

QUEST

*An
Adventure
of
Ideas*

Editors: Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Amlan Datta

R. DAS

A Critique of Karmavada

SIDNEY HOOK

Types of Existentialism

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

The Province of Religion

ABU SAYEED AYYUB

The Language of Poetry

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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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WHY WAR?

Prophetic Correspondence *between* *Albert Einstein and Sigmund Freud* *

INTRODUCTION

WE had forgotten these exchanges of well-measured praise which are the privilege of scrupulous men who respect themselves and one another. Their existence had been driven from our minds by that brutal argumentation which passes for thought in the totalitarian age — whether the arguer is attacking or defending dictatorships.

We had forgotten because it all happened in 1932, exactly on the threshold of that quarter-century which was to see the rise of Hitler, his fall that dragged all Europe down with him, the rebirth of a hope of union and, finally, the ultimate weapon in the hands of two powers almost paralyzed by the fear that they might have to use it. What did these two universal geniuses think and foresee on the very eve of that upheaval — an upheaval whose causes they had decided to examine in the hope of finding a means of averting it? We read them again today with a kind of retrospective anxiety.

One of these men limited himself to asking questions in a field in which he knew very little more than the average well-informed citizen. The other answered with all the clarity of his own system of thought: he was at home.

Einstein said that an authority had to be created to deprive nations of their sovereignty and bring them back to reason. But why does reason not have more power? Why do the masses follow their 'governing class'? How can instincts be overcome? How can we eliminate that 'need to hate' which degenerates into 'collective psychosis'? All this was written from Potsdam under the eyes of the barbarians.

Freud answered from his native Vienna, which was living on borrowed time (and not for very much longer). Einstein's Pacifism had to submit to analytical examination by a specialist who, though courteous, had long lost all his illusions. No, replied Freud, might is not the opposite of right. For

* The two letters published in this issue and to be published in the next were written just over twenty-five years ago at the invitation of the International Institute for Intellectual Cooperation, by whose permission they are reproduced.

right, in the long run, is nothing more than another form of inevitable violence. It is violence born of 'the alliance of many weaklings.' The violence of one nation can be broken only by the union of its victims, a union basing its laws upon common interests and sentiments. This means that the reins of power must be transferred to some vaster unity. But the League of Nations, he said, does not possess strength in proportion to the demands placed upon it.

Going on to the tremendous questions asked somewhat naively by Einstein, Freud deflated them with masterly ease by stressing man's vital erotic (i.e. constructive) force and his death instinct, both equally essential. 'There is no likelihood of our being able to suppress humanity's aggressive tendencies.' But can they be channelled into forms of expression other than war? Here, Freud startles us. On the one hand, he appeals (with 'no compunction' but vaguely) to the love which binds all men together: on the other, to the authority of a true elite of leaders and thinkers who might direct the masses.

The current of civilization, which goes against nature in so many respects, has brought certain men today to the point of feeling much more than moral revulsion in the face of war: they suffer from 'a constitutional intolerance.' How can this breed of man be multiplied? Freud bases his hopes for the distant future on the activity of two forces: the development of culture and the fear of the consequences of a total war.

EINSTEIN PROPOSES only one idea, whose logic cannot be refuted: the idea of a world government. I shall come back on this shortly. For the rest, his diagnosis is based upon some fairly rough-and-ready notions of what makes the world go round. The 'governing class' and the arms merchants, he writes, are in control of the press, the schools and the Church. This means that they also dominate the masses and drive them to hatred, a hatred which leads to war. But it seems obvious to me that the rule of any single class in Western world disappeared long ago. The decisions which give concrete shape to history and the public opinion which prepares these decisions are the result today of the State, political parties, business and, occasionally, the churches. But they result not from the complicity but from the *dissensions* of these bodies. Even when all of them are working in the same direction within a single nation, the effect of their forces can be modified — or even annulled — by pressure in the opposite direction exerted by other empires. The idea of a warmonger ruling class may be a popular one, but it belongs to another age. It seems amazing that Einstein

could have accepted it without the least criticism when, threateningly close to him, Hitler was rising to power despite the opposition of political parties, the rich middle-classes, churches and government leaders, all united against war.

In his role as a critic of 'pacifist' clichés, Freud, on the other hand, seems more pertinent than ever today. By reducing the classical opposition of right and might to the struggle of two forms of violence, he lays down the conditions for any realistic policy.

Four years after the exchange of letters which is published below, Hitler re-occupied the Rhineland. In Paris, the French Prime Minister proclaimed to the world: 'We shall oppose the right of might with the might of right.' Translated into Freud's terms, this declaration meant that the violence of one nation would be opposed by a violence springing from the union of its victims. But since there was no union in fact, it amounted merely to opposing Hitler's tanks with a wall of rhetoric.

This now brings us to the need for an authority superior to that of 'sovereign' nations. Einstein and Freud agreed on this, but while the physicist dreamed of a higher moral authority, the psychologist seemed to have more confidence in the terror inspired by weapons which physicists would create. 'Given the high perfection of modern arms,' wrote Freud, 'war today would mean the sheer extermination of one of the combatants, if not of both.' This led to his idea of an eternal peace enforced by a weapon so powerful that a central world authority would be obeyed.

Remember, this was all said in 1932. Einstein feared that the supernational authority of which he dreamed would be deprived of a force proportionate to its task. And it was to Einstein that Freud made his prophecy — to the very man whose discoveries had already touched off the process which was to lead thirteen years later to the explosion at Hiroshima. There is a tragic and sublime irony in the exchange of these two geniuses: one of them could see the future clearly, but did not realize that he was revealing it to the only man in the world who held its secret without knowing it!

Einstein never stopped protesting against the dangers of atomic explosions, nor did he ever cease to display disarming pacifism. Still, one feverish night, he signed a letter to Roosevelt in which he proposed the manufacture of the atomic bomb. Perhaps the profound calculations of Freud had overcome the sincere conclusions of his own reasoning and led him unconsciously to give man that supreme weapon to make war impossible.

At all events, the situation is now reversed. Today we do not have a super-State awaiting its weapon, but rather a super-weapon awaiting a moral power big enough to cope with it. The second unifying factor which Freud indicated is still lacking: today, can anyone imagine a common sentiment — whether an ideal or a collective fear — which could unite the human species? Shall we be forced to go to the Moon to feel this sentiment — or even farther, into the absolute darkness of interstellar space?

DENIS DE ROUEMONT

Dear Professor Freud,

The proposal of the League of Nations and its International Institute of Intellectual Co-operation at Paris that I should invite a person, to be chosen by myself, to a frank exchange of views on any problem that I might select affords me a very welcome opportunity of conferring with you upon a question which, as things now are, seems the most insistent of all the problems civilization has to face. This is the problem: Is there any way of delivering mankind from the menace of war? It is common knowledge that, with the advance of modern science, this issue has come to mean a matter of life and death for civilization as we know it; nevertheless, for all the zeal displayed, every attempt at its solution has ended in lamentable breakdown.

I believe, moreover, that those whose duty it is to tackle the problem professionally and practically are growing only too aware of their impotence to deal with it, and have now a very lively desire to learn the views of men who, absorbed in the pursuit of science, can see world problems in the perspective that distance lends. As for me, the normal objective of my thought affords no insight into the dark places of human will and feeling. Thus, in the enquiry proposed, I can do little more than seek to clarify the question at issue and, clearing the ground of the more obvious solutions, enable you to bring the light of your far-reaching knowledge of man's instinctive life to bear upon the problem. There are certain psychological obstacles whose existence a layman in the mental sciences may dimly surmise, but whose interrelations and vagaries he is incompetent to fathom; you, I am convinced, will be able to suggest educative methods, lying more or less outside the scope of politics, which will eliminate these obstacles.

As one immune from nationalist bias, I personally see a simple way

of dealing with the superficial (i.e., administrative) aspect of the problem: the setting up, by international consent, of a legislative and judicial body to settle every conflict arising between nations. Each nation would undertake to abide by the orders issued by this legislative body, to invoke its decision in every dispute, to accept its judgements unreservedly and to carry out every measure the tribunal deems necessary for the execution of its decrees. But here, at the outset, I come up against a difficulty; a tribunal is a human institution which, in proportion as the power at its disposal is inadequate to enforce its verdicts, is all the more prone to suffer these to be deflected by extrajudicial pressure. This is a fact with which we have to reckon; law and might inevitably go hand-in-hand, and juridical decisions approach more nearly the ideal justice demanded by the community (in whose name and interests these verdicts are pronounced) insofar as the community has effective power to compel respect of its juridical ideal. But at present we are far from possessing any supranational organization competent to render verdicts of incontestable authority and enforce absolute submission to the execution of its verdicts. Thus I am led to my first axiom: the quest of international security involves the unconditional surrender by every nation, in a certain measure, of its liberty of action, its sovereignty that is to say, and it is clear beyond all doubt that no other road can lead to such security.

The ill success, despite their obvious sincerity, of all the efforts made during the last decade to reach this goal leaves us no room to doubt that strong psychological factors are at work, which paralyze these efforts. Some of these factors are not far to seek. The craving for power which characterizes the governing class in every nation is hostile to any limitation of the national sovereignty. This political power-hunger is wont to batten on the activities of another group, whose aspirations are on purely mercenary, economic lines. I have specially in mind that small but determined group, active in every nation, composed of individuals who, indifferent to social considerations and restraints, regard warfare, the manufacture and sale of arms, simply as an occasion to advance their personal interests and enlarge their personal authority.

But recognition of this obvious fact is merely the first step towards an appreciation of the actual state of affairs. Another question follows hard upon it; How is it possible for this small clique to bend the will of the majority, who stand to lose and suffer by a state of war, to the service of their ambitions? (In speaking of the majority, I do not exclude soldiers of every rank who have chosen war as their profession, in the belief that they

are serving to defend the highest interests of their race, and that attack is often the best method of defence.) An obvious answer to this question would seem to be that the minority, the ruling class at present, has the schools and press, usually the Church as well, under its thumb. This enables it to organize and sway the emotions of the masses, and make its tool of them.

Yet even this answer does not provide a complete solution. Another question arises from it: How is it these devices succeed so well in rousing men to such wild enthusiasm, even to sacrifice their lives? Only one answer is possible. Because man has within him a lust for hatred and destruction. In normal times this passion exists in a latent state, it emerges only in unusual circumstances; but it is a comparatively easy task to call it into play and raise it to the power of a collective psychosis. Here lies, perhaps, the crux of all the complex of factors we are considering, an enigma that only the expert in the lore of human instincts can resolve.

And so we come to our last question. Is it possible to control man's mental evolution so as to make him proof against the psychoses of hate and destructiveness? Here I am thinking by no means only of the so-called uncultured masses. Experience proves that it is rather the so-called 'intelligentia' that is most apt to yield to these disastrous collective suggestions, since the intellectual has no direct contact with life in the raw, but encounters it in its easiest, synthetic form — upon the printed page.

To conclude: I have so far been speaking only of wars between nations; what are known as international conflicts. But I am well aware that the aggressive instinct operates under other forms and in other circumstances. (I am thinking of civil wars, for instance, due in earlier days to religious zeal, but nowadays to social factors; or, again the persecution of racial minorities.) But my insistence on what is the most typical, most cruel and extravagant form of conflict between man and man was deliberate, for here we have the best occasion of discovering ways and means to render all armed conflicts impossible.

I know that in your writings we may find answer, explicit or implied, to all the issues of this urgent and absorbing problem. But it would be of the greatest service to us all were you to present the problem of world peace in the light of your most recent discoveries, for such a presentation might will blaze the trail for new and fruitful modes of action.

Caputh, Near Potsdam,

Yours very sincerely,

July 30, 1932.

A. Einstein

Freud's reply will be published in the next issue.

The Theory of Karma and its Difficulties

By R. DAS

THE so-called law of Karma appears to be a common postulate of the various systems of philosophy and religion that have developed and established themselves in India. I have preferred to call it the theory of Karma, as in my opinion the amount of evidence in its favour is not sufficient to entitle it to the dignity of the name law. It seems to rest on certain dubious assumptions and to entail many unwelcome consequences. But if this is so, how is it that it has formed an article of faith with such a vast number of people in this country for so many centuries? Obviously, this theory has some *prima facie* support in the ordinary notions of our life and experience. I may also confess at the outset that although I have no love for this theory, I do not think that it can be conclusively disproved. But before we discuss what can be said for or against the theory, it would be better to make ourselves clear as to what it actually asserts.

The theory of Karma, as it is commonly understood, asserts that our present lot in the world, whether good or bad, is the inevitable result of our past deeds, either in this life or in some previous existence. The deeds are considered not merely or primarily, in the physical aspect, but also and specially in their moral aspect. The amount of happiness we are allowed to achieve in this life is strictly proportionate to the amount of morally good actions we did in the past, and contrariwise, our sufferings are due to our past immoral

actions. Rather, our happiness is due to the merit acquired by our good actions and our suffering is due to the demerit acquired by unjust or immoral actions. Indeed the word Karma itself is often used to denote the merit or demerit that results from the good or bad action, rather than the action itself (which is its literal meaning). Understood in this sense, Karma seems to determine what we are to enjoy or suffer in this life.

To be sure, this kind of belief has some justification. Whatever novelty may emerge in the future, we know that the future is largely determined by the past. We cannot suppose that any action of ours, or any event in nature, can take place and leave no trace or influence behind. That would go against the law of causality. Just as every event must have a cause, we should say that every event must have an effect. We should, therefore, have no difficulty in admitting that every action (Karma) of ours will have some effect in our life. If the action is good, we should expect its effect to be good also.

It is also a demand of our moral consciousness (endorsed by such a high authority as Imanuel Kant) that the virtuous should be happy. But in actual fact we often find that the unscrupulous person is thriving in life whereas a virtuous man can hardly make his two ends meet. In order to bridge the gulf between this kind of fact and our idea that virtue and happiness should go together, it is easy to suppose

that the virtuous man is unhappy because of some misdeeds on his part, and the unscrupulous man is similarly reaping the fruits of some past meritorious acts. The problem may come to us in the more general form of the unequal lots of different people of this world. We find some are born rich, while others are born poor. Some are favoured with excellent opportunities in life, while others are placed, from the beginning, under very unfavourable circumstances. Justice demands that there should be equal opportunities for all, but inequality in diverse forms seems to be the rule of life. Our baffled intelligence cries for an explanation for this flagrant injustice and the theory of Karma appears to offer a solution of this difficulty. Men are born, it is said, under different circumstances according to their Karmas, i.e., merits or demerits of their actions in the past life. Thus the theory gives considerable help in solving the problem of evil which many philosophers find almost insoluble.

The problem arises in this way. We cannot deny that evil is there in this world in the form of pain and suffering, cruelty and injustice, etc. At the same time, we like to believe in a God who is all-powerful, all-wise and all-good. And the difficulty is to understand how a good God with perfect wisdom and power can allow any evil in the world. The theory of Karma relieves God of all responsibility for evil in the world, and refers it to men's unrighteous deeds. It says in substance that God does nothing, but we have brought evil on our own head by our past misdeed, and to the extent we are able to reform ourselves it may also be removed.

This is all that I can say in favour of the theory of Karma. But let us now see what it assumes or implies. The first major

assumption of the theory seems to be that our virtue must be rewarded with happiness and vice punished with suffering. That virtue should be joined with happiness is taken to be a demand of moral consciousness. The belief that virtue and happiness are connected with each other, although backed by the authority of Kant, appears to us to be without any foundation. Even Kant would admit that there is no analytic connection between virtue and happiness such that if we think of anybody as virtuous, we must at the same time think of him as happy. There appears to be no logical or metaphysical connection between virtue and happiness. Virtue connotes an inner spiritual quality of the soul, and happiness, as we understand it, is dependent on many external and bodily conditions. Even Kant, I believe, described happiness as the balanced satisfaction of all our inclinations—and true morality consists in our rising above the influence of inclination. To achieve morality we must rise above and ignore all inclinations, and to achieve happiness we must be able to satisfy our inclinations. This brings out the utter disparity between these two concepts. Thus it is quite clear that there is no connection between virtue and happiness, and I contend that it is not even a demand of moral consciousness that they should be connected. A truly moral person is concerned to perform his duty for its own sake, and for him virtue is its own reward. His virtue would be contaminated, if it carried with it a demand that it should be joined with happiness.

In actual experience virtue and happiness do not strictly and proportionately go together and it is mere wishful thinking to suppose that they will be squared with each other in some future existence.

The second assumption is that a spiritual quality of the soul can influence the material conditions of our life. The theory of

Karma supposes that the merit acquired in a past life resides in the soul even when it is separated from the past body—and helps to bring about the suitable material conditions for the realisation of the kind and amount of happiness, proportionate to the merit. It is difficult to understand how the merit which is not conceived as a conscious agency should be able to order the many complex material conditions of life, and one has to bring in God to solve this difficulty. It is supposed that God orders the material conditions of our life in the light of our merit or demerit. But to call in God is to call for miracles and is virtually to give up the attempt at rational understanding.

Mind can, no doubt, influence matter, but only when the mind is in an embodied state. We have no evidence whatever of any disembodied spirit influencing the course of material things.

This brings us to the third assumption, viz., that spirit can exist apart from matter and to the necessary corollary of the theory that souls migrate from bodies to bodies. The belief that spirit can exist apart from any material embodiment is widespread, but as far as I know no conclusive evidence has ever been produced which can stand the test of careful scrutiny. Spirit or spiritual being is primarily realised only in myself and I never find myself separated from my body. I know the fact that spirit is nowhere found apart from the body is no proof that it cannot and does not exist apart from the body. But this fact does supply us with a strong presumption in favour of the idea that spirit does not exist in separation from the body whereas we have not even a presumption for the contrary view. If we disabuse our mind of the unfounded belief that spirit can exist apart from body, then the belief in the transmigration of the soul will be hard to maintain. If the soul is to pass from one body to

another, the passage must be effected in a disembodied state and if this is impossible, transmigration would be no less impossible.

I have read and heard of people who can remember their past lives. If this be a fact, then transmigration would seem to be proved, although we do not yet know what tricks our memory may or may not play with us. But I am very sceptical about the supposed fact. This goes at least against the psychological fact that I can remember only what I have experience in the present body. I should like to think that the alleged cases of memory are not perhaps well authenticated historical facts.

The basic assumption of the theory of Karma which dominates all the others is that justice governs the universe. It is because one believes that the ends of justice must be met in the lives of men that one has recourse to the "law" in order to explain the obvious cases of injustice in the world. But the belief is a mere assumption. We find cases of justice as well as of injustice in the world and the only reasonable belief, conformable to this fact, is that the universe is indifferent to our notions of justice and injustice. If the basic assumption of inherent justice in the course of things and events in the world is given up, there remains no firm ground for the theory of Karma to stand on.

We may now consider some of the consequences of this theory. A belief in the so-called law of Karma makes a belief in God quite unnecessary. The events in the world are understood in terms of my experience and if my experience is explicable by the law of Karma, i.e., if my experience is what my Karma ordains, I have no need of God. The Buddhists who believe in the law of Karma feel no need for a God. At least the law of Karma makes the hands of God inoperative in human affairs. If God could interfere with the law of Karma that would mean that it was no strict law. And if the

law really held its ground, there would be left nothing for God to do. The cries of human souls to God for help in times of dire need would appear, in the light of this law, quite pathetic but utterly useless. The argument that a law would need a legislator or an administrator need not be taken seriously, since we can very well conceive a law, as in the physical world, without any such agency, human or divine.

This theory further has a tendency to make us rather hard-hearted and unsympathetic towards those who should deserve that sympathy. We naturally sympathise with a person who suffers and suffers unjustly. But if we are made to believe that a person's suffering has been well deserved by his own deed, as the theory of Karma seeks to make out in every case, our natural sympathy for him is likely to be diminished considerably. If we hear of a cat burglar who has broken his leg jumping out of a first floor window, we say (and feel)—'rightly served', or we hope it will be a lesson to him. If we hear of a man who has broken his leg in a railway accident, we feel genuine sympathy for him. But if even in the second case we are to believe that the broken leg was the result

of a crime or sin committed by the man in his past life, won't all our human sympathies tend to dry up? Thus the theory seems to have an indirect adverse effect on our moral sentiments.

Moreover, the theory in effect refers our human sufferings to an inscrutable and mysterious cause like the law of Karma and thereby diverts our attention from the human and natural conditions which actually produce the sufferings. Many of our sufferings arise from social and economic maladjustments as well as from physical causes. These can largely be remedied by human efforts. But if the belief prevails that our sufferings are due to the law of Karma, before which even the gods are powerless, we cannot be very serious in our efforts for social amelioration.

Rational thought demands that one should refer empirical facts to empirical causes. Human sufferings are empirical facts, but the law of Karma is not anything of an empirical character. The theory thus clearly appears to be anti-rational and anti-moral in its tendency. And in some conception of religion in which a belief in God and divine grace is thought to be essential to religion, it is anti-religious too.

Two Types of Existentialist Religion and Ethics *

By SIDNEY HOOK

IT is commonly assumed that religion and morality reinforce each other's claims and that despite differences in emphasis they express a common outlook which assigns man an intelligible place in an ordered world. Historically the connection between religion and ethics has always been intimate. It is possible, of course, to define religion in such a way that every strong ethical or unethical position is religious and the distinction between the religious and ethical categories disappears. Little is to be gained by such procedure. It does violence to the actual historical materials. Further, the differences between ethics and religion reappear in the recognized differences among religions.

In this paper I wish to call attention to two types of existentialist religious thinking in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which point up the difference between the attitude of faith—which I regard as strictly religious, and the attitude of morality which I regard as primarily secular.

By the two types of existentialist religion I mean the types of religious thinking represented by Søren Kierkegaard and Ludwig Feuerbach. The first is oriented towards some transcendental element which conditions the whole of human experience; the second regards human experience as the matrix of all religion. Although in polar opposition to each other both were

critical reactions to the idealistic panlogism of Hegel, for whom religion was nothing but an aesthetic or symbolic rendition of the truths discovered by philosophy. Kierkegaard has become the most influential philosopher of religion of the Western world in our time; Feuerbach still awaits his proper recognition.

Kierkegaard is an existentialist who takes his point of departure from man's subjective experience, supposedly universal, of incompleteness, insufficiency, and despair, 'an anxious dread of an unknown something.' On the basis of this and similar subjective experience Kierkegaard postulates, he cannot rationally establish the existence beyond an "infinite yawning abyss" of an objective Absolute, completely transcendent to man and therefore essentially unknowable and mysterious. In the words of Karl Barth, a lineal theological descendant of Kierkegaard, God is "wholly other than man."

Feuerbach is an even more radical existentialist than Kierkegaard. He interprets man's religious beliefs as projections of human needs and care. They are either ideal liberations from his most pressing concerns or, when they express longings, ideal fulfillments. For him 'the secret of theology is anthropology.' This is meant in two senses: the first as a heuristic principle in the study of comparative religion; second, and more important, as a naturalistic interpretation in cultural and psychological terms of belief in the supernatural. "Religion is the dream of the human mind,

* Presented at the Ninth International Congress for the History of Religions at Tokyo, Japan, August 27, 1958.

But even in dreams we do not find ourselves in emptiness or in heaven, but on earth, in the realm of reality.'

The school of existential theism from Kierkegaard to Barth recognizes the fact that Man's nature is expressed in his religious beliefs. It places, however, an altogether different interpretation from that of Feuerbach upon this fact. It dismisses the Feuerbachian approach as a stupendous but dangerous commonplace; a commonplace because everything man does and thinks bears witness to his faltering mortality; a dangerous commonplace because unless disciplined by the humble realization that the conceptions of finite, wicked and mortal creatures violently distort the nature of God, they inescapably lead to idolatry, in which the part is worshipped as the whole, and man impiously confused with God. Indeed some modern followers of Kierkegaard regard Feuerbach's existential humanism as a *reductio ad absurdum* of any interpretation which takes its point of departure from the facts of religious experience alone independently of its ontological correlative.

The Kierkegaardian point of view is correct in pointing out that there is an inescapable reference to man in all his works, from art to astronomy and religion. The fact that astronomy is a human enterprise does not preclude our achieving objective knowledge of the behavior of heavenly bodies. But certainly this element of subjectivity is not a sufficient condition of knowledge, else there would be no difference between veridical and hallucinatory experience on any level. The only way objectivity can be established on the basis of human experience is by empirical evidence and/or reasoning, both of which are rejected out of hand by the existentialists of this school. This leaves the only way open to them the unmediated "leap" of faith, the reliance upon "paradox, inac-

cessible to thought," the glorification of "the absurd," the refusal to apply any categories of reason or logic to 'the revealed.' Since it disdains human reason, not in the light of a higher Reason, for this, too, is infected with man's imperfect nature, it is impervious to rational criticism. Nonetheless it is not beyond the reach of psychological analysis and social criticism.

The existentialism of Feuerbach denies that human projection in religion distorts 'reality' because projections are not literal reports of antecedent existence but a mode of experiencing things. For something to be distorted requires that it have a normal or natural appearance. But if all appearances are essentially related to the finite eye and mind of men, it makes no sense to counterpose what human beings experience to some allegedly objective transcendent entity. The eternal can only be grasped in a temporal frame. The 'absurd' for Feuerbach always consists in the negation of human sense and understanding and is therefore rejected by him as a negation of the true nature of religion as he conceives it.

Of the two thinkers, it is apparent that although Feuerbach's development took him further away from the Hegelian philosophy of religion than did Kierkegaard, the latter made the more radical break with the Hegelian tradition of reason and the systematic unity of the concrete universal. Feuerbach is closer to Hegel because like Hegel he rejects all dualisms, epistemological, metaphysical or theological. For Hegel, Spirit, divine or human, is one, and it develops by alienating itself into objective forms which become both temporary obstacles and stimuli to its further advance. Feuerbach interprets the process of human alienation as consisting in this unconscious worship of its own projections. He naturalizes and demythologizes the Absolute Spirit of Hegel. He reinterprets the differ-

ent stages in the progressive development of the Idea or Absolute or God as a succession of different *historical* expressions of the human species or essence. 'Man—this is the mystery of religion—projects his being into objectivity, and then again makes himself an object to this projected image of himself thus converted into a subject...' Feuerbach's attitude towards religion is reverential and sensitive. He believes that it is an irreducible aspect of human experience no matter how profoundly its images, symbols and dogmas change. 'What yesterday was still religion, is no longer such today: and what today is atheism, tomorrow will be religion.'

The profoundest difference between the approach of existential theism and that of existential humanism to religion is in their conceptions of ethics and morality. Existential humanism, especially in its post-Feuerbachian developments, sees man's moral vocation in redoing, remaking, reforming the world and self in the light of consciously held ethical ideals to which religious myths and rituals can give only emotional and aesthetic support. Existential theism, aware of human finitude and weakness and self-idolatry, places the greatest emphasis upon the acceptance of the world and its underlying plan, so unclear to human eyes, upon the explanation and justification of evil rather than on the duty of eliminating specific evils. This is sometimes obscured by the fact that the transcendent and Absolute God of existential theism is considered to be *beyond* good and evil. Psychologically it is apparent that the belief that the difference between human good and human evil disappears in the light of the Absolute, or that what appears good or evil in the sight of Man may be quite different in the sight of the Lord, cannot serve as a premise for the active transformation of the world. In effect, it accepts the existing order of things, what-

ever it is, as a basis of preparation for salvation either by a leap of faith or a transformation of self.

This is brilliantly illustrated in Kierkegaard's remarkable analysis of the Abraham-Isaac story in his *Fear and Trembling*. According to Kierkegaard, God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his only and dearly beloved son, Isaac, to Him as a burnt-offering ran counter to one of the highest ethical principles. The test of Abraham's religious faith was his willingness to violate his duty as a father, husband, citizen and compassionate human being in order to carry out his absolute duty to God. This 'teleological suspension of the ethical' raises Abraham in Kierkegaard's eyes above tragic heroes like Agamemnon, Jeptha, and Brutus who sacrificed their children to the common good. They were 'tragic heroes,' exalting the universal over the particular. Abraham is no tragic hero. He must be regarded, says Kierkegaard, as either 'a murderer,' from the ethical standpoint, or a true 'believer' from the standpoint of absolute religion. Kierkegaard's account is powerful and honest. He admits that Abraham 'acts by virtue of the absurd' and that although in ethics it is wrong to subordinate the universal to the particular, in the case of one's absolute duty to God 'the particular is higher than the universal.' In serving God one is beyond good and evil. 'Hence it is,' writes Kierkegaard, 'that I can understand the tragic hero but cannot understand Abraham, though in a certain crazy sense I admire him more than all other men.'

We can use this parable to point up the difference between the approaches of Kierkegaard and Feuerbach. The latter would interpret the story quite differently. First, he would maintain that despite Kierkegaard there is no escaping the standpoint of morality, that we are all responsible for our judgments, and for the conse-

quences of our judgments, no matter what we believe the external source of our moral duty to be. Here the Feuerbachian view follows the Kantian view. When Abraham, knife in hand, prepared to sacrifice Isaac, the Biblical account says an Angel of the Lord commanded him to stay his hand. How did Abraham know that this message was a message from the Lord and not from Satan, or that it was not the voice of his own longing, the expression of the anguished wish of a loving father not to be bereaved of a son? The existential humanist answers that Abraham attributes the source of this command to God, not to Satan, because it is Abraham who finds it good. Every statement which asserts that the Good is what God commands presupposes that we already have independent knowledge of what is good or bad in order to attribute the good to God and the bad to Satan. The command from the Angel of the Lord represents the birth of a new moral insight in man, in Abraham, according to which it is not necessary to sacrifice human life in thanksgiving to, or in fear of, the imputed author of creation. The earlier injunction to sacrifice Isaac undoubtedly reflected a local religious practice.

Certainly, *after* the Abraham-Isaac episode, even Kierkegaard would judge a man willing to sacrifice his son or any other human being on the altar of the Gods, by a different standard. Abraham's resolution to carry out the first Divine Command can be justified only because he knows or believes it is a Divine Command and only because he knows or believes that the Divine Command is the source of good. Feuerbach believed, I think truly, that men create God in their own moral image, that morality is autonomous of religion, and that although religious beliefs and symbols may support moral values the latter can

never be derived from the former. Where this is denied or overlooked then the status quo in all its infamy is either accepted in terms of a disguised value judgment or it is ignored as something irrelevant to man's profoundest concern.

It is of course true that even an immanent theology can adopt a morality which leads, as in the Hegelian system, to the belief that whatever is, right. (*Die Weltgeschichte ist das Weltgericht.*) Such an identification receives a well-merited rebuke from existential theism on the ground that it results in an idolatry of history, especially when, as in Hegel, the path of history is interpreted as the path of divinity. The great paradox of existentialist theism is that it properly perceives the finitude of all human standpoints, the relativity of all philosophical absolutes, but fails to see that a finite creature can criticize the finite only in the light of another finite, the relative (or relational) only from the basis of another relative (or relational) position.

The question remains whether existential humanism is also another form of idolatry. If ethical ideals are related to human interests is not man's pursuit of the good a worship of his own nature? There is no doubt that sometimes this is the case. But it need not be. Men, by projecting their ideals as standards, may appeal from an existing self to a developing self, from what things and men actually are to what they may possibly be or become. They may criticize the structure of the self from the standpoint of shared interests with others, which forms the basis of community. Time guarantees that whatever the world is or may be, new visions of human excellence, whether in conflict or cooperation, will prevent men from identifying their limitations with the limitations of all human possibility.

The Province of Religion

By C. RAJAGOPALACHARI

"The Ramayana and the Mahabharata were woven into the texture of millions of lives in every generation for thousands of years. I have often wondered that if our race forgot the Buddha, the Upanishads and the great epics, what then will it be like? It would be uprooted and would lose the basic characteristics which have clung to it and given it distinction throughout these long ages. India would cease to be India.

If religion deals not with dogmas and ceremonials but rather with the higher things of life, there should be no conflict with science or *inter se* between religions. It might be the high privilege of India to help in bringing about the synthesis. That would be India's ancient tradition inscribed in Ashoka's Edicts: 'The increase of spiritual strength is of many forms'."

THESE words and other connected things said by Sri Jawaharlal Nehru in his recent Azad Memorial address induced me to collect my thoughts on the subject of Faith and Science and I felt it may be of some use if I jotted them down.

The culture that has grown in the great continent of India through the many thousands of years of her civilized history is something not only for pride but of value to the world. All culture according to Indian philosophy resolves itself into self-control in one form or another.

Good citizenship also resolves itself ultimately into self-control. True happiness too, results from self-control and misery is the consequence of a lack of self-control. This is the Indian philosophy of life, but it is also a universal truth. Self-control is the supreme discipline for all intelligent men. This is what, the Upanishads, the Gita and the Buddha repeatedly told men, was most important in human life.

Human behaviour has to be controlled. It is more satisfactorily effected and more

easily borne when there is no question of the coercion of a majority or of any privileged minority, inflicting control through the institutions of Government, but the required constant control comes from within in the form of self-discipline as an automatic habit and as a form of worship of the Ruler of the Universe. We get this self-control accepted and practised with the least pain and the maximum satisfaction, not by law but by the force of religion, belief and practice until it crystallizes into personal habit and national culture.

Religion may be defined in this aspect as consisting of the behests of revered dead men. The behests of dead saints are more acceptable, more easily tolerated than the behests of living men which is what control by law or government amounts to. The command of the majority in a democracy is not less irksome than the decree of a monarch or an oligarchy. But the command of a dead saint which forms the basis of self-discipline which has no coercion behind it effectively shapes human

behaviour without unpleasantness until the individual feels it is his own will and the privilege of his cultured mind.

(ii)

The physical Law of cause and effect is unchangeable and from this issue the doctrine of determinism in respect of human behaviour also. Some philosophers hold that all human behaviour is pre-determined. The circumstances shape themselves according to the law of cause and effect. These and heredity and other purely 'physical' causes bring about human behaviour. Some vague doubts have been cast on the physical law itself by the theories that have emerged about the movements of the fundamental particles of matter; but this does not materially affect the doctrine of determinism. The statistical law of averages is brought into the argument for determinism as against these doubts raised by modern science itself.

Whether on the contrary man has been endowed with free-will to act as he chooses, independent of the behests of the theologian's God as Milton repeatedly affirms in the *Paradise Lost* and independent of the force of heredity and material circumstances postulated by the biologists and the physicists is still an unsolved question. The scientists have not totally yielded to the strong determinist bent of their pre-occupation. They still linger over some argument or other to make out free will for the human mind. The inherent inclination of the human mind is to discover freedom for itself and to indulge at least in an illusion of freedom. The human mind established in its own dignity refuses to surrender to determinism and loves to claim room to prefer of its own choice what it considers right to what it condemns as wrong. It is repugnant to the human mind even of the scientist to hold that God is just a cold mathematician and to allow man to renounce responsibility.

We are inclined to claim freedom when our action results in something pleasant or creditable. We are inclined the other way to be determinists, when it turns out to be something unpleasant or discreditable. Alone among all the things in the Universe, the human mind rebels against the imposition of dead mechanical order. The best theological solution is the Hindu doctrine of *Leela*—the play of *Iswara*. This is a pleasant way of expressing the limitations of human enquiry. Man cannot adjudge or even understand the will of God or His plan or even His nature. Anthropomorphic attempts at understanding the universe not to speak of God the author necessarily end in error and futility.

The physicists are bound to favour determinism. But whatever be the truth, human duty and responsibility cannot be wiped out. They may be deemed to be only relative duties and not truth in the absolute sense. On that basis an ethic, some code of control of human behaviour, has a definite place in life. Freedom may be an illusion. But there is that illusion and relative responsibility and duty issue from it.

(iii)

No ethic can hang on itself. It must hang on a faith, a theory about the Universe. However convincing and irrefutable the determinist position may be within the compass of dynamics, and however exhaustive the physical explanation of the phenomena of the Universe may be, there is still the residual question of the origin of it all. We seek causes at every step in the physical sciences. We refuse to rest until we find them. How can we suddenly stop that urge when we reach the stage beyond which we cannot travel. This residual question is not answered by the discovery of unqualified and unchangeable order in the Universe. It must remain reverently unanswered. It is the basis of the humility called Religion.

A formula in respect of the unknowable region that remains and must remain unexplored by science is essential for man, to choose good and reject evil. Even if there be no freedom to choose the Good in preference to Evil and man is just a plaything of the 'Gods', the fact remains that the best men somehow prefer or appear to prefer the unpleasant Right to the most attractive Wrong, and they feel this in their own hearts as a free preference. Man cannot, he will not, give up Religion as long as we all agree that self-control is essential for happiness—one's own true happiness as well as the welfare of others around us.

(iv)

Therefore we come to the conclusion that Governments must support religion. They need not and should not support a particular religion but should support all religions that are not wedded to immorality. The Upanishads saw this and laid it down. The Gita did the same. Ashoka did it in his Edicts. Governments cannot afford to be 'secular'. Their impartiality and refusal to support particular religions need not have been given this wrong name. 'Secular' does not express the position of positive support to all religions alike. It is out of Faith that spiritual values flow and Faith if it is broadly identical among a large mass of people is Religion.

(v)

In the days of infant science, religions included many branches of material knowledge also. The Veda of the Hindus was an encyclopaedia of knowledge in all departments. Specialisation took place gradually and the growing knowledge of the world of matter was finally extricated from Religion. This led to Religion being gradually freed from the incubus of departments of knowledge subject to development and change and from the consequential contradictions that for a long time discredited and puzzled piety. Today these sources of

contradictions must be wholly removed from the field of Religion. It is not good for Religion to have its own astronomy or physics or medicine while the sciences of astronomy, physics and medicine are making rapid strides forward giving up old theories and adopting new ones. Religion must confine itself to its own proper field thereby giving no room for contradictions with science. Science would then not come into conflict with Religion which belongs to a region outside science altogether.

The use to which science is to be put is not a matter of science but a question of right conduct which must fall within the bounds of ethics and therefore of Religion. The nature of bacteriological or nuclear poison is a matter of science. But the use of it in war would be an ethical or religious question. All the means and strategies employed in war are science but the limits to which means and strategies could go and the manner in which wars may be conducted are matters of conduct falling within the field of morality and religion. The oft-mentioned conflicts between religion and politics, religion and science are all products of confusion in this respect, pure fallacies. There can be in the matter of conduct no two standards, one to be actually followed in politics or commerce and another to be regarded as religious ideals without being followed in worldly transactions. All conduct must accept and follow the restraints enjoined in Religion, be it the Gita or the Bible or any other Scripture. The ethical restraints of human conduct cannot be treated as something different from worldly affairs, to be kept apart from human conduct itself.

(vi)

It is futile to imagine that the affairs of a people do not fall within the jurisdiction of the codes of religion regarding human conduct. Nations are individuals living together and combining their individual efforts,

Their rights and duties are not of a class different from the rights and duties of individuals. It would be merely a trick of evasion to make such a distinction. The human conduct such as is sought to be controlled by the codes of various religions is not merely the personal conduct of some (a small or large number of) individuals but the conduct of *every* individual and therefore of them all combined. The whole cannot escape from the restraints placed on the component parts. Nations cannot therefore claim to be free from the ethical principles that are good for the component individuals. India has a mission in this respect. May the guidance she gets be in furtherance of this mission.

Recently the 'Church Peace Union' of America distributed in India a book by Ernest Lefever in a cheap edition. The book seeks to prove that Ethics should have nothing to do with foreign policy. We are told therein that 'Judaeo-Christian' ethics attribute sin to man, that this original sin attaches to politics and specially to foreign policy and that therefore we should not complain if foreign policy deviates from morality or from the teachings of Jesus. One wonders what Christ or Paul would have said to this. It would seem that the Peace Church Union lends its authority to the frustration of the object of the Son-of-God's incarnation on earth on the basis of a doctrine of the inevitability of sin.

(vii)

This leads us to the capital question of how we shall conquer ill-will and suspicion and establish peace. Blessed are the Peace-Makers. And how shall we make peace?

There is no way but by example and unilateral action, and the acceptance of all the hazards contained in such unilateral action. Some things are hard to dissolve in any fluid except in a particular liquid. Hatred and suspicion can be dissolved only in the uncalculating unilateral steps taken by the more courageous party. Courage consists not in the organisation of self-defence and retaliation but in the un-negotiated step taken in disregard of fear and suspicion.

When both parties are in a dangerously strong position, distrust and fear continue through any negotiation that might be attempted and render it impossible of successful conclusion. If the hazards of unilateral action are ruled out, all approaches to peace are closed and only balanced terror can prevail as the alternative to hot conflict and disaster. Unilateral action is a policy essentially rooted in Religion; and when this is not available, Peace such as we want is automatically ruled out. The principle of unilateral action has a place even in negotiation at every step therein, if the latter is to succeed and not end in failure leaving the position worse than it was before.

Nothing else can dissolve suspicion and fear. There is much more power in brave unilateral action than in $E=MC^2$; power that builds, not destroys, builds lasting human progress and civilization. The point the West, including Russia has reached after discarding religious values has brought the world again to a truer vision of these discarded values. The road to Religion must now be taken or else we shall be lost.

The Symbolism of Literature

By GANGADHAR GADGIL

THE problem really boils down to the nature of the content of creative literature. What does Literature express? Does it make the same type of statements about life and reality as are made in political or moral philosophy? Does it try to interpret and evaluate life and reality from a moral and political point of view? If the answers to these questions are in the affirmative, moral and political considerations will inevitably come in when evaluating literature.

Many authors are deeply interested in the political and social problems of their times. Some are profoundly committed to certain moral and political ideas and values. Quite a few have declared that they write only to express their deep rooted convictions; and it cannot be said that what they have written is not genuine literature.

Great literature often raises profound and disturbing moral issues. We find that an author's moral ideas or view of life influences his style, and his mode of presentation and characterisation. Graham Greene's mode of presentation and characterisation cannot be dissociated from his preoccupation or obsession with a certain moral predicament. The same can be said about Sartre and many others. Moral and political ideas seem to permeate literature and shape it.

After all authors write about men and women and about the world in which they live. Language is their vehicle of expression. Words embody ideas. It would therefore seem futile to say that a literary work

does not interpret reality or express a view of life which is based on moral and political ideas.

Nor, it seems, is it possible for a reader to remain unaffected by the view of life expressed in a literary work. As T. S. Eliot puts it. 'Though we may read literature merely for pleasure, of 'entertainment' or of 'aesthetic enjoyment', this reading never affects simply a sort of special sense; it affects us as entire human beings; it affects our moral and religious existence'.

The case for recognising the relevance of moral and political considerations in evaluating creative literature thus seems to be complete.

Yet such a recognition seems to go against my experience both as a reader and a writer. When I read a novel, I do not find it necessary to accept the author's moral and political ideas in order to enjoy it. I do not commit myself to the view of life embodied in 'Mahabharat,' when I say that it is a great literary work. I do not have to reject Dostoevsky, when I accept T. S. Eliot as a great writer. I am no doubt profoundly affected by the moral and political issues raised in '1984'. But it is not for understanding these issues that I read that novel. The novel disturbs me and sets me thinking. But my agitated thinking is not an attempt to resolve the issues. They are there and to try to resolve them seems to come in the way of fully experiencing and enjoying that novel. The issues are incidental to something different and, if I may say so, something deeper. A novel is something

unique, and any attempt to generalise on its basis seems to be a violation of its integrity. The moral and political ideas it expresses are like sparks that fly off a rotating wheel. You cannot collect them and store them and use them. Once they fly off they are dead and reduced to ashes. A novel or a poem does not answer any questions or resolve any issues. Great artists have been tempted to try to resolve issues in their novels. But whenever they have tried, they have failed. Any such attempt seems to go against the very principle on which a literary work is organised.

It is no doubt true that a writer has certain moral and political ideas. He has a certain view of life which finds expression in his literary work. But it seems to me far more important that what he writes is a novel or a poem. He uses for self-expression a certain kind of symbolism and he cannot do in a novel something that the nature of his symbolism does not permit him to do.

I have said in the beginning that the problem boils down to the nature of the content of a literary work. The nature of the content can be best understood through a study of the nature of the symbolism used.

A creative writer uses more or less the same words which are used in ordinary speech or in a scientific treatise. The words are strung together in sentences which have the same grammatical structure. Yet any one who reads creative literature is aware that a writer uses language in quite a unique manner and to serve a unique purpose.

Broadly it can be said that a creative writer uses language to express an emotional experience. A word symbolises not merely a conception or an idea but an emotional response that is associated with the conception or the idea. In so far as it symbolises an emotional response or experience, it defines it. It indicates the form of the emotional experience. If the meaning of the

term 'idea' is widened so as to include all types of mental forms, then a word as used by a creative writer symbolizes an idea which is different from and yet related to the logical conception or idea symbolised by that word. There is no one unique emotional response associated with a word. In fact, a writer in so far as he creates something unique and new gives a new 'meaning' to a word. He uses it to symbolize a different emotional form. This is done by bringing together a number of words in a unique combination.

The combination of words has usually a grammatical structure. In fact a creative writer needs it to convey his 'meaning'. Yet he is always to some extent at war with grammar. He finds the grammatical structure of a sentence inadequate to convey his meaning. He therefore uses various devices to overcome this inadequacy. One of them is the introduction of rhythm in his sentences. Another is the use of imagery. An image fuses together the meanings of a group of words instead of merely linking them up. A poem or a novel has a structure of its own which is super-imposed on the grammatical structure. This structure corresponds to the structure of the emotional experience it symbolizes.

An emotional experience does not exclude elements in the complex and rather amorphous whole that is experience. Thoughts and emotions influence and shape each other. Feelings do not belong to a non-rational world which is discontinuous with the rational world of thought. Rationality consists in the recognition and discovery of forms and as such it is inherent in us. Our sensations organize themselves into forms which we perceive. Our feelings too have definite forms which become progressively articulated. Feelings thus are not irrational. They are the ingredients of rationality. They somehow participate in knowledge and understanding. Feelings

and systematic logical thought are thus two interconnected ingredients of human rationality. There is no inherent contradiction between the two; and therefore there is nothing incongruous in thoughts being the ingredients of the emotional experience that is expressed in literature.

But thoughts expressed in creative literature do not exist as thoughts. They exist as ingredients of emotional experience. Their function is not to interpret reality or to justify certain values. It is to define or to make meaningful the emotional experience of which they are the constituent elements. When Macbeth says that life is a tale told by an idiot signifying nothing, we are not called upon to examine or accept that statement as a valid generalisation about life and reality. It defines and makes it possible to clearly visualise Macbeth's intense emotional experience.

The nature of the symbolism used in creative literature makes it impossible to look upon its thought content in any other manner. To generalize is the essential nature of logical reasoning. An interpretation of reality has to be in the very nature of things a generalization, which is logically worked out. A system of moral or political ideas can be formulated only by a chain of logical reasoning. But what a literary work symbolizes is a particular emotional experience. It is concerned with something that is individual and unique. Its structure is shaped by the structure of emotional experience. It therefore cannot generalize. It cannot arrive at or express logical conclusions as logical conclusions.

It is sometimes argued that observation and reasoning are not the only methods of arriving at truth. Truth, it is said, can be discovered intuitively. It can be revealed to a man in a flash of insight. This argument has been too often refuted to need any elaborate discussion. Intuition plays as great a part in the field of science as in the

field of creative literature. It suggests the existence of a new and hitherto unsuspected hypothesis or idea. It brings various constituent elements of experience into a new relationship. But intuition is not always dependable; and whether the hypothesis suggested by intuition is valid or not, has to be decided by the methods of observation and reasoning. A truth intuitively realized has therefore to be put in a logical form. It cannot take a 'poetic' form and stand apart from scientific statements.

That a creative writer is not engaged in establishing any generalizations about society or moral values is conceded by a reader the moment he realizes that he is reading a novel or a poem. 'Once upon a time' is how all stories begin and nobody cares to verify the veracity of the writer's statements. If the writer says that a princess had wings, the statement is accepted. A reader does not expect from a creative writer the kind of cogency he expects from a moral philosopher or a political scientist. He expects from him a different kind of cogency. The princess can have wings but a sentence cannot have a wrong rhythm. A writer cannot use a wrong image. If there is a piece of reasoning in a novel, it has to have a logical consistency only to the extent to which it is demanded by the emotional context in which it is made.

Great writers have always been intensely interested in ideas and thoughts. They have been interested in interpretations of reality and moral evaluation of social institutions and individual behaviour. Yet their interest in ideas is not of the same order as that of a moral philosopher. In Tolstoy's 'War and Peace' or in 'Mahabharat' we come across different interpretations of reality and moral standpoints, expressed or suggested at different points. Sometimes they are brought to bear upon the same situation. These interpretations have a life of their

own and they wander through these books at their own will and enrich their 'meaning'. As a reader one does not find it necessary to accept any one of them and to reject the others. One doesn't find it disturbing that the different and very often conflicting interpretations should be present in the same book. They are in some peculiar way insubstantial like shadows and do not collide.

There are of course other and lesser writers who at least apparently express only one view of life in their creative works. Thomas Hardy is one of them. But this consistency on the part of the writer does not make the reader commit himself to the author's views of life. On the other hand it impoverishes the meaning of the author's work. Creative literature does not demand commitment to the views or thoughts expressed in it. In fact it demands that the reader's interest in ideas and thoughts should be secondary. It should be incidental to his interest in the form or meaning of emotional experience.

This assertion is apparently contradicted by historical experience. All major systems of belief have found expression in creative literature and works of art. It cannot be denied that the Mahabharat and the Ramayana have for hundreds of years led people to accept the system of beliefs that is Hinduism. Christianity has similarly found creative literature a convenient instrument for the propagation of faith. At the same time all religions and creeds have been extremely suspicious or intolerant of creative literature that expresses beliefs which they do not accept.

There is a reason for this. All systems of beliefs require that their adherents should have not only certain convictions and logically formulated views, but also certain emotional attitudes. These emotional attitudes have to be clearly formulated and defined. This is done by creative literature

and other forms of art. On the other hand there are certain emotional attitudes which are dangerous to a system of beliefs. It is necessary that adherents to that system of beliefs should not be aware of these emotional attitudes. Literary expression of these emotional attitudes is therefore discouraged.

At the same time all systems of beliefs have recognized that creative literature is not a dependable means of formulating and expressing beliefs. The beliefs have been logically formulated in philosophical works and all problems of interpretation and application of the system of beliefs have been always solved by a reference to this logical formulation of beliefs. The primacy of the logical formulation of a belief over its expression in a literary work has always been recognized. It has been always demanded that a belief as expressed in creative literature should conform to the belief as formulated in logical terms. A Gothic Church is not regarded as adequate for ensuring adherence to the system of beliefs that constitute Christianity; a sermon has to be preached in the Gothic Church.

The co-relation between creative literature and a system of beliefs has always been recognized to be tenuous, and history has confirmed this. Many systems of beliefs have died a natural death in the course of history. They are no longer accepted. Yet the literary works which are supposed to express these systems of beliefs still continue to be accepted as great works of art. They have a meaning which is still valid and valuable to us.

Emotional experiences and beliefs are no doubt inter-related. They are both the ingredients of the rationality of man. But it is not possible to express their relationship in terms of simple equations which are always valid. A particular emotional experience can suggest a belief. But it can

also suggest other beliefs, and in any case it does not necessarily lead to or require the acceptance of a particular belief.

Totalitarian systems always find themselves on the horns of a dilemma when dealing with creative literature. On the one hand they need it to strengthen the adherence to the system of beliefs on which they are based. On the other hand they are highly suspicious of it. For, behind any work of creative literature there is a spirit of free inquiry. Creative literature inquires into the multiple forms of emotional experiences. Such a spirit of free inquiry is dangerous in two ways. It may lead to the formulation or symbolisation of emotional experiences which are dangerous—which suggest awkward questions and dangerous possibilities. Secondly, free inquiry in one field of mental life is bound to stimulate

free inquiry in another field, viz., the field of thought.

A totalitarian system tries to solve this dilemma by requiring that all creative literature must conform completely to the accepted system of beliefs. But no such complete conformity is possible. For the very nature of creative literature makes such conformity impossible. A totalitarian system therefore has to make do with pseudo-literature. It can conform because it is organized on a logical or pseudo-logical basis. It is organised on the same basis on which the accepted system of beliefs is organised. It is certainly safe. But in a way it is also not safe because it is not literature. It cannot formulate the emotional attitudes that are necessary to strengthen the adherence to the accepted system of beliefs.

Belief and Literature

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

By PRABHAKAR PADHYE

MANY people see in literature a reflection of their own ideas. They colour its essence with their particular views. They do not enjoy it for its own sake but as a means of satisfying their non-literary interests. This is facilitated by the fact that literature functions through words and words have both intellectual and emotional meanings. One can neglect the emotional aspect and concentrate on the intellectual, with the result that a literary piece ceases to be a work of art and tends to be a treatise. What is even more confusing is that there are countless people who have both artistic and intellectual interests and look into a work of literature for the satisfaction of both. All this has created a confusion in the evaluation of literature—and there have emerged as many systems of literary criticism as there are interests.

These can be divided into four broad schools of literary evaluation: the aesthetic, the moral, the social and the psychological. The aesthetic school insists that a work of literature is primarily a work of art, and must be regarded as such. Its value must be judged by the quality of rhythmic beauty revealed in it, by its capacity to hold the attention of the reader for its own sake, by its sheer enchanting quality. All other considerations must be regarded as secondary and incidental. The school of moral analysis treats literature as a vehicle for

moral values. According to this school, a work of literature must reflect the sense of values of the writer and/or of the society. Its greatness or otherwise must be judged not by its aesthetic beauty but by its ennobling quality. The aesthetic method of analysis, this school insists, may tell you whether or not a literary work is a work of art, but it will not tell whether it is great or not. Its greatness must be judged by the writer's *weltanschauung*, by his sense of human destiny, by the profundity of his thought, by his capacity to elevate the personality of the reader, by the sense of values and ideals revealed in it. A work which lacks this quality, however perfect artistically speaking, can only be a piece of amusement; it can never attain the dignity of a great literary work. The third school looks for social significance in a work of literature. Its analysis is based on the inalienable relation between the individual and society. A writer is a product of society. His destiny is bound up with it. His intellectual and emotional make-up is formulated by the social milieu. His work must therefore throw light on its nature and significance. If it does not it has no real importance. The psychological method looks for the working of the human mind in a work of literature. A literary piece, for the advocates of this method, has significance only if it reveals the subtle and in-

tricate working of human nature. Its greatness would seem to depend on the extent and quality of this unfolding.

To judge the relevance or efficacy of these methods one has only to ask a few questions: Why does the reader turn to a work of literature at all? What does he expect to find in it? Moral elevation? For that he could easily turn to the Bible or the Bhagwadgita or the lives of great men and moral leaders of mankind. To understand the essence of a social reality? This could be more accurately and reliably accomplished by reading social studies or the accounts of social conditions in different periods or phases of history. Does he read literature to understand the complex of human nature? Surely he could do that by being a little observant in his day-to-day life. Or he could turn to the vast amount of psychological literature, or, at least, to the newspaper reports. But no, he is eager to read a novel, witness a play or go to a picture. We are told that the moral elevation or social education or psychological understanding is more interestingly or effectively secured in a work of literature. May we not therefore conclude that what makes a work of literature effective or interesting is really its distinguishing quality?

Let me ask another question—from a slightly different angle. Why is a person who would run away from a tragedy in real life anxious to witness it on the stage? (I am deliberately choosing the instance of a tragic play, because a play as acted on the stage is a combination of several arts—and its consideration is likely to throw light on the essence of all arts.) It is quite obvious that the tragic feeling which he gets from the stage is different from the tragic feeling he gets from life's real tragedies. Not only that; he also gets some sort of joy by witnessing tragedy on the stage. Clearly, therefore, literature as a fine art produces

an emotion which is different from the practical emotions which one experiences in ordinary life. Should I call this (after Mr. Clive Bell or Mr. Mardhekar) 'aesthetic emotion'? I am aware of the fact that many eminent psychologists would deny the very existence of such an emotion. But then (as Mr. Cecil Day Lewis pointed out), 'When I am moved by a poem the emotion I feel is distinct from any other emotion.' (*The Poetic Image*, p. 22). Call it 'aesthetic emotion' or whatever you will, the fact remains that the emotional effect of a work of art is different and that may very well be its distinctive feature.

What is it that produces this particular emotional effect? A work of literature contains thoughts, characters and events. These are all (in a realistic novel, for instance,) bound together by the fact of realistic possibility. In that sense they are governed by the normal characteristics of similar characters, events and thoughts in real life. For instance, a normal lover in a play or novel must be shown to experience the normal emotion of love. Characters must be convincing, events must look real and thoughts must be governed by meaning. And yet the author looks at them with a peculiar psychical distance. The creator of Dushyant is not overcome with the emotion of love. Shakespeare is not caught in the dilemma of 'to be or not to be'. (Nor, for that matter, is the reader or the spectator.) There is surely an identification; but it is not with individual characters or events or thoughts. It is identification with the entire work, with the literary piece as a whole, the gestalt. Again, it is an identification of a sort—an identification with an element of psychical distance in it. Otherwise the author would lose the perspective and would be unable to keep his characters, events and thoughts in proper relationship—a relationship which ultimately creates

the distinctive emotional effect which I have preferred to call 'aesthetic emotion.' I would suggest that it is this quality of psychical distance which distinguishes an aesthetic emotion from an overpowering practical emotion. One might call this element of psychical distance non-commitment. In this sense all literature and all art is non-committed. The contemplation of characters, events and thoughts in their proper perspective and relationship (that is, with that element of psychical distance) is what makes one experience 'aesthetic emotion'.

It is contemplation of the gestalt in all its inner relationships which creates the sense of Beauty—of that quality which captivates the critic (the Sanskrit word 'rasik' is more appropriate). The gestalt is governed by a rhythm generated by an organic series of tensions and resolutions which are in a state of self-development till the capacity of the last resolution to be followed by tension is completely exhausted. In other words a literary work is a pattern of characters, events and thoughts, which is governed by an organic rhythm. It is this rhythm which creates that sense of beauty or artistic joy which so completely holds the *rasik*. A work of literature is an entire experience, a gestalt, and characters, events and thoughts all come in as parts of that experience—parts which are in a rhythmic relationship, acquiring their significance in so far as they contribute to the creation of this pattern of emotional experience. They have no independent significance; all their significance is contributory.

If you grant the essence of the argument it will be easy to see the importance of thoughts, values, ideologies, description of social conditions, depiction of psychological processes, unfolding of the vision of human destiny, in a work of literature. They all play their part in the creation of

the aesthetic pattern, and it is necessary to note their varying functions for a proper understanding and evaluation of a literary product. A work of literature is an organic pattern of tensions and resolutions surcharged with varying degrees of emotional power, and emotions are a complex of many things. They are variously created. They have different expressions in different social conditions. Their intensity varies in different contexts. They are bound up with social norms and values. Different thoughts enliven them differently. Different visions endow them with different power. In short, their colour and complexion change in different sets of circumstances. Therefore a knowledge of social conditions, psychological processes value-systems and the writer's ideals or *weltanschauung* become important in the appreciation of literature. That is their relevance. But this relevance is only as a means—to the end of creating a rhythmic emotional pattern, as a means of enriching its quality and complexity, on which the worth of a literary piece ultimately depends. Obviously a more complex and qualitatively richer pattern will create a greater work of literary art, provided of course, the complexity does not destroy the basic order of the gestalt. This is in tune with the general development of Nature and human organization. Natural and social evolutions have revealed a trend towards complexity. Perhaps our ideas of greatness are conditioned by the spirit of this growing complexity. But one can easily see that a more complex pattern of rhythmic tensions and resolutions, a pattern whose complexity widens and deepens the basic order of the gestalt, makes for a richer work of literary art.

It is the failure to see the distinction between the role of means (however active in their operation) and the role of ends (however aesthetic in their appearance) of the

social, psychological and ideological factors in the creation of a literary piece that has created confusion in the evaluation of literature. It is a confusion between ends and means. To illustrate my point I shall give an example, and I venture to take the example from the inaugural address which Mr. Arthur Koestler has given at this conference. Mr. Koestler has argued that there is always an ideology behind a work of art, 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. He quotes a passage from Ulysses' dialogue from Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* to prove his point:

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:
Mr. Koestler's purpose in quoting this

passage was, as he himself says, 'to demonstrate that even the most timeless works of literature, without any ideological bias, will reveal under the x-ray camera a scaffolding of well-defined moral values and philosophical assumption.' Even if you accept this, does it prove the point? There may be a 'scaffolding' of moral values and philosophical assumptions — but they only provide a 'scaffolding' to build a mansion of literary art. Surely the beauty of the mansion does not depend on the scaffolding. In fact, you can take the scaffolding away, because the beauty of the passage (if it is proper to take an isolated passage from a complete work of art to prove an abstract proposition which should deal with an entire whole, a gestalt) does not vitally depend on the scaffolding. I do not believe in the value-system and philosophical assumptions presumed here (nor does Mr. Koestler, I am sure), and still both of us are sensitive enough to appreciate the beauty of the avalanche of images presented here, their rhythm, which, indeed, is the source of the artistic excellence of the passage — although one cannot help feeling that the imagery is somewhat overdone. I would even say that Mr. Koestler is a little uncharitable in calling the value-system and the philosophical assumptions of this passage a mere 'scaffolding'. They should rather be described as a part of the material with which the mansion is built. Surely material (for instances, marble in the case of the Taj) does condition (perhaps even actively condition) the beauty of an architectural construction. Characters, events, thoughts are, indeed, active ingredients of the experience embodied in a work of literature, but surely it would be wrong to call them the essence of the thing. This is very often conceded, but the point is brought in by the back-door by saying that although a piece of literature is primarily a work of art and therefore the

values of beauty are basic to it, what makes the work great is the moral values or vision embedded in it. This contention raises a host of questions. What happens if there arises a conflict between the basic value and the greatness-awarding value? Will the greatness of a work of literature depend on the shifting importance or acceptance of the moral values which are supposed to confer greatness on the work? Has the passage from *Troilus and Cressida* ceased to be beautiful in this modern age of social equality? It is no use telling us that the moral values which confer greatness on a literary work are of perennial importance, because the moral values and philosophical assumptions from the passage from *Troilus and Cressida* do not belong to this category, and yet the beauty of the passage does look perennial. It is no use telling us either that since art also is a value there can be no conflict between art and morality. Values, unless they are ordered and graded, are more than likely to conflict in the same operational field — especially in the organic field of a work of art — and if it is agreed that moral values are of a satellite character in the field of art, it would be easy to see that they then play the role of means and not ends.

Some people find such a view of art rather depressing. They think that it creates an unwarranted dichotomy between Art and Life and reduces art to the position of a prodigal or a recluse — in any case, it makes art insignificant in the context of life. This criticism fails to notice a unique function which art plays in the development of man. Every work of art is an embodiment of experience. Its universality lies in its capacity to affect not only the creator but also the 'rasik'. This means that the 'rasik' is able to share the experience of the artist, and it is necessarily a new experience, because the experience embodied in a work of art is unique (otherwise it would

be dismissed as a piece of plagiarism.) A work of art makes it possible for others not only to share the unique experiences of the artist but also provokes responses which transform those experiences in the process of appreciation. In any case, art increases our awareness. As J.W.N. Sullivan said 'Certainly the most significant factor in the development from amoeba to man seems to us to have been the increase in consciousness. Also the activities we most value are those that do the most to increase our awareness of ourselves, of our fellow-creatures, and of the material universe we live in. This is obviously the case with art. The great artist, painter, poet, or musician, makes us aware as we have never been aware before. He extends and subtilizes certain elements of our experience and so gives us great knowledge and mastery of life. It is even possible that he acquaints us with radically new experiences and, if he be a great artist, we feel that these experiences are not freakish but significant because they are in the main line of man's development.' (*Limitations of Science* p. 229). The capacity to increase awareness is of course not the distinguishing characteristic of art, but increased awareness is certainly one of its most important consequences.

Apart from what art does to others, art does a great thing for the artist himself; it enables him to sublimate certain tensions created by his threefold relationship: with Nature, with others and with himself. He is not engaged in conquering Nature but in establishing a creative relationship with her. The inspiration he gets from Nature depends on this relationship. Harmony in relations with others comes naturally to him because his art brings joy to them. And he is at peace with himself because he is gifted with the capacity to have 'aesthetic emotion' which has a peculiar serenity that transcends the stresses and strains of the

practical emotions. Thus art enables the artist to achieve a threefold harmony — of course, only to the extent that the artist in him triumphs over the demands of the practical world of conflicts. I suppose a passionate devotion to 'artistic reality' would enable him to achieve this, for, as Clive Bell said, 'the contemplation of pure form' (or, as I would like to call it, aesthetic pattern) 'leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life.' (*Art*, p. 68). I would suggest that the 'pure form' of the artist is a reflection of the artistic reality the existence of which has been thus argued by Clive Bell (of course, as a pure hypothesis): '... the formal significance of any material thing is the significance of that thing considered as an end in itself. But if an object considered as an end in itself moves us more profoundly (i.e. has greater significance) than the same object considered as a means to practical ends or as a thing related to human interests — and this undoubtedly is the case — we can only suppose that when we consider anything as an end in itself we become aware of that in it which is of greater moment than any qualities it may have acquired from keeping company with human beings. Instead of recognising its

accidental and conditioned importance, we become aware of its essential reality, of the God in everything, of the universal in the particular, of the all-pervading rhythm. Call it by what name you will, the thing that I am talking about is that which lies behind the appearance of all things — that which gives to all things their individual significance, the thing in itself, the ultimate reality.' (*Art*, pp. 69-70). I do not know if such a Reality actually exists. But the artist would appear to believe in it. For him the world seems to exist in pure forms and emotional rhythms. Just as a scientist is provoked to discover new laws when the appearance of some new phenomenon disturbs the established scientific view of things, so the artist is provoked into creative activity when something disturbs *his* artistic view of the world. (The only difference is that, in the case of the scientist the view of the world and the disturbance are objective whereas in the case of the artist they are purely personal and subjective.) That is the moment of his inspiration. That is when he gets his 'vision'. The birth of every work of art is an act of restoring the artist's original artistic view of the world — a realisation of the basic rhythmic reality which sets his world apart.

The Language of Poetry

I. Autonomous and Opaque

By ABU SAYEED AYYUB

ONE may speak of a 'poem' as an object existing in many dimensions. I should like to limit myself to four, though a fifth is sometimes added. The first dimension is constituted by the sensuous quality of the sound of the words with which a poem is composed, and of the visual images immediately suggested by them; the second by the formal quality of the pattern or configuration in which these sensuous elements are set. These two together are sometimes referred to as 'the aesthetic surface' of the art object. This expression is helpful in so far as it points to the close unity of the sensuous form and the sense-contents (we have not come to the other 'contents' yet); but it is not quite harmless for it might suggest that the aesthetic surface is only a superficial aspect of a work of art. I particularly want to avoid such a suggestion to start with, for I am presently going to examine a view which regards this aspect (the aesthetic surface) as practically the only aspect worth considering in a poem. The third dimension takes us to the objects and events in the external world or an aspect or facet of them; this is what the poem is normally said to 'mean'. The fourth dimension brings us to the emotions, attitudes or mood of the poet expressed in the poem. The fifth is Reality with a capital R, lying behind and beyond the appearances, the Absolute of the metaphysicians or the God of the mystics, a glimpse of which, accord-

ing to some, we catch at least in the best poetry.

Down the centuries trends in poetry and even more in criticism and the philosophy of criticism had emphasised one or other of these dimensions to the exclusion of the rest. In the ancient Greek theory of mimesis the 3rd dimension was all-important; the aesthetic surface of the work of art had no status of its own, it was but a replica of the sensuous and formal qualities of the objects (natural or human) copied, and the personality of the artist was submerged in the skill of the copyist. Sometime later, with Plotinus and the other neo-platonists, emphasis shifted to the 5th dimension; all art was conceived and valued as a revelation of the transcendental Absolute or God. The personality of the artist emerged as an important constituent of the work of art during the renaissance, and for the 19th century romantics art had become a medium of expression of the emotions of an unusually sensitive soul reacting to its environment. It would not be unfair to credit the 20th century with the reduction of a work of art to its 'aesthetic surface'. Not that other views are not current, but this has been the vogue for many decades now.

Can we apply the categories of truth and falsity to poetry? This question, to my mind, boils down to the question: has poetry any objective meaning? For if the words of a poem have no meaning, are not a sign of other things, but are themselves things, if their syntactical order is to enhance the beauty of the words and not to

This paper is a considerably revised and enlarged version of a first incomplete draft presented at the *Quest* seminar on Belief and Literature.

indicate any state of affairs beyond them, then poetry has nothing to do with truth or falsity. Only a meaningful statement can be true or false, not a table or a tree, nor *tra la la* or a patch of olive green. New fashions in criticism and in the theory of criticism have been largely based on the denial of all meaning to poetry. The denial of meaning, i.e., of reference of the sensuous form and content of a poem (as sign) to anything beyond themselves (as signified), is but another side of the emphasis on these as all that really constitute a poem, every other constituent being absorbed by the aesthetic surface as its own property or as a charge on it. This denial, however, should not be confused with another denial, viz., denial of the possibility of paraphrasing a poem ('put it in your own words', as the question papers say). This latter denial, according to me, is quite legitimate, but does not imply the former, more sweeping denial.

It is sometimes contended that although poetry has a meaning, its meaning is not factual but wholly emotive; according to others the meaning is purely imaginative. I shall come later* to these pseudo-meanings, which still permit us to deny truth (and falsity) to poetry. But first let me consider the more drastic theories of poetry which would make a clean sweep of all external meanings whatsoever.

Perhaps the best representative of such a drastic theory is Jean-Paul Sartre, whose eminence at once as a creative writer and as a philosopher entitles his views on literature to especial respect. Sartre has wisely enough excluded fiction and prose drama from his rather odd semantics of poetry; but as I wish to contend against a theory like his even in this restricted sphere, that does not affect my argument. In fact, pleading for the 'commitment' of fiction

and drama (*littérature engagée*), he is all the more anxious to liberate poetry from all possible commitments, social as well as semantic—perhaps I should say, social and therefore semantic.

For Sartre, to speak of the words used in a poem as language is as good or bad as to speak of the 'language of flowers'. In the language of flowers roses may signify fidelity to me. But if they do that then the fact is that 'I have stopped seeing them as roses. My attention cuts through them to aim beyond them at this abstract virtue. I forget them. I no longer pay attention to their mossy abundance, to their sweet stagnant odour. I no longer perceive them. That means I have not behaved like an artist'. The words of a poem are precisely like roses and are to be treated like roses by poets and poetically sensitive readers. To the question that words and their syntactical orders have socially accepted meanings which take us beyond them to the world of objects, Sartre answers: 'Poetry does not use words in the same way as prose, and it does not even *use* them at all. It *serves* them. Poets are men who refuse to *utilise* language. . . . Nor do they dream of naming the world, and this being the case, they name nothing at all, for naming implies a perpetual sacrifice of the name to the object named'. He continues: '*The poet considers words as things and not as signs.* For the ambiguity of the sign implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or *turn one's gaze towards its reality and consider it as an object.* The man who talks is beyond words and near the objects, whereas the poet is on this side of them' (italics added). To be sure, we are not to suppose that in poetry the words have lost their meanings altogether; they have lost only their external reference. The meanings in which the poet is interested are those which give words their verbal unity. For

*Please see next issue

the poet the meaning is a property of the word, it is *in* the word, and not *out* there amongst the things, 'having flowed into the word, having been absorbed by its sonority or visual aspect, having been thickened and defaced, it too is a thing uncreated and eternal' (*What is Literature*, 1948, pp. 4-6).

To cite another witness, Prof. Northrop Frye too finds that 'in all literary verbal structure the final direction of meaning is inward, *questions of fact or truth are subordinated to the primary literary aim of producing a structure of words for its own sake*, and the sign-values of symbols are subordinated to their importance as a structure of inter-connected motifs. Wherever we have an *autonomous verbal structure* of this kind, we have literature' (italics added). These lines slightly misrepresent Prof. Frye; here he has sweepingly generalised remarks about literature which, according to his usual and more synoptic view, strictly hold good only for one of its phases—however important that phase might have become in recent times. Prof. Frye is quite aware that inward and outward directions of meaning are normally present in all works of literature and create a sort of tension. 'This tension finally snaps off in the movement generally called *symbolisme*. . . . *Symbolisme*, as expressed for instance in Mallarmé, maintains that the representational answer to the question 'what does it mean' should not be pressed in reading poetry, for the poetic symbol means primarily itself in relation to the poem'. (*Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957, pp. 74 and 80).

This elimination of meaning from poetry is parallel to the recent philosophical fashion of declaring all metaphysics—practically all earlier philosophy except the empirical line of Bacon-Hume-Mill—to be meaningless. The difference is that whereas metaphysics is deprived of meaning and

discarded, poetry is deprived of meaning and retained—as an enjoyable pattern of sound and image. My concern is with this theory of poetry. Readers will have no difficulty in recalling or discovering for themselves as many illustrative examples as they care to, mainly from the symbolist and sur-realist poetry of France. Not that other Western countries would be lagging far behind; even Bengal could come forward with a few specimens. The best-known English name is perhaps Edith Sitwell's. I shall content myself with citing only two examples here, one to indicate the probable source, and the other to demonstrate the deplorable end-product of the line of poetical development I am talking about.

SONNET

Her pure nails very high dedicating their
onyx,
Anguish, this midnight, upholds, the lamp-
bearer,
Many vesperal dreams by the Phenix burnt
That are not gathered up in the funeral urn

On the credences, in the empty room: no
ptyx,
Abolished bibelot of sounding inanity
(For the Master is gone to draw tears from
the Styx
With this sole object which Nothingness
honours.)

But near the window void Northwards, a
gold
Dies down composing perhaps a decor
Of unicorns kicking sparks at a nixey,

She, nude and defunct in the mirror, while
yet,
In the oblivion closed by the frame there
appears
Of scintillations at once the septet

STEPHANE MALLARMÉ'

hot rod

vellum list fell dole
 packed pendulum red roar
 esteem wet spindle
 auricular thy lung
 scut thews cold selvage
 out angular out out odd
 yet not

HERBERT READ

This is what the most eminent French critic, Charles Mauron, has to say about Mallarmé's sonnet: "In this Sonnet, whose effect depends very largely on the actual sounds of the French words, Mallarmé seems to have made a wager to accomplish the impossible by choosing rhymes of the utmost difficulty—rhymes in 'yx' and 'ore' in the quatrains, inverted to 'ixe' and 'or' in the sestet. If one considers also the interior assonances with which Mallarmé enamelled his verse one must admit that the logical significance is likely to have suffered. The words themselves, rare and chiselled, suffice to give the poem the air of a jewel in gold and agate." (Mallarmé: *Poems*, p. 236). There is no harm in playing at poetry, but there is something seriously wrong with the state of literature when a clever game is treated as great art. I do not deny that Mallarmé has written transparently great poetry, but this sonnet surely is not poetry. And if Mallarmé's sonnets are really as bad as those things with which fashionable wives of rich men adorn their necks and earlobes, then they must be bad indeed!

Sir Herbert Read's poems (six were published in *Encounter*, March 1959) read like brilliant parodies, and I believe the poet and the editors intended them to be read as parody. But I shall not be terribly surprised if some readers, or the poet himself, were to insist that they are the genuine stuff of poetry.

The state of modern poetry is such that both claims appear to be equally in order. One of my distinguished literary friends here whom I gave these poems to read was of two minds about them. Another produced arguments to prove that they must be parodies—somewhat as follows: Herbert Read normally writes in a very different way; as a critic he does not approve of this kind of art; if the poems were meant to be taken seriously, they would have been presented without those introductory quotes in justification, and certainly without the recipe at the end, etc. One could argue back: Conversion need not be supposed to be rarer in poetry than in religion; these poems were not published in *Punch* but in *Encounter*—not usually given to light literature; greater poets have called themselves engineers, why shouldn't Sir Herbert compare himself to a chef? and so forth. The argumentation is merely to draw attention to the fact that a good bit of modern poetry reads so much like a parody of modern poetry that one is often not quite sure which is which.

But before criticising one must understand. The *raison d'être* of the theory and practice of poetic opacity (not to be confused with Donne's clever ambiguity, Hopkin's telescoped blurring or Eliot's hurdles of erudition—across which definite objective meanings can be discerned) is not difficult to see. But to understand why it is so is not to justify its being so.

The romantics, and even the realists of the nineteenth century were, by and large, *en rapport* with man and nature. Not to speak of the adolescent enthusiasm of Shelley and the pantheistic raptures of Wordsworth or the warm sentimentalism of Dickens, even such a cold-blooded realist as Emile Zola was convinced that 'the naturalistic novel is simply an enquiry into

nature, beings and things..... You must start from the point that nature is sufficient, that you must accept it as it is, without modification or pruning; it is grand enough, beautiful enough to supply its own beginning, its middle and its end'. In a similar vein wrote Courbet about physical nature: 'Beauty lies in nature,..... The painter has no right to add to this expression of nature, to change the form of it and thereby weaken it..... Such is the foundation of my beliefs about art'.

This *rapproch* with Nature (human and physical) was destroyed by forces over which the creative writer had little control. We notice a very different kind of attitude in novelists like Flaubert and Dostoevski, in a poet like Baudelaire, and in a painter like Whistler who wrote, 'That nature is always right is an assertion artistically as untrue as its truth is universally taken for granted. Nature is very rarely right, to such an extent that it might almost be said that Nature is usually wrong'¹. The ravages of the Industrial Revolution and the new social consciousness whose most forceful spokesman was Karl Marx, had awakened in the artist a sense of evil and horror in regard to the condition of man which had been only dimly felt in the earlier decades of the century (e.g., by Wordsworth in the poem 'I heard a thousand blended notes'). On the other hand, the rapid progress of the physical sciences had transformed Nature from an object of awe and mysterious fascination to something intelligible, drab and mechanical, but useful. And what inspiration could the poets find in a cosmos whose 'one far-off divine event/To which the whole creation moves' was now 'known' to be a heat-death in which all energy will be levelled down and evenly spread over the universe, ruling out the least possibility for the existence of life and consciousness?

This denigration of man and nature was part of the general process of devaluation of all traditional values. It could not but have the most powerful impact on the sensitive mind of the poet. It made him insulate himself and his work from the world around him.

The poet might have turned his gaze away from the world to his own self, and made his poetry a mirror in which were reflected his inner moods, emotions and feelings. This would only have reinforced the earlier emotive and expressionist tendencies in art. It did not happen, however, for two reasons. One was the difficulties inherent in a purely expressionist theory of art, which were now becoming obvious and about which I shall have something to say in a moment. The other was a change in the artistic mood. A direct expression of emotion had become stale and was beginning to appear vulgar. Our poets turned reticent; 'sentimentalism' was considered the worst offence in art. To ask some one straight away to 'accept the worship the heart lifts above' or to say 'My heart leaps up when I behold a rainbow in the sky', even if in fact (however improbable now) it did leap, seemed bad taste towards the close of the 19th century in France. Not only poetic diction but poetic feeling too was being tabooed. Moreover, no feelings could be directly expressed in the new mode. Direct statement—indirect statement—esoteric statement—no statement—no syntax—a meaningless pattern of words and images, seemed to be the line indicated.

What in fact did happen was that poets like Mallarmé and Rimbaud and the sur-Realists after them turned, in the first instance, from the world to the over-world, the sur-Real. 'Dislocation of the senses', and (concomitantly) of the words, was found necessary to remove the objects of the world as the referent of poetic language, for the world was felt as an unwanted

¹ This and the two previous quotations are from Hosper's *Meaning and Truth in the Arts*.

screen lying between the poet (or rather any one enjoying the poetic experience) and the transcendent luminosity which was the ultimate goal of all art. But Rimbaud and Mallarmé were not really mystics, they lacked genuine religious feeling and belief. Mallarmé speaks of his wrestling with God and of his great victory in felling this odious opponent to the ground. This is to be contrasted with Hopkins's deeply religious struggle expressed in that excessively condensed and therefore slightly obscure but magnificent sonnet, *Carrión Comfort*. Mallarmé's victory, however, did not bring him like Hopkins to that inner condition in which 'my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear'. Instead, it brought him to the Void, to 'the spiritual conception of Nothingness'. He hated the sea and sky ('Et je deteste moi, le bel azure'); and since it is impossible to love the Void, he fell in love with—Words, words not in their transparency but in their opacity, not as signs but as things. Valéry disdained to think of himself as a poet endowed with creative vision; instead, he boasted that he was nothing but 'an engineer manufacturing an artefact of words.'

The pre-Baudelairean poets felt humble before the mystery and sublimity of the world; they were happy if they could reveal some aspect of it. For this their work at its best must yet sacrifice itself by its transparency. The moderns, on the other hand, reject the 'God-made universe' because they are so proud and eager to display the great artefact which they have made with their own hands. We can say, vice versa; but it was this way too. A transparent medium does not satisfy them; it shows things on the other side and so distracts attention from itself. Wasn't it a modern poet (I forget who it was) who said that the purpose of creation is to be transformed into a line of verse!

But why, it may be asked, this dichotomy? Why feeling for and display of Words, or feeling for and revelation of Reality? Why not both at once? We have what is called the organic theory of art, art as an organic unity of words and meanings, form and content, revelatory medium and revealed reality; both terms of this organic relationship are supposed to be equally important, and are to be equally attended to in a work of art.

I must, for a moment, digress and refer to the situation in painting, for such an organic theory is even more plausible and has been maintained with greater conviction there. But not with any great success. Clive Bell and Roger Fry found that in the total emotional reaction produced by a painting two distinct types or levels of emotion could be discerned. One was the emotion produced by the representational content of the picture, the character, the life situation, the dramatic scene or the natural scenery depicted by it; this they called 'the life-emotions'. The other was a very different kind of emotion, evoked by the formal arrangement of line and colour in the painting — characterised by Bell as "the aesthetic emotion."

Roger Fry analysed a number of famous paintings and showed that in none of these there was any real cooperation between the representational elements evocative of life-emotions and the formal elements evocative of the aesthetic emotion. "Indeed, I cannot see how one is to avoid this. How can we keep the attention equally fixed on the spaceless world of psychological entities and upon the apprehension of spatial relations" (*Vision and Design*). More attention to the symbolised "life-emotions" means less attention to the plastic forms by which they are symbolised, and appreciation of a picture which combines both often requires conscious transference of attention from one to the other. Both these

eminent art critics therefore came to the conclusion that at least in the visual arts, the symbolisation of life and nature and the emotions evoked by these, if not completely eliminated from art, must at least be altogether subordinated to and absorbed by the plastic values of spatial configuration. Otherwise they conflict with and do damage to the aesthetic emotion.

I maintain that the conflict in poetry is even more pronounced. If we fix our attention on the words, on their sonority and pictoriality, on the technical excellence involved in their choice and ordering—as the modern poets and the “new” critics want us to — then the language of poetry becomes opaque; we see *it* and not *through it*. On the other hand, one who is interested in meanings, that is, in the world, ceases to notice the words themselves, for he is using them as signs, as instruments, and not as things possessing intrinsic value. We may shift our attention from one to the other, but that only disrupts the aesthetic experience. To begin with, of course it is necessary to attend to all the qualities and potencies of the words. But as one grasps them and sees what they signify, as one comprehends their full poetical meaning, one penetrates through them; they become gradually transparent and cease to be the arresting plane of attention. Semantic relation is a unique kind of relation and poles apart from the conjunctive. Things may form a whole or signs may form a whole, but things and signs together do not constitute any proper whole; one or the other has to be treated as a sacrifice. The pre-Baudelairean poets mostly sacrificed the words by making them transparent. Mallarmé and his followers prefer to sacrifice the things signified by the words.

To be sure, in music, at least in non-operatic music, things have always been sacrificed. Representation of life and nature

is admittedly absent there. All the attention of the listener must be fixed on the sensuous plane of pure sound and the elaborate patterns of harmony and melody built out of the sonal units. Whether the theory of aesthetic surface as the sole or the principal constituent of a work of art holds good in music or not may be disputed, but it is at least plausible. For the aesthetic surface of a musical composition is extraordinarily rich. In contrast, the aesthetic surface of a poem is deplorably poor. The notion that poetry could be made a non-objective “pure” art on the paradigm of pure music (or abstract painting) set it on the wrong rails. The poet can make use of only a small part of the sound values available to the musician. Unlike the latter, he can do nothing with the variety of keys, scales and notes, with the different ways of harmonisation and building up a melodious structure, with the intricacies of beat and rhythm — and all the other technical devices normally at the service of the musician. Besides, even if the poet has in his mind a rich configuration of the sounds of words, he will not be able to communicate it to his reader, for his means of communication is writing, not notation. Musically considered the best sonnet could only be a poor second to the simplest sonata.

Words of course suggest images, but the capacity of imagination to form vivid, bold and sharply defined pictures is extremely limited, and the mental palette of many people does not extend beyond white, black and the greys. Even the best visualisers can imagine only a small fraction of all the shades of all the colours used by an ordinary painter. Moreover, no one can hold a particular colour or a particular contour clearly before his mind's eye for more than the twinkling of an eye. The pictorial power of poetry is limited by the paucity of chromatic and graphic vocabulary, but even more by the natural impotency of the

reader's imagination. The best word-pictures cannot be compared in the wealth of colour and delicacy of linear form to the poorest paintings.

It is amazing how some modern readers have persuaded themselves, or been persuaded by the "new critics", to believe that the most elementary kind of music and a set of crudely coloured hazy sketches can make great poetry by the simple process of being juxtaposed together in a verbal structure. Words are extraordinarily powerful instruments *with* their meanings, and deplorably impotent when used *without*. No doubt, a painter could make some sort of a picture using only the wrong end of his brush; so could a poet make some sort of poetry without making use of the right end of words—the meaning-end. But shouldn't we regard both as a wee bit corky? And wouldn't the "new poets" who seem to be almost exclusively concerned with the sonal and pictorial qualities of the words do greater justice to themselves as artists if they were to take to the sonal and pictorial arts proper? I have no intention indeed of denying that the music of words as well as the images evoked by them are immensely important in poetry. But they are important as signs, as instruments for the further development of the full poetic meaning of the words—in which process the conceptual meanings also play their part from another side. My point is that they (the sonal and pictorial elements) should not be treated as "things", as opaque to everything else, as not bearing any semantic properties. Mallarmé's advice to his younger contemporaries about making poetry with words and not with ideas misled some of the greatest French writers who followed him. It misled Sartre into thinking that the words of a poem are totally opaque; it misled Valéry to maintain that even words should not be emphasised in a poem, what alone matter are syllables

and rhythms. I am told that there *are* poets in France who have dispensed with words and write poetry with syllables only.

I have said before that, in the first instance, the symbolist poets of France rejected meaning (and therefore the world of things) from their poetry not for the sake of the Word but for the sake of the Over-world. The point was taken from Jacques Maritain. Maritain characterises classical poetry, by which he means pre-Baudelairean poetry, as something in which 'the reader is confronted with a work of words which signifies, first as an intermediary, and through concepts subjected to the primacy of logical connections, a definite set of things standing as objects of thought—and second, as the final aim, a mysterious flash of reality which has been grasped without concept and which no concept can express' (*Creative Intuition in Art and Poetry*, Meridian ed. p. 212). I do not feel it right to say that a poem has two distinct aims, signifying a set of things in this world, and then separately 'a mysterious flash of reality', as if the flash of reality could subsist outside the world, in Platonic abstraction. That the two significations are separate for Maritain becomes more obvious in the next sentence where he says that the music of the words of classical poetry (which signifies the flash of reality) should be "strong enough to overcome *the obstacle* created by the intermediary signification, the definite set of things." I should think the natural course for the reader's aesthetic experience would be to follow the course of the poet's own creative intuition—which, according to Maritain, grasps "the flash of reality in the *God-made universe*", "the poet has perceived a certain mystery in the *mystery of the world*." If the integral unity of intuition be split up in the course of poetical composi-

tion, and one half made 'intermediary' — and, as we shall see in a moment, superfluous — then I do not understand how the second half, the intuition of the flash of reality, can be at all evoked in the mind of the reader in abstraction from the things of the world in which the flash was caught by the poet's intuition. But that is precisely what, Maritain tells us, modern poetry proposes to accomplish:

'Modern poetry has undertaken completely to set free the poetic sense. In the double signification of the poem, it endeavours to extenuate, if possible to abolish the intermediary signification, this *definite set of things* whose presence is due to the sovereignty of the logical requirements of the social signs of language, and which is, as it were, a kind of wall of separation between the poetic intuition and the unconceptualizable flash of reality to which it points. The poem is intended to have, not a double, but a single signification — only this flash of reality captured in things' (Ibid. p. 214).

I entirely fail to see how the reader is expected to take in a leap stretches of spiritual terrain which the poet had to cross step by step in order to reach the culminating point of his experience, the intuition of the flash of reality. "The resonance of the things in his subjectivity" which was so necessary for the creative intuition of the poet, has suddenly become a disturbing clang which must be silenced for the appreciative intuition of the reader. The flash of reality, the mystery of the things, which the poet saw *in the things*, is to be revealed to the reader (by 'the internalised, inaudible music of the poem') *apart from and beyond the things*. Such is the impossible task which the modern poet has, according to Maritain, set before himself. The result is that he reveals, not the flash of reality, but only the flash of his own virtuosity.

Perhaps Rilke, one of the truly great moderns, was only speaking to himself in characteristic humility; but he might well have been addressing some of his fellow-

poets who had made an artefact of words, beautiful but opaque, between themselves and the things of the world:

"Don't you know *yet*? — Fling the emptiness out of your arms

into the spaces we breathe — maybe that the birds will feel the extended air in more fervent flight. Yes, the Springs had need of you. Many a star was waiting for you to espy it. Many a wave would rise in the past towards you; or else, perhaps,

as you went by an open window, a violin would be giving itself to someone. All this was a trust.

But were you equal to it?"

I have given so much space to the treatment of poetic opacity not because I believe that most modern poetry in fact uses language that is totally opaque. Some does; but what matters is the prevailing tendency. It is considered quite the thing by our contemporary poets (yes, the Bengali poets too) to put into their poems words, phrases, lines or even whole passages which mean nothing at all, and which are there only for their sonal and pictorial virtues — sometimes typographical, as in E. E. Cummings. And this poetical practice receives theoretical justification and even plaudits from the highest critical quarters, as I have tried to show above. Sharpness of images, liquidity of consonants and length of vowels seem to have become the most important yardsticks for measuring the excellence of poetry. Even prose has been invaded. There is James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, still regarded as a work of genius, and Gertrude Stein has enriched the English language with the expression "gertrude-steinism". So I believe I have not been tilting at wind-mills. Those who are depriving language of its pellucidity are not to be taken lightly, for to corrupt language is to corrupt the most priceless possession of man. And in my opinion opacity is not the quality which distinguishes poetry from prose; it only indicates the presence of impurities in the language.

(To be concluded)

Ten Years of Nehru: A Minority Report

By JYOTISWARUP SAXENA

PERHAPS every one would agree that Jawaher Lal is more than a political leader: he is a myth, a force, a culture-hero who shapes our awareness of the social reality. What Nehru thinks to-day, the country thinks to-morrow, and his peculiar response to the complex environment of our age has become an almost compulsive cliché of Indian thought. He has the uncanny knack of putting his finger on the very pulse of history and his insight into the nature of the forces which envelope modern man is profound. He has given us, through planning and the Constitution, a secular and rational perspective of democratic effort within the context of a humanist culture. But after one has conceded all this — which is conceding a great deal — one must also add that during these last ten years as Prime Minister, he has betrayed the expectations of a small and insignificant minority. It might be argued that minorities do not matter in politics even if they represent the furious striving of a backward people to evolve a new scale of fulfilments and satisfactions: they exist only so long as somebody does not come and smash them up. And perhaps there was something wrong with the ecstasy of idealism and the fever of enthusiasm which inspired the thought of this minority. It forgot to reckon with the nature and the fact of political power. Naive, uncorrupted, guiltless liberals who see in politics the interplay of mind, intellect, imagination, courage and conscience are easily non-plussed and silenced because in their innocence they assume that a politician struggl-

ing for power through an ideology or a scale of values will remain loyal to his faith even when he comes to control the entire apparatus of political, social, intellectual and cultural initiative within the community. The tragedy of the liberal mind is that it must first create heroes and then be betrayed by them.

To the younger generation, Jawaher Lal was something more than a social technocrat, a mere 'iron man': he was the intellectual who retained his integrity and wholeness without becoming alienated from the living culture of the age. If Gandhi was the Moral Man compelled to become a politician under the pressure of history, Jawaher Lal was the Political Man in quest of a more comprehensive and active form of self-awareness. This was the phase of what I call 'politics by prophecy' and Nehru's version of the Promised Land, his intellectual and emotional richness, his cultured sincerity, the nature and the range of his commitments raised him far above the level of a mere fighter. Through his profound capacity to contain in his postures, ideas and words the contraries in the experience of a sophisticated intellectual as well as the earthiness and the integrity of the common peasant, Nehru expressed the faith of an entire people in a collective destiny. He could relate the different culture-worlds into a pattern of unified endeavour. He could if he had the time and the power, one thought, express the whole rationale of history in terms of democratic institutions. Politics for him was a form of self-consciousness, the attempt of

each man to discover for himself new dimensions and possibilities and thus contribute his bit to the creative activity of a whole culture.

In this sense Nehru was with the minority. He would rather break an organisation than become its prisoner. He lived in a state of perpetual tension — a state adored by the liberal intellectual — without the loneliness and the despair implied in the 'pale cast of thought'. His nerves and his temper, one thought, were rooted in the violent protest against the oppressive, the irrational, the inefficient, the gross, the vulgar and the humanly degrading in a stagnant society which threw up corrupt men and corrupt institutions. Instead of descending to the level of the common man, he wanted to lift him up, and his peevishness and anger were really against those who failed to see their destiny. He exhaled the aroma of Lenin with the equanimity of a saint. This, if one is cynical enough, is perhaps a myth which the immature liberals of the thirties and the forties foisted upon the most consummate tactician of all time.

The minority asks what has happened to this man who was destined to create and enlighten a nation and not merely administer a country. I submit that what has happened to him happens to all illusions and dreams, Utopias and prophets when they become involved in politics. The Prime Minister has swallowed the thinker: the party-machine has tamed, if not broken, the rebel and the democrat; the bureaucracy has transformed the genuine and the authentic man, a live wire of ideas and intuitions, into a spool of red tape: the Press has smothered the fire of revolt into a smoke-screen of clichés and pious platitudes, delusions and wish-fulfilments; his yes-men have infected him with megalomania, and his opponents, by their sheer

cussedness, have roused his egocentric fury. Nehru does not create, he administers; Nehru does not throw a spanner into the works, he blithely presides at the liquidation of the democratic impulse by conniving with those who seek to limit the range and the scope of popular initiative: politics for him is now a balancing-trick in which one plays off parochial power-groups against each other in an effort to keep this dirigible (?) balloon of pressures and counter-pressures called the Congress in fighting trim, or at least hold it from busting up. Nehru has lost the feel of the dreams and the frustrations of the common people, he is more in touch with statistics, files, figures and protocol: he has ceased to be the vessel into which the poor and the down-trodden, the lowly and the last poured all their hopes, longings and aspirations. His real strength is no longer rooted in spontaneous and willing consent but on tact, technique, publicity build-ups and patronage. His voice and its multiple echoes alone vibrate in that political and cultural wilderness over which he is king: all roads — whether of politics, literature, science, the arts, the academic and the intellectual life — lead to Jawaher Lal and are carefully guarded by his yes-men. He is our military thinker, creative writer, philosopher, educationist, economist, parliamentarian, politician, historian, and what not, but the spirit within him languishes and dies. To be patted on the back by Mr. Nehru to-day is the surest though the most humiliating means of political, social, and monetary success in this corrupt and power-worshipping age. Nehru has concentrated within his hands the entire cultural and social initiative of the whole country and he does not know the cost which people have to pay in terms of intrigue and self-respect to catch his eye. The nation looks up to Jawaher Lal and Nehru looks down at the nation like a hen at its

brood: herein lies the tragedy of this decade.

We fondly believed that Indian Nationalism would throw up a new kind of leader, a new type of Prime Minister, who would, through his policies and practices, change the minds of men, the texture of their intellectual and emotional life, and create a new nation by enlarging the scope and the area of conscious, deliberate and willed consent and initiative. We are sadly convinced that we have got a Prime Minister who is in no way fundamentally different from the Prime Ministers of other countries except perhaps that he is a more brilliant tactician who knows how to exploit the myths and the illusions of his countrymen: he can go one better and create new myths to replace the patched-up decrepit fabric of hopes and fears which carried him to power. It is no argument that others might have done worse and we really have no alternative to Nehru, for the Jawaher Lal we knew was not the next best but the very best, not a stop-gap arrangement to prevent the country from falling apart but a permanent creative revolution which sought to transform our whole society through a new sense of purpose, vision and destiny. That Jawaher Lal is now no more.

But, one might say, has not Nehru done his bit by making the country accept the idea of planning on the basis of 'mixed economy' and the concept of the socialist pattern of society as the goal of our endeavour? The whole approach to the complex political and economic environment of the modern age of which the policy of dynamic neutrality is a product is ingrained in the heritage of a new kind of nationalism through which India tried to discover a new basis of stability and survival in the midst of the eddies and the whirl-pools of hate. It is true that Jawaher Lal has given to these ideas a new intellectual and moral stature: he has made a stagnant and deca-

dent society progress-conscious because he has grasped the fundamental needs of a backward social system. He has laid down the norms of relevance in the field of economic activity. Is this not enough to make a man immortal?

It certainly is. But the ideas of Nehru today, I feel, are based on strategy. What was once a faith has now become a fashion: a vision has hardened into a creed and a Church with its apostles and renegades. How else can one explain the fact that in spite of his fervent talk about democracy and solemn homilies on freedom and self-expression, almost every single institution from the *gaon panchayat*, the municipalities, and the district boards to the autonomous universities, has ceased to be democratic? We have not only failed to create new channels of creative initiative but have gradually dammed up even those which existed in the past. Nehru talks of the diffusion of political and economic power within the framework of a planned society and yet he shuts his eyes and refuses to see the impact of the process of bureaucratisation based upon the concentration of all political, economic, social and cultural functions within a few hands.

It is said that we have failed to raise up to the task because we have lost the sense of India, of its manifoldness and variety in the quest for a narrow and parochial self-interest: we lack the foresight and the dignity required in an age in which vast and unknown perspectives of adventure are opening up before mankind. What can Nehru do if we are corrupt and lack integrity and character? He has at least clamped the lid tight on a moral cess-pool. But the main reason of Nehru's popularity is that the nation still believes that he can do something about it rather than sit upon a volcano and leave us alone when it explodes. Nehru's followers go on ruthlessly exploiting this myth to keep themselves in

positions of authority and power: they even go to the extent of distorting the political reality and drug the people on a dream. It is not Nehru's ideas which catch votes because ideas alone do not matter in our politics today; they are masks rather than mirrors and conceal more than they express. The myth of Nehru is the greatest confidence-trick in our history. Jawahar Lal was the broken vessel into which we, the entire Indian people, poured the bitter potion of all our vague longings as well as our muted hopes in a frenzied attempt to find a destiny for ourselves. I tremble to think of the terrible day when this great nation wakes up from its reverie disillusioned, saddened, cynical, and despairing to discover a little too late that the intoxication, the sense of self-abandon and the fever of hope which we associate with the myth of Jawahar Lal are a part of the fraud called politics. All betrayals are dangerous but the betrayal of a Utopia kills a culture.

Please do remember that this is a minority report, a disenchanted and sad assessment of the interplay of political and cultural forces as they appear to an intellectually harassed, emotionally alienated and a morally starved minority which seeks in politics as well as culture a form of self-awareness in terms of ideas and values rather than power status and money. The age of Nehru is gradually breaking down its will, corrupting its conscience, debasing its intelligence and moral vigour, destroying its integrity and stamina through the whole brutal cult of survival through success and success through intrigue and irresponsibility. Politics is no longer a focus and a discipline rooted in a dramatic revolt against the oppressive burden of hate and terror through which we transform ideas into social energies. We break our heads against the blank wall of complacency and though there is no shortage of grievances or

anger, the agony of self-delusion and the anguish of having grasped only the symbols and the tokens of power, our politics is still the politics of a generation:

Lost in a haunted wood

Children afraid of the night

Who have never been happy or good.

(AUDEN)

I submit that the basic issues which we and Nehru face to-day are intrinsically the same as they were twenty years ago: in spite of the anaesthesia of Nehruism, we are back again into the thirties and the early forties. The age of Nehru has forgotten the most crucial issue involved in transforming a stagnant and decadent culture into an organic, progressive and socialist society. I call it the *problem of integrity in politics*, the problem of relating socialist and democratic values to the total life of man through a unified way of thinking and feeling, initiative and control, which reconciles the contraries in individual and collective destiny into a coherent motive of social endeavour. Democracy and Socialism fail not because of a clash or conflict of interests but because of the disintegration of motives. The narrow, the parochial, the anarchic, the divisive and the fissiparous in our experience of a rapidly changing socio-economic system transforms the immediate selfish needs of individuals, castes, classes, linguistic and provincial groups into a chaos of warring wants on which our survival depends. We see society through a filter, and the pressure of the age compels us to equate our own future with the future of the nation. This conflict between competing motives and isolated destinies raises caste, group, province or party into a living force. Instead of the unity of motives, we have the plurality of passions. We do not see society as a whole but as a series of splinter-groups and incoherent tensions. Politics ceases to be a form of creativity, a kind of self-awareness through

which: a culture stabilises itself. Gandhi raised this problem of integrity in politics on the moral rather than the intellectual and the emotional level: he gave us a sense of India, of its manifoldness and variety, its complex texture and unifying threads. He was concerned with a revolution in the hearts of men which compels them to seek a new kind of adjustment within themselves as well as with their environment. Jawaher Lal's task was to give this impulse a concrete institutional and intellectual shape, and his basic failure lies in the fact that he has failed to rise up to this great challenge.

His answer to the problem of integrity in politics is perhaps contained in the Five Year Plans and the Indian Constitution and the Panch Sheel. The highest form of technology, the most advanced science, acceleration of the pace of economic growth, enforcement of an abstract and formal legal norm, the administrative and the military 'steel-frame' which holds India together through its centralised and bureaucratic control of popular initiative—Mr. Nehru seems to think—will by the sheer fact of a logic of existence unify the country and create the consciousness of a single stream of collective endeavour. But Prime Minister Nehru, I submit, has forgotten the lesson of Jawaher Lal. Since it is in the minds and the hearts of men that a nation is born, matures, grows old, and dies, it is there that the defences of nationalism must be constructed. Even planning raises the problem of integrity in politics, for economic growth presupposes a resilient, flexible, and active approach to the material and the social environment: it implies a complex of assumptions, a system of priorities and wants, a framework for expressing and satisfying them, a mechanism which corrects the psychic and the social imbalance involved in rapid change, a solvent for the misery of rootlessness and the bewilderment of accepting the new on a collective

national scale. There is some such thing as the 'spirit' behind economic growth, the determined passion of a whole society to transform itself from what it is to what it wants to be. Nehru seems to forget that progress, even material progress, is something more than facts and factories, statistics and steel-plants, or balance of trade and employment figures. They are but the externals of a society's quest for a kind of welfare which it regards as valuable. You cannot evolve a pre-fabricated technological, economic, administrative, military and political Utopia by a trick of social engineering or mere expertise and know-how. Before you can have the know-how, you must give us a know-why. Democratic planning is something more than conjuring out a steel mill from a khadder cap. Economic growth is not automatic: it is rooted in the self-awareness and the self-consciousness of a whole culture rather than of the few at the top. It implies the regeneration of the will, the liberation of the creative energies in a whole society.

Jawaher Lal was the symbol of an entirely new type of resurgent Nationalism. What can that symbol do when that creative fervour is gone? He can at least cease to be a symbol of what he no longer represents. If he can no longer infect his men with the fever and the passion of a great idea, he can at least dissociate himself from the corrupt machine which crushes all integrity out of existence under its heavy burden of opportunism, snobbery, intrigue, terror, patronage and power-politics. It does not mean that he should leave the Congress but only that he should not claim for himself the status of the saviour of the Indian people, 'the child of the Indian revolution', the reality behind the great myth which we wove round him. Let him be the leader of the Congress Party moving in the familiar world of Bismarcks and Stalins which we know how to judge. If he

cannot give us anything new to express, he can at least decelerate this clogging up of the channels of thought and communication by his lieutenants who in their anxiety to preserve the 'glamour' of the sacred white elephant of the temple called Nehru are trying to impose the worst and the most puerile kind of conformity. I do not even suggest that Nehru should resign his Prime Ministership and go into a political wilderness to lead the legion of the 'lost' and 'the damned'. If he wants to be the Prime Minister, let him remain the Prime Minister but let him be the Prime Minister and nothing more (who on earth bothers about Prime Ministers?). He must cast off this mantle of the prophet, the mass-hero, the cultural leader whose word is law in every field: he must shed off this pose of the philosopher-king with which he confounds and silences the minority. Simply by abstaining, Nehru will reduce the pressures generated in a conformist society against those who refuse to share its values. Perhaps he does not know that during the last ten years he has laid down the foundations of a sterile culture and a static society: there are many things which he does not know and nobody has the courage to tell him.

Our only hope is that if Jawaher Lal cannot lead us out of our hell, he can at least

stop misleading us by the myth that through politics and politics alone can we find self-fulfilment. The creative interaction of cultures for which Nehru stands has under his able leadership become the degenerate interplay of puerilities, catchwords and slogans and those who resist the magic of his name are mercilessly put down, deprived of the confidence in their own intellectual and emotional powers, robbed of the very sense by which we see folly as folly, cruelty as cruelty, injustice as injustice and terror as terror. The manipulations of the 'culture-builders', of which Mr. Nehru is one, have destroyed the very basis of integrity. We shall be content if Mr. Nehru dissociates himself from the steam-roller which crushes those who seek to build the bulwarks of freedom within their own nature. Let him have power but let him not raise it into an absolute value. But we are grateful to Nehru for having taught us the most important lesson of our life: *every age does not get the saviour it deserves, and in politics we must look only for politicians, not for myths and destinies, humanists and prophets, martyrs and culture-heroes, because politics ultimately means betrayal (even if it is Lenin, Stalin or Mao) and a politician can only administer, he cannot create. He is not the architect but the scavenger of history.*

The Food and Population Problem in India

By A. RANGANATHAN

THE problem of feeding the ever-increasing population of our country which is difficult even in normal times, has been rendered particularly acute owing to the uneasy transition of our economy from an essentially agrarian pattern with its accent on increased agricultural production during our First Five Year Plan to the next stage of economic development with its emphasis on heavy industries. And the various difficulties and hardships necessitated by such a transition have not been fully grasped. It is a complex problem and has to be viewed in its several aspects—the historical background starting with the separation of Burma, the Bengal Famine, the partition of India and its economic consequences, the First Plan, deficit financing and its consequent inflation and the various solutions proposed to avoid a possible crisis, the gloomy Malthusian situation that is taking place making it increasingly difficult to maintain even the existing per capita income which is one of the lowest in the world, the great time-lag between a fall in mortality rate due to medicine and the fertility of the Indian population which does not suit the present age, and birth control as a possible remedy as well as several other steps to be initiated in order to establish a balanced economy as a whole.

The food position in India, except for an occasional spell has never been sound. Unfortunately the seriousness of the problem was never realized as long as Burma remained a part of India. Due to the lack of

any comprehensive production or consumption statistics, the following figures published by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations can help us to draw valuable conclusions regarding our food position over a long stretch of forty years.

IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

Exports (+)	Imports (—)	In million tons	
Year	India	India excluding Burma	Burma
1900—1905	+3.16	...	...
1905—1910	+2.84	...	...
1910—1915	+4.22	+1.95	2.35 +2.27
1915—1920	+2.59	+ .40	+2.19
1920—1925	+2.48	— .16	+2.64
1925—1930	+2.03	— .77	+2.80
1930—1935	+1.85	—1.27	+3.12
1935—1940	+1.46	—1.39	+2.85

The only period when India had a surplus of 2.35 million tons was in the period 1910-1920. During this period the increase in the population was only 1.2 per cent which was the lowest in the century due to the terrible influenza epidemic which accounted for nearly fourteen million deaths. This surplus was possible because there were not enough people to eat! The deficit starts in the very next quinquennium (1920-1925) which repeats itself successfully. With the separation of Burma, the problem of food shortage became a stark reality. If the Government had taken stock of this grave situation and applied suitable measures, the Bengal Famine of 1943 which caused the deaths of more than one and half million people (even if we are to

believe the official version) might not have occurred.

The Indian economy which was already affected by the Bengal Famine had to suffer more as a result of partition. India was left with 82 per cent of the population on a rough estimate, but could not get more than 68 per cent of the total acreage of the fields, 65 per cent of wheat land and only 48 million acres of irrigated area. In 1921, the population stood at 248.18 millions; in 1931 at 275.52 millions, in 1941 at 314.88 millions and in 1951 at 356.83 millions. The Census Commissioner for India has calculated that at this rate of growth during the period of 1921-1951, the population will reach a figure of 410 millions in 1961, 460 millions in 1971 and 520 millions in 1981. According to the Census Commissioner's analysis, the limitations of food production will virtually set the limit of the population at 450 millions, the D-day taking place in 1969. This certainly dramatizes the situation. While it would not be realistic to dismiss the Census Commissioner's Report as the dismal forebodings of a Cassandra, several factors have to be taken into consideration before we commit ourselves to a definite formulation. The gradual increase in the general standard of living which will make more and more of our people alive to the need of family planning, improved methods of agriculture (including the possibilities of the application of atomic energy in the irrigation of dry areas and the irradiation of crops as a result of mutations induced when crops plants are exposed to atomic radiation) are some of the factors which must be taken into consideration in any prediction about the future. There can be no doubt that the electricity generated by atomic power stations would render possible the irrigation of hitherto neglected areas as well as in the yielding of new land to agriculture. Professor Ake Gustafsson's prediction (during the first

International Conference on the peaceful uses of Atomic Energy held in Geneva in August 1955) about the new possibilities in plant breeding opened up new vistas of the atomic revolution in agriculture. It is possible to argue that to a considerable extent, the future prospects of the food and population problem in India are linked up with what may be termed the agricultural Economics of Atomic Energy.

The First Five Year Plan draft stated that 'under present conditions, an increase in manpower does not strengthen the economy, but in fact weakens it.' The sharp fall in mortality rate is due to the various modern public health measures sponsored by the Government. Unfortunately it is not accompanied by what may be termed as the modern fertility rate. This is a phenomenon peculiar to underdeveloped countries. In the words of A. Sauvy, the noted French economist (in terms of annual rates) 'the co-existence of mortality rate below 1.5 per cent and a birth rate over four per cent is no longer an exception. Now the mortality rate for the Western countries at the outbreak of World War I was 1.5 per cent; thus many under-developed countries have the fertility of European countries in 1750 with the year 1900 mortality rate. A time-lag of at least a century and a half.' Various remedies have been proposed to solve the food and population problem in India—internal migration, emigration, development of agriculture, industrialization and a population policy. Internal migration is not a solution in itself since it is connected with the bigger problem of industrialization. Emigration is certainly a tempting solution, but so far as India is concerned, it is more easily said than done. To cite an example, countries like Australia are in need of skilled labour whereas the problem of India is to find an outlet for her surplus agricultural labour. The problem cannot be solved even

partly by international emigration, but must be solved within our geographical boundaries. In this connection, Prof. Nurkse drew attention to the saving potential in rural underdevelopment as an instrument of capital formation. The idea is to take the surplus labour off the land and have them work on projects ranging from railways to factories. This would contribute to an induced process of economic growth which will progressively lessen the burden on an economy subject to a steady increase in the rate of growth of our population as well as laying the foundations of a gradual process which could transfer a good number of the people of the primary sector into the secondary and tertiary sectors.

While agricultural investment constituted nearly thirty-three per cent of the total outlay in the First Five Year Plan, it constitutes only twenty-one per cent of the total outlay earmarked in the Second Plan. The present difficulty is due to the undue emphasis on heavy industries, without striving to establish a balanced economy.

Inflation which usually follows in the wake of deficit financing was not pronounced in its effects due to some favourable conditions during the period of the First Plan. The food situation which was normal due to the favourable monsoon, the enthusiasm of the Government to fulfil the food targets, enough sterling reserves to draw upon which inspired a sense of confidence and financial stability, a general recession in price levels, both in the internal and international spheres contributed to bring down the inflationary effects of deficit financing. During the First Plan period, inflation was confined to a few areas in the world and the over-all pattern of the world economy as a whole was not affected. Inflation at the time of independence was the result of external factors, particularly due to post-war difficulties. But the economic

climate is different today. It is known that while the rise in prices is a sign of a developing economy, it must be arrested at the stage when it would develop into a spiral of inflation. And it is especially dangerous to make use of large scale deficit financing in a country like India which is continuously faced with balance of payment difficulties. The inflation we are suffering from today is to a great extent an artificial creation of the government of India. Nearly Rs. 957 crores have been injected into the economy in the last three years. And considering that a sum of Rs. 245 crores is proposed for the period 59-60 to be followed up by a possible outlay of Rs. 250 crores for 1960-1961, the amount of deficit financing would run to Rs. 1452 crores, which exceeds the originally contemplated maximum limit of Rs. 1200 crores. Today, inflation is a world-wide phenomenon. Added to the usual danger of minimum latent inflation which may be described as conventional, the Government have further generated the forces of full-scale inflation arising out of increased doses of deficit financing which would be hardly withstood by our economy. The effects of deficit financing can be brought down considerably with adequate food reserves. While two million tons could suffice for purposes of emergency, another eight million tons are necessary if the effects of the increase in prices are to be neutralized.

The idea of food control looms once again on the economic horizon of India. But the deteriorating food position cannot be arrested by mere controls. We are faced with a philosophical dilemma—whether in the interests of the Five Year Plan with its emphasis on large-scale industrialization the basic requirement of the people can be sacrificed or is the Five Year Plan meant to increase the prosperity of the people. This does not mean that the policy of industrialization is to be opposed. But the

difficulties arising out of transition that we are facing ought not to be brushed aside but viewed with sympathy and understanding. Merely issuing forth appeals *ad nauseum* to tighten our belts or to change our food habits cannot help the government to grapple with the food problem. After all food is as much a part of the hard core of the plan as iron and steel. Man does not live by iron and steel! If prices rise still further and controls are introduced it will create an artificial situation which may result in break-down of the economy. Indeed a combination of factors such as an unfavourable monsoon and 'localised' wars in one or the other danger spots of the world can lead to a tragedy greater in human suffering than even in the Bengal tragedy of 1943. Should the same folly be repeated due to sheer callousness under totally different circumstances when the situation can be easily controlled by our Government? 'The time has already come,' wrote Keynes in his famous book 'the Economic Consequences of the Peace', 'when each country needs a considered national policy about what size of population, whether larger or smaller than at present or the same is more expedient. And having settled this policy, we must take steps to carry it into operation.' How are we to formulate a population policy for India? There is no need to create a scare, and the people need not be hustled into adopting a policy of family planning overnight. India cannot be said to be overpopulated at the moment, although her rate of growth seems to be alarmingly high. Family Planning arises out of a higher standard of living and a conscious policy by the Government to introduce birth control through disseminating information on various methods of family planning and introducing cheap and hygienic methods of contraception by starting a number of

clinics would help in creating an atmosphere when the message of birth control could be understood by the majority of the people. There is need for real social education which covers not only the technical aspects of the problem but the philosophy of birth control as well. Family Planning must be an automatic process and not an imposition from above; it cannot be passed by legislation, but its meaning must be clearly explained to the people so that the country becomes population-minded through social awareness of the problem.

The Food and population problem is one of the major factors in history. Indeed, Lord Boyd Orr pointed out that 'calories' were opposed to communism implying that a full stomach and revolutionary fervour went ill together. It has been well remarked that 'had the feeding arrangements of Bourbon France given satisfaction, the Bastille would probably never have been stormed or had the steppes of Central Asia been able to feed all their rapidly breeding tribes, neither the Aryan nor Mughal invasions might have occurred.' Of course, the modern Indians have no Bastille to storm, but nonetheless are confronted with the food and population problem. The food and population problem of India can be solved only through a spirit of cooperation between the Government and the people; the Government ought to reduce deficit financing to the minimum, if not scrap it altogether, build up a reserve stock of at least ten million tons of food grains, rice and wheat, in addition to what we import for our actual needs (although it would mean a slice off our foreign exchange) and initiate a well coordinated national policy of birth control through gradual stages. The future can be hopeful only if the Government do not impose an undue strain on the people.

Two Roads from Marx *

*The Themes of Alienation and Exploitation,
and Workers' Control, in Socialist Thought.*

By DANIEL BELL

1. A Look at the Road Map

The root impulse which has underlain trade union organization in the last hundred years has been the need for protection against 'exploitation'. Exploitation was seen in two forms: first, that an employer was profiting unfairly by the labour of the worker; and second, that having the power to hire and fire, to provide or withhold bread, the employer had the unilateral and arbitrary power to determine the amount of work to be performed, the wages, the rhythm of work—in short, to impose his own concept of equity and his own logic of efficiency upon the worker.

This impulse, with its motive against injustice, existed long before Marx, but it was given its sharpest expression, its key concepts, its basic analytical tools and powerful rhetoric from Marx. Central to one aspect of Marx's thought was the notion—how simpleminded in retrospect—that if one 'transformed' property relations then exploitation would be ended. The logic was simple: the capitalist was the beneficiary of exploitation through surplus value—the extra labour time worked for the capitalist. Abolish private property, eliminate the

capitalist, socialize the surplus, and exploitation is ended. (Marx once called 'juridical cretinism' the idea that one could deduce the actual power relations in a society by citing the legal forms). For those who are not 'juridical cretins' it is clear that even where the legal form of private property is ended, exploitation can and does exist in many other ways: in a state regime which draws off surplus value in the name of socialism and distributes it to new privileged classes; in the arbitrary power of a manager in a private or nationalized enterprise who, disregarding the wishes of workers, fixes work norms, introduces speed-up, and sets the condition of work, who, in general, follows the logic of efficiency. In the Soviet Union, the old property forms were transformed, but a heavy exploitation has emerged with extraordinary powers of the police state and the arbitrary authority of the plant manager. In the West, the property concept was never challenged directly, but the authority of the capitalist or manager has been reduced considerably. In some instances, the forms of control give a large role to worker representatives (as in the *Comité d'Entreprises* in France), though the content is minimal; in the United States, the forms are few, but the control is effective.

It would be fair to say that in the West, by and large, exploitation of workers in any extreme or crude form of the arbitrary power of management, has been eliminat-

* This is part II of the paper presented at the international seminar on Workers' Participation in Management, held in Vienna, Sept. 19-25, 1958, under the auspices of the Congress for Cultural Freedom. It was completed at the Centre for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, California.

ed.¹ Yet a large task remains, a task which arises from a more pervasive problem, a problem not of capitalism, but which underlies all industrial civilization: the dehumanization of the labourer, the alienation of work. Curiously, the theme of alienation in work—as the theme of alienation—finds its most original and powerful expression in the writings of the young Marx. But this was a road that was never followed. And it is to this road that we now turn.

2. *Alienation—The Detached View*

The goal of man for Marx, as for Hegel was freedom—a state where man would be self-willed. In the 'kingdom of freedom', man would overcome necessity and alienation: Man would no longer be bound by the Promethean thongs of necessity, (the dependence on nature and its limitations), or be cleaved by the Orphic separateness of *alienation* (the radical dissociation of the self into a subject that strives to control his own fate, and an object who is manipulated by others).

One need not ascend into the cloudy heights of German idealism to accept the pervasiveness of alienation as fact of the human condition. It is a subject of fashionable literary discussion today and almost a catchword for existentialists. But alienation is *not* a wholly negative, or dehumanizing condition. Alienation in the Hegelian idiom is the 'externalization' of the self onto some physical or spiritual object. But a sculptor who 'externalizes' a pre-figured image creates beauty by transforming inanimate matter into something with a 'life' of its own which enhances other lives. The individual who can stand aside and regard himself with detachment achieves that first, necessary stage of self-understanding which strips one of a sense of omnipotence and gives one a compassion for the suffering of others. Modern philosophies of 're-inte-

gration', whether they be tribal (on the basis of race), or communal (on the basis of class), or spiritual (by losing the sense of self, as in Zen) are in the name of being human, ultimately anti-human, because they are anti-individual. To be deracinated, to be uprooted, to be alienated, is the first step in the travail of self-consciousness which is prelude to becoming an individual. More than that, the concept of alienation represents a radical break in the history of philosophy for it initiates the period of *modernism*. In classical philosophy, the ideal man was the *contemplative* one. Neither the middle ages nor the transitional period to contemporary times (the 17th to 19th century) was ever wholly able to detach itself from the ideal of the *Stoa*. Even Goethe, who gives us the first modern man in Faust, the man of ambition unchained, reverted to the Greek in his ethical image of the human ideal. Hegel introduced a general principle of *action* since man, in order to realize his self, has actively to overcome the subject-object dualism. In action a man finds himself; by his choices he defines his character. In Marx, the principle of action is given specificity in a radical new emphasis on *work*. Man becomes *man* through work; through work he is able to transform nature; through work man loses his isolation and learns to become a social or cooperative being.²

In locating man's alienation in work, Marx had taken the revolutionary step of grounding philosophy in concrete human activity. The steps by which he 'freed himself' from the tyranny of abstraction was a long and difficult one. As an Hegelian, Marx first thought of the alienation of work in terms of the idealistic dualities. Man, in working, reifies himself in objective things. This is *labor* (*Arbeit*) and his part of 'an alien and hostile world standing over against him.' Labour is compulsive, (*nicht freiwillig*); in labour, man is 'under the

domination, compulsion, and yoke of another man'. In a state of freedom, however, man would transform nature and himself by free, conscious, spontaneous, creative work. But what stood in the way of freedom? The fact that in the alienation of work man lost control of the process of work, and of the product of his labour. For Marx, the source of alienation lay in the *property system* whereby man sold his labour power and someone else appropriated it. In the organization of work—in labour becoming a commodity—man became an object, used by others, and unable, therefore, to obtain satisfaction in what he was doing; and by becoming a commodity, he lost his sense of identity; he lost the sense of himself.

The extraordinary fact about Marx is that he had taken a concept which German philosophy had seen as an ontological fact³ and given it a social content. As ontology, as an ultimate, man could only accept alienation. As a social fact, rooted in a specific system of historical relations, alienation could be overcome by changing the social system. But in narrowing the concept, however, Marx ran two risks: of falsely identifying the source of alienation only in the property system; and of introducing a note of utopianism in the idea that once the system was abolished, man would immediately be free.⁴ Unfortunately, both risks proved hazardous, and the 'vulgar' implications were drawn by Marx's followers.

The question why men were propertyless turned Marx to economics. For a man whose name is so linked with the 'dismal science' Marx was never really interested in economics. His correspondence with Engels, in later years, is studded with contemptuous references to the subject (at one time he referred to the 'economic filth'), and he resented the fact that his detailed explorations into the economic mechanisms

of society prevented him from carrying on other studies. But he continued, because for him economics was the practical side of philosophy—it would unveil the mystery of alienation; and for him the categories of political economy, principally the concept of exploitation became the material expression of that alienation.

This is seen most clearly in the studies written in 1844, when Marx was 26, called the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts*. Unpublished in his lifetime, and preserved among Marx's papers, they were discovered only in this century and published, first incompletely, in Russian in 1927, and in German original in 1932 by D. Riazanov, at the time, head of the Marx-Engels Institute.

The *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* was an 'anthropoloty', a discussion of the nature of man. But it is, in the history of Marxist thought, a key document for it represents the bridge from left-Hegelianism to the Marxism we have come to know. In it one finds the first conception of alienation as rooted in work, (rather than in abstract spirit or religion) and the beginnings of the analysis of property. And in the analysis of property, one finds the transmutation of philosophical into economic categories: Thus *alienation*, once conceived to be a process where an individual has lost his satisfaction in work, is now seen as *exploitation*, or the appropriation of surplus product by the capitalist. Thus a philosophical expression which actually embodied a socio-psychological condition has become an economic category.

But the irony is that in moving from 'philosophy' to 'reality', from phenomenology to political economy, Marx had moved from one kind of abstraction to another. Self alienation becomes transformed; man as 'generic Man' (Man writ large) becomes divided into *classes of men*. In *The German Ideology*, written in 1846 (but first publish-

ed in full in 1932), the idea of 'self' has disappeared from Marx's writings. Marx now mocks the left-Hegelians for talking of 'human nature, of Man in general, who belongs to no class, has no reality and subsists only in the realm of philosophical fantasy'. But in saying that there is no human nature 'inherent in each separate individual' (as Marx does in his sixth thesis on Feurbach) but only classes, one introduces a new determinism; and in place of men, acting as complex individuals in history, one introduces the *persona* of classes.

Marx himself points out explicitly, in his preface to *Capital* written in 1867, that 'to prevent possible misunderstanding... I paint the capitalist and the landlord in no sense in *couleur de rose*. Here individuals are dealt with only insofar as they are the personifications of economic categories, embodiments of particular class-relations and class-interests. My standpoint, from which the evolution of the economic formation of society is viewed as a process of natural history, can, less than any other, make the individual responsible for relations whose creature he socially remains, however much he may subjectively raise himself above them'. Thus individual responsibility is turned into class morality, and the meaningfulness of individual action transformed into impersonal mechanisms.

To sum up the argument, thus far: in his early philosophical writings Marx had seen, against Hegel, that alienation, or the loss of a sense of self, was rooted primarily in work rather than in the abstract development of consciousness. In the organization of work, men became 'means', for the aggrandizement of others rather than ends in themselves. As alienated labour, there was a two-fold loss: men lost control over the conditions of work; and lost, too, the product of their labour. This dual conception was always present, even in the later

Marx: *the loss of control of work was seen as 'dehumanization', occasioned by the division of labour and intensified by technology; the loss of product, as 'exploitation', because a portion of man's labour (surplus value) was appropriated by the employer.* But other than passing literary references in *Capital* to the dehumanization of labour and the fragmentation of work, *this first aspect of the problem was glossed over by Marx*; in common with later sociologists, Marx felt that the only solution lay in the reduction of the hours of work, the automation of labour and the development of leisure. What became central to *Capital* was the concrete social relationship created by private property, that of employer-employee, rather than the processes generated by technology. Thus Marx turned his attention to economics. In the key chapter in *Capital*, the section on the 'fetishism of commodities,' Marx sought to expose the process of exploitation; i.e., that while labour was formally free, in the complicated exchange process, surplus value was taken from the worker. The solution, therefore, was simple: abolish private property, and the system of exchange (later Marxists wanted to abolish the market altogether, mistaking its function in facilitating exchange with the consequences of exchange), and exploitation would disappear. This became the political message and the political goal of socialism. This was the historic impulse behind workers' control.

But in this transmutation of the concept of alienation, a root insight was lost as well—that alienation is a consequence of the organization of work, and to end alienation one must examine the work process itself. The time has come, perhaps, to move away from the transmogrified personifications, with their simplistic views of social behaviour and their simpleminded solutions for 'history'. If one is to deal meaningfully

with the loss of self, of the meaning of responsibility in modern life—one must begin again with concrete problems, and among the first of these is the nature of the *work process* itself, the initial source of alienation.

3. *Meaning in Work—a New Direction*

In recent years there has arisen a sophistication which understands that *the abolition of private property alone will not guarantee the end of exploitation. The problem has been posed as: how does one check bureaucracy.* The problem is a real one. In socialist thought the 'new' answer is to raise again the theme of 'workers' control'. This has shaped the demand for *comités d'entreprise* in France, for *mitsbestimmungsrecht* in Germany, and is emerging in Britain as the left-wing answer to the British Labour Party's plan 'Industry and Society.' It underlies, of course, the demand for workers' councils in Poland and Yugoslavia. I have no quarrel with the demand *per se*. But often it is difficult to know what the concept means.

In Communist theory (to the extent there has been one apart from the opportunistic absorption of syndicalist ideas), the slogan of 'workers' control' was conceived of almost entirely in *political* terms, as one of the means of undercutting the economic power of the employer class under capitalism, and as a means to power, but not as a technique of democratization or the administration of industry in a socialist society.

At the other extreme there was the detailed, imaginative, but unworkable blueprints pieced together by the medievalists, distributivists and syndicalists who formed the Guild Socialist movement in Britain before and after World War I. The movement has been insufficiently appreciated for the Guild Socialists wrestled, as did the

earlier Fabians, with concrete problems of administration. Most of the questions which beset socialist and managerial societies today were anticipated and thrashed out in Guild Socialist debates. They were aware that nationalization of the means of production might result in the exploitation of the individual Guilds by the State (i.e., the building of unwanted new investment at the expense of consumption or leisure, the setting of high work norms, etc. On the other hand, syndicalism, or the ownership of production by the individual Guilds might lead to a separatism or 'parochial imperialism' whereby a single Guild might seek to benefit at the expense of others. The Guildsmen 'solved' the problem by vesting title to capital and land in the State, but leasing the property to the Guilds at a rent (or interest) large enough to cover government expenses. Politically, the Guild State was to be composed of a bi-cameral body, the one a geographical Parliament. The other made up of functional (i.e., vocational) representatives. The consumer, through Parliament, was to set the goals of production; the Council of Guild Representatives was responsible for the efficient conduct of industry. Each Guild was to be a self-governing body, based on local councils; membership was to be open freely, but if jobs were unavailable, the State was to support the waiting applicant until he could work. Each Guild was to set its own conditions of work—tempo, grievance procedures, etc. The Guild would receive money in proportion to its membership, but, could distribute the shares in accordance with the wishes of the membership, either in equal shares or in differentials according to skills. In contrast to production, distribution was to be under the control of the State, with Parliament determining wage and price levels, and the general level of new investment. Foreign trade, inevitably, would be a Government

monopoly. But ordinary forms of personal property, homes, autos, etc., would be left to the individual.

As a compromise between statism and syndicalism, Guild Socialism has given us many useful guides. Its weakness is that it sought to grapple with too many problems and that it set forth too detailed a blueprint. It was, paradoxically, too rational. Human societies cannot be made over *de novo*. One has to begin, pragmatically, with existing structures and with the character, temperament, and traditions—and desires—of the people concerned.

If the slogan of 'workers' control' is raised, the simple starting point, perhaps, is to ask: workers' control over *what*? Control over the entire economy? This is unfeasible. A syndicalist society is too much a single-interest affair, which, if extended with its own bureaucracy, would simply substitute one form of interest domination for another. If a single industry, or enterprise? One can question, further, whether this, too, is a meaningful — realistic — concept.⁵ The British T.U.C. report, in 1932, on *The Control of Industry* — which accepted the public corporation rather than Guild structure as the form of nationalized property, and joint consultation rather than syndicalist organisation as the form of social control — was a hard-headed recognition of the limits of workers' control. And the new British Labour Party program on *Industry and Society*, which extends the idea of social control, through State ownership of shares in enterprises, although increasing the risk of a new 'managerial' class society, is in principle, a large step forward in creating 'social accountability' of corporations to society, which is the aim, too, of workers' control.

The major confusion in the idea of workers' control, as it has been put forward by socialists and syndicalists is that the word control has always had a double

meaning: as direction (e.g., to control the course of an automobile) and as a check (e.g., to control someone's rage). Usually, in the debates on workers' control, the proponents have rarely singled out the different meanings. Roughly speaking, socialists have talked of workers' control to mean direction, or management of an enterprise by the workers' themselves, or the participation in management. This latter sense is the meaning of workers' control as it is being tried in Yugoslavia. The difficulty inherent in worker participation in management is that it tends to minimize the separate interest of workers, from management, and to rob the workers of an independent status in the plant. Historically, the trade union has been a restrictive and protective organization, acting to defend workers' interests. Where the union has become an instrument to 'control' the workers, in the interests of national unity or for the state, workers have formed substitute bodies. This was the history of the shop stewards movement in Britain during World War I, of the workers' councils in Poland in October 1956. In Yugoslavia today, the Communist Party is in a dilemma. Because the workers have been brought into participation in management, there seems to be no functional role for the union; and some theorists have gone so far as to say that the trade unions ought to be eliminated. In Britain, on the other hand, the unions in nationalized industries have consistently refused to participate on the Boards of Management or to take responsibility for production. The union continues to act as an independent, defensive institution vis-a-vis management.

Is there, then, no role at all for workers' control? If there is any meaning to the idea of workers' control, it is control — *in the shop* — over the things which directly affect his work-a-day life: the rhythms, pace, and demands of work; a voice in the

setting of equitable standards of pay; a check on the demands of the hierarchy over him. These are perhaps 'small' solutions to large problems what Karl Popper has called 'piecemeal technology', but look where the eschatological visions have led!

Let us separate out two things which are crucial, I believe, in affecting the worker in the plant: one is the question of equity in treatment; the other is the impact of technology and an engineering culture on the work process itself.

By *equity*, a worker wants a situation where no supervisor should have arbitrary or capricious power over him, and where some channel exists whereby his own grievances find an impartial adjudication. And secondly, by *equity*, a worker wants to be assured that his wage, *relative to others in the plant or area*, is fair. The question of differentials in wages is a difficult one. In the past these differentials have been set by custom, or by the supply-and-demand balances in the market. In recent years, engineers have sought, through job evaluation schemes, to set up 'impartial' intervals between classes of jobs. Often these have failed because the 'ornery' workers refuse to believe that mechanical criteria, mechanically applied, constitute equity; and sometimes because 'power' groups in a plant refuse to recognize a scheme which disadvantages them. In the West, by and large, the functions of the unions (or of shop committees, since in Germany for example, the unions deal with regional wage policies and have no roots in the shops) have been directed, with a large measure of success, to securing recognized standards of equity written into collective-bargaining contracts. The principles of seniority, of arbitration and umpire procedures, of union determination of methods of sharing wage increases (e.g., through equal or across-the board allocations, or through percentage increases), all attest

to the victory of the workers' conception of equity, rather than the employers' in the matter of fair treatment in the plant.

But in the second aspect of control, in the challenge to the work process itself, the unions have failed. The most characteristic fact about the American factory worker today — and probably the worker in factories in other countries as well — is his lack of interest in work. Few individuals think of 'the job' as a place to seek any fulfilment. There is quite often the camaraderie of the shop, the joking, gossip, and politicking of group life. But *work* itself, the daily tasks which the individual is called upon to perform, lacks any real challenge, and is seen only as an irksome chore to be shirked, or to be finished as best as possible. Most workers, by and large, are not articulate about work. Questionnaires and surveys provide merely the muttered semi-approvals or disapprovals, the grudging assents, or the grunted displeasures which mask the 'to-hell-with-it-all' attitude of the individual who feels his life-space constricted.⁶ But the behavior itself becomes a judgment. First and foremost, it appears in the constant evasion of thought about work, the obsessive reveries (often sexual) while on the job, the substitution of the glamour of leisure for the drudgeries of work. Yet the harsher aspects are present as well. It takes the form of crazy racings on the job or what the workers call the 'make-out' game, i.e., the break-neck effort to fulfil one's quotas early in order to lounge for the rest of the hour or day (and it is striking to see how this pattern is recapitulated identically by the Soviet worker in his habit of 'storming'), by the sullen war against production standards and, most spectacularly, even if infrequently, by the eruption of 'wildcat strikes.'

Contemporary sociology has come to the melancholy, and defeatist conclusion, that technology as 'progress' cannot be

reversed.⁷ In a rational order one would *reduce* to as little time as possible the number of hours spent in irksome work, and then find respite in leisure. But is this the case? Can we not do something about the nature of the work process itself?

Actually, the root of alienation lies *not* in the *machine* — as romantics like William Morris or Friedrich Junger were prone to say — but in the concept of *efficiency* which underlies the organization of the work process. The idea of efficiency dictates a breakdown of work and a flow of work in accordance with engineering rationality. It seeks to increase output by erasing any 'waste'; and waste is defined as those moments of time which are not subject to the impersonal control of the work process itself. Central to the idea of efficiency is a notion of measurement. Modern industry in fact, began not with the factory — the factory has been known in ancient times — but with measurement. Through measurement we passed from the division of labour into the division of time. Through measurement, industry was able to establish a calculus of time and pay a worker on the basis of units of work performed. But the value of work itself could only be defined in terms of its cost to the user; and cost was — and is — conceived primarily in narrow market terms. Thus the psychological costs of indifference or neuroses, the social costs of road and transport, are charges all outside the interest and control of the enterprise. Thus such a consideration, for example, as the size of a factory is determined largely by the possibility of increasing output rather than by the costs involved in travel time for the worker, community crowding, etc. In these situations the human being is taken as one more variable in the process, and quite often a very subordinate one. *Our emphasis has been on economic growth, increased output, but not to what kind of men are being molded by*

the work process. Even the recent vogue of 'human relations' has been considered a justified cost to management not in terms of increasing satisfaction in work but of increasing output. The assumption has been made, of course, that if a worker is more satisfied he will increase his output. But what if the costs of satisfaction involved in reorganizing the work process, mean a *decreased* output? What then? Which 'variable' does one seek to maximize: the satisfaction of the work group, or the productivity of the enterprise?

I have tried to spell out in some detail elsewhere⁸ the reasons why the cult of efficiency has been an unanalyzed assumption in the 'logics' of modern industry. Some of it is due to a utilitarian rationality (one of the sources, too, for the practical British bent for seeing problems in 'administrative' rather than ideological terms); much to early technological necessity since the nature of early steam power required the bunching of work. Once the goal of efficiency was established, however, the rationalization of work began; so, in Taylorism, we have the detailed breakdown of time, and with Gilbreth the economizing of motion.

In the United States apart from questions of production standards, the unions have failed to challenge the organization of work. To do so would require a radical challenge to society as a whole: to question the location of industry or size of plant is not only to challenge managerial prerogatives, it is to question the logic of a consumption economy whose prime consideration is lower costs and increasing output. Moreover, how could any single enterprise, in a competitive situation, increase its costs by reorganizing the flow of work, without falling behind its competitors.

But this is not only a failing of 'capitalist' society. In the socialist societies, sadly,

there has been almost no imaginative attempts to think through the meaning of the work process. In Britain, this has been, in part, the heritage of the Webbs, and their own concept of efficiency (capitalism for them was waste and anarchic; socialism would be a 'tidy' society). But of equal weight is the fact that with outmoded machinery and in a falling world market, British society has been forced to think primarily of productivity in order to compete in the world markets. And who, today, would challenge the God of Productivity, if it might mean a lowered standard of living?

In communist countries, where minority dictatorship has sought to speed rapid industrialization, the effects on the workers have been even harsher. Lenin's solution for the disorganization of production, for example, in a famous speech in June 1919, was to introduce piecework and Taylorism, in order to discipline the workers!⁹ In the West, at least, where dehumanized work results in increasing productivity, the fruits of that productivity are shared with the workers. In the communist countries, not only is work dehumanized but the social surplus through 'primitive accumulation' goes to enhance the power of the State.

For under-developed countries, where living standards are pitifully low, it is difficult to talk of sacrificing production in order to make work more meaningful to the worker. Yet these are not, nor should they be put in either/or terms. Engineers have learned that if efficiency considerations are pushed too far — if work is broken down into the most minute parts and made completely monotonous — it becomes self-defeating. The question is always one of 'how much'. But the question must be stated and placed in the forefront of considerations.

One need not accept the fatalism of the machine process — or create new utopias

in automation — to see that changes are possible. These range from such large-scale changes as genuine decentralization, which brings work to the workers rather than transporting large masses of workers to the work place, to the relatively minute but important changes in the pace of work, such as extending job cycles, job enlargement, allowing natural rhythms of work.

The specifics are there: what is needed is a change of fundamental attitude. If one is to say, for example, that the worker is not a commodity, then one should take the step of abolishing piecework and eliminating the distinction whereby one man gets paid on a weekly or annual salary, and another man is paid by the piece or the hour. If one accepts again the heritage of the old socialist and humanist tradition of worker protest, then the work place itself and not the market should be the centre of determination of pace and tempo of work. The 'flow of demand', to employ the sociological jargon, must come from the worker himself rather than from the constraints imposed from above.

It may well be that increased production would result from a reorganization of the work process in accord with the demands of the workers themselves. (In the United States, the success of the 'Scanlon Plan' — a scheme which emphasizes *group* incentives plus participation in production — has resulted in striking increases.) But even if costs were to rise, surely there is an important social gain in that the place where a man spends such a large part of his day becomes a place of meaning and satisfaction rather than of drudgery. Fifty years ago, few enterprises carried safety devices to protect workers' limbs and lives. Some protested that adoption of such devices would increase costs. Yet few firms today plead that they cannot 'afford' to introduce safety devices. Is meaningfulness in work any less important?

¹ Compare the status of the West European or American worker with the formulation of the "law of increasing misery" that one finds in Marx: The accumulation of wealth at one pole of society involves a simultaneous accumulation of poverty, labour torment, ignorance, brutalization, and moral degradation at the opposite pole. . . . (The) inherent tendency (is) towards the appropriation of labour for the whole twenty-four hours of the day." *Capital*, Vol. I, Chicago, Kerr edition, p. 259.)

² The most interesting discussion of the thought of young Marx can be found in the recent study by Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, University of Chicago Press, 1958.

³ At the other extreme, Kierkegaard had taken the concept and given it a religious content; thus it became universalized as a pervasive condition of man which, if understood, showed the world as completely *absurd*, since man, by rational act, could never overcome the subject-object dualism; and thus he introduced a thread of pessimism which held man to be completely bound.

⁴ The abolition of private property however, it should be pointed out, does not, for the early Marx, usher in the state of human freedom. The abolition of private property, as Robert Tucker points out in his study of Marx's early writings, produces only "unthinking" or "raw" communism.

In discussing Feuerbach, Marx points out that the negation of a negation is not, *per se*, an affirmation. Similarly, he said (in the *Manuscripts*) the abolition of private property, the negation of negation, would not produce human freedom — but "raw communism". This type of communism, he said "completely negates the personality of man." It expresses "envy and a desire to reduce all to a common level". It is "universal envy constituted as power". Raw communism, however, is to give way to true communism as a "positive transcendence of private property" and to a positive humanism in which "man recognizes himself in a world he has himself made". He returns, therefore, to his "species character". He is no longer partial man, bound by class behaviour, but once again generic Man, transcending human self-alienation and "returning to himself".

Twenty-five years later, when Marx was again forced to confront the question of the nature of the future society, in the *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, the image of two-stages of the future society again was invoked. It is clear, in this context, that when he spoke of the "dictatorship of the proletariat" as the "immediate transitional stage", it was for him "raw communism" that would be superseded by the idyllic world of true communism where each man would live "from each according to his means, and to each according to his needs".

From the criteria established by both Marx and Lenin, one would have to say that present-day Soviet society is one of the most misshapen products ever seen of "unthinking" or "raw communism."

⁵ Hannah Arendt, the keenest student of totalitarianism, and a sympathetic critic of the idea of workers' councils, writes apropos of the Hungarian and Polish experiences of 1957: "...it is quite doubtful whether the political principle of equality and self-rule can be applied to the economic sphere of life as well. It may be that ancient political theory, which held that economics, since it was bound up with the necessities of life, needed the rule of masters to function well, was not so wrong after all." For her extraordinary discussion of the meaning of the spontaneous emergence of workers' councils during the 1957 events, see her article, "Totalitarian Imperialism," *Journal of Politics*, Vol. 20, 1958, pp. 5-43.

⁶ Some sociologists deny that workers in a plant tend to be unhappy, and point to survey data — much of it collected by management — to show that the workers are fairly well satisfied with the job. The argument misses two essential points: One, there may be other aspects than work itself which provides some satisfaction, i.e., the clique or the group, and, second, no questionnaire on satisfaction is meaningful unless the worker is aware of alternative possibilities of work. (This, I suppose is the meaning of the old saw: how can you keep them down on the farm once they've seen Paree. A farmer never having seen or known Paree may be satisfied with his lot; but is he once he knows wider horizons? My quarrel with industrial sociology — see my article "Adjusting Men to Machines", *Commentary*, July 1947, and my essay on Work — see note 8 — is that not only has industrial sociology accepted managerial biases in its conceptualization of what is a problem (e.g., the idea of "restriction of output") but that it has failed to conceive of alternative methods of organization of work so as to provide real choices for a worker.

⁷ See David Riesman, *The Lonely Crowd*, as a prime example.

⁸ See my book *Work and Its Discontents*, Beacon Press, Boston, 1956, for a discussion of the relation of efficiency to the concepts of rationality, and the necessary relationship of meaningful work to meaningful play and leisure. Shorter and variant versions have been published in *L.P.E. Papers*, Number 4, "Work in the Welfare Age," London, July 1956, and "Notes on Work," *Encounter*, July 1954.

⁹ "Scientific Management and the Dictatorship of the Proletariat," *Collected Works*, Vol. 7.

POETRY

A CENTER

I saw into a center,
said "Who am I,
who have called themselves
this name I go by?"

Shall we wear pink willows
when we meet,
and go to streets
that intersect the morning?

Shall we greet each other
when I've hurried by
and stood on other corners,
or will I cry "Who am I"?

EMILY POLK

THE CASTLES

The castles sit along the sea
to sun their thinning tresses
where sly gossiping winds
are listening.

Sing, sing, shining air,
secrets the waters share
while whirling through liquid streets
they wash the gold Venetian feet
of castles.

Sing, sing, let me hear
of guilts, slanders, thrusts,
sea-ridden lusts of panderers and queens,
of good gone grandeurs
where old unruined golds gleam
in memories of Adriatic castles.

Sing, sing . . .
let me dream
that none of it
has ever been.

EMILY POLK

OUR HANDS

I have sought your hand
 As the bird seeks its nest
 In fear of pursuit and death,
 And spoken to it with my soul
 In the language of blood —
 The only speech we may understand
 In this world of words and books.
 But at night your hand is a storm
 And mine a bird in its grip:
 I should like to fly its grasp,
 Yet I relish the stroke upon stroke
 And utter exhaustion at the end
 So that I might lie
 Tired like a child on its mother's breast.
 In the dark our hands may search
 The answer to the enigma of face
 And flesh and beauty and love;
 In an age of hands and hands
 Our two hands freed from the anguish
 Of seeking, may give shape
 To a god — our anchor of hopes.
 What we could not hold
 To each other with eyes and lips,
 May be achieved through the joy
 Of hands when sailing like a ship
 Your hand moves softly and slow
 On the calm sea of my hand
 Seeking no shore beyond this eager flesh.

AMARESH DATTA

ONE READS

Daily, and therefore calmly, one reads:
 of the raving Ganges,
 the boats overturned;
 a summer's thatch of villages
 most casually burned;
 our night's pomegranate mines
 that, unseasoned, cast
 their ember seeds
 into the future and the changing past
 of files, charts and last year's twins,
 the once-tended hives
 in the garden,
 or even
 the unwaiting sociable wives.

But through the tall headlines
 one hears now and then
 the ambushed silence:
 the pebbled ebb of crested tides
 where no one rides
 upright:
 the wildcat quiet
 of evil in distant worlds
 the narrowing spiral of reeling birds
 and bankrupt brood that hatch like lice
 in other men's sunday suns.

Then, one sees—
 the leprosy in light and shade,
 the sunlit beggar, squatting
 on his shadow, clotting
 the antlers of bare April's trees:
 pandering lies
 for our charity's
 counterfeit pice.

A. K. RAMANUJAN

THE SOLUTION

After the rising of the 17th June
The Secretary of the Writers' Association
Had leaflets distributed in the Stalinallee
In which you could read that the People
Had lost the Government's confidence
And could only win it back
By redoubled efforts. If so, would it not
Be simpler, if the Government
Dissolved the People
And elected another?

BAD MORNING

The Silver-poplar, that village beauty,
Is an old hag to-day. The lake
A pool of slops, don't touch it!
The fuchsias beneath the snapdragon cheap and vain.
Why?
Last night in my dream I saw fingers pointed at me
As at a leper. They were calloused
And broken.
You don't know! I cried
Guiltily.

BERTOLD BRECHT

A Note: Bertold Brecht, after his death in East Berlin in August 1956, was described by the official East German Press as 'the greatest German, . . . the most significant contemporary dramatist'. His authorship of the first poem (The Solution) has not been officially confirmed, but it has not been officially denied either. Martin Esslin writes in *Encounter* (June, 1959): "There can be little doubt that it is genuine. Its style is similar to that of a number of other poems from the same period of Brecht's life which have been published, and which display the same epigrammatic kind of wit". The same writer comments on the other poem (Bad Morning): "It clearly refers to Brecht's feelings of guilt about his support for the East German regime". We are thankful to the editors of *Encounter* for permission to reproduce these poems.

A R T S

The Minority Theatre in India

By KIRONMOY RAHA

INDIANS as a rule are more at home in the Time Machine than in the Space Ship. We may be, as Al Beruni complained, instinctively xenophobic, but anachronism never worries us. Strange surroundings make us uncomfortable, but we take centuries in our stride and a simultaneity of the past, the present and possibly the future leaves us with no particular sense of incongruity. In the context of drama and the theatre, this timeless quality is to be seen in the fact that you can have, at any given moment, your choice of centuries in any big city—self-conscious revivalists trying their hands at Bhasa; Jatras and street drama with their naive but vigorous conventionality; the more bizarre later offsprings of Indar Sabha—florid and flamboyant; commercial theatres playing safe with technical novelties and well worn and sentimentally beloved old reliables; and finally, experimental groups of varying degrees of sincerity, ability and daring. For our present purposes, we can forget all but the last and of the last too a goodly proportion. Much that passes for experimental daring is nothing but a species of dilettantism. Pieces a la mode elsewhere and new lions in the theatrical world overseas—Waiting for Godot, Cards of Identity,

Osborne and Anouilh, have a certain snobish vogue. These efforts are valuable only in the sense that every piece of dramatic art actually performed adds to the technical insight of those who perform it and those who see it. For the rest, they are marginal to what is properly describable as serious preoccupation with the creation of a national tradition in drama. It is with this that we are concerned here.

To appreciate the immensity of this undertaking, it is necessary to remember the fact that such traditions of dramatic art as we once possessed have almost completely disappeared. It is true that drama as a literary genre and mimetic art did flourish in India in the past. Indeed, such pieces as have come down to us stand out plainly as the crown and glory of a live dramatic tradition of considerable complexity and intellectual sophistication. Sakuntala, Mrichchakatika and Uttara-Ramcharita are the end products of a civilisation that has been in the making for a long time before. Of the humbler and earlier products of this tradition we can but guess. In any case, with the break-up of the political order of the ancient Hindu polity, the central stream of Hindu dramatic tradition had dried up nearly comple-

*A scene from Tagore's "RAKTA
KARABI" produced by
Bohurupee*



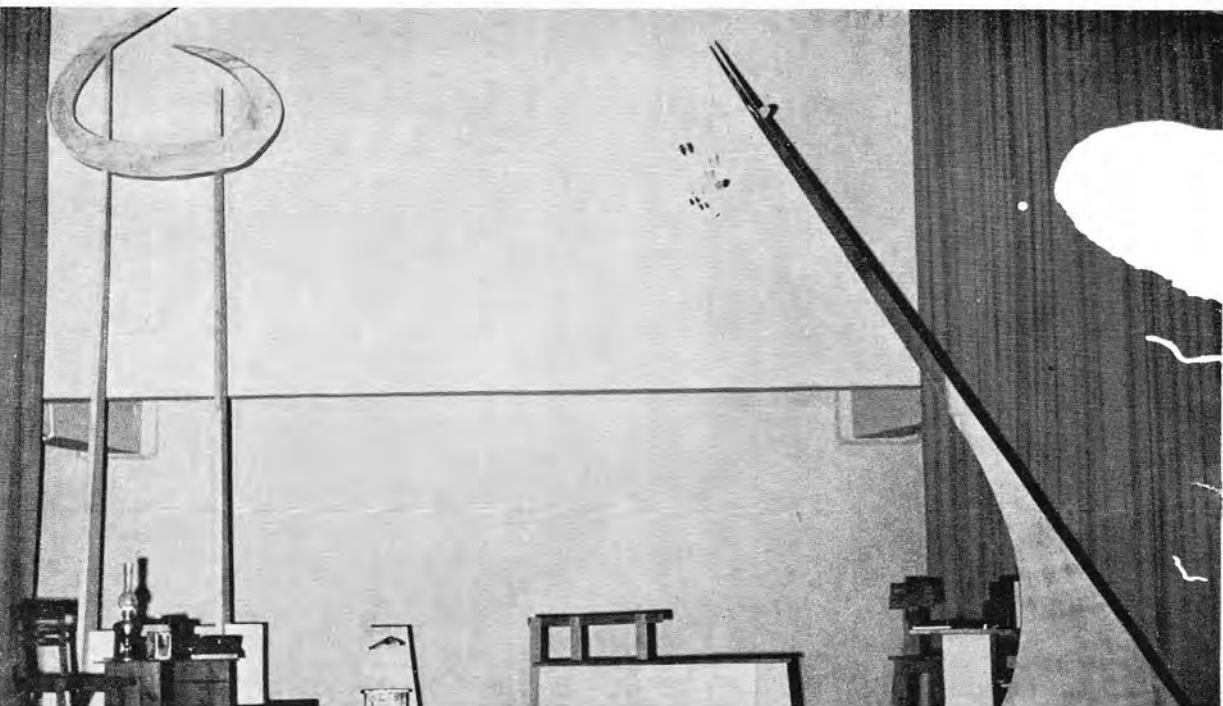
*A scene from 'PUTUL KHELA' (Bengali translation of Ibsen's "Doll's House")
produced by Bohurupee*





A scene from Ibsen's 'HEDDA GABLER' produced by E. Alkazi

E. Alkazi's setting for his production of Strindberg's 'THE FATHER'



tely. The tributaries that fed it, however, had a fugitive subterranean life in folk forms. Some of these achieved a certain vitality and crystallised into accepted patterns of declamatory mime while others got merged, like the Kathakali of Kerala, with the sister art of Natya. But neither of these succeeded in keeping alive the ancient dramatic tradition.

The particular medium of collective communication we have in mind when we discuss the theatre, is something that came to us from the shores of England some decades after the British had consolidated their rule in India. The timing of its arrival was somewhat unfortunate because the British theatre was at its nadir when the English touring companies brought the theatre to India. The Parsi theatre—the first in India in modern times—became, from the moment of its appearance, a copy, twice removed, of the British theatre of the day. Since both the values it cherished and the exemplar it chose were so unfortunate, it was inevitable that its productions should have turned out to be barren and artificial. Beyond acquainting the people with the theatrical conventions like the match box stage, the painted scenes and the footlights it achieved little.

It did, however, generate a desire for an Indian theatre—a theatre more in tune with the ideas and aspirations of the educated section of the public of the day. The first fruits of this desire were the Hindi plays of Bharatendu Harishchandra, the mythological plays that Ganpatrao Joshi took around Maharashtra and the efforts in Telugu of Sri Dharmavaram Krishnamacharya. But even with the nurturing care of these and other pioneers the theatre did not absorb the western theatrical tradition, except to a very limited extent in Calcutta, where a host of causes had already started that complex chain reaction which was to lead to an astonishing flowering of

the arts a couple of generations later.

With the turn of the century there were unmistakable signs of change and development but the unevenness in the quality of the plays and their performance persisted if indeed it did not become more noticeable. Thus, while under the influence of Mama Warerkar's first plays the Marathi stage was growing out of the formless operatic slant given to it by Kirloskar, no worthy successor of Bharatendu appeared to prevent the infant Hindi theatre from dying of inanition. And at a time when the very necessary connection between literature and the stage, made earlier by Girish Ghosh and Dinabandhu Mitra was being soldered in Bengal by D. L. Roy, Khsirod Prosad Vidyabinod, and Tagore, the Gujarati Natak Mandalis in Bombay were still dominated by the baroque romanticism and exaggerated sentimentality of the Parsi theatre.

This lack of an unified sense of direction among the different language theatres in India was brought into sharper relief when Sisir Kumar Bhaduri, a college teacher, joined the stage and brought to the theatre an intellectual and aesthetic quality it had never known before. In the two decades between the wars the theatre in Calcutta was very much what Bhaduri made it and the prosperity that the play-houses in the city came to enjoy was largely attributable to his inspiration and example.

Yet, the very success and popularity of the new naturalism of Bhaduri brought on, in the later years, a decline in standards which was not confined to the quality of acting and decor only. More and more plays were being put up that were empty of all serious content. The producers insisted on plays built on dialogues that were artificial, and situations that were contrived. Small wonder that the play-wrights started playing safe and would not utter a sentiment that was not conformist or create

a character which was not conventional. It appears significant in retrospect that even a young play-wright like Sachin Sengupta in one of the few instances when he tried his hand in adaptations chose Bjornson's 'The Newly Married Couple' rather than Ibsen's 'Doll's House'.

It was amidst this all round debasement and hollowness of the theatre that the first voices of protest against unreal plays and puerile productions began to be heard and attempts were first made to discover a wholly new set of values and standards for the theatre. In the early forties, simultaneously, in different parts of the country small groups of enthusiasts started putting up a new type of drama that gave visible and audible shape to this protest. Within a few years of each other, Rangnekar and Altekar in Maharashtra, the Little Theatre in Calcutta, the K.L.T. in Andhra, and the Indian Peoples Theatre Association had started functioning. Not long thereafter Prithviraj produced 'Pathan' and the Sevas group in Madras had started their work of building up the new Tamil theatre. Very soon the work of these different groups took on a character of a movement—a movement for a new theatre which would be as much a protest as an adventure into untrodden theatrical ways.

Of all the early attempts the one which came nearest in typifying the character of the protest and in imparting a sense of direction to the movement was I.P.T.A.'s production in 1944 of the Bengali play 'Nabanna'. In its purposive sincerity, in its conscious abjuration of all artificiality and striving after effect, it was refreshingly different from all that had gone before. Arriving at the time it did, its effect on the theatre-going public was electric. Its contemporaneity — its theme was the Bengal famine — was in any case inescapable as also its thematic realism. After all, that was the core of the protest against the earlier

efforts in the theatre. Its structural looseness and somewhat embryonic characterisation, were in some respects a distinct advantage. Indeed, it put the new movement somewhere at the point of early morality plays in English dramatic tradition, and it quite simply dropped the dead weight of the mongrel dramatic tradition that was incommoding it. In the firmness of its moorings in the social realities of the times and in its complete naturalness in speech and action, 'Nabanna' blazed the trail of a new theatrical idiom.

Since 'Nabanna', the movement for the new theatre has gained considerable strength and something like a vital tradition of a dramatic art of both national and contemporary significance has slowly grown. But, it is by no means a 'popular' theatre yet. Despite its strenuous and self-conscious preoccupation with the 'common' people and their problems and its deliberate employment of the idiom of popular speech, it is still a minority theatre both in the values it cherishes and in the patronage it elicits. The admass still prefers the seductive wares, the commercial theatre and the cinema purvey. But if the movement gathers momentum, there is no reason why it should not win the popular support it deserves.

One reason for the comparative ill success of the new movement to capture the imagination of the people is that it is yet to produce a first rate playwright. The protest I have been speaking of has been from the beginning an actor's protest rather than that of a writer. The comparative paucity of good new plays explains why the different groups have so often been driven to fall back upon adaptations of European plays.

How far has the movement succeeded in what it had set out to do? One way to answer this is to judge the performance of the best and the most successful of the

different theatre groups in India. Indubitably, the most versatile and successful of these is the Bohurupee of Calcutta. From the very beginning Sombhu Mitra and his group have been completely loyal to the idea of the theatre as an end product of an artistic process. They, more than any other group, have striven consciously to find out the answers to the problems and functions of the new theatre in theatrical, and in no other, terms. To misquote Shakespeare, 'The play is the thing' and nothing else. This austere technical devotion has not only saved their productions from the barrenness which attend the theatrical expressions of the doctrinaire Left or the revivalist Right but it has also impelled them to work out on their own an answer to the basic problem of the theatre.

This problem is that unlike most other art forms the theatre is a collective experience in which the audience, besides forming an essential part of the product, has also to be there participating in the very process of creation. There can be a poem without a reader, a painting without a viewer, a dance or a music recital without more than a few persons to see or hear but unless there is a fair number of people viewing it together there is no theatre. Like any other audience, the theatre audience, however, is made up of persons of widely differing capacities for appreciation, judgement and enjoyment. And the theatre, while it must aspire to comprehend and express the universal truths in its own special idiom in a way which will meet the aesthetic demands of the cultivated and the discriminating, it must, at the same time, be able to capture the imagination and heart of the common viewer.

The Bohurupee group realised early that this problem was incapable of solution unless a conscious attempt was made to understand, draw upon and absorb those art forms which have their roots embedded in

the cultural psyche of the people of the country. This means that thematically the play must concern itself with social reality and technically it must synthesize the stylistic expressions of the Indian art forms with the theatrical conventions of the contemporary western stage. The recent plays put up by Bohurupee show that the group has succeeded to a considerable extent in doing exactly this.

In achieving what they have so far achieved, the Bohurupee players have indeed done nothing more than finding a form which is beautiful and true and which is wholly 'theatre'. For one thing, they have refused to view the theatre as anything other than a collective experience in which the smallest event is as important as the cathartic denouement, and in which every actor was the first actor. To them the building up of this homogeneity is much more than a demonstration of individual virtuosity. It has, for them, been an exercise in understanding the sources of India's cultural urges. Those who took note of some of the statuesque compositional groupings in 'Rakta Karabi' or 'Putul Khela' could hardly have failed to be reminded of many of the patternised human figures in ancient Indian painting or sculpture. The synthesised quality of their plays is also conveyed in the way they manage to fuse some of the stylistic conventions which are strictly Indian with the complete naturalness of their acting. If in their attempts to find a form for the theatre in India they had not also found a partial answer, at least, to the problem mentioned before, they could not have produced plays like 'Rakta Karabi' in so poetic and full bodied a fashion.

If Bohurupee's contribution to the creation of a national tradition in drama and the theatre has been substantial, it has, by no means, been the only major one. The popularity of plays like "Hamara Gaon" and "Under Secretary" put up by the Three

Arts Club of Delhi, the technical excellence of the recent productions of the Indian National Theatre of Bombay and the numerous One-Act plays staged at the Theatre Centre in Calcutta, show how other groups are helping to build up this tradition. And while they all take the theatre seriously indeed, none take it more seriously, perhaps, than Alkazi and his Theatre Unit in Bombay. Lack of space prevents me from making more than a passing reference to the considerable contribution which Alkazi has made to the cause of the minority theatre in India. Whether he is producing Shakespeare or running his well-known school, his stern refusal to compromise and his absolute sincerity impart to all that he does a quality which is both rare and sustaining.

To say all this is not to assert that the minority theatre has arrived at a point where it can control the direction of the theatre in India. Nor is it to claim that it has achieved anything comparable to the theatrical ventures of the minority theatre in England or France or the United States. In point of fact it is as yet trying to discover its own form. It is still engaged in establishing a foothold on firm ground and has not, in the phrase of yesterday, yet arrived. The success of Bohurupee and other groups merely goes to show that though a Stanislavsky or a Brecht has not yet appeared on

the scene, the future is not without hope.

But it may well be so, if after having succeeded so far, it is unable to find an answer to two things that worry it. The first is the absence of a major dramatist or even a plentiful supply of good plays. Of these, there is an acute dearth even in the richer among the regional languages in India. Unless an Ibsen or a Shaw appears on the horizon, the minority theatre can, at best, fulfil its function only partially. Unfortunately, except for hoping and trying to create a developed taste for the drama, there is nothing that one can do about it. Even the most widespread and genuine of movements can hardly guarantee to provide genius.

There is, however quite a lot that can be done about the second problem, which is the absence of a permanent stage. The theatre groups that are seriously trying to rescue the Indian theatre from a totally barren existence have no stage or play house of their own. They are yet to find an Emily Horniman to help, to encourage and to provide for them. Nor has the Government helped them except in a limited and unimaginative manner. A serious preoccupation with drama and the theatre is no longer an eccentric fad of the few even if the efforts so far are considered as not having very much to show as results. We owe it to ourselves to find the minority theatre in India a home to work and to play.

SHORT STORY

All for a Match

By ASHAPURNA DEVI

NOWHERE in all the seven parts of the Ramayana are we told whether matches were used in Ravana's golden Lanka, or whether Hanuman, when he set it on fire, had to rub two pieces of wood together or strike a flint.

A fire does not start by itself nevertheless, however big the blaze may be. Will anyone dare to deny that an article in itself as insignificant as a match is indispensable?

A single match is sufficient to destroy a city. That is to say, it is sufficient if gun-powder is present in the required quantity.

But this morning Jahar and Jayanti proved that it is not impossible for a conflagration as great as the burning of Lanka to be caused by the absence of a match.

When Jayanti woke up in the morning and went into the kitchen to light the stove her heart gave a jump. Not a match! She had looked everywhere that matches were likely to be found. But all of them seemed to have conspired to non-cooperate. There was not a match in the whole house!

She ought to have asked Jahar to buy some matches for her last night. She had even tied a knot in the end of her sari to remind her. But the night had flown!

The whole night!

A smile stole unconsciously over her face as she remembered. A box of matches was

usually to be found in Jahar's pocket in case of emergency. But last night he had used the box up burning sticks of incense. How foolishly happy he had been! He bought the incense and flower garlands on his way home from a friend's wedding. He was in high spirits!

Stick after stick until the incense was gone and the matches as well, he had set alight. The sari with the knot that Jayanti had tied in it to remind her about the matches lay in a heap under the bed, in offended neglect. Jayanti had had to open her trunk and put on her sky-blue sari with the gold border.

If, after all this, Jayanti had not forgotten to communicate to Jahar the urgent piece of news about the matches, even when he ran out, we ourselves would have cried shame on her.

But that was last night.

This was morning. A summer morning. The earth was filled with strong sunlight by six o'clock. The scullery maid had not yet arrived and the house was in disorder, a disagreeable sight. Crows had flown down on to the covered porch and were fussing over last night's dirty dishes. The noise of a violent quarrel arose from the nearby slum already, so early in the morning. A shrill voice, harsh as a cracked gong, rose over the varied sounds of the streets, pierc-

ing the tin roof as though trying to reach heaven.

What had happened last night was embarrassing now. The sari with the gold border was out of place. Using up all the matches to burn incense seemed a shameless extravagance when Jayanti was confronted with the crude necessity of lighting the stove.

Tucking her sari, still fragrant with the jasmine garland of the night, tightly into her waist Jayanti searched the kitchen once more, looking high and low, in the pantry, on the porch, on every shelf and rack, in every niche and hole. If only the much desired object would appear! Even the broken half of a match would do, a stump tossed aside in careless contempt!

But no! Not a match anywhere! One or two empty boxes appeared. So empty! Since when had Jayanti become so neat a housewife that not a stray match was to be found in her house, a match forgotten in a box somewhere?

She looked again in all the places she had looked before, went again through her trunks and boxes. Some curse appeared to have whisked the god of fire entirely away from Jayanti's house.

The clock which had been on the wall since her father-in-law's time suddenly reminded her in a soft deep voice that resembled his that it was seven o'clock.

At eight-thirty Jahar was to have his breakfast on rice and curry. What was the poor girl to do?

Last night's foolishness had taken its toll. She had woken up late. And now this had happened!

What was Jayanti to do? Should she waken Jahar?

To waken Jahar was a job for a coolie! And to-day he had a special claim to his rest—to make up for the lost sleep of the night. How could Jayanti push and pull him out of bed to make him run to a shop for

such an insignificant thing as a match?

Couldn't a match drop out of the sky? Just a little bit of a stick with a gunpowder hat?

Won't two empty match boxes struck together light? Won't they produce a single spark? A spark would be enough with a liberal dash of kerosene.

After thinking of many foolish things Jayanti was on the point, at last, of calling her husband. How long was he going to sleep after all? Wasn't he going to shave? Have tea? Go to market?

Did nobody ever have to go to a shop in slippers as soon as he got up? Under the pressure of circumstances? Would it wear a person out to do it? Would Jayanti have been in such trouble if she had known how to act like a modern girl? She would have put on the slippers herself and gone down to the shop on the corner!

She was not in the habit of doing such things.

She felt helpless and was on the point of calling her husband when a loud knock on the door announced the arrival of the maidservant Sarada! Now then, could Sarada not be asked to do it? Sarada did the housework in five families. She knocked, walked and worked in a military style. No doubt about the value of her time was permitted. Even to think of sending her to a shop was extremely daring, yet Jayanti, in her desperation, made the suggestion. Blaming herself over and over again for her forgetfulness, describing her anxious and futile search for a match, Jayanti asked her gently, entreatingly, "will you bring me a match, Sarada? It won't take a minute!"

Sarada was not an innocent young girl. A little pleading was not going to soften her. A woman cannot do the work of five families with a heart so yielding. Sarada had known that before she took her first job. So she replied briefly that her time

was valuable. It was not part of her duty to go to shops and markets.

The fire in search of which Jayanti had been so anxiously bestirring herself since early morning suddenly flamed inside her head.

'Such insolence in a hired servant! Is it not part of your duty to do as you are told?', she demanded in an unnecessarily loud voice.

Jayanti was not the only one who knew the art of raising her voice. Sarada had been a maidservant for twenty years!

Needless to say the words that began to fly back and forth between them after that were not very sweet.

When Sarada, throwing down the bucket and broom, came to the point of walking out on her job Jahar woke up.

He got up, came out and asked irritably, 'What's all the noise about so early in the morning?'

Sarada knew exactly when and to what extent she could display temper. Instantly her manner changed, her whole attitude changed. Her eyes filled with tears. Her voice choked with sobs. She complained, 'I'll beg on the streets if I can't find work. That's better than putting up with such abuse! I cannot bear it! Please pay me my wages'.

Even though he did not know exactly what had happened Jahar might still have been able, with the help of a few soothing phrases, to turn the course of events. Sarada would have come back, and picked up the bucket and the broom, the discarded weapons of her trade. But Jayanti, in a vicious tone of voice and with an expression on her face unbecoming to gentlefolk, exclaimed, 'Dear, O, dear! What a she-devil you were a minute ago! And now, salt water just bubbles out of your eyes at the sight of the master. 'Please pay me my wages!' How sweet she is! So sweet!'

If anyone imagines that Sarada would

stay after that they do her a mortal injustice.

'Very well! Very, very well! Pay me or not as you like! Whatever gentlefolk say or do is found becoming! Steal a couple of rupees from a poor woman and make yourself a king if you want to! Fine!' With that Sarada walked rapidly out of the front door. She was gone. Gone!

If the matter had ended there nothing more might have happened. Jayanti would have set to work cleaning the house herself, Jahar would have fetched the matches and tried to light the stove for her himself. But Jayanti did not allow it to end there. She called after Sarada in a voice like a whetstone, 'Go on! Get out, you slut! A handful of rice will bring many crows like you.'

Jahar looked at her in astonishment. He looked at the crumpled blue sari with the gold border, at her unwashed face and at her mouth, red with betel juice. Suddenly she seemed to him—ugly! She appeared coarse!

'Lovely!' Jahar exclaimed with an ugly expression of disgust that matched Jayanti's own, 'Your rice may be cheap but crows are not. You can go into the slum yourself to look for a new maid!'

'What did you say?' Jayanti was stunned, 'You say that to me?'

'Why shouldn't I? Your manners and your taste not so much above theirs! If you lose a maid with your brawling why can't you go into the slums to find another?'

Jayanti could not be expected to soften and yield after that! Neither could Jahar be expected to keep his temper even.

The language in which they spoke to each other that morning, so openly that the air was rent with it, bore, to say the least, on resemblance to the soft sweet intercourse of the night before. Perhaps with no night, no evening, no morning in their lives ever before.

When and where had Jahar ever called Jayanti vulgar? When had he ever called her lazy, slovenly, silly? When had he complained that he had to put up with a great deal in the house?

And when had Jayanti ever blamed Jahar in such hot words for his incompetence? Had she ever before asked him so bitterly why a man who could not keep his wife in a little comfort had wanted to get married? Had she ever asked him how a man whose wife worked like a hired maid because he could not afford to keep a servant could sleep until 8 o'clock in the morning without feeling ashamed?

It was all so sudden.

Who could say where the gunpowder had lain hidden, the gunpowder that burst into a blaze for want of a match? Are words made only by the tongue? Do they not have to go through the pain of conception? Are they born on the instant?

Jahar, unwashed, unshaven, hungry, glanced at the clock and left. Jayanti sat morosely on, the housework lying undone around her. No such display of anger is possible where there is a baby. Jayanti's lap was empty. Several years before a daughter had been to her but the child had died when she was a few days old.

It seemed to Jayanti now that she had never grieved adequately for her babe. She ought to! Why hadn't she? What harm was there in making up for it now? People cry over old sorrows.

They cry, it is true, but how long can they keep it up?

The sound of water gurgling in the tap awakened Jayanti. It was half-past three o'clock.

Had she cried herself to sleep?

She felt mortified when she looked around her. What an ugly scene over a trifle! What would anyone who dropped in for a visit think? Last night's dirty dishes

were still lying scattered over the covered porch. The broom and the bucket were rolling about the courtyard where Sarada had thrown them. What a revolting sight!

Suddenly she realised that Sarada would not come.

Had she been unnerved by the black prospect facing her on Sarada's departure? Was that the reason she had lost control of herself? Whatever the reason may have been it was now time for her to get to work. Other things could wait.

The scene that morning had really been disgraceful!

Poor Jahar had left without even a cup of tea. He had to work in the office all day. And Jayanti? Jayanti had slept.

She had slept soundly and for a long time.

The night before had left a hangover. An illimitable weariness had weighed upon her, an exhaustion accented by lack of food and no bath.

Jayanti set to work quickly in order to finish everything before Jahar came home. She cleaned the pots and pans and dishes, swept down and washed the verandah and the courtyard. She bathed. Then she went into the bedroom. The stale fragrance of the jasmine of the night before struck her like a blow as she entered. The garlands were still lying on the bed. How shameless! It was lucky no one had come! But why was the room so dusty? Why so untidy?

O! This morning, in her haste, Jayanti had gone to light the stove before tidying up. The dust was the dust of the night before, all that remained of the incense. And the trash consisted of burnt-out matches!

Jayanti tidied the room and swept it clean. When she looked at the sweepings her eyes nearly popped out of her head. What was this! Not all the heads of all the matches were burnt out! There was one still wearing its little cap of gunpowder, laughing there among the rest.

Yes! It was looking at her! Looking at her and laughing!

If she had tidied up the room this morning as usual she would have found it. Jayanti had tidied up the room the first thing in the morning for three hundred and sixty-four days in the year but this day today, she had neglected to do it.

Her eyes grew bigger and bigger as she stared at the match. A strange burning remorse grew within her and spread and spread. What could she do? Could the morning be brought back by beating herself on the head? Could she restore to Jahar, the disheveled, hungry, unwashed Jahar, the sleepy contented look he had when he woke up? Could she take back all the mean filthy things she had said?

She could do nothing. That is to say, she could do none of these things.

On the other hand she could, with the help of this match, make her kitchen glow with her preparations.

She could scrap the usual chapatis and curry they ate in the evening. It was unappetising food. She could cook things Jahar liked, rice and dal, balls of poppy seed, a curry of pulse dumplings as a substitute for fish. She could hold out a steaming cup of tea to Jahar as he came in the door! What could she not do? There were so many things! Could she only please him? Could she not conquer him?

Jayanti came into the kitchen with the match, a treasure worth seven kingdoms to her. Cakes of cow dung lay in front of the stove. Coal was in the basket. The bottle of kerosene stood beside them. There lay the empty match box. All she had to do was to pour a little kerosene on to a bit of waste and drop the match on it!

Once more the night would be sweet with the eager protestations of an unclouded love! To take the place of a garland of flowers there was her necklace, unfading. It would deck her with soft grace. And can

beauty not be set alight with new and clever styles of dressing, in lieu of incense?

Poor Jahar would be swept away and drowned in the flood of her charm, her laughter, her fun!

But what was she doing? What? What are you doing, Jayanti, even after you have thought of so many things? Why are you pouring the kerosene on to yourself instead of into the stove? Aren't you spoiling the clean white clothes you have just put on? It is a mistake, isn't it?

Must you set fire to such a precious thing in order to make amend for having forgotten to tell Jahar that you had run out of a precious household article?

What will Jahar do when he comes?

It never occurred to him that Jayanti would repair her error by doing such a terrible thing! He worked hard all day so that he could present her with a dozen or two boxes of matches when he came home, so that he could laugh the affair of the morning off as a joke!

Jayanti, will anyone believe the story of your obtuseness if I tell them? Will they not smile knowingly and say, 'Not that! It was not that! A single match start such a conflagration? There was gunpowder somewhere!'

But I saw it all. I saw everything. I know there is nothing to disbelieve. I know that it was from that insignificant match! There would have been no need to relate this story at all if you had found it in the morning or had not found it in the afternoon!

More, much more incense would have been lighted for you, many more garlands laid around your neck. Up steps of incense and of flowers you would have climbed to become an honoured matron. Looking at your grave and beautiful face no one would ever have thought of trying to find the smell of gunpowder in your married life.

(Translated from Bengali by Lila Ray)

DISCUSSION

I. Herbert Luthy and Marxism

By PARESH C. CHATTERJEE

I

MR. Herbert Luthy, the noted European author and publicist in his longish review of Fritz Sternberg's "Capitalism and Socialism on Trial" ('Quest' Jan-March, 1959) has raised important issues concerning the Marxist theory of economic development. Sternberg was a participant in the famous debate that took place among the Marxists in Germany in the earlier part of this century on the destiny of Capitalism—a debate that was opened by Vollmar and Bernstein in the closing years of the last century. Echoes of the debate still ring in the pages of this book. Mr. Luthy has earned our gratitude for having raised some of these momentous issues — seldom discussed in our country — in his contribution to this distinguished Indian journal.

II

Sternberg's central thesis, according to the reviewer, is that Marx's prognosis about Capitalism has been falsified by later developments. Marx was correct as far as he went; but he did not go very far. He had not foreseen, among other develop-

ments, the rise of Imperialism which saved Capitalism from the fate assigned to it by him. Mr. Luthy, it seems, accepts the negative part of Sternberg's thesis but rejects the positive part. That is, he agrees that Marx's prognosis about Capitalism has been belied by later developments but points out that "the postulate of imperialist diversion is . . . futile". In fact, he rejects outright the whole Marxist theory of economic development.

III

Mr. Luthy begins by questioning the model of capitalist economy presented by Marx. The Marxist model was one of autonomous competitive economy and as such out of keeping with reality even in his own time. Not only that. The Marxist analysis is also absolutely useless as a guide to an understanding of the later developments of the system.

Let us examine his arguments carefully.

It is well known that in science we sometimes begin with a simplified model and then proceed by way of successive approximations. So why should Marx be wrong in having evolved such a model, specially

when Mr. Luthy himself concedes that it was "sufficiently close to the real economic conditions to serve as a working hypothesis"? The point, however, is that though Marx began his critique of Capitalism with a simplified model of the system he later subjected it to considerable modifications, thereby bringing it closer to reality. For instance, in the first volume of *Capital* he began his study with a discussion of 'value' and 'rate of surplus value'; later, in the third volume, to make the analysis more realistic, he modified his earlier discussion by introducing 'prices of production' and 'rate of profit'. Mr. Luthy brackets Marx and the "liberal classical economists" to show that their respective ideal types were equally "abstract". This is not correct. With due allowance for approximations that are inherent in every theoretical model¹, Marx's model was much closer to reality than that of the classical economists. Let us take the case of what is usually known as Say's Law of the Market². It is well-known that no classical or neo-classical economist beginning with Ricardo—with the possible exception of Malthus — made any general attack on this Law until Keynes seriously challenged it in his theory of under-employment equilibrium³. But Marx, "the economist of the underworld" — in Keynes's famous phrase — rejected this Law more than seventy years before Keynes, thereby showing a far greater sense of reality than they⁴. In this connection John Strachey's remark in his much-discussed critique of Marxism is worth quoting. "If Keynes had not had such a horror of Marx", says Strachey, "he could have. . . . come much earlier to the clarity of the 'General Theory' simply by mastering the relevant parts of Capital"⁵.

In the same way we cannot also accept the reviewer's contention that Marx's analysis contributes little to our understanding of modern Capitalism. True, Marx lived

and worked before the rise of modern monopoly-capitalism and to that extent his analysis was certainly limited. But none could be more conscious that any model that analysed a particular economic situation must be out of date as soon as the latter had ceased to exist. Criticising Proudhon he wrote, "He falls into the error of the bourgeois economists who regard . . . economic categories as *eternal* and not as *historical* laws which are only laws for a particular economic development"⁶. Though the Marxian archetype was mainly based on competitive capitalism, Marx, by studying the basic contradictions inherent in the system could, however, discern many of the trends — specially those relating to the concentration and centralisation of capital — which later changed it into monopoly-capitalism. What appeared to be revolutionary to the academic economists in the late twenties and early thirties of this century was already commonplace to the Marxist theoreticians. We refer particularly to the now fashionable discussion of monopoly and oligopoly in academic economics that was initiated by Sraffa, Chamberlain and Mrs. Robinson.⁷ Marxists⁸ were already discussing these issues and their far-reaching implications, of course, in their own way, in the opening years of this century.⁹ This they could do precisely because they had been trained in Marx's analysis as well as his method.

IV

In Mr. Luthy's discussion of Imperialism there are two points worth considering. After alleging, with Sternberg, that Marx did not foresee the rise of Imperialism the reviewer tries to point out the "futility" of the so-called theory of 'Imperialist diversion' — a myth carefully nursed by the Marxists — which says that Capitalism could not have survived so long but

for the help Imperialism rendered it.

As there is, in our opinion, some confusion in Mr. Luthy's understanding of what Marxists mean by Imperialism, it is better to begin by pointing out the meaning they attach to it. By imperialism Marxists do not simply mean colonialism. There were colonial empires long before Imperialism. To the Marxists Imperialism is a comparatively modern phenomenon that has marked the later phase of Capitalism. The most important features that characterise Imperialism and distinguish it from early Capitalism are monopoly-capitalism based on advanced industrial techniques and the export of surplus capital.

True, Marx could not leave behind a complete theory of this later phase of Capitalism working as he did before the Imperialist era. But, we submit, there are sufficient indications in his schema which are a pointer towards these later trends. We have already seen how Marx foresaw, in a very important sense, the rise of modern monopoly-capitalism. That the capitalist countries, at a certain stage, require the export of capital can, similarly, be discerned in Marx's theory of crisis (concerning the realisation of surplus value), as well as in his discussion of the counter-tendencies to the falling rate of profit, in his principal theoretical work. Even in the ostensibly political *Communist Manifesto* one can find the germs of the later theory of Imperialism, if one looks hard enough. We cannot, therefore, entirely agree with the contention that Marx did not foresee the rise of Imperialism. Indeed, as Prof. Schumpeter pointed out, "The roots of the Marxist theory of Imperialism are all to be found in Marx's chief work".¹⁰ Incidentally, we cannot accept the claim — implicit in the article — that Sternberg, in trying to develop Marxist theory (in his 'Imperialism') was the first to show the ability of the pre- or extra-capitalist markets to

absorb the surplus production of capitalist countries, thereby allowing the system a fresh lease of life. Rosa Luxemburg — misunderstanding Marx, in our opinion — did the job quite thoroughly in her famous 'third market' argument at least thirteen years before Sternberg.¹¹

We turn to the second important point in Mr. Luthy's treatment of Imperialism. Is it so very "futile" to say that Imperialism allowed Capitalism a fresh lease of life? Marxists maintain that Imperialism helps Capitalism in a double sense. First, the prospect of a falling rate of profit in the home country — due to higher organic composition of capital — is checked by the export of capital. Capital earns higher profit by being exported to under-developed regions where it is scarce and labour plentiful and cheap. Profitability also rises in the home country now that capital becomes relatively scarce in the investment market. Secondly, the workers of the metropolis get a share of the huge 'super-profits' earned by the owners of capital and to that extent remain relatively less discontented with the social system. Both these factors contribute towards a temporary stabilisation of Capitalism.

Imperialism in the sense used here began as a serious movement after what has been called in economic history, "The Great Depression" of 1870's. The Great Depression made the bourgeoisie acutely conscious that the opportunities of internal expansion of capital were fast diminishing. In 1885 Jules Ferry, a very important statesman of France, made the revealing statement, "It was the question of finding outlets for our industries, exports and capital. This was an absolute necessity since Europe was closing itself to Europe".¹² At about the same time the noted English politician Joseph Chamberlain pointed out, "It is only in such (i.e. Imperialist) developments that I see any solution of the social problem with which

we are surrounded."¹³ It is in these circumstances that the principal capitalist countries embarked on the Imperialist adventure. Of course, there could be no secular stabilisation of Capitalism through this adventure, which itself was an index to the profound crisis of Capitalism. But there is no doubt that it contributed towards a certain viability — albeit short-lived — of the system. Maurice Dobb in a recent publication¹⁴ has pointed out that there has been, since 1870's, a rise in the organic composition of capital in the principal capitalist countries — from which we should expect a secular tendency of the rate of profit to fall. But we find instead a slowing down of the tendency or sometimes even its reversal.¹⁵ "Profits", says Prof. W. Arthur Lewis, "may have fallen in earlier phases of economic history, but there seems to have been no secular decline of the rate of profit over the past hundred years".¹⁶ We venture to suggest that one of the contributing factors has been the export of surplus capital from those countries during the same period — which has served as a counter-acting force to falling profitability.

Out of the huge super-profits thus earned the bourgeoisie have been able to offer a share to the working-class, thereby successfully paralysing, for the time being, any serious threat to the existing social order. Engels had already attributed the absence of Socialism or even a strong working-class movement in England to her economic position in the world market.¹⁷ Lenin later developed this into a full-fledged theory and indicated the possibility of Socialism being victorious first, not in the heart of Capitalism, but in its less important limbs, the back-waters of the system, "the weakest link in the chain". History has, we believe, broadly confirmed the truth of the Marxist position, however, "futile" it may appear to the learned reviewer.

That the Marxist theory of Imperialism is not so very absurd is also proved by the positions taken in this respect by two great economists — none of whom could ever be accused of Marxism. About the time the movement was starting John Stuart Mill pointed out that "the overflow of capital into colonies or foreign countries to seek higher profits" was one of the "counter-forces which check the downward tendency of profits".¹⁸ And when the movement, having already passed its zenith, was on the wane, Joseph A. Schumpeter wrote, "It (i.e. Imperialism) was as much a movement towards higher wages as towards higher profits, and in the long run it certainly benefitted (in part because of the exploitation of native labour) the proletariat."¹⁹ Elsewhere, the same author criticising Marxist theory of Imperialism admitted that it was "by far the most serious contribution towards a solution of our problem. Certainly there is much truth in it".²⁰

V

We do not believe in the finality of Marx's economic theory. There are, indeed, aspects of modern economic development which Marx, writing in the mid-nineteenth century, could not foresee; there are also aspects where his predictions went wrong. But it is only Marxism that enables us to appreciate these inadequacies. That is because as a method of analysis — as a "guide to study", — it is the most powerful yet evolved by man. What greater proof of the essential validity of Marxism can there be than the fact that Socialism, with all the short-comings and mistakes — often criminal — in its working and with all the ill-will against it, is marching from strength to strength and outpacing Capitalism every day? Marx might have been wrong here and there, but not Marxism.

- ¹ Cf. Engels, "None of the economic laws has any reality except as approximation... the concept of a thing and its reality run side by side like two asymptotes, always approaching each other yet never meeting" (letter to Schmidt - 22/3/1895).
- ² Paul Lambert has shown that J.B. Say was not the originator of this law whose essence can be traced back to Josiah Tucker ('International Economic Papers', No. 6, pp. 14-15).
- ³ Keynes himself seems to claim as much ('General Theory' ch. 3, sec. III), Haberler's contrary opinion ('New Economics' ed. Harris, pp. 173-6) does not appear to be convincing.
- ⁴ 'Capital', vol. I, ch. III, sec. 2.
- ⁵ 'Contemporary Capitalism' - ch. XII, p. 218.
- ⁶ Letter to P.V. Annenkov, 28/12/1846. Emphasis added.
- ⁷ 'Laws of Returns under Competitive Conditions' (Economic Journal, Dec. 1926); 'Theory of Monopolistic Competition'; 'Economics of Imperfect Competition'.
- ⁸ Kautsky, Hilferding, Luxembourg, Bauer, Lenin.
- ⁹ Actually Engels opened the discussion in 1895 in his brilliant - albeit unfinished - supplement to vol. III of 'Capital' where he wrote, "The freedom of competition has reached the end of its tether" ('On Marx's Capital', pp. 197-8).
- ¹⁰ 'Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy', p. 49.
- ¹¹ 'Accumulation of Capital', 1913, English translation, 1951.
- ¹² Quoted in Woolf, 'Empire and Commerce in Africa', p. 46.
- ¹³ Quoted in Fay, 'Great Britain from Adam Smith to the Present Day', p. 82.
- ¹⁴ 'Capitalism, Yesterday and To-day', ch. IV.
- ¹⁵ Dobb cites appropriate authorities on pp. 41-2 of the same book.
- ¹⁶ 'The theory of Economic Growth', ch. V, p. 298.
- ¹⁷ Letter to Kautsky (12/9/1882); 'England in 1845 and in 1885' (London Commonweal, 1/3/1885) reproduced in his Preface to the English edition of his 'Condition of Working-class in England' (1892).
- ¹⁸ 'Principles of Political Economy', Bk. IV, ch. IV, sec. 8.
- ¹⁹ 'Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy', p. 53.
- ²⁰ 'Imperialism and Social Classes', Eng. Translation, ch. I, p. 8.

We are glad to announce that Dr. Fritz Sternberg is himself replying to Mr. Herbert Luthy's criticism of his book in *Quest* 20. The reply is expected to be in our hands for the coming issue.

II. The Necessity of English in India

By PUNYA SLOKA RAY

IN the Discussion section of the April-June issue of the *Quest* Shri Kant argues for the replacement of English by Hindi on the ground that English is spoken by only 1% of our people and Hindi by 42%. He considers it very unjust that a language spoken by such a small minority should be the federal language. For the validity of this argument he tacitly assumes that the group of English-speaking Indians is of the same type as that of the Hindi-speaking Indians.

This however is not the case. The English-speaking group is a collection in which all the regions of the Indian Union are fairly represented. Moreover there is no common loyalty of English-speaking Indians to one another except an all-India loyalty. But the Hindi-speaking group is a collection in which the overwhelming majority belong to a particular geographical region. In them the all-India loyalty is often dominated by a regional loyalty. People from northern-central India make up about 42% of the first group but more than 95% of the second group.

The question which should be our federal language is to me simply the question which should be the language of power, of the power to assert our freedom and to define and distribute it amongst ourselves and to use it for our common ends. It is certainly desirable that this power should be shared by the masses. Is it not equally desirable that this power should be shared fairly by all the regions of our big country?

Again, the English-speaking group consists of all the educated citizens of today's

India and will continue to consist for an indefinite future of all those who will have the very highest types of professional education. Since modern knowledge and modern thought are now changing at a speed greater than that of the development of our Indian reality, this simple fact is not likely to alter soon. In contrast, the Hindi-speaking group contains illiterates, literates with little education and literates with higher education in more or less the same proportions as any other Indian language-group. That is, not more than 20% of the Hindi-speaking group is literate and not more than 1% of the Hindi-speaking group has had education upto the School Leaving Certificate.

I wonder if Shri Kant will support the view that since 80% of our people is illiterate, government and higher education should be conducted without the use of writing. The gulf between the literates and the non-literates seems to me a less misleading analogy for that between the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking Indians than the one used by him. In fact, the figures we both quote are based on the assumption that the group of English-speaking Indians is the same as the group of SLC-holding Indians.

Actually, this so-called gulf between the English-speaking and the non-English-speaking citizens is due to factors other than linguistic. It is an expression of the social gulf between the educated 'gentry' and the uneducated 'lower classes'. This gulf not only existed before the introduction of English education but was then far more

difficult to cross over than it is today after two centuries of exposure to modern knowledge and modern thought, accessible as they are still primarily through English. If we really mean to abolish this gulf, which is a heritage from medieval times, English is not an enemy but a great ally.

What I miss in the champions of Hindi is the willingness to make sure that Hindi will not be used as a filter (i) favouring a particular regional group more than its fair share, thus creating a gulf between the Hindi-speaking and the non-Hindi-speaking citizens and (ii) discriminating in the import of knowledge and thought from the outside world, thus creating a gulf between Indian knowledge and thought and that of the outside world. It is not a question of formal legal guarantees or of solemn public pledges but of clear and simple goodwill. If the champions of Hindi have at least the will to be fair to the different sections of our heterogeneous people and to modernise our post-medieval civilization, much of the opposition to Hindi will disappear. The big question is whether they have that will.

Even if good faith is assured, it will do no good to underestimate the standards of civic morality and intellectual productivity required for the success of a change-over from English to Hindi. It will not be easy to counteract the tendency inherent in the very nature of the thing towards those misuses. The Hindi-speaking people will have to be very patient and practise great self-discipline. They will have to make sacrifices in order to win the hearts of those whose mother-tongues are other than Hindi. And we all shall have to spend a vast amount of energy and money to make modern knowledge and modern thought

as easily accessible in Hindi as they are in English.

What I find in them is too often only a petulant craving for glory, a hungry impatience to make Hindi the greatest language in the world. Some of them have publicly regretted that Hindi is not an international traffic language like English. I think Shri Kant is agreeing with that view when he says that English should be continued in India as 'a window on India till Hindi or any other Indian language is able to do this job for us'. The sentence immediately before this one discusses the use of English for the purposes of international communication. I wonder how by jingo we can make 'Hindi or any other Indian language' into a medium of communication between ourselves and other nations except by conquering those other nations.

The desire for making a language great is in itself nothing unholy, if it is shorn of such mad dreams and coupled with a care for being just to all parts of the country and a readiness for long-ranging hard work. What alarms many of us is the passionate insistence on glory and the persistent refusal to pay the bill. In their attempt to have greatness cheaply, the champions of Hindi seem too ready to take the risks of alienating half the nation and putting up a Silk Curtain around the Indian mind.

For myself, I will not take those risks, especially because I am convinced that the gulf between the 'gentry' and the 'lower classes' will remain till complete industrialisation will have been achieved and that, as a consequence, if we replace English in a hurry, we shall pretty soon have three gulfs to deal with instead of only one.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Life of the Flesh

"Much knowledge will come to you, not from books but from your bodies. Don't let it be discounted by those who are occupied too much with cerebration."

ALDOUS Huxley's observation that the primitive man tried to think upwards with his heart while the modern man is trying to feel downwards with his head promptly comes to mind when confronted by stimulating logical expositions on the need for feeling properly, for making a warm, full-blooded heart a part of our organised response to the world and life. The sociologists, the philosophers, the theologians, the politicians who seek to better society through the individual—and not the individual through society as the Marxists do—the humanist thinkers and the artists, all agree in their diagnosis that modern man is suffering from a deep malady of the soul. He has allowed his feelings to run dry and the cockles of his heart to atrophy. He is acting too much with his head and too little with his heart. The remedy, they think, lies in striking a happy balance between the functions of the head and of the heart. To this, one vigorously nods assent without any reservations. This undoubtedly is the disease and this surely is the possible remedy. Man should be warm, natural and sympathetic. The problem is how? How can he be warm, natural and sympathetic when he was gradually ceased to be so? Ceased to be so, the pity of it—without his knowing and his desiring. It may be possible for a solitary individual with the necessary courage or the resources to cut himself from a cold and dehydrated society and to live in the

lap of nature. Such an individual may, perhaps, be able to adjust the disturbed balance of his responses. But is it possible to achieve this for large groups of men? One is therefore mildly amused or seriously annoyed by the 'priests, prophets and poets who brandish such views in the form of theories or in the form of a handful of beautifully printed verses as Mr. Buchanan has done in his 'Bodily Responses'.

This is a slender volume of thirteen odd poems and a few footnotes. It reminds one of the books brought out by Bodley Head in the Yellow Nineties, their worth enhanced by the stylized line-drawings of Aubrey Beardsley. It may not be just a coincidence that here the footnotes appear on yellow paper and contain pictures of Greek goddesses self-consciously perched on fluted marble columns. The cover is embellished by Titian's Venus with the Organ player, printed in yellow. The title together with the pictures, makes it clear that the poems are about bodily responses and raptures, not as understood by a debauchee but as understood by the philosopher of the flesh, who recognizes a mysterious divine force permeating the human flesh—particularly that of a female, Titian's female.

The footnotes which are mere jottings made here and there, give the general enunciation of the poems. Notes have become a peculiar feature of modern poetry, bearing out the truth of the poet's statement that the modern man is fast 'becoming incapable of love... dominated by cold intelligence.' In old days, notes were added to the text by hard-working editors and diligent scholars. Adding of notes by the authors themselves is a recent phenomenon. Somehow a book of poetry with notes makes one uneasy. It is like the sight of a

BODILY RESPONSES: George Buchanan
Published by Gaberbocchus Press, p.p.
45, 8s. 6d.)

skylark soaring on crutches. As the incomparable actor and wit, John Barrymore remarked, the act of crossing over to the notes for an explanation of the text is like having to run down the stairs to open the door to the milkman on the first night of your wedding. Here, the notes comment on the lack of love in modern man's personal and social life and make a plea for effecting what is described as the 'Aphrodisian Revolution'.

'the meaning of the expression 'a poor man' is already changing. Soon he will not be the man without money, he will be the man who is deprived of the experience of love, friendship or art.' 'Scientists long for a style of thinking as a disembodied brain might have, but it may be that only in a body within reach of an opposite sex has the mind the right temperature for accurate perceptions. The dish of thought done slightly under the cookery of senses may be better than the raw, uncooked reflections.'

So far this is good, even admirable, but when he states:

'Men would think even of God in terms of the female principle — the feminine outburst in modern society is a crude aspect of a gathering social force — one that will mature in the next fifty or hundred years;

or

'In the speeches of modern men, the meaning is heavily clothed because they themselves are heavily clothed. The laws made by naked members of parliament might be more intelligent,' he is allowing his theory to run amuck, sweeping everything before it. By this standard, the home of best law-making should be the sweltering heart of Africa.

'In the modern press sex is emphasised as a punishable offence which makes for an awkward shyness in the relation between men and women.' As against this, the poet refers to a personal experience. He attended a strip-tease show, at the end of which, he writes, 'some well-developed women were set up naked on pillars, to the music of a girl chorus with hard voices and the atmosphere in the theatre became almost as rapt as in a church.' Evangelist Graham should include this number in the repertoire that he uses in his soul-saving campaign. Other

people have a different experience of the strip-tease. Obviously Mr. Buchanan has not read certain pages of Steinbeck's 'Wayward Bus.'

After the 'aphrodisian revolution,' a social aesthetic will rule sexual behaviour and then vulgarity and lechery will be looked upon as merely boring. Men and women will worship each other with their bodies, and sexual desire will become as normal and respectable as our desire for food.

These aspects of the 'aphrodisian revolution' are versified in thirteen poems, divided in two parts. The first part bearing the sub-title 'other poems' develops the thought that one should be glad to live in the present without caring for eternity. The present is an essential part of eternity just as a drop in the mid-ocean is as much a part of the ocean as the waters on the shore. Open the safe and throw out the bags of accumulated knowledge.

Don't gloat like a miser over old experience.

He undertook the adventure into to-day

Threw himself into the ground like a seed.

He was mixing with circumstances, he had faith in the accident — which might be a true faith.

It is futile to argue about 'War-and-Peace' because 'there is war and peace; not either-or but the two.' The poem contains some beautiful lines with an ironical flavour after the manner of Eliot:

"Peace is quietude for retired persons sitting on fixed principles, sealed off from the climate of the contingent in a place where nothing is urgent."

It is—

'coming home after the dark to a divided family, living in harmony with a bitch.'

It is no use regretting the passing of summer. Life has no stages. It is better to believe in 'no direction' but in '*floraison*, mere blooming.'

This is Walter Pater, Oscar Wilde, Omar Khayyam with a difference, quite negligible of course!

The second part with the title 'Bodily Responses' treats the central idea of the footnotes. It is put, somewhat prosaically though, in 'Pray Down.'

The ego-brain

looks on the body as an appendage, takes pride in absenting itself from the situation.

This is called union with the divine.

But the body has a brain to negotiate it and take it about. How did we reverse this?

It's better to take the body seriously.

To forget it may not be so high-minded as some suppose.

The 'Bright Day' is made of all girls, and the 'Nobodies' become somebodies when their skirts are lifted up like a parasol by the wind. (Alas! in India folks believe that the distinction between individuals is to be found in the face.) The greatest 'Philanthropy' for ladies is to 'receive the poor, the emotionally under-nourished' and 'send them on their way rejoicing'. The 'Theatrical Venus' meditates, 'men invent our attraction. Our hips were for us *terra incognita* till audiences made us know the power of their discovery.' The cynics and lechers merely torture the flesh, they are the 'Anti-bodies' and wisdom is dead in them. God is incarnated in human flesh and is to be looked upon as God-Mother.

So you have realized the state of the modern world and how badly it needs an aphrodisian revolution! With individuals diagnosis may be half the cure but not with societies. It may be that mankind—and of that none can be too sure—has gone neurotic, but the cure is not on the psychiatrist's couch where you are seductively helped to discover, under soft lights, the origin of your complexes and you become once again a whole and healthy being!

The story of two Indians and the mermaid makes a significant point as all slightly vulgar stories do. Two Red Indians were fishing by the river. One of them tugged at his pole and hauled up a ravishing mermaid at the end of his line. The eyes of his friend sparkled with unholy glee. The Indian took her up and turned her around. Boy! she sure was a beauty; But below the breasts, she was covered in the shining velvet sheath of a fish's skin. The Indian thought for a moment and threw her back in the river. His friend screamed in great consternation, 'Why?' The Indian coolly questioned back

'How?' About this aphrodisian revolution, it is good to be in the company of the Indian and question 'How?'

M. D. HATKANANGLEKAR

DETERMINISM AND FREEDOM in the Age of Modern Science—Sidney Hook (Ed.)—New York University Press 1958 (pp 238, \$5)

MIND AND MATTER—Erwin Schrödinger (Cambridge University Press, pp. 104, 13s. 6d.)

EVER since Plato philosophers have tried to derive ethics from a theory of the universe and of man's place in it. Idealists and materialists alike have attempted to show that the ethical system they advocated was a logical consequence of what they had proved to be the only world-view valid in the light of contemporary knowledge. As a result, both the content of ethics and the sanctions of morality came to be determined in a manner which could only be called metaphysical. Philosophers differed on the 'real' nature of man—on whether he was 'essentially' good or 'essentially' wicked; on whether he could be moral only as a result of an inner transformation; or whether his selfishness was an inevitable consequence of a contingent environment, destined to disappear once philosophers realised that the task was not of interpreting the world but of changing it. All utopias, whether religious or secular, are based on some such plausible *weltanschauung*.

The twentieth century has not seen the construction of many utopias, but the modes of thought characteristic of utopian thinking still linger with us. Thus few philosophers who can talk in freedom would talk today of the city of God or of its secular counterpart, the city of Marx. But many still feel the need of examining the question of freewill and moral responsibility in the light of a philosophical interpretation of modern physics. One does not usually hear of an economist trying to solve his problems with the aid of the philosophy of physics. One can understand the student of logic or epistemology concerning him-

self with the philosophy of science. But it is difficult to see what bearing theoretical physics in its philosophical aspect can have on the problem of ethics.

And yet that is what one finds in the proceedings of this excellent symposium organized by Professor Sidney Hook in 1957 under the auspices of the Philosophy department of New York University. The treatment of the problem proceeds from the universal to the particular. Thus the symposium is divided into four sections: (i) Determinism in Philosophy, (ii) Determinism in Modern Science, (iii) Determinism and Responsibility in Law and Ethics, and (iv) Discussion. The case for philosophical determinism has been put forward by Brand Blanshard. "The real issue", he says, "so far as the will is concerned, is not whether we can do what we choose to do, but whether we can choose our own choice, whether the choice itself issues in accordance with law from some antecedent." He then introduces the concept of different levels of causality in order to explain the obstinate feeling of freedom associated with the process of making one's choice from among a set of alternatives. Blanshard suggests that "when causality of the highest level is at work, we have precisely what the indeterminists, without knowing it, want." However, the ingenuity of the argument is only apparent. For, as William Barrett points out in his paper, "the enumeration of antecedents can at best give us only the necessary but never the sufficient conditions of a creative act." This accords with the fine logical analysis given by Max Black, where he discusses a simple paradigm of "Making Something Happen," and introduces the notions of *conditionally necessary* effect and *conditionally sufficient* cause. Indeed, Black's paper clarifies a number of confusions usually besetting discussions on determinism.

Blanshard also makes another questionable assertion, which is naive enough to remind one of Lenin's image-theory of ideas. He asserts that "in thinking at its best thought comes under the constraint of necessities in its object, so that the

objective fact that A necessitates B partially determines our passing in thought from A to B." This is metaphysics pure and simple, with little corroborative and much invalidating evidence in the history of thought. What, for example, was the level of geometrical thought until Einstein? And what, in any case, is the mechanism by which the necessities of the object of thought constrain the movement of thought? P. W. Bridgman's paper sets the tone of the discussion of "Determinism in Modern Science." He does not accept, and rightly it seems to me, the reification of probability as is done by Margenau and certain other physicists like Eddington who played at philosophizing about physics. But Bridgman seems unfair to Cassirer, whom he charges with displacing the domain of law and causality from the physical to the mental world, "*because of his belief with the existence of a mental world inaccessible by the methods of science.*" (italics added.) One would think that Cassirer's attribution of causality to the form of knowledge instead of to physical reality was motivated by a desire to distinguish between thought and its object. This is necessary irrespective of Cassirer's neo-Kantianism, if one is to avoid what Milton K. Munitz charges Bridgman with — namely, "giving a greater ontological weight to the terms of theory — as if these corresponded to some structural features of physical events — than need be done."

From philosophy and theoretical physics the discussion comes down to the social plane with H.A.L. Hart's paper on *Legal Responsibility and Excuses*. Hart leaves the problem of determinism alone, but makes out a strong case for treating the law as "a choosing system in which individuals can find out, in general terms at least, the costs they have to pay if they act in certain ways". It becomes clear then that the function of legal institutions is "to render effective the individual's preferences in certain areas." "That such institutions do render individual choices effective and increase the powers of individuals to predict the course of events is simply a matter

of empirical fact, and no form of 'determinism', of course, can show this to be false or illusory". And finally, "on this view excusing conditions are accepted as something that may conflict with the social utility of the law's threats; they are regarded as of moral importance because they provide for all individuals alike. . . . protection against the claims of society for the highest measure of protection from crime that can be obtained from a system of threats."

Hart also clarifies the problem of the moral justification of punishing the wrongdoer. After distinguishing between legal liability and moral culpability, he suggests that what is important and relevant is the moral defensibility of the legal system *as a whole*, so that its existence secures more good than evil. But from this it does not follow that one should not punish anyone unless in breaking the law he has done something morally wrong. What is necessary here is that the agent could have helped doing what he did. Inquiry into the "inner facts" is dictated only to determine whether any excusing conditions (such as insanity, grave provocations, etc.) are applicable, not whether the agent has done something morally wrong.

I have quoted at some length from Hart's paper, for together with the papers of Max Black and William Barrett, it completely answers the case for moral determinism made out by Paul Edwards and, in a more sophisticated manner, by John Hospers. The determinist traces the roots of the individual's acts and volitions to his biological and cultural heritage. From this he infers that since the individual's choice and the action flowing from that choice were pre-determined ("Did he choose his choice?", whatever the question may mean) by factors over which he had no "control", no moral responsibility could attach to him. And it is wrong to punish in the absence of moral responsibility.

The social implications of this position—they call it "hard determinism"—are obvious. What is equally obvious, but not noticed by the determinist, is the illogi-

cality of his position. For, as Professor Sidney Hook points out, what is the propriety in the determinist's blaming his opponent if the attitudes of both are equally pre-determined? Incidentally, the determinist appears to feel so much sympathy for the criminal that he does not have any left for the poor victim!

The papers submitted for the three sections seems to have aroused lively interest. Of the contributions made to the discussion, those of C. J. Ducasse and Sidney Hook are specially valuable. Ducasse gives an analysis of the concepts of determinism, causality, freedom and moral responsibility. Sidney Hook's remarks are encyclopaedic in their scope and they form the best review of the papers in the preceding sections. Unfortunately his suggestion to treat the problem of determinism in specific contexts instead of on a universal scale does not seem to have been followed up.

Erwin Schrödinger's "Mind and Matter", which is the text of his Turner Lectures at Cambridge in 1956 is a disappointment after the symposium reviewed above. He starts with a statement which is reminiscent of Eddington and Russell at their worst: "The world is a construct of our sensations, perceptions, memories. It is *convenient* to regard it as existing objectively on its own" (*italics added*). He then proceeds to examine the nature of consciousness, and suggests: "There is no reason whatever for believing that our brain is the supreme *ne plus ultra* of an organ of thought in which the world is reflected. It is more likely than not that a species could acquire a similar contraption whose corresponding imagery compares with ours as ours with that of the dog, or his in turn with that of a snail". Elsewhere Schrödinger states that Einstein, instead of "giving the lie to Kant's deep thoughts on the idealization of space and time, has, on the contrary, made a large step towards its accomplishment". And so on and on. Schrödinger's book inevitably reminds one of Susan Stebbing's rough, but well-deserved, handling of Arthur Edding-

ton nearly twenty years ago. Another Stebbing is necessary to deal with Sir Arthur's successors.

A. B. SHAH

THE RHYTHM OF HISTORY: Arthur Osborne Published by Orient Longmans; Pages XVII+139, Rs 4.50.

THE purpose of the present book is not so much to suggest any new philosophy or interpretation of history as to draw attention to a rhythm that runs through it, establishing parallels and coincidences large and obvious enough not to be open to dispute," declares the author in the last paragraph of the Introduction. He is in complete concurrence with the modern trends in the philosophy of history that discard the irrational theories of biologically inevitable progress; cyclic progress; process of ever-increasing mechanical inventions culminating in the modern machine age, and the Communist "faith" in the law of progress that must lead to the proletarian revolution. And yet he does not agree with those philosophers of history who criticise the theories of progress that amount to building up a science of history, and say that we can record both rise and fall but see no meaning in it at all. The author's disagreement with the progress schools as well as the 'fortuitous Universe' school is due to his special theory of 'rhythm'.

Where and how does the author see the rhythm? To summarise the rhythm story as the writer narrates it: "The latter part of the sixth century and the early fifth was a time of mighty beginnings. It was the time of Lao Tsu and Confucius in China, of Buddha and Mahavir in India. In Persia, it was Zoroaster and in Greece Pythagoras; while farther West the Roman Republic was founded. . . . Midway between the time of mighty beginnings and the time of Christ, vast Empires were formed which facilitated the spread of the new culture. . . . In the next phase the domain of God was distinguished from that of Caesar, which made possible a fusion with Rome and adaptation of its heritage. . . . At the same time that Christianity was infiltrating

into the Roman Empire, Buddhism was being introduced into the Chinese, and just as Romanised Christianity was to spread beyond the confines of Rome throughout the West, so Mahayan Buddhism coloured by Chinese influences was to spread throughout the adjacent lands. . . . In the early centuries of the Christian era, known as the Dark Ages, the Classic Empires broke down or grew effete and a period of chaos, barbarism, invasions, or governmental impotence ensued before the medieval empires were established over their ruins. . . . In each of the great civilisations in the Middle Ages there was a sumptuous art and a rich culture together with turbulence, dissensions and oppressions as the governments failed to govern. . . . The story of Chenghis Khan and his Mongols was a One-World experiment that failed. . . . The Renaissance, that includes Reformation, was a tendency to discard the decaying tradition of Medievalism in life and initiating all aspects of a fundamental humanism. . . . There was an enormous bifurcation in the current of history at this stage, for the Renaissance revolt against medievalism succeeded in the West and failed in the other civilisations of mankind. . . . It was the Industrial Revolution that made domination over the rest of the world necessary to the West. . . . and it was the need for defensive industrialisation that induced Eastern countries to take up modernism. . . . And what gives a peculiar significance to the present century is that now for the first time one uniform civilization has overspread the whole world. Two complementary movements characterize the present age: the Eastern acceptance of modernism and the trend of modernism itself away from materialism. The result has been. . . . a hitherto unattained uniformity. . . . And a new world will now emerge, as has long been predicted in all religious texts; through divine intervention. . . . The coming of the last Avatar, Maitreya Buddha, "The Rider on the White Horse" is awaited!

Such is the sketch of human history in the eyes of the author. Could there be a better way of scrutinizing this story than

by raising a few questions? Mr. Osborne labels the sixth and the fifth centuries B.C. as the period of mighty beginnings. Were not Christianity and Islam mighty beginnings? How is it, then, that one of these was six centuries and the other twelve centuries later than the beginnings of the sixth century B.C.? And were not mightier beginnings like agriculture and alphabet made many centuries earlier? How are many such facts of history to be fitted in the scheme of the rhythm that the author visualises? How is it that there were no vast Empires in about half the area of human inhabitation in the period between the sixth century B.C. and the first century A.D. which, according to Mr. Osborne, was an age of vast Empires? The author himself explains the failure of the One-World experiment under Chenghis Khan and his Mongols (let us not discuss here whether it was really such an experiment) as a result of (i) the death of Chenghis Khan and (ii) the failure of the Mongols to abstain from the women and the religions of the conquered peoples. But the author who cannot tolerate "the triviality of assigning small causes to great movements" is not satisfied with his own analysis; and then declares that the 'the profoundest answer lies in Christ's saying: "Evil must needs come." But the basic problem is still left unsolved. Why did Divinity want that Mongol experiment to fail? Mr. Osborne has not been able to translate the divine design in the language of inquisitive mortals. In describing the Dark Ages the author asserts that the trend was 'basically' the same all over the world; he is struck by the paralld course in which he sees the divine will. In his account of the Renaissance, however, he speaks of the Western branch going one way and the Eastern another. Where, then, are we expected to see the divine plan: in the "parallels and coincidences large and obvious enough" or in the "enormous bifuractions"?

Mr. Osborne's reading of the present age is also quite interesting. "The present tendency in the East is", he says, "towards materialism and in the West back to

spirituality." To those heretic querists who may ask as to how many are involved in this grand task, the author's reply is "they are few in numbers, but it is a mistake to judge such a movement by numbers." This, obviously, cannot convince us. Number may not be a correct measure, but what is the other one which we could use without reference to the author of the 'rhythm'? To those who ask, "Why, if there is a divine plan, the state of the world should be as unsatisfactory as it is today", the writer replies that "the question has no more meaning than to ask why an individual should know misfortune." Well; if the individual should not know his misfortune, why should he care to know the divine moves, through centuries, either?

Mr. Osborne has very correctly and ably shown the follies in the pseudo-scientific approaches to history. He has emphatically demolished the myth of progress. And still, we are afraid, he is doing more injustice to the past and harm to the present by bringing in God, who is not even an ordinary citizen of any state today, to rule according to His whims. Mr. Osborne is making history seem a divine project by, in the words of Bertrand Russell, "falsifications and omissions."

I cannot but conclude without quoting H.A.L. Fisher, who submitted long back: "Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me."

SADASHIV ATHAVALLE

NEHRU AND DEMOCRACY: The Political Thought of An Asian Democrat, by Donald Eugene Smith. Published by Orient Longmans. pp. 194; price Rs. 9.

CAN Nehru be understood or is he a bewildering puzzle, an enigma? The author not only feels confident that Nehru can be understood but he seems to have come to the conclusion that he has understood him at least in the limited range of the subject of Democracy. He regards this Asian leader as "the foremost interpreter of liberal democracy that Asia has produced".

Is Nehru a thinker or only a political leader? The author tries to make it out that Nehru has made some positive contribution to political philosophy in terms of the "application of democratic ideas to Indian conditions".

To the reviewer, however, the author appears to be hasty in coming to such sweeping conclusions. Nehru's speeches are notoriously innumerable and quite a few of them have been published in addition to his writings. So that literature *by* Nehru is itself copious. And mostly he speaks *extempore*, very much influenced by the circumstances or the mood of the moment or by the pressure of the problems besetting him at a given time. He seldom prepares his speeches; rather he thinks aloud. So it is not difficult to understand him *as a person*. But it is rather difficult to build out of his expressed ideas any systematic political philosophy. The contours of his life and of his intellectual evolution, developing under the impact of his personality traits, are such as make him unfit, and even uncomfortable, to be a systematic thinker. He is impulsive in his thoughts and actions and rationalises this by the word "dynamism".

Before we try to analyse him further, we must pay our tribute to him for his greatest contribution to India, and by implication to Asia as well. It is the emphasis on *secular state*, both in the realm of ideas as well as of action. Whether this will stay even after him is another question. The author of the book under review has very ably distinguished Nehru's approach to secularism from that of Gandhi's. Nehru, as a more modern man, thinks essentially in terms of a *political society*, where the State is the symbol of public authority. Such a political society based on *citizenship* is still to emerge and get stabilised even in India. Nehru's contribution lies in the fact that he has been its most forceful exponent in practical action at crucial moments of India's recent history. The period of 1947 was one such and Nehru emerged gloriously out of it. Even so, the last hurdles are not yet over.

To understand the personality and the

direction of Nehru's "dynamism", it is necessary to take cognizance of several facts. The author duly records them but does not appear to come to grips with them.

Nehru was very much attached to his father all along. This place was subsequently taken by Gandhi. This continuity in emotional relationship irrespective of the differing views on ideological issues is of supreme importance in Nehru's life. At all critical moments in his personal or public life he fell back on the father-image for a decision. Thus, as a sensitive and aesthetic individual he continuously raised doubts and questions but seldom resolved them by himself. This basic personality problem haunted him even in intellectual matters. After the passing away of Gandhi this personal problem has been accentuated and has been reflected in his spasmodic swings from one direction to the other with an uneasy mind.

The author has competently noted how Nehru in the thirties felt confident in his Marxist outlook, found fault with parliamentary democracy and the capitalist economic system and propagated the message of 'radical transformation of society' through 'socialism'. He was led to this attitude to cover his intense sense of 'shame' and guilt when he saw for the first time the picture of Indian poverty among the U.P. *Kisans* and compared his own 'bourgeois' life with it. But Russia's *real-politik* during the Second World War shocked him and his attitude of certainties began to dissolve. His "goal" of socialism remained, but:

"I confess that I have a feeling of groping forward step by step, even though the goal might be clear". (Letter to Jai Prakash Narain, *The Hindu* March 20, 1953).

This represents a mind confused (even after a decade) by the shock of a fallen idol, not an attitude of confident acceptance of "pragmatism" as an element in decision-making. For Nehru's actions and attitudes on some major issues in the last few years indicate no attempt at systematic constructive thinking after he is "shocked" by Russia. Leaving out his subsequent policy

on Russia, China Hungary, socialism has never been defined by him. Communism, he has often stated, he is not opposed to as an ideal. He has foisted the goal of "socialist pattern of society" on the Congress Party as well as the Parliament without adequate discussion and without explaining what it really meant even as a picture. He has several times expressed the idea that "no moral right attached to property". Whenever he has been confronted by opposition to his "progressive" policies, he has played with the argument that the "community is more important than the individual". On the issue of compensation to the landlords, he went to the extent of saying that "the legislature must be supreme and must not be interfered with by the courts of law in measures of social reform". He thinks that Fundamental Rights in the Constitution are static concepts and should be subordinated to the more dynamic Directive Principles of State Policy whenever necessary. Recently his attitude on Co-operative Joint Farming is pretty far from

the "pragmatic" element. He conceives of an economic pattern where the "Public Sector" will dominate. His government's experiments with the Public Sector administration so far are farthest from the notion of decentralised and autonomous authorities.

What do all these trends come to? To the reviewer it means that Nehru for all essential and basic purposes is socialist in outlook *in the classical Marxian sense*. These ideas are rooted in his mental make-up as the programmatic content of his "dynamism", although as a decent individual he would distinguish himself from the crude Russian form of Communism and from its *real-politik* in the international power chess-board.

The author seems to be very impressed by the fact that Nehru has been fascinated by "science" from his early days. That he became a Marxist was due to its being 'scientific'. That he was 'disillusioned' of it was also because of his 'scientific' attitude. That he talks of the 'transformation of

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society' and 'social engineering' arises out of his bias for science. His emphasis on 'results' emerges out of his scientific attitude. It has become a fashion to talk of science to-day. This magic word of the twentieth century is, however, not irreconcilable with totalitarianism and planning. As a matter of fact, one of the important contributory trends towards modern totalitarianism is the demand of "science" for scientific planning of everything. While discussing democracy, should we not, therefore, be a little cautious in using this fashionable phrase?

Even in the field of secularism where Nehru has made the maximum contribution, we find that to-day religious communalism, cultural regionalism, linguistic patriotism and casteism are corroding Indian *civil society*. The idea of 'Secular State' cannot have an abiding place in the public mind unless it is based on a broader and more thorough-going definition of "Indian". Nehru has not yet been able to give that. That is why he says:

"They (East and West) are both part of me, and though they help me in both the East and the West, they also create in me a spiritual loneliness not only in public activities but in life itself. I am a stranger and alien in the West. I cannot be of it. But in my own country also, sometimes, I have an exile's feeling". (*Towards Freedom*).

But modern India is crying for a definition of itself for its bare survival as a civil society after Nehru. Can it still come from Nehru? The chances are extremely meagre.

K. K. SINHA

**INDIA'S FIGHT FOR FREEDOM OR THE
THE SWADESHI MOVEMENT (1905-
1960)** By Prof. Haridas Mukherjee and
Prof. Uma Mukherjee, August 1958.

THIS book is basically an attempt to explain the emergence of a new national outlook in 1905-6. This outlook included Swaraj as an ultimate political goal for the country, and Swadeshi, National education, and a United Bengal as immediate ideals. The regional problem of the partition or

reorganisation of Bengal was a starting point that set in motion a national commotion. It first developed into a regional protest; not only against British bureaucratic methods as exemplified in the partition proposals, decision and implementation; but also against the use of British goods and the blind acceptance of an imposed educational system. The ground for all these aspects of the agitation was long prepared in the rest of India. It was therefore easy for the Bengal agitation to develop into an all-India movement, and for a new political outlook to develop along with it. The problem of the relation of regional and national movements is of perennial interest, and we have here a case in which regional and national goals were particularly easy to fuse.

The chief contribution of the book is that it gives new data relating to events in 1905-6. This is a period in which we have the foundation of the All-India Muslim League, the sharp polarisation of the national movement into moderates and extremists, and also the increased sectionalism of Indian and British Chambers of Commerce; all of which make a study of the emergence of a new political *zeitgeist* of special interest.

Coming to the interpretation of the data, the book cannot be said to be particularly successful. No attempt is made to spell out conceptions clearly or critically. The term "Swadeshi movement" has acquired at least two distinct meanings in Indian discussions. It is used for the whole agitation of 1905-6 and it is also used to describe a movement of much more extended character flowing from a set of economic attitudes. The authors use the term in the first sense and try to explain aspects of the phenomenon of 1905-06 with reference to each other rather than to earlier historical situations. In the second sense i.e. as an economic programme flowing from a set of attitudes, Swadeshi involves (a) The preference of cottage goods, and especially Khaddar, over mill-made goods and (b) the preference of national over foreign goods, and especially of the national producers who

utilised Indian capital, technicians and labour. These sets of attitudes developed over a very extended period and the failure to bring this sense explicitly to the surface reduces the value of the book. A little more stress on continuity would have made into history what is now little more than raw data for the historian and social psychologist.

Further, if the book had included some discussion of elements of congruence and divergence in the sets of attitudes implied by terms like "Swadeshi", "capitalist", "democratic" and "nationalistic", it would have sharply formulated many issues and explained many tensions and tendencies of the times.

In spite of these criticisms, some of which are really matters of the preferences of individuals, it is necessary to welcome the book as it provides new information and carefully documents the sources.

M. V. NAMJOSHI

EAST TO WEST: A Journey Round the World. By Arnold J. Toynbee; Oxford University Press; 1958; Price 21s; pp. 221.

PROFESSOR TOYNBEE'S *East to West* contains his impressions of the various countries which he visited during his recent seventeen-month tour round the world. It was undertaken at the end of thirty-three years of fruitful work at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. This well-planned journey began from Ecuador, and took him to Peru and the land of the Incas, to New Zealand and Australia, and from there to some of the countries of the Far East, the South East and the Middle East.

With the help of books, monographs, maps etc., Professor Toynbee was familiar with the places that he visited during this tour. Nevertheless, the experience of being personally there proved to be far more exciting. It stood out in sharp contrast with the experience of an American tourist in England who enquired of Professor Toynbee's friend in a train from Oxford to

London: 'What is that little creek?' 'The Thames' was the answer. 'Not the famous Thames?' 'Yes, the famous Thames', was the rejoinder and the American collapsed! In spite of knowing a good deal about the place in advance, Professor Toynbee always felt on the spot that there was far more to see and learn than one could actually see and learn. His feeling of dissatisfaction reaches its highest point when he winds up his tour of India: 'Next time I visit India, I shall not make any engagements or commit myself to a terminal date. I shall buy a bullock cart (Andhra type) and a pair of patient eyed white oxen; and then I shall set off on a journey without end. If ever I return I shall come back, this time, with a cargo of real knowledge piled high between my slowly turning wheels.'

Professor Toynbee has approached different countries in different moods and with different approaches. Ecuador, Peru and the seat of Inca civilization bring out in him the historian who is busy assessing the strength and weaknesses of the civilization that flourished there, Japan brings out in him the sociologist who is trying to understand where she stands between the East and the West; India makes him sentimental 'Rivers of India, you haunt my memory. Holy Ganges, do you remember...': and Iran makes him view the Persian civilization against the background of her geography.

But no matter what his mood or approach to a country is, he is not concerned with that country as such but with the civilization according to him is its modern standardized capital. He therefore avoids it as far as possible.

Professor Toynbee's *impressions* were recorded as he travelled and were written out as soon as he completed his journey. Consequently at times there are superficial generalizations about some countries. Needless to say, his firsthand impressions of various places, which he has recorded in this book, might serve as material for some more ambitious work to follow.

A. H. SOMJEE

KINGDOM COME: Laurence Clark (Published by Centaur Press, London. (pp. 288; 15s)

THE Indian locale has been used by quite a few English novelists. Laurence Clark is another who has fallen to the lure of this seemingly perplexing and yet enticing subject. But his book does not bristle with the problems we find in 'A passage to India', or 'Bhowani Junction', for 'Kingdom Come' is frothy and frivolous and sometimes pointlessly so.

It is a story of young Lieutenant Felix Tolley, (fresh from Sandhurst and Wellington). The conscientious commander of a mud fortress named Kach Kach (rhymes with Dutch) on the border of the mythical state of suzhukistan, somewhere in the North West Frontier of India.

The year is 1942, and India is seething with the 'Quit India' movement. Young Tolley, who is on leave in Delhi, gets involved in a street brawl with the 'toad bellied Babus'. They are, however, helpless against his muscles like the proverbial whipcord.

Felix Tolley's fiancé, Jemimah Pericord is even more splendid, being two years older and two inches taller. This young woman who is calming the feverish brows of psychiatric cases in far away Calcutta cannot be reached on the phone because the 'Grand Union of All India Telephone Babus' have found Tolley's tone objectionable.

His uncle, the bureaucrat Sir Ronald Strudwick who has the 'bald pointed crown which distinguishes a man of the loftiest

principles' introduces him to cranks who are so crankish that both Tolley and the reader are at last forced to explain, 'The British sense of humour seemed to be overdoing itself.'

The young man goes recalled to his mud fortress with his faithful suzhaki bearer Ma Khan. There, his two seniors have been replaced by Major Baffles Fitchins who can 'quote whole pages of the London Telephone Directory' while under the influence, and Rupert Dungrandon Smither (Dung for short) a man who has a grouse against the Suzhakis for having thrashed him with the flats of swords in the disaster of '22.

The story comes to a quick confusing climax with all the elements of the dream world thrown in for good measure. The end is happy. Even centenarians get married and the divine figure of Frank Beadon, the super visionary looks on with bland benignity.

Laurence Clark has a gift for caricature and is terribly effective in delineating the figures of the dying 'Sahibocracy'. His humour, reminding us, as it does, of many masters, is delightfully naive. Though at times there is an effect of strained effort, the result on the whole is not unpleasant. 'Kingdom Come' is a very creditable 'first' for the writer. One however hesitates to concede the implied claim of the publishers, who declare that they "had for long declined all fiction in the hope of one day discovering a novel that would provide the sheer entertainment of this brilliant satire on the times."

M. G. DESAI

OUR REVIEWERS

M. D. HATKANANGLEKAR—reviewed 'Modern Indian Poetry' in *Quest* 21.

PROF. SHAH, a frequent contributor to *Quest*.

SADASHIV ATHAVALE—Author of *Charvaka: 'History and Philosophy'* (Marathi). Author of a Collection of poems, a play, two collections of short stories and two novellettes (Marathi).

K. K. SINHA is a leading Radical Humanist. He edits the *River Valley Journal* and is Director of the Institute of Political and Social Studies, Calcutta. He reviewed Edward Shils' *The Torment of Secrecy* in *Quest*.

DR. M. V. NAMJOSHI has been doing research in the economic history of Modern India at the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics and lectures at the University of Poona.

A. H. SOMJI, Reader in Political Science, M. S. University, Baroda.

M. G. DESAI, teaches English in Fergusson College, Poona.

CONTRIBUTORS

ALBERT EINSTEIN. Not in the 12th century, but in the middle of the 20th century, the greatest single benefactor in his time to the most advanced of all the sciences was considered an undesirable citizen in his own country because his parents professed the religious faith of a minority community.

DENIS de ROUGEMONT, a citizen of Geneva, is an eminent critic of society, politics and religion. He has written some twenty books, several of them available in English.

RASHBEHARI DAS was professor of the Indian Institute of Philosophy, Amalner, for 23 years and head of the department of Philosophy for 2½ years at the University of Saugor before joining his own University of Calcutta from where he took M. A. degrees in Philosophy and Sanskrit in 1920 & 1922. He was general president of the Indian Philosophy Congress in 1956, and is at present director and secretary of the Indian Academy of Philosophy, Calcutta. Author of several books and many papers.

C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, equally eminent as statesman and as litterateur, is a frequent contributor to *Quest*.

SIDNEY HOOK is Professor of Philosophy at New York University. Generally considered an authority on Marxist Philosophy, his books on Marxism were highly esteemed by Communists all over the world until they discovered that he was an original thinker and not just an exegetist. He was in India during December and January last.

GANGADHAR GADGIL is an eminent short story writer in Marathi, and teaches Economics at Wilson College, Bombay.

PRABHAKAR PADHYE used to be well-known as a short story writer in Marathi till a few years ago when his literary career was interrupted by political writing and organisational work.

JYOTISWARUP SAXENA has been assistant professor of English, Allahabad University, since 1949. Publications: *Modern Essays and Lectures on Galsworthy*.

A. RANGANATHAN is a free lance journalist living in Madras.

DANIEL BELL is a professor of Sociology at Columbia University, New York. Author of "*Work and its Discontents*"; another book of his "*The End of an Ideology*" is due to be published this coming winter.

EMILY POLK, an American poetess living with her architect husband in Calcutta, has just published her first collection of poems.

A. K. RAMANUJAN is a lecturer in English literature at the M. S. University of Baroda. A number of his poems were published in Mr. Nissim Ezekiel's *Quest*.

AMARESH DATTA, Lecturer in English at the University of Saugor, has now a verse drama and a collection of poems ready for publication.

KIRONMOY RAHA is a senior officer in the Income Tax Department who finds occasional writing a relief from the tedium of his files.

ASHAPURNA GUPTA is a leading short story writer in Bengali. She has already 33 books, (short stories, novels, sketches, juveniles) to her credit. She has not had the benefit (or handicap) of college education due to the purdah system and other traditional ways of her family; as a result of (and/or in spite of) this fact, there is something very Indian and yet refreshingly modern in her writing.

PARESH C. CHATTERJEE teaches Economics at the City College, Calcutta, and contributes rarely to the *Economic Weekly* and other periodicals.

PUNYA SLOKA RAY of Cuttack University is a frequent contributor to *Quest*.

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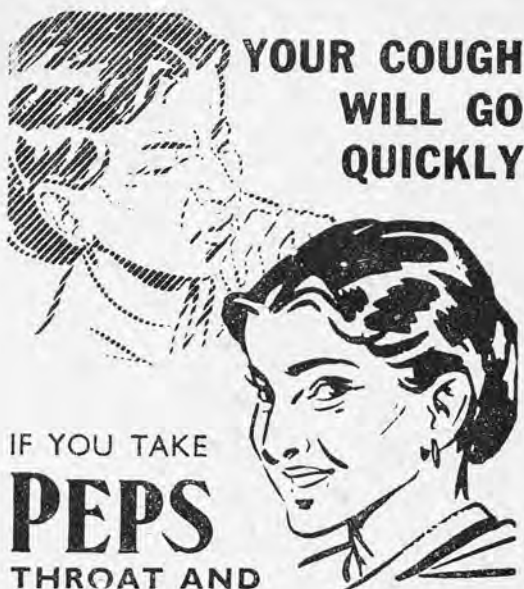
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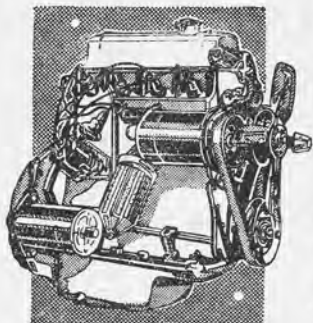
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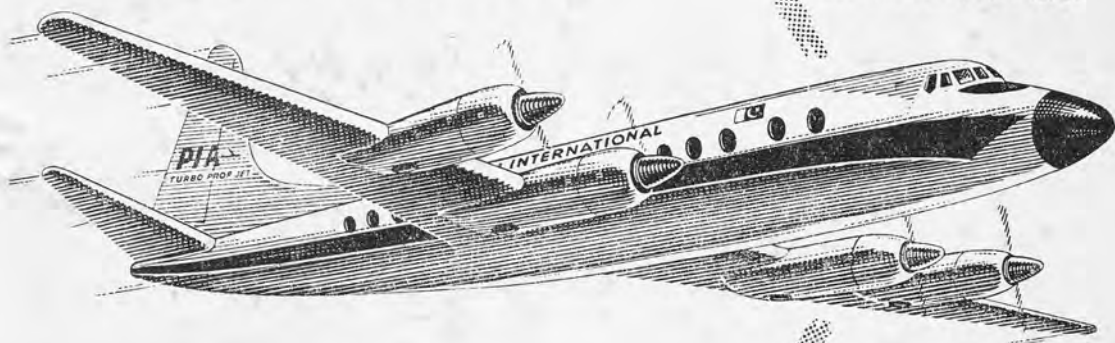
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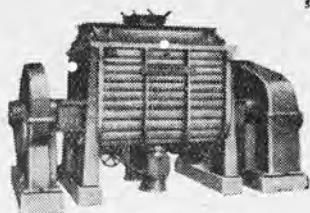
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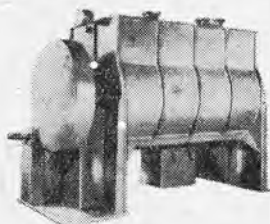
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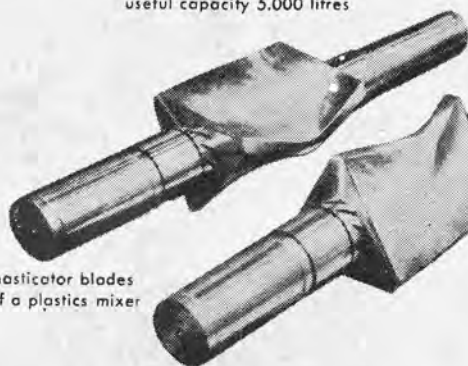
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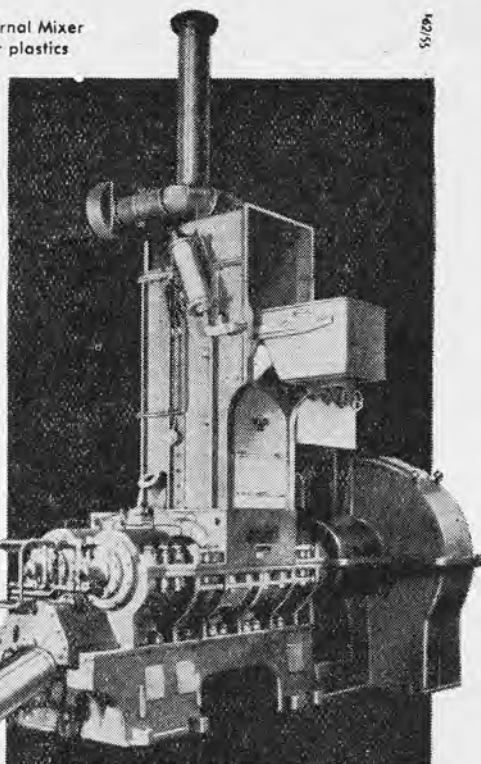
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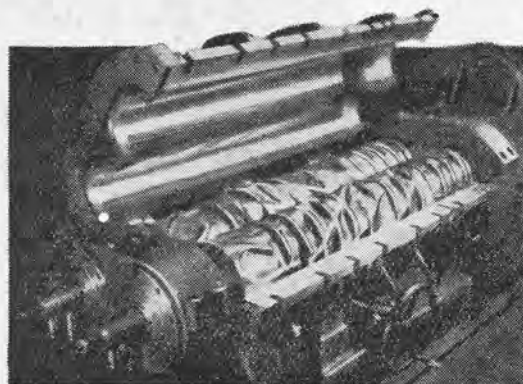


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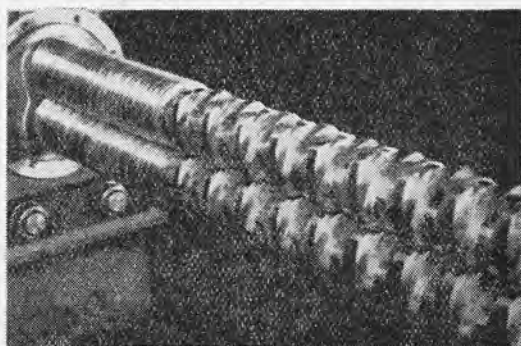
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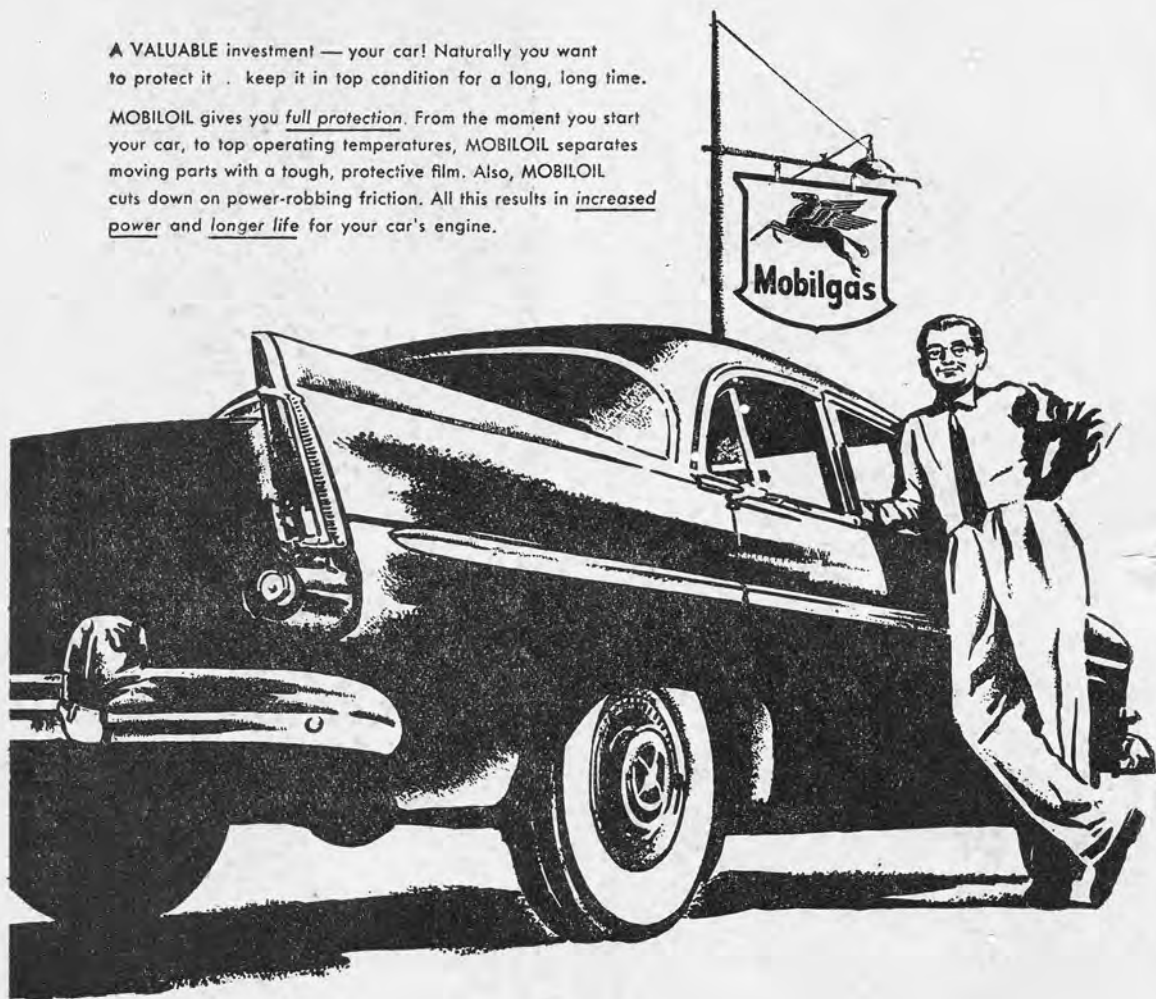
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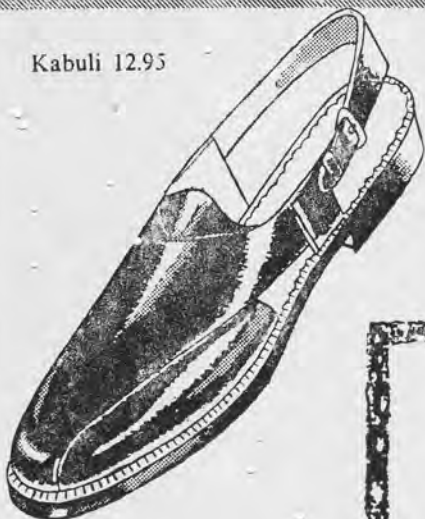
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