

*An
Adventure
of
Ideas*

QUEST

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Meanings of Democracy

HAIG KHATCHADOURIAN

The Brothers Karamazov

VINOD SENA

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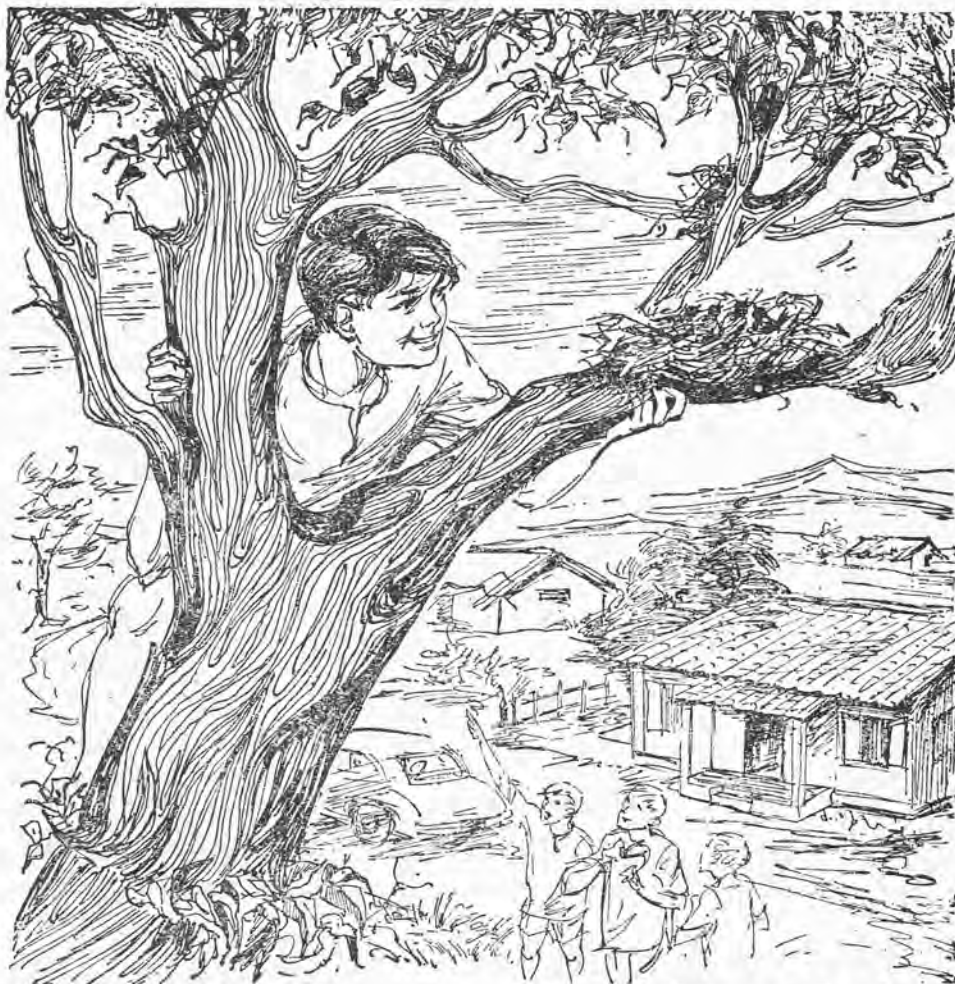
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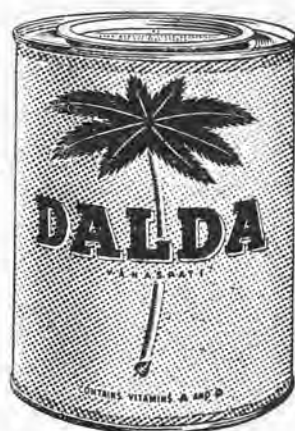
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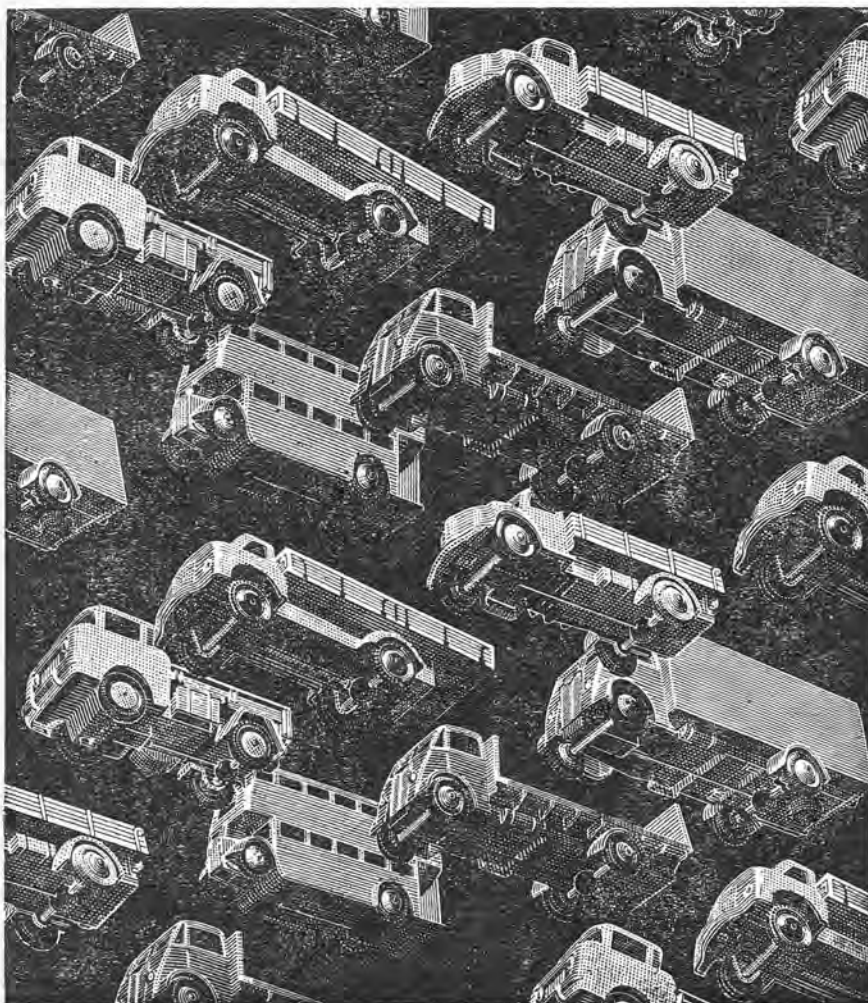
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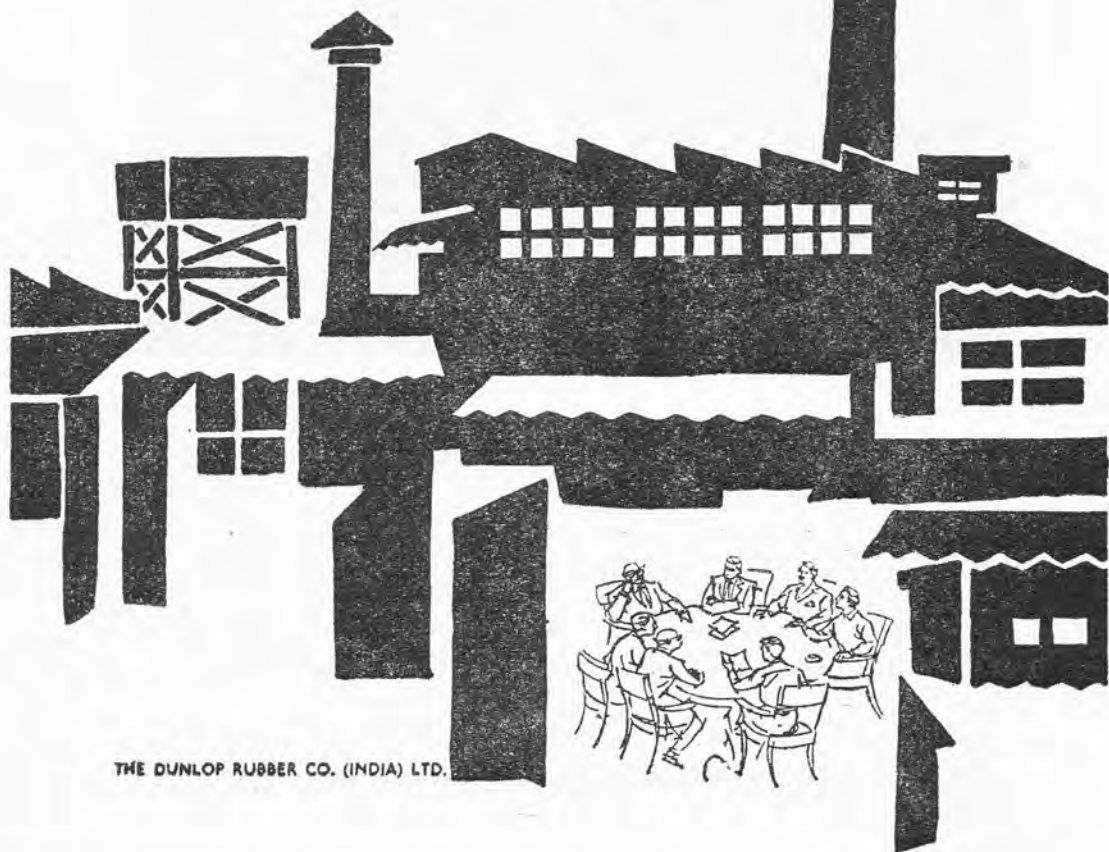
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The Theme of Isolation in Dostoevsky's 'The Brothers Karamazov'

By HAIG KHATCHADOURIAN

IT is a commonplace that no work of art, certainly that no great work of art, can be exhausted by any one interpretation of its content. No single theme, however pervasive or dominant, can serve to define it. Any attempt to sum up a work of art in one grand formula, to give its 'essence' in a few pithy sentences, is doomed to failure. This is eminently true of Dostoevsky's major novels and, perhaps more than all, of *The Brothers Karamazov*. But some themes may be more pervasive and dominant in a work than others: themes which can be seen to recur again and again in different forms and under different guises—as in the case of a motif in a musical work—in ever-new patterns. Two such themes in *The Brothers Karamazov* are what may be called the theme of isolation and the theme of communion. Although we cannot speak of this novel as being *about* isolation and communion, *simpliciter*, a good number of the characters, particularly the major ones, and many of the incidents in it acquire greater significance when seen in terms of these two themes; what seem on the face of it to be detached and unrelated happenings are found to form part of an intelligible picture.

The themes of isolation and communion are not confined to *The Brothers Karamazov*. A study of Dostoevsky's other major novels, such as *Crime And Punishment* and *The Idiot*, shows that these themes are found in all of them in a lesser or greater degree, in one form or another. We shall have occasion to point this out in

the course of this paper, with respect to the theme of isolation. It would be interesting to discover the relative roles which these two themes play in the four major novels taken in relation to one another; it may even be possible to place them in a hierarchy in terms of these themes. Our analysis will however be devoted exclusively to the theme of isolation, and primarily as found in *The Brothers Karamazov*. The theme of communion will be treated in a separate essay.

The logical starting-point of the notion of human isolation is the belief expressed (primarily) by Father Zossima in the novel in hand, in the existence of a perfectly good God, the creator of the universe and the moral order in it. Indeed, the idea of a benevolent God is the axis around which the whole novel revolves, at least as far as the philosophical ideas in it are concerned. To say that a benevolent God is the creator of the universe is to say that every part of His creation is bound to every other part by virtue of its being God's handiwork. God is the force which binds all human beings together, to animals, and to nature; and all these things are bound together because, in the first place, they are all bound to God. Thus speaks Father Zossima in his exhortations to his fellow monks and to Alyosha. (p. 341)¹

The relation of creature to creator is not an accidental, external relation. Not only the existence but also the nature of everything that is what it is by virtue of God's nature. Man is created in God's image and, as such, every human being mirrors all other human beings and nature. This relationship of man and God is manifested

¹ All references in this paper are to the Constance Garnett translation.

in human society as a whole in the form of morality. The same power and goodness which created man created the moral order of society which, therefore, is not artificial or alien in spirit to him but a manifestation of his own nature as God's image. The divine in man is manifested in this moral order, and as long as man lives in accordance with it, he lives in conformity with his divine nature and God's purposes. God is the cosmic guarantor of human values, the *sine qua non* of the moral order. Without God and immortality there would be no rational reasons not to overstep or violate morality. This is well stated by Miusov during the gathering of the Karamazov family in Father Zossima's cell toward the beginning of the novel, in describing what he believes to be Ivan's views. (pp. 67-68) In short, if God is dead all is permitted.

But God is not dead: there is a God and immortality—this is the belief Father Zossima and Alyosha reiterate, and toward which the novel as a whole moves as to its pole; so that at the end even Ivan seems to be strongly inclined to believe it, ironically enough through his encounters with the devil. Therefore the universe is good, the moral order is good, everything is not permitted, and man is not totally evil. Consequently, rebellion against the moral order of society, pre-eminently crime, is not merely a rebellion against society or morality: it is a rebellion against God, the committing of a sin as well. But rebellion against God is rebellion against the bonds which bind men to Him, to Zossima's 'other world'; and so against the bonds which unite all men together. The evil-doer or sinner severs himself from God and men by evil-doing or sinning. The result of sin or evil-doing is isolation.

Yet the sinner is still God's creation, is still fashioned in His image; hence still ontologically bound to all other men and

to God. This means that sin isolates emotionally and spiritually, not ontologically.² The sinner, as a result of his sin, experiences emotional and spiritual isolation and the tortures which these bring in their train. This, not physical punishment or isolation behind prison bars, not hard labour in Siberian mines, is also the punishment for sin. For even the sinner does not cease to crave for the restoration of the bond he has rebelled against; his nature still cries for it. In Mitya's words, the sinner still cherishes the ideal of the Madonna even though he lives in accordance with the ideal of Sodom.

The characters in Dostoevsky which this recalls most readily are of course Raskolnikov in *Crime And Punishment*, and Mitya and Ivan in the present novel. The sinner may not regard himself as a sinner; but that does not make him less isolated. To the very end (even perhaps in the Epilogue) Raskolnikov refuses to admit consciously that he has committed a crime. He is nonetheless isolated, even from those closest to him; his mother, his sister and Sonia. The crime sets up a barrier between him and them. He has a dreadful secret he cannot share with others, which he must hide from everybody. His isolation from Sonia is however less complete than his isolation from his mother and sister, since the former is a sinner too—though not voluntarily and wilfully as in his case—while his mother and sister are not sinners. This together with his love for Sonia makes it possible for him to confess his crime to her. The same isolation, in a different form and less graphically depicted, is found in Svidrigailov's case. There it is even more drastic than in Raskolnikov's case, because—and here we anticipate—it is not mitigated by genuine love. Svidrigailov's attitude toward Dounia lacks the loftiness which we find in Raskolnikov's attitude toward Sonia: it is not love but animal passion that animates him. And because he fails to overcome his isolation, thanks to Dounia's efforts, he ends by taking his own life.

To abide by the moral law is to accept

² This is extremely important in relation to the notion of redemption. The sinner is redeemable precisely because he is still ontologically bound by his God-created nature to his creator, to other men, and to Nature.

the world and to accept, to obey God. It is to accept one's station in the hierarchy of existence. To do so as a conscious human being one must have faith in God, in the goodness of the moral order and the hierarchy of existence. It is also to believe that man, despite his evil ways, can and does harbour the ideal of the Madonna even when he follows the ideal of Sodom; and that the sufferings of the innocent (cf. the sufferings of the Marmeladov children, including those of the child-like Sonia, of the horse in Raskolnikov's dream, of Ilusha, of the children depicted by Ivan in 'Pro And Contra') are not in vain. Above all, it is to believe that Christ's sufferings for the sake of man's salvation are not in vain. The divine benevolent order is hidden behind or beneath all the suffering, evil and ugliness that are so glaring, so apparent: unlike these it cannot be seen with the eyes of the body or be touched with the hands. To demand that it shall be visible or tangible is to be as unbelieving as Thomas in wanting to touch the wound in Christ's side. Faith is the eyes and the hands of the soul, which can see the unseen, touch and feel the intangible. Only through faith, that "mystic sense" of which Father Zossima speaks, can the unseen benevolent order, therefore God Himself, be apprehended.

To have faith in God is to submit to Him, to be humble and loving. To be proud and unsubmissive is to rebel against God; it is to attempt to usurp the thrones of the angels, so to speak, to storm heaven. (No wonder St. Augustine, following the Gospels, regards pride as the chief vice and sin.) Contrast Alyosha and Raskolnikov, for instance, and you will see the difference between faith and submissiveness; between the man of faith and the proud, rebellious man, the man of unbelief.

There is an intimate relation between pride, or rebellion, and reason—this is what novels like *Crime And Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* intimate. The benevolent order of the universe cannot be seen with the eye of reason, just as it cannot be seen with the eyes of the flesh.

Therefore to demand that it be seen with the eye of reason is again to ask for the impossible. Ivan's tragedy results from his wanting to discover rationally a benevolent order in things, short of which he cannot accept the world and must return his ticket to God. He does not have faith, and consequently cannot accept God's world. Instead, he is torn between doubt and the desire to believe: a desire that never triumphs over his powerful intellect. He cannot say: 'I believe because it is absurd,' or 'I believe in spite of its being absurd.'

Reason cannot tread where faith treads. What is more, reason, it is intimated, is antithetical to faith. True, rebellion against God and society, pride, sinfulness may be purely emotional or volitional, a result of animal passion—as, to a large extent, they are with Mitya. Whereas Alyosha and Father Zossima represent the dominance of faith over passion and intellect, Mitya can be taken to represent the dominance of passion, of instinct—the Karamazov instincts (cf. Marmeladov in *Crime And Punishment*)—and the precipitous and weak will, over intellect and over faith. In Mitya's case this overstepping of the limits, the rebelliousness is not deliberate, wilful, fully conscious and voluntary, motivated by rationally chosen objectives, premeditated. Mitya, it is true, plans to murder his father—though he never works out a precise plan; and of course he never actually commits the murder—and what seems to count morally for Dostoevsky is the fact that he desires to kill his father. Mitya murders his father in his heart or mind, though not physically with the brass pestle. So we see his consciousness of isolation begin to take shape during the interrogation at Mokroe, and grow in intensity during his imprisonment and trial before being sent to Siberia. His feeling of humiliation during the interrogation takes a dramatic form when he is commanded to take off his clothes. His being stripped of his clothes, in the presence of men who are all dressed, gives him the feeling of being physically isolated from all men, of being cast out from human society. He

feels that he is no longer regarded by those around him as one of them, as a human being. 'He Ippolit Kirillovitch thinks of me as a puppy' thinks Mitya, gnashing his teeth. 'That rotten prosecutor has gone, too, contemptuous no doubt, it disgusts him to see me naked!' (p. 522) Another aspect of this growing feeling in him is the tormenting doubt that Grushenka and his brothers believe that he is guilty. If they do the last and most precious ties with his fellow men will be severed; he will be completely alone. It is not surprising that he feverishly tries to convince Grushenka that he is innocent, and is overjoyed when she tells him that she believes him. He is also immensely relieved when Alyosha assures him that he believes in his innocence; though his belief that Ivan thinks otherwise continues to trouble him.

Mitya's impulsive and irrational desire for his father's death is in striking contrast with Smerdyakov's rational approach to the murder. Smerdyakov is Ivan's distorted image, in the same way as Svidrigailov is Raskolnikov's. But even Smerdyakov's crime is not completely rational. Though it is rationally planned and is partly motivated by Ivan's dictum 'All is allowed,' it is also motivated by Smerdyakov's intense hatred for his father, for Mitya and Ivan, and by the seduction of the three thousand roubles set aside by the victim for Grushenka. It is Ivan who represents the greatest predominance of intellect over passion (though the latter is not negligible in him) together with the total absence of faith. His counterpart in *Crime And Punishment*, to a large extent, is Raskolnikov. Both are rebellious, both commit the sin of pride and both commit intellectual acts of murder. But Ivan does not physically commit murder; nor is his desire for his father's death ever consciously formulated in his mind; and he is genuinely shocked when Smerdyakov accuses him of harbouring the desire. By brooding over the lackey's words he discovers with horror the truth of the accusation. Ivan's crime is consequently far milder than Raskol-

nikov's deliberate and calculating crime and his isolation less drastic. Yet it is more drastic than Mitya's, Marmeladov's or Sonia's isolation.

Not only is the spiritual isolation greater in the case of intellectual crimes: it is also more painful, being more conscious. Intellectual crimes are committed by men with developed intellects, like Raskolnikov or Ivan; so their heightened self-consciousness and incisive self-analysis come to plague them with overwhelming consciousness of isolation. Intellect is a two-edged knife, and the intellectual criminal impales himself with the same weapon with which he impales others. Though Svidrigailov is the worse criminal, his sense of isolation is a far cry from Raskolnikov's torments. Similarly with Ivan and Mitya, or even Ivan and Smerdyakov. Though Ivan's ideas are one of the major motives for the latter's crime, Smerdyakov does not grasp these ideas himself. He merely carries to its logical conclusion—that is, practices—what Ivan preaches. The intellectual grounds for the crime are Ivan's, not Smerdyakov's. Smerdyakov is merely the physical instrument of murder. It is Ivan the intellectual, not Smerdyakov, who experiences the torments of guilty conscience, who has the hallucinations and is visited by the devil, whose intellect finally seems to give way in dementation. As a matter of fact Smerdyakov is not depicted as conscious of any isolation, which is puzzling—though his hanging himself could well be regarded as the Nemesis of isolation. For after all, he did commit murder. The explanation lies again, I think, in the notion that the criminal *parexcellence* is the person who desires and wills the crime, not (or not to the same extent) the person who executes it. However, I might here add parenthetically that on the whole the theme of isolation is less dominant in *The Brothers Karamazov* than in *Crime And Punishment*, especially if one thinks of the extremely vivid, complex and detailed manner in which Dostoevsky depicts this theme in Raskolnikov's case. In the former novel a good deal is said about isolation

(by Father Zossima); in the latter novel the theme is more concretely and vividly embodied in the characters and events.

II

In the course of his exhortations to his brethren Father Zossima asks the question: 'What is hell?' And he answers: 'I maintain that it is the suffering of being unable to love.' (p. 343) Hell is spiritual, not physical suffering it cannot be taken away from the sinners, 'for that suffering is not external but within them.' (p. 344) Those who, like Fyodor Karamazov, look for the hooks with which the devils would drag the sinners down to hell, cannot find hell. That is why Ivan's desperate attempts to prove to himself that the devil who visits him is unreal, is a part of his own self, is such an ironic failure. For in trying to prove that he unwittingly tries to prove the reality of hell, which is not without but within the self; in trying to prove his point he really tries to prove that he himself is in hell all the time! But the inability to love is the result of sin, the result of spiritual isolation or, rather, one aspect of spiritual isolation itself. Hence hell is nothing but spiritual isolation. This can be seen in another way. The bond which binds all men to God is love. To have faith, to submit to Him and to humble oneself before Him is to love Him. And rebellion against God is hatred of God; hence hatred of everything God has created; hence hatred of all men. Again, pride and love cannot keep company; one cannot love another if he treats him as an inferior. The degree of pride or of rebellion against God is the measure of hatred of God. Isolation from God and men therefore means the dominance of hatred and the absence or the eclipse of love. This explains why for Ivan belief in God and immortality is a condition for the possibility of loving other men. And Father Zossima says: 'One who does not believe in God will not believe in God's people. He who believes in God's people will see His holiness too, even though he had not believed in it till then.' (p. 310)

Believing in God is not merely believing in God's existence but believing in His goodness and so in the world's goodness and loving God and men because they are good. This indicates that for Dostoevsky Ivan is inconsistent when (in 'Pro and Contra') he says that he believes in God's existence and goodness but cannot accept His world: he is more consistent later on when he rejects God's existence as well as the notion of the world's goodness. Again, in *Crime And Punishment* we are told by Raskolnikov that he believes in God's existence; but (leaving out the Epilogue, which is ambiguous) God never becomes a reality to him. Believing in God means believing in Him with the heart not, or not merely, intellectually, conceptually; whereas Raskolnikov and Ivan (in 'Pro And Contra') believe in Him only conceptually. This is again why Ivan cannot really love his neighbours even in the abstract: for there is not and cannot be any love of men—of anything for that matter—in the abstract.

In this connection we are again reminded of Raskolnikov's inability to reciprocate his mother's and sister's love, his inability to give himself fully to Sonia. The same inability, in another form, we find in Svidrigailov. But the latter confuses material giving and the spiritual giving of oneself which is love. He gives money to Sonia to help support her orphaned brother and sisters; he lavishes gifts on the child who is to be his bride. He discovers his mistake, his failure however and ends his life—or at least we can partly explain his act in this way, since Dostoevsky does not make his motives clear. In *The Brothers Karamazov* we encounter in a milder form the same inability to love, as we had occasion to mention before. Of course Mitya does love Grushenka; but he never seems capable of throwing off Katerina Ivanovna's fascination for him: he vacillates and oscillates in his emotions between the two women and can never love either—not even Grushenka—unreservedly. Moreover, and quite naturally, there is no spiritual peace, no harmony in his love. He is continually torn by jealousy: which indicates the posses-

siveness and selfishness of his love. Only temporarily, when he learns that Grushenka has gone to the Pole who had originally seduced her and on his way to Mokroe, is jealousy strangely stilled in his heart. Soon it flares up again in a milder form (since what he regards as his arch-rival, his father, is no longer alive). Similarly Ivan's love for Katerina Ivanovna is full of agony; it is passionate and profound (as he himself confesses to Alyosha), yet Ivan never fully confesses it to her and hides it behind a cloak of pride. It is also no accident that Ivan states that he cannot love men in the concrete. Besides Father Zossima only Alyosha can love disinterestedly, selflessly, fully, without jealousy or possessiveness, joyfully. He loves his brothers, Grushenka, even his father, despite all their failings or sinfulness. He loves Father Zossima, the quick-tempered and mischievous Lisa, Ilusha, the self-conceited Kolya, the other boys. Spiritually he is not isolated from his fellow men, young and old, the intellectual and the non-intellectual alike. Ivan's Mitya's, Grushenka's and Katerina Ivanovna's love is like a whirlwind; Alyosha's love is like a still small voice in it.

The contrast between Alyosha's serene love and the tempestuous love of Ivan, Mitya, Katerina Ivanovna and Grushenka is paralleled in *The Idiot*, though we also have some interesting differences. Nastasya Filippovna's love is a good example of the latter kind; but the love of the Christ-like Prince Myshkin (a more towering Alyosha) does not completely fit in with what we have said; and even more so, Aglaia's love. But a discussion of this is beyond our scope here.

So far we have talked about isolation in relation to crime and sin in general. But isolation is not confined to these. Crime and sin in general are a form of illegitimate assertion of the individual will, a form of the individual's rebelliousness. There are other forms of illegitimate assertion of individuality and isolation is the penalty of these too. Isolation is the penalty for all attempts on the individual's part to attain

his personal goals, to satisfy his own desires, independently of and without regard to the welfare of others. The 'mysterious visitor' who appears in Father Zossima's early life speaks to him about his cherished dream of universal brotherhood and maintains that this will come after men have passed through the period of isolation. To Zossima's question 'What do you mean by isolation?' he replies:

Why, the isolation that prevails everywhere, above all in our age... For every one strives to keep his individuality as apart as possible, wishes to secure the greatest possible fullness of life for himself; but meanwhile all his efforts result not in attaining fullness of life but self-destruction. For instead of self-realisation he ends by arriving at complete solitude. All mankind in our age have split up into units, they all keep apart, each in his own groove; each one holds aloof, hides himself and hides what he has, from the rest, and he ends by being repelled by others and repelling them... Everywhere in these days men have, in their mockery, ceased to understand that the true security is to be found in social solidarity rather than in isolated individual effort. (pp. 321-322)

Self-realisation therefore is only possible through cooperation with others, through mutual help and love, not through isolated individual effort and certainly not through withdrawal from society. Isolation means the impoverishment of personality and the spirit. In subordinating himself to society the individual will realise himself; this is not subordination to an artificial, external power; and it is not the acceptance of what is as right. It is subordination to the moral order which makes society possible, and in accordance with which a good society operates. It is the moral order which tells us to love our neighbours as ourselves. (These things, by the way, explain why Father Zossima is opposed to asceticism and insists that one serves religion only by living with the people, whether within or outside the walls of a monastery; and advises Alyosha to go out into the world before taking religious orders.) Ultimately it is subordination to God Himself. To rebel against God and morality, to cut oneself off from other men, is to seek to free oneself from responsibility toward other men and toward God. True freedom how-

ever does not lie in the relinquishing of human relations and responsibilities, in rebellion. The criminal, the sinner, the extreme individualist is not a free man but a slave. He is a slave to his passions, to his vices or to his intellect (in the case of men like Raskolnikov or Ivan). Raskolnikov believes that there are men who are above society and morality, though he holds that overstepping the bounds of morality in the case of such privileged men is (only?) justified by the desire to serve mankind. Here the end is as should be, but the means is wrong. Ivan believes that if God and immortality do not exist everything is permitted, and he attempts to act accordingly. That he cannot liberate himself from morality and from society he soon discovers to his sorrow. Morality has the better of him in the form of his conscience. He cannot consistently practise what he intellectually avows; he cannot really repudiate God and morality because they are not without but within Him. In order to free himself from them he has to free himself from his own self, and that he cannot do without ceasing to be (but if he has an indestructible soul, he will not free himself from them even if he destroys his life!). And the point which seems to emerge from the novel as a whole is that this failure is due to the impossibility of freeing oneself from morality, from society, from human love and responsibility. Concentrating on Ivan, it is impossible in his case not because he is too much a child of his particular society and its Christian moral code, but because morality is stamped on his soul; it is a part of him as a human being.³

III

If a benevolent God created the world, then his purpose and goodness manifest

themselves in nature as well as in man. If all men are bound to one another by the bond which unites them to God, they are also bound to nature which is likewise the handiwork of God. Father Zossima speaks of everything in nature as praying to God. 'Every blade of grass, every insect, ant, and golden bee, all so marvellously know their path, though they have not intelligence, they bear witness to the mystery of God and continually accomplish it themselves....' (p. 311) And again: 'All creation and all creatures, every leaf is striving to the Word, singing glory to God, weeping to Christ, unconsciously accomplishing this by the mystery of their sinless life.' (*Loc. cit.*) If so, we would expect that isolation through sin or, in general, through illegitimate assertion of the will, would include isolation from nature; that the solitary individual would be incapable of loving nature and its beauties and of having communion with it. It will be remembered how Markel, Father Zossima's brother, begs forgiveness of the birds during his fatal illness: 'Birds of heaven, happy birds, forgive me, for I have sinned against you too,' he cries. Recalling his earlier, unbelieving life he adds: '...There was such a glory of God all about me; birds, trees, meadows, sky, only I lived in shame and dishonoured it all and did not notice the beauty and glory.' (p. 305) In *Crime and Punishment* the theme of isolation from nature is present, though only in the background, there being little nature in Petersburg, the setting of the novel. For both Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov the grey, icy waters of the Neva inspire nothing but the thought of suicide, the complete rejection of life. Father Zossima sees the universe as one vast ocean: '...All is like an ocean, all is flowing and blending a touch in one place sets up movement at the other end of the earth.' (p. 340) But Raskolnikov and Svidrigailov see only their own isolation reflected in the river's unresponsive waters. What a contrast with Ippolit in *The Idiot* the consumptive lad who has only a few months to live! Far from thinking of committing suicide, the latter thinks only of

³ This does not necessarily imply that Dostoevsky himself believed in the existence of a supernatural basis for morality and therefore in God's existence. But that he believed in these things seems to me to be the case—though I also think that, like Ivan, Dostoevsky was continually struggling with the problem of evil, with the problem of justifying God's ways to man.

the welfare of others as he gazes at the river: that he could seek to do some good on a small scale rather than on a large scale, since he has not much time to live!

In *The Brothers Karamazov* Mitya seems to understand man's bond with nature. Opening his heart to Alyosha toward the beginning of the novel he recites Schiller's 'Hymn to Joy,' including the following stanza:

Would he man purge his soul from
vileness
And attain to light and worth,
He must turn and cling forever
To his ancient Mother Earth.

And then he significantly adds: 'But the difficulty is how am I to cling forever to Mother Earth. I don't kiss her. I don't cleave to her bosom. Am I to become a peasant or a shepherd? I go on and I don't know whether I'm going to shame or to light and joy!' (p. 108) And indeed he does not kiss Mother Earth and cling to her. He goes the way of insects, who are only given 'sensual lust.' We see something quite similar in Ivan's case. In 'Pro And Contra,'

speaking of his Karamazov 'thirst for life regardless of everything,' Ivan says: 'I have a longing for life, and I go on living in spite of logic. Though I may not believe in the order of the universe, yet I love the sticky little leaves as they open in spring. I love the blue sky....' (p. 242) And after his harrowing description of the sufferings of children and his recounting of the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor, when he cries again: 'I told you, all I want is to live on to thirty, and then...dash the cup to the ground!' Alyosha exclaims: 'But the little sticky leaves, and the precious tombs, and the blue sky, and the woman you love! How will you live, how will you love them?.... With such a hell in your heart and your head, how can you?' (p. 277) Ivan's subsequent career serves only to confirm Alyosha's doubts. The sticky leaves and the blue sky afford Ivan no comfort, no solace in his continual mental self-lacerations, his guilty conscience. They do not drive out the devil when he visits him and cannot in any way prevent his mind from giving way. Only Alyosha (excluding Father Zossima) is one with nature. But Alyosha is a subject all by himself.

Economic Development and the Intellectual

By PRANAB BARDHAN

IT is now widely recognised, though that recognition is often only lip-deep, that economic development is not a mere matter of manipulating the highly abstract instrument variables of the fashionable growth models that our economists (*qua* economists) carry in their kitbags. As a matter of fact, the ultimate determinants of the growth process cannot fully be understood without crossing the borderlines of a number of social science disciplines, and a proper study of economic development should consider along with changes in production functions and other economic-technological growth factors, the vitally important elements of the sociology of the development process, its socio-cultural background, the prevailing psychological-institutional complex and finally, the structure of social and economic leadership. This paper attempts to explore one essential, but relatively neglected field of such a study: the role of the intellectual in economic development.

I

'The fundamental problem of development', Hirschman notes, 'consists in generating and energizing human action in a certain direction', and in this context, the problem of leadership assumes its importance. No discussion of the take-off and all the economic aeronautics of it can be complete without reference to the pilot and his performance. But the history of 'take-offs' in a number of countries informs us that this leadership was never consciously and

directly assumed by people whom we can call intellectuals. The Schumpeterian entrepreneur, despite all his 'dynamic' virtues and 'inner direction', was not, by any stretch of imagination, an intellectual. In those days people with a high I.Q. went into scholarship, into theology and the church, into administration, into medicine and the law, but they did not enter into the commercial and industrial life of their countries. The then great intellectual centres of Europe—Paris, Heidelberg, Berlin, St. Petersburg, etc.—had very little direct connection with the progress of industrialisation. It was only in the twentieth century that the great laboratories of scientific research established by big corporations and trade associations harnessed scientific intellect in achieving advances in industrial technique. Even so, much of the driving force of contemporary industrial development in Canada, the United States, Belgium, Italy, Western Germany, etc. still comes from outside the educated classes.¹

The most striking example, in the earlier part of this century, of some sort of an intellectual leadership in economic development was that provided by the *avant-garde* of the Communist Party in Soviet Russia. Lenin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Chicherin, Gorky, Litvinov, Zinoviev, Rakovsky were all intellectuals of a high order. Carrying on the great intellectual tradition of the Glorious Russian Enlightenment—the Russian Renaissance—and seduced by their own Utopian visions, it was the intelligentsia (incidentally, the term 'intelligentsia' itself had its probable origin in 19th-century Russia), and not the proletariat, that had thought up and carried out the Revolution. And, after the Revolution, they not merely engineered the socialist cons-

¹ Edward Shils: *The Intellectuals, Public Opinion and Economic Development*, *Economic Development and Cultural Change*, Oct., 1957.

truction through the political cadres of a semi-militarily disciplined Party but also supplied the necessary intellectual and ideological inspiration. As Raymond Aron puts it, 'The emperors of old were often poets or thinkers; for the first time the emperor actually reigns *qua* dialectician, interpreter of the doctrine and of history'. In China, Communist intellectuals—who have acted both as warriors and scholars—like Mao-tse-tung, Liu-shao-chi and Chou-en-lai are now leading her 'great leap forward' in the industrialisation drive. In fact Communist countries perhaps provide the singular case of a determined band of intellectuals (or workers intellectually inspired) sparking off social and economic progress in industrially backward countries.

In the resurgent underdeveloped countries of South-east Asia and Africa too, the urge for development and progress is felt, articulated and activated primarily by the intellectuals—the most sensitive and vocal section of the people. But in view of the scarcity of indigenous entrepreneurship and its 'zero-sum'² orientation, socio-structural variables cannot be relied upon for the automatic creation of the conditions for industrial development, as has been historically the case with Western Capitalism. The task, therefore, largely devolves upon the intellectuals themselves. The university-trained civil servants, engineers (social as well as technical), specialists in exact sciences and all the others who form the so-called 'brain-trust' (which Roosevelt mobilised in his New Deal) are to supply the personnel for industrial progress. Economic planning, industrial management, construction schemes, agricultural research and extension work and the various welfare services—all these will require the active participation of a large number of intellectuals. The intellectual has to come out of his house-top garret or coffee-house corner.

But merely emptying the coffee-houses

would not do unless and until the whole pattern of our education, and more fundamentally, our value-system, is reoriented. The need for technical training and the study of experimental sciences and a change in the literary-philosophic bias of our intelligentsia have long been emphasised. Shils has traced the origins of the relative indifference towards science and technology in our classical tradition as well as the traditions set up by colonial administration. He has also drawn attention to the 'xenophile' pseudo-intellectualism so painfully rampant in our coffee-houses as well as secretariats. Intellectual leadership will be fake and misdirected so long as xenophilia afflicts our educated classes, perverts the social tradition and widens the elite-mass dichotomy.

While the intellectuals have thus to remodel themselves according to the growing needs of leadership in economic development, they in their turn have to reshape the cultural pattern of society as much as it is possible for them and infuse growth-oriented values into it. We know how such dynamic social values, properly diffused, have opened the floodgates of productive ventures in the formative centuries of the now-advanced countries. In the words of Mumford, 'Behind all the great material inventions of the last century and a half was not merely a long internal development of technics: there was also a change of mind. Before the new industrial processes could take hold on a great scale, a re-orientation of wishes, habits, ideas, goals was necessary.' This reorientation now in the context of the undeveloped countries has to be piloted by the intellectual class. What is of primary importance is the development of a historical sense and a basic form of rationality among the people. (This rationality need not have its emphasis on accounting and calculation, the *zeitgeist* of capitalism Sombart talked of.) The intellectuals are to devise systems of thought (and accordingly manipulate communication symbols) which permit an open and rational view of the world and instil desire in the people to harness the blind

² This term, borrowed from the game theory of economic behaviour, has been used by Leibenstein to denote activities that are unproductive from the point of view of economic development.

forces of nature or of social systems. (It is important to note here how the leaders of the Indian Renaissance tried to galvanise the stagnant society with their concept of secular, human reason—a form of rationality different from that of Hindu logic or of Buddhist disputations.) In general, they have to break through the fetters of time-honoured traditions and mediate the secular values of a Faustian West which stress the ideas of progress, mobility, activism, science, controlled environment, empiricism and things of that sort. Of course, it may not be altogether difficult to find evidences of an indigenous tradition of 'practical' and material values in Oriental life, but it is for the leadership to afford it a direction and harness it for the purpose of economic development.

But these new values (or old values 'revitalised') can serve as a focus of social reintegration only when they are woven into an effective ideological pattern for economic development. Changing values must be interpreted within an inclusive framework of objectives that ignite the public imagination with the vision of a better world, ushering in an era of never-ending prosperity, and the faith, in the words of Saint Simon, that the golden age lies not behind, but ahead. The formulation, elaboration and promulgation of such an ideology is one of the principal tasks of the intellectuals. Saint-Simonian socialists did it for France under Napoleon III. It is well-known how Saint Simon's ideas (as expanded and redefined by his followers, particularly by Bazard) glorifying science and industrialism as a religion—a '*nouveau Christianisme*'—appealed to the brothers Pèrreire of Crédit-Mobilier fame, who contributed so much to the spread of the modern capitalist system in France. Similarly, as Gerschenkron points out³, Friedrich List's industrialisation theories may be

largely conceived of as an attempt to translate the inspirational message of Saint-Simonism into a language that would be accepted in the German environment where the lack of both a preceding political revolution and a national unification rendered nationalism a much more suitable ideology of industrialisation. In Japan too, nationalism turned into a religion, served as the requisite ideology, greasing the wheels of industrialisation. In Soviet Russia, it was Communism with all its materialist dialectics.

Apart from mediating new values and raising new ideological banners of economic advance, the intellectuals in developing societies may have also to confront the historic task of creating an adequate collective self-image for the community.⁴ As the certitude and homogeneity of the old society fall by the wayside, and dynamic Western values encroach upon the old traditions, there is some danger that the sense of the national identity may be lost in the process. It is for the intellectuals to rediscover the national genius and establish a viable ideational link with the past, providing transcendental inspiration throughout the entire social spectrum. In contemporary Burma, Buddhism, in a revitalised form, is being used as such a source of national self-identification. Similar efforts to make religion the basis of a revitalised cultural tradition appear to be made in certain Muslim countries, such as Pakistan. Gilberto Freyre, we are told, has contributed much to the development of a collective image for Brazil as what he calls a 'lusio-tropical civilisation' (cf. his *New World in the Tropics: the Culture of Modern Brazil*). In India too, the marked tendency, noted by Shils (*Quest*, 24), of the Indian intellectuals to find a renewed interest in Indian philosophy, Indian art and architecture, Indian dancing and music and to rediscover some connection with Indian traditions and folk-styles, may be significantly explained by a similar desire to redefine and idealise the meaning of

³ A. Gerschenkron: 'Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective' in *Progress of Underdeveloped Areas*, ed. by Hoselitz.

⁴ John Friedmann: 'Intellectuals in Developing Societies', *Kyklos*, Fasc. 4, 1960.

national culture and destiny in the context of a changing society.

III

So far we have tried to cover the more or less familiar ground of the necessity of intellectual leadership and some possible directions in which it might choose to flow in underdeveloped countries. What is perhaps more controversial is the degree of intellectualism that is compatible with the commercial and industrial values of an economically progressing society.

The fact that historically the intellectual class — if there is such 'class' — has not come out for conscious direction of the development process in many important countries is perhaps not without a pointed suggestion, and one may very well suspect something basically anti-intellectual in the whole affair. America's industrial advance, for instance, is not totally unconnected with the populist tradition in her culture and her typical distrust of the 'eggheads'. France, on the other hand, is a country with a tradition of intellectual maturity and it may not have been a chance phenomenon that she has lagged behind in the march of Western Capitalism. Nor can it be totally explained away by reference to her deficiency in certain basic resources, her peculiar class-structure or to certain familial attitudes. In India too, if one ventures to take an interregional comparison, the economically most developed section of her people is not always intellectually the most advanced, or conversely, the most 'cultured' regions have not been very successful from the material point of view. To come to a more concrete case, we may take the example of Bengal. If someone says that her rather luxuriant intellectual growth and the concomitant attitudinal changes have not been very conducive to her material advancement, he is *not* perhaps merely rationalising the frustration of the Bengalee in the material field, but, we believe, emphasising what is at least a partial truth. It is also remarkable that since the 1920's one can discern a

gradual shift in the Indian leadership to those areas more or less affected by the populist ideology of Gandhism (which emphasises moral fervour, but not intellectual sensibility), and Bengal, admittedly, has been one of the least-affected areas.

We have cited some cases where intellectual growth has not gone well with material aggrandisement, and no doubt, these are *prima facie* inconclusive. But, we think, these do call for a reconsideration of the idea of economic development in the light of an intellectually mature value-scheme. Industrialisation may have its own ethics but in an advanced philosophy of life they might have no place. The positivist rationalism of industrial civilisation has long proved miserably inadequate. As Michael Polanyi so eloquently argues (*Encounter*, Sept., 1959), 'Scientific rationalism did serve man well as long as it was moving towards its false ideals from a great distance. But this could not last. Eventually the truth-bearing power of its absurd ideals was bound to be spent and its stark absurdity to assert itself. This is what has happened in the twentieth century'. In a developing society apotheosising the cult of science and technology, the intellectual might feel a sort of spiritual alienation, a sense of hollowness (a sense of the 'absurd') and even in many cases may very well develop some sort of a cynical outlook — qualifications which ill befit the leaders of economic progress. An industrial society with its large-scale standardisation and mass production has its inevitable by-product in a commercialised and vulgarised mass-culture ('shiny barbarism' as Richard Hoggart calls it), and the intellectual may find it simply suffocating. No wonder, the hero of an industrial society is the mechanical scientist or the technician whom Ortega y Gasset (cf. his *The Revolt of the Masses*) sees as the prototype of the mass-man, a 'learned ignoramus' so to say, often incapable of understanding the complex historical and cultural factors which are necessary for social integration. We have talked of the intellectual's task of diffusing among the

people the material values and ideologies of economic advance and invoking a collective myth for national self-identification. But after a time, a true intellectual may not feel quite happy about all these. Materialist ideologies he may find rather empty, the idea of the 'economic man' may be dismissed by him as an entirely false conception of human personality, the scientific ideal he may consider as much too narrow, mechanised and depersonalised, he may question the very welfare postulates behind a programme of cumulative economic growth and finally, he may not easily lend himself to the particularistic attachments to a collectivity, be it a nation, a race or a religious group, and concur, let alone pioneer, in a mass idolatry of history.

We may go a little bit farther and may very well question the intellectual's capability of providing sustained mass-leadership in economic progress. The picture of the intellectual has traditionally been that of *L'Etranger* in a community of unthinking masses, an Albatross *au milieu des huées*; in a sense, the intellectual has essentially been that kind of a creature. Cases are not rare in which his advanced intellect has gradually driven him to introversion that produces what Mannheim calls 'Schizothymia'. This is a state of 'critical tension between the person's 'inner' and his outer world, which in extreme cases may impair his capacity to maintain normal social contacts. Whenever a stratum of literati has emerged, as Max Weber pointed out, it has shown an inclination towards private intellectual ecstasies as contrasted with the communal rapture of peasants. This is still true today. The philosophy of contemporary 'existentialism' is basically a product of this process of withdrawal and estrangement from the public realm of reality'. (Mannheim: *Essays in the Sociology of Culture*). The intellectual's capacity for social (and economic) leadership may thus be limited in a very significant sense.

We have spoken earlier of the intellectual leadership in Communist countries. Now the question can be raised whether

the same anti-intellectual bias cannot be discerned in the collectivist-materialist ideological inspiration of economic development in these countries. The development of the forces of production has been underlined as the great theme of history. The Marxist eschatology flattering as it does in Russia the messianic idealism of the Slavs (or in China, the nationalist urges whipped up by centuries of foreign domination), the myth of proletarian liberation and the cult of technique — all these have produced a mass hypnosis for the fanatic endurance of the rigours of rapid industrialisation. (It is interesting to note that the great 'purges' of the 1930's not merely rid Stalin of his political rivals but also purged the Soviet Communist movement of the intellectualism that vitalised its earlier leadership.) When the exigencies of Communist industrialisation circumscribe the intellectual horizon to the narrow confines of Marxist-Leninist dialectics, socialist realism, forced optimism, Pavlovian reflexology and a particular form of genetics and biology, the true intellectual who has not prostituted his soul is bound to feel crushed. Boris Pasternak's is a tragic figure.

If the course of economic development of a society is influenced by its intellectuals, its exigencies in turn might thus affect the course of its intellectual development. A sociology of the intellectual throughout history shows how he has changed with the change in the 'structure' and 'function' of society. In our times, as the logic of industrial civilisation involves a supersession of culture by technology (or at best intellectual culture by mass culture), excommunication of 'art for art's sake' or pure research, and emphasis on the manipulative aspects of knowledge, the decomposition of the intellectual process is bound to set in. The growing society will no doubt require the services of engineers, factory managers, writers, professors and psychologists. But the continued neglect of humanistic values will ensure it only the supply of technocrats, bureaucrats and the 'engineers of the soul'

— not the free intellectual, the full cultivated man. Faust will have long lost his soul.

IV

This paper is not meant to belittle in any way the imperative necessity of the intellectual's leadership in undeveloped countries now embarking on an industrial career. On the contrary, it has already emphasised that in unequivocal terms. It only questions the intellectual acceptability of the philosophical foundations of the 18th-century idea of 'progress' which has stimulated two centuries of Western industrialisation and is now the *idée maitresse* of indigent societies. True, that it was the

'creative minority', to use Toynbee's term, that has always solved the problems of man in history, and once more in the hands of one such creative group has devolved the task of pulling the backward economies out of the quagmire of stagnation and gear them on to the path of economic prosperity. But always it has to be remembered, as Tawney once cautioned us, that economic ambitions are good servants, but they are also bad masters. Harnessed to a social purpose, they will turn the mill and grind the corn. But the question to what end the wheels revolve always remains. This end, for the future society, should be an inclusive framework of goals in which man's acquisitive aims are moderated by higher and broader human purposes.

The Uniqueness of Theatre

"The play's the thing..." SHAKESPEARE

"The stage is a lie, make it as truthful as possible..." VOLTAIRE

By VINOD SENA

TODAY, when amateur dramatic productions seem to be continually on the increase and when we find a small but steady and expanding group of enthusiasts attempting to found a professional theatre in this country in the hope that it may one day grow into a national one, we often find people wondering why there should be so much fuss about developing this particular form of mimetic art when another is already flourishing so abundantly in our midst? That India had some form of rudimentary theatre at the advent of the cinema is a fact still within the living memory of some of us. That this theatre was superseded without any struggle, allowing the cinema to have almost a walk-over, is implicit in the present (almost complete) absence of any professional theatre worth the name in our country. Then why, when the cinema has already proved itself as a more dynamic, more vital and more versatile form of mimesis, should we seek to revive the conflict already resolved, to rejuvenate a form that has apparently become *passé* and spent its force?

These are some of the questions that the average lover of the mimetic arts asks when posed with the issue of the revival of drama in India. The arguments advanced in reply often tend to be: First, that every great nation today, American, French, English, Russian, has a national theatre of its own, and that no nation can hope to figure on the cultural map of the world without a theatre in at least its capital; Second, that if the cinema is to attain a high and consistent level of art, it must find some nursery, some training

ground where young talent could get the opportunity for training and experiment which the cinema itself (with its commercial dependence on stardom) cannot offer, and that a flourishing theatre is the best possible feeder that it can get. But neither argument really justifies any serious interest in the revival of drama. If vodka is a national institution with the Russians or Burgundy with the French, that is no reason why we should follow suit; and no art that is cultivated simply as a matter of international prestige can hope to have much life. And if the cinema needs a place for nurturing its saplings, surely it can afford to set up at one point a school or an academy where it could concentrate the nation's best talent for training the young in a manner not possible to the theatre whose resources must be dissipated over large areas, covering at least the major cities of the country.

No, if the theatre is to be resurrected, it must be for different reasons. It must justify itself in itself, and not in terms of something else. The more sensitive of the drama's fans have often spoken of its 'uniqueness': they have found in it something that no other art-form seems to offer in quite the same way or to quite the same degree. It is in terms of this individuality of appeal, this peculiarity of the opportunities that it offers, that drama, ultimately, must be justified. And to be able to do this, we must begin by attempting to define the essential nature of theatre-experience, for if we can show that the drama can offer that which no other like art-form—cinema, ballet, opera—can give, something that has its own distinct value,

then the drama shall need no apologists: its necessity shall stand beyond question and the need for its development be self-revealed.

That the theatre has its own fascination, a magic, a thrill not to be found in any other art, is a fact wellknown to theatre-goers for centuries. But when one looks for any analysis or exposition of its individuality, one is surprised to find so little. Our ancestors seem to have taken their theatre-addiction for granted. Many a Pepys may have left indubitable proof of the stage's extraordinary power, its ability to *grip*, in spite of its fanfare and exhibitionism, even men of a retiring temperament, compelling them irresistibly to itself regardless of their most ardent vows and promises. But they never stopped to examine the why and wherefore of their experience. It was enough for them that some divine Muse or god was the art's patron, and that it in some way served as a 'mirror to nature', or 'an image of the times.' One may take Aristotle's remark about the 'purgation' of the emotions of 'pity' and 'terror' as a starting point for an investigation into the nature of theatre-experience — and many a modern analyst of drama has done that—but Aristotle himself never carries his inquiry further into this field and never explains his meaning, and it is not surprising that today there should be said to exist sixty different theories on the meaning of his 'catharsis'.

However, things have begun to wear a different complexion. As in other fields, so here: the kind of selfconsciousness that has become so characteristic a feature of modern life, is gradually making itself felt in theatre-experience. The invention and development of other art-forms very close to the theatre — the cinema, the radio or T.V. — has made us conscious of the distinctiveness of the theatre in a manner not possible to our forefathers. The fact that we continue to find in cities like New York, London or Paris a sufficient number of "people who undertake the trip to the ... theatre through the worst bottlenecks of traffic in the world"¹ to spend two-and-a-half hours in its press, paying often fancy

prices for their uncomfortable seats, when they could just as well go to the nearest square and see the best Hollywood stars performing on the screen or sit back in the warmth of their hearth fire and watch their T.V. sets come to life, makes one wonder what it may be that thus impels them to the theatre? And if it is in America that these new forms have been most rampant, it is from there that we get the first distinct signs of a new sensitiveness to the uniqueness of theatre-experience. It was this burden that inspired the late Maxwell Anderson's "Cut is the Branch that might have grown full Straight," but his purpose is rhetorical rather than analytical. He notes a distinct difference between theatre and cinema, but beyond commending the former at the expense of the latter, he was little to say. Mr. Eric Bentley, perhaps America's greatest living dramatic critic, certainly carries things much further. In the little essay of his latest volume *What is Theatre?* he considers at some length what he regards as the peculiar attractions of the stage. To begin with, there are, as he says, the peculiarities of the theatre as a 'place' with its locale, machinery, lights, curtains, etc. Further, 'there is something too about its inhabitants', 'there is something about the actor as such, about the mere fact of impersonation, there is a 'magic' in this too.' Again, there is the 'audience' with the psychology peculiar to a 'group of people in close physical proximity, with their faces all pointing one way and their attention—their eyes, ears, hearts and minds—focussed upon a single object,' a psychology whereby 'an experience is changed by being shared in such company in such a manner,' until 'the joke I imperceptibly smile at alone in my study, we perceptibly grin at, we perhaps all 'roar' at in the theatre.'

But these factors by themselves cannot account for the theatre's peculiar power, for these to some extent it shares with the cinema, which too brings large numbers together, and has its own machinery of screen and projection and sound. Bentley realises this, and the *raison d'être* of

theatre-experience, he concludes, must be found in a living relationship between actor and audience impossible to the movies or to T.V.:

No current flows from celluloid to audience—or, at any rate, no current flows from audience to celluloid. In the movie theatre we can watch a story and admire many things that actors do, but we cannot be caught up in a flow of living feeling that passes from actor to audience and from the audience back again to the actor. In the movies Shirley Booth may smile and you may smile back at her; but she can scarcely catch your returning smile and toss it back again or change it and give it back in the form of a sob or catch in the throat. But such are the dynamics of theatre.

Mr. John Gassner, the other Colossus of American dramatic criticism, approaches the problem from a somewhat different angle. The concluding sections of his Dancy lectures on *Form and Idea In Modern Theatre* are largely devoted to an examination of the nature of theatre-experience. Its quintessence, Gassner believes, is to be found in the theatre's 'Duality':

As spectators in the theatre, we make use of a built-in mechanism comparable to a shuttle, which enables us to move back and forth between the planes of reality and theatre. Or this faculty may be described as a double vision, which enables us to experience a stage performance in such a way that it is both reality and theatre at the same moment. We can focus on 'real life' (i.e., succumb to the *illusion* of reality), at one point in the performance and soon thereafter respond to a thoroughly theatrical effect which we *know* to be 'theatre' rather than 'real life'. Also we can have the experience of feeling an action to be 'real' and 'theatrical' *at the same time*, just as we are simultaneously aware of 'real' time and 'theatrical' time, which may be much longer and can even

consume decades during the actual lapse of minutes.²

Both Mr. Bentley and Mr. Gassner could have pursued their explorations much further; but their intense concern for the problems of the contemporary stage distracts them from questions of theory to those of practice. Had that not been the case, one is certain that they would have arrived at a clear and coherent exposition of the true nature of theatre-experience, its scope and its limitations—for who could have been more qualified to speak on such matters than them. But things as they stand, they give us much by way of suggestion and they leave much that is unsaid. It is this that makes their pronouncements so invaluable, for if they do not exhaust the subject, they can at least serve as a useful baseline for further explorations.

The most significant suggestion that Bentley gives is that the theatre offers some kind of *communal* experience in which everything that enters is in some mysterious way transformed by being shared; and that this communal experience is not confined to the audience but is shared by it with the actors. Carrying this line of thought a little further than Bentley does, we could say that the fact of a communal sharing of experience between actor and audience implies that the audience is more than a spectator, it is in some sense a *participant* since its response to some degree conditions the actor's performance. Mr. Gassner's chief contribution lies in his pointing out that the theatre exists for us not just as a plain glass through which we look at life: it is a magic glass that intensifies, exaggerates, distorts, whatever it images, calling attention not only to the objects it pictures but also to the fact of its picturing them. In other words, the theatre is 'real' and 'theatrical', a transcript of life and an improvisation; and it can be both not merely alternately but simultaneously. And here, it would be interesting to note, both lines of inquiry meet, for if, as Bentley suggests, we are tempted in the theatre to smile at Shirley Booth and she tosses

back to us in some form or another our gesture of appreciation without undermining the experience, (if anything, intensifying it), it follows that when we are watching a stage performance we are somehow always aware of its being a performance, of the fact that the actors and actresses are deliberately impersonating before us—a sensitivity to the ‘virtuosity’ of their art becoming a vital part of our response.

It is its ‘duality’, then, its reality and theatricality, that is at the heart of theatre-experience—and it is this duality that is somehow related to its other vital attribute; its quality of communal experience. Other arts may attempt to ‘mirror’ human experience, but they must transform its elements into terms other than those in which it could have occurred or be expected to occur in real life, be they linguistic, visual, musical, plastic or kinaesthetic. But the dramatist suffers from none of the constraints experienced by the narrative writer, the musician, painter, dancer, or sculptor. He can employ all the complex machinery of life; not just *translate* its varied elements into a single artistic medium, but bring them *bodily*, in fact, upon the stage: language, gesture, movement, setting. He does more than *express*, he *reincarnates* life upon the bare boards. The drama, therefore, has not only a more varied sensuous appeal (i.e., appealing simultaneously to more than a single sense), but it has a literalness, an immediacy not experienced in reading a verse or prose narrative, in watching a dance, appreciating a picture or hearing a music recital. Each of these arts attains its own intensity, an intensity beyond the reach of drama; but in each there is a certain remoteness from actual physical experience. A master of narrative may often come close to giving us all the details of incidents as they occur in life; but then there is all the difference between a description and direct perception. The theatre may have conventions of its own (which are usually dictated by its physical limitations), but these, and this reinforces the point,

seem to matter far less in its case than in that of other arts, its appreciation being certainly more accessible to the untrained than is the case with dance or music. For the fact is that the spectator tends to see a theatre performance not so much as an attempt to translate into one set of terms experience that in life occurs in others, than as a sort of transcript from life. He is hardly aware of ‘convention’ as such: he becomes aware of it only when he is jolted from one mode of presentation to quite another.

But this is as true of the other mimetic arts like opera and cinema as it is of the theatre; and whereas we may dismiss opera on account of the ‘remoteness’ it introduces by virtue of its stylization of speech and gesture and its dependence on music, it is otherwise with the cinema. Its ability to mimic actuality is, if anything, more developed than that of the theatre—and herein lies the crucial difference. Both the stage and the screen bring before us human beings moving, speaking, acting as they tend to do in actual life. But the cinema, once the lights are off and the silver screen has come into its own, creates the illusion of actuality to a much greater degree than the stage. We are scarcely conscious that the figures we see before us are deliberately *performing*; we become conscious of the fact of impersonation only when it is being defectively done, or else when the lights are switched on and the screen fades back from a living ‘eye’ to a lifeless piece of fabric. But the theatre is always an improvisation: the stage-actor, even when impersonating at his best, remains an actor; and we are most sensitively alive to his art when he touches its highest points, not just when he fails to master it. It was perhaps this distinction that Mr. Eliot had in mind when, after his experience of seeing his *Murder in the Cathedral* filmed, he wrote: ‘The difference between stage and screen in respect of realism is so great, I think, as to be a difference of kind rather than degree.’ George Hoellering, his producer, is even more explicit: ‘Whatever is seen on the stage is real; everything seen

on the screen is, in a sense, an optical illusion.

The cinema, in other words, offers us a photograph of human life, albeit a faked one, but a photograph nevertheless. The theatre offers us instead an 'imitation' of life; and while a photograph, even when known to be faked, depends for its effect upon an illusion of literal transcription; image and object coinciding exactly, an 'imitation' (in the sense in which the term is used here) realises itself by coalescing our awareness of the object imitated with an awareness of the fact of imitation, object and image not only coinciding but remaining distinct. Once we have surrendered ourselves to the magic of the cinema we tend to assume that what is before us is a record, a photographic record, of something that *happened* or could happen, and the screen, that can contain within its dimensions almost anything, lends itself readily to this illusion. In the theatre, however, even after we have given ourselves up to the performance before us, the stage, the rising and falling of the curtain, the painted sets the actual physical presence of human beings (not just their photographs) who daily repeat the same or similar performances—in fact everything about it reminds us insistently that what we behold is not a photographic reproduction but an improvised imitation. The illusion of theatre is never an optical illusion, for it is an illusion that is actively aware of its own illusory nature.

This awareness of its being only a kind of make-believe, far from being a sign of the theatre's limitation as a mimetic art-form, is the source of its peculiar power. For if opera and the ballet tend to be too much 'art' and the cinema too much 'illusion', it is in the theatre that the two tendencies (each with its own attractions and possibilities) finally meet and are synthesised into something distinct from either, something providing multiple satisfaction at multiple levels. The theatre carries with it the direct impact of immediate experience and yet is not bound by the limits of physical verisimilitude. Being

at once actual and theatrical, it is free to strain beyond to a larger, more vigorous life and can impose upon experience a rigidity of pattern that could only seem artificial in the movies. Thus the theatre can give us life as it is lived on its surface as well as life as it surges underneath, with its dreams and aspirations, its hopes and fears, uniting into one, words that, as Arthur Koestler suggests (*Quest* 21, pp. 9-10), normally appear distinct and even opposed. Small wonder that W. B. Yeats, while realising his limitations as dramatist, should have devoted so much of his energy to the theatre, for he saw in it 'the most immediately powerful form of literature, the most vivid image of life...'

Besides, the theatre engages us as spectators more completely than the cinema, since in it we are more than spectators, we are *participants*. Our response to what is presented affects to some degree the very fact of presentation. There is, as Bentley suggested, a live chord vibrating between actor and audience, a chord that has snapped in the case of the movies. Through this sense of collective participation the theatre acquires something of the force of communal ritual, of the kind of thrill that binds together a village community at a ballad recital where, even though there may be a single voice singing, the rest join in at the refrain or beat time with their hands. Yeats surveying the Irish folk drama in 1904 aptly observed: '...when the theatre is perfectly alive, the audience, as at the Gaelic drama today in Gaelic-speaking districts, feels itself to be almost a part of the play.' It is possible that we can empathise better with characters when they appear in flesh and blood than when their photographs are projected two-dimensionally on a screen. A speech of Hamlet or Othello may be a memorable thing indeed in the cinema, but it fails to send quite that physical thrill down our spine that we experience in a good theatre performance. One may not be amiss in saying that the theatre 'in a sense' is at once *more real* and *less real* than the cinema. And when with its peculiar opportunities for partici-

pation and empathy, the theatre of a nation turns to the dramatisation of the hopes and fears of its people at a time when they are collectively moved by shared anxieties and aspirations, it suddenly acquires a new dimension and miraculous power. It is no longer a mere organ of the entertainment industry, a place for a two-hour spree of amusement and relaxation. It becomes an extension of life itself, the point where its multifarious forces converge into an intense white flame of energy that draws us out of our limited, isolated existence and thrusts us into a wider, more universal, more terrifying, and also more satisfying mode of life. The theatre of Aeschylus' Athens, of Shakespeare's London or of the Paris of the recent German Occupation had a collective vitality of impact, a quality of crystalizing the dark and festering dreams and sorrows of the audience as a single collective being, that neither the novel, read in the closet, nor the cinema, which hardly permits participation, could have ever supplied.

But we must not forget that if the theatre can afford us, at its moments of vitality, the thrill peculiar to communal ritual, it also keeps us above it. Being simultaneously experienced as 'fact' and 'fiction', 'reality' and 'art', the audience, while entering into the experience, yet retains its power of critical detachment. This dual quality of our response to theatre leads directly to many significant consequences. It means that a theatre audience is more critically alive than a cinema one. It tends to be far more sensitive to the art of the 'thing', for when we see an actor as someone trying to impersonate a character, rather than as that character himself, we tend to be incessantly alive to the virtuosity of his rendering. The screen-actor's art is no less exacting, and the audience cannot be said to be entirely unconscious of it. But its consciousness of the art tends to be of a negative kind. As already observed, we become conscious of it either when the art is being poorly handled or when the show is over and the illusion broken, and we look back retrospectively and critically

review what we have witnessed. But in the theatre the fact of impersonation is always actively at the back of our mind, ready to come to the forefront whenever a particular action or piece of dialogue is particularly well-rendered. The enjoyment afforded is not unlike that we experience in hearing a piece of good music exceptionally well-played, for there too we are not only conscious of the quality of the music but also of the skill of the musician playing it. And the burst of applause that often greets the descent of the curtain after a difficult and well-performed scene is ample proof that to the experience afforded by the movies the theatre adds another, that of the conscious appreciation of 'art'.

This more active critical awareness on the audience's part also implies greater demands upon what is presented. The spectator at the movies, not being called upon to participate and tending to see the performance as a literal transcript, is critically relaxed and accepts whatever is presented. So long as the photographic reproduction seems faithful enough and can hold his senses he has little to say. It is not surprising therefore that the dialogue of an average film script when seen on paper should appear so much poorer than that of the normal play. What is true of language is equally true of plot. Since the audience is not mentally very active, the cinema can afford to be thoroughly episodic and yet be a success. Even if it tries to be otherwise, it may fail, for, as Eliot notes, 'An intricate plot, intelligible on the stage, might be completely mystifying on the screen. The audience has no time to think back or establish relations between early hints and subsequent discoveries.' In order to apprehend any complex organism as a whole, our awareness of its individual parts must be critical. But in the cinema the illusion is so complete and our critical faculties so relaxed that we are always sacrificing the whole in our submission to the part. As such it can never attain to that complexity of structure and verbal suggestion that is the chief distinction of great drama.

Another and related factor is also res-

possible for this difference of texture. If the cinema can master more varied sensuous effects, it can also become their slave. A strength may often prove a weakness, and if the cinema can make use of the picturesque in a manner beyond the scope of the stage, it not infrequently begins to exploit its visual opportunities for covering up an underlying thinness of substance. An ingenious photographic sequence backed up by competent music may be made to evoke almost any emotion; and when emotion can be thus easily evoked by an art-form, what is there to prevent it, under the pressure of commercialisation, from generating a response that is not really justified by the experience presented. It is no accident that Indian movies should be so atrociously sentimental, or that the average film from Hollywood should tend toward the spectacular, sensational or jazzy. The stage, by being denied the screen's opportunities, escapes from its vices. It cannot afford to shift the emphasis from the human action to the setting, and whatever emotions it evokes must be generated by that action itself and not by something else. Thus the theatre can arrive at a concentration of human experience scarcely attainable by the cinema; and the fact that (since it has far fewer visual resources) it has to depend very largely on language, ensures its survival as literature.³ It is a paradox of drama that while it is not constrained to translate the experience it embodies into purely linguistic terms, it yet stands as one of the most outstanding and permanent forms of literature. The cinema may often make considerable use of language, but its pervasive reliance on the eye makes it impossible for it to realise itself anywhere but on the screen. Some screen-plays may have been published, yet they only go to make us recognise that the cinema can never become a branch of literature like the drama. Once again the drama displays a strange duality: it is at once literature and more than literature, bringing to the complexity and concentra-

tion of a work of literary art the immediacy of concrete physical experience.

The most significant consequence, however, of the critical awareness generated by the theatre's duality is its amazing ability to immerse us into varied human experience and still keep us above it. The theatre, as we have seen, allows ample scope to our empathy; yet if we know that a certain actor is not Hamlet but impersonating Hamlet, we are not very likely to indentify ourselves completely with the role. We are thus enabled to enter human experience in all its literalness from within and yet remain its master, viewing it objectively from without: we are *at once involved and free*. (Bertolt Brecht's theories of an 'epic theatre', wherein the audience is deliberately prevented from indentifying itself with any of the characters, may be extremist, but are no more than a one-sided exaggeration of a vital double-sided truth about drama.) While attending a theatre-performance we are, then, not only more sensitive to the technique of presentation, but are more critically alive to the quality of experience presented. We ourselves may hardly be conscious of the difference; and yet if the plot of a play may be more intricate, it follows that in the theatre we are intellectually more alert. Complexity of plot is but another aspect of complexity of experience (even though in a period of decadence the two may not go together). Denied the cinema's visual resources, the theatre has to concentrate on human experience; and by virtue of its 'duality' it invites us to be more critical of it, to compare and contrast, to correlate the before and after, to distinguish its varying shades and subtle differences. It is because of these opportunities that the drama in its short-lived days of glory has displayed a boldness and intensity of exploration that rarely finds parallels among other art-forms that can deal with like material. The cinema and the novel, by being too tied up with the details of everyday life, its surface, tend to become social documents—even though some masters may have done

great things with them. Opera and ballet, by their reliance on stylised movement and music, suggest rather than define and explore experience. The traditional epic and ballad, while giving literary form to the legends of the people, view them in terms of the codes and attitudes current in their time without subjecting them to any sustained process of scrutiny. *The Mahabharata* or *The Divinia Comedia* may be more philosophic than any play could ever hope to be, but do they possess the kind of intellectual challenge that audiences must have experienced in attending the plays of Euripides, of Ben Jonson or of Ibsen? While being far more universal than the movies or the novel—since they are above the trivial details of life—are they not too closely bound with the thought of their times, and does not one have to cultivate a certain frame of mind for their appreciation? The drama, too, cannot escape its times—the Elizabethan ‘world picture’ is a constant presence in Shakespeare’s plays—but at its most live moments it subjects the accepted beliefs of its day to a process of intense exploration, reaching beyond to something that is timeless, born of its own times and yet of no time. The drama is said to be the most ancient of art forms; it also remains the most modern.

It is this exploratory quality that makes it a place of intellectual stimulation. However much Shaw and Yeats may have disagreed on other matters, on this they were agreed. Shaw in 1898 declared:

The truth is that dramatic invention is the first effort of man to become intellectually conscious.

While Yeats, less than a decade later, founding a drama the very opposite of the Shavian, was exhorting his Irish colleagues to

...make the theatre a place of intellectual excitement—a place where the mind goes to be liberated as it was liberated by the theatres of Greece and England and France at certain great

moments of their history, and as it is liberated in Scandinavia today.

‘Intellectual excitement’ of course does not mean ‘intellectual debate.’ The theatre becomes intellectually challenging not by discussing the ‘current problems’ of the day—that could only ensure ephemerality—it attains that status by subjecting the presumptions and attitudes of its day as embodied in the lives of concrete and living characters to a process of sustained psychological exploration. Great drama exhibits a rare unity of sensibility, cutting at the normal distinction between intellect and emotion, for it arrives at its intellectuality not by dabbling with abstract ideas and systems, but by becoming more completely (because more consciously and critically) aware of human experience in all its confusion of emotion, feeling and ideas. Like other arts it brings with it the exhilaration we experience when any obscure movement of our thoughts and feelings is brought to the surface. But since it unites detachment with empathy, it greatly extends this sense of liberation by making our awareness of experience more conscious and objective. The theatre, at its best, besides being a mode of self-expression and self-awareness, is a means to *self-mastery*. It is a two-headed Janus that looks at life simultaneously from within and without, and no other art-form realises, perhaps, quite this balance of ‘inwardness’ and ‘objectivity.’ To the intensity and immediacy that must accompany the crystallisation of the obscure and often morbid fears and anxieties of a whole people, drama alone can bring the sense of exaltation and freedom that is peculiar to tragedy.

Whatever has been said regarding the essential nature of dramatic experience may not be equally true of all drama. The theatre, too, has its periods of ripening and decay, and it, too, is subject to the pressures of commercialisation. Besides, it is very difficult to generalise about an art that has found such varied expression as the Noh plays of Japan, the religious pageant-plays of Europe and India, the drama of Bhasa

and Kalidasa, or of the masters of Greek antiquity, the Renaissance dramatists of Spain, France and England, or those of our own times. Modern drama itself displays enough variety to baffle any theory. But one must try to get at the heart of an art so ancient and so permanent; and even though the elements we have discussed may not all be realized in any particular drama, yet they do, I hope, exist as potentials in every theatre.

It is its 'duality' that is the drama's perpetual source of power. The difference between it and the cinema as forms of mimesis is not one of degree; it is one of kind. The cinema is not just a theatre that has escaped the traditional theatre's physical limitations: it has tended to develop into a different art altogether. Its emphasis is on the photographic and the episodic, that of the theatre on the verbal and structured. If the cinema moves towards naturalism and the graphic arts, the drama approaches symbolic expression and literature. But unlike other literary forms, it possesses the power of immersing us directly into concrete physical experience, yet it can do this

without (as often happens in the cinema) throwing our critical faculties into abeyance. It has the best of both worlds: to the actuality of the screen it can bring the concentration, order and freedom from naturalism of art, and to art's remoteness and harmony it can bring the violence and immediacy of actual life. What it offers is something unique, something distinct from either cinema or opera. And this 'something' is not only unique but supremely valuable, for what other art-form can give us this same awareness of experience from within and this mastery of it from without? This is certainly not to say that the drama is superior to other forms of art — each (and the cinema no less) has its own peculiar opportunities and its own peculiar pleasure and value. It is simply to affirm that a healthy theatre flourishing among any nation is much more than a matter of cultural prestige and pride: it is the point where the varied strands of its people's lives are gathered into one and given a collective meaning and direction; and that the absence of this art-form among a people cannot be made good by the presence and cultivation of other arts.

¹ Eric Bentley, *What is Theatre?* New York, 1956, p. 244. All subsequent references to Bentley are from the essay in this volume 'What is Theatre? : A Point of View,' pp. 235-70.

² John Gassner, *Form & Idea in Modern Theatre*, New York, 1956, pp.210-11.

³ The drama must ultimately depend on language, for though the actor's facial expression and gestures may be made to convey a great deal, they cannot be made as expressive on the stage as on the screen, where the camera can move backwards and forwards at will. At this point I am tempted to make the rather daring speculation that human experience, in order to arrive at the kind of communicable verbal articulation essential to drama, must reach up to a higher degree of consciousness than is requisite in the case of an art-form where suggestive visual and musical sequences may be employed, in place of language, to evoke it. Is not the development of human consciousness closely related to that of language?—but, of course, I must not encroach upon a field that is the special domain of psychology.

⁴ It is not unlikely that high tragedy of the kind we meet with in Sophocles, Shakespeare or Racine may be quite beyond the scope of the screen whose genius may lie in the direction of the pathetic rather than the tragic. We have already seen that the 'more than life' quality of the theatre is beyond the cinema, and this 'extra-life dimension is exploited by all the great tragic dramatists. Besides, by making the hero's sufferings and death too literally 'real' it seems to me to introduce a certain element of morbid pain that is absent in a stage-representation—a difference in quality which I think is borne out by Olivier's film version of *Hamlet*.

Language Planning

By PUNYA SLOKA RAY

BY language planning I mean an active recommendation towards a preferred solution to an existing problem concerning linguistic usage. At one end of the scale comes such a decision as of an individual writer to prefer 'interpretive' to 'interpretative'. At the other end of the scale comes such a decision as of a national parliament to prefer Sinhalese to English. Such plans might or might not turn out to be successful, might or might not be persevered. But those would be separate questions.

WHO PLANS?

Planning is at the first instance a matter of private individual leadership. Later on support may come from a Church or from a State, or indeed may not. Such a leadership may succeed even without later endorsement by a Church or a State. Diverse examples are not lacking. In Norway in the middle of the last century, two humanist scholars made two different recommendations for a national language as distinguished from the then official Danish. Each published a grammar, a dictionary and sample texts. Other writers supported one or the other. It was only later that political parties decided to endorse one or the other through state control. And at the moment, the one which is favoured by the overwhelming majority of writers is also the one disfavoured by the ruling party. In Bengal in the beginning of this century, one distinguished writer, Pramatha Chaudhury decided to prefer the dialect he had learnt as a child to then current literary dialect. At first the schoolteachers used to give samples from his prose to their pupils for exercise in correction. Yet

it is his dialect that almost all Bengali writers prefer now.

Or, planning may become quite early a matter for community leadership. The first and the most widely read book in most languages has been the Bible. And the decisions of its translators have been impressed upon the people with all the backing of a fresh, powerful ideology. If Luther had not chosen the literary dialect of the Meissen chancellory, it might not have so easily become the basis of the now current standard High German. But at least he had several semi-standardized dialects to choose from. The effect of others who translated the Bible into a till then unwritten language might conceivably be greater, if the general conditions of success in language planning are present.

And, planning can become a matter for State initiative or control. Cardinal Richelieu established the French Academy in 1635, composed of some of the most respected writers of the nation, for the express purpose of purifying, fixing and extending the language. Kemal Ataturk established the Turkish Linguistic Society in 1932 for a similar purpose, though he preferred to fill it with party members and schoolteachers. Within one generation ordinary Turkish prose has consequently undergone a most remarkable change. Loanwords from Arabic and Persian used to make up about 75 per cent of the vocabulary of Turkish newspapers. Now the proportion is between 35 and 40 per cent. The nationalist movement in Indonesia had opted for Bahasa Indonesia, that is, Malay. But only the intervention of the Japanese followed by national independence has really established it. The task of coördinating all sug-

gested improvements in the language has been assigned to an official committee.

CONDITION OF SUCCESS

Planning by the State is not a guarantee that planning will be successful. One of the clearest example is shown by Norway, where the long-ruling Socialists have steadily preferred Ivar Aasen's Landsmaal to Knud Knudsen's Riksmål but with less and less success. Another example is shown by Papua, where the governor thought that Neo-Melanesian, then known as Melanesian Pidgin, was a disgraceful language and ought to be abolished. The only results of his strenuous efforts have been that the language continues to flourish everywhere except for a small area around Port Moresby, where it has given way, neither to English nor to any 'authentic' tribal speech, but to Motu, which is an equally unpedigreed and composite language. And responsible foreign observers are now beginning to remark that the attempt to replace English in India by Hindi has only resulted in a growth of the regional languages at a rate faster than that of inter-regional Hindi.

Success in language planning depends on the already existing network of social communication, that is, on the established channels of commerce in material and intellectual goods. It matters less with whom I am free to communicate than with whom I constantly need to communicate. Such a need arises because the other fellow is able to supply a convenience, or because association with him gives me my self-respect. But apart from utility and prestige, the need to communicate is as such a basic drive. The individuals who participate in relatively more intense communication form what Karl Deutsch calls the 'mobilized' part of the population. He shows how changes in the status of languages no less than in their shape spread along the lines of mobilization.

Let us take some concrete examples. Motu prevailed over other candidates firstly because it was based on the speech of the

police-boys who formed the larger part of the total mobilized section of the population, and secondly because these police-boys were much more accessible to the ordinary people than the English-speaking rulers. Riksmål predominates over Landsmaal because it is based on the speech of the urban intellectuals and officials. Malay prevailed over the much larger Javanese, Sudanese etc. because of its long-standing and wide-ranging circulation by preponderantly Malay-speaking traders, soldiers and priests. Not only entire languages, but also specific linguistic habits spread only along the current channels of social communication. The uvular pronunciation of R was in its earliest known records a specialty of Paris and surrounding territory. As this region became dominant, the uvular R gradually replaced the apical R all over France and eventually also in Germany. But even today, the uvular R is, outside Paris, a distinct mark of education and class. Or, as the joke goes it came from Paris to Bonn via Berlin. The social channels of communication do not exactly correspond to the physical routes or the administrative paths but is certainly related.

Planning can succeed only when it rides an increasing social mobilization. By mobilization is not meant anything like an official control over the newspapers, the publishing houses and the radio. It does not even mean a bringing together of people in a common task, if in the execution of the task the roles are narrowly and rigidly allotted and communication thereby made very limited. We are talking of mobilization only in the informal, purely social sense. A more familiar and less misleading paraphrase of the concept might be spontaneously formed habits of talking and listening to one another, increasing readiness to explain oneself to or understand one another in unrestricted interchange of proposals and comments.

In other words, formal organized action by an acknowledged authority, as a widely read and respected writer or churchman or statesman is, can only be successful in its

intention to encourage or discourage linguistic habits if it correlates by a maximal extent to informal unplanned action on the part of numerous lesser authorities. Artificial languages like Esperanto or Simplified Latin have so little chance of success just because their teachers and texts are so few, indeed initially only one, namely the inventor and his sample composition, and so expensive to come by. In contrast, any native speaker of a natural dialect or language functions as some kind of a teacher during the moments of social contact.

ENDS OF PLANNING

Why is language planning ever felt to be necessary? The prime reasons seem to be three. Firstly, there may be no common, uniform, standard linguistic practice at all. Secondly, there may be one common, uniform but functionally restricted standard. Thirdly, there may be several functionally restricted common standards. We shall discuss these under four separate headings: script, dialect, source of borrowing and language.

Script: Quite often there is no script at all. This is the state of affairs when hitherto illiterate communities begin to adopt a more civilized kind of discourse. The various tribal languages in different countries are at this stage now. The usual method of solving this problem is to borrow the script of the nearest trading people, of that external community with which this people are most often in contact. Sometimes a political or a religious consideration is added to the fundamental economic consideration. In current practice, the choice is Roman with the least practicable modification. A few minor exceptions are in India, where some tribal languages have acquired a writing system from neighbour communities. More important exceptions are in the USSR, where all but a few minority languages are now written in Cyrillic.

Or, there may be a standard but functionally restricted script. The most glaring

example is of course Chinese. The script is built on a non-phonetic principle from hundreds of elementary signs to make up an entire lexicon of complex signs. For all practical purposes, these complex signs have to be learnt separately, which takes years and cannot be expected from other than a privileged class. The present Chinese government is determined that all simplifications are to be temporary and the Roman script without additions will be adopted as soon as the Peking speech has become sufficiently widely spread. Other examples are given in the history of Turkish and in that of Malay, both of which have shifted from Arabic-Persian to Roman, partly on the ground that the former could not do justice to the given wealth of vowels, and partly on the ground that the former made possible a dependence on Arabic-Persian sources of borrowing in preference to the modern European languages.

Or, there may be several rival scripts. This is the case in Yugoslavia, where the same language, Serbo-Croat, is written in both Roman and Cyrillic. This is also the case in India, where Hindi and Urdu, which differ only in the formal, learned vocabulary, use Devanagari and a derivative of Arabic-Persian respectively. Japanese is a special case with three scripts for the same language, a set of ideograms borrowed from classical Chinese, a syllabary used for formal writing and another syllabary for informal use. The last two differ almost as much Cyrillic differs from Roman or Gurmukhi from Nagari. German used to be written in two only very slightly different scripts, Gothic and Roman. The Nazis pointedly preferred the former as a symbol for the isolation of Germany from the rest of the Western world. For the same reason, it has been quite abandoned after the war.

Dialect: There may be, within a single language, no one dominant dialect which can serve as the base for a common standard. This was the case in Germany before Luther. However, Luther's choice, combined with the otherwise admitted advantages

of the relatively most unified dialect, tipped the scales towards a clear decision. Frequently, there is no clear awareness of the situation in this regard. This was the case in Southern Rhodesia, where C. M. Doke had to research for one year before reaching a decision in favour of the very closely related Karanga and Zezuru dialects for building a written, unified Shona language.

Or, there may be a common, uniform but functionally inadequate standard dialect, restricted to formal oratory and writing. This phenomenon has been termed 'diglossia'. Arabic is a major example. The formal Arabic differs little from the classical and is used all over the Arab world. But ordinary conversation even among the urban intelligentsia is carried out in several distinct, relatively stabilized dialects in the Maghreb, Egypt, Syria and Iraq. The outlook at long-range, given the political disunity, seems to be the rise of several daughter languages on the model of the rise of French, Italian, Spanish etc. from Latin. Another possibility for a case of diglossia is the eventual dominance of one of the spoken varieties over the rest. This seems to be the drift in China. A third possibility is the indefinite persistence of the situation. This is the best judgement on Switzerland's German-speaking areas, where High German and the Swiss German dialect supplement each other.

Or, there may be more than one common and inadequate formal standard within the same language. One example was exhibited for some decades and in some areas of Bengal. There were two literary dialects, one without a spoken base in the present and the other with a spoken base in another region, besides fairly stabilized spoken dialects structurally intermediate to the two. The situation has now been resolved by a rapid obsolescence of the first of the literary dialects.

Source of borrowing: By a source of borrowing I mean a source which is currently utilized and not such sources as might have been utilized in the past. English did borrow heavily from Danish at

one time. But Danish is not a source of borrowing for English now, at least not a major source. For any language, the number of the different sources of borrowing is less important than their mutual relationships. For English the major sources are French, Latin and Greek. This situation has persisted for many centuries now, though the order of importance has gradually reversed. Since French borrows heavily from Latin and Greek, and Latin from Greek, these sources form a serial order functioning almost as one single whole.

Or, the sources may be ordered parallel to one another. Dutch, French and English form for Indonesian this kind of an order. Similar is the case of German, for when it borrows it usually does it from French or English.

Or, the sources may be ordered in two unrelated and divergent groups. This is the case for Japanese, which borrows from classical Chinese as well as from the modern European languages. The situation is similar for any modern Indian language with Sanskrit (or classical Tamil or Arabic-Persian) and English as the sources. If we regard word-building as a special case of borrowing, namely borrowing from one's own bank, German may be placed here too. The tension which is so generated may be sought to be alleviated in different ways. One is to abandon one of the divergent sources. This is what has been done in Turkey. Many words traceable to Arabic and Persian are still used, but these are spelt and built around in Turkish ways. And fresh borrowings from Arabic and Persian have entirely stopped. The other is to use elements from one of the sources in ways that harmonize with the other source rather better than with the original usage. Most of the new formations which German produces by recombining native elements, and Japanese by recombining elements borrowed from classical Chinese, are more or less literal, mechanical translations of the Latin and Greek terms current in other modern languages.

Language: There may not be a single

common language. This is much rarer in these days than might be supposed. Few multilingual countries lack a dominant language. The USSR is not a good example. The two nearest examples are Finland and Switzerland. In Finland, Finnish is spoken by over 90 per cent and Swedish by less than 9 per cent. But Swedish was the official language until late last century and still is the nearest equivalent of a lingua franca in the Scandinavian region. The consequence is that Swedish is the official second language and the urban population is also actually more or less bilingual. In Switzerland, German is spoken by 72 per cent, French by more than 20 per cent and Italian by slightly less than 6 per cent. But except for formal purposes the former use a rather pronounced dialect, while French and Italian are spoken much as in France and Italy, which are powerful and often admired neighbours. Moreover, Switzerland was for a long and crucial period under the influence of France. The net result is that the language most often utilized as a second language within the country is French. Two or three standard languages seem to be within the abilities of an average urban population to master.

Or, there may be one common but not quite adequate language. In the Phillipines, English is the common language and, from the third grade onwards, the only medium of instruction. The official census declares, with some but probably not too bad exaggeration, that 38 per cent of the people are able to use it. English is clearly in the process of being transformed from an originally foreign, then upper crust, second language to a mass language, although the native languages are still quite useful at the mass level. In Indonesia, Malay was in the beginning spoken by a very small part of the population, although this small part was also the major element in the total mobilized section of the people. In Israel, Hebrew was converted from a language of ceremonial recitations to a modern, all-purpose language in less than two genera-

tions. It has naturally enough undergone important changes in the process.

Or, there may be several common languages, each functionally inadequate in different ways. To an extent this is the case in the Phillipines, where Tagalog is the dominant language of the first city and surroundings, and Spanish too is taught in the school, though only an extreme few habitually speak Spanish. The best example is of course furnished by India. English is used for all higher education and administration and business, but less than 2 per cent speak it, and that too not in the home. Hindi is traditionally used in the lower echelons of the army, in the majority of the larger marketplaces all over the country, and in a large bloc in the North amounting to about one third of the people and including the major share of the places of religious pilgrimage. Sanskrit is used for ceremonial purposes only, with intelligibility by a few thousands. Tamil and Bengali too are to some extent used beyond their base territories, the former in the South and the latter in the East, and both have large bodies of speakers outside India, the former in Ceylon and the latter in East Pakistan. If Urdu is treated as a separate language, which it is only in the written, learned form, then we have to say that it is utilized by about a tenth part of the population, almost all of which also speak some other Indian language, and that it too has an important body of speakers outside the country, namely in West Pakistan. Thus 6 languages, of which two differ only in the written style, qualify as common in different degrees and slants. Since 8 more languages have the status of official languages in regions endowed with considerable political autonomy, a slight change in the point of view would allow us to speak of altogether 14 common languages in 11 scripts.

This kind of a situation may be resolved by several different drifts. One is the ultimate victory of one of the languages over the rest. This seems to be the hope for the Phillipines. Another would be the break up of the political unit. This happened in the

case of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the first world war, giving rise to such different states as Czechoslovakia, Austria, Hungary, Yugoslavia etc. The other possibility is a more or less stabilized bilingualism. This is the case in Finland and Switzerland.

To sum up, language planning is felt to be necessary when an existing pattern of social communication is sought to be replaced by another. Since sharing the same linguistic habits is a necessary concomitant of social mobilization, language planning is part of the broader question of deliberate interference in social mobilization.

MEANS OF PLANNING

The means of action in language planning consists basically of two steps. The first is the creation of a model for imitation, and the second is the promotion of this model over rival models.

A model for imitation means a body of discourse capable of attracting the interest and the loyalty of its intended audience or readers. If we are concerned with the spoken form, this means the availability of people who habitually speak that form. If we are concerned with the written form, this means the availability of a body of literature in prose. For either form, a model for imitation may be created by private, unorganized, obscure, multiple decisions, that is, by unplanned decisions, or it may be created in a planned way. Further, a planned model may be set up on a purely private basis, relying on nothing but persuasion, or it may be set up on a commissioned basis, relying on more tangible sanctions. For all practical purposes, however, the discussion may be simply restricted to the creation of a model literature in prose, and that through special official encouragements.

This means commissioned writing, whether as original or as translation, with specific conditions as to the choice of the writing system, dialect, source of borrowing or language. The publication of approved terminologies has its only use in

pointing to the general direction of borrowing, since words have to be exhibited in their systematic, formal as well as material, associations in continuous discourse before they would mean anything. The commissions may be given through free for all public contests, subsidized commercial enterprise, private religious or philanthropic associations or state academies. The reward itself may take the shape of the glamour of publicity, a cash grant, expected or ensured orders for the book from chains of libraries, inclusion in the list of recommended or compulsory textbooks in a chain of schools or colleges.

But the danger in commissioned work is that when the hacks have grown rich and the state libraries have filled shelves, the readers may not coöperate by reading the stuff. I am not sure, for example, how much of the commissioned literature produced by some of the States of India is actually used by anybody either as a source of information or as a paradigm of style. It is easy to disguise failures when non-profit agencies, such as the State is, do the book-keeping.

The problem is then not only to create a model literature in prose but also to promote its acceptance over others. Now there is no quick way of making the horse drink the water, if it does not want to. Only the satisfaction of genuine needs can enable a literature to win the allegiance needed. If the information given in the book is of a kind wanted by the people and is also put in a way which does not confuse or deceive, for all the insistence on new habits the presentation goes to meet the intended readers more than half way, it might be successful.

Of course, needs may be created or aggravated by State efforts so that sheer desperation will drive the people to read certain things rather than other things. The steps are two, to open up or aggravate needs, and to prohibit or hinder certain ways of satisfying needs. For example, industrialization of the country would intensify the needs for information on technology of all kinds, physical or social.

Or, the establishment of a working democracy would create the need for a mass literature on political and economic questions. On the other hand, the decision to withdraw the subsidy on the teaching of Arabic and Persian in Turkey contributed to creating a need for a more turkified Turkish literature. When the University of Nagpur in India found that the scientific textbooks it had caused to be produced in Hindi and Marathi were not being either bought or read by its students, who continued to prefer English, some of the trustees proposed a total abolition of English as a means of compelling the students to buy and read those books.

However, need-creating would not be of much use without the simultaneous adoption of model-creating. The argument that once the medium of instruction or that of administration is changed from English to Hindi or to Tamil, satisfactory literature will begin to come out in Hindi or in Tamil, is a piece of falsehood. Productions that satisfy the best standards of expectation are expensive in terms of talent, leisure and money. Productions that satisfy the widest standards of expectation would not need subsidies to help them. The essence of the problem is the disparity between the best and the widest standards of expectation. Language planning is needed only to alleviate this disparity. There is for none of the Indian languages such a number of scholars with intellectually respectable standards as will be able to make themselves felt immediately. The inevitable result will be chaos. One may argue that the chaos will be temporary. That might be true. But some irreversible changes might come about during a chaos, however temporary it might be.

One of these feared irreversible changes might affect the multilingual context. The changes of linguistic habits within such a region might be on a whole convergent or divergent. Take for example the question of vocabulary. The technical terms which are pouring into the Indian languages from English are the same for all of these languages. In this respect the change is

towards greater convergence. But the technical terms which are being taken from Sanskrit into these languages are rather less convergent. It does not help much if both 'suucana' and 'ghoshana' can be met with in original Sanskrit, if one is selected by Hindi and the other by Bengali to translate the same English-derived concept 'notice'. Even when mutually intelligible, and that is not always true, the Sanskrit loanwords in the different languages may become mutually grotesque and barbarous. And to the extent that building from non-Sanskrit, non-English sources and elements is preferred, the change is towards even greater divergence.

CONCLUSIONS FOR INDIA

I have reviewed the main types of situations calling for language planning, the anticipated results, the methods and the agencies of the process, and I have barely defined the Indian situation in their terms. Before I end this essay, I think that it is my duty to suggest some concrete steps towards a solution to the Indian problem, although I do not have here the leisure to support these suggestions with adequate arguments. These are:

1. To establish a single script for all the languages. It will not be possible to make this change after literature in these languages have grown significantly. Every year the financial cost of such a change seems to be rising much faster than the nation's ability to pay it. I do not believe that the current jealousies will permit a choice for the Devanagari, even if we wait for it. A simple, diacriticless Roman may be adopted.

2. To establish one, and for the time being only one, university of an internationally comparable class, which can serve as an inspiration to the other universities, a centre of recruitment for their teachers, a focus of convergence for their best students. Without such a nucleus within the country, one cannot hope to have men who will continue to under-

stand each other for all rethinking in different languages.

3. To push ahead a programme of translation of key works in the literature of knowledge. Literal translation, with transliteration of difficult words, is far preferable to 'original' expositions. For transfer of content into languages which are not yet completely stabilized, that is, for which the readers have not yet developed a hypercritical sense of style, it is much easier to find good translators than good expositors. The work of the Sahitya Akademi is excellent, but unfortunately restricted to aesthetic literature. The National Book Trust has yet to show signs of serious thought or perceptible activity. The work of the semi-private American organization, Franklin Publications, is very much more to the point, but has yet touched only some of the neighbouring countries.

4. To make sure that translation is done by people who know the particular subject matter at least as well as the two languages concerned, and to leave the determination of the technical terms to such translators as are actually engaged with particular texts. It has been a capital mistake to encourage people who may be qualified in the classical languages, but are not thoroughly conversant with the specific fields of knowledge and are not respon-

sible for exhibiting recommendations consistently through a continuous text, to decide technical terms out of the blue.

5. To prefer pump-priming subsidies enabling commercial publishers to employ good translators and to risk not completely certain ventures, rather than whole-hog subsidies effected through large-scale State buying, State-financed and State-managed publication, change of the medium of administration or instruction. The latter disguise failures and create a demoralizing rush developing into chaos.

6. To establish a central clearing house of technical information and advise on a non-compulsory but strongly publicized basis to aid all aspects of expository writing and translation. This kind of work can be systematically analyzed, its tricks listed, its principles formulated, and to a considerable extent this has already been done at various centres outside India. There is no reason why a commissioned writer in any part of India should have to work as if he were a lonely pioneer.

7. To entrust the same agency with the task of systematically collecting and circulating information concerning the exact detail of events and decisions in the various languages, so that decisions in each language may be taken only after a good chance of knowing what is being done in the others.

Crisis in Indian Biography

By OMPRAKASH SHARMA

TO speak of a possible Lytton Strachey for India is to entertain, in the words of a popular hit song by Frank Sinatra, 'high hopes'. Indeed it seems not only impossible for us to produce biographers of the stature of Strachey and Guadella but the incriminating evidence remains that we have actually produced biographers like Tendulkar, Aiyar and Frank Moraes. In other words, we have converted what might have been a negative virtue into a positive evil. One may be pardoned therefore for enquiring into the why and wherefore of it.

Is it because we Indians, being what we are, fail to provide a good subject for a good biography? Is it because we fail to inspire a respectable writer to rise up to the occasion for two good reasons: that there is no respectable writer and no occasion for it? As an eminent modern biographer has remarked 'life is less well recorded than in Boswell's Johnson and less worth recording.' To think of this in the land of heroes and hero-worshippers!

However, be that as it may, it cannot be seriously disputed that it requires a Lincoln to attract a biographer of the calibre of Lord Charnwood, a Churchill to provoke a Philip Guadella, a Bernard Shaw to harness the ingenious talents of a Chesterton and a brilliant though erratic Bloomsbury group to invite the attention of even an economist like Sir John Maynard Keynes. One may be led to think that there is some corresponding law of supply and demand operating in this department of letters, in spite of our Nehrus, Gandhis, Boses and Bhaves. And curiously enough even for a fairly readable account of their lives one has to look to foreigners—Hallam Tennyson in the case

of Bhave, Michael Brecher in that of Nehru, Dr Holmes on Gandhi and we have to supplement Aiyar's account of Subhas Bose's life with that of George Orwell to make the picture more human and complete.

Clearly therefore, our biographers tend to fall into either of two mistakes. One is that they create an artificial halo round their subject making him too big for his shoes and thereby converting his biography into something akin to a matrimonial advertisement where all the good qualities are listed and magnified. They are peculiarly susceptible to the criticism F. L. Lucas made in another connection, of the process of 'smothering your effigy with the conventional flowers'. With all due respect, I think it is precisely that worshipful attitude towards the subject, so strongly advocated by one of the speakers, that is responsible for this present pass in Indian biography. To state his case at its telling best, one has to seek the help of no less a biographer than Leslie Stephen in whose opinion 'excessive admiration though a fault, is a fault on the right side—nothing can compensate for a want of enthusiasm about your subject.' But how often does this enthusiasm make Malvolios of us all? Besides, were it not for his vaulting enthusiasm, Leslie Stephen would not have suffered the ignominy of eating his words, for he utters in almost the next breath 'Spedding's hero-worship led him to apologise for all Bacon's errors; and, though the very ingenuity of the pretexts is characteristic both of the hero and his biographer, we are sensible that a more disengaged attitude would have enabled Spedding to produce a more genuine portrait. We want the writer capable of developing the

character in the Shakespearean spirit; not displaying his moral sense by blackening the devil and whitening the angel.' If this recantation will not carry conviction, nothing will. Still, not having lost my faith in the doggedness of human nature, allow me to further quote from a well-known modern biography of Samuel Johnson in the hope that it may clinch the argument. 'The passionate admirers of great men are often tempted to march up with whole buckets of whitewash. But a good painting is not improved by whitewash. Biography, history, fiction have an aesthetic as well as an ethical side. Johnson would have been a better man, had he been better-tempered, more courteous, gentler, cleaner; but he would be less picturesque, less amusing, less known and valued today. Johnson lives for us not so much as a remarkable writer, but rather as an extraordinary dramatic character in the great drama of life ... often tragic, still more often comic. We treasure his memory partly because he was often wise and good, but partly—let us own it—because he could also resemble an intoxicated hippopotamus.'

Our biographers, on the other hand, come to praise Caesar, not to bury him even when a decent burial may be all that is necessary and desirable. The subject of an Indian biography, were he honest enough like Wellington, may well be excused should he fail to recognise his own portrait at the hands of some transforming biographer-cum-alchemist. The Philosopher's Stone may be the despair of many but in this department of literature it seems to work miracles everyday. Only, out of fairness to both the parties concerned, the biographer should adopt the practice of some novelists who usually append a short notice to their works. 'No reference is intended to anyone living or dead. All similarity is purely accidental'. This will ensure at least that the sins of the biographer do not visit the biographee as in the celebrated case of 'Gray' by Mason who regarded the poet this side idolatry

and accordingly manipulated his correspondence to fulfil his expectations of his hero's art. Some are born great, some achieve greatness but most have greatness thrust on them.

The other error, to put it euphemistically, is to swerve to the other extreme and make the biographical account so factual, cold-blooded and utterly devoid of all humour and human interest that it reads something like an epitaph carved on a tombstone. The details listed, and the manner in which they are listed, should provide a good butt for one of Leacock's elaborate jokes, one fancies. 'The ideal of such writers seems to be a blue-book in which all the evidence bearing upon the subject can be piled like a huge prehistoric cairn over the remains of the deceased, with no more apparent order and constructive purpose than the laws of gravitation enforce spontaneously.' In fine, we either make our subject too good to be true or alternatively too true to be good.

Another besetting sin of many an Indian biographer is lack of style no less than lack of perspective. Our Frank Moraes and Tendulkars write laboriously not luckily, to invert a famous Johnsonian observation. You can read Frank Moraes' *Life of Nehru* from cover to cover, if you have the patience, and yet not betray the shadow of a smile. D. F. Karaka's account of the same august personage though less reliable and less reverent is more engaging and must be viewed by the general practitioners of the craft in our country as a grave lapse into interesting writing. But—the inevitable 'but' remains—it fails to satisfy the highest expectations simply because it stinks too much of Karaka's gall and a pound of Nehru's flesh which the biographer has knifed successfully. One is as much put out by this book as at the sight of some indelicate operation like post-mortem or a public hanging, notwithstanding the awful fascination it may hold for anybody. Not until the condition which Bethell calls the ethical considerations of art, is fulfilled, could it be said of a bio-

graphy what Whitman proudly said of his work

-----this is no book

who touches this, touches a man.

To come to the subject of volume on which volumes have been written and said, I don't think it wise to say in so many words what could be said in so few. One is apt to conveniently forget the wisdom of Callimachus, librarian of ancient Alexandria. 'A big book is a big evil', he thought, a sentiment which will find a ready echo in the bosom of every librarian, not the least ours the shelves of whose library are groaning under the weight of the voluminous biographies that are unread and unreadable. Like yoghurt produced by

the germ-conscious Americans, such books are 'untouched by hand'. A little surgery will do them no end of good. As the blurb of 'The Search For Good Sense' sums it up rather neatly 'the most instructive of all kinds of book, it has been said, is the life of a good man; the next most instructive the life of a bad one. Yet many biographies lack brevity. The reader retains too little because he is told too much. He feels like a fly wandering over a portrait of a dictator, fifty feet square. By concentrating on the vital, the typical, the essential, one may produce something clearer to grasp and easy to recall.'

Lest I myself transgress this golden rule of brevity, with these few random observations I should like to take my place.

Literature in South Africa: English

By JACK COPE

THE father of poetry in South Africa in English is generally held to be Thomas Pringle, a friend of Coleridge, philanthropist and ally of Wilberforce in the anti-slavery movement of the 1830's. This is significant, for the trickle of poetry written in this country ever since, in English, has been imbued with philanthropy and missionary zeal, with torments of conscience and acts of expiation. To this day, the writers have been (with important exceptions) the spiritual descendants of Pringle. Either they believe that their race has some higher role of bringing to Africa the gifts of freedom, religion, justice and fair-play, or by more complicated processes they stand outside the violent and hot-blooded course of events in this country and by criticism or abhorrence absolve themselves from the guilt they sense.

The 'missionary' writing is a thin and watery tradition. At best it produces work of sincere compassion, but again the problem of integration becomes acute and the poet, remaining an outsider, fails from a lack of identity. All great writing seems to have arisen from a complete and integral identity between the writer and his society. He is the voice of his people and time, whether it is a voice of protest or approval, criticism or loving humour.

The sense of being outside, exiled or excluded, of not belonging, is a recurring undertone in South African writing. It spills over from poetry to fiction, it haunts the essayists and short story writers and the speeches of the best orators. The poets look for a sense of being or identity. What is a South African? Is there such a conception satisfying to a full personality or is man here still a wanderer amidst the incredible beauty of nature, and is his ulti-

mate destiny to be identified with all men and all peoples and to accept humanity in the largest sense?

If the weakness of South African writing in the past has been its querulousness and its lack of focus, its strength perhaps arises from this very identity embracing all peoples and classes. The English language, subtly changed and nuanced, becomes a literary medium for writers of every race and group in a new and turbulent country. It is not the exclusive medium tied to any set of national prejudices but a *lingua franca* which may become the full possession of any civilized man. It is for this reason, perhaps, that South African writing has so impressed the outside world. Such a British critic as John Lehmann has said recently that the literature of this country cannot be regarded as a provincial offshoot but, for quality and range, as part of the main stream of the English-language tradition.

South African fiction begins from Olive Schreiner whose *Story of an African Farm* (1883) had a sensational success and is still read and discussed. Olive Schreiner had her own brand of missionary zeal — she was a lifelong campaigner for women's rights and afterwards she pleaded for justice to the Africans under the impact of conquests, for the Boers trampled by the British, for socialism against imperialism and war. In her first book the sheer force of art and passion triumphed over the special pleading. It thus becomes a creative work of permanent validity, which no other work of hers succeeded in doing. This contradiction between propaganda and art runs through the entire literary product of South Africa, and Olive Schreiner's dilemma is repeated strikingly

in the contemporary novelist, Alan Paton.

A glance to South African poetry at the turn of the century contains no indication of the strength and independence it was to attain in the hands of Campbell, Plomer, Prince and others. The versifiers hammered endlessly at the picturesqueness of the land and people and most of them, though opposed to injustice, believed in the civilizing role of the Empire. H. H. Dugmore sang in 1904:

'Thou hast a glorious mission to the nations.'

The Boer War had attracted world-wide attention to South Africa and we have the inevitable Kipling making verse under the bright stars of the veld. Rider Haggard and later John Buchan romanticized the extraordinary fascination of Africa. Haggard knew and admired the Zulus and his picture of the African often has the dignity and sympathy which one finds in Fenimore Cooper's treatment of the North American Indians. It is a picture drawn from the outside, yet the novels retain their freshness in an almost boyish vigour and fine narrative skill.

An important landmark for fiction is the appearance in 1942 of *The Little Karroo*, a collection of stories by Pauline Smith. 'Recalled in tranquillity' by the writer from memories of her youth, these stories have a poetic intensity that lift them far beyond their original interest. They also contain a feature now characteristic of literature in this multi-racial country — the overflowing of sympathy from one group to another. Here, the daughter of the English country doctor identifies herself completely with the lives of a poverty-stricken but proud and enduring Afrikaner community.

In the middle 20's appeared *Voorslag* a literary magazine associated with two of South Africa's outstanding writers, Roy Campbell and William Plomer. The magazine was short-lived but its stormy career marked a new era. The tame versifiers, the abysmal dullness of self appointed critics, the writers of nostalgic and phoney novels all felt the whip of the little Durban paper that flickered out after violent quarrels

among its founders. Campbell quipped of the novelists:

You praise the firm restraint with which they write—

I am with you there, of course;

They use the snaffle and the curb all right,
But where's the bloody horse?

Campbell's 'Flaming Terrapin' has already appeared, an amazing long poem of coruscating fire, humour, anger, and pride and showing a young poetic talent capable of the purest lyric line. A literary satire followed and in 1930 came *'Adamastor'* a collection of poems containing many pieces of classical importance. Here, in a magnificent sonnet he sees the black African serf behind the plough —

His heart, more deeply than he wounds the plain,
Long by the rasping share of insult torn...

And concluding with prophetic power:

But as the turf divides

I see in the slow progress of his strides
Over the toppled clods and falling flowers,
The timeless, surly patience of the serf
That moves the nearest to the naked earth
And ploughs down palaces, and thrones,
and towers.

Campbell had a sublime contempt for the debilitated bourgeois. He had been brought up among the Zulus of Natal and always retained an inordinate admiration for the bravery, manliness and dignity he saw in a beaten but ultimately unconquerable people.

These qualities he sought after, in the poet's lonely travail among an indifferent and material-minded public, in love and physical struggle and in the ardours of an ascetic religion. Sometimes it seems as if Campbell was incapable of spiritual maturity, remaining far into his life incurably romantic, aggressive and lacking in tenderness. He adopted the Catholic faith and ultimately landed up as a supporter of Fascism in Spain.

Campbell had left his country for good before 1930 but the stamp of his native land and upbringing remained with him strongly. New interests absorbed him, not

always to the good, and probably his lowest ebb artistically and from every other point of view was in 'Flowering Rifle' an adulation of fascism. But he afterwards made up for this lapse and, if a judgment has to be made, Campbell's artistic achievement as a whole is his vindication. He is powerfully on the side of life and humanity, of heroic qualities in a world of shrinking values, of colour against the drabness of the huddled town-dwellers. Against the greyness and moral decline he saw in western 'civilization' he stood as the 'sun poet'.

Plomer's novel '*Turbot Wolfe*' suffers from its immaturity and its special pleading against colour prejudice, the theme being too clamant and unresolved. His stories and poems are of special interest but he remains an observer of South Africa from the outside and, indeed, he left the country like Campbell and seldom returned. At his best, he is a highly accomplished lyrical poet and has a special facility for satirical verse. Looking back at Johannesburg he cries:

Pioneers, O pioneers,
Grey pillars of a Christian State,
Respectability has turned
Swashbuckler prim and scamp sedate;
— Prospecting in the brain's recesses
Seek now the nuggets of your prime,
And sift the gold dust of your dreams
From drifted sands of time.

F. T. Prince is another voluntary exile, living abroad and publishing very little. He suffers from a certain neglect but there is no doubt about his poetic gifts. He commands a natural and musical line at once reminding one of the classical seriousness of Wilfred Owen, but without Owen's anguish. Like Campbell, Prince is impressed by the picture of man uncorrupted by civilization as presented by the Zulus and his poem 'Chaka' is a notable achievement. He admires the colossal pride of the conquering tribesmen who, after enumerating their fighting regiments say:

All these are ours
And we are the People of Heaven, Tell us no lies
On our noons made loud by abolished clans.

Another book inspired by the black conqueror is '*Chaka*' by the Basuto writer, Thomas Mofolo. It is written in the African Sesotho tongue and translated into rather poor 'missionary English'. And yet Mofolo's peculiar and powerful imagination gives his tragic story of the Zulu king an epic quality. Volence, superstition, heroism and a brooding sense of the evil against which a man contends within himself touch this book with a strange mystery. It is certainly a startling indication of what may be expected from the African writer and has not been equalled in 30 years.

From the 20's also comes a book remarkable and significant to a degree beyond its author's simple and straightforward intentions. It is *Commando* by the Boer fighter Deneys Reitz. Reitz, the son of a distinguished Afrikaner family, took up the rifle as a mere boy and for nearly three years fought on a hundred battlefields against the British. He tells his story in a fine and unpretentious English and the combination of his own character, the fantastic story of his adventures and his amazing lack of bitterness raise *Commando* virtually to the status of a saga.

The next period of South African writing dates from World War II when the whole question of the elimination of colonialism came before the conscience of the world. In place of the isolated book of distinction looming up like a peak through the mist of third-rate writing, it can almost be said that a school of South African writing arose with many writers of similar interests, a growing degree of technical skill and a message for an audience in their own country and beyond.

Several flaws can be seen from the outset in this sudden emergence of talent mainly in fiction writing. Nearly all South African writers are published in Britain or America, or both, and there is an undeniable tendency for the work to be slanted for a foreign market. How much of real subtlety and interior significance is lost by the process is impossible to say. Just as it is almost impossible for anyone to master the final intimacies of another language, so

a native will speak to an outsider in a deliberately simplified way. Many books by South Africans have this reserve or restraint as if the writers are saying: 'This is what we look like', instead of saying to their own people: 'This is what *you* look like.'

The special interest of the outside world in South Africa presents other dangers. It is far too easy for a public in America or England to gain a kind of spurious comfort out of the contemplation of somebody else's sins, dangers and suffering. Instead of turning a light in upon themselves, they can feel a doubtful righteousness by condemning others. So, the thicker the colours are laid on the better. There is a tempting market for this kind of commodity with the result that inferior books readily find publishers. Amateurism flourishes and among the distortions and wilder fancies the voice of the genuine artist is likely to get lost.

A man who wrote with no ambitions beyond his own local audience was Herman Bosman. Although an Afrikaner, he used the medium of English and like Pauline Smith his stories are devoted to the lives of a single community he knew intimately. His *Mafeking Road* contains some of the finest stories of this country, racy, humorous and with a sure insight.

By contrast, another writer who appeared at this time was the Zulu poet, Herbert Dhlomo, who also wrote in English. Dhlomo died in 1957 much neglected and embittered. Yet his *Valley of a Thousand Hills* although burdened with literary tones is a notable work, often with a strange pathos or flashes of anger:

My home is not
My home! I am an outcast in my land...
Must I still fight and bear anew the scars?
Must freedom e'er with blood, not sweat,
 be bought?
You ask me whence these yearning words
 and wild;
You laugh and chide and think you know me
 well;
I am your patient slave, your harmless child,

You say... so tyrants dreamt as ev'n they
 fell!

On an unassuming level and yet with freshness and insight is *The Bend in the Road* a semi-autobiographical novel by a young coloured girl under the pseudonym of Katie Hendriks.

The new 'school' of South African fiction (if such a term can be used) begins with Alan Paton's *Cry, the Beloved Country*. This is a moving and simple novel of the white-black clash in the city. Paton is an excellent writer and succeeds in this novel even with the use of an archaic rhythm deriving from the Bible in order to catch something of the pastoral simplicity of his Zulu characters. Behind the realism and dignity of the story there is also Paton's passionate demand for true and generous human relations as the basis for a deeper patriotism. In a second book, *Too Late the Phalarope*, dealing with the colour clash among an Afrikaans community the same media are used but without the striking success of his first book. The special pleading is too obtrusive.

Paton has since turned aside from fiction writing and carried his humanitarian battle into the field of politics.

An interesting 'one-book' writer is Phyllis Altman whose *The Law of the Vultures* on the theme of the black man's impact with city life contained a promise that has not yet been fulfilled. Harry Bloom's *Episode* is a more accomplished book recreating in a naturalistic manner the tensions and underlying violence of life in an African location.

Laurens van der Post, an Afrikaner associated as a youth with Campbell and Plomer, has since made a name for himself in England. He is a good stylist and his early novel *In a Province* had both distinction and a promise which has not been fulfilled. His more recent books of travel and exploration are excellently written but overlaid with the somewhat false glamour and mystique of a stagey Africa. Sarah Gertrude Millin, a prolific novelist who began her career in the 20's has continued

unabated. She first made her name with *God's Stepchildren* on the colour theme, but her best book is probably *Mary Glen* the story of a simple country girl.

Doris Lessing has written five novels yet it remains true that her finest work is in her stories. She has an unusually robust style and a compelling power in her best work that set her apart. For more than 10 years she has trodden the difficult path of a writer in exile, living in the cold, grey atmosphere of England, but it is when she writes of Africa that her work takes fire.

Nadine Gordimer is a writer of acute sensitivity and quite exceptional technical achievement. Her work is usually on a small scale and her range of interests narrow, but there is no South African writer who commands such an exquisite incisiveness. At her best, in such a story as 'What New Era Would that Be?' she achieves a poetic insight that is at once critical and illuminating. Her two novels fail somewhat through being too episodic and lacking in construction. In her later stories she has also tended to a looseness of construction that may be a danger sign.

Daa Jacobson, one of the younger writers, has already an impressive number of books to his credit including novels and a collection of stories. Although he has not reached the quality of some others of his compatriots, his youth and sincerity make him a promising figure.

Peter Abrahams is a peculiarly South African product, a coloured writer from an Afrikaans-speaking family who has adopted the medium of English. His early novel, *Mine Boy* is impressive and his autobiography, *Tell Freedom* one of the most illuminating books in this field from South Africa. Abrahams loses force by taking up subjects with which he is not on terms of complete familiarity. He also had lived abroad for a long period and none of his later books has the impact with which he began.

A more recent exile from South Africa is the talented young Alfred Hutchinson, a coloured short story writer who has settled in Ghana. Also in Ghana is the African

writer of short stories, Ezekiel Mphahlele, who is remarkable for his control of the English language which he uses in his tales and his autobiography *Down Second Avenue* with a simple severity.

There is, for so small a population, a surprising number of writers including some gifted poets. But few of the poets ever find an audience. Occasional modest volumes appear and once in a while an anthology is brought out to the surprise of discerning readers while causing not the slightest ripple of interest among the public. Guy Butler, John Howland Beaumont, Anthony Delius, Charles Eglington, Sidney Clouts, R. N. Currey, Phyllis Haring and Roy MacNab have all written verse of distinction. They are preoccupied with man's spiritual and social integration in what is mainly seen as an alien or exterior reality. Ruth Miller is a natural poet of intense imaginative power and in the rich, sensual texture of her verse is an exciting awareness of Africa and its human destiny.

Delius has attempted to laugh at politics and politicians in a skillful verse satire. But the realities and harshness of South African politics are too intractable to be touched by so subtle a shaft as wit and one is reminded of Pope's admonition: 'Leave dang'rous themes to unsuccessful satires'.

Tania van Zyl, an Afrikaner poet writing in English, has attained a sheer mastery of the language and is, on any level, one of the most striking talents in South Africa today.

There are hardly more than a million English-speaking South Africans of Anglo-Saxon origin but there are millions more to whom the language has become a heritage and from this strange and fertile soil is springing a multifaceted literature. The Anglo-Saxons are inextricably involved in the life of Africa and yet tied by the umbilical cord of their culture to the entire English-speaking world, looking for literary affinities as much to America or Ireland or Australia as to England itself. Their path is a difficult one and their spirit as expressed through the poets and writers is troubled, inquiring and open to change.

Writing in South Africa seems to invite a

stormy passage and many of the outstanding literary figures are in the vanguard of protests. Paton drops writing to lead the left-wing Liberal Party; Harry Bloom sits in gaol as a political prisoner (May 1960); Delius wins a £200 State prize for poetry and flings it in the teeth of his Government by donating it to a fund for political prisoners; Doris Lessing attempts to visit South Africa from her exile and is ordered out at a few hours' notice; Alfred Hutchinson is arraigned for high treason and flees to Ghana; Peter Abrahams cannot return to his homeland—he is married to a white girl, a crime in South Africa.

Whether the writers find they must protest or the protesters find they must write is difficult to say. It probably remains true that the literature that will last will be that which goes deeper and beyond the special problems, passions and appeals of the moment. If politics and art must be mixed it seems that the enduring books will emerge and make their claim on time *in spite of* themes and special motives—just as the first South African novel, by Olive Schreiner, has endured as an artistic creation in generations which have forgotten what all the fuss over women's rights was about.

Meanings of Democracy

By RAJNI KOTHARI

APPROACHES to democracy differ. Historically, they have veered round two meanings of the term democracy — 'rule by the people' and 'self-rule for the individual'. It is the former concept that has given rise to most of the difficulties. Quite often it has led to the obviously anomalous position where it has been invoked by a totalitarian regime to justify its democratic character. The result of such confusion in the use of terms has produced a situation in which democratic concepts come to be casually dismissed as undemocratic. Thus there are those who have dismissed parliamentary democracy as oligarchic in nature. Now parliamentary democracy has its defects and it is necessary to know them. But just because it has tended to be oligarchic in some countries, oligarchy does not become the essence of parliamentary democracy. Even more disturbing is the abuse showered on the concept of 'direct democracy'. It has been lightly branded as dictatorial in nature¹ just because some dictators have had the audacity and finesse to label themselves as direct democrats. Once again, although 'direct democracy' as originally practised by the Greeks and later adopted in part in some other democracies has grave defects, dictatorship is not the essence of direct democracy; indeed the one is a denial of the other. The danger in such a light-hearted approach in the use of democratic concepts is that we are prone to dismiss not only the concepts but along with them also the achievements of great epochs in human civilisation and the high ideals that inspired them.

The need is to formulate minimum criteria by which alternative forms of democracy can be judged, to grasp the precise meaning given to the ideal of democracy in each of these forms, and to disentangle the ideal from the particular forms in which it has found expression from time to time.

I

NEED FOR A FRAME OF REFERENCE

Two such criteria can be laid down. A democratic system must give rise to an open and flexi-

ble society where individual freedom has the maximum scope to flourish. Secondly, it must impart unity and stability to society, thus giving rise to conditions which allow unfettered scope for individual creativity. Creativity is the ideal; a democratic system is the means to achieve the ideal.

Philosophers who have such an ideal of human life in mind have not infrequently wanted to do away with the State itself, thinking that it is necessarily evil and destructive of the best values of human life. There is no doubt that this is a misunderstanding of the nature of the State, the very elementary function of which is to provide a frame-work of confidence and security to the individuals living under it. The real need is to evolve a certain quality of the State which answers to both the criteria mentioned above. It should ensure a fundamental unity in society and at the same time allow maximum scope for individual freedom. The former is as essential as the latter. For freedom cannot endure without a basic unity in society, as the Greeks learnt to their bitter experience: the finest flowering of human civilisation foundered tragically on the rocks of disunity and instability. On the other hand, unity without freedom is necessarily a coercive unity. Whether the coercion comes from the State or from society is immaterial; an 'organic democracy'² based on a communitarian or spiritual order is as coercive as a 'people's democracy' based on a monolithic party or a 'guided democracy' based on a military dictatorship: they all seek to foster unity on their people by suppressing differences. It is a fictitious unity.

An important index of judging the success of a democracy on the basis of these two criteria of freedom and unity is the extent of stability and the absence of rebelliousness found in a political order. Rebelliousness or 'direct action' is a phenomenon that takes place where both freedom and stability are lacking. The unfree individual and an unstable and coercive political order combine to create a situation where individual energies find outlet in aggressive parochialism which then issues forth in violence and disorder.

Experience with the working of democracy in many countries has revealed the widespread extent of direct actions taking place in them. Not all of them have led to undemocratic results; indeed some have only strengthened democracy by challenging authoritarian tendencies in their societies. At other places, direct action has resulted in a subversion of democracy. Italy, Spain, the Latin American countries, the Weimar Republic, Indonesia, Iraq, Turkey and Pakistan are a few examples. Even the French system has given rise to periodic outbursts of Bonapartism.⁹ In England and the United States, too, direct actions have occasionally taken place, though this has invariably been in defence of democratic rights; for a large part, however, they have been anticipated by a government that is responsive to public opinion; even when they have occurred, the populace has never been so exasperated as to take to extreme and violent forms. The point, however, is that although the possibility of direct action—and the 'right to rebellion'—cannot be denied in a democracy, it is nonetheless a symptom of a fundamental disequilibrium in society. The question is: is direct action inherent in democracy? Or is the modern approach to democracy somewhere faulty and half-hearted?

This is the broad framework against which it is proposed to examine the relative merits of the alternative approaches to democracy.

II

THE CURRENT DISCUSSION

Already, there is a growing debate in this country between the proponents of 'parliamentary democracy' and what in the literature of political science has come to be known as 'direct democracy'. The debate is carried on at various levels—

⁹ In order to avoid misunderstanding, however, it must be made clear here that we do not hold that the rise of General De Gaulle to power in France is an instance of Bonapartism. The real threat in France has come from army generals like Salan and Challe; the latest incident was provided by the *coup* staged by the military junta from Algiers. It was a repetition of a known phenomenon in French history where the army lends its support to a powerful man who then proceeds to subvert the Constitution. President De Gaulle's meteoric rise to power may also have been a reflection of Frenchmen's exasperation with politics which has so often paved the way to the rise of a Bonaparte. But it would be quite mistaken to brand De Gaulle as a dictator; if anything, he has saved French democracy from going to pieces.

practical politics, intellectual discussion and system-building after the manner of a Utopia. Among the latter falls the famous thesis of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, 'A plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity'. The intellectual discussion, on the other hand, is regarding the ultimate values a political system should serve. There is agreement on the hypothesis that an enlightened public opinion is a necessary pre-requisite of an effective democratic system but there is disagreement on the institutional form the latter should take. The debate has been ably presented in a recent exchange in the *Quest*.³ On the level of practical politics, the most noteworthy is the development of ideas within the ruling party on the question of popular participation in national reconstruction. The dissatisfaction felt at the working of the parliamentary set-up and the corresponding apparatus of planning, especially in respect of eliciting 'public co-operation', has led the Government of India and the National Development Council to adopt a series of measures promoting village panchayats, village cooperatives, community development centres and national extension services, culminating in the unqualified adoption of the 'Panchayati Raj' resolution at a recent meeting of the A.I.C.C. held in January 1961. The implications of these measures for the nature of democracy envisaged by the leadership are clear: they mark a step towards some sort of 'direct democracy'. On the other hand, there are many within the Administration and the ruling party, as well as outside, who view these steps with considerable skepticism. In view of all these developments, it would be fruitful to set forth clearly the theoretical assumptions underlying the debate between parliamentary democracy and 'direct democracy' in some detail here.

III

THE RELEVANCE OF THE ARGUMENT

The debate is very timely indeed, not only for an adequate analysis of the political situation in this country but also from the point of view of world development as a whole. It is necessary to emphasise this wider perspective. For the ultimate problem—which has also become the immediate—facing the world today is the avoidance both of a third world war and of a general retreat into another dark age as a result of some sort of a Hobbesian solution to the world crisis. There is no escape from the fact that, in the ultimate analysis, this can be achieved only on the basis of a

general spread of enlightenment in the world as a whole. This seems clear from even a cursory glance at the general problems faced by most countries in the world. The concentration of power resulting from the mechanics of a perpetual cold war which is forcing even the democracies to adopt authoritarian methods, the new dimensions that the doctrine of nationalism is taking in the world today by making strife-ridden, multi-racial and collectivist societies its theatre of operation, the dynamics of rapid economic development which is assuming in some countries the form of an official creed, and the psychological consequences of scientific gigantism found in the growing sense of individual insignificance and powerlessness—all these factors demonstrate the weakness of the classical position where social and political equilibrium was viewed in terms of a 'balance of interests'. They point to the need for greater awareness among ordinary men and women of their *individual* responsibility for the preservation of cherished ideals. The question is acquiring increasing importance with the rise of an affluent society and a Welfare State and the consequent growth of public apathy.

The principal weakness of the current controversy lies in its vagueness and lack of theoretical rigour. It also suffers from excessive formalism: parliamentary democracy versus direct democracy; State-aided culture versus 'Cultural Freedom'; party politics versus non-party politics.⁴ The practical result of this vagueness and formalism in theory is that the central problem of Indian politics (and even of world politics in general) is not faced: *the problem of erecting a new order on the basis of self-governing associations of men steeped in democratic values*. It is our intention in this paper to bring into focus this central problem as also to examine, by stages, the controversy between parliamentary democracy and direct democracy. The need is to spell out the essence of democracy in a precise manner so that its true meaning is disentangled from the mass of loose opinions and prejudices that abound in popular discussion.

IV

THE SUBSTANCE OF DEMOCRACY : INFRA-STRUCTURE

There is a general tendency among 'humanists' in this country to affirm the need for a cultural enlightenment from time to time and think their task is done. Such an attitude, although it emphasises the basic fact that democracy functions

ultimately in the minds of men, a fact which is prone to be neglected in the frenzy of economic development, may lead to complacency and failure to face the real problem. The real problem is: how is this enlightenment to take place? What are to be the channels of the postulated 'Renaissance'? Some liberals emphasise movements of artists and thinkers like that of 'Cultural Freedom'; others, having despaired of the quality of modern intellectuals (especially in this country), stress 'cultural planning' through governmental aid. It seems to us, however, that the problem is not one of State-aided or privately launched 'Cultural Renaissance'; the fact is that a Cultural Renaissance cannot be *launched*: by launched is meant fostered from above in a mood of paternalism. The real criticism of the development taking place in this country is not that it is largely State-aided—the State is after all the political aspect of society—but that the institutions the State has chosen to create a 'new society' are doomed to pervert the process. What is questionable, in other words, is the very nature of institutional growth that has taken place in this country since Independence, where no regard is paid to the need to adjust existing institutions in the country to serve new democratic values. The successful functioning of an institution depends upon the extent to which the value-system implied by it becomes operative. The situation in this country is that whereas the values embodied in the traditional institutions continue to persist, the values implied in the new institutions have not yet struck roots. The result is that while politicians and their critics think in terms of the formal constitutional structure, the traditional institutions like caste, region, language and religion, which have not been permeated by the new values, are effectively manipulating this structure to serve quite different ends.

Although some thinkers in the country are awake to this need for general enlightenment, they tend to think that such an activity can be carried out in 'splendid isolation' from the public as well as from each other, with the queer result that the process of enlightenment remains limited to the already enlightened. Having in mind a facile parallel to the European Renaissance, they think almost exclusively in terms of writers and artists, leaving out activists of all orders: theirs is only a symptom of a regrettable attitude of apoliticisation of many contemporary intellectuals; the understandable disavowal or lack of interest in *party politics* has led to a tendency, supported by other currents in the Indian situation, of disowning all responsibility towards the country's political development and laying all blame at the doors of

the government: the lethargy of the mass is reinforced by the apathy and what Edward Shils has characterised as the 'oppositional mentality' of the Indian intellectuals.⁶ The questions not squarely faced under these conditions are (1) the need for a rejuvenation of politics, maybe at a different level or by providing to it a new orientation; (2) the development, by conscious efforts, of a network of voluntary, self-governing institutions in all walks of life as well as a permeation of existing institutions, voluntary as well as ascriptive, by liberals and democrats: only the creation of such a net-work could provide a running continuum between society and the State.

It is not enough to assert that a democratic culture is a necessary pre-requisite of a democratic polity. Of course, 'culture' is important but 'culture' has to become operative through living institutions. The development and right functioning of institutions is at least as important as the spread of values; the two processes must proceed side by side. While it is the diffusion of ideas that give meaning to institutions, ideas become operative only by permeating the functioning of institutions. It is accumulation of concrete experience in the working of institutions that makes for a general assimilation of values which in turn ensures that institutions serve the values for which they were set up. It also ensures stability and performs an integrative function in society. The individualist and liberalist spirit that must pervade the minds of men (which, in fact, is the crux of the proposed Renaissance) before democracy can become real, can hope to do so in a collectivist society only by means of an activated 'infrastructure'⁷ of autonomous groups. Even the working of atavistic and seemingly archaic institutions based on caste, region and language can be gradually transformed by the adoption of a new value system, provided liberals and democrats in the country do not fight shy of providing the requisite leadership to such organisations. The current mood of anti-politicism coupled with a fashionable detestation of traditional institutions would lead to a situation in which while opportunists would be getting hold of the political apparatus the prevailing apathy would continue to obstruct the development of a democratic infrastructure in spite of the wide diffusion of democratic values in the country. Even in England or America, which many of us seem to idealise, the democrats did not reject, at any stage, the traditional group activity and local institutions in those societies; they rather sought to activate such activities and associations and inject new values

in them. The humanists and democrats in this country, rather than wait for one fine morning when Indian democracy would have achieved 'cultural roots', should devote themselves actively to building up such an infra-structure of self-governing institutions—in their professions, in their neighbourhoods, in the various social groups to which they belong and, most important of all, in organised congeries of thinkers and intellectuals who feel sensitive to the changes taking place around them.

Such an infra-structure could, besides providing more flesh to the dry bones of a formal set-up, also provide for: (1) the mobilisation of a large leadership potential in the country by bringing men out of their existing apathy: participation in the conduct and government of such self-governing institutions is observed to provide excellent basis for the training of new leadership; (2) the instillation of practical and responsible attitudes among intelligent men and women whereas the present tendency, all too common, is to evade responsibility and wherever possible shift it to someone else; (3) the possibility for the same individual to participate concurrently in several organisations thus making for cross-cutting allegiances and consequent flexibility and mobility in the social structure; and (4) the prevention of mass outbursts, in the form of sporadic 'direct actions', that are bound to occur in a society where creative energy is not properly channelled, the gap between promise and fulfilment is wide and the individual's need for gaining a sense of belonging and significance flows into parochial channels.⁷ But apart from imparting self-reliance and a sense of importance to individuals, and apart from generating a feeling of satisfaction with existing institutions, such as infra-structure of autonomous groups performs the all important function of (5) providing a continuous mechanism for social change. Change comes about in a manner that is smooth and acceptable to most people. Moreover, it is the method of effecting change that is important from the point of view of democracy. Change takes place in an organised manner by a constant interaction of diverse interests thus giving rise to a continuous give-and-take, an ability to appreciate the opposing point of view and a spirit of tolerance based on a rational appreciation of facts: it gives rise, in other words, to a subtle and intricate system of conflict and accommodation, of what in contemporary parlance has come to be called 'pressure group politics' which is the modern version of the old ideal of a 'government by discussion'.

THE ESSENCE OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY

It is in this context—of the need to provide democratic content to the political process by means of an activated infrastructure between the State and the individual—that the question of parliamentary democracy versus 'direct democracy' has to be viewed. For, if it is granted that the problem of democracy is ultimately a problem of the general assimilation of a new value-system, it is clear that the functioning of democracy has to reach far beyond the existing parliamentary set-up. The individual, in other words, has to be made partner in the common endeavour by means of effective channels of participation. Whether to call such a system today as 'direct democracy' or merely an extended form of parliamentary democracy or by some other name is a question of nomenclature. We shall return to it later. In order to make discussion meaningful, however, it is necessary to formulate the concept of 'direct democracy' in a manner that is both precise and practicable. It is in this that contemporary discussion suffers the most. Direct democracy has been ridiculed as unpractical and inapplicable to modern societies, condemned as totalitarian in character and dismissed as a chimera. Such views are derived from societies where plebiscites and other 'direct' methods have been employed by politicians to perpetuate their own rule; men who are the very enemies of democracy come to invoke 'direct democracy' to create the illusion of a popular regime based on a popular mandate.⁸ On the other extreme are those whose understanding of direct democracy amounts to little more than administrative and territorial decentralisation of power.⁹ It seems to us that the concept needs a more careful definition.

The concept of direct democracy as conceived in the Greek polis or the contemporary Swiss commune or English parish is based on two norms: (1) that the final sanction for political authority is to be found in the individual himself who is conceived as the maker of his own destiny; we may call this *the concept of self-government*; (2) that, however, such a self is not isolated from other selves. There is no dichotomy between the individual and the 'society' in which he lives. Self-government is a process of co-operative decision-making; we may call this *the concept of participation*.

Thus self-government through participation in the decision-making process provides, in our view, a workable definition of direct democracy. Its

distinction from parliamentary democracy is that it considers both the rights and the responsibility of the individual as inalienable; its emphasis is less on exact institutional patterns and more on individual creativity; it expands the scope of individual participation in the political process far beyond the casting of votes; and, finally, in it power remains necessarily diffused. On the other hand, such a concept does not necessarily include the institutional arrangements that Greeks or Rousseau had in mind.

Participation and Consensus

Before proceeding with the analysis of direct democracy, certain preliminaries must be fulfilled. The concept of *participation* needs to be precisely formulated. A casual approach to the concept has given rise to much misunderstanding. There are three points worth noting. Participation is not an end in itself; it is only a means to an end. The end is to produce a certain quality of the mind with which the individual shows the confidence and the capacity to mould his own life in willing co-operation with his fellow beings, their good being as important to him as his own good, not indeed as a categorical imperative but as an essential ingredient of his own enlightened self-interest. (The furtherance of a good life is not a class phenomenon as the ancient Greeks would have us believe: my good cannot possibly be furthered apart from the good of all others.)

Secondly, participation is a process, not simply a form. The distinction between process and thing has been much discussed by psychologists. It is important for a proper understanding of participation. Participation, if viewed simply as another form of communal behaviour, is in the danger of slipping into procedural rigidities. It has to be viewed more as a method of reaching decisions, flexible in its working and producing a certain quality of human intercourse. In this sense, it is akin to the idea of democracy which is also not simply a mechanism of government but a method of reaching decisions.

Thirdly, even so, it is not participation *per se* that is desirable. An uncritical approach to the concept of participation may land us in a dangerous position. For, it is a concept that cuts both ways: it can lead as much to authoritarianism and strict conformity as to democracy and discussion. Once again, it is a certain quality of participation that is relevant. Participation that is based on a metaphysical theory of society such as the Corporate State, the Class State or the Historicist State endowed with a world mission can only lead to

rigid conformity and the negation of individual freedom. The need, in the present context, is to distinguish between participation based on individual self-consciousness and that based on a collective ego. The one takes the dignity and rights of the individual as its starting point; the other bases its authority on a social myth. The former, in other words, is based on the democratic principle of individual sovereignty; the latter on the individual's status in society. It is the failure to make this distinction that has given rise to so much confusion in discussion. It particularly accounts for the fears of some western intellectuals who see the germs of totalitarianism in popular participation. Their obsession with the inter-war experience in Europe has led to a one-sided view of participation; it is forgotten that it was precisely the lack of one type of participation that led to the attraction for the other type: democracy, not having percolated to the life-experiences of the individual, was soon subverted by demagogues who were not slow to lure the populace into fantastic make-beliefs.

Also relevant in this connection is the concept of *consensus* which again calls for a more precise formulation than it has hitherto received. Now there is no doubt that an uncritical approach to the problem of reaching a general consensus may lead to a suppression of all dissent. As was pointed out by Mill, liberty has to be preserved as much against the constraints of social prejudice and conventionalism as against the encroachments of the State. But the point once again is that it is the type of consensus one has in mind which determines its character. For there is no gain-saying the fact that every society must devise some way of reaching agreement on questions of common interest. This has two aspects. There are particular agreements to be reached on particular issues; there has also to be a general agreement on the manner in which the particular agreements are to be reached. It is the decision regarding the latter which distinguishes one type of consensus from another, between (1) a consensus that is imposed upon the individual who, by subtle conditioning and indoctrination, is made to merge himself into some collectivity and (2) a consensus which is the outcome of free and open discussion by a large number of people who are under no sufferance to agree except by their own willingness to abide by decisions arrived at by known and approved procedures. Such a consensus and the participation that makes for it are inherent in the idea of democracy; the fact that totalitarian societies have made use of these concepts and twisted them out of all recognition is no reason

why we should disown such essential components of a democratic order.

To bring together the various threads of our definition, *participation in a democracy can be defined as a process of arriving at a general consensus by a critical exchange of views in which the individual joins in active fellowship with others on the basis of his own choice and conviction and with the end of furthering a good life for him as well as for others; and for others because for him.*

It is such a concept of participation that lies at the basis of the democratic ideal. The totalitarian concept of participation, on the other hand, is the very negation of democracy, direct or indirect. Indeed, it is no participation at all.

VI

DEMOCRACY IN MODERN TIMES

It has become a commonplace to dismiss this ideal of direct democracy as being inapplicable to the modern State with its large size and complex character. But this is to confuse the *ideal* with the particular *institution* in which it found expression at certain points in history. No one would deny that it is not possible in modern times to conduct the affairs of the State on the basis of market-place discussions. Nor would anyone deny that it is not possible any more for all the citizens of a State to meet in a common place. But the inapplicability of an institution does not necessarily involve the rejection of the ideal that the institution fulfilled—unless, of course, the ideal is itself surrendered on other grounds. The point is that if the ideal was based on a sound reading of the needs of human nature, the real problem is to devise institutions which could realise such needs under changed conditions. Representative democracy is certainly a step towards such a realisation but it falls far short of the goal as a result of the rigidity of its institutional pattern and the inevitable power concentration to which it gives rise. The need is to devise channels of participation for the individual which could transcend the limitations of representative democracy. In other words, the problem is to find new forms for the functioning of the ideals embodied in direct democracy. (It may be legitimately argued that in order to preserve the historical association of the term 'direct democracy', what is now proposed should not be called by the same name. And this may be conceded. What is important is not the name; what is important is the ideal em-

bodied in an experience from which civilisation has drawn its inspiration for more than two thousand years.)

As for the inapplicability of the *ideal* of direct democracy to the largeness and complexity of modern life, the point is wholly invalid. It is precisely because life has become so complex and the communication between the individual and the institutions that affect him in diverse ways so remote that the need for individual participation in the decision-making process — which is the crux of the idea of direct democracy — becomes all the more potent. As a recent study in decision-making has indicated, The heart of the problem is whether the public, or particular publics (organised groups of people), can know enough to hold the decision-makers responsible or to enter into effective consultation with them. With every increase in the complexity of political decisions and the special knowledge that is required to make them, the ability of the public and of particular publics, to understand the factors in the decision must be increased if the democratic quality of the decision is not to diminish.¹⁰ In fact, the growth of groups and associations demanding greater participation in the conduct of government is most marked in societies that have taken to urbanised and more complex forms of social and political life. Even the medieval guilds grew up in response to the urbanisation and differentiation of society. The need is even more felt today with the emergence of a complex mass society that is making older modes of conducting the business of government inappropriate. The point is to evolve institutions that can answer to the needs of such a society.

Those who dismiss the *ideal* of direct democracy as inapplicable to modern times are really speaking thinking of direct democracy in terms of its formal institutional structure as it existed, for example, in Athenian democracy rather than the spirit that underlay such a structure. The modern problem — faced in many spheres and not necessarily restricted to the under-developed countries — is to recapture the spirit and basic ideal of such a democracy and to try to approximate the ideal as closely as possible under modern conditions. Otherwise we would only be throwing away the baby alongwith the bathwater.

The ideal of such a democracy in an admittedly complex society has to be realised at various levels. 'Self-government through participation in the decision-making process' would, in such a society, be the end-product of the functioning of a net-work of self-governing institutions, over a wide area of social life. It is the absence of a

well filled-in social hierarchy with a continuous traffic between various levels in such a hierarchy that accounts for much of the rigidity of the political process in countries like India. The reorganisation, of 'natural' and atavistic forms on voluntary and democratic principles, the formation of organised interest groups on territorial and functional basis, and the bringing together of like-minded organisations in State and national institutions, can go a long way to ensure the democratic character of decision-making. These institutions will also open up the existing political institutions like political parties and legislative assemblies by operating from within them, thus affecting the entire working of the formal institutional set-up. Such a network and the mobility it makes for in this manner would provide a continuum of social effort without dividing loyalties or giving rise to parochial tendencies. It fosters a true unity as distinct from what Emile Durkheim called 'a mechanical solidarity'. A democratic system can be judged by the degree of freedom to which it gives rise. In the absence of a genuine unity, however, true freedom is impossible. Only such a continuum as here envisaged can provide both the unity and the freedom that are the hallmarks of a successful democracy.

The other basic idea behind such a continuum is, of course, to inculcate the idea and spirit of democracy in the individual's approach to all problems and institutions. This is of great importance for the maintenance of those psychological traits without which true democracy would not be possible. It is not often realised that in our efforts at erecting an efficient society that will 'service' the individual on all his problems, we might willy-nilly be undermining the springs of self-reliance and voluntary striving that are the ultimate safeguards of freedom. The danger is more acute in societies where democracy tends to be equated with the paternalistic notion of the Welfare State and where the individual is in danger of being emasculated before the advance of a perfect State. Men, under such conditions, begin to conform to standardised responses called forth by stereotyped stimuli. They are not allowed to make mistakes and learn from them. They lose all confidence in themselves and look to the government for solving the problems. If we are to save ourselves from such a situation we should strive consciously to organise our lives such that maximum scope is allowed for the exercise of individual initiative and voluntary group effort. A rationally planned social order can be an instrument of individual happiness only if it is the creation of men working together for a common end. For it is only through organisations

based on the principles of self-help and mutual aid that the proper spirit of independence and mutual respect that are so essential to democratic behaviour can be cultivated.

Thirdly, such a net-work also fulfils the important function of providing intimate groupings in terms of which participation takes place, thus solving the psychological problems of modern man who has been uprooted from his traditional faith and alienated from the collective groupings from which the new ideas are liberating him. Such liberation, unless it can itself become the basis of a loftier faith, may lead to atomisation of the individual ultimately craving to be personified in a collective ego: freedom, as Erich Fromm has shown, can become very frightening *unless it leads to a new integration* based on the new ideas to replace the old integration based on 'natural' ties.

The upshot of the whole argument here advanced is, then, that the activation and development of an infra-structure of autonomous and self-governing groups able to influence the decision-making process is the true basis of an actively functioning democracy. It is the closest approximation to the spirit and substance of 'direct democracy' under modern conditions. On the other hand, its institutional scheme is very different from the primitive practice of a general meeting of an amorphous and undifferentiated mass: it is, in fact, a synthesis of the Greek *concept* of democracy and the Anglo-Saxon practice of democracy. Moreover, such a view of democracy is both in consonance with human nature as realised in the process of biological evolution and with the needs of an ancient society set on the path of democratisation. The liberal and democratic values could become real and permeate existing institutions only on the basis of such a concept of democracy. The growth of effective public opinion, the ultimate safeguard against tyranny, also depends on such a development. On the other hand, the concept of public opinion is not without ambivalence. By itself, public opinion is not enough to preserve democracy. As John Stuart Mill, that great apostle of human freedom perceived, public opinion can itself become despotic for the individual; it has to be informed and enlightened in order to perform its function in a democracy. But 'enlightened public opinion' does not land from the heavens; it is a function of organised discussion and deliberation, of a clash of ideas and a critical examination of honest differences. It is only through a living tradition of self-government as analysed above and for as many people as possible, that such a process of education and criticism can be

carried out. To limit the cultural process to groups of writers and artists or to understand the process of enlightenment merely in terms of 'cultural freedom' for those groups would prove fatal to Indian democracy. While intellectuals would be discussing in coffee-houses the prospects of democracy in India (like the economists constructing their models), the political dynamics of a collectivist society would seal the fate of Indian democracy at least for the foreseeable future. With it will also be sealed the fate of 'cultural freedom'.

Infra-Democracy

Such a concept of democracy and the forms it prescribes differ both from 'direct democracy' as practiced by the Greeks and parliamentary democracy as practised in modern communities. The chief difference is that unlike the latter two, it does not conceive democracy in political terms only. On the contrary, its emphasis is on the creation of a whole line of secondary social groups between the individual and the State which alone can ensure the democratic quality of decision-making. The term 'participating democracy' would perhaps be more appropriate but we choose not to use it both because the concept of participation, as indicated above, cuts both ways and because the phrase has been used by men whose notion of democracy differs radically from the one advanced here¹; to continue using it can only lead to confusion. Confusion has indeed marked contemporary discussion of democracy to a large extent. This is because the term democracy is in fashion. It can 'sell'. Recast in attractive jargons — peoples' democracy, participating democracy, basic democracy — it is employed by all sorts of people. This makes the task of coining a new phrase difficult. In order to avoid confusion, we propose to use a term that is less emotive and more technical to denote the type of democracy discussed here. As the essence of the system is the functioning of an active infra-structure, we suggest that the term *infra-democracy* should be used to describe it. Although emotionally less appealing, it has the merit of being precise, accurately represents the type of organisation it envisages and is less subject to varying interpretations. On the other hand, there is no intention of propagating the term. It is used merely to facilitate discussion on the points raised here. The word 'infra' means 'from below'. It suggests an institutional structure from below that supports the top. 'Infra-democracy' thus clearly signifies a concept where democracy is not limited to the political State; its stress is on organising the whole society on democratic principles.

Political democracy, without such support, would soon break down. Its emphasis is on social engineering as a whole, not merely on the adoption of a political structure. Moreover, its distinction from both direct democracy and parliamentary democracy also becomes clear. It imbibes the ideal of direct democracy without adhering to the forms in which it once found expression. It can also draw upon the practice of those modern communities that have made democracy a way of life and a method of decision-making pervading a large part of the social life; and it can do this without being tied down rigidly to the forms of parliamentary democracy.

Optimum Size for a Democracy

Some other associations of the concept of 'direct democracy' need to be severed from the type of democracy here envisaged. It is common to identify 'direct democracy' with small size and autarky. Men are supposed to live in small and self-sufficient communities and conduct their own affairs. Such an identification, however, is not essential to the concept of democracy here propounded. Nor is even local autonomy a necessary component of the latter. Where and when local autonomy can lead to more democracy, it is to be welcomed. But it is by no means certain that this will always be the case. It is quite likely that local autonomy, instead of furthering the cause of democracy, may retard it. The essence of democracy is the freedom of the individual, not of a locality. Indeed, the latter may well go against the former. Under conditions where the exercise of power becomes the preserve of a dominant faction or economic interest, local autonomy can be very cramping to individual freedom. Lacking a genuine unity of the wider community, the existence of small and numerous jurisdictions can only lead to a disintegration of civil life. It is, of course, true that democracy implies diffusion and decentralisation of power. But centralisation is not necessarily a function of size; it can occur as much, and at times more, in smaller than in larger communities. It is the quality of social organisation, not its extent, that determines its character. Size is no criterion by which the quality of democracy can be judged.

Direct democracy is also associated in the popular mind with unanimity in the decision-making process. Unless care is taken, however, unanimity can, by eschewing competition and criticism, degenerate into a perpetual oligarchy. The stress often laid on the need for unanimity in current

discussion on 'panchayati raj' in this country points precisely to such a danger. The Panchayat Committee of the Congress Party went to the extent of recommending a greater devolution of powers to 'unanimously elected' panchayats. Such an approach leads to a coercive order. For such unanimity hardly reflects a true consensus in society. It was quite another matter with the Greeks where unanimity signified a consensus and a 'sense of the house' that issued out of long and heated discussion in a meeting where all the citizens were entitled to participate. Today such a general consensus without resort to elections may be reached in primary groups as also perhaps in the secondary groups here advocated, although such a procedure should not be strictly adhered to; votes ought to be taken whenever found necessary. Unanimity in elections to representative organs of government, however, makes for a consensus of quite a different order. It should be discarded as a method of reaching decisions.

Another popular association of 'direct democracy' should also be discarded here. Direct democracy, as formally understood, is supposed to do away with representative institutions altogether. Decision-making in such a system comes to be conceived only in local and 'direct' terms. It is clear, however, that such formal rigidity does not always serve the interests of democracy. A flexibility in the choice of forms is necessary. For if the principal feature of the type of democracy here envisaged is the active functioning of a continuum between the individual and the State, representation from lower to higher levels of organisation cannot be avoided. What can be said is that representation does not exhaust the exercise of individual participation in decision-making; it is only one mode of participation, and not the principal mode. But representation as one of the methods of decision-making cannot be ruled out. On the other hand, the concept of representation implied in an infra-democracy would differ from the concept as used in representative democracy. A representative is no longer considered 'alienated' from and independent of the community it represents. He derives his authority from his constituency and is accountable for his actions, although this does not preclude him from using his own judgement and providing the requisite measure of leadership to his constituents. Infra-democracy, then, adopts forms that are both direct and representative, the chief purpose being the achievement of maximum scope for individual initiative without undermining the efficiency of the larger community.

VII

ASSUMPTIONS OF PARLIAMENTARY
DEMOCRACY

Having dealt in some detail with the type of democracy most suited to modern times, we should now like to deal with those in this country who advocate parliamentary government as the best and most desirable form of government. The question has been dealt with by us in some detail elsewhere (QUEST 24). It may be added here that these advocates do not appear to have faced up to the predicament confronting the westerners themselves: the spectacle of McCarthyism in a country with an unrivalled faith in representative democracy; the doctrinaire waging of the Cold War and the sterile bomb controversy; the disillusionment faced by 'the Left' in practically all the Western countries; the French dilemmas which are, at least in part, a result of the ultra-representative character of French democracy; and the staggering extent of public apathy and irresponsibility towards social issues which is disturbing the more sensitive among the intellectuals in those countries. There is the even more serious problem of the western individual feeling lost and powerless before the huge bureaucratic party and administrative organisations that confront him in a parliamentary democracy. The uniformity and standardisation of political behaviour that it gives rise to, the conformism it demands, and the discount it puts on individual creativity make for totalitarian relations of power and authoritarian modes of political organisation. If countries like England, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States have been able to preserve the ideals of democracy in spite of these problems, that has largely been the result of a very active tradition of self-governing institutions at all levels of human association. It should be remembered that *such a tradition does not stem out of the institutions of representative government; in most cases, it ante-dates the popularly elected legislatures; and it is the persistence of such a tradition in spite of the centralising tendencies of parliamentary government that accounts for the strength of these democracies.*

Here it may be noted that quite apart from the formal inadequacies of the parliamentary form of government, there is the important point that even within the context of parliamentary democracy the function of parliament has been grossly misunderstood and exaggerated in many quarters. Parliament neither should nor does (in mature politics) initiate change; it merely reflects changes

that have already taken place in the deliberations of society at various levels. In countries with a long tradition of democracy, in other words, it is the social and ideological context that is more important than the politicians who merely reflect the same. It is quite otherwise in a country like India where, misunderstanding the function of legislatures the politicians have usurped to themselves the function that rightly belongs to other groups in society. (Even in the West, there are signs that the traditions of self-government and local autonomy are weakening and far too great an importance is now being given to the role of the politician in initiating change. Self-reliance is also reported to be on the decline and there is increasing dependence on the State and its agencies. This is largely the impact of the increasing revival in those countries of paternalism in the form of the Welfare State which has ushered in an age of apathy; to that extent democracy has weakened there also by the weakening of older traditions.)

A point might here be raised that what is said above really vindicates the whole case for parliamentary democracy. It is indeed a misunderstanding of parliamentary democracy to limit its functioning to the legislature and the government; an organised interaction of interest groups and a wide net-work of self-governing local institutions are not merely excluded from its structure: they lie in its very logic as the evidence from mature democracies show. The argument can be met, first, by saying that it reduces the whole controversy between parliamentary democracy and 'infra-democracy' to a verbal level: there is no essential quarrel between the two; and, secondly, by the counter-argument that, in fact, parliamentary democracy does not necessarily involve all this mechanism of popular participation, that it is really speaking an alternative form of government based on quite different principles and that its dynamics inevitably leads to such power concentration as to negate the very principle of participation, a principle which involves a diffusion rather than a concentration of power. The only form of popular participation *inherent* in parliamentary democracy is vote-casting which gives the government in power the stamp of legitimacy. (No one can deny that India has a parliamentary government.) The fact as indicated above is that in countries with formally parliamentary structures where a vital tradition of autonomous institutions also exists, the latter does so not because of but in spite of the former. To repeat, such a tradition ante-dates parliamentary institutions. In such countries, the legislature only becomes a forum

where a continuous adjustment between competing interest groups takes place while the real benefit of self-government comes from quite other agencies. (As indicated above, there are signs that even in those countries such traditions are weakening.)

It is usual to view democracy in a country like England as just another instance of parliamentary government. A correct reading of such a political system, however, points to a different conclusion. According to such an interpretation, democracy in England is a slow adaptation, under a changing historical context, of a long tradition of give-and-take between various interest groups that were autonomous in their own spheres. Decisions in Parliament, on this view, are, by and large, the final product of such a process of consultation and accommodation although there is no gainsaying the fact that the mythology of parliamentary government has its own part to play in the political process. Moreover, we should not forget the historical role played by the English Parliament itself in safeguarding such interests and 'privileges' and resisting the onslaughts of those who (like Cromwell or James II or even George III) sought to reduce society to an amorphous mass. Apart from this special historical context, however, the government in Great Britain is more a government by discussion and consultation at various levels of governmental activity as well as through a complex network of autonomous groupings than a government based on a legislative majority renewable or removable every five years. According to the *mystique* of parliamentary democracy prevailing in England, the government is responsive to public opinion for fear of losing at the next elections; this is too simplified an interpretation of a very complex and continuous process of accommodation and adjustment that provides the peculiar character of the British system of government.

But the arguments here advanced in favour of 'infra-democracy' are not derived from the institutions of a particular country or countries. They are based on the needs of our own society as well as on similar needs of other societies—ultimately, that is to say, they are based on certain assumptions about human nature and views on the best procedures for decision-making in consonance with these assumptions. On the needs of our own society we shall shortly return. Meanwhile let us examine the human nature assumptions on which the alternative systems of democracy discussed here are based.

The whole position of the advocates of parliamentary democracy is one of Classical Rationalism. The Platonic dichotomy between reason and pas-

sion which led Plato to advocate the rule of philosopher-kings finds its echo in the modern idea of a political elite driving the population to a better life. Corresponding to this dichotomy in the structure of the human psyche is the dichotomy between individual and society which are separated by a wide gulf. The individual is an atom, undifferentiated and self-contained. It is the task of the 'guardians' to tell him about his rights and obligations. On this view the dispassionate and detached 'judgment' based on reason and an awareness of tradition is most fully developed in the representative; so is 'public spirit'—rare commodities among ordinary mortals. However, as even the choicest of human beings are fallible and as absolute power can corrupt, the insight of the representatives is balanced by the wisdom that belongs to the multitude; a periodic poll coupled with a mandate between polls gives the right balance to the political process; it can be seen that Aristotle has come in to rectify the perfectionism of Plato.

From such a reading of human nature follows the technique by which decisions come to be taken under a parliamentary democratic set-up. The technique consists in a competition between political parties so that there are always available two or three sets of decision-makers from which the electorate can make their choice. The actual choice made is not important; what is important is the *availability* of choice: that is the parliamentary democrat's concept of freedom. Having made the choice, however, it is best for the people to withdraw from the decision-making process; that part of the elite which has not entered the government would henceforward furnish the 'enlightened public opinion' which would safeguard such freedom.

The concept of infra-democracy, on the other hand, rests on quite different assumptions about human nature. Classical Rationalism is here considered an inadequate basis for democracy. In place of making the dichotomy between reason and passion the basis of a division between rulers and ruled, it considers reason as the essential character of *man*. The mechanism for reaching decisions that it advocates also follows from these assumptions. There should be available to the individuals opportunity for participation in diverse forms of social organisation and at various levels of decision-making. The conception of the individual differs radically from the Classical view. The dichotomy between a simple and undifferentiated individual and a complex and differentiated society is replaced by the conception of an individual that is co-extensive with society, the diver-

sity of society being derived from individual diversities: the organisation of the former is built around the needs of the latter. On the other hand, it is by contributing to the social process that man is creating the best that is in him; for it is only so that he partakes in the making of the good life; to assume that the elite could create a good life for him is to subscribe to the doctrine of the—Real Will and to confound democracy with dictatorship.

That all men do not at all times act according to reason is not here denied; nor is the role of instinct and emotion in reaching decisions belittled. What is asserted is that given proper conditions, the realisation of the rational potential in man is not limited to any group. Such a conception is also the basis of the 'one man, one vote' maxim in parliamentary democracy; each man is indeed unique but there is also a unity underlying his uniqueness: this unity consists in the humanity of each being, the essence of which is rationality. Under parliamentary democracy, however, the implications of such a principle are not fully worked out. In fact, parliamentary democracy is more a concession of the classical position to this principle than an embodiment of the same.

VIII

DEMOCRACY IN A MASS SOCIETY

The real basis of the parliamentary democrat's views is his distrust of the masses; he sees the germs of totalitarianism in a mass democracy: ignorance would become the midwife of tyranny. The truth, however, is that a totalitarian regime never arises out of a mass democracy. On the contrary, it owes its origin to the fragile structure set-up by a formally democratic constitution in countries where the preconditions of democracy do not exist. In our own days, we have had enough of this experience in the form of various *coup d'état*, not very far from our own country. More important is the point that the *coup* is facilitated under a parliamentary regime where power is concentrated in the hands of a small Establishment. All that the skilled political adventurer—or the military general—needs to do is to capture this Establishment. The totalitarian use of democratic methods (for example, the holding of plebiscites) succeeds rather than precedes such a capture of power. The point, therefore, is entirely invalid.

The confusion underlying such a view arises out of mistaken identities. Those who argue against participation of the people in the political

process for fear of totalitarian consequences of the same, confuse participation with *involvement* in the political process. The danger they have in view arises when people do not really participate—true participation implies a critical attitude—but merely merge themselves in a totality and the 'Leader' makes them feel they are involved in all that he does. It is an identification born out of indoctrination, not out of genuine participation which implies both the habit of respecting the minority's viewpoint and the courage of conviction in such a minority: the ability to dissent is as much a pre-requisite of such participation as an agreement on the manner in which decisions are to be reached.

Far more important, however, is the point that to dismiss the role of a large mass of the people from the active political process is to ignore the principal character of modern society: it is a mass society. Unless steeped in democratic traditions by continuous contact with the political process, the masses who are undoubtedly becoming politically conscious, will be successfully placated by the demagogues who never hesitate from promising them a Utopian future. Mass society, whether we like it or not, is a fact that has come to stay. The political implication is clear. Either democracy must be given a mass basis or else the mass—and its manipulators—will blow democracy to pieces.

The possibility of such a mass basis depends upon the availability of channels of participation at various levels of the decision-making process, the effectiveness of those channels in influencing the legislature and the government and the extent to which people would avail of such opportunities. (The assumption made here is that unless opportunities are available, it is not possible to generalise on the extent to which they would be availed of).

The pivotal role of enlightened leadership in a democracy is not here denied. Indeed, in a nascent democracy, the initiative for a general diffusion of liberal values rests entirely with such a leadership. The presence of a leadership steeped in democratic values, however, is not enough. Unless linked with the led in constant and intimate interactions, it would be swept off its feet by events beyond its control. Political education of the masses in such a society would depend upon the opportunities available for such an interaction between the leaders and the led at various levels of the decision-making process.

Such a concept of participation differs from the Greek concept in two ways. It does not require a large mass of human beings to be kept in bond-

age so that the select citizenry could have enough 'leisure' to participate in the conduct of public affairs: modern technology has liberated the pursuit of a good life from its dependence of any system of exploitation. Secondly, it is not the participation of an amorphous mass of undifferentiated units gathered together at one place. Infra-democracy as defined in this paper is based on a differentiation of the population on the basis of a number of criteria, the autonomy of each such differentiated group, the readiness to resolve conflicts of interests by recourse to democratic procedures and the culmination of such a process in political decisions, legislative as well as administrative. The chief aim is to allow maximum scope for the individual's freedom to participate in the total decision-making process according to his inclinations and choice; the main point is not to allow such a process to be exclusive or limited to a privileged group. Such a system also fulfils the further aim of instilling in the individual participant a solidarity with his fellowmen and a *civisme* based on an awareness that happiness and a good life for one can only be created through contributing to similar life for others: it is a conscious recognition of the unity that underlies individual differences.

IX

THE SITUATION IN INDIA

Passing from general considerations to the particular conditions of our own country, it seems to us that the trouble with those in India who are satisfied with the adoption of parliamentary institutions merely because they have worked in some western countries is that their formalistic approach makes them think of parliamentary democracy as a mechanism for ready adoption. It is an approach that views institutional change in terms of a change of structures. But as sociologists have time and again pointed out, even the best structure has its limitations, and an exclusive preoccupation with structure leads to a neglect of the special problems of the society in which the institutions are sought to be implemented. But social change, surely, cannot take place merely on the basis of adoption in a mechanical fashion. The process of social change is selective and unless account is taken of prevailing culture-patterns, values and modes in such a society, it is likely that the selective process will produce a structure in which the system sought to be implemented will be wholly distorted. The forms might be the same but the content entirely different. Anyone in some touch with the political scene in

this country cannot fail to note such a distortion taking place.

The selective process can work to our satisfaction only if the democratic way of life is viewed as a gradual evolution, proceeding from the actual working of existing institutions with which the individual is closely associated; it is the task of enlightened leadership to activate such existing institutions, set up new ones *in consonance with local needs* and make both the bearers of democratic principles and value. Of course, as has already been argued in this paper, the emergence of such enlightened leadership depends on the extent of autonomy enjoyed by local and functional units which, in turn, depends on how far the State provides conditions for such autonomy but even more on the extent to which the units themselves—in reality, the individual members of the units—assert themselves *vis-a-vis* the State. In other words, our whole conception regarding the nature of authority will have to be changed: legitimacy would not derive from the *carte blanche* received at a general election—although elections can certainly not be dispensed with—but from the willing assent of individuals cooperating in autonomous units which, in their complex interactions, would really constitute the State. On the other hand, the end of such an activity, specially in a country like India, is also to secularise and politicise (in the wider sense of politics as here advocated) these organisations. *Participation does not merely remain social; at the same time it also becomes political.*

All the arguments for an infra-democracy used in the previous sections apply even more forcibly to countries like India. Here a traditional society based on hierarchical and atavistic principles is sought to be transformed on the basis of the democratic ideal. (The democratic ideal is not simply political; it is also economic and social.) There are no deeply-laid traditions of democratic conduct in this country. On the other hand, the defensive posture assumed by the traditional order and the inadequacy of the capitalist economy to solve the problems of dire misery and inequity has led to the *politicisation of all social change*: the State has become the arbiter of society. It is this that makes the problem of the proper organisation of the State more crucial in such a society than in societies where both the *maturity* and the *specificity* of political life limit the coercive role of the State. The problem turns on the distribution of political power. If the exercise of power is on a broad basis, such 'politicisation' of the social process need not cause much concern. The point about parliamentary

democracy in such societies is that it does not provide such a broad basis. Unless countered—or supplemented—by other forces, it is bound to lead to a concentration of power inimical to the growth of free institutions.

Such a concentration of power is further accentuated by centralised planning; economic change, like social change, is also politically conceived. In the absence of a tradition of 'sharing power', the economic imperative lends rigidity to the political process.

This is not to argue against 'politicisation' *per se*. Politicisation is both inevitable and desirable in such a society where the spread of modern democratic values has become the function of political education. The point, however, is that unless we are awake to the problem of the proper distribution of power in such a society, politicisation may lead to totalitarian results in which the populace is subjected to uniform controls stretching into every sphere of human activity. What we would have achieved is *politicisation without democratisation*. There is no doubt that such a state of society would be far worse than the traditional society.

The only saving grace in India is the presence of a large middle class steeped in democratic values. A rapidly developing economy, however, neglects its middle classes, both because of the exigencies of centralised planning and the inducement to placate the peasantry and the labouring classes for considerations of electoral victory. Under conditions where a democratic code of political conduct has not evolved, the making of elections to Parliament the sole medium of holding power necessitates the distortion of ideals—equality, democracy, socialism etc.—into common-places of party politics. Politics is thus inevitably vulgarised. In other words, everything gets engulfed in the struggle for votes. The political see-saw becomes its own justification. Thus the functioning of parliamentary government, under conditions of poverty and want, and in the absence of democratic traditions embodied in a network of self-governing institutions, is positively unfavourable for the lower middle classes. This leads to mounting frustration and the search for a panacea. The corruption of the existing system lends an edge to such a search; it is common to hear many of them exclaim in bewilderment, 'let's have a dictator for a few years'. Their democratic sense gets blurred under the strain of mounting frustration.

Frustration, however, does not issue from economic reasons only. It very often arises from a growing hiatus between the government and the

governed, the widening gap between what is said and what is done and the consequent sense of insignificance and powerlessness. Economic distress attains potency only under circumstances where suffering cannot be shared and is not based on an awareness of common purpose and where the feeling of injustice sharpens the feeling of misery. The unifying force that comes out of such shared convictions being absent, and the impression that the State imposes such suffering as is entailed in the transition to a better order, leads to a sense of fatalism which eventually plays into the hands of ambitious and unscrupulous adventurers. Ultimately such a situation is based on a lack of awareness among the leadership of the fact that a democratic polity cannot be built on the frustrations of the most intelligent sections of the people: for, the very bearers of the liberal ideology, if driven to the wall, become the willing agents of tyranny.

An important problem facing countries like India to-day is the achievement of a genuine national unity. This problem, it seems to us, has been dealt with in a most unrealistic manner. Either there is a reliance on empty platitudes and 'appeals'; or the solution is conceived in terms of arousing the irrational instincts in man towards the deification of a collectivistic ego called the 'nation'. The chief failure from the point of view of democracy is in the lack of a proper understanding among the leadership of the precise relationship between unity and freedom. The approach is most ambivalent. On the one hand there is the idealisation of a past when India was one and united; unity is not viewed as a problem to be tackled in our own times but as one of resurrecting a mythical Golden Age. Such an approach fosters neither true unity nor true freedom. On the other hand, the concrete attempts made are in terms of imposing various sorts of *uniformities* in peoples' behaviour rather than cultivating a basic unity in their approach. Unity tends to be equated with uniformity. Now it is clear that while the prevalence of a genuine unity in society is a necessary prerequisite of freedom, the attempt to foster uniformity can only lead to indoctrination, standardised behaviour patterns, and conformity and timidity in the individual's approach to social norms. It would very subtly give rise to a closed order. Such a conception of unity is totalitarian to the core and would undermine democracy before it has had time to assert itself against such levelling tendencies. The problem can be solved only in terms of the life-experience of ordinary men and women and on the basis of a clear understanding of the nature of unity. Unity in an

otherwise diversified society can only come out of a conscious effort to evolve a common frame of reference on the basis of shared ideals and convictions arrived at not by social indoctrination nor even by the force of political power but by prolonged discussion and deliberation. Such a frame of reference finds concrete expression in shared traditions, manifold forms of cooperation, common undertakings, ways of conducting one's business with others. Such unity, however, is not incompatible with cultural diversity. Those who maintain that political unity cannot be achieved in a society where there is no cultural homogeneity misunderstand the nature of the former. The decline of free institutions in Pakistan where there is far more cultural homogeneity than in India is a case in point. On the other hand, Switzerland provides an example of a stable political order in a State which reigns over three distinct national cultural groups. Political unity is by no means a function of cultural uniformity. It is a different type of unity altogether which, while it allows for all sorts of diversities, also makes for a consciousness of common purpose and mutual obligation. It is a question of instilling a *civic sense* in men, an awareness that every right involves a responsibility. Such a sense ensues out of participation in public affairs, by an engagement of one's self with other selves for the achievement of common ends, and the conviction that without such engagement one's own realisation would not be complete. True integration, in other words, always assumes the freedom to discuss, deliberate and decide, a scope for such discussion and deliberation, and the confidence that such deliberation could effectively influence the ultimate decisions.

x

NEED FOR A NEW ORIENTATION

It should be emphasised once again that the relevance of the above analysis is not limited to any one country or a group of countries; it has world significance. We live in a world where the situation of crisis in one part cannot help to affect other parts. Irrespective of cold war calculations, democracy in India is as much a concern for an European as for an Indian. This is one point. Secondly, even the 'developed' nations are in need of a similar if not as intensified a rejuvenation of politics as are the 'underdeveloped' nations. In fact, the crisis in the former is much more deeper than in the latter. But space does not permit us to go into an analysis of their situation.

There is another perspective to the theme dis-

cussed in this paper. It is increasingly realised on all sides that unless human inventiveness in the realm of ideas keeps pace with progress made in other fields, a new theology would land upon us by sheer default. The ideologies let loose by the French and the Industrial Revolutions—capitalism, socialism, communism, nationalism, welfare state, etc.—have all been demonstrated to be irrelevant to the world we live in and the problems that such a world encounters. Men have got bored with the same old shibboleths. It is an irony that the ideal that has not been clearly worked out nor even fully discussed—although always mentioned—is the oldest ideal that civilisation has produced: it is the ideal of democracy. Only a rejuvenation of the democratic ideal *in a manner that would appeal to the common man* can prove decisive in providing new directions. The need, in the context here stated, is to transform the base of democratic cosmology from the typical political apparatus and economic system as found in some countries to the life-experience of ordinary men and women in all societies; in other words, the need is to do away with the identification of democracy with either classical liberalism or capitalism. And state socialism and welfare state are but variants of capitalism.

Conclusion

We have, in this paper, tried to take the discussion on 'the best and most desirable form of democracy' a step further, largely by providing a theoretical framework to such a discussion. We have examined the differences between parliamentary democracy and 'direct democracy' in respect both of the actual power relations that obtain in the two systems and the assumptions on which they respectively rest. We have tried to analyse the shortcomings of parliamentary democratic forms in realising the ideals of self-government and popular participation. We have also discussed the irrelevance of certain forms usually associated with the concept of 'direct democracy' as understood by the Greeks. We have, however, tried to recapture the spirit underlying both the Greek and the Anglo-Saxon practice of democracy and examined the best means of approximating to it. The development of institutions that can realise such an ideal has been discussed in some detail. It is pointed out that only by a flexibility in the choice of institutions, a gradual spreading out of the experience embodied in them and a general assimilation of the value-system entailed in their working, can democracy strike roots in a society. It is argued that the stability of such an

institutional pattern depends on the existence of an active 'infra-structure' of self-governing institutions which provide for a continuum between society and the State. Such an infra-structure would provide scope for individual initiative and spontaneity while at the same time making for a common outlook on the fundamentals of life, not indeed on the basis of conformism or conventionalism but on a critical exchange of views and a continuous exercise of responsibility. We have taken the view that such a system of democracy provides an alternative to both parliamentary and direct democracy. We have chosen to use a non-emotive term to describe it in order to avoid confusion in discussion. We have tentatively given it the name of *infra-democracy* and tried to show its historical affiliations, the philosophical assumptions on which it rests and the substantive character it must attain to justify its claims.

On the other hand, our attempt throughout this paper has been less to argue for any particular form of democracy—indeed the emphasis has been to get beyond forms—as to bring precision to the debate between alternative forms. Only so can

deep-seated prejudices get to be viewed in their proper perspective and concepts come to stand for what they are. Above all, it opens scope for discussion to continue, whereas the present tendency of 'damning' only serves to close discussion. The orthodoxy and conformism to which the latter gives rise may provide comfort and complacency but it certainly undermines the real basis of intellectual vigour—a constant questioning of the grounds of our beliefs. But it is such questioning that is the ultimate safeguard against the decadence of values in a dynamic society.

The type of democracy we have not discussed in this paper is 'People's Democracy' for the clear reason that both in its philosophical assumptions and in its practical working, such a system of government is anything but democratic—as the term has been used in the last two thousand years. People's Democracy is at the same time a People's Dictatorship—an anomaly which only helps in rendering communication confused and meaningless. And it is clarity of communication and precision in the crucial terms employed that we need the most at the present level of discussion.

¹ For a detailed and devastating criticism on this line, see J. L. Talmon, *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*.

² The term forms the title of a paper circulated by Shri Jayaprakash Narayan through the Congress for Cultural Freedom. For an elaboration of such a conception of democracy, see his *A Plea For Reconstruction of Indian Polity and Swaraj for the People*.

³ See *Quest* 25, 'Democracy and Public Opinion' by Mr. A. B. Shah and *Quest* 27 for a controversy on the same between Mr. C. R. M. Rao and Mr. A. B. Shah.

⁴ This particular theme has not always remained on a formal level. For useful discussion, see Jayaprakash Narayan, *A Plea*. For a variant of this theme where party conflict is proposed to be restrained owing to the 'compulsions of a backward economy', see Asoka Mehta, *Politics of Planned Economy*. See also the provocative posthumous publication of M. N. Roy, *Politics, Power and Parties*.

⁵ See especially Shils' 'Political Development in the New States', published in *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. II, No. 3. See also his 'The Culture of the Indian Intellectual', *Quest* 24 and 25.

⁶ The use of the term 'infra-structure' in this context was floated by Gunnar Myrdal at the Rhodes Seminar on *Democracy in the New States*. It has now become part of the political vocabulary. For more detailed observations on autonomous groups, see Myrdal, Sterner and Rose, *An American Dilemma*. See also Myrdal's *Beyond the Welfare State*. On earlier and penetrating observations on the role of autonomous groups in democracy, see Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*; James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*.

⁷ For an analysis of the causes that give rise to such disturbances within a parliamentary democratic set-up, see Rajni Kothari, 'Direct Action: A Pattern of Political Behaviour', especially sections II and IV, *Quest* 24.

⁸ The latest instance is provided by Cuba's Fidel Castro. For an excellent appraisal of Castro's regime, see Theodore Draper, 'Castro's Cuba', *Encounter*, March 1961.

⁹ The debate on 'democratic decentralisation' and 'community development' in this country makes interesting reading in this connection. See, especially, the Congress Resolution on 'Panchayati Raj' passed in January 1961. Also, C. R. Rao, *op. cit.*

¹⁰ 'Technical change and Political Decision', *International Social Science Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 3, 1960.

¹¹ Jayaprakash Narayan, *Organic Democracy*. The term 'participating democracy' is used by the author as an equivalent of organic democracy. The concept of participation he has in mind is, of course, metaphysical and 'organics'.

POETRY

FOUR POEMS

Night Scene

two white geese waited
for you . . . on the eaves, blackly,
a black cat strutted

Two on the Seawall

below the seawall
two shadows attract the lights
of ships . . . night grows tall

Lovetease

'spindles!' I told you,
speaking of your legs . . . but then —
you know? — it's not true

Floating Feeling

the touch of your eye,
the soft smile of your finger
lift me to the sky

G. BURCE BUNAO

GROUP PHOTOGRAPH, FAMILY ALBUM

To be here is to be invulnerable.
Outside the leaves fall
and the children lose their innocence;
the wise and busy world
moves on its wheels, precise as the clock
on the mantelpiece, under whose watchful eye
we live and die moment by moment :
but here, stylised for ever, the soft
evening light imprisoned in their faces,
these are ghosts of another time and place,
caught in a brief enchantment which eludes
the wayward flashbacks of memory.
Bravely they wear their masks, knowing that
when they have paid time's necessary tithe
what remains is theirs to keep.

The brief, the long, the happy-sad years
are gone like the careful smiles
with which they held themselves
this precious moment, tight-lipped and prim
for posterity. The readiness is all.
Outside the leaves are still falling as
I close the book and sadly return
to the narrow journey, the vicious chore,
coveting this immortality,
jealous of the old, forgotten dead.

F. R. STANLEY

STRENGTH

He grew disastrous in anger,
 For she betrayed his hope
 As the moon betrays at times
 The dream of crystalline nights.
 His hand grew mad in despair,
 His eyes narrowed like beaks ;
 His lips twisted
 To utter an inchoate curse ;
 And a spiral impulse shaking
 His entire frame died
 Dumb and dangerous in every limb.
 But she still smiled and sat reposed.
 Her dark eyes darker now
 With the depth of understanding.
 Her lips swayed like thin boats
 On the rippling river of her face,
 For she knows his anger
 As the earth knows the fury of storm,
 For when he comes she will
 Hold his hands in hers
 And let their madness wane
 In the cool valley of her corpulent breasts.
 She will kiss away the curse
 From his lips and between her hips
 Tame his dark impulse
 And let him purr for a time and then
 Let him sleep serene like a helpless child.

AMARESH DATTA

SHORT STORY

*A Martyr**

By KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM

THE old man said 'Don't you know that blood is thicker than water... You know that—Don't you?'

Rajamani replied: 'Father, look here; at your age it is time you stopped putting up with so much in life on my account. I don't think it's fair. You'd better be on your own. The Government is kind enough to grant you your pension; that will suffice for your needs.'

'Why bring up my fat pension... just a sum of Rs. 28/-' remarked the old man.

'Fat or not, it will do for you. Moreover it was for me you accepted this attenuated pension. For me you had part of it—that is Rs. 20—commuted to a lump sum and paid it to me, which I spent soon enough. And when I think I have been a wash-out and failed in all my ventures...'

The old man continued 'why talk of the past?' His tone did not betray the least sign of the deep displeasure that raged in his mind.

'I think it is better that you live away from me, by yourself. At your age it is not proper that I should demand that you share the trials and tribulations of my life. Might our lot not change? When there is a change for the better, we can live together again!' Thus Rajamani.

'What are you saying? I was sixty-four, last year. I don't know whether I shall last till the year is out...' So the old man.

'Really, you seem to be in love with Death, the way you talk.'

'In love with Death! But I'm sixty-four. I've had my share of life's troubles. Always thinking of dying? Does one willingly depart from the World? One would like to

live like this for ever and ever' said the old man.

Rajamani had a good look at him. His father was an able man. No doubt about it. Or rather, he had been an able man once. But now his brain had lost its original nimbleness. But all the other senses were still active; his eyes had not lost their power of vision; his teeth were quite sound; he could still quite easily cover four miles on foot. If Providence willed it, he might well live for another ten years.

But his son was the cause of all the troubles he had in life. Rajamani himself did not deny it.

'Don't begin counting the months like Margazhi and Thai, Father. That will be much more hard to bear than all that I have borne hitherto' said Rajamani.

In truth, it would be too hard to bear. To begin with, he would lose what he was getting through his father's pension.

The old man Krishnaswami Sastri went on, 'I've lived a pretty long time. Now nothing can touch me—neither trials nor tribulations. You are my sole support in the world. Where else could I be so comfortable? How can I live elsewhere? Why should I? When you have a hard time of it, could I bear to be away from you? Could I expect to be happy like that?'

Rajamani did not give him any reply. The old man could not think of any other place of refuge. True enough. That really was the hardest blow. How could you order him out, with absolute indifference, without any concern whatsoever?

'For good or bad, my place is with you. That is good enough for me.' Said the old man.

Rajamani thought to himself: 'Till you

*Maha Thyagem

leave there will be no end to the hardships that I undergo. I believe once you leave, there will be a change for the better in my life. Whether that will be for your good or mine, how can we be sure?' Aloud he said: 'Surely your life with me has not been one to boast of; God only knows, in future too, whether there will be a change for the better.' There was a trace of tears in his voice. His eyes grew blurred. He felt depressed. He was badly shaken. He cursed himself aloud.

* * *

Before his mind's eye there unrolled his father's life, spread over a period of sixty-four years and his over a period of thirty-five years.

Krishnaswami Sastrigal had himself narrated to him the story of his past many a time. From low beginnings he had raised himself to a high position. But he could not maintain that position for long. For this, Rajamani had to be blamed. Instead of being a help and an incentive to him to raise himself to a still higher position, Rajamani had helped to bring about a rapid decline in his status.

'His son Rajamani's life...pooh! What kind of a life is that.' So thought Krishnaswamy Sastry.

In his sixty-four years of life, he could reckon only about seven or eight years as a period of unclouded happiness. Only the memory of this brief spell of well-being gave him the sustenance to carry on for the rest of his life.

He had talked to Rajamani many a time about his father. 'My father was not a bad sort. But he had a single blemish which spoiled not only his life but also mine. He went after women. In those days he was earning a tidy sum. But he raised a good amount and he spent the whole of it on women. After his death, I had to discharge his debts out of my twenty years' earnings. And in those twenty years you could take it from me I led the life of the poorest of the poor in this poor country.' So Krishnaswami Sastrigal talked about his past.

'In my life of hardship and poverty in

these days it was my mother who taught me the resolve and the spirit to face and deal with the harsh reality of life. She was Mahalekshmi incarnate. How else could you describe her? The only legacy she got from her husband was the curse of an incurable disease. To think of her powers of Endurance! the way she managed things...' So Krishnaswami Sastrigal reviewed his past.

Rajamani used to say, 'Incurable diseases or not, Granny could forget in you all the troubles she experienced with her husband—you were a good son to her'.

Krishnaswami Sastrigal himself felt proud on that score. Thanks to his wife, it was possible for him to please his mother. She was that rare person—a daughter-in-law who won the approval of her mother-in-law. But Krishnaswami Sastrigal had no time to waste a grateful thought on her. Rajamani could not remember her, by the very nature of things. For she died, when he was only a boy, when he was ten years old.

She had so ordered her life that her husband, mother-in-law and her brother-in-law had nothing to complain about her; apart from that, there was nothing striking about her. She bore seven or eight children. Of them, only the eldest girl and the last boy lived. Krishnaswamy Sastrigal married off his daughter at the proper age in the proper manner. But the girl was ill-fated.

Both the husband and the mother-in-law, both of them extremely self-centred, sent back the girl to her parents, making a false charge against her that her morals were loose. Could any greater calamity befall a mother?

The mother, whose health was none too good at any time, died of a broken heart, within two years of her daughter's arrival. The girl too, as if she did not want to add to the troubles of her father and younger brother, died soon after, (about four years later). This end of hers affected neither her father nor Rajamani so much. They thought that she did well to die rather than continue to live and bear the cross through-

out her life. Still at times they could not but recollect her wasted and unmeaning life.

In one sense, Rajamani's weak fibre could be traced to this. From his boyhood, his sister had always been with him. Then came first the death of his mother—and close on its heels his sister's death. All this taught Rajamani the quietistic doctrine of shedding one's responsibility. He had no instinctive urge for any vocation except a taste for endless and inconclusive philosophical speculations.

Krishnaswamy Sastry's two younger brothers formed a complete contrast to their elder brother and his son, in their character and attitudes. They had not the cares and responsibility that went with the elder brother's family. Without entangling themselves with its fortunes, they thrived under its sheltering care.

They were in the North in different places and were quite well off. The eldest chanced to see either of them but rarely. The cares and worries of the eldest brother's family hardly affected them. It was no exaggeration to say that they viewed the affairs of their eldest brother with the same air of detachment with which they regarded the affairs of a stranger.

This attitude infuriated Rajamani. Since coming of age he had never been friendly with any of his uncles. But all this had no effect on Krishnaswamy Sastry. 'What does it matter, if they don't care for me; what matters is they should be all right somewhere'. So Krishnaswamy Sastry used to say. But in his heart of hearts he too felt the insult. At times Rajamani himself used to remark 'If they identify themselves with us, they too may become like us unblessed. Let them be as they are, so that they at least may be happy and comfortable'.

In all his sixty-four years of life Krishnaswamy Sastrigal had not even once slipped. He had a clear conscience, which gave him great relief.

'From my father's life I learnt but one thing. It came to me naturally that a man who could not trust himself with women, could not run a family properly. I realized

that a man who went after women not only spoiled his own life but also that of his descendants. So I resolved even then that I would guard myself against temptations as far as women were concerned'.

This was true not only of his relations with women. Throughout his life he had led a blameless life in all his thoughts and actions. Nobody dared to criticise him. He did not tell tales against anyone; he never coveted another man's wealth; he never did harm to others either in thought or deed. He did not involve himself in other people's affairs. He led a sheltered sort of life, busying himself with his own affairs.

His life proved that the good men on earth lost most of the good things of life.

'While I have lost everything else, I still have Rajamani left. He will come up in life and make me a happy man. Why should I despair, so long as he is alive.' So thought Krishnaswamy Sastrigal. He was not to be blamed for thinking like that! The whole day is not given over to total darkness.

But this is just the point. Not only is the whole day given over to total darkness but the next day too dawns in darkness.

Rajamani was good at his studies; he passed his examinations creditably. And he wasted no time in getting a job. And Krishnaswamy Sastrigal became very happy thinking that his period of trouble and distress was over.

But this happiness proved to be short-lived. Rajamani lost his job when he least expected it. He was made a scapegoat for another man's fault, who chanced to be a rogue. He only escaped being sent to prison.

But within a few days, Rajamani got another job. In a mood of passivity, crippling his spirit, he carried out his duties with a foreboding that Fate would deal harshly with him again; days passed; consequences which he dreaded never followed. But he lost his job all too soon. He was cashiered on the score of incompetence.

By now all the hopes and aspirations which Krishnaswamy Sastrigal had for Rajamani had suffered a gradual decline.

Krishnaswamy Sastrigal was preparing to bear his final burden.

In the interim Rajamani got married. This made it seem that both father and son would grow optimistic again. It so happened that it was a good match. The bride was good-looking and came of a rich family. After the marriage even Rajamani appeared to develop a robust and healthy confidence. After the lapse of many years, Rajamani appeared decided to play his part as a man. He appeared to make a little progress too, thanks to the added incentive in the shape of a wife.

But this incentive and source of strength did not last long. Two years after her marriage his wife had an attack of typhoid. She died leaving Rajamani, a prey to despair and distress.

After this Rajamani did not revive at all. He accepted that he could not fight against Destiny. He tried to bypass the challenge of existence. One could say that only his old father served as a frail link which kept him alive now.

And how could Krishnaswamy Sastry summon strength enough to supply the incentive to carry on, after he had undergone so much. Once he tried to make his son marry a second time. And he could not banish from his mind even now, the way his son had looked at him when he had broached the matter to him.

He was counting the days to when he could make his final exit. That appeared to have become a preoccupation with him. But still the thought of Death shook him. Even at sixty-four he was not prepared to welcome death.

* * *

The old man's voice shook Rajamani out of his reverie. 'Get busy. Take your bath and we can have our meal.' So said the old man.

Rajamani got up. When he was ready to depart after taking the towel from the hanger Krishnaswami Sastrigal said, 'I go on counting the months like Margazhi and Thai, instead of getting ready to meet Death with courage this very day.'

Rajamani paused. 'Father why do you talk in this vein today?'

The old man did not give him a straight reply. But the thought came to his mind that his misfortune dogged his son's footsteps also and that, once he was dead, his son's lot might improve. This appeared quite probable to him. The thought grew obsessive.

Krishnaswamy Sastry found his son standing there still looking at him. 'Hurry up; have your bath and come soon; I feel hungry' he said.

Without giving a reply, Rajamani went, with a mind at peace. Only after emptying four buckets of water while taking his bath, was he reminded of what he had thought just a moment before. He thought: only after his father's death his lot might improve. Supposing the same thought had occurred to his father also...?

Leaving the vessel suspended in the well, he dried his head with his towel hurriedly and rushed to the central hall, with water still dripping all over his body.

In the centre of the central hall Krishnaswamy Sastrigal was lying on his sheet, spread from South to North. There was a smile over his face.

'Father' called Rajamani. He did not expect him to reply; and there was no reply.

Rajamani had no need to assure himself that he was dead. Covering the face with his wet cloth, he leant against the pillar, in the central hall. From his wet back, water streamed along the floor.

'First he had his mother—Then towards the end he had his son. And for their sake he could play the martyr. But who is left for me? Who is there for me to live to be a martyr for?' So Rajamani asked himself. He could get no reply to this question.

'I am only thirty-five. But if I too were to live to his age...'

This question too remained unanswered.

When he woke up from his reverie, the shades of night had begun to fall.

(Translated from the original Tamil,
by T. K. DORAISWAMY)

Brother Abdur Rahman

By AMARLAL HINGORANI

SOME called him crazy, and some saw in him an inspired being, a holy *dervish*. Maybe, he was both. Lean and lanky, rather above the average height, wheat-complexioned, he wrapped around himself an old quilt. He was not altogether nude.

A mystic, he always seemed to be absorbed in the mystery of his own brooding. He would be seen sometimes in a mosque, and sometimes in a Hindu shrine. Often, in the evenings, near the quay on the river-side in Sukkur, people gathered for a recital of poet-saint Sami's devotional verses. He would be there, listening with rapt attention. Every little while he would be muttering to himself, 'Well, Brother Abdur Rahman, did you get it into your thick head? When will you, silly man, see the light?'

One day as he was walking along the road, he tripped over a stone. Sharply, he rebuked himself, 'Brother Abdur Rahman, your head has turned dizzy with conceit. Sheer arrogance has sealed your eyes. Had you walked humbly, with open eyes, you would not have hurt yourself like this.'

He sat down, pondering deeply. Soon, he resumed his soliloquy, 'Brother Abdur Rahman, see how selfish you are! Is it right on your part to go away without first removing that stone? Think it over, brother. Some other creature like you may also stumble over it, and get hurt.' Pausing for a moment and scratching his head, he suddenly thundered, 'Look here, Brother Abdur Rahman, if you are really a good man, you will pick up that stone and throw it away.' And so he did.

It was his habit to talk to himself aloud in this manner and to address himself as Brother Abdur Rahman. Maybe, he delved deep within to let the voice of conscience

dictate to him in that meaningful language. The high moral tone of these homilies addressed to himself seemed to show as if two distinct personalities were in a constant tussle, one poised like a relentless sentinel to remonstrate and to guide the other one.

If somebody happened to ask this quaint man whether he would care to have a meal, he would pass on the message to himself and reply back in the admonishing words of a Persian proverb, 'One must eat to live, and not live in order to eat.' Thus would he confer with himself before passing on the final response.

He was a poet in Persian and he knew Hafiz by heart. Of Shah and Sachal, the immortal Sindhi poets, he knew enough, but he was steeped in the verse of the third immortal poet, Sachal, the Intoxicated. He also knew Urdu, and when others received letters from Punjab written in that language, they would seek Abdur Rahman for reading and interpreting those letters. Calm and contemplative by disposition, his worldly needs were meagre. He was content with a few morsels of food. The *godri*, the old quilt covering his body, was his constant companion. At night, be it the hottest night of the summer, he would invariably stretch himself under that *godri* and go to sleep. Maybe, under its cover, he held his most intimate communion with the Divine Beloved.

An innocent person found himself implicated one day in a trumped-up case. He was charged by the police with the theft of a golden watch, belonging to a Muslim merchant, which had been allegedly recovered from his possession in the presence of witnesses. The evidence against him was

strong, and the rich Seth was a man of great influence.

The accused had based his defence on the plea that as he was passing one day near the Seth's residence, he was caught and manhandled on the suspicion that he had looked up to the balcony and ogled at the Seth's womenfolk. He would have been beaten to death but for the timely intervention of Abdur Rahman who happened to pass then. Not that the Seth felt appeased. No, he kept ranting that the name of his august family had been sullied by a man of low class, and that it was not quite the end of the story.

It was then that Abdur Rahman started talking to himself. 'See, Brother Abdur Rahman, the Seth is very obstinate. He feels so touchy about his family's honour. He has a sister, thirtyfive years old, but he will not marry her off lest she may take away her share of the patrimony under law. Well, if the poor woman is denied a husband while she has still some youth and warmth of passion, surely...' He checked himself and frowned. 'No, no, Brother Abdur Rahman, you are not here to expose others. Fie upon you! Fold your hands humbly and try again to make the Seth see reason. If he is still obstinate about it, you can then tell the truth,' Abdur Rahman rarely conversed with himself in a whisper. This time everybody who were present heard him and understood the hint, and so did the embarrassed Seth.

The poor man thus escaped further molestation. But what Abdur Rahman had insinuated soon become the talk of the town. The scandal damaged the Seth's reputation beyond repair. The accused now based his defence on that particular incident, and he had cited for evidence those who had witnessed it.

The Seth flatly denied everything in the court. Three of the defence witnesses were his neighbours, and the fourth one was Abdur Rahman. Two witnesses were bought off by the Seth, and the third one was served with an arrest warrant for his failure to attend the court on the first day. In sheer panic, he pleaded ignorance of

that incident. The defence case now entirely depended upon Abdur Rahman's testimony, and the defence counsel had grave misgivings about the worth of such a quixotic witness. But the accused had implicit faith that Abdur Rahman would tell the truth without fear or favour.

When Abdur Rahman received the court summons, he told himself, 'Brother Abdur Rahman, you have been called by the Honourable Court of Justice. You must make it a point to go there humbly and with due deference.' He even borrowed a pair of shoes for the solemn occasion and kept it rolled within the *godri* till his name was called by the court peon. Putting on the shoes ceremoniously and folding the *godri* around his neck, Abdur Rahman entered the courtroom.

The people snapped at him, 'Eh, you, take off your dirty shoes!' People of humbler stock alone are admonished in this manner because they are expected to show respect before the mighty ones by walking barefooted.

'Brother Abdur Rahman,' said the *dervish* to himself, 'you have been ordered by the peon to take off your shoes. Tell him that you made it a point to borrow the shoes precisely for the purpose of appearing respectfully before the honourable magistrate.' He then informed the peon accordingly and advanced unruffled while the magistrate greeted him with a pleasant smile. As he took his stand in the witness box, the magistrate asked him testily why he had raised the *godri* around his neck.

At once Abdur Rahman talked to himself loudly, 'Listen, Abdur Rahman! The magistrate Sahib has questioned you about your *godri*. Mind your tongue! You are now facing Justice seated on that chair. Tell him respectfully that since Hindu witnesses on such occasions are accustomed to wrap a scarf round their neck, you have also adopted their custom to show respect to the court.' Abdur Rahman then repeated what he had just said to himself. The entire audience was spell-bound by this exquisite explanation.

'Repeat the words after me,' ordered the court clerk who administered the official oath. 'In the name of God, the All-Seeing, the All-Pervading, I will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth.' Abdur Rahman repeated the oath to himself with the concluding comment, 'Of course, the clerk is saying the right thing, Brother Abdur Rahman, and you must obey him. God is watching you.' He then turned to the clerk and recited the prescribed oath.

'Your name?'

'Brother Abdur Rahman, the clerk wants to know your name. Of course, you must tell him your name.' He then loudly addressed the clerk, 'My name is Abdur Rahman.'

Some people in the audience started sniggering. The magistrate who was at first inclined to feel amused began to lose his patience. One of the lawyers got up to inform him in English that it was the normal habit with the witness to converse with himself before replying to any question.

'Your religion?'

The witness turned to himself in sheer confusion, 'Now, Brother Abdur Rahman, don't forget that you are under oath to speak the truth. What is really your religion, you old sinner? Oh, it is an awkward question! If you say that you are a Muslim, Hindus will mind it. If you say that you are a Hindu, Muslims will surely resent it. Why not tell the truth? Shame on you, Brother Abdur Rahman, that you get confused over such a trifling matter. Just recite to him Intoxicated Sachal's verse,

'I am neither a Hindu,

Nor am I a Muslim;

I am what I am!'

The clerk turned to the magistrate with a puzzled look. The magistrate ordered, 'Write him down as a Muslim. He has a Muslim name, hasn't he?'

'Your age?'

In a rattled tone Abdur Rahman turned to himself, 'Now he wants to know your age. When I said that I am not a Muslim,

the magistrate insisted upon entering me on his record as a Muslim. Tell the clerk that he can put that question also to the magistrate.' Turning to the clerk he then said, 'Yes, you may put that question also to the magistrate.'

Enough! The magistrate was besides himself and threatened in a contemptuous tone, 'You ignorant *jat*, guard your tongue and give your evidence properly. You are here before the Honourable Court!'

Abdur Rahman kept smiling and resumed his muttering, 'Brother Abdur Rahman, he has called you a *jat*. Ask him what he means by it.'

Before Abdur Rahman could repeat the communication from his inner self, the magistrate was screaming, 'The *jat* is an illiterate man, *you jat*!'

'So, Brother Abdur Rahman, you are a *jat*. You know Sindhi, Persian, Urdu, Sanskrit and Hindi. Five languages in all. Ask the magistrate how many languages he himself knows.' Then turning to the magistrate, he asked, 'Sir. . . .'

Interrupting him rudely, the magistrate snarled back, 'A *jat* is one who does not know English!' The magistrate leaned back on his chair with a look of triumph. But the peace of the court had been disturbed and all were whispering aloud and sniggering over this wordy duel.

Abdur Rahman resumed his monologue solemnly and audibly, 'Brother Abdur Rahman, the magistrate insists that you are a *jat* because you never cared to learn English. Did you listen to this son of Topanmal whom you knew so well. Yes, that Topanmal who was in charge of the cattle-pound. Remember? Now ask the magistrate whether his father and his father's father and all the forefathers who knew no English, nor cared to learn it, were silly *jats*, and whether he can be called the son of a'

The magistrate exploded in a wild fury. He started hammering on the table, and shouting, 'Order, Order!' The entire court was resounding with peals of laughter. Taking out pen and paper, the magistrate thundered, 'Enough of your impertinence.'

You will have to pay for it. Will you show cause why you should not be convicted for contempt of court? Now, keep your mouth shut, and write down what you have to state in your defence.'

Silently, with great dignity, Abdur Rahman took the paper and pen. Leaning over the desk, he then wrote,

'Honourable Magistrate Sahib,

Be it known to you that Brother Abdur Rahman has committed no contempt of court. If anybody has lowered the dignity of the court, it is your good self. On this very day, you have abused and insulted several witnesses. But your foul words cannot touch even the fringe of Brother Abdur Rahman's *godri*. Be it known to you that you are not the sovereign master of those over whom you sit in judgment. You are supposed to be their servant. We witnesses

do not come to this court for the sake of fun. You have summoned us to help you in dispensing justice. Now, is this the courtesy you show to your invited guests? Who will then agree to testify before your court if you know only how to humiliate the people appearing before you? It is you, above all, and in all fairness, who must show cause why you should not be dismissed from your exalted post for using uncivil language and lowering the dignity of the Crown to whom you have sworn your allegiance.

In accordance with his own oath, Brother Abdur Rahman swears that he has told the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Signed,

Brother Abdur Rahman.'

(Translated from Sindhi by HASHMAT RAMANI)

Contributors are advised to keep a copy of the typescript with themselves, since return of the same is not assured.

Editors, QUEST

Talking About Books

By SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH

PERSONAL anthologies — of course Palgrave and Quiller-couch are also personal in a sense — have a special flavour. Here the compiler is just as much a 'makar' in the Scottish sense as any of the poets. Such anthologies have been compiled by Lord David Cecil, Aldous Huxley, W. H. Auden, E. V. Lucas, Cecil Day Lewis, John Masefield — and these are only a few of them. *Come Hither* compiled and edited by Walter De La Mare and published by Constable is, however, a little different. It is meant for the young — of all ages — and is a nostalgia for lost Edens. The contributors, naturally range from Anon to Young (what is a 'Francis Brett' among friends?). There are a number of songs, madrigals and 'ayres.' Here, the dream-pedlar is at his best. 'I thank God for my happy dreams' wrote Sir Thomas Browne in *The Religio Medici*, 'as I do for my good rest ... And surely it is not a melancholy conceit to think that we are all asleep in this world. We are somewhat more than ourselves in our sleeps and the slumber of the body seem to be but the walling of the soul.'

Rayner Heppenstall, author of the delightful, discursive *Four Absentees* has now written *The Fourfold Tradition* also published by Barrie and Rockliff. This is a miscellany of reviews and articles on French and English literary subjects — ranging from Chaucer to Joan of Arc and Gide to Amis and Snow. Like Maugham, Duff Cooper, Belloc or Sir Harold Nicolson, Mr. Heppenstall is an obvious Francophil. His point is that the French and the English have much in common. He also argues that the double tradition in England — i.e. the Establishment at the Centre of power and the Nonconformists in principal opposition to it — has a French counterpart. Mr. Heppenstall, one can see, is an eccentric heavily involved in cultural politics and literary manoeuvres. He is saved from priggishness by a sense of comedy, a distrust of contemporary pretensions, a wide and curious reading and a ear to the ground. It seems that he likes a little irreverence. He has a healthy contempt for doctoral dissertations and an unfortunate sympathy for that fifth-rate writer Kingsley Amis whom he prefers to John Wain.

Somerset Maugham's outburst about the 'angry young men' bring so much scum seems to him a bit excessive. If Amis is not scum, I wonder who is. His summing-up of Sir Charles Snow seems acute and just. The Snow contribution, he feels, has been his ability to take with sympathetic, unflurried seriousness what nobody else takes seriously at all. 'What takes place in senior common rooms and in the corridors of power what is said by the steady confident voices, the capacities shown in steering a committee are made to seem the highest reality'. Where, he asks sotto voce, are the Snows of yesteryear?

International Literary Annual No. 3 edited by Pamela Lyon and Arthur Boyars and published by John Calder is a survey of the contemporary scene. It has become donnish and tendentious, though. The level is high, except for the piece on India which is poor and jejune redeemed only by a healthy awareness that the Sahitya Akademi awards during the last six years have gone to about fifty 'Very second-rate persons'. On the whole, the preoccupation with the contemporary scene does not seem to be very fruitful. Should critics of the status and stature of Frank Kermode and D. J. Enright occupy themselves with writers like William Golding and Lawrence Durrell? (And I thought Hilary Corke had made a corner in Durrell). D. J. Enright, I concede, has produced a stimulating essay, distilling much of the diffused evocativeness of the Alexandria Quartets. But D. J. Enright is one of the few contemporary critics, with the true Hazlitt touch, — he could not be dull or indifferent, if he tried. Ronald Bryden, contributes a slapdash survey of the years' fiction in Britain.

Lionel Stevenson's *The English Novel* published by Constable is a scholarly and very readable survey of a complex subject. The English novel has had few distinguished, but many arbitrary chroniclers. Baker is referred to rather than read. Richard Church and Arnold Kettle have written useful handbooks on the subject but Professor Stevenson has met the long-felt want for a longer but adequate and readable book. He rightly traces the origins to Elizabethan pastoral and picares-

que, merely glancing at Malory and Mandeville. I am, however, unable to share his view that the Theophrastian character-writers—Hall, Earle and Overbury contributed to the development of the novel. They helped the development of the essay, which, as a form is inimical to the novel. Nor can I equate Defoe with 'the discovery of realism' for that would leave unexplained the highly realistic contributions of Deloney, Dekker and even Greene. His assessment of the great eighteenth century novelists and subsequent offshoots like didactic fiction, the novel of manners and the novel of terror is on traditional lines and quite unexceptionable.

He seems to have outgrown the Jane Austen Cult. He is just, but not gushing about Jane Austen; he is just also to Scott which E. M. Forster never was. His account of Walter Scott brings to mind Verrall's famous lectures or the Clark lectures of G. M. Trevelyan. It is something in an age hypnotised by false notions of the 'Great Tradition' to find in Scott 'a spirit of generosity, honesty and loyalty that even the most cynical reader finds hard to resist.' Stevenson has ignored T. S. Eliot's strictures on Hardy and D. H. Lawrence's on Galsworthy. His awareness that the ascendancy of blind chance gives Hardy's novels the dignity of Greek Tragedy may be orthodox but his contrast between Hardy's 'tragic irony of inevitable frustration' and Meredith's 'Comic irony' is stimulating and original. His account of recent fiction is necessarily summary and even slapdash. There is little excuse, though, for being off-hand about Somerset Maugham and Compton Mackenzie, and even less for excluding Frank Swinnerton whose *Nocturne* deserves to be remembered for a very long time, and V. S. Pritchett. A historian who brings his survey down to L.P. Hartley and Angus Wilson might have been a little more circumspect.

Raymond Aron's *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* published by Weidenfeld and Nicholson is one of the major books of this century. The study of concepts, as Wittgenstein saw, is the study of forms of life. But our forms of life also have an overall unity and change through history. This lends a special significance to M. Aron's belief that history and philosophy are inseparable. He does not treat history as a kind of natural science, but follows Kant in deriving the various forms of human thought from a philosophy of mind and Hegel in setting this philosophy within the historical process itself. Like Collingwood, he holds that the theory of history is one with the theory of man, that is, a philosophy. He shares with the post-Wittgensteins the sense of a crisis

which confronts philosophy to-day. A profound and profoundly disturbing book.

Bertrand Russell, is by civilised consensus, one of the very few great men of this century. His campaign against nuclear warfare has frightened the English Tories and quasi-leftists. Papers like *The Spectator* are only too keen to subtract from his great reputation; unfortunately for them 'to this process Russell is remarkably resistant'. Almost immune, maybe. *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell* edited by Lester Denonn and Robert Egner and published by Allen and Unwin is a fairly representative anthology of a very great man. Some of the work e.g., *Principia Mathematica* and *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, has obtained the highest professional recognition as something lasting and fundamental. As a philosopher he is a great empiricist in the tradition of Locke and Mill, though the earlier empiricists had neither his learning nor his contempt for pedantry. He shared also some of the interests of the Bloomsbury Group. He was one of the four Apostles who were also Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge in 1902. The other three Apostles were J. E. MacTaggart, A. N. Whitehead and G. E. Moore. Leonard Woolfe in *Sowing*, says; 'Russell has the quickest mind of anyone I have ever known; like the greatest of chess players he sees in a flash six moves ahead of all the other Grand Masters'. For this century, though, Aldermaston may be more significant than Aquinas or Mathematical Philosophy. Russell's splendid passion for toleration, equity, and loving-kindness in human affairs has not so far elicited that homage from the world, which is due to it. Pity. Like Orwell, he has always felt that goodness lies in resistance to, and not mere condemnation of evil. Nor has it been recognised that he is one of the best prose-writers of this century. His prose has not the colour of H. M. Tomlinson's or the punch of Orwell's. But for sheer precision and effectiveness Shaw (the Shaw of the Prefaces) and Russell would take some beating. The beautiful prose of *Portraits from Memory* should have been served up entire. 'I suggest to your professors' he says in that book 'that their first work should be written in a jargon only to be understood by the erudite few. With that behind them, they can ever after say what they have to say in a language 'understood of the people'. In these days when our very lives are at the mercy of the professors, I cannot but think they would deserve our gratitude if they adopted my advice'. The advice is the considered opinion of a maester who has grown out of Flaubert, Pater and Logan Pearsall Smith.

One can always do with a good history of

English Poetry and the twentieth century Court-hope or Warton are nowhere round the corner. Grierson's 'History of English Poetry' is, of course, highly satisfactory but one wonders whether Douglas Bush's small, scrappy book can claim the same distinction. James Reeves's *A Short History of English Poetry* published by Heinemann will meet a long-felt need. It begins, sensibly with Chaucer and not with *Deor's Lament* and equally sensibly does not dwell too long on the twentieth century. It is, however, a little Compton-Ricketty and there is no attempt to trace trends and movements. Neo-classicism, Romanticism and Pre-Raphaelitism have to be taken on trust. Nonetheless, a sober, scholarly survey of the greatest poetic literature in the world.

George Orwell was, far and away, the most significant writer of this century, but for this very reason has not been fortunate in his biographers and critics. (An Indian parallel is the Bengali novelist, Sarat Chatterji). His circumstances were peculiarly susceptible to the petty, peevish, Parthian shot and first John Morris and Cyril Connolly and then Christopher Hollis tried to get their own back on him. I do not suggest that Sir Richard Rees' pleasant and chatty *George Orwell*, published by Secker and Warburg is quite in this category. But he has exaggerated the 'Old-fashioned' side of Orwell, and the English right is sure to exploit this, just as it exploited '*Animal Farm*' and '*1984*'. Sir Richard Rees is mistaken in regarding Orwell as an angry young man born before the phrase. Since he expressly declares that 'everything human is ambivalent' (P. 11), some allowance may be made for his double-talk. Occasionally there seems to be too much of it. Thus he concedes that Orwell had a lynx eye for humbug and inconsistency in politics, but is chary of admitting that he was hypersensitive to any kind of affront to the decencies. (When, in 1959, I was making certain enquiries about Orwell in London, the B.B.C. put me in touch first with T. R. Fyvel, and then the charming and talented poet, 'Ruth Pitter and David Astor. No one suggested the name of Sir Richard Rees—a pity). Sir Richard Rees repeats the popular fallacy that Orwell was at once a rebel and an imperialist, and therefore a split maladjusted personality. Why does a man who claims to have been Orwell's friend, not realise that Orwell was not a rebel and still less an authoritarian? He is the greatest of the English Radicals, in the tradition of Hazlitt, William Cobbett, Dickens and Wilfrid Scawen Blunt. He was a Radical who had cleared his mind of cant and is going to pay the price. A lot of cant will be written about him.

Barbara Ward is an acute observer of political trends but her *India and the West* published by Hamish Hamilton is tainted by a reference to the persons to whom she dedicates her book. One of them has been assiduously selling a few western ideas in India and persuading us that the western way of life is so perfect that we must not grudge a few starvation deaths. The Planners can take them in their stride. Barbara Ward, too, is eloquent, knowledgeable and statistical on India's Plans—and needless to say, on foreign aid. The great human tragedies of India, the squeezing out of the Middle-class, the creation of unnecessary hierarchies, the sufferings of the Plan's victims, the growing corruption in the ruling Party, 'the face of men and the time's abuse'—these mean nothing to her. Perhaps she feels some contrition and by way of an afterthought, there is a brief one-page appeal to the conscience of the West. The West is advised not to fall back on evasions and make-believes which did not help the Cretan kings drinking behind the walls of Knossos, while the Mycenaean fleets were waiting outside, or Marie Antoinette playing shepherdesses at Trianon, when the French peasants—not sheep—were eating grass.

The great Shakespearean critic is always a man of many and catholic sympathies. That Bradley was a great Wordsworthian has been recently conceded by Bateson, and his estimates of Shelley and Tennyson have not been rivalled in a more specialist age. England is fortunate in having, among living critics three Olympians like Sir Maurice Bowra, Professor F. L. Lucas and Professor Wilson Knight. Sir Maurice Bowra's equal familiarity with Seferis and Sophocles and equal insight into Mallarmé and Milton gives his criticism an authority and assurance reminiscent of the great encyclopaedist of the Middle ages, Vincent of Beauvais. Professor Lucas is also a great classicist and he frequently reminds me of Sir Herbert Grierson's saying: 'Thank God I did not study English; I studied classics.' The vintage flavour and mellowness of Professor Lucas's prose is to be found not only in his '*Tragedy*' and his '*Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy*' (now alas, unobtainable) but in his works on Rossetti, Tennyson and the French poets—and of course the two great books on the eighteenth century.

Professor Wilson Knight's mighty achievement is not limited to his great work on Shakespeare. The '*Laureate of Peace*' will rank with Geoffrey Tillotson's work as one of the two best books on Pope. (But Tillotson is a Pope specialist and everything else is off his beat). '*The Starlit Dome*'

and 'Romantic Imagination' are easily the two best books on the Romantic period and it is right that one of these should be by Professor Bowra and the other by Professor Knight. To Professor Knight I am indebted for valuable reading hints. My generation, of course, is not unfamiliar with the work of the Powys brothers. The correspondence of Kenneth Hopkins with Llewellyn Powys reveals the latter as a dedicated person, an impression strengthened by the delectable 'Dorsetshire essays'. The prose is pellucid. John Cowper Powys is not only a discerning critic but a major novelist. There is something seriously amiss with the literary Press of England, which will get Kermode to write on Golding and someone else to write on Stuart Holroyd. Why there should not be proper appraisements of Sir Compton Mackenzie, Frank Swinnerton (whose essential wisdom is conceded by men so different as Fredric Warburg and Sir Stanley Unwin) or John Cowper Powys is hard to understand and necessary to deplore.

Professor Knight drew my attention to John Cowper Powys's *Wolf Solent*, just re-issued by Macdonald. The theme is not exotic like *A Glastonbury Romance* or *Morwyn* or *Maiden Castle*. *Wolf Solent* deals with a year in the life of a man of creative gifts who is frustrated by lack of outlets for his artistic talent. The scene is Dorsetshire, part of which is Hardy Country. Powys has Hardy's compassionate awareness of all the factors that twist and frustrate human aims. And, of course, the general impression is symbolic. But the peculiar, gripping, unforgettable quality is its nostalgia. The evocation of the Dorsetshire plains, with its overhanging clouds, the dirge-like north wind whistling through the blackthorn hedges has a curiously hypnotic quality and again recalls Hardy. (Though the meeting between Wolf Solent and Gerda Torp is more reminiscent of Meredith, the Meredith of 'Modern Love' and 'Richard Feverel'. Powys's evocation of Sherborne school (the school of 'Loom of Youth') is so incomparably superior to Cecil Day Lewis's (in 'The Buried Day') that one must draw the comparison between a man who rummages in his memory and the man who rummages among his note-books, slowly, the mystical awareness of material things dawns upon the reader. And, as happens in true nostalgia, all kinds of smells pour pell-mell into his memory—the smell of the flowering hedge, the smell of the duck-ponds, the smell of the butter-cup dust. And he shares Wolf Solent's realisation that men must endure their going hence as their coming

hither; that it is all rather a lark; and that ripeness is all.

Books professedly about Themes tend to be snooks cocked at an imaginary Establishment in Criticism. It is refreshing to come across a book which is not. J. B. Leishman's *Themes and Variations in Shakespeare's Sonnets* published by Hutchinson is quite the most comprehensive and most penetrating book on the subject. The literature around this begins with Wordsworth's 'With this key Shakespeare unlocked his heart' and is formidable in quantity though varied in quality. It includes Oscar Wilde, Ivor Brown, L. C. Knights, Wilson Knight, Hallett Smith and J. W. Lever—to mention only a few. Wilson Knight's, and J. W. Lever's books are highly original pieces of sustained criticism. Professor Leishman must have used their work but he feels it unnecessary to quote them. The result is an extremely original and brilliant work but a little disconcerting to the student reading for a dissertation.

The idea of the Sonnet-sequence comes not from Petrarch but from the Pleiades (Ronsard, Du Bellay and others) Shakespeare owes little else to Ronsard. The transience of youth and beauty is a common theme not only in the Pleiades but in Tasso. The theme of literary immortality is once touched upon by Du Bellay, but quite a few of Spenser's sonnets in *Amoretti* are on the Triumph of Time. Time is always the destroyer, a theme later to be found in *Troilus and Cressida* and one or two of the major tragedies. Professor Leishman does not think much of the supposed Platonism of Shakespeare. It is really inverted Platonism, or Platonism standing on its head. That a sequence consisting of one hundred and fifty-four sonnets contains no self-pity, no reference to *Carpe diem*, *Carpe florem* or 'in grateful beauty threatened' seems also remarkable to Mr. Leishman. The sonnets emphasise Shakespeare's remoteness from the neo-paganism of Donne. Professor Leishman points out that Shakespeare, not Donne is outside the main tradition of European poetry.

Miss M. C. Bradbrook also makes a dead set at themes—in her *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* published by Cambridge University Press. Her argument, based on illustrations from Marlowe, Tourneur, Webster and Middleton is that Elizabethan conventions of speech, action, presentation and acting constituted an integral part of Elizabethan drama. She defines a convention as an agreement between writers and readers, whereby the artist is allowed to limit and simplify his material. She seems to be riding the idea too hard. When E. E. Stoll attacked Bradley's criticism of Othello on the ground that

the Elizabethan slanderer was always believed, he may have been citing a real convention. But when Miss Bradbrook says that the tragic hero was not thought of as a human being, she has stumbled over, and not upon an Elizabethan convention. For was not this a neo-classical rule—indeed a postulate—rather than a conceivable convention?

When I visited John Masefield at Oxford in 1959 I tried to recapture the emotions of Beverly Nichols recorded in *Twenty-five*. To-day, the English public is apt to be snooty both about the poet and his acolyta. So much the worse for it—and the smart-alecs who carry copies of Edith Sitwell and Dylan Thomas, while John Masefield, Edmund Blunden and Siegfried Sassoon remain on library shelves are only to be pitied. The loss is theirs. The publication of John Masefield's *Collected Poems* and his *The Bluebells and other Verse* by Heinemann is a reminder that a life dedicated to the worship of beauty and simple splendour can never be futile—not even in a sophisticated world. Masefield is one of the few poets to have written the short lyric and the long narrative poem with almost equal success. Some of his sonnets in *Lollingdon Downs* and some of the sonnets on Beauty will survive stacks of Sitwells. 'When Bony Death' has a Shakespearean or Spenserian quality and brings to mind a famous sonnet in *Amoretti*. 'Shopping in Oxford' is the kind of light, occasional poetry which some of the Georgians like Martin Armstrong did very well, and is part of a neo-Augustan tradition which poets like Donald Davie, D. J. Enright and others are resurrecting. 'Biography' is his 'Prelude' in miniature, his 'Tintern Abbey' for the general poetry-lover. 'The Everlasting Mercy' may have

dated but this can hardly be said of 'Reynard the Fox'. One can hardly expect all the poems in *The Bluebells* to be on this level, but it is churlish to grudge a tribute when a long life approaches its final day. Masefield's poetry will always evoke a wander-thirst for the tang of the sea, for the Curlews crying on sheep-walks, the steady Trade winds blowing in the ghostly palm-trees. His still flaming memories constitute a hymn to Beauty and a reminder that even if we cease, life is a miracle.

W. B. Yeats's *Essays and Introductions* and Elizabeth Coxheads' *Lady Gregory* both published by Macmillan, bring back the days when we all felt we were the last romantics. In retrospect, it does not seem we were so far out. Lady Gregory was not only a formidable figure but one of the prime movers of the Irish Literary Revival and 'Coole' is the most coherent of the symbols ever used by Yeats. *Essays and Introductions*, read together with *Autobiographies* and *Mythologies* must reveal one of the most complex minds of the Century. He had little philosophy apart from Symbolism and the central essays in the book are those on Magic. He was also the great assimilator—drawing on the Upanishads, Blake, Berkeley, Swift, Parnell, Tagore and Purohit Swami with an insouciance and a lack of awareness of the mixed character of his bag that must seem impressive. His explanation as to why he did not write in Gaelic (instead of English) is less so, and in fact, quite confused. In spite of his preoccupation with magic, was he a Magus himself? I wonder. Fifty years hence, he may seem in retrospect an alchemist manqué most of the time, though in inspired moments an alchemist, too.



BOOKS

Bumming Along

WALKING THE INDIAN STREETS by
Ved Mehta (Faber, pp. 145, 15s)

BEFORE spending 'a bummy month' together in India, Dom Moraes and Ved Mehta were—or so this book confesses—very 'bummy' at Oxford. They roamed around 'bumming drinks' and after a period of really first-rate slogging at studies, they would take a holiday, 'bumming and being amiable'. These 'bummy days', explains Ved, 'were an Oxford speciality'. (These five bummy quotations are all, incidentally, from page 49 of his reminiscences of his Indian month). Readers are therefore warned that they should expect a considerable quantity of bummery-flummery in the book, in much the same way as *Gone Away* supplied whole chapters of dipso-tipso—so much, alas, that Mr. E. M. Forster longed for a non-alcoholic edition slippable in one's pocket in lieu of a hip flask.

More cute treats are in store. Dom and Ved often attached 'kins' to words when they were at Oxford. 'We liked the words better that way,' explains Ved, and when they were both drunk—a not infrequent condition—(Domkins more than mekins), they suffixed 'kins' to practically everything. This practice was 'just more bummy and more comradely'. So, while in Delhi, Vedkins rings up Domkins, 'This is me!' says a voice. 'Hello, it's you, on the phonekins,' says Ved, and 'Oxford is in India.' There is a get-together—'a bummy Oxford surprise'. They go to the Volga, Dom gets drunk and begins feeding imaginary dogs under the table; a Sikh rings for the police, the waiters don't know what to do; then both stagger out, and Dom tries to give his

whole bankroll to the taxi driver for his kind services. Next morning they call on Khushwant Singh, and blind Ved notices Khushwant's 'lecherous eyes'. Later they visit Dr Narayana Menon, drink beer and talk of Michelangelo and Yehudi Menuhin and Oxford. That afternoon they are interviewed by Khushwant Singh after a special V.I.P. limousine is sent by All India Radio to fetch the somnolent interviewer, who says he won't come in a taxi even though the director will pay the cost; he wants 'a special limousine'.

This dreary, gossipy, undergraduate account of a day's doings is a fair sample of what goes on in *Walking the Indian Streets*. It is all so slickly tiresome: a young, self-conscious and self-important man who writes beautifully but chatters on and on as if he were descanting to a bunch of fawning middle-aged women and sniggering adolescents. Even that one wouldn't really mind. For if a person is trying to be chummy—or bummy—he compels interest because he lays all his cards on the table. Not here. 'We seldom told an unvarnished truth; we made whatever happened to us more fanciful and funny, to amuse ourselves and our friends... It was just part of our natures...'

That gives the game away, for what is going on here is one prolonged confidence trick. Ved Mehta changes his moods like quicksilver—now he's bumming, now he's respectful (specially to Pandit Nehru, with whom he lunches); now he commiserates with Indians ('The setting of the British sun... left us with a permanent hangover'), now he rips it up in a brothel area with Dom and Khushwant Singh, who 'drinks beer and grips the arm of a very fat American girl,' who says she will report him to the F.B.I. for having bad finger-

prints (Prolonged Applause from Readers, please—a joke has been cracked). But how much of this is serious, and how much cheap fun at the reader's expense? Ved Mehta speaks in one place of 'embellishing and embroidering little incidents' to 'amuse our company with fantastically exaggerated accounts' and 'somehow to find an escape from our own gloom.'

I, poor reviewer, who expected more than tricks and pranks, must confess to being not amused. 'You are an old fraud,' writes Jasper Griffin to Ved Mehta on page 122 of this book, 'and I have a mind to denounce you to the public as the moral man you are.' Sentiments such as these are easy to understand, for though Ved does not go quite so far as Dom, it is quite clear that often his bland statements of 'fact' are highly glossed concoctions. He does not even care to check up on details where people are concerned.

Take, for example, the incident that highlights Moraes's two-day stay in Calcutta: in *Gone Away* it deals with a visit to a brothel. Ved says (p. 99) that there was a blow-out, and their 'trustworthy' taxi-driver was lost. Therefore, they went on their own 'to a small, square room where there is an ugly dancer, riddled with all the diseases of the sun...' Dom says (p. 159) that the taxi-driver took them in; 'Stay here for twenty minutes, otherwise I will eat your life.' Then some Bengali girls, a couple of Chinese and a negress, in tinsel saris or short cocktail frocks, arrive, and giggle. 'You must choose,' says one. 'We only want to talk,' says Ved piteously. 'The best kind of talk is done in the bedroom,' cries the African girl passionately, and tries to unzip Dom's trousers. Dom jumps up to go, but three 'hairy men paring their nails with large knives' block the way. The girls flutter away, Dom grabs Ved's arm and they run. 'Wind inflated my shirt, which had a neat knife-cut through one side.' They bundle into the taxi, still waiting, and go back to the Grand. Thus Moraes in *Gone Away*; but Ved Mehta has an entirely different version in *Walking*. Apparently, both slowly go from brothel door to door

in a taxi—not Dom's taxi, because that had a blow-out, says Ved—giving money to the prostitutes who stand in rows (like spectators welcoming royalty, one supposes). They sidle up: 'No, no', both friends shout. But the girls persist. Ved and Dom jump out of the taxi, jump into another—'The Grand—quickly, the Grand!' But 'a man jumps half-way through the front window beside the unoccupied taxi driver.' He has an 'ugly, bony face' and holds a 'ridiculous little penknife'. The taxi-driver and the man fight. There is a terrifying scream, 'which rings through the streets like a death gong'. The taxi driver has grabbed the man's testicles, and thrown him out. 'The bloody man was a robber,' says the driver. 'He got what he deserved.'

A pity that Ved Mehta doesn't stop to ask himself if his reader is getting what *he* deserves. Buddhadeva Bose arrives with his 'cousin' and an American poet, and the cousin wants to translate Bose for the world, 'but on second thought, I ought to get on with my own creative work'. Dom finds no cousin; 'with him was his son-in-law, and a tall American' (p. 162). Or consider the meeting with Mr Nirad Chaudhuri. Moraes says on p. 68 that both climbed three flights of groaning stairs—by the time they reached the top floor they were 'both in a vile temper'—and on a broad veranda find 'a naked figure asleep on a sheet'. Ved bends and shakes it impatiently. 'Hai mai, brother, get up and call your master.' The figure springs up, wraps the sheet round itself and says with dignity, 'I am Mr Chaudhuri.' Ved has a different version. A 'barely clad figure' points down the veranda when asked, 'Where is the sahib?' A second figure—Mr Chaudhuri's son—leads Ved and Dom to the drawing room, where they 'grow uneasy with waiting'. Finally, Mr Chaudhuri appears, now dressed to meet visitors. Neither Ved nor Dom, in their pathetic efforts to make fun at Mr Chaudhuri's expense, seems to realise that this is exactly the way a Bengali gentleman behaves when at home, and that such behaviour in no way suggests lack of taste.

One could go on multiplying instances, but what's the use? How is one to know if Ved Mehta is reporting Krishna Menon correctly when the Defence Minister is made to say, 'I'm not anti-Muslim. If anything, I'm too pro-Muslim.' Or when the President of India is quoted as saying that the influence of Gandhiji—after a ten minutes' talk with the Mahatma—was so powerful that 'My wife and children were no longer the first things in my life'. Or when Mr Chaudhuri is supposed to have said, 'I get invited to two hundred diplomatic cocktail parties in a season, but I hate them, so I go to only seventy.' Or when the Prime Minister says, brushing aside protocol, 'Come and talk to me whenever the spirit moves you. Just ring up my secretary. It is as easy as that.'

No, it's all pretty shoddy, and once bitten, one is twice shy anyway. What an utterly malicious, utterly scrumptious romp Vedkins and Domkins had in this country!—tweaking great noses, pulling august legs, being one-up on the bigwigs. Such charming young men! Such lovely prose styles! Such gentle manners! We've been well had; but it is difficult to fool all the people all the time. Lifekins is too shortkins for this kind of foolikins.

P. LAL

Politics

INDIA: The Most Dangerous Decades
by Selig S. Harrison (Oxford University Press,
pp. 350, Rs. 20.)

HOPES and promises held out by public men during the years of struggle for independence, together with the establishment of democratic institutions, have released certain social, regional and political forces in this country which threaten it with disintegration. The fact that democracy has survived in contrast to the political instability and the rise of military dictatorships in various countries of Asia and Africa has often made people wonder how firm its roots are. While this country has successfully conducted two general

elections and is now getting ready for the third, no one can assert with confidence that the foundations of our democracy have become stronger as a result. On the contrary, the democratic procedures have released and generated certain forces which put it to one of the severest trials known in history. What these forces are and in what manner they influence the working of our democracy have been discussed with profound learning and insight by Mr. Harrison in *India: The Most Dangerous Decades*.

Mr. Harrison is a political sociologist who specialises in Indian problems. He has lived here for several years and has first-hand knowledge of political forces at work in the States and in the Union. His papers on 'Caste and Andhra Communists' and 'The Challenge of Indian Nationalism' displayed his remarkable understanding of the peculiarities of Indian politics. They also earned him a great deal of respect among social scientists in this country and outside. The present work is an elaboration of his paper on Indian Nationalism.

Apart from the fact that a realistic approach to Indian political problems is possible only when they are considered against the broad social, economic and regional background, with which they are intimately connected, Mr. Harrison has been able to bring out their *consequential* character. For the political problems in this country are the products of the interaction of our efforts to establish democratic institutions on the one hand and the forces which are at work in our environment on the other. Mr. Harrison, I believe, has provided us with a novel and a helpful perspective for looking at our political problems. His book deals with the consequences of three basic factors in our social life, namely, the linguistic diversity, economic and political functions of modern caste organizations and the regionalization of the elite, parties and politics. Each of them deserve to be considered in some detail.

So far as the problem of linguistic diversity is concerned, Mr. Harrison claims

that this country never achieved a fundamental 'unity' of which thinkers and politicians speak from time to time. Historically speaking what we have had in this country is regional culture and regional greatness. It is indeed very difficult to write a history of *India*. What gets written is the history of the North, the Deccan and the South. Whatever appeared or was interpreted to be giving a fundamental unity to this country has turned out to be a gross oversimplification of a diverse reality. This fact has been brought home to us since Independence. The democratic institutions which we established provided us with an opportunity of expressing our diversity in language, culture, economic and political ambition in a manner which has alarmed all of us. Through democracy we have realised the strength of the divisive forces in our society.

What stands out as the most conspicuous feature of our political life today is the assertion of the regions. This regional assertion is fundamentally different from what it had been in the past. This is because, 'in contrast to the India of one thousand years ago, disunited by default in a welter of political jurisdictions, India now faces the prospect of disunity by deliberate designs of regions face to face in a single state.' In other words, in recent years, we have encouraged the political expression of regional sentiment enough to make each region oblivious of the other and of the whole.

There is another significant feature of the assertion of the regions. In the past the diversity of regions did not undermine what may be loosely regarded as our cultural unity of which the inter-regional Brahmin elite was the custodian. It made use of Sanskrit to establish its inter-regional character. When the strictly Brahminical elite declined another cosmopolitan elite took its place and made use of the English language to preserve its inter-regional character. Now with the decline of the English language the position of this elite is being threatened. It is increasingly in conflict with the regional

elite, trained in a regional language and more effective in the leadership of the regional masses. The regional elite is increasingly wielding more and more social and political power. It is merely aware of and concerned with regional problems. Within the region it is successfully challenging the English-educated cosmopolitan leaders who possess a kind of all-India outlook. It is also in conflict, due to its excessive emphasis on regional matters, with the national leadership.

Equally grave are the political repercussions of what is popularly known as casteism. 'Despite a common fund of tradition,' says Mr. Harrison, 'Hinduism is in a social and political sense as much a force for disintegration as for integration.' Within itself the caste-system leads to social conformism and integration but when it expresses itself through a political idiom, it becomes a disintegrating force in society.

Neither education nor migration to urban areas has weakened its hold. Migration to urban areas has resulted in superficial social intercourse between different social groups. But economically castes are far more organized in urban areas than we would like to believe. Caste patronage in service and in business is an unmistakable feature of urban life today. A. D. Gorbala has aptly summarised the attitude of a town-dweller in the following words: 'a man's clear duty is to provide for his relatives, near or distant, as well as for his *biradari* or brotherhood.' The most distressing feature of it is that even after Independence, as Professor Ghurye has pointed out, the number of caste weeklies and monthlies has gone up much more than ever before.

In the political field the consolidation of social groups makes itself readily available to politicians. Within the framework of democracy where a leader has to have popular support, preorganized caste-groups become great assets. The leader has merely to convince the group that he is protecting its interests. So great is the utility of the preorganized caste-groups to politicians, that no political party, no matter what it

claims, refrains from exploiting them at the time of election.

One of the political parties which has most successfully exploited the forces of linguistic diversity, local sentiment etc. on the one hand and antagonism between different social groups on the other is the Communist Party of India. The existing division on regional and caste lines in this country, says Mr. Harrison, almost appear to be 'made to order for communist exploitation'. As opposed to the normal interest in poverty and class struggle, the communists in this country have exploited the social cleavage and the regional sentiment to get a political hold on the people. Even before Independence, the CPI under the influence of Stalin wanted to approach the 'national' or the regional question in accordance with the theoretical claims of Stalin regarding the right of nationalities to secede from the union. The CPI's obsession with this approach was so great that even the Hindu-Muslim question before Partition was regarded by it as a question of merely determining the administrative boundaries of various nationalities.

Mr. Harrison has convincingly cited the case of Andhra politics in support of his contention that the communists in that area successfully exploited the regional sentiment and social cleavages between groups. From the very beginning they supported the claim of Telugu-speaking people to the formation of Andhra State. They blamed the Congress for poverty in that area. Finally they exploited the rivalry between the two peasant proprietor caste-groups, namely, the Reddis and the Kammas. With the help of a detailed analysis of the elections of 1946, 1951 and 1955, Mr. Harrison has been able to substantiate his thesis.

In Kerala the cleavage between Ezhavas on the one hand and Nayers and Christians on the other was successfully exploited by the communists. Numerically a very powerful group, the Ezhavas are considered to be an exploited people of Kerala. The communists blamed the other two groups for the relative poverty of the Ezhavas. They

also exploited the regional sentiment in Kerala. As in Andhra, they were one of the earliest advocates of a Malayalam-speaking state.

In Bengal, the influence of the party is greater in Calcutta than in rural areas. The absence of a marked social cleavage in Bengal denied 'to all parties the opportunity for social leverage available in other regions'. The party, however did exploit the regional sentiment in Bengal to the full. Before Partition it worked for a united sovereign Bengal. It also took the side of Bengal in the Bengal-Bihar boundary dispute.

The CPI, it is interesting to note, has flourished more in the non-Hindi speaking areas of Bengal, Andhra and Kerala than elsewhere. In these states the regional sentiment is about the strongest and it was exploited fully by the communists along with social cleavages wherever they were found. The net result of this on the CPI itself was the loss of its national character. Advocacy of regional causes coupled with the absence of leaders of national stature has made the CPI a region-oriented party.

As opposed to the CPI the Congress has its following more in the Hindi-speaking areas than elsewhere. Until recently the Congress leaders strongly advocated the learning of Hindi. Mahatma Gandhi went to the extent of saying that it was our *dharma* to know Hindi. It is only in recent years that the opponents of Hindi within the Congress have come out in the open. This has led Nehru to warn Hindi-speaking Congressmen not to regard themselves as the centre of national importance.

Mr. Harrison has been, I believe, unduly charitable to the Congress in not emphasizing its exploitation of the antagonism between different social groups on the one hand, and the question of freedom of conscience for the religious minorities on the other.

While the CPI never acquired an all-India character, the Congress is in the process of losing it. Congressmen are getting more and more involved in regional issues. This brings them in conflict with the

national leadership. In the words of Mr. Harrison, 'national party discipline, in fact, is likely to count for less and less as the shift to the regional languages shifts the center of attraction in all political life to the regional level. While the high command of any party in power can exercise certain brute powers in a showdown, the Congress high command, when it no longer acts in the name of Nehru, may suffer from the same failure of nerve that even now inhibits the growth of effective national parties opposed to the Congress. If even the special communist commitment to discipline has failed to yield a strong national party, as we have seen, it is not surprising that other opposition parties with a commitment to democratic procedure have failed still more dismally.'

The regional forces as they stand today work towards the regionalization of all political parties; whereas the successful working of democracy presupposes the presence of national parties, preferably two in number. The factor of regionalization of parties and politics alone therefore throws heavier odds against the success of democracy in this country.

In less than two decades democracy has released certain forces which have transformed the character of our politics. Socially organized groups are available for political exploitation; regional issues are becoming more vital to us than national ones; finally political parties are getting divided on regional lines. What then will hold this country together? We have had two charismatic leaders in succession, Gandhiji and Nehru. Later it is possible that no leader of their stature may appear. Will that split this country into small units? Will that mean an end of our democracy? These questions are both painful and difficult to answer.

Mr. Harrison deserves our congratulations and gratitude. He has produced a book which must be read by all those who are concerned with the future of democracy in this country. He has given us a much-needed warning by handling the

most baffling issues of Indian politics in a masterly fashion.

A. H. SOMJEE

SIDELIGHTS ON RAJAJI by *Khasa Subba Rau* (Vyasa Publications, pp. 77, Rs. 1.50)

SIDELIGHTS on Rajaji is a collection of twenty-two short articles written for *Swarajya* during 1956-1960, by its late editor Khasa Subba Rau, and those who know this clear-sighted paper will recognize here the penetration and intellectual integrity which are a quality of Mr. Subba Rau's work as a journalist. As the title suggests, these articles focus on Rajaji, his character and contribution, and analyse his speeches and writings. In short a 'tribute', the kind of book one approaches with trepidation. Happily, Mr. Subba Rau does not allow himself to fall into the traps of the propagandist and his little book turns out to be refreshingly free from the atmosphere of incense and oracle which makes too many works of this kind embarrassing and unreadable.

On *Swarajya* in action, the elections, our socialist planners, state trading, Mr. Subba Rau has much to say that is trenchant and well-informed. From these writings as a whole there emerges a full and well-rounded picture of Rajaji as a 'man of indefatigable compassion', of great warmth, strongly anchored in spiritual values; 'deep faith in God is one way in which the sensitive human conscience preserves itself against indifference and despair'. Characteristically this faith is joined to a strong mind implacable in its honesty, and with a vision of the future which is unfogged with emotionalism or egotism. In these pages we see Rajaji as the true Gandhian who having survived the Congress loss of ideals has not hesitated to challenge an absolute monolithic one-party Government, using all its resources to perpetuate its power. As the founder and leader of *Swatantra*, which may well become India's second party, one hopes with the author that he may yet rescue the country from Congress obsessions, and compel it,

through honest organized opposition to a reappraisal of its policies.

The chapter 'Rajaji on Rajaji' is illuminating. It brings to mind in sharp contrast the famous early essay by Nehru on Nehru, and together they drive home what Max Lerner (quoted here) describes as 'one of India's tragedies, and a cruel waste of ability and insight that this old man—one of the great men of the Asian Continent—seems doomed to sit in a modest Madras house to eat his heart in bitterness until death. For by the time Nehru is ready to relinquish power, Rajaji will probably be beyond politics and perhaps beyond the temporariness of this world'.

Commenting on Mr. Lerner, Rajaji (also quoted here) very characteristically has this to say. 'I do not mind if I die, before Nehru is ready to relinquish power..... when duty calls and one responds to that call despite all handicaps, approaching death is not relevant. And if one really seeks to fulfil a duty there is no question of bitterness. Time may not allow me to fulfil the task. But the attempt is itself a fulfilment. If the movement (Swatantra) is one that the nation needed, it will not die with me....'

Nothing less than intelligent rethinking, on the whole doctrine of the Socialist State in which the Congress has become involved, will suffice, in Rajaji's opinion, if the welfare of the people is to be realized instead of being merely bruited about. He points out that without the free and critical atmosphere of a well-balanced democracy 'a welfare State is most favourable soil for the growth of the weeds of careerism, intrigue, and various types and degrees of dishonesty', and he believes that our Socialist pattern made its advent into India without debate or discussion, in an undemocratic way, and in gross violation of the Mahatma's basic philosophy of individual responsibility for social good.

'Has there been,' Rajaji asks, 'any known public or even private discussion of the merits of the various ideals connoted by these terms Socialist pattern and Socialist State?..... Do people who now accept

National Socialism do so after having considered and rejected the doctrine of trusteeship which Gandhiji told his disciples was his way and was preferable to the Egalitarianism of the Socialists? Have men thought about the matter and all its consequences including the concentration of all economic power and influence in those who for the time being wield authority? Or has Socialism been adopted as parrots learn to speak?'

These quotations are offered without comment. They raise disquieting issues which cannot be ignored. For as the author puts it, they are like Burke's clamorous midnight fire-bell. 'They may disturb your sleep, but will keep you from being burned in your bed!'

For the politically conscious Indian, on the eve of the elections, and in search of a stable future, there is much to ponder in this slender volume.

MITHOO COORLAWALA

ESSAYS ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

by Amlan Datta, (Bookland Private Limited, Calcutta. Rs. 10.00)

THE second edition of Dr. Datta's 'essays' retains the topicality of his writings. His approach to economic development is in the context of democratic progress and he has been careful to avoid the pitfall of indulging in technicalities which trap so many writers on economics and specially the professors of economics. It is unfortunate, however, that in these writings which first appeared in economic journals, Dr. Datta has not been able to pursue ideas which, where he touches lightly on them, raise fascinating lines of thought. For instance, he suggests that the phenomenal rise in population in the past two hundred years is not normal and that the trend might change. But why he thinks this we are not told. He also is sceptical of the value of the propaganda for family planning which, reaching as it must the educated classes and affecting very little the rural masses, is likely to cause 'a quali-

tative deterioration of the human stock'. It is difficult to see how this dilemma can be solved outside the very undemocratic technique of enforcing sterilisation. Nor is it absolutely untenable to question the validity of the faith in the better quality of the non-rural stock. Dr. Datta, however, makes a point when he observes that women are generally more appreciative of family planning and asks that propaganda may usefully take note of this. But, since he does not share the general panic over the present trend in population growth, he is not very energetic in pursuing his suggestion.

In his remarks on the place of innovations in economic growth, Dr. Datta has called attention to the general neglect of them in classical theories of capitalist development. This comes in later than population growth and capital accumulation—at any rate to the notice of economists in the advanced countries; and in the backward regions where questions of imitation and emulation of the pioneering countries predominate, innovations are matters of buying technical know-how from foreign countries. In the practical application of the theory of innovations, Dr. Datta sets out some interesting points. 'Preoccupation with quantitative results in terms of physical outputs may be a serious hindrance to smooth economic development'; 'India and other countries which have adopted ambitious programmes of economic development, have not shown as much energy in recasting and extending their educational systems as in building up isolated physical symbols of progress'; 'while conventional theories have tended to over-emphasize the role of capital in economic development and by implication to exaggerate the importance of foreign capital in developing poorer countries, an innovation-oriented theory serves to underline that an industrially backward country may possibly afford to neglect foreign loans under certain circumstances, but not the knowledge and technology that foreigners have to offer.'

Dr. Datta enforces his thesis with refer-

ences to the experience of Japan and Soviet Russia where foreign skill was more drawn upon than foreign capital. His criticism of Indian planning is borne out by the Draft Third Plan's observation: 'The number of students in the Universities and colleges has increased from 634,000 to 900,000 in five years. But of these the number of science students will be only raised from 209,000 to 270,000.' And again: In the engineering field, there is expected a surplus of 6,200 graduates and a shortage of 4,000 diploma holders. Dr. Datta makes his point here about it being unnecessary for any backward country to duplicate the cultural climate of the advanced economies but so slightly that it is almost lost. Yet it is one which has great bearing on present day programmes of development.

The other essays reveal the same breadth of outlook and curiosity to explore ideas. Dr. Datta's great charm lies in his awakening interest. And despite the theme being the dismal science, he is so far from being a bore than on many matters one wishes only that he had written at greater length.

S. NATARAJAN

Philosophy

REASON AND MORALS *by John Wilson*
(Cambridge University Press, 185 pp, 1961. 15s)

MR. WILSON believes that the revolution in philosophy (an event which few in this country care to know about), unlike the revolutions in physics and psychology, has so far failed to make any serious impact outside the universities because philosophers, as he himself adds, 'have succeeded neither in teaching society the importance of their trade, nor perhaps in learning from society those things that would make their trade more important still'. He believes that philosophy is as directly and immediately important to the lives of communities and individuals as science and psychology. 'Hence this book.' And it is eminently a successful effort.

Like his *Language and the Pursuit of Truth*, Mr. Wilson's *Reason and Morals* is written in three short chapters. Till almost the end of the nineteenth century 'it was believed by most people, including professional philosophers, that the job of the moral philosopher was primarily to make moral recommendations with a view to action: to influence men to live differently.... More recently, however, this view has been denied.... Modern philosophers do not think that the philosopher is entitled to make moral recommendations in his professional capacity.... This movement has from its inception tended to place very much more stress on logic, epistemology and the philosophy of science than upon ethics.'

An actual moral judgement or moral principle is made in a 'first-order' statement; that which is written about this judgement or principle, or the statement which expresses it, is written in 'second-order' statements. The metaphor has also been used of a two-storey building, in which ordinary people carry on their everyday business and conversation on the ground floor, while philosophers observe this business and conversation from a bird's-eye view on the first floor.

Mr. Wilson chooses to discuss three activities in moral philosophy and shows that an elucidation of those activities does have considerable value. The three activities are (1) Puzzles and paradoxes, (2) Explanation of moral discourse and (3) Critiques of past philosophers.

First, people are worried by the conjunction of beliefs (a) that we have free will and (b) that all our actions have causes, that our behaviour can be predicted by those who have intimate knowledge of the human mind, etc. The philosopher can show that 'cause' does not imply 'compulsion', that neither cause nor prediction nor anything in the same logical group is really incompatible with personal freedom or self-determination and that therefore this worry is unnecessary. Secondly, most people can distinguish between a virtue and a talent or between a

vice and a misfortune. But most people cannot state the criteria for the distinction accurately. The philosopher may be able to explain the difference to them and this explanation may help them to pass judgement on difficult cases, 'such as that of the Inquisitor who commits the most wicked deeds of cruelty from the highest motives'. Thirdly, the modern moral philosopher can and does spend a great deal of time in analysing the first-order moralising of past philosophers. As a result, many valid and important points of logic and language may emerge.

As Mr. Wilson says, 'The majority of people simply *use* their morality — perhaps blithely, perhaps sternly, but without very much anxiety or mental cross-questioning.' The philosopher shows that 'there *ought* to be doubt (if not anxiety), that people ought to realise that their moral lives are more problematic than they normally suppose.' (p. 135) The modern philosopher's business, to quote Mr. Wilson, 'includes giving the logical criteria for certainty, but does not include indoctrination'. (p. 19) Elsewhere he says that 'philosophy has the never-ending task of patiently clarifying each particular piece of confusion as it arises.' (p. 36)

The second chapter, 'The Purposes of Moral Language', deals with one particular piece of misunderstanding which is connected with the nature of morality itself and with our own attitude to it. In this connection he explains what he calls Moralism and Factualism. What are known as Intuitionism, deontological ethics, morality of motive or *Gesinnungsethik* are for the sake of simplicity called Moralism and what are known as utilitarianism, teleological ethics, morality of consequence or *Erfolgsethik* are called Factualism. 'It would be logically vacuous to attempt any kind of assessment of the relative importance of Moralism and Factualism: each, in a quite different way, is plainly essential.' (p. 133)

In the first place, the Moralist defends his view, not by reference to facts or social results, but by reference to a moral code

or conscience or religion, while the Factualist looks for facts and social results. In the second place, the Moralism thinks you ought to do what is right because it is right, whereas the Factualist thinks that you ought to do what is right because it is constructive or brings about good results. Lastly, the Moralism will concentrate on a man's intentions, on his choices, whereas the Factualist will not make such a sharp division; he will not necessarily grant any unique importance or status to moral intentions or choices.

Our attitude to morality largely depends on whether we treat human beings as men or as machines. Mr. Wilson says that the statement 'men are like machines' is 'a blunt and challenging way of expressing the belief that human beings are amenable to scientific study.... The claim is rather that human beings are in one particular and important *logical* way like machines: that they work by cause and effect.' (p.46) The rest of the chapter is devoted to an analysis of some important and common concepts of Moralism, such as (a) Freedom and Compulsion, (b) Criteria and Morality, (c) The Function of Moral Principles and (d) Justice, Reward and Punishment.

The last chapter, 'A Method for Morals' includes (1) Criteria and Agreement, (2) Rational Morality, and (3) Epilogue. In the final analysis what is necessary is a careful but sympathetic study of human nature and purposes.

Mr. Wilson's findings may not be accepted by all. But few can express things as clearly as he does. What Professor Woozley has said about *Language and the Pursuit of Truth* could very well be said about this book. It is 'written with admirable clarity and simplicity'. We feel that the book could be prescribed as a text-book for Philosophy Honours students. The Bibliography at the end of the book is short but extremely useful.

A. M. GHOSE

Culture

TOWARDS UNIVERSAL MAN by Rabindranath Tagore (Asia Publishing House, India, U.K. and U.S.A.; in collaboration with the Ford Foundations, New York, pp. 401, Rs. 12.50.)

ALTHOUGH the last of them was written more than twenty years ago, and most of them have rarely been seen in English, these essays of Tagore are curiously pertinent. For at a time when the greater part of the civilised world was busy destroying itself in the name of nationalism, and when our own national energies were concentrated inward upon the independence issue, Tagore saw beyond the limits of nationalism and formal religion — the two notions that have got the world into more trouble than anything else — to a scheme at once grand and simple, the concept of universal man. But Tagore was an internationalist only in the most positive sense. He argued that loyalty to humanity means an expansion of spirit and action, and in fact begins with loyalty and love for one's own country and people, and is by no means to be construed as an excuse to shed responsibility in one's immediate affairs.

Imbued with this belief and deeply involved in the struggle for independence, Tagore was one of the few Indians to pinpoint those of our faults as a race which kept us in political and mental bondage. Today in the aftermath of our political freedom we might well consider the reasons which in his view prevent our progress towards international manhood. Indians, said Tagore, seem to suffer from an extraordinary apathy both in action and intellect. The root of this anaemic approach to life lies in our schools and universities. In the race to accumulate those facts which will help us to pass examinations, obtain degrees and get jobs as quickly as possible, we disregard the real purpose of education which is to develop discipline of thought and imagination. This is a sure means of freedom, for it trains virile and mature minds. Instead, 'we do not talk, think or act like adults and we try to cover up the

poverty of our minds with over-statement, ostentation and swagger'.

Tagore's ideas on how to prevent schools from being factories in which goods are made to order found expression in the rural but sophisticated university at Shantiniketan which seeks to keep its students in close touch with nature, and to relate education to life and language to thought. One effect of education that is separated from life ('like rainfall on a spot that is a long way from our roots') and of centuries of codified living is an almost moribund lack of self-confidence and a strange passivity where there is any call for action. Tagore quotes the instance of a road leading to his house which flooded every Monsoon, and the people who lived near it submitted to this as a decree of fate — an inevitable hardship — for sixty years, rather than do anything about it. A result of this tendency is an unfortunate weakness for prestige, a sort of spiritless one-upmanship, which leads us to decry the possibility that the rest of the world has

anything to offer us apart from certain material benefits. But it would be a sorry state of affairs indeed if the world had nothing to give us.

The shock of outside forces and the comparative *joie de vivre* of the West can, at the very least, help us out of our spiritual inertia. But, cautions Tagore, we must restrain ourselves from imitating the more obvious, less worthy aspects of western civilisation and choose discriminatingly. To be able to receive without renouncing oneself is a sign of strength, not weakness. When we learn this then only can India progress towards 'fulness of being'.

LINA MAYADAS

Literature

CHRONICLES OF KEDARAM by K. Nagarajan (Asia Publishing House, pp. 254, Rs. 10.50.)

JOHN WAIN, in a recent issue of *Encounter*, refers to the problems that embarrass Indian writers: they must start

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with a clear-cut decision whether they will write in English and devote themselves mainly to presenting a picture of their own country to the outside world, or in an Indian language to address their own people. The former is a hazardous choice because English in India is not so much a literary language as a language for politics, commerce and administration; and though many Indians are more or less native English speakers, 'Indian English, being a *lingua franca*, lacks the fineness of nuance that makes literature possible'.

Mr. Nagarajan does not fence with these difficulties: by accepting their inevitability, he is deftly able to manipulate them to his advantage. He is conscious that however well blessed with the graces and attributes of a writer, the Indian who uses English cannot risk writing in the twentieth century manner: the language at his disposal is not really adequate to permit indulgence in the present day method where the novel is no longer carried forward by the tides and currents of plot and where the interest does not lie in treating characters as socially significant individuals. Also, with the political focus trained on the East, the Indian writer in English cannot shirk the responsibility of giving true evidence before the interested outsider who turns to him attempting to understand this country better. Knowing this, Mr. Nagarajan is aware that the primary count on which he will find himself judged is: how authentic a picture of the country has he presented? A clear view of his obligations makes it easier for him to discharge them with distinction.

Not only does the book present a truly vivid picture of Hindu life for the outsider, but for an Indian generation that came upon the scene too late to share the struggle deeply, it constitutes a fascinating study of the anomalies and inner conflicts created by the imposition of modern civilization on minds that belonged essentially to Vedic times.

Gokarna Sastri, the narrator of the story, is a wonderful example of the orthodox mind with its deep-seated distrust of foreigners

and foreign ways, who looks forward to the day when the British would quit our shores enabling India to revert to its ancient purity. Imagine his anguish when he finds instead that the 'Congress was trying to set the Nilaveni, the Cauveri and all the South Indian rivers on fire. They were proposing to throw all Hindu temples open to Harijans.... The Congress Ministry, I had hoped, would set an example of ordered progress but my hope turned to ashes and dust.... I shuddered to contemplate the invasion of Kedareswar's and Varadaraja Perumal's by the untouchables, ... "Do you think, Koni, that the Heavens will fall?" asked Vasu. "I wish they did. I wish the seas rose in wrath and submerged us all", I almost wept. "Don't whine. Tell me what are your objections?" I could not think of any objection except that it was not done, it had not been done before. They had their deities, the *harijans*, their *Veerans*, *Irulans* and *Katteris*, who inhabited trees and stones and running streams, why should they be allowed to defile our temples?"

In other aspects too all the King's education seems to have changed Gokarna Sastri not the least bit. While on the one hand excusing himself for producing children every year, at 'the minimum statutory interval' as his friend calls it by saying, 'It is not in my hands', his thought upon the birth of twin daughters is: 'It was a cruel joke.... The twins were born on the anniversary of my mother's death and that set tongues wagging. It was my mother born again, good soul, proclaimed street, *agraharam* and the *Bar nem con*. If that were so, it was unlike her, the most considerate woman in the world. Would she, having been the woman she was, reappear as two girls and add to my burdens? I peeped into the future and visualized the day when I should have to hunt for two sons-in-law at the same time, pay two sets of bridegroom-price, at the prices which were certain to have soared to cut-throat levels by then, and celebrate two weddings. It was terrifying.'

It would, however, be unjust to say that

Mr. Nagarajan has merely created an authentic picture of Indian life: his characters are consistently and accurately drawn — there is no unnecessary duplication of 'types' — and they are skilfully woven into a story that is human, at times tender, and free of melodrama. His Kedararam too, a city on whose historic character 'Chairmen of Reception Committees dwell with accents of pride, and, visitors, not to be outdone in courtesy, express themselves greatly impressed', is as representative a district headquarters town as one can possibly hope to find; yet it has a definite character of its own. To add to this, Mr. Nagarajan has a sense of humour. As for Mr. Wain's criticism about 'Indian English lacking the fineness of nuance that makes literature possible', Mr. Nagarajan has overcome it in a rather Wodehousian fashion. He has deliberately stuck to the *lingua franca*, which is often a translation of some Indian language phrase, or, equally often, some stilted legal or commercial expression which has become current with Indian English speakers. This

not only enables him to portray the Indian mind more precisely, it gives what may be called a sort of 'background humour' to the book.

One wishes more of our writers in English were like Mr. Nagarajan.

IQBAL LUKMANI

SHORTER NOTICES

THE TOURIST MECCA and THE CLOCK
two plays by Asif Currimbhoy, (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, Rs. 7.50)

SINCE Independence, accompanying the urge to banish English from this country, there has been an unusual growth in what is known as 'Indo-Anglian Literature. More and more Indian writers are producing creative work in English. It is certainly a sign of a coming of age, a growing beyond the bonds of narrow nationalism.

Like all creative efforts in any language, Indo-Anglians produce literature which is good, bad and indifferent. Unfortunately they suffer at the hands of critics because they happen to use a foreign language. The chauvinists fail to realise that for these writers the language may not be foreign after all.

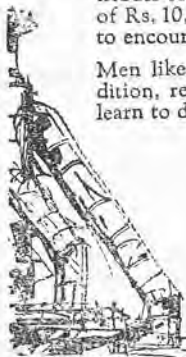
One who did not waver...

Jamshedpur's latest blast furnace needed a 'big bell' — a 20-ton component requiring highly skilled casting and machining. A difficult operation even if the right machine tools were available, but in 1958 they were not, and import seemed the only solution to all but one determined and resourceful young engineer, N. P. Naik.

Working on this problem in his leisure hours, Naik gradually crystallised his ideas into mathematical formulae and blue-prints. He developed, at the same time, a new machine tool to do the job by remodelling a small boring machine, stage by stage. Then started the casting and intricate machining, until, in a short time, Naik and his colleagues succeeded in producing a 'big bell', fully meeting the technical specifications to the last detail. As a tribute to Naik's fine endeavour, Tata Steel gave him an award of Rs. 10,000, the highest made under a ten-year old scheme to encourage initiative from the shop floor.

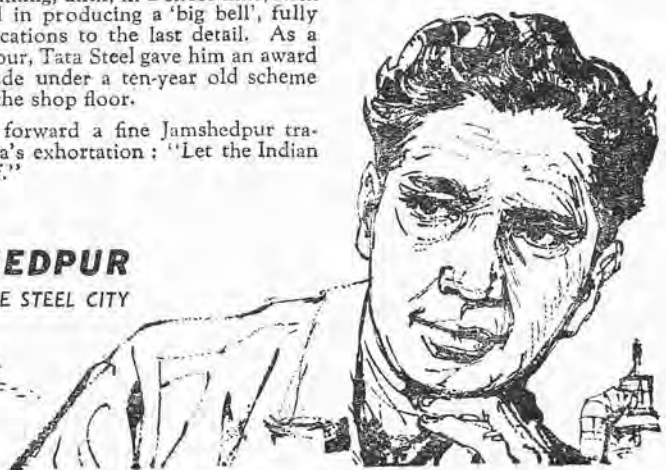
Men like Naik are carrying forward a fine Jamshedpur tradition, recalling Jamsetji Tata's exhortation: "Let the Indian learn to do things for himself."

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Asif Currimbhoy, a young playwright, is bold in the selection and treatment of the themes of his two plays. *Tourist Mecca* reveals a sordid aspect of tourism — the emergence of the gigolo. Woven into this theme is a tender romance, which does not achieve fulfilment. It is a challenging play, partly satirical, partly straight, and certainly outspoken.

In construction it is completely modern. Tourists from different countries on a visit to Agra form an interesting backdrop to the action. They are not etched in fine lines, but are treated like the chorus of a Greek drama.

The play has its weaknesses. The atmosphere is European rather than Indian, although the usual Indian elements are thrown in. They only establish the locale, but do not create the atmosphere. The tourists are too faintly sketched to emerge as types. Finally, the conclusion is rather sudden and unexplained. On the whole it is an interesting play, but not quite 'expressive of our times and the lives we live' in India today, as the publishers' blurb would like us to believe.

The second play, *The Clock*, is more experimental. It is not only a one-act play, but virtually a one-man play. The other characters remain generally in darkness. Their presence is felt and their voices heard. The technique helps to heighten the impact of the underlying theme of the play — the essential loneliness of man. The influences of friends and relatives work only in the background. The lonely man faces frustrations and crises alone. Life goes on and the clock does not stop ticking. Both in conception and in construction this is indeed a bold attempt. One wonders, however, why an English setting is used. Is not such a situation more true of India today with its conflicts of diverse values?

SUBRATA BANERJEE

SHAKESPEARIAN TRAGEDY by H. B. Charlton. (Cambridge University Press, pp. 246, 10s.6d.)

THIS study was first published in 1948 and went into two more editions before its present appearance as a paper-back. It consists of the Clark lectures delivered at Trinity College in 1946-47 and is a sustained defence of the Bradley approach to Shakespeare against its modern detractors. This point of view is explained with nimble sarcasm in an introduction which is followed by an examination of *Titus Andronicus*, *Richard III* and *Richard II* in one chapter and *Romeo and Juliet*, *King John* and *Julius Caesar* in another. The major tragedies are given a chapter each. In the "Conclusion", Prof. Charlton makes some profound observations on the essentials of the Shakespearean vision. The writing is clear and vigorous throughout.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION by Robert H. Thouless. (Cambridge University Press, pp. 285, 10s.6d.)

THE author is Reader in Educational Psychology at Cambridge. His book was first published in 1923 and was reprinted in 1924, '28, '36, '50 and '56, a tribute to its popularity. It is intended for those who wish 'to study the psychological problems of religion, without any prior knowledge of psychological terminology'. The substance of the book was delivered originally as vacation lectures to ordination candidates. The ethos of the argument is therefore Christian and so are most of the references and examples. There is a special 17-page preface to this paper-back edition. In it is reaffirmed the author's view that 'a religious interpretation of the world and of the nature of our own being is basically right.' N.E.

OUR REVIEWERS

A. H. SOMJEE is Head of the Department of Politics at Baroda University. He is currently delivering a series of lectures at the London School of Economics.

MRS. MITHOO COORLAWALA was formerly principal of a boys' school in Hyderabad, is at present secretary of the Cambridge Society, Bombay.

P. LAL is Professor of English at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta. He founded and is the chief organiser of Writers' Workshop and editor of its bi-monthly miscellany of creative writing.

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SUBRATA BANERJEE reviews books for *Seminar* and other Indian periodicals.

LINA MAYADAS holds an American degree in English Literature, writes and reviews for a number of magazines including *Design* and *The Sunday Standard*.

A. M. GHOSE is Professor of Philosophy, Rajasthan University.

CORRESPONDENCE

Integrating Indian Society

EDUCATION AMONG ADIVASIS

Dear Sirs,

While it is very hard to disagree with the anthropological or ethnographical content of Father De Meulder's article (QUEST 29), there are some incidental points I would like to make; these are heuristic rather than remedial, in their intention.

While the merits and demerits of the Shukla-Niyogi reports require an objective study which has not yet been made, the efforts and activities of Christian missions vis-a-vis the adivasis can be assessed in a detached mood even previous to such a study. Such an assessment derives from psychological, cultural, and — disregarding the unacademical stigma on the word — humanistic considerations:

Any endeavour to eliminate value-notions or hierarchical notions based on caste, is laudable. The application of caste-ideology, of both *varna* and *jati* to tribals is all the more irksome, as these notions have never been part of the cultural make-up of Indian tribals — a fact which Father De Meulder has pointed out quite relevantly. However, the methods used or suggested for the elimination of caste-bound treatment, both antagonistic and patronizing, of the tribes people, are not equally meritorious. My main objection to the Christian missions' care for the adivasis is that it is fundamentally a *Christian* care, and that proselytization remains in the fore or at the back of the Christian missionaries' minds in the process of their care. A famous missionary anthropologist in India once admitted in writing, that 'winning souls for Christ' is the basic impetus of all charitable and educational work among the less privileged groups in India. And this is the crux of it all: if the missionary, qua missionary, is put before the choice of secularizing his work or abandoning it,

his labours will be abandoned or inhibited. By 'secularizing' I here mean much more than giving his work a secular frame: I mean a change of heart—could the missionary continue his work, were there some feeling-detector which could prove that he has overcome the desire to convert as he educates and heals the adivasi? On the organisatory level, would the religious institutions backing or supporting his work continue their support, if he told them *in camera* that he no longer feels that 'souls have to be won for Christ'? Obviously not.

The cultural problem involved is a challenging one: if education worked on a *tabula rasa* (and, assumedly, the adivasis provide a *tabula rasa* at least for modern pedagogical targets) is to be truly secular, if values to be stimulated are to be humanistic (in the sense the patrons of *Quest* understand the term), can a person whose fundamental concern is religious, whose final point of reference is 'winning souls for X' (X being a religious system or its founder), be entrusted with secular education of a group which is ideologically virgin, unaffected by any traditionally sophisticated ideology? I don't think so.

Now there would be a way to ascertain such training for the adivasis; it is speculative, perhaps utopian. Why not educate a cadre of adivasis from all over India in a purely humanistic fashion—devoid of nationalistic, religious, and clannish bias? Here, for once, we have many millions of people whom no bulky formal and written precepts tie down to moral, intellectual, and ideological stagnation.

I am aware of the one great hitch in the way of executing this suggestion—there are not enough teachers for such courses. The late Dr. Ambedkar might perhaps have had some such idea in mind, although his late conversion to Theravada Buddhism added dangerous zeal to his efforts for his nationwide fellow-untouchables. But then, neither

a Buddhist nor a Hindu educator is necessarily beset with the pathological complex under which the Christian or Muslim educator suffers, qua Christians or Muslims: a Buddhist qua Buddhist need not convert, a Hindu qua Hindu cannot convert. This does not require the backing of modern apparatus. Jaimini, the alleged founder of the Mimamsa school of thought, and his less mythical followers between 500 B.C. and 1000 A.D. propounded a healthy doctrine: that the Veda, and all religious texts, teach religious things *only*, and that the trees, cows, men, passions, drugs and beverages mentioned in the Writ are *never* the ones botany, agriculture, anthropology, psychology, and pharmaceuticals deal with. Thus, the Hindu can teach these subjects without doctrinal qualms—he can feel free about evolution, about

picking ethical value systems, etc., and teach them without the pangs of religious ensconcement. That he does feel such pangs nevertheless, is another matter with different reasons to it—but he does not have to. The Shukla-Niyogi apprehensions may be fully justified, or exaggerated, or perhaps a bit misplaced in parts—but I think that they are not really inspired by secular or humanistic ratiocination (again in the sense readers and writers of *Quest* connote these terms).

Summa summarum: in order to educate our tribals toward a modern body politic, no religious missionary can function properly; it is necessary that he changes his basic reference when he educates. But then he is no longer a missionary—just only an educator.

SWAMI AGEHANANDA BHARATI

CASTES AND BIOLOGY

Dear Sirs,

George E. Simpson and J. Milton Yinger in *Racial and Cultural Minorities: An analysis of prejudice and discrimination* (1958, New York, Harper & Bros.) gives an interesting summary of the biological effects of race mixture:

'The descendants of nine mutineers from the English warship *Bounty* and Tahitian women are vigorous, long-lived, and alert people. Members of this group have interbred for five generations, and, according to Shapiro, they equal or exceed in physical exuberance either parent stock. In Hawaii there has been much crossing between Polynesians, whites of many nationalities, Filipinos, Japanese, Chinese, Koreans, and others. The mixed population produced by these crosses seems to be made up of very satisfactory physical and mental types. Further evidence of successful race crossing in Polynesia is found in New Zealand where Maori-white mixture has produced unusually healthy and capable hybrids.' (p. 55)

Further consideration of the consequences of intermarriage between biologically distinct groups at various historical periods in many parts of the world leads the authors to the conclusion: 'Race

mixture tends to produce offspring which exceed their parental groups in vitality, stature, and fertility.' (p. 57)

Castes in India have traditionally been endogamous, and marriage outside the caste has invited social sanctions. Scientific evidence from the field of anthropology would seem to indicate that the custom is biologically unwise. It has led to the emergence of anthropometrically distinct groups, the various castes, whose members have not generally crossed. (For example, see D. N. Majumdar, *Races and Cultures of India*, 1958, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, pp. 299-302, presenting data for various castes in Uttar Pradesh.)

It is reasonable to argue that castes in India—and the various religious and language groups, all of which tend to be endogamous—represent relatively distinct gene-pools. The hypothesis is well worth examination by physical anthropologists; and if it finds empirical support, it would follow that marriage across caste, religious, and language boundaries would lead to desirable, valuable consequences in purely biological terms. Whether or not such practice would be socially desirable is a question that will bear discussion.

Sincerely yours,
SATISH C. SABERWAL

SCIENCE AND HUMANITIES

Dear Abu Sayeed Ayyub,

In making science compulsory for our graduates (Quest No. 29), you have revealed a wrong bias. It is wrong to imagine that science subjects are more difficult than humanities. Beyond the elementary stage, a subject is as difficult as the level of complexity that one wants to reach in that particular subject. Besides, you seem to ignore that each student is gifted with some specific aptitude and that his full personality can blossom forth only when he offers subjects of his choice.

You will permit me to make a different type of suggestion, which has the same ideal as yours, but is less totalitarian. One subject that we should make compulsory (if at all) is mathematics. Mind always maintains its own levels. If one reaches a higher intellectual level at a young age, the same can be maintained and sharpened by constant application to different disciplines at later stages. For this purpose, I don't think there is any subject more important than mathematics. We should make this subject compulsory because one can master science at home, but no one can master mathematics without any external guidance. Bertrand Russell in one of his afterthoughts condemned mathematics as 'a weird tauto!ogy', but I doubt if Russell or A. N. Whitehead could have commanded that wide sweep of integrated learning if they had not had initial rigorous training in mathematics. Any one who does not understand group or field theory, factor analysis, vector analysis, or theory of probability can not understand higher physics, economics, psychology or sociology. One has only

to read Kurt Lewins' 'Vectors of Mind' to know the truth of my assertion.

Your 'cultured man' cares only for the development of intellect and the refinement of taste. You just make a passing reference in your article to a very important attribute of a cultured person — character. I shall quote T. S. Eliot in support of my contention: 'We know that good manners without education, intellect or sensibility to the arts, tends towards mere automatism; that learning without good manners or sensibility is mere pedantry; that the intellectual ability without the more human attributes is admirable only in the same way as the brilliance of a child chess prodigy; and that the arts without intellectual context are vanity'. (Notes towards the Definition of Culture, p. 23)

The basic problem, therefore, is not that a man should know all the sciences and humanities. He may know them all and still be ignorant. Learning depends on the integrative or the associative faculty of mind, which, as Dr. I. A. Richards has said, 'is the nervous system, or rather a part of its activity' (Principles of Literary Criticism, p. 83.) If one does not learn with a sense of hierarchic differentiation or synthetic integration, one may, at best, acquire only information, which disillusion rather than enlightens. If knowledge does not mature into wisdom, it is futile. Keats at the young age found one line of Shakespeare enough to contemplate over for three hours. Unless education develops in us not only a sense of curiosity but deep humility and wide sympathy, there is no other prescription that can enable us to bridge the gulf between two cultures.

Yours sincerely,
CHETAN KARNANI

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

HAIG KHATCHADOURIAN teaches philosophy at the American University, Beirut

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OMPRAKASH SHARMA teaches English at Government College, Ajmer

VINOD SENA, PUNYA SLOKA RAY and **RAJNI KOTHARI** have appeared before in the pages of QUEST

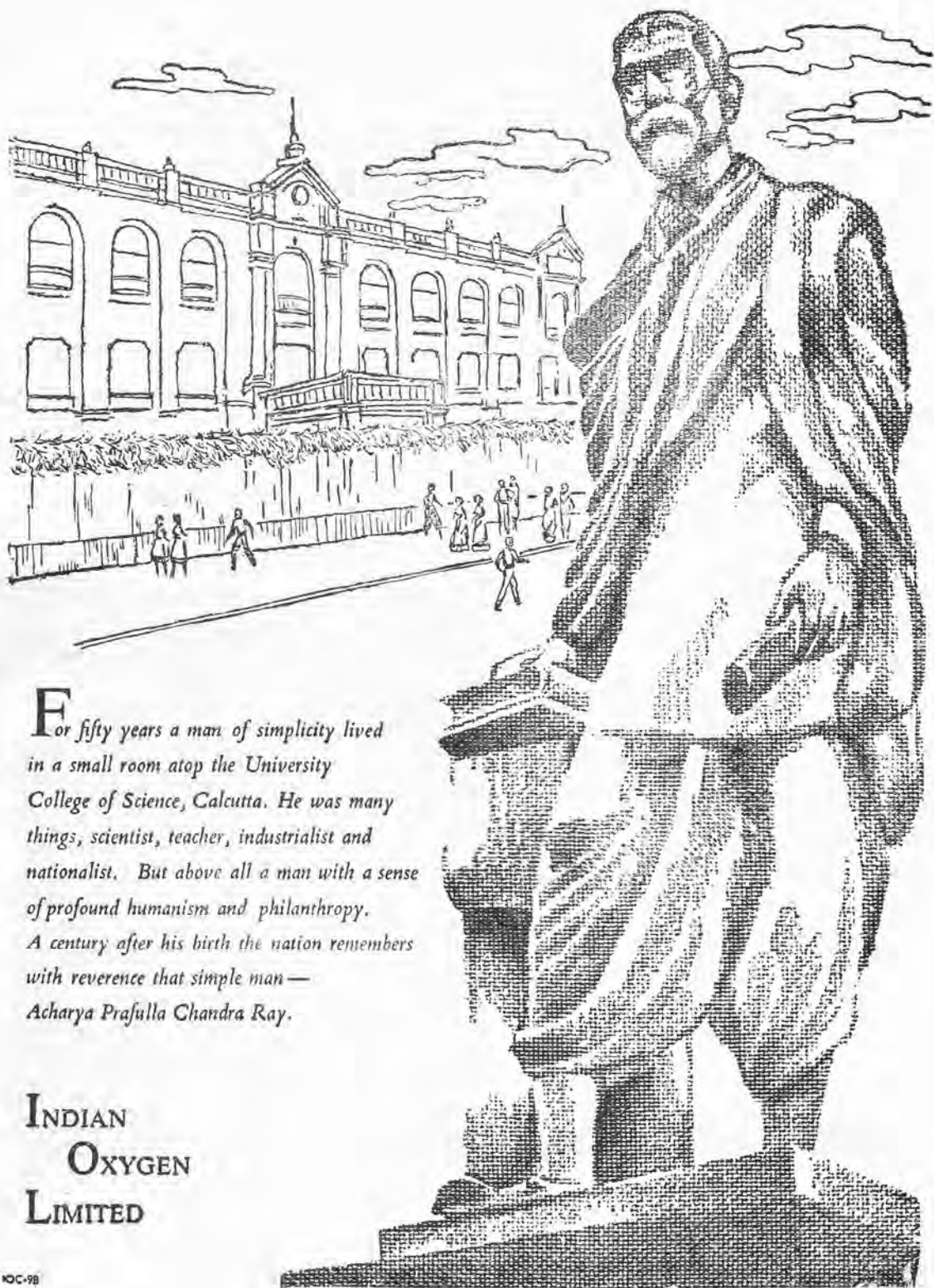
JACK COPE, novelist and short story writer, concludes in this issue of QUEST his account of South African literature

G. BURCE BUNAO, editor of *Comment*, experiments in these poems to combine Filipino imagination with Japanese form

F. R. STANLEY of Madras Christian College and **AMARESH DATTA** of Gauhati University are already known to regular readers of QUEST

AMARLAL HINGORANI, lawyer and short story writer, died some time back. His story 'Brother Abdur Rahman' is highly esteemed in Sindhi literature

KA NAA SUBRAMANYAM, eminent Tamil writer, needs no introduction to readers of QUEST



For fifty years a man of simplicity lived in a small room atop the University College of Science, Calcutta. He was many things, scientist, teacher, industrialist and nationalist. But above all a man with a sense of profound humanism and philanthropy. A century after his birth the nation remembers with reverence that simple man —
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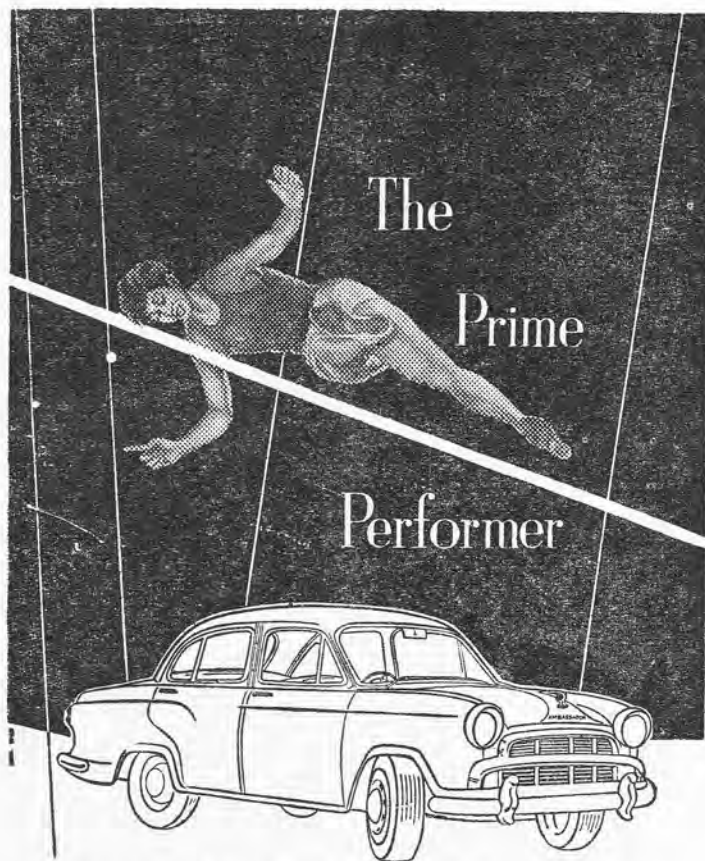


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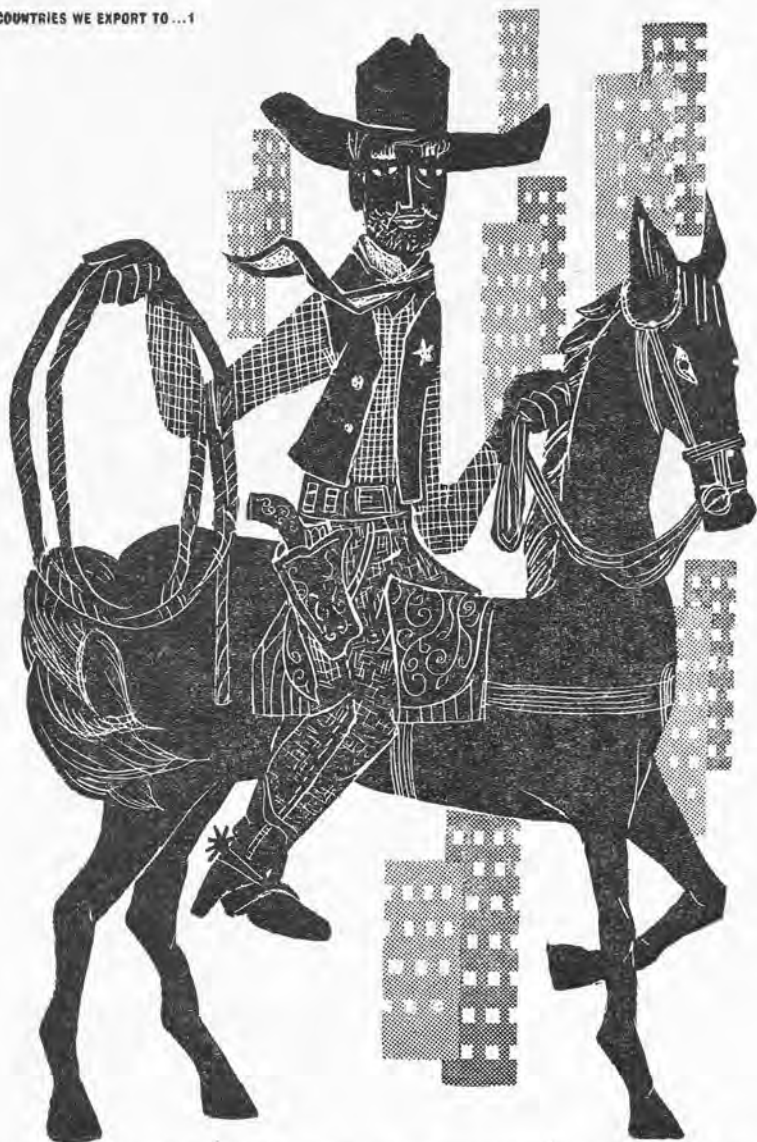
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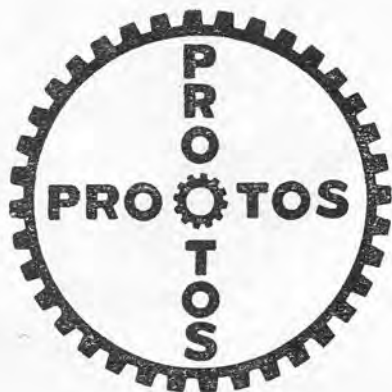
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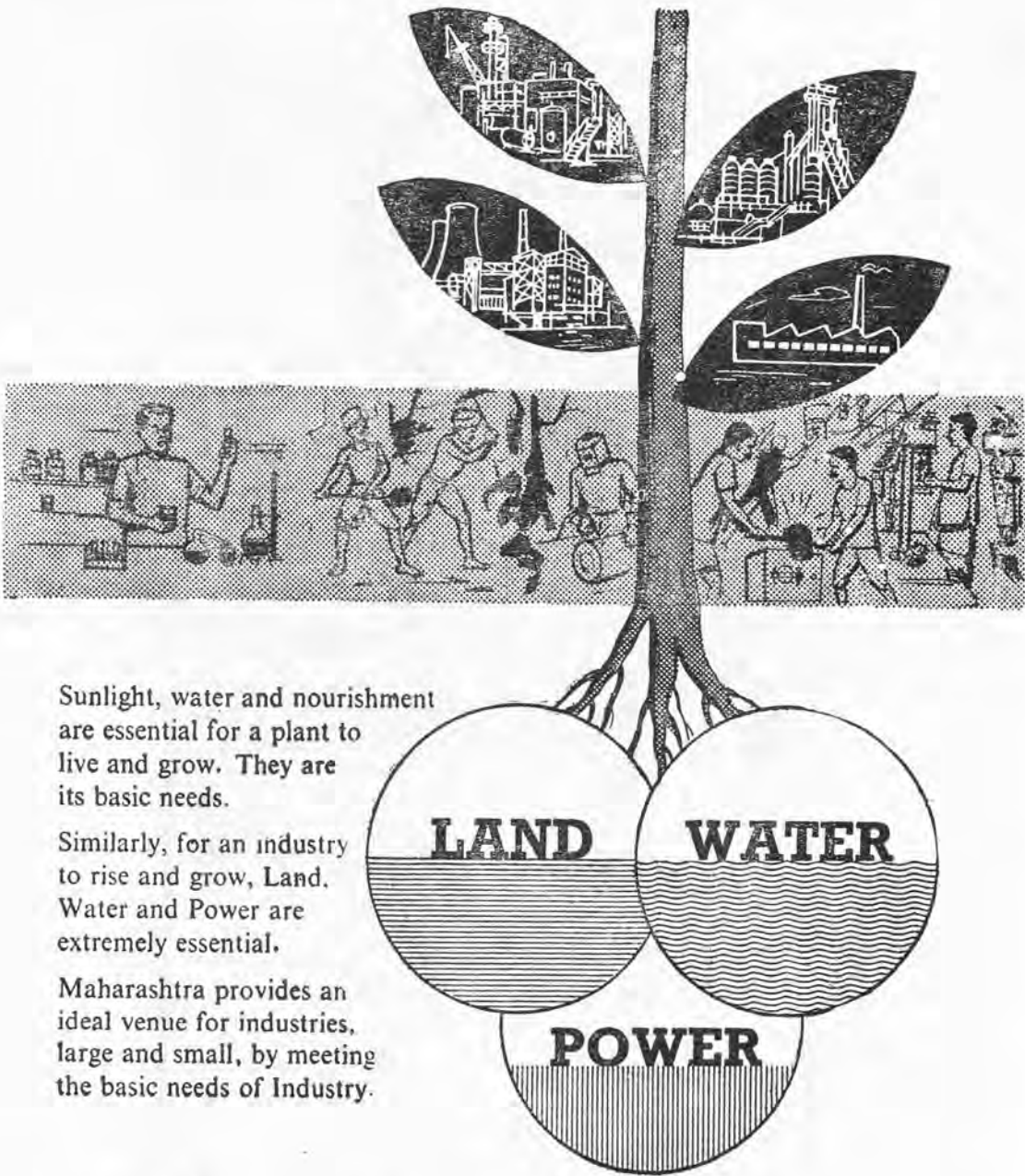


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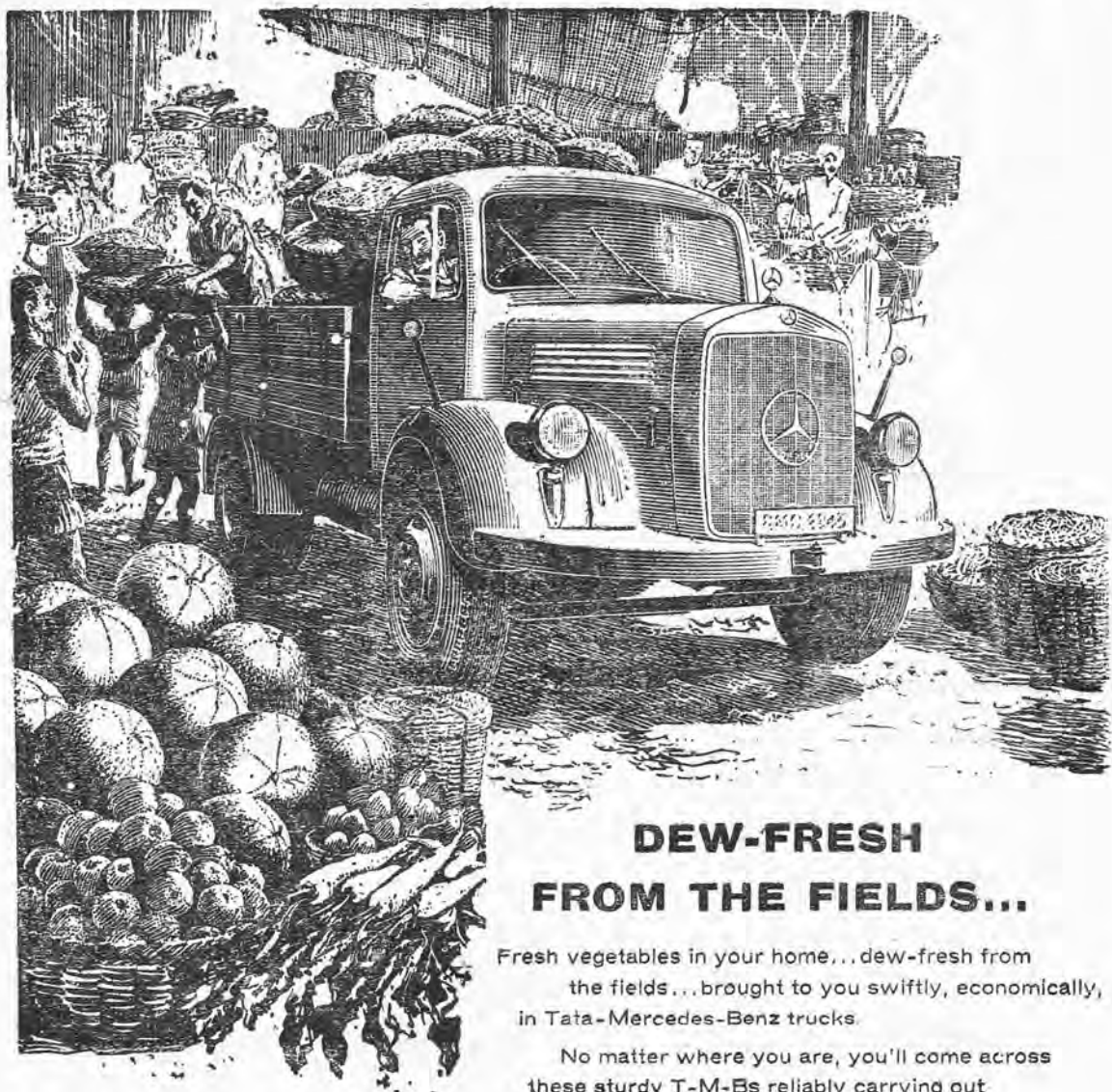
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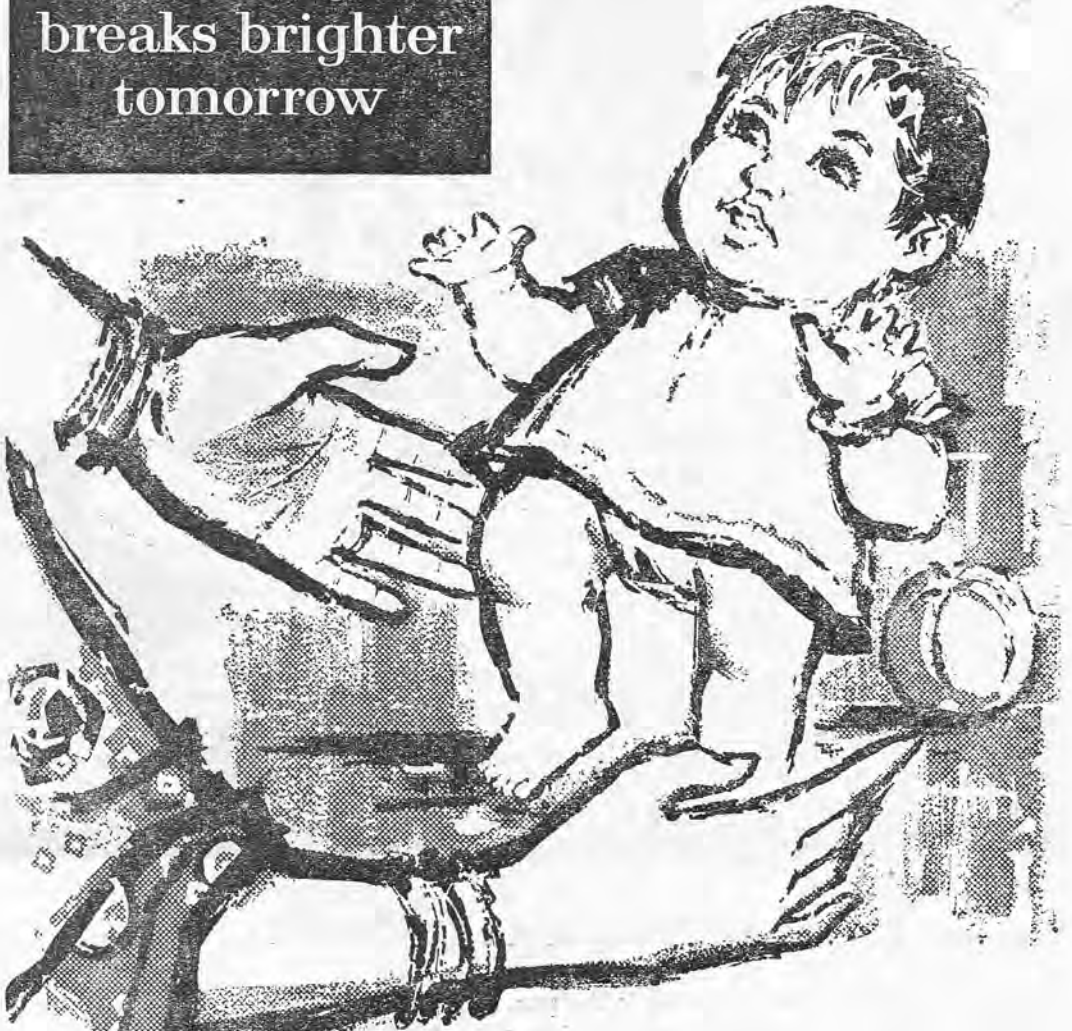
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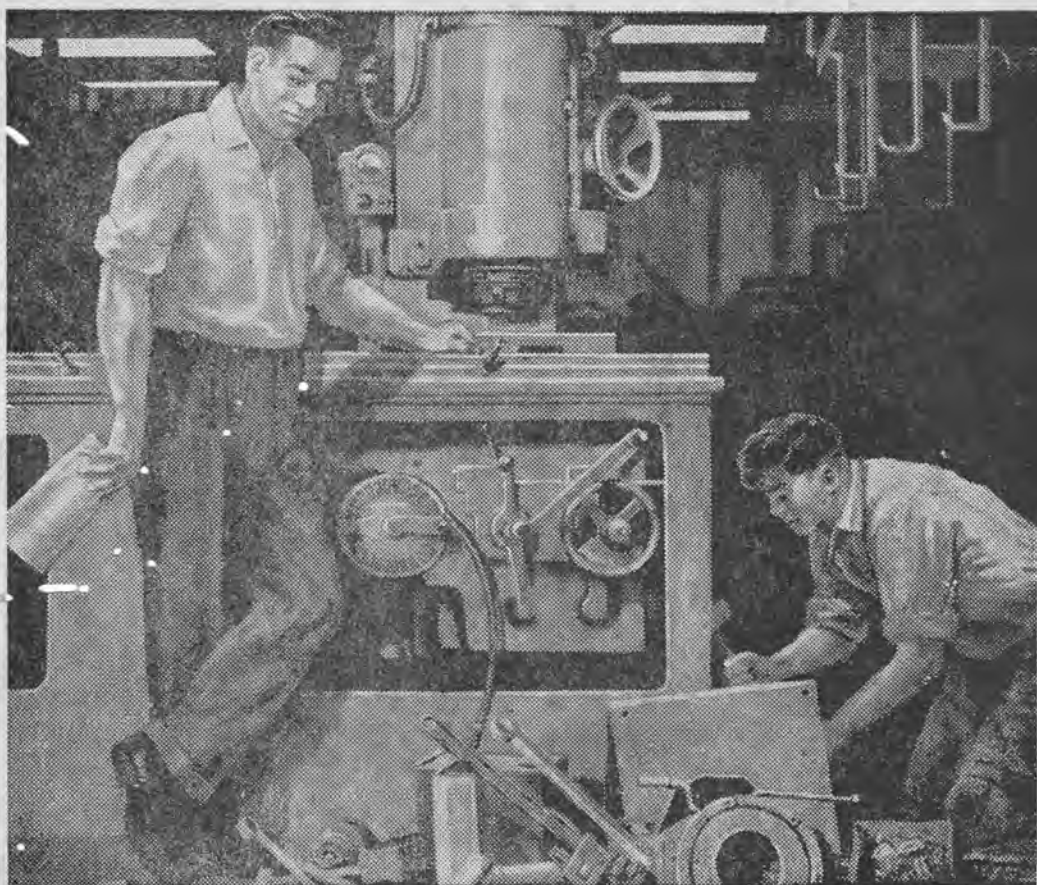
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