a romantic expression both in feeling, language and accent. Though its roots were classical, it was not straitlaced and Spartan in outlook but highly romantic in expression and interpretation. It combined the vigour and masculine vitality of the Gwalior style with the delicate and refined features of its own genius.

The Agra style lived and endured and in the recent years, it found its greatest exponent in Ustad Faiyaz Khan. As a khayal-singer, he interpreted the compositions of this Gharana as no one else did before. He lent it his own magic touch, his own miracle-performing power. He has been a torch-bearer who has brought the heritage of his music into limelight, inspiring dozens of musicians in dozens of ways.

No exponent of the khayal style was so deeply steeped in the traditions of Dhrupad, Hori and

Alap as Faiyaz Khan, and it was a *delight* to listen to him. I am convinced that a musician who has no correct conception of a Raga, can never do justice to it in Alap. And probably the best way to judge the knowledge and accuracy of a musician is to listen to his Alap if he knows at all how to render it. But, again it is not only the accuracy of a Raga according to the Shastras that counts, but something infinitely more important. I call it the imaginative rendering of Alap which alone leads a musician to a creative understanding of the Raga.

The great Ustad was the only khayal exponent who could musically give the creative interpretation of a Raga through the technique of Alap. He resisted the temptation of reducing his Alap to dissection, a pastime to which even some of our well-known exponents have always resorted with a pathological curiosity. He handled no surgeon's knife, and did not murder to dissect. His Raga-Alap was a living picture; one never saw the tools of dead grammar in his hanōs.

That is why, he did not only construct or build up a Raga but created it and brought it into being till it pulsed with life and personality. The result was not just *work*, but *deed*, something which had a kind of everlasting touch. Also, he never advocated mere classical precision and purity for their own sake. He never succumbed to the fatal temptation of intellectualising his music to the exclusion of its imaginative rendering. With him intellect was no olympian tyrant but something which pulsed with feeling. He gave intellect the tremulous sensation of feeling not for sheer emotional effect but to serve the higher purpose of art. Unlike other exponents who submitted their Alap to a mere analytical process and who divorced feeling from intellect for the ultimate effect of classical purity, he directed it towards a point of perfection, a final synthesis in which intellect and feeling combined their forces to interpret the Raga.

That is why his Hori compositions inspite of being technically difficult and intricate, won such popular applause. He simplified them into art. With him they were never a jugglery of voice and Tal intricacies. I have yet to come across a musician who can render the Hori style with such effortless charm and technical excellence. With him rhythm was no external gift, but a native virtue, the air which his singing soul breathed. While others would fumble through the mazes and mystery-paths of the Dhamar Tal, he had the time measure at his beck and call and like a Greek

deity he ordered the spirit of rhythm to obey his command.

As a khayal exponent from his early youth, Faiyaz Khan realised that continued work and complete mastery of one's art make it possible for a musician to acquire a kind of creative intuition to deal with varieties of Raga-personalities. Each Raga was a living personality to him. Often well-known khayal singers render their compositions correctly and skillfully within the framework of the Asthai and the Antaras and within the rigid and specific limits of a Tal, reaching its logical end the Sam with a bang. He would do nothing of this sort. He would skilfully render his Asthai and Antara with an emotional zest and playfulness and carried his listeners along with him to the logical Sam, which for him, was something like the end of a choice couplet or the conclusion of a beautifully written paragraph. But as he built up his theme slowly and patiently like a craftsman of great skill, he had his eye on the Raga and so he would give it life and paint it for us in its utter charm and simplicity as if in its original, primeval form, exploiting its notes to enable us to see its face which betrayed familiarity with the past.

Often he would say: "One must play with Raga with a lover's passion and not render it a cripple by inflicting on it the hammer-blows of a mechanical technique and also by a sorry exhibition of vocal acrobatics". He had no sympathy with mere acrobats and he always said; "One does not have to fight a duel with a Raga. One does not have to treat it with a wrestler's vanity and pride. One must learn to love it, to pay court to it like a cavalier and then only a musician can tell the story of love and grief, of joy and separation, of laughter and tears. This passion, this love-play alone enables us to know the secrets of a Raga. Music should please and move." Thus his art lay in exploring and interpreting pleasurable emotions. And just as he loved their tense passion and romantic fervour, he also loved them in their tranquility and repose looking at them with a philosophic calm tinged with a melancholy that spoke more of detachment than depression.

With no other musician simplicity in art was so much an index of the universality of appeal. There are musicians whose music is very often, something like a cerebral acrostic. There are others who reduce it to dead mathematics and sing in a style which is a negation of the Khayal-style. His tastes were different. While others were busy making their music obscure and difficult, rare and unintelligible, he knew that the highest art lay in simplicity and spontaneity. Thus when he applied

his imagination to his theme, he not only created illusion out of reality but also produced in his listeners, as if by witchcraft, a willing suspension of disbelief. He held his listeners in suspense, preparing them for surprise and for something unforeseeable and pleasant. And the way he sang the notes of Raga and built up its theme seemed not the work of a mortal. Surely, he learnt it from the Gandharvas of the past.

The same sense of values was seen operating in his *Tans* and *Bol Tans*. He lent them dignity, accuracy and an imaginative propriety and never overdid them either as a means of embellishment or as something like a fitting peroration. His *Tans* were almost impossible and there is no second Faiyaz Khan to reproduce their *Gamak*, their skill, their total effect of manly dignity and also to remind us of the giants of the past. His *Bol Tans* were untranslatable, almost incapable of reproduction and very often, the Tabla player met his Waterloo in them. But all this happened in an atmosphere of cheerful cordiality.

But he could not have wrought all this magic without putting words to their highest and most artistic use. I have yet to come across another musician who would surpass him or even come to his standard in pronouncing the words of his music so correctly, so artistically and so musically ex-

plotting the wealth and imagery, grace and diction of Braj Bhasha in which most of our Hindustani classical music has been composed and written. We cannot forget the fact that Agra, Mathura and Atrauli where he moved and lived in his early life, belong to the Braj Bhasha zone.

Both on account of his early upbringing and his natural love for correct and artistic accent, he cultivated a fine pronunciation of the words of Braj Bhasha. He rightly set much store by this artistic virtue because he knew people blamed musicians for pronouncing words incorrectly, inartistically and indistinctly, thus obscuring the meaning of their theme. He made full use of the words and reproduced them in their natural grace and flexibility, in their correct, native accent and folk intonation. With words again he entered into a playful activity, an aesthetic partnership and that is why, he reproduced their rhythm, their dance, their fun, their vitality, their calmness, their sorrow, their joy, in keeping with the artistic needs of his exposition. He loved them with a lover's passion. Unlike those musicians who strangle and butcher their words, he made the best use of them knowing very well that they too have a life of their own.

Lucknow University

S. K. CHAUBEY

CONTRIBUTORS

ARTHUR KOESTLER is too well-known to need any introduction. It is not so well-known, however, at least in India, that four years ago in his preface to the *Trail of the Dinosaur* he bade farewell to politics and political writing. His latest publication *The Sleep Walkers* is a history of man's changing vision of the Universe.

DAYA KRISHNA is a frequent contributor to standard philosophical journals in India and abroad. A French translation of his paper on Political Index Numbers presented at the Rhodes Island Seminar last October is being published in *Le Contrat Social*. His article appeared in *Quest* 17.

NISSIM EZEKIEL has just published a volume of verse called *The Third*. Apart from its several poetical meanings, the name carries the prose meaning that this is his third publication; his two previous ones being *A Time to Change* and *Sixty Poems*.

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JAGADISH N. HATTANGADI was not exactly "fifty when he was born" but he seems to be a good many years older than his present age, which is sixteen. This is his first publication outside his college magazine.

R. de LOYOLA FURTADO, Lecturer in English Literature at Punjab University, was a contributor to *Quest* 17.

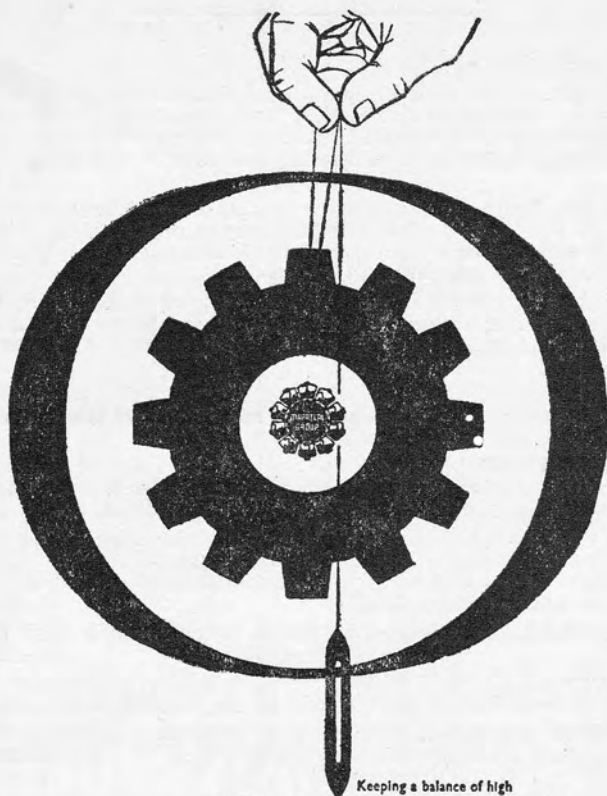
ELLEN ROY is co-editor of *Radical Humanist*. Her article on Democratic Socialism was published in *Quest* 18.

ARON TAMASI at sixty is one of the major figures in Hungarian short story and drama. He was a member of the National Peasant Party and of the Hungarian Parliament but remained aloof from day to day political struggles. He has published two plays and many volumes of short stories (the latest probably being *Wings of Poverty*), and was awarded the Kossuth Prize during the New Course in Hungary.

P. MAHADEVAN was Professor of English of the Madura College and later its Principal until his retirement in 1953. Author of *Subramania Bharati, Patriot and Poet*.

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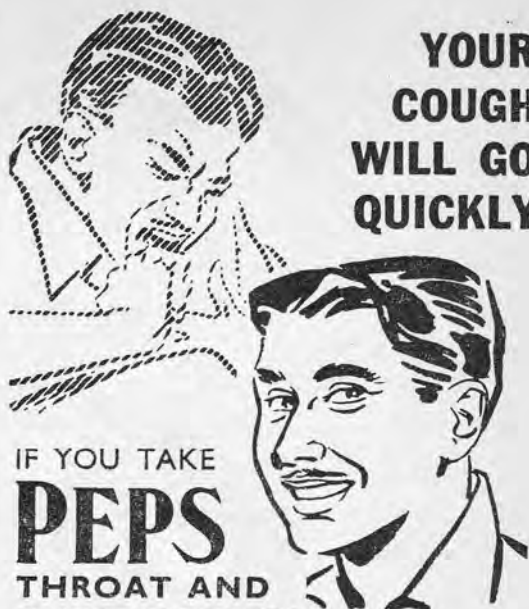
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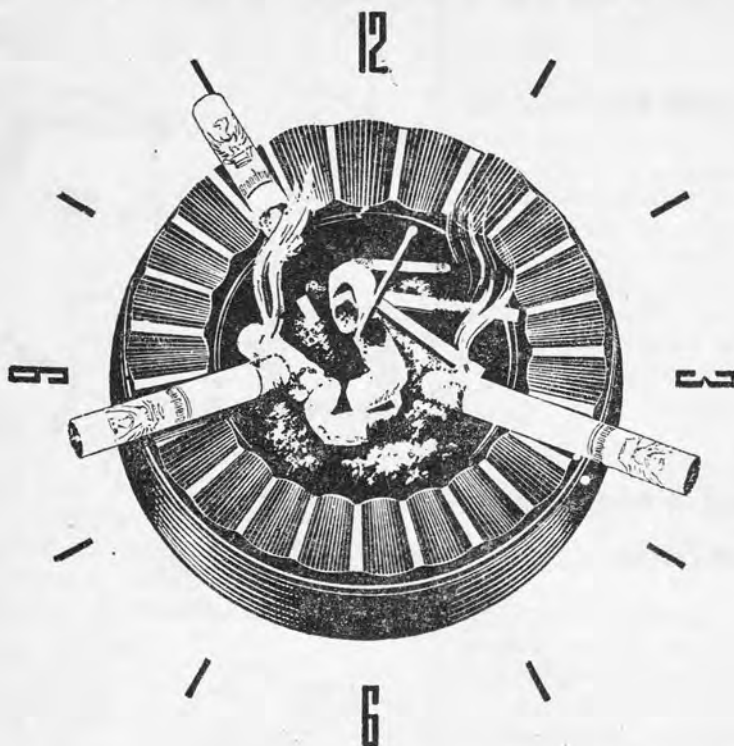
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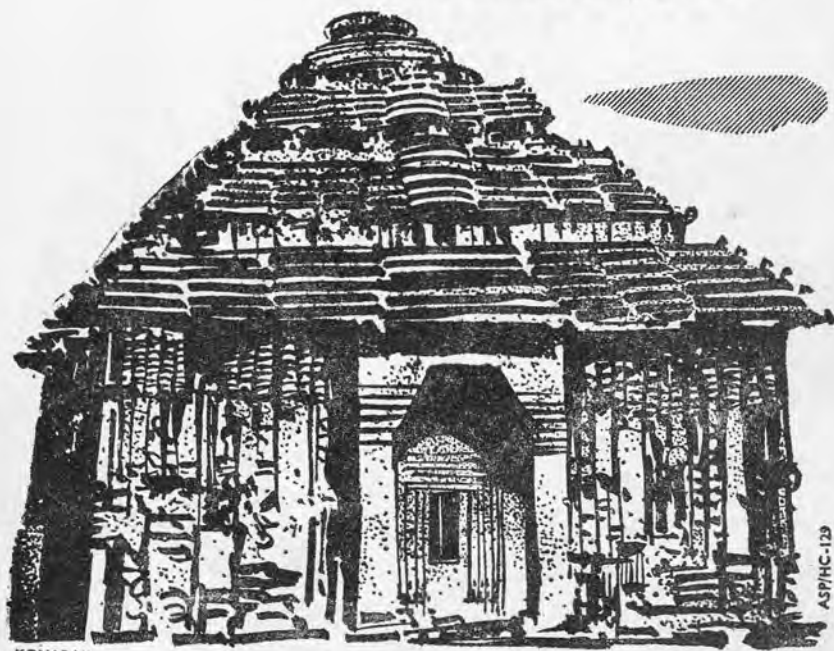
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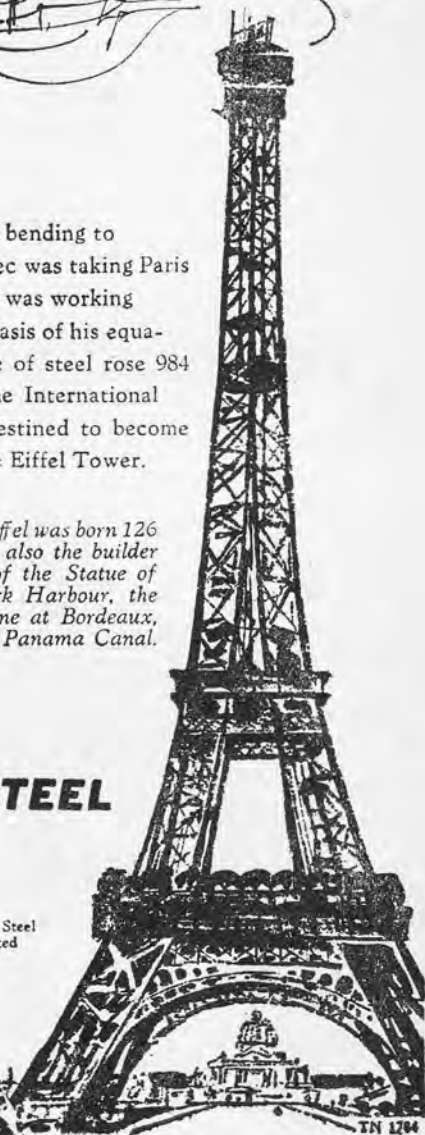
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Look intently at the faceless crowd — and you will discern the face of the individual. It may be a face lined with care or lit up with laughter, serene or sad, young or old. Whether it belongs to a poet or a peasant, an architect or an artisan — it is unique! For, no two faces — nor the personalities they reflect — can ever be quite the same.

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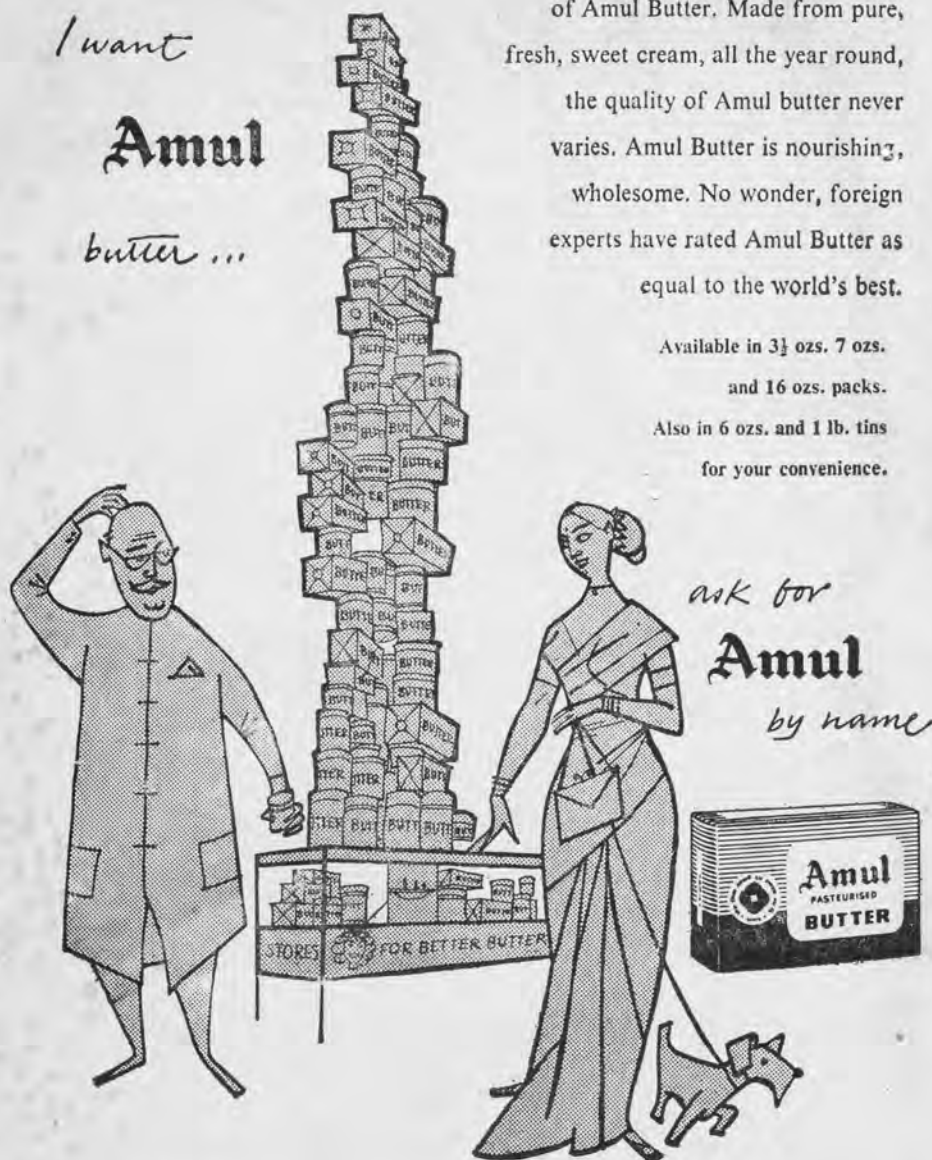
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