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QUEST

Editors: Abu Sayeed Ayyub, Amlan Datta

G. V. KARANDIKAR

Realism as a Literary Value

AGEHANANDA BHARATI

A Viennese Cultural Critic in India

H. R. PASRICHA

Our Stuporous Society

JYOTIRMOY DATTA

As a Film Critic

J. A. RAMSARAN

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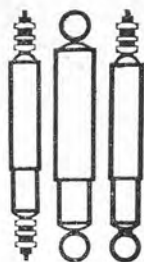
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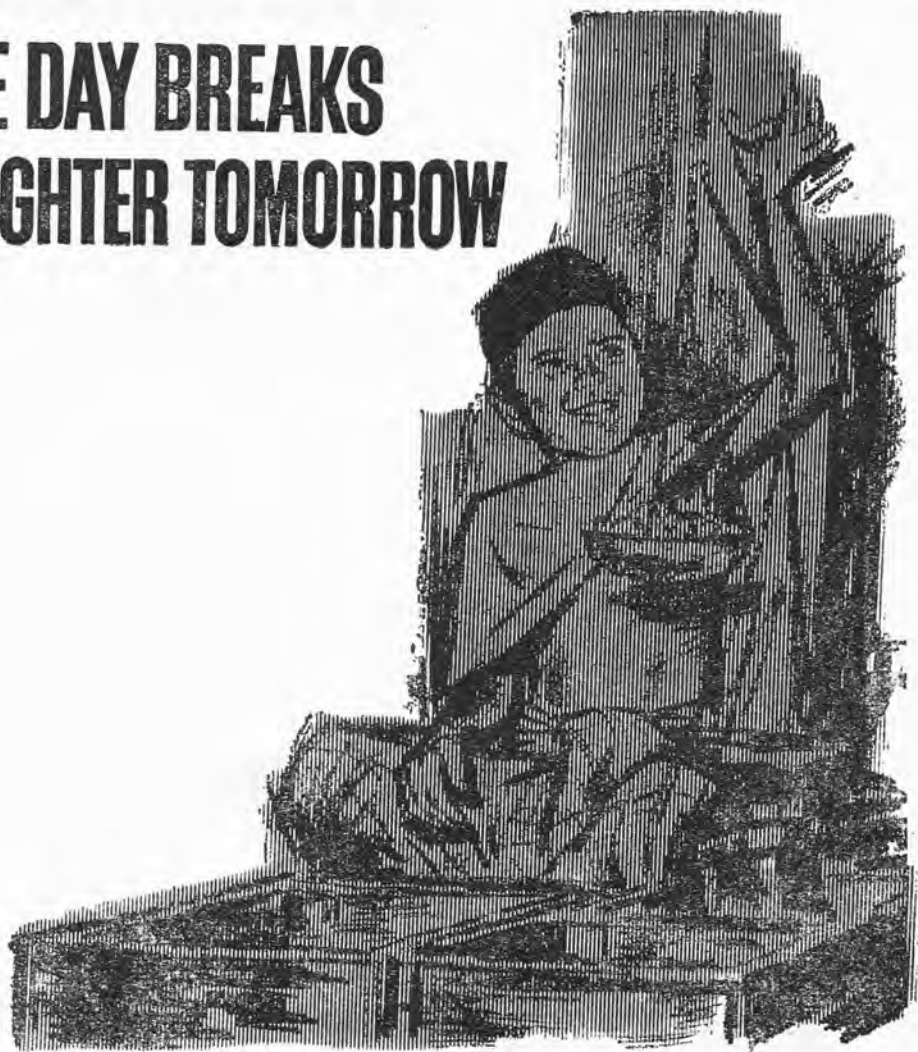


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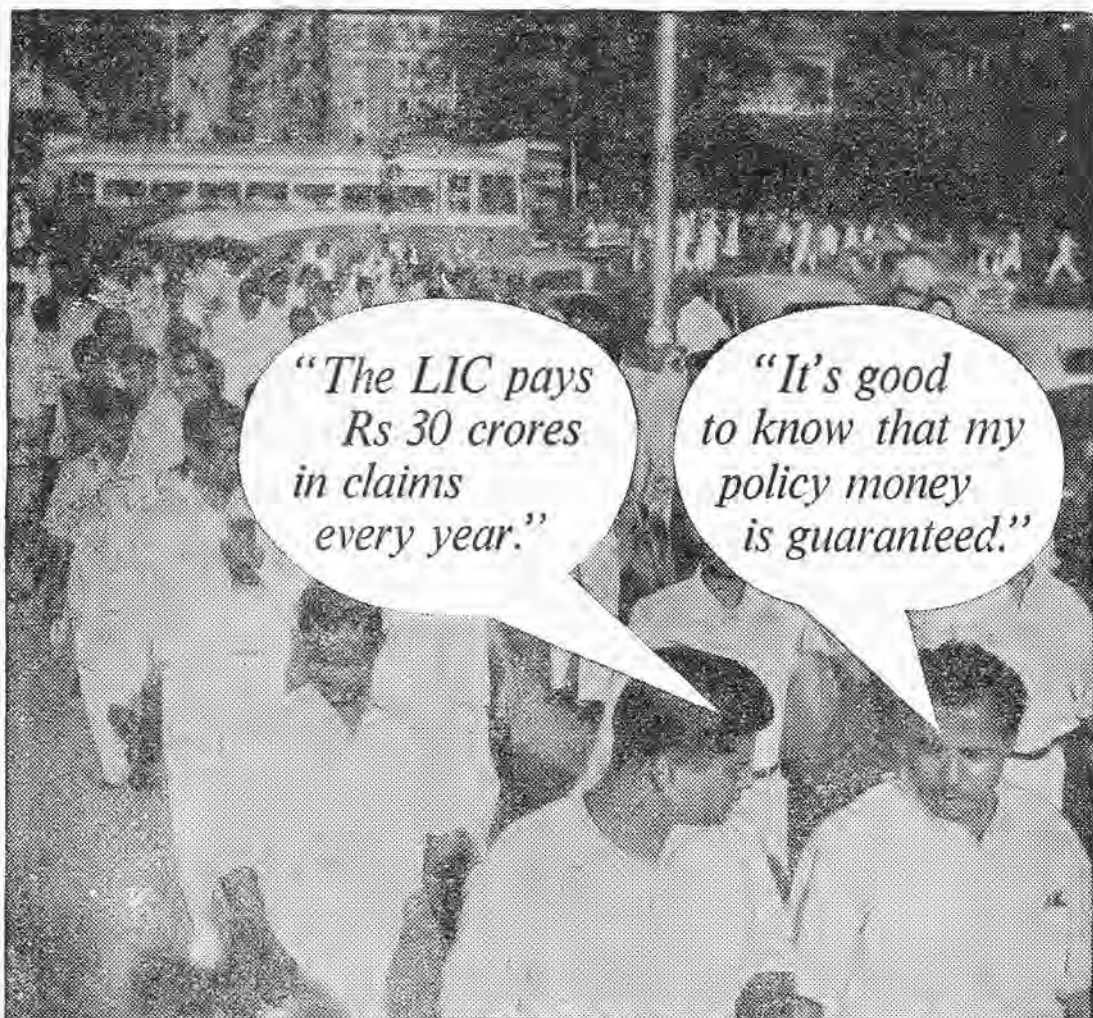
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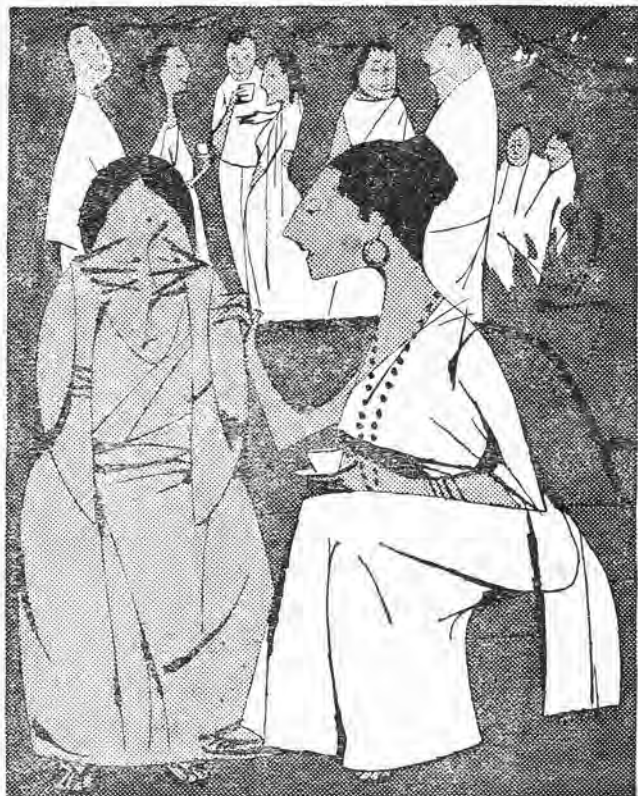
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Realism as a Literary Value

By G. V. KARANDIKAR

ANY discussion of literary problems in the 20th century situation is bound to bring forth literary as well as philosophical issues. The development of aesthetics and semantics in more recent times has bridged the gulf between the two fields of inquiry and now it is becoming increasingly difficult to consider critical problems on a purely literary basis, particularly so when words like 'realism' and 'value' have acquired the status of significant concepts in both the disciplines. I would, therefore, try to isolate the more specific meanings of these terms which are relevant in the course of my discussion from others which for the purpose of my argument are not so very relevant. Though I want to consider realism in its more abstract character this has no philosophical preoccupations. Realism in philosophy means 'a theory of the reality of abstract and general terms, or universals, which are held to have an equal or sometimes a superior reality to actual physical particulars'; as such it is opposed to nominalism. Sometimes the term is opposed to idealism and then it means 'belief in the real existence of matter as the object of perception', 'the view that physical world has independent reality and is not ultimately reducible to universal mind or spirit.'

This ambiguity in the meaning of realism is not confined only to philosophy. In literary criticism it suffers from a worse misfortune. Like 'poetry', it is at its best a polymorphic concept. We speak of naive realism, naturalism, surrealism or super realism, socialist realism or Marxist realism as different kinds of realism. And yet there are vital differences. I shall not be surprised if some one were to speak of mysticism as transcendental realism and Crocean expres-

sionism as intuitive realism! In other words, realism in literary criticism presents the peculiar problems of a polymorphic term. In spite of this initial difficulty I would not preoccupy myself with any particular form of realism but would try to conceive it in its more abstract form, primarily not as a particular literary creed, but as a creative attitude in general.

An effort to understand the nature of realism in its more abstract form must begin by posing some very simple and obvious questions: Is there any essential common characteristic shared by naive realism, naturalism, surrealism and socialist realism? Can we say that 'an attachment to what is real, a tendency to regard things as they really are', distinguishes this attitude of mind? Or turning from the creative attitude of the literary artist to the work of literature can we say that 'a close resemblance to what is real, fidelity of representation or rendering of the precise details of the real thing or scene' constitute the essence of this kind of writing? Let us take the second question first. The temptation to answer this question in the affirmative can be resisted if only we are aware of the trap laid by the word 'real'. It is a very spacious term and means different things in different kinds of realism. To one who swears by naturalism it means the sordid life of the biological man totally untouched by the quality of the creative mind; to the surrealist it means the subconscious and the dark life of the individual psyche or the collective unconscious; to the socialist realist it means the life of a member of society acquiring its individual and typical traits through the dialectical interplay of productive, social and cultural relations, and is essentially purposive in its character.

The word 'real' as interpreted in these

contexts is devoid of an essential semantic unity; and it is on account of this want of essential semantic unity that we are forced to consider realism as a polymorphic concept. But though we have no access to an essential unity in the signification of this term we can certainly discover a unity of the operational type. All these meanings use a pointer. The content of realistic literature tries to justify its being in the light of something else. All these kinds of realism are referential in the sense that they claim excellence through some kind of correspondence with something external to the work of literature. But even this operational unity cannot be asserted as the unique characteristic of realism *per se*. But for aesthetic formalism I do not find any other school of literary thought which can claim complete emancipation from any trace of such correspondence of external reference. Impressionism, expressionism, symbolism and mysticism are all more or less involved in some kind of external reference. Correspondence with something external to the autonomy of a work of art is not altogether irrelevant to their conception of value. The idea of correspondence is, generally speaking, a significant foothold for attempting a critique of realism; but such a critique of realism, it is often forgotten, is also a critique of these more respectable schools of critical thought. Yet the fact remains that the idea of correspondence gives an operational unity to different kinds of realism and the relevance of realism in the valuation of literature must ultimately rest on this significant fact.

From the analysis of the real as received by different schools of realism I must now turn to the analysis of the creative attitude at the back of literary realism. In other words we can now pose the simple question which I asked at the beginning. Can we say that 'an attachment to what is real, a tendency to regard things as they really are' distinguishes this attitude of mind? Do we find anything at all which is common to different kinds of realistic attitudes? A 'tendency to regard things as they really

are' is ultimately a craving for some kind of objectivity. It is the desire to consider the world of human experience in its essential character, not as something distorted or magnified or idealized by the quality of the creative temperament. To the realist the work of literature is not primarily the expression of the personality of the author. He is not free to manipulate his material according to his sweet will. He claims to achieve excellence by adhering to the pattern inherent in the scheme of natural and human life. He experiences the paramount need of recognizing certain basic and universal factors within and without man. His objectivity is a craving for the realization of these factors. Different kinds of realism have different ideas about these factors; but the desire to be faithful to these factors is common.

The creative attitude of realism is essentially objective. A craving for objectivity is also an important attribute of aesthetic formalism, but the aesthetic formalist tries to realize this objectivity in terms of the structural laws governing his configuration, whereas the realist tries to adhere to the actual patterns of experience. The possibility of the ultimate harmonization of the two patterns need not be always left out of consideration. Objectivity has its limits, and a conscious and laboured pursuit of this ideal may turn out some kind of psychological, aesthetic or social automation and not a work of literature. But at present I am not concerned with the healthiest form of objectivity; my only contention is that a craving for objectivity is an important element in the attitude of the realistic literary artist. I would be, however, greatly misunderstood if this objectivity were confused with 'disinterestedness', for surely nobody would ever maintain that the surrealist or the Marxist realist could ever consider the creation or the appreciation of a work of literary art as an entirely disinterested pursuit. The literary value of realism can partly emerge from a consideration of this common craving for objectivity—which is not the same as disinterestedness.

If there is any merit in this exposition of

realism in its more abstract character our quest for its literary value may be guided by the following observations: (1) Realism is essentially a polymorphic concept; in other words there is no 'essential' quality which belongs to all kinds of realism and which does not belong to something else. (2) The significance of the word 'real' in the context of works of realistic literature and the creative attitude which produces them can be expressed by two words; 'correspondence' and 'objectivity'. (3) The literary value of realism as realism must more or less depend on the aesthetic and literary relevance of these concepts. (4) The 'essential' characteristic of each kind of realism taken separately may be different from these two concepts. Our valuation of realism in its more abstract character does not exhaust the axiological implications of naive realism, naturalism, surrealism, and socialist realism in their own individual forms.

I have said above that the literary value of realism as realism must more or less depend on the aesthetic and the literary relevance of the concepts of 'correspondence' and 'objectivity'. I have intentionally used the expression 'the aesthetic and the literary'. For the fact must be clearly borne in mind that the aesthetic and the literary are not exactly identical. A work of literature is a work of fine art and in so far as it is a species of this genus it may be considered in the light of the basic values presiding over all the fine arts. But literature is not only a fine art; it is something more; it is literature. In other words, literature is distinguished from other fine arts by the peculiar character of its substantial medium (i.e. imaginative action involving thoughts, feelings and sensations) and the inevitable means of its communication. By virtue of its essential difference from other fine arts it can claim the right to be judged in the light of an additional set of values which, possibly, may not be at all relevant in our experience of other fine arts. The animal can be judged in the light of that which distinguishes it from the inorganic

world, but when we think of the excellence of a man we do bring in a new set of values. If we transfer the logic of this situation to the problem of aesthetic values and literary values we may not find it difficult to accept the view that the two sets of values cannot be the same. When it is stated in this particular form, it appears too obvious to be emphasised and I would have spared myself the trouble of doing so, if I had not realized that the failure to understand this vital distinction is the cause of much confused thinking in this part of our country.

To be more explicit the confusion is caused by a desire either to identify the aesthetic values with literary values or to consider the characteristic literary values as merely secondary and then to derive them from the more generic aesthetic values themselves. In my opinion both of these confusions land us in a state of things which is neither compatible with logical thinking nor with our actual experience of literature. To value literature only as a fine art in terms of the laws of configuration or formal beauty is to deny literature its specific function as a species. Literature to deserve the name of fine art will have to realize beauty but it will have to be something else as well as that not on sufferance but in all its vital character. A sincere effort to discover its characteristic values must begin with a clear recognition of the inadequacy of aesthetic values in interpreting the total significance of a work of literature. The task may be difficult; but it will have to be faced. Realism, with its two key concepts of 'correspondence' and 'objectivity', is an indicator of the direction in which the quest may be fruitfully undertaken.

Before I proceed with the quest I may pause a little to consider the meanings of the words 'literature' and 'value' as they are used in this discourse. Without attempting anything like logical precision in the definition of these words, I may still try to place them beyond the vagaries of personal associations. For the purpose of this dis-

cussion I have considered literature as 'a configuration of imaginative action in language' and value as 'a criterion of excellence more or less generally accepted by the relevant aspect of human mind and reflecting some objective characteristic of the world of human experience'. The axiological distinction between the intrinsic values, which are desired for their own sake, and the instrumental values which are casually connected with them, though significant in itself, is not very relevant in the context of my discussion, I believe that the distinction between the aesthetic values and the literary values is not the distinction between the intrinsic values and the instrumental values. Literary values are neither derivative nor casually connected. The distinction between the intrinsic and the instrumental may be found in either set of values.

In the definition of literature which I have proposed in this context, there are two elements which are the chief bearers of its value significance. The word 'configuration' implies the possibility of aesthetic values which literature must share along with other fine arts. The contribution of aesthetic formalists to our understanding of this set of values is certainly the most significant, but real harm is done when we identify the total value-experience of creative literature with the value-experience implicit in this configuration. For we cannot ignore the phrase 'imaginative action in language', which is the bearer of the characteristic literary values. The word 'action' indicates social, physical as well as mental processes which constitute human experience in general and can be at its best as rich as the entire psychic and material life of man. The word 'imaginative' places the substantial medium of literature beyond the narrow limits of mere historicity. Further this imaginative action is recognisable in terms of our own human experience and this presupposes a certain correspondence with the actual human situation.

The semantic symbolism of language is

essentially conventional in character and this kind of conventional symbolism, while it denies the possibility of one-to-one correspondence with reality and the transfer of reference between any two persons, is at the same time entirely based on the possibility of some communication through correspondence. Only when language achieves the power of incantation it transcends the limits of this system of symbolism; it becomes the 'thing itself' and not 'the thing it contemplates'. But incantation is not the necessary condition of the creative use of language. Even the emotive use of language is more common in poetry than in prose fiction. In fact the respectable distinction between the emotive use of language and the referential use of language is an over-simplification of the real state of things. The creative use of language exploits all these possibilities without committing itself to any particular function and, on the whole, never loses its chief character of being conventional symbolism—a symbolism based on the arbitrary association between the word and its signification. The realist is not only objective in his attitude to human life; consequently, he is also forced to be objective in his attitude to language. He achieves his highest emotional effects through a description of the objective situation and with the help of conventional symbolism; even the surrealist distortions derive their whole force from their necessary juxtaposition with the conventional symbolism of language latent in human mind. After all, distortion and incantation are two different phenomena. The point which I am making is simply this: If the words 'imaginative action in language' have any sense at all, they have it in a situation where there is some kind of correspondence between the world within a work of literary art and the objective world without.

Realism with its emphasis on 'correspondence' and 'objectivity' indicates the nature of the characteristic literary values. The formulation of these concepts may be crude; but the direction is not wrong. It

does not comprehend the creative situation in all its complexity, but the direction, in which the essential literary values should be sought for, is not much mistaken. Our experience of a work of art is a highly complex phenomenon. It would be, therefore, more proper to speak of 'resonant correspondence' and 'creative objectivity'. I may define resonant correspondence as that quality of a work of literary art by virtue of which the conventional symbols of language are informed with the significance of human experience. It may be easier to explain the nature of this resonant correspondence with reference to three different fields which are fully harmonized in our experience of a literary masterpiece. These three fields are as follows: the field of symbolic expression (the internal field); the field of all the subjective experience of the reader (the subjective field); and the field of the common experience of humanity (the objective field). The internal field only embodies the possibility of experience and the relations implicit in its structure. The possibility can only become actuality through an act of communication between the internal field and the relevant part of the subjective field. In literary art (which makes use of a system of conventional symbolism) this can only take place through the mediation of the objective field which is the only common basis for reference. In other words the richness of the communication between the internal field and the subjective field is necessarily conditioned by the texture of the correspondence between the internal field and the objective field. Literature, as distinct from other fine arts, greatly depends upon this kind of resonant correspondence for its immediate as well as ultimate significance. It brings about an integration of all the three fields; for it involves both the operations; a dynamic chain of references between the internal field and the objective field on the one hand and an organic interpenetration of the internal field and the subjective field on the other.

In other words a work of literary art can

never be looked upon as a static entity. A great book indicates the eternal possibility of a number of books. And such a work of literary art can be objective in a very special sense of that word. It is not objective in the sense in which a work of science can be objective. It does not achieve its objectivity through the denial of the emotional element in the subjective field, but through a chain of references to the total emotional experience of humanity. This is the true meaning of creative objectivity. A work of literary art can have the richest kind of resonant correspondence with life if it is conceived in a condition of creative objectivity—objectivity which does not consist in the denial of emotions but in the recognition of their essential vital character and their exact relevance in a particular context. In so far as this creative objectivity is causally connected with the existence of resonant correspondence in a work of literary art, I may describe the former as the instrumental value and the latter as the intrinsic value.

My modification of the basic implications of realism is, I frankly admit, merely experimental in its character. The value of realism lies in its function as a pointer towards the characteristic literary direction of our quest. Realism does not contradict aestheticism, it completes it.

Before I conclude this paper I would place before you two minor issues which concern realism in its role as a dynamic literary tendency: (i) its specific historical role in the development of the literature of a people and (ii) its particular biographical function in the creative life of a literary artist. The recurrence of realism at particular stages in the evolution of the literature of people is a historical phenomenon and the vicissitudes which necessitate its recurrence can be a source of fruitful study. No one can claim complete competence in handling a problem of this magnitude; for it presupposes, in addition to the gift for analysis and interpretation, a first-hand acquaintance with the literary histories of a number of people and in

different languages. Without this check on the imagination of a thinker the inquiry may result in an unconscious distortion of the historical process to suit the needs of a preconceived metaphysical speculation. My interpretation of the historical role of realism is limited to my experience of the English literary history. But I would rather take the risk than evade the issue, if only in the hope of being corrected by the more competent experts of the subject. My interpretation of this historical role takes the following form: (1) In every period of revolutionary literary change a realistic element has played a significant liberating role. (2) Realism, in this particular role as a liberator, has worked in close association with romanticism as well as classicism. (3) Decadent romanticism and decadent classicism are usually found to be in revolt against realism. (4) Realism in its historical role has always embodied in itself a certain survival value for literature which, for want of a better word, I may call 'vitality'.

From the literary history of a people we may pass on to the creative life of an individual literary artist. Here again I find myself on a most uncertain ground. There is nothing more illusive than this will-o'-the-wisp of an author's personality. It is

certainly a problem for the professional biographer and the subtle psychologist. But I have my own temptations and may risk a couple of conjectures: (i) The creative life of a man is a most tortuous and self-contradictory process. Many authors who have never dreamt of being realists—nay, who have professed to be something else—have passed through a realistic phase in their creative life and derived sustenance and strength from that attitude. The professed faith of the author and the attitude implicit in his work may be two different things. (ii) Genius by its very nature is unpredictable and can skip over certain phases of normal imaginative development. But even when this point is conceded, there is some sense in saying that the development of the individual talent from the more unsophisticated romantic impulse into the restrained and more severe classical or purely aesthetic attitudes is usually effected through the mediation of the realistic phase. In these conjectures, I am afraid, I may be more deeply involved in my own particular experience as a creative artist than I am fully aware of; but such a trespass may be forgiven in a discourse which, at its best, is only experimental in its analysis and highly tentative in its exploration.

Cultural Criticism as a Tool for Social Studies

By AGEHANANDA BHARATI

CULTURAL criticism or culture-critique—whichever term you prefer—is a new tool, or a prospective, heuristic device for the social sciences. In the form in which I shall present it, it has not been used nor even, to my knowledge, formulated by sociologists or anthropologists; and it is very largely for the latter that I am stating its method. At least in the United States, there is a demarcation between sociological and anthropological interests, more methodological than subjectwise; the subject-matter of these sciences may overlap—which accounts for the fact that the two are being taught under one chair at many American schools—but anthropology needs some tools which sociology can forego, as the latter does not usually concern itself with culture patterns which are totally distinct from those of the investigator.

'Cultural criticism' is easily defined—the difficulties arise only in its applications. It is the method of obtaining information from persons belonging to a culture other than the native culture of the investigator, by criticizing cultural patterns of the informant's native culture. Or, schematically, 'cultural criticism' is criticism pronounced by A about B₁ (A standing for the investigator born in the culture A₁—he may or may not be an anthropologist, but must have anthropological interests; B standing for an informant native in the culture B₁, different from A₁). My own example: A. Bharati, a native of Vienna, Austria, criticizes certain cultural patterns of India, by addressing them to one or more or many Indian hearers or readers, all of whom are variables for B.

The objective of cultural criticism varies according to the investigator's chief interest, as also according to the discipline

which his investigation attempts to feed: the anthropologist, sociologist, historian, and all other non-normative scientists want to describe their objects, hence their final consideration is obtaining information, and nothing else. Their work is neither 'good' nor 'bad' for the informants' milieu—it is ideally quite neutral. Of course, this does not always work—anthropological publications have influenced the informants who collaborated to create them. American Indians have been known to take to handicraft manufacture and business on the basis of anthropological tracts about them—this is no joke. The villagers of Senapur, U.P., have at least unconsciously adapted themselves to the needs of the Cornell University centered anthropologists; I buttonholed an old man in that village, who said wistfully "*jaisā American sahibān sunnā cāhte hain, waisā ham log aksar bolte hain*" 'we often talk just as these American gentleman want to hear us talk'.

It is a different matter with the normative scientist, the philosopher: his cultural criticism fulfils a descriptive function, no doubt, in that it states cultural facets as he sees them. But the philosopher's study of a culture alien to his native culture is less cognitive, and more inferential than that of pure anthropologists in the same field. He certainly wants to change what he criticizes, or at least he wants to make his informants see why he criticizes. I trust the fundamental difference in approach is clear: the anthropologist etc. criticizes in order to elicit more information—he is more of a psychologist who would at times consciously irritate or even infuriate his patient to obtain more information about him. The philosopher criticizes in order to influence the criticized pattern toward

some sort of modification; he is more like a psychotherapist who annoys the patient in order to improve his state of health (and, incidentally, the psychotherapist's notions of what constitutes a 'healthy mind' are about as vague as the professional philosopher's notions about what constitutes an ideal cultural pattern).

The methods of cultural criticism need to be worked out in detail, with reference to many cultural patterns and many areas, and separately, for the reasons just stated, for philosophers and for social (non-normative) scientists. But in this initial presentation, I shall confine myself to the anchoring and to the exemplification of 'cultural criticism'; the various methodologies will, so I hope, be studied in anthropological and philosophical trade-journals in due course.

A note of warning: with whatever motivation it is done—philosophically normative, socio-anthropologically descriptive, 'cultural criticism' is not going to make friends among the informants. It will make *some* friends among the informant population: intellectuals 'stand out' quite literally, and in India, where the term 'intellectual' does not—or not yet—have the pejorative or somewhat sissy flavour about it which it has in Britain, or the 'egg-head' flavour which it has in non-academical America, being an intellectual entitles a man to 'stand out' in the sense that he may join cultural criticism of his own native patterns of culture, with relative impunity. For example, an M. N. Roy or a Nirad Chaudhuri may criticize Indian culture, and yet they would not thereby be 'un-Indian' in the eyes of the conventional in India—in North America, cultural criticism of America by Americans tends to brand them as un- or anti-American, adding the charge of being leftist by a fatuous association. The orthodox pandit, swami, or his followers, would never think of calling M.N. Roy 'un-Indian', they would hardly think of denying him the epithet of an intellectual; on the contrary, they will maximize the epithet by calling such people 'intellectual giants, but...' holding the saint-scholar,

the ascetical savant, out against them: as 'true intellectuals'. Yet, it is only the very few who have some sort of a stake in denying their loyalty to their cradle—people like the present writer, for instance, who regards the struggle against ethnocentricity as a full-time job—who will not resent cultural criticism about their own background. I happen to enjoy any criticism of Vienna: for this, there may be any number of psychological explanations which are irrelevant here; but I have also taken great pains in training myself toward a perfect imperviousness to such criticism, for the very reason that I am recommending it as a tool for all social scholars. And of course, the few things I really love about Vienna—Mozart and Haydn, pretty Viennese women, and *Sachertorte*, do not come within the purview of any serious cultural criticism—though Viennese reactions about Mozart, etc. well may. But short of having undergone this very specific training, it is almost certain that 'cultural criticism' will yield its desired results: it will excite, annoy, or irritate, or even infuriate the informants¹, and it will elicit information—but, as a byproduct, it will tend to alienate and to antagonize them. Some price must be paid for interesting information.

The philosopher, or any other normativist, will face the same indignation and the same antagonism; he has to be prepared for that. This is a case where philosophers must suffer private and possibly official censure even in free countries—the official viewpoint usually being the viewpoint accepted by a majority of people in a country, the alien critic will probably not be tolerated: 'mind your own business or get out' is a diffuse proposition of governmental agencies vis-a-vis the alien critic; it may be understandable, it is not laudable; it may be expedient, but it does not add to culture—it was a matter of great pride for Pericles and other Greek leaders to be able to say that their city-state had not been turning aliens out of the country. India, and other countries may refuse visas to critics, be they philosophers or anthropologists—it is always convenient to term

an interested scholar a potential spy; persons who 'handle' aliens—police officers and deputy secretaries, are administrators who do not want to be burdened with extra-curricular, academical reflections: they do not know much about cultural history, cultural anthropology, and philosophy as academical disciplines—and even if some of them do, such reflections would interfere with their administrative routine. In short, the cultural critic is in chronic trouble abroad—and abroad lies his field.

Thus I shall try to show that cultural criticism is not only an important evil, but something considerably more beneficent in the realm of human communication and information: these two together are almost synonymous with 'culture'. The late A. Kroeber, America's leading anthropologist, once listed no less than 160 definitions of 'culture'—I know that communication and information are implicit in each of them.

Cultural criticism is *not* hole picking; nor is it pointing out of trivial matters, nor even of anything obvious to be criticized. If a person, scholar, journalist, pilgrim, or plain tourist complains about bad roads, bad hygiene, red tape, or even corrupt officials in subaltern administrative India, he may perhaps be frowned upon, but he will not really make any enemies; on the contrary, most intelligent and influential Indians will support and corroborate these charges; but they are not cultural criticism—they are serious at times, but they are always trivial. On this side of the ocean, similarly, if an alien visitor or a new resident criticizes the the juke-box and the slot-machine, the medicated meats, the T.V. aids and programmes, the necking in large cars, and the impoliteness of waiters, he will encounter some frowns and possibly some invective from the less perspicacious and more die-hard propounders of the 'American way of life', whatever that is—and he will also hear much apologetic confirmation, but he will not really make any enemies. These criticisms may be founded, but they are not important, nor new, for 'everyone'—viz. the American intellectual—knows them anyway, just as the

intellectual Indian knows the shortcomings of roads and officials anyway, and *ad nauseam*.

Books that are best-hated are very frequently best-sellers, and the best among them are largely pieces of cultural criticism: as such I would rank Arthur Koestler's 'The Lotus and the Robot' and Wylie's 'A Generation of Vipers'. Strictly speaking, the 'Generation of Vipers' is no cultural criticism in my formal sense—for the author is American and criticizes American ways—but this is really a minor point so far as the contents of the book go. The ancient 'Mother India' would have been a piece of cultural criticism, judging from the Indian reception of and reaction to it, up to this day—but Mayo's opus did not really qualify for cultural criticism, as most of her criticisms were trivial—of the bad hygiene—bad officials—superstitious people—type. I do not say that Koestler's 'Lotus and Robot' provides a technically correct apparatus of critique, but the method is decidedly valid cultural criticism, by my definition.

In my writings I often refer to the totality of puritanistic-ascetical-antiesthetic pattern of modern Hindu ideas as the 'Hindu Renaissance'; I use the term pejoratively, in line with my intention to wield cultural criticism, and as shorthand for thousands of such important, largely unknown, or unattended-to things as the oleographs of gods and Gandhi and Nehru, of Mr. Purshottamdas Tandon's and the late Mahatma's attitude about erotic temple sculpture. 'Hindu Renaissance', for me, is an object of cultural criticism. Thus, it is not the criticism of Gandhi, say, as a utopian in the field of physical and economical development—all people know this, and their statements are not culture critique, even when they are not trivial—they are economical, technological criticisms, and they are none of my interest. To me as a non-economist and a non-technologist these notions seem to have been personal idiosyncrasies. But the Mahatma's ideas about sexual continence, based on a profound disgust for sexual tenderness, quite

apart from his own personality development and from his modal personality structure, are very much an aspect of Indian culture, of the Hindu Renaissance; with the Hindu's implicit emulation of the charismatic's teaching and the acceptance of his predilections as morally normative, the Mahatma's ideas did and do influence the people of the Hindu Renaissance, and reasoned criticism of this aspect of it is profoundly resented, and is genuine cultural criticism. It is not 'known by everybody anyway' like bad roads and corrupt officials, but it requires a trained philosopher or anthropologist, to trace these ideas and to point them out.

One of the most recent and incisive pieces of cultural criticism of India is Prof. Edward Shils' new study:² in discussing a very subtle shortcoming of Indian intellectual ideology, he writes

'...the modern intellectual tradition is different from the tradition of intellectual life which India has received from its own past. The former is open, emirical, experimental, as well as metaphysical. It is more cognitive than the Indian intellectual tradition; it seeks to discover hitherto unknown principles which govern the universe *while the Indian intellectual traditions seek to attain a condition of fusion with the principle, already known, which governs the universe.*' (p 22, my italics).

In another passage Shils points out that some of the reluctance of Indian scholars about acquiring a sizable library of their own is not only due to poverty—though this is the overwhelmingly important, and non-cultural hence for us non-relevant factor—but also due to the deeprooted, culture-conditioned, writ-instilled norm of non-attachment, which bars the wise man from hoarding and accumulating possessions; but *ipso facto*, it also blocks his urge to possess a library (which he could afford), pictures or good reproductions which he could afford—the result by suffering rather than by choice being the ubi-

quitous formidable assemblage of calendarized, multi-coloured, hideous oleographs on his empty walls.

Prof. McCutcheon points out another shortcoming of the thinking Indian, when he says³ that devotion to the interesting, the discursively new, the aesthetically experimental is 'little understood in India and possibly repellant'. These are important, not obvious, (to the Indian informant) irritating, hence genuine pieces of cultural criticism.

Here in America, if I were to criticize former President Mr. Eisenhower for his untrammelled delight in golf, this would be a trivial criticism; if I criticize an American leader for inserting a phrase like 'one nation before God', or for ostentatious church-going inside the country and on state-visits abroad—even when the visited states are not Christian, this is matter for serious thought—but it becomes cultural criticism only if I can show a pattern—say of conformity-cum-naive theism-cum-'asserted freedom to profess any or no religion'—a pattern which I can criticize from the vantage point of a view which eschews this sort of naivety. In other words, when persons are taken as paradigms for a typical or modal pattern which is then criticized, this would be cultural criticism. Belief in the moral importance of church-going is indeed an aspect of American culture, just as Mahatma Gandhi's invectives against sex do indeed fall in line with an aspect of Indian culture; and these aspects are criticizable from the standpoint of humanistic world views or of analytical reasoning which avoids or transcends them.

I have said that the culture critic must encounter antagonism. 'Must' here is a statement of fact, not any ethical postulate; quite on the contrary, he really ought *not* to encounter such antagonism, because it is based on ethnocentricity, or on plain parochialism or nationalism for which there is no intellectual excuse. If patriotism or any other felt commitment were to vindicate anger at cultural criticism, then any criticism would evoke rightful wrath, because any criticism evokes negative emo-

tional response. Criticism can be validly rejected only by refuting its actual contents. Thus 'dont criticize X for it is a slur on our national honour' is no valid objection; 'dont criticize X for you misrepresent X' is a valid objection if it can be shown that the critic actually does misrepresent his object.

Gandhi said and wrote that Buddha believed in God; I criticized Gandhi for this erroneous statement⁴—for I can thereby criticize a cultural pattern which is strong in modern India: the notion that a man can be good only if he believes in God—strangely similar to the all-over American view; the fabulous American comedian Mort Sahl tells on one of his records about children worshipping, in a manner of speaking, the micky mouse with large ears on T.V., and adds 'but that's all-right, if only they believe in something'. Among intellectual Americans, this is a joke (Mort Sahl largely addresses himself to intellectuals—more solid citizens in the U.S. prefer other comedians and entertainers); in India, it would hardly be seen as such. I see and criticize, in India of the Hindu Renaissance, a trait which I term 'intellectual dishonesty'—a strong phrase, no doubt, but a *terminus technicus*, a tool of cultural criticism. The pattern 'I know that x was y and that x was not z, but I dont tell people, lest they should err. . . .' ('we know that beef was the staple diet of the Vedic Indians, but we dont tell our flock lest they should fall into sin'; 'I know that Buddha was a thinking atheist, but people should not know that, lest they think that atheists can be good people or that Buddha was not a good man.')—is exemplified by people who use it.

Pdt. Madan Mohan Malaviya exhorted the first generation of B.H.U. students 'brothers, drink milk, do gymnastics, and take the name of Hari'. In stating this, I may be criticizing a great pedagogue for his naivety, but this is no cultural criticism yet. It is when I show that my criticism is directed against the widespread Hindu notion that milk-drinking, gymnastics, vegetarianism, and prayers are essential for

a more efficient acquisition of academical knowledge. The confusion of academical knowledge and spiritual status is deliberate and endemic in Hindu India, and as soon as this is pointed out, the rejoinder states that academical knowledge is inferior to religious knowledge. But at this moment, discourse has arisen, and an important pattern of Hindu thought and parlance has become evident and can be studied—a very real case of cultural criticism. For of course, at least the more intelligent Hindu disputant will admit that the vegetarian is not necessarily a better student or scholar than his beef-eating colleague; he will insist that the vegetarian is a better *yogi*; this may be true or may not be true, for yogis of the meat-eating variety will enter the dispute, and this is what we want—for against the complacent Latin-Teutonic school-dictum, the cultural critic wants both *multum* and *multa*. In this instance, I have criticized the idea implicit in the Hindu notion that building a saintly character is as important in a university as it is in a forest hermitage—I did so from the vantage point of a humanistic outlook which views asceticism as but one element of possible experiment, but not a pervasive condition for knowledge.

Take another example: Prof. Stcherbatsky was beyond any doubt the foremost occidental scholar on Mahayana Buddhism, in his day. He died of starvation during the Nazi siege of Leningrad. I quoted some remark of his on a point of Buddhist logic in a discussion with one of India's foremost Sanskrit scholars of today; a scholar trained in the orthodox tradition of South Indian panditdom as well as in occidental philological and critical methods. But when I mentioned Stcherbatsky, this scholar said with a deprecatory gesture: 'That man was no scholar.' No scholar, I marvelled? What about his work in the Bibliotheca Buddhica, his insight into Buddhist doctrine, etc.? The Brahmin professor was not impressed: 'Stcherbatsky visited nightclubs with women in Paris, and drank wine till late at night in their company. A man who leads such an im-

pure life is no scholar.⁵ When I point out the stupendous fallacy involved in this pontification, my argument is cultural criticism—not because the pandit was wrong, but because his statement is paradigmatical for a pattern in Hindu India, based on a traditional, but otherwise unwarranted assumption of an intrinsic connexion between an austere life and scholarship. In criticizing the Hindu doctor and this specific pattern, I must try to show that there is no such concatenation; that there is no causal nexus between scholarship and an ascetical way of life — neither psychological nor philosophical nor even culturally diffused (in Greece and in certain Chinese traditions, the wise man was Epicurean); I must show that the assumed connection derives from a particular way of using language, viz. from the Hindu conjunction of 'behaviour according to a set of standards traditionally ascribed to the genuine pandit's personality, laid down in certain scriptures and by oral assent', on the one hand, and 'genuine scholarship' on the other. I must show that this is a linguistic, hence accidental connexion, inherent in the Hindu way of using language, but not a necessary semantical connection — or in other words, that these two propositions are understood conjointly, by most Hindus, but that they do not have to be thus understood by others, and that they cannot be accepted on any logical or experimentary evidence. At this point, the anthropologist will be satisfied: he has shown that there is such a linguistic connection in Hindu language use. But the philosopher will try to show, in addition, that this connexion is not necessarily beneficial to the growth or the perpetuation of Hindu culture — that Hinduism has and can accomodate more lenient and humanistically palatable views about scholarship and asceticism. Beyond that, I may have to show that visiting nightclubs and drinking wine with women in Paris is not necessarily tantamount to an 'impure life', any more than visiting milk bars at day with male friends in Stockholm indicates a 'pure life'. Here, the philosopher critic

is a therapist, whereas the anthropologist can only be a diagnostician.

I will go a step farther and maintain that cultural criticism is not only a wholesome device and a fine prospective tool for social studies and for philosophical goading in an alien milieu, but that it could probably be the very best cross-cultural contribution in human communication. It must needs work for intellectual acumen and a hard core of courage. Panegyrics are easy, hence frequent—if I praise Gandhi, I shall have many friends in India and few foes abroad—why, everyone praises him. Few in India will oppose me, even if my eulogy consists of vague tritisms and scant knowledge of the man and his thoughts and his work; and due to a purely subjective enthusiasm for the man, I may even say the right things for the wrong reasons—no one except perhaps some followers of M.N. Roy will contradict me. On the other hand, if I criticize Gandhi—or anyone else that is an object of veneration to the Indian mind, or any institution Indians are fond of, I have to brace myself with hard facts, with much and detailed knowledge; as an anthropologist with psychological inclinations, I have to study the person and his motivation, as a philosopher I have to study his argument. Human beings, however civilized, connive at pleasant things said about them and their kin, even if they know these things to be untrue or vague.

In many places, but in India perhaps most strongly so, there is the official notion that one should not emphasize 'differences', that doctrinal and ideological differences are unimportant, that unity must be shown behind diverse thoughts. I very strongly believe that this is wrong, and that instead of sermonizing sanctimonious unity, we should point out differences and discrepancies, and nonsense written and said by great men, by all means. I have no patience with the common, jejune idea held by well-meaning but often depressively uninformed world organizations and individuals of integrity, that the world's people will 'get together' and keep the peace 'because they have so many ideas in common'; nor with the

obverse and equally infantile contention that the world's people will fight each other if they find out they do not have so many ideas and doctrines in common. For all this fuzzy reasoning implies that if people, or their scholars do find out and show that there are indeed vast ideological and doctrinal and cultural differences between various cultures, they would have to fight. This is an absurd imbecility, and cultural criticism, as an apparatus of intelligent communication, beyond its narrower use as an anthropological or philosophical tool, should do away with it. The Theravada Buddhist Burmese invaded the Theravada Buddhist Siamese kingdom of Ayuthia, breaking up some of the Buddha images with a hope to find some gold in them; the Catholic Italians and the Catholic Austrians, *in rebus politicis*, have not much love for each other. But the heathen Japanese and the Christian Japanese live in perfect amity with one another. The last ten years of world discourse have brought much verbiage on co-existence, yet the very talk about it, the fears that beset these formulations and perorations show that all those concerned, deep down, believe that different ideas make people fight each other. Hence the mutual proselytization urge: coexist with us by all means but (under one's breath) it would be better if you accepted my view all the same.

A new attempt at 'coexistence' may feasibly be made—'let's enjoy our differences'. Such an attitude presupposes a good dose of cultural criticism.

We should study each other's culture with zealous application, and as a test of our scholastic success, let us challenge and criticize those whom we study — the best among them, and see if our criticism is refuted by them. If it is — by sober, pertinent, valid argument and refutation, it means simply that we have not learnt enough. Let us criticize with all the scholastic apparatus at our disposal. Before and as we do it, we must learn to dissociate ourselves from the awkward commitment to our cradle—we all know, as thinking men and women, that things around

our cradle are not really better than distant things, or if they are, that has nothing to do with our having been born there — my Austrian birth is purely incidental to Mozart's good music; philosophy is pretty poor in Austria, but this dissociation must be consciously learnt. Indians abroad defend Nehru even when they don't at home — he is modern India's most interesting and most vulnerable product, and they must defend him because they were born there. This cradle-committedness must go.

Michel Polanyi has created the important phrase 'heuristic passion'. The austerities incumbent on the cultural critic are expressions of this passion. Polanyi's criticisms against scientism is a highly specialized sort of cultural criticism—directed against a diffuse cultural group: the scientists who believe that quantitative methods can be directly transferred from natural to social sciences.

Karl Popper criticizes the historicist, the scholar who believes there are laws as aids to prediction in history; his, too, is cultural criticism. Popper's and Polanyi's is perhaps the subtlest kind of cultural criticism, but I hesitate to extend the use of the phrase to their work lest it become so wide that it includes all intelligent criticism, which would decrease the utility of the idiom as a tool for specific sciences. I merely want to point out that cultural criticism should proceed, in its various ethnical fields, much in the manner which Popper and Polanyi have, in their highly specialized, narrowly focussed studies.

About cultural anthropologists, especially here in the United States, I do have a complaint: they are, or pretend to be, equally interested in Navajo 'culture' and in Hindu 'culture', and judging from the respective bulk of publications, the former means more to them. Now I have no quarrel with any scholar's interest. But once cultural criticism is understood and used as a tool, it will be realized that it is simply childish to hold and teach that Navajo culture is equally 'important' as Hindu or Chinese culture. This may be true for a Master's Thesis, but it is not

true in any intelligent survey of the world's cultures. Among nonliterate societies, there can hardly be any cultural criticism. But I think one of the reasons why modern anthropology tacitly shies away from the intensive study of literate high cultures is simply the lack of a tool to get at them — and to obtain results equally satisfactory as those obtained from nonliterate regions. Cultural criticism seems to be the tool. Of course, this training involves more work of the kind anthropologists do not usually

fancy: the study of languages, and literatures, and philosophical argument.

Cultural criticism must be a mutual enterprise: the Indian critic must criticize the American and European, and vice versa — not trivially, but discursively, culturally. Then, cultural criticism may one day be the finest medium of cosmopolitan communication; by showing what seems wrong from one stated viewpoint, new fruitful avenues of human discourse can be opened.

¹ A. Bharati, 'The Ochre Robe', G. Allen & Unwin, London 1961

² E. Shils, 'The Intellectual between Tradition and Modernity: The Indian Situation,' Mouton & Co., The Hague 1961

³ D. McCutcheon, 'A Rather Extraordinary Way of Seeing the Tradition'. Writers Workshop (Seven), Calcutta 1961. This is, incidentally, the most elaborate and the most critical, but also the best review article written on *The Ochre Robe*.

⁴ A Bharati, 'Gandhi and Buddhist Atheism', Gandhi Marg 18, New-Delhi 1961

⁵ my italics. The learned pandit did not stress these words—for him this is a sort of analytical statement in the Kantian sense.

Our Stuporous Society

By H. R. PASRICHA

THIS short essay is an attempt to describe, assess and record the state of Indian Society today from the intellectual, political and social points of view. It had, perhaps, better be made clear in the beginning that there is hardly anything original in the considerations set out here. It is more than likely that these considerations have occurred to different persons at different times. The only originality, if any, lies in compiling all the considerations and in their application to Indian conditions.

A word of warning is necessary also: there is no parallel abroad to conditions obtaining in India. We are tied up emotionally and traditionally with Great Britain more than many people are willing to recognise or allow. Our outlook is as close to the British as it could be. The educated classes have imbibed the lessons of British history deep and developed an admiration for democratic institutions, although an admission to this effect is not always forthcoming. Consciously or unconsciously, we are always making comparisons between Indian and British conditions. This habit is not free from drawbacks; what can be made to work in Britain may not be workable in India. In the solutions of the problems that beset this country, we are constantly drawing inspiration from British experiments. It would be difficult to graft on to Indian society measures that have worked with a reasonable amount of success in Britain.

British society is politically highly developed with a tradition of Freedom and Democracy stretching for centuries into the dim past. It has enjoyed freedom from external interference for over a millenium. The democratic attitude is pervasive in British society and the moral tone in personal behaviour high. In India, society is unevolved politically; the national mind is largely feudal, and caste and group considerations immensely strong. Con-

siderations of personal welfare still predominate over social welfare. For the protagonists of modern political thought, this should be a warning.

Since the aim of this essay is to describe and assess the state of our society, frank objectiveness must be the criterion. It would, therefore, be fruitful to start with a brief consideration of the meaning of criticism.

Speaking to teachers of a university in India recently, Prof. J. K. Galbraith, Ambassador of the United States, pointed out that criticism had many positive features and should not evoke thoughtless resentment. Without quoting his speech *in extenso*, important positive and beneficial aspects of criticism emphasised by him could be advantageously enumerated. Criticism, according to him, was an index of fraternity, an extension of the franchise in its most valuable form in open societies. It can only be made where improvement can be expected. These remarks about the value of criticism as an essential element of international intercourse he specifically confined to open societies with civil liberties still intact. In closed societies, on the other hand, criticism, no matter how constructive, is deviationism, dogmatism and counter-revolutionary activity. That is not to say that criticism is tolerated in all open societies. Liberal European societies, tolerant on the surface, have their limits of endurance of criticism; they are stung to the quick and react pretty vehemently when criticism touches their material and economic interests. But as we descend in the scale of development, societies tend to become more and more sensitive and intolerant of criticism by others. This sensitivity is often carried to such extremes that even their own nationals are not permitted to utter a word of honest criticism without coming under heavy fire. The more backward and primitive a nation the greater the

sensitiveness it displays to any pointed reference to its unrepresentable and unrepresentable aspects of life. It appears to popular belief that national prestige and honour can be maintained by dissimulation and suppression of facts.

On this subject, a law could easily be formulated: the ability to withstand criticism is directly proportional to the level of cultural development reached by a society and inversely proportional to its primitiveness. To put it bluntly, excessive sensitivity and unseemly reaction to criticism is an overt expression of an inner knowledge of inferiority. It is also resentment against exposure to the public gaze of the unwholesome aspects of life in that society.

The inner knowledge of inferiority, referred to above, needs to be further elaborated. Elementary psychology makes it clear that the human mind responds by self-deception to certain primordial emotions, of which self-esteem is one. It is credited to be the one emotion that makes life tolerable for all, particularly the less gifted and fortunate ones. The human mind can, without much difficulty, convince itself of its own great merit which, in its own eye, is unfairly neglected by an unappreciative society. A feeling of self-pity smooths all misfortunes. What is true of individuals is true of nations with equal force.

It is a matter of observation that all recently liberated nations are extremely touchy about their national prestige and honour. That is a great psychological handicap.

Since the aim of this essay is to present a clear picture of Indian Society as it exists today, it has been necessary to explain clearly the motivation, and apologise in advance for any unpalatable facts that might obtrude in the discussion. Another explanation is in place here. It is not possible to deal with the subject in all its aspects in the short essay now contemplated. The intention, therefore, is to confine it to those factors which explain, or have

a bearing on, the political mind of the nation and related aspects of personal behaviour and conduct.

II

It was mentioned above that all recently liberated nations seem to be specially touchy over matters of national prestige. Their behaviour in face of any adverse remark concerning national prestige is predictable; they react violently and passionately and the pattern is the same though the shades may vary. All these reactions taken together are manifestations of a psychological complex to which I prefer to give a name — RELEASE PHENOMENON.

Long periods of servitude and repression produce feelings of utter frustration in a nation and make it highly introspective. Through numerous complicated mental twists and turns, the introvert manages to convince himself that, in reality, he is a man of great merit and virtue, and the misfortune of slavery is not his fault but a cruel quirk of Fate. Once released from his bondage, he proceeds with vigour to prove his hypothesis. There is abundant evidence for anyone to see that the Indian today is afflicted terribly with the malady of release phenomenon. Both at home and abroad, he is over-anxious to prove his superiority. The exposition of superiority he takes good care to confine to spiritual matters since, in other spheres, he has not much to show.

A diplomat accredited to this country surprised me by his intelligent summing up of the people of this country. It must have been a moment of friendly candidness induced by the atmosphere of a social function. *Apropos* of a remark made by me, he declared that in fact, all Indians suffered from an inferiority complex though there were some communities which were afflicted more seriously than others. Two of these he correctly named. More correctly, he could have said that all Indians suffered not only from an inverted form of inferiority complex but, in addition, display all the signs of suffering from a release phenomenon. Hence the laboured efforts

of most, including the so-called intellectual Indians, at establishing and proclaiming Indian superiority. They hardly require any encouragement to plunge into this national effort, and, despite lack of interest on the part of their audience, they maintain their efforts with undiminished zeal. The stock-in-trade in this one-sided bargain is composed mostly of two items: transcendent spiritual philosophy and antiquity of the nation.

The claim of antiquity is unassailable. India is an ancient country and Indian society very old. In the East, age has always been respected and revered, and, in course of time has come to be confused with greatness. It might well be conceded that this survival of a nation over many centuries is a great merit. But it could also be sheer resilience, endurance, determination to exist under any circumstances—utter submission. A distinct line would have to be drawn for the purpose of an objective assessment, between age and antiquity on one side and merit and greatness on the other. The greatness of a nation is determined not so much by its age and antiquity as by its achievements in the sphere of human activity. If this were not so, the Red Indians of the American Continent and the many aboriginals of our own country would have a greater claim to greatness than the present Indian society. Finally, age can mean senility and decay.

These preliminary considerations are set out in the beginning so that they may not be lost sight of in the following pages.

The behaviour pattern of a nation and of individuals is to a great extent determined by its past history. Therefore, a brief reference to the past history of India is indispensable. The history of India, no one would deny, has largely been a dismal tale of woe and suffering; bright periods have been few and far between. The epic period of ancient Indian history is so apocryphal that one hesitates to draw any conclusions. About the only purpose the epics have served and continue to serve is the

establishment of ideals of human conduct. For this purpose, they still continue to be acknowledged as authoritative. The five centuries or more immediately preceding the birth of Christ during which Buddha's spiritual thought burgeoned and blossomed and the Mauryan Empire was built after the Greek retreat, and, after Christ, the Gupta period, are no doubt bright spots in the ancient history of India. There, however, the bright period stops and the long, dismal and depressing tale begins, though here and there we find a few isolated spots where peace and progress flourished for a few more centuries.

The pathetic story of shortsightedness, mutual jealousy and disunity that led to the piece-meal annihilation of the Hindu princes is too well-known to the students of Indian history to be repeated. The much more important point that needs consideration is that a period of subjugation extending to nearly a millenium could not possibly have failed to leave indelible marks on the outlook and attitude of the people. The most striking feature, which no student can fail to acknowledge is the sad spectacle of disunity, shortsightedness, stupidity and utter lack of capacity to subjugate personal interest to the national. These features, it could be stated *en passant*, still motivate most Indians and, therefore, have to be borne in mind in any attempt at understanding the Indian mind. Forlorn and disunited patriotism raised its head here and there, as in Rajasthan, but only to be crushed ultimately. With defeat, the will to persist in resistance against heavy odds died out, and its place was taken by supine acceptance and even active cooperation in the subjugation of others still resisting. This was a remarkable development. No free nation in history has displayed such philosophical resignation to and utter acceptance of its conquerors. This particular feature, easy acceptance, is a noteworthy part of the warp and woof of Indian character.

No one who has held any intercourse with a large number of Indians can fail to

be struck by the extremely narrow outlook of the people, including the so-called educated. This too is an inheritance of the past: the result of political and religious persecution on a vast scale. The extreme insecurity of life circumscribed the outlook, reducing it, in the end, to a concern for mere survival. The results of such developments in a society meagrely educated and underdeveloped are devastating. Complete stagnation and retrogression have been the result.

In tropical countries, particularly in India, abstract thought is more abundant and emotional responses more excessive than in northern pragmatic societies. Heroes are easily created and uncritically accepted; they are built into supernatural beings and great homage is paid to them. The personality cult, strongly denounced in Russia now, exists among us too. We too have the ludicrous spectacle of adulation of one political leader on a national scale. Such a leader can dissimulate, prevaricate, even throw dust in the eyes of the public, and still maintain a secure hold on the pedestal on which the public have put him.

Absolute power generates the qualities, if they can be so termed, of obsequiousness and sycophancy in the oppressed; both these qualities are abundantly in evidence in the Indian character. A worship of the rising sun has been inculcated into the Hindu from the very beginning. He takes easily to worship of power and wealth.

This historical background and the consideration of its influence in moulding the Indian outlook can be brought to a close by a brief reference to British influence which left its own mark and further complicated the picture. One direct outcome of the British occupation of the country was the appearance of the notion of geographical unity. What had hitherto been a conglomeration of states, big and small, came to be regarded as one geographical unit in the minds of the people as it was for purposes of government. This

process of geographical fusion was bound to lead gradually to the birth of Nationalism. For the first time, people widely different in dress, habits, food, thought and outlook began to think of themselves as nationals of one country. The idea of Indian nationhood was born with the country still in bondage. Western liberal education opened and broadened the mental horizons. The study of British history, including the struggle for the achievement of Parliamentary Democracy, proved to be an inspiring example to emulate, and the yearning for Democracy was born in the hearts and minds of people. Admiration for British Parliamentary institutions grew imperceptibly; they are accepted unquestioningly today; it is part of Indian political thought.

It must be mentioned here that all these far-reaching developments were facilitated greatly by the study of the English Language; without this language the rapid development towards political unification could not have taken place. This fact has to be emphasized because, of late, a number of cranks have raised their voice in a loud wail against the continued use of this language. They should not be unmindful of the enormous debt of gratitude we owe to English.

One great heritage from the British, of inestimable value, must be mentioned especially, because some of our politicians, for reasons of their own, are inclined to either ignore or belittle it as much as they can. For this purpose, they often take shelter behind Mahatma Gandhi and Non-violence. But the creation of an effective, disciplined national army was without doubt the greatest boon conferred by the British on this country. Without its devoted service the country could not have held together during the trying period of partition. Against the backdrop of the threatening and disrupting elements that are beginning to raise their heads, the armed forces still stand apart as a bright and relieving factor. The unity of India is assured as long as the unity and devotion

of the armed forces can be maintained unsullied.

Reverting to the topic of this essay, British influence has been responsible for one amusing development in the Indian character also. This should be mentioned here. Western liberal thought was superimposed on an undercoating of feudalism, complacency, docility and submission. The outer veneer obtrudes prominently in talk and profession, but action, quite often, is still motivated by the old compulsions. This is a remarkable phenomenon: the capacity of the Indian mind to absorb the new without renouncing much of the old. The result is a double life. This could form the subject of a separate essay. Those of us who have made an objective study of Indian behaviour have been struck by the dual personality of an educated Indian. In parenthesis, one must make clear that this manifestation is mainly confined to the educated. Outside the bosom of his family; away from his caste, particularly in association with Western people, he is an advanced liberal, a democrat and a progressive humanitarian. Back in the bosom of his family, he has slipped back centuries. The most convincing corroboration of this phenomenon in action is available to all in the willing readiness with which even the highest of the high submit to superstitious rituals at the time of marriage or death or any of the numerous other ceremonies that afflict an Indian.

At the time of Independence in 1947, such was the pattern of Indian society — a twisted tangle of narrowmindedness, parochialism, casteism and utter selfishness. It was a picture of crumbling decay at the core and an outer veneer of modern thought and profession. On this sandy, treacherous soil, an endeavour was made to lay the foundation of a modern democratic society. Out of this incoherent mass, a modern liberal, democratic policy was to be evolved. Before, however, any notion of the requirements of the new times crystallised, a new idea was superimposed. The edict went out that those who had

the fate of this nation in their hands had in their greater wisdom decided that a Socialist pattern of society was not only ideal for India but also inescapable. This was at Avadi.

Curiously enough, it was not preceded by any elaborate discussions on a country-wide basis to explore and determine the best solution for the problems that beset the country. In its truest sense, it was an edict handed down from the All High. Since then a lot of tendentious material has continued to pour in from interested quarters. Now the Socialist pattern — the thin end of the wedge — has merged, through sheer force of propaganda, with the idea of a Welfare State and full-fledged Socialism. Indeed, an impression has been created and largely accepted by our complacent, docile society that Socialism is the panacea for all the ills of Indian society. We are, therefore obliged to consider the implications of this new development, but we shall deal not with Socialism as it obtains in text-books but as it is being practised in India. However, a few remarks on the theory of Socialism will have to be added by way of clarification.

III

The edicts of Socialism have been accepted lock, stock and barrel by the complacent stuporous public without demur. The laws of economics are not as immutable as those of the natural sciences. They can be and have been improved upon by human ingenuity. Economic theories hold true for short periods for the simple reason that human experience is short and confined. An economist can formulate theories only about the conditions prevailing at the time and according to their current tendencies, but a long-range prophetic quality cannot be imparted to them without running the risk of being exploded. No economist has been blessed with a genius and vision so profound as to be true for all time. To take a couple of examples: increased production, a device of human ingenuity, has falsified many economic forebodings; the

disappearance of the gold standard did not result in the disasters that were predicted.

Economic theories are bound to be left behind by the march of Time. Obsolescence is the fate of all economic laws, no matter how sound they might appear when formulated. The only way to make economic theories true for all time to come is to impart to them the passion of faith and build them into a religion so that all disbelievers can be straightway branded as heretics. This is the path of Marx; but even 'scientific' Marxist theory needs to be brought upto-date in the light of new experience, and a periodic revision of the dogma is required to keep it scientific. Translating this into Communist jargon, Revisionism should find its rightful place in the faith of Communism as well as in Socialism, and, instead of being condemned and punished it should be looked upon as normal and natural.

To revert to the idea that economic theories have relevance only to short periods during which the conditions on which they are based continue to exist. Adam Smith's depressing dictum that the income of the masses was bound to be slowly pressed lower, apparently true at the time of formulation, was falsified by the later development of Trade Unions, by increased production and the rise of a managerial class. Again, the well-known Malthusian observation on population and total food resources, as well as Ricardo's adduced relationship between population and available capital are still awaiting verification. Marx's dire prediction of the doom of Capitalism is also awaiting fulfilment for the simple reason that the Capitalism of Marx's days has been replaced by a more enlightened one. More than a hundred years ago, it was laid down in the Communist Manifesto that once the supremacy of the proletariat were established, national differences would disappear. Yet this same supremacy is no bar to differences between Russia, China, Albania and Yugoslavia. All these theories, at the time of their enunciation, appeared plausible enough and large masses of peo-

ple put their faith in them and some still continue to do so.

A study of Indian conditions lends support to the view that economic theories relate only to certain stages of development of a society. The behaviour of Indian Society during and after the Second World War proved that Ricardo's view that population regulates itself by the funds which are to employ it, though no longer true in the West, still held in India. Before World War II, unemployment was depressingly rampant in the working as well as the educated classes. During the war and the period following, several new avenues of employment opened up. The consequent increase in wages was accompanied by a frightening increase in population despite the fact that the increase in funds was in reality specious on account of the simultaneous rise of inflation.

IV

The time is now ripe for an economist of outstanding ability and inspiring faith to appear and break the spell of Socialism and Marxism. He would be able to explain that, ultimately, neither of these isms solves the problems it sets out to, and, in the process creates some more. With the State in control of all or almost all avenues of employment, power begins to reside increasingly in hands increasingly occupied in dispensing the innumerable favours which are available for the Government to bestow. The old upper class, which through long usage had become less predatory, is displaced and dispossessed by a new class of hungry, indigent, unscrupulous politicians in a great hurry to become capitalists themselves. This is Djilas' *New Class*. Later on, we shall have more to say about this particular development in Indian Society. The rise to power of this new class inevitably sets a bad example which, in course of time, leads to a deterioration of moral standards and the gradual vulgarisation of society. This development in relation to Indian society will be discussed in greater detail later.

The success of socialist planning depends

upon the availability in the society of a large number of devoted persons dedicated to the faith of socialism who would be willing to subordinate self-interest and put the good of society first. This is the rock on which the ship of socialism comes to grief and is dashed to destruction. Strangely enough, all prophets of Socialism assume the availability in plenty of such dedicated individuals. Actual experience belies such extravagant expectations. In real life, there is greater likelihood of the availability of such persons in the requisite number in the opposite camp. Contrary to all claims and assertions of the socialist, the class with secure income is more likely to yield individuals who would be prepared to work for the country in an altruistic manner.

On numerical grounds alone, the specious claim made by the socialist that the poverty of India could be eradicated by socialist planning alone could easily be proved fantastic. Taking into consideration the existing population of the country and the rapid rate of increase, it could be established that no government, no matter how powerful, could provide jobs or work for more than a small minority. In fact, the self-employed peasantry and unfettered trade and commerce would do so better than any socialist planning.

One final consideration: Socialism is a peculiar creed; it is inimical to itself. The beneficiaries of Socialism do not remain faithful to it. As soon as they acquire a stake in society, they revert to conventional ideas and look askance at socialism. In other words, prosperity achieved through orthodox socialist means would sound the death knell of socialism.

The content of democracy in the state in which we live is extremely uncertain, undefined and likely to be continually reduced. Our state is in an unstable equilibrium: it is in a state of flux. It is slowly sliding towards dictatorship. With the slow accretion of power, it would become a giant. It would be in control of industry, trade and agriculture; it would have immense power of good and evil, but it would continue to

remain in a state of unstable equilibrium. A great deal would then depend upon the person in control of this giant. A good democrat might try and preserve Liberty and Freedom. On the other hand an unscrupulous power-crazed person or a crypto-communist would mould it to his heart's desire. In plain language, the fate of a socialist state of our kind, and therefore of our people, would always hang in the balance. It would be at the mercy of any unscrupulous adventurer who would like to establish himself as a dictator.

To sum up, the threat to democracy in a socialist state such as is in the process of being established in our country, in the context of prevailing conditions, would be continually present; it could any day, any moment be converted into a full-fledged dictatorship. Fondly and foolishly, we put faith in one person and hope that he will not turn out to be an enemy of Democracy. Some even maintain that he could not. That is a precarious state of existence. The freedom of a nation must not rest on the goodwill of one person, as it does to-day in India. The fate of a whole nation must not be permitted to depend upon such slender sustenance. Also, it follows that if Freedom is to be preserved, no one person or party should be permitted to become so powerful that he or it cannot be replaced. Nor should the government become so powerful that it is in possession of all avenues of employment and in control of all spheres and aspects of life. For, whoever is in control of such a government is in control of everything and could establish himself and his henchmen in power forever. Mahatma Gandhi himself looked with fear and apprehension on the growing power of the State. He declared that, in his opinion, the violence of private ownership is less injurious than the violence of the State. Trotsky also emphasised: wherever the state had become the only employer, the old slogan: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat', had been replaced by a new one: 'He who does not obey, neither shall he eat.'

V

The rise of a new class in India has taken place *pari passu* with the introduction of socialist planning and State Capitalism. This development, pointed out by Djilas, seems to be the result of a Law as true as the Laws of Gravity. It is the one result of state socialism which is ineluctable.

The New Class in India, which has now replaced the old exploiting class, is composed of the old guard and the new bandwagon riders. The old guard established their rights by going to jail. They suffered for the Freedom of the country; their right to a pound of flesh is undeniable and inescapable. It is equally true that in most cases they have not missed an opportunity whenever it presented itself. They have made the country pay manifold the price of their visits to jail. The regrettable development from the point of view of the country is that new bandwagon riders have taken a leaf out of the book of their seniors and are determined to follow the same road. It is no secret now that large fortunes have been and continue to be made by ministers, members of Parliament or Assembly and Party bosses whenever an opportunity arises. Perhaps some of them have remained untouched by this fever of aggrandisement, but their fame has not spread very widely. Opportunity in abundance is provided by the system of permits and licenses. These, in the hands of Party men, have become convertible into currency more readily than the official currency.

In a poor, hungry country like ours, there is bound to be a large number of people who find it hard to prosper in the open market either on account of lack of skill or knowledge or application or all three. The temptation to turn to politics is, therefore, commensurately great. In fact, there was a class, difficult to count, which had no ostensible means of livelihood and who took to politics to eke out a living in the early days of Congress agitation. Today, they are in power. As a matter of scientific interest, it would be fruitful to take count

of individuals in the ruling party who were failures in their professions or vocations or who never had any profession or vocation. To them could be added those others who could never lay claim to any means of livelihood independent of their political perquisites.

We have, in fact, through sheer complacency and foolishness, put in power a class of men whose equipment, mental and otherwise, for politics was as slender as their means of livelihood—a class of hungry, indigent men, unscrupulous, uncouth, unpolished and repulsive.

This is the fruit of socialism, the price the country has to pay willy nilly.

VI

A people who have passed through a long travail of slavery, as in India, would be expected to be naturally apprehensive and sensitive to all risks and threats to their Freedom. They would also be expected jealously to guard their Freedom. They would also be sensible enough to know that Freedom can be lost more easily from an attack from within than from external aggression. In recent times the world has become familiar with the technique of the Fifth Column and subversion from within, and it is common knowledge that the agents of these activities are the natives of the country in the process of being subverted. One would imagine that a great deal of common sense is not required to understand that some discrimination has to be employed to make out friend from foe. It cannot be assumed by rule of thumb that all the nationals believe in the same kind of Freedom for the country, and those who flaunt their efforts during the old struggle for independence are no exception to this rule. The least the people could do would be to make clear the issue of the type of Freedom. There is a distinct risk that the type of Freedom in the mind of the few who control the ruling party might not be the type generally understood by the large majority of the people. In their

minds, Democracy might mean Peoples' Democracy.

The smug complacency with which risks to Freedom are ignored is dismaying to say the least. It is taken for granted that Freedom will somehow be preserved forever. Great faith is placed upon the leadership whose infallibility is not questioned. In blind admiration of leaders all critical faculties are surrendered, judgement held in abeyance and pious hopes in plenty expressed that all is bound to be well in the hands of the leaders. No one seems seriously to have asked whether all is going right for the leadership or the people at large. The previous discussion has brought out the existence of a distinct cleavage between the interests of the people and the leaders. It has been pointed out that the rigors of socialism imposed on the people have not stood in the way of the leaders' efforts to become rich quick. While the leader loudly preaches the scaling down of incomes of others, his own he essays brazenly to increase.

Narrowness of vision and the lack of a critical faculty are to some extent responsible for the chaotic conditions prevailing in the sphere of politics in this country. Instead of the existence of a strong Opposition fighting the dictatorial tendencies of the government at every step, we have small opposition groups whose constant lament is that the government is not radical enough in its expropriatory measures and in limiting freedom further! Whilst the Congress Mikdado sits on the throne trying to fit 'punishment to crime', the opposition stands in the wings to cheer and applaud.

The rise to power of an indigent, unscrupulous class of men in the wake of the Mikado has corrupted politics: that is pretty plain to all but the blind. But that is not all the damage done. Their example has vulgarised society. The lowest of the low takes pride in insulting his superior; he is aggressively assertive of his imagined rights and completely ignorant of his obligations. A general attitude of irresponsibility and hostility to his betters is blatantly in evidence.

The existence of a personality cult in India has been referred to already. Closed and regimented societies have been blamed as its origin, but in India we have the same on a much bigger scale. In the former countries it was imposed by force; in our country the adulation of one person is the result of national hysteria and a complete surrender of judgement. The large majority of squalid politicians who have managed to find a comfortable seat on the socialist bandwagon and derive an income therefrom have completely suppressed any qualms they had, and swear night and day their loyalty to the faith of socialism in practice in India. Their vested interest in socialism is understandable. After all, in a poor country like India a reasonable source of income is the first consideration. Nowhere in this country is a better living more easily made than in politics or alternatively as a hanger-on of the politician. But what of the other classes of the society? The teachers, lawyers, doctors and engineers, how have they stood by the country and the society? With rare exceptions, they have not allowed their critical thoughts to stray from the immediate need of making a living. That is not entirely their fault. The middle classes in India, to which the professional classes belong, have been ground down between the crushing stones of Taxation and Inflation.

Education to this class has always been a means to an end—a means to livelihood. Blessed with a narrow outlook by tradition, this class has always turned a blind eye to all that did not immediately bring more grist to the mill. The drabness of their lives and the lack of an intellectual outlook is incredible, the inanity of their conversation depressing, and absence of interest in art or humanities an outstanding feature.

All this has something to do with the curious phenomenon in India of the lack of influence of the educated classes in society. In advanced societies the educated exercise a great deal of influence on the less enlightened; they are looked upto and respected. The educated, on their side, feel it their duty to pass on the benefits of edu-

cation, as far as possible, to the masses. To that end, they always find time to engage in social activity of one kind or another for the benefit of the masses. In India, with very few exceptions, the educated have kept themselves isolated from the masses and when they have engaged in social work, they have done so more with the motive of self-advancement than altruism, trips abroad being the current coin for such rewards. In their isolation one can detect an element of disdain which, in turn, has produced an attitude of hostility in the lower classes. The latter are more inclined to make fun of the ways of the educated than to take a leaf out of their book. The outcome of the interplay of these forces has been deplorable in the sphere of politics. Leadership of society, the rightful preserve of the enlightened classes, has passed into the hands of the half-educated, uncouth and unpolished agitators. It cannot be denied that this process of usurpation has received a great deal of encouragement—overt and covert—from the Party in power in general and its Leader in particular. The motive of this encouragement could form the subject of another essay. Here, it may be stated in brief: the aim is to pack the Party with a large number of men who would not bring to politics very wide knowledge or experience, and, for economic reasons emphasised already, would not be courageous enough to put any opposition to the gradual process of increasing control over all facets of life in society, leading to ultimate communisation.

The educated in general and the government servants in particular, whenever they congregate in a group of their own ilk, give free reign to their opinions about those in power under whom they have to serve. But I have not come across anyone who went beyond criticism to suggest any practical way in which they, in their own humble way, could do something to circumvent the approaching disaster. For that matter there are hardly any groups, or clubs, or gatherings where classics, drama or poetry is read or recited. The number who keep them-

selves informed of recent literary publications must be negligible.

An attitude has developed among the educated to regard the politician as a rogue and scoundrel, to condemn him roundly and then accept all that he does. They shrug their shoulders in despair; politics is too dirty a game to soil their hands with. It would not be easy to determine precisely the part played by the female in the development and growth of the attitudes outlined above, but it is certainly not negligible. To begin with, it cannot be gainsaid by even the most charitably inclined that women in India continue to be disproportionately unenlightened even though a great many are educated. Their chief concern in life is still confined to the household and the family. The number of women, for example, who consider it right and becoming to engage in social activity of one sort or another for their less fortunate sisters must be considerably smaller than that of men similarly inclined.

If, however, this failing of Indian women were counter-balanced by greater devotion to the intelligent bringing up of the family, the charge of sluggardliness could not be maintained. But the real state of affairs is deplorable. The homes too are not presentable and the extent of healthy influence of the family on the offspring can be easily measured by the uncouthness of the youth. There seems to be no very widespread evidence that she has succeeded in creating an atmosphere at home which would raise the moral standards of society and help raise a forthright and straightforward offspring. She does not appear to exercise any restraining influence on her husband in his public life, if he has one. One look at the wives of the mighty leaders could corroborate that charge. Men in the public life of India appear to function in isolation. They take care to leave their wives at home while they engage in public activities. Many of the wives of the political bosses of the New Class would hardly edify the public gaze. Woman has not emerged from the medieval frame of mind when she was

taught to admire all the actions of her husband. Such dutiful obedience and acceptance is, no doubt, conducive to a high degree of harmony between husband and wife and extremely pleasant and flattering to the male, but it can hardly be expected to generate a healthy atmosphere in society at large. A man's actions would become circumspect and conform to moral standards only if he is aware that he is watched carefully by his wife and family and would be exposed to severe criticism for his lapses by his family.

There is one other sector of society which is influential and therefore has to be considered here. That is the business community in which is included the industrialist. This community, by virtue of being an employer on a large scale, is in a position to influence society by its own example as well as by precept.

With astounding lack of foresight, the ancient law-givers of Hindu Society relegated the businessman to an inferior status. Little did they realise that one day the head of the leaders of society would roll in the dust, that the contemptible businessman would become the most powerful class in the society and replace the Brahmin. It was an unfortunate lack of vision to stigmatise a whole class. It cannot, however, be denied that to date, with very few exceptions, the businessman has not come by a prepossessing personality. If what he is today is any criterion for us to estimate what he was in olden days, the law-givers could hardly be at fault. This should not be taken as a wholesale condemnation; there are many good businessmen and industrialists who are not forgetful of their duties to the country but, by and large, the exceptions are rare and the majority is true to type.

If the businessman was degraded by society at the instance of the shortsighted law-giver, the businessman, in his turn, did his best to degrade and succeeded in degrading business. For a long time, he set himself against modern education as well as training in business and set his mind

against any wind of change, lest it penetrate his old notions. His degradation turned him against society; he became anti-social and wreaked his vengeance on society by losing all humanitarian considerations and occupying himself with the sole purpose of acquiring money. His very soul became greed and acquisition. No better description could be produced of him than the one given to Alan Campbell Johnson by a Fleet Street editor: men with no principles save the acquisition of money, men without taste or culture, who eat bad food in ugly houses (*Mission with Mountbatten*. Page 35). His integrity is brought into bold relief by the still current practice popular with him of maintaining a minimum of three sets of accountbooks; one for himself, one for his partner and one for the income-tax authorities. His opposition to modern methods of business and finance broke down when he discovered that a joint stock company offered a better, more impersonal and covert means of diverting public funds to his own purpose.

More than anyone else in the current Indian conditions, it is the business man who stands to gain by the preservation of Free Enterprise. Yet he is the one who is inclined to do the least for it beyond lip sympathy of which he gives plenty. As long as money is coming in, he is the least inclined to think of tomorrow. The manner in which he chases authority, political or executive, corrupts it or purchases it, is not only incredible; it is a measure of his debasement. It has not yet occurred to him that the money he is busy making today with shady means could be taken away from him by a grasping Government in less than the twinkling of an eye.

We come to the sad and depressing conclusion that Indian society, which should be deeply concerned about threats to liberty and jealously guard it, is apathetic and smug in its fond and foolish belief that everything will come all right by the grace of God. Such a people only God can help.

Racial Themes in the American Negro Novel

By J. A. RAMSARAN

WORDS bandied about in a discussion of what, for want of a more concise label, is called the Negro novel, that is, fiction written by Negro novelists chiefly dealing with Negro life, are *identity, affirmation, integrity, assimilation, engaged and disengaged*. But whatever terms are employed, and whatever aspects of Negro life or black-white relations are being described, the dominant notes are fear, hate and anger. Captive to these emotions the only freedom most Negro novelists seem to enjoy in spite of NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People) and ACHR (American Council on Human Rights) is the freedom of writing on squalor, crime, delinquency—all generously mixed with sex.

Harlem is no longer Canaan—the Black Jerusalem, or 'Nigger Heaven'—to use the title of Van Vechten's novel which appeared in 1926; Chicago is no more simply the Yankee El Dorado for migrants from the Deep South, although they continue to come up North—not only American Negroes from the South, but also Puerto Ricans, U.S. citizens from the Caribbean. When Claude McKay, the Jamaican, went to America he was going 'Home to Harlem', the title he used for his novel in 1928. The 'Negro Renaissance' had already started in the 'twenties, and the black man was beginning to show signs of a discontent with the role of second-class citizen in a third-class paradise. That discontent has grown into the clamour for desegregation and integration, and has found literary expression in the 'protest' novel.

Frank London Brown, the author of *Trumbull Park* (1959) dealing with the difficulties of a Negro family settling in a white housing estate in Chicago, when

asked whether his novel was a 'protest novel', protested that it wasn't. Protest was addressed, he thought, to those who were the cause of one's disabilities, and it implied a certain amount of supplication. He maintained he hadn't written expressly for white readers but for his own people in their own idiom; and his intention was to rouse them to self-awareness. He had produced a novel of statement, not protest.

Statement or protest, most social novels by Negroes follow this set pattern: grievances and disabilities are realistically presented, that is, with the already mentioned ingredients of fear, hate, anger and sex—all cumulatively amounting to an indictment of so-called American democracy, the historical result of historical accidents and historic blunders. At least one redeeming feature of this much vaunted democracy, a feature evident long before the Supreme Court's ruling on desegregation, is the right claimed and exercised in the North by black writers to protest. It is more than twenty years since the most powerful of Negro protest novels appeared in the form of Richard Wright's *Native Son*; and its chief character, Bigger Thomas, may be regarded as the prototype of subsequent protest heroes in Negro fiction.

The Negro as a kind of marginal man of American society is treated in Wright's second novel, *The Outsider* (1953). Cross Damon, the outsider, is motivated by a compulsive power lust which destroys him as surely as communism destroys the individuality of man. By 1953 Wright had ceased being a fellow-traveller and *The Outsider* was partly a statement of his disillusionment. If anything, his second novel has more violence than his first, but *Native Son* is the more savage of the two. Yet the

story has occasional passages of genuine pathos when the blazing fire of an all-consuming passion gives way to the darkness of the suspended will. In such moments the silence is more eloquent than the ranting about Bigger asserting his manhood by acts of mutilation and murder.

The most outstanding novel of recent years to handle the subject of the Negro's growing self-awareness and the need for self-integration is Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952). Gradually yielding himself to the power of Louis Armstrong playing the Blues, the chief character is moved 'to put invisibility down in black and white, to make music of invisibility; to answer the question

'What did I do
To be so black
And blue?'

As he listens to the music subconscious race memories give meaning to his personal experience and the moment of illumination reveals that he has found himself:

'All my life I had been looking for something, and everywhere I turned someone tried to tell me what it was. I accepted their answers too, though they were often in contradiction and even self-contradictory. I was naive. I was looking for myself and asking everyone except myself questions which I, and only I, could answer. It took me a long time and much painful boomeranging of my expectations to achieve a realization everyone else appears to have been born with: That I was nobody but myself. But first I had to discover that I am an invisible man.'

The novel is brilliantly conceived and executed with the deftness of a juggler who keeps a number of balls going around in the air to create the illusion of an unbroken ring circling around. In the course of the story Ellison brings in subjects wholly or partly germane to the main theme of the invisibility of the Negro, an

invisibility both objective and subjective — the white man's inability to see the Negro as a human being, and the Negro's own unawareness of his identity. As a result of this 'invisibility' he fails to integrate in his being the disparate elements of his experience, to absorb into his mental circulation the various influences of North and South as naturally as the air breathed into his lungs.

This theme of identity and integrity appears to be an obsession with many Negro novelists and with the Negro intellectuals generally. In a search for themselves they ransack the Negro's past: slavery, the Civil War, the Reconstruction, the New Deal (and the 'raw deals'), and, now, the newfound mystique of *Negritude* or American style African Personality — a myth, or is it a bogey? In a land where colour-blindness is a social disease and colour-consciousness a social obligation, in the South at least, it is quite possible that belief in the blackness of black as being superior to the whiteness of white will spread a new doctrine as iniquitous as the one it hopes to supersede. Identification with Africa through *Negritude* to the exclusion of non-African strands in the fabric of American life breeds a cultural chauvinism, and leads to an hysterical denunciation of the 'assimilationist Negro' described in *A Raisin in the Sun* as 'someone who is willing to give up his own culture and submerge himself completely in the dominant, ...oppressive culture.' What is in reality the American Negro's heritage? James Baldwin, in a kind of apologia to be found in his *Notes of a Native Son*, writes:

The most crucial time in my own development came when I was forced to recognise that I was a kind of bastard of the West; when I followed the line of my past I did not find myself in Europe but in Africa. And this meant that in some subtle way, in a really profound way, I brought to Shakespeare, Bach, Rembrandt, to the stones of Paris, to the Cathedral of Chartres, and to the Empire State Building, a special atti-

tude. These were not really my creations they did not contain my history; I might search them in vain forever for any reflection of myself. I was an interloper; this was not my heritage. At the same time I had no other heritage I could possibly hope to use — I had certainly been unfitted for the jungle or the tribe. I would have to make them mine — I would have to accept my special attitude, my special place in this scheme — otherwise I would have no place in *any* scheme.

This admirably states the dilemma of the Negro intellectual, and this ambivalence of acceptance-rejection operates most of the time both on the conscious and subconscious levels in fiction today.

The love-hate complex in the race relations of the South *and* of the North springs largely from the days of slavery when white masters fathered a brood of bastards on their black slaves and concubines. In addition white children then, and this still operates to some extent today, found a warm protective love in their mammies while they hardly associated their own mothers as intimately with the most impressionable period of their infant lives. So the puritanical South especially placed the white woman on a pedestal to be worshipped, but gave its warm affection and fleshly attentions to black mammies and mistresses. The almost pathological race hatreds and sex neurosis of the South must derive from these historical facts in some degree. Hence also the fascination the subject of rape seems to have for writers and readers — a fascination heightened by insinuations about the alleged hyper-sexuality of the black male. All these factors operating in the perfervid imagination confuse the desire with the deed. Time and again the Negro is depicted as a rapist scapegoat of the white man's fear and hatred. Non-Negro writers, too, notably William Faulkner in his *Intruder in the Dust* (1948), have exploited this theme. The self-seduced 'white goddess' seeking to satisfy her curiosity is

the counterpart of the Negro rapist; but she is never really convincingly portrayed. Ann Petry, a leading Negro novelist of today, becomes partisan when she treats the subject in *The Narrows* (1953).

When mutual attraction of black and white takes its natural course, disregarding social sanctions or defying sanctions and legislation, the result is generally unsatisfactory — often disastrous. The most pathetic cases are those of men and women who, passing for white, are weighed down by the burden of their secret and torn by the inner conflict of divided loyalties; for in such cases, unlike James Baldwin's, the lines of Europe and Africa converge. But nowhere in Negro writing is there anything as moving as Faulkner's *Delta Autumn* which treats such a convergence with rare sensibility. The South, of course, contends that the heart is not changed by legislation, and is bitterly critical of Yankee liberalism which it calls blindness, if not hypocrisy. Desegregation by an act of the Supreme Court may not be the cure for rooted maladies of the heart, but Negro novelists, in their apocalyptic zeal, do not help matters when their hearts 'don't bother with thinking up words that fit together,' — to use the words of the character in *Delta Autumn*. The theme of 'passing' has attracted Negro writers, from time to time, at least since the beginning of this century. Chesnutt, in 1900, wrote on the subject; and Weldon Johnson, in 1912, published *The Autobiography of an Ex-Coloured Man* moderate and subdued in tone and still readable. But novels on 'passing' generally show self-deception on the part of the near-white and their desire to impose on society as a betrayal of the Negro cause which reaps its just punishment. There is a tendency to ridicule or shout and denounce instead of to understand and pity.

A subsidiary theme intimately bound up with racial obsessions is the part played by the Negro in the economic development of the country. First as slaves and then as sharecroppers after emancipation, during the Reconstruction, Negroes along with

poor whites provided the labour exploited by the rich whites, a small minority of the Deep South, to amass their fortunes. The poor whites were little better off than the blacks, but they were at least white, and therefore 'superior' to the Negro. The rich whites made capital out of this situation by playing up this 'superiority' and thus boosting the ego of the poor whites, and at the same time underpaying them and blaming the low wages on Yankee liberation of Negro slaves, freight charges, etc. The poor whites as a result looked down upon the Negro as a person to be kept in his place. It was in the interest of the rich whites to encourage this attitude so that when the trade union movement came South the Negroes were kept out, and the poor whites were so much the weaker since there could be no collective bargaining of poor whites and Negroes. A novel like John Killens' *Youngblood* (1955) gives a graphic account of the Negro struggle to get fair treatment at the hands of employers. It shows, too, the fear and hatred of the white mill hands who kept the Negroes out of the unions, attacking them physically at the slightest provocation and often resorting to lynchings. Of course, everything was Jim-Crowed — unions, street-cars, trains, restaurants, schools and churches. And Jim-Crowism caught on even in Yankeeland as more and more Negroes moved up to Canaan and the Harlem heaven.

It is not generally known that Negroes also migrated to the West. During the last war efforts were made to integrate black and white workers in shipyards and factories to produce war materials. Chester Himes wrote two novels on black-white relationships in California: *If He Hollers Let Him Go* (1945) and *Lonely Crusade* (1947). Friction is caused by such situations as black foremen having to direct white workers under them; but once again race animosities are intensified by sexual desires and trumped-up charges of rape. Today integration appears to be working well in California; and these novels of Himes show the first steps towards that

integration and what it meant to both races in emotional conflict and self-adjustment. However, these novels are very much like Wright's in their violence and protest. *Lonely Crusade*, like *The Outsider*, focuses attention on the working of communism; but in addition it treats of Negro-Jew relations which leave much to be desired. Some novels on New York life have also touched upon this latter aspect of racial uneasiness in New York. More recent developments in the relations of minority groups have resulted from the immigration of a considerable number of Puerto Ricans, chiefly Spanish-speaking at first, who apparently wish to preserve their identity as a group distinct from Negroes. Travelling by the subway in New York one frequently overhears conversation in Spanish; and Puerto Ricans are pushing further west in Chicago.

It would not be right to give the impression that Negro novelists write only on racial tensions in the U.S.A. Some have turned their attention to delinquency among young Negroes in New York and Chicago. Mark Kennedy's *The Pecking Order* (1953), subsequently reissued under the more appropriate title of *Boy Gang*, describes a day in the life of boys who roam the streets and alleys of the squalid Negro quarters of the South Side: they fight among themselves, steal from shops, make off with a car and end up disastrously on the Outer Drive. Julian Mayfield has written two short novels: one, *The Hit* (1957), on a popular form of gambling known as 'numbers'; the other, *The Long Night* (1958), relates the adventures of a boy of good intentions who comes up against a gang and just escapes disaster. A Negro writer of repute who has treated the life of crime much more comprehensively than the writers just mentioned is Willard Motley whose chief character in *Knock on Any Door* (1947), is Nick Romano, son of Italian emigrant. This novel and its sequel, *Let No Man Write My Epitaph* (1958), can stand comparison with the trilogy of James Faraell, *Studs Lonigan*, considered the classic on this as-

pect of American civilisation, or lack of civilisation. Both novels are based on Chicago life. Of all these novels only Mark Kennedy's seems to imply that racial disadvantages predispose the Negro to social vice. The others rather lay stress on the general malaise of society where human personality is held cheap and where justice is corrupted for personal or group benefit — political and industrial.

American Negro novelists of today speak for the majority of the fifteen million black people in the U.S.A., and, perhaps, for others elsewhere. Their novels, except for the few on non-racial themes like the 'costume novels' of Frank Yerby, represent the thinking aloud of Negroes and mainly serve the purposes of social documentaries. But they do not voice what all Negroes are thinking all the time: it needs much more than documentary to do that; it needs art to capture something of the deeper longings beneath the confusion of thoughts and the clamour of colour, class or creed. Paule Marshall's recent first novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones* (1959), though having some of the stock ingredients of the Negro novel, reveals an indefinable tenderness and poetic intuition that one had despaired of ever finding in this type of novel. The author, born of West Indian Barbarian parents living in Brooklyn, is a first generation American who has travelled in the West Indies and studied for a period in Jamaica. Perhaps, because of this she

has been able to achieve a certain detachment from the life she describes. But she is not the only Negro novelist of recent years to capture something of the poetry of the Negro's experience. James Baldwin, who admits his inability to write on the Negro question which he thinks is too much and too badly written about, himself achieved something of poetic insight into orthodox revivalism: *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1935) is the only novel that treats this particular theme without degenerating into Negro hysterics. These two novels, at least, have the documentary plus the insight which is necessary along with other things, to raise the novel to the level of art.

As long ago as 1900 Paulino Elisabeth Hopkins in her novel, *Contending Forces*, said about fiction writing:

No one will do this for us; we must ourselves develop the men and women who will faithfully portray the inmost thoughts and feelings of the Negro with all the fire and romance which lie dormant in our history, and as yet, unrecognised by the writers of the Anglo-Saxon race.

Whatever she may have meant by the 'Anglo-Saxon race', the time has come when the Negro novel as a social phenomenon of some significance for the world must be reckoned with by sociologists and students of literature alike.

Tamil Womanhood Down the Ages

By HEPHZIBAH JESUDASAN

THE progress of Tamil womanhood is an exciting study. It is not that Indian women of the south are themselves of particular interest, or of finer and nobler calibre than women in other parts of the world. That would be an extravagant assertion. It is understandable that, given the same opportunities, she would be quite up to all that her Western or Northern sister is capable of. Yet the study of the Tamil woman covers the time-limit of almost twenty centuries of Tamil literature, for which space of time she is seen in direct or indirect relationship with the political and social changes of her people. It is not women of all countries or peoples that we can observe against such a changing background for such a length of time. Hence we might as well make use of the opportunity. We shall look at the Tamil woman from three different points of view: first, her appearance; secondly, her position in society; thirdly, her own contribution to the literature which reflects her.

Never perhaps does woman consider her appearance the least part of her personality. Nor perhaps does man quite think so either. Hence it would not be out of place to glance at it here. It would go without saying that in Dravidian eyes the Dravidian woman is, or at any rate was, beautiful. The lover may see Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt. Why not in a Dravidian brow? She is not, she certainly was not, a fair woman. It is remarkable that the Sangam conception of a beautiful complexion is not what it is today. The Mongolian perhaps finds gold the only right shade for a woman's skin. The white man praises the roses in the white woman's pink cheeks. Everywhere man has had an eye for beauty, particularly on the face of the

woman he loves. Why not the Dravidian? The Sangam poet invariably sees in the complexion of the Sangam woman the beauty of a glorious yet familiar sight to him — that of the mango tree covered with tender leaves. Anyone who has seen the tender leaf of the mango will recognize the shade and texture — ranging from dark purple to a light mauve, with a silky finish. That is the Dravidian woman's skin in the bloom of youth. 'Maamai', the Sangam poets, with their love of realism, call it. The accessories to this beauty are of lesser importance since they do not change with time. She has kept her glossy black hair and her blue-black eyes, eyes of which Ilango says they are 'not hyacinths, but cruel, cruel,' and Kamban, 'eyes that run to the ears, and are bigger than the sea!' But something has happened with time to 'maamai'. In Sangam days the golden colour was invariably a sign of pallor, and 'maamai' the only right shade for beauty. But the Aryan entry changes matters. Eventually 'maamai' for a woman's complexion takes a secondary place to a golden one. The lime-fruit and gold become the choice literary comparisons. And maybe the habit of using turmeric, to impart a yellow gloss to the skin, comes from the desire to possess the approved colour. There is no evidence whatever of the Sangam girl using turmeric to colour her complexion yellow. Today there are dark Tamils and brown Tamils, and there are also a handful of fair Tamils who have derived their complexion from elsewhere, but no longer does a Dravidian mind find much beauty in 'maamai'. It may be that complexes do change our conception of beauty, and it is true that today through force of circumstances the Tamil is often

complex-ridden. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why the modern Tamils, man and woman, regret 'maamai', and wish ineffectually for a lighter or even paler skin. Yet whether they want it or not, even today in Tamilnad, the land abounding with mango trees, the tint of its dark mango buds is on most of its women.

The woman's role in society is, after all, of more importance than her appearance. And her role, too, has changed with the changing times. It is sad to reflect that Tamil womanhood has not maintained the prestige and status of Sangam times, and even the activities of the Freedom Movement and the work of men like Subramania Bharati and Tiru. Vi. Ka have not fully restored the Tamil woman to her ancient rights. That is not to say that the Sangam age was an absolute paradise for woman. After all it was a masculine, almost a military society, where woman would naturally have to be content with playing second fiddle. Anything like the freedom of Western woman in the days of science and industrialisation is not to be expected. Woman was economically dependent on man and socially subject to him. There is even evidence of bride-price being paid. The matriarchal system is practically unknown, which is strange considering the fact that it is quite conspicuous in later society, particularly in groups having marriage connections with the Aryans, when paternal interest in the family becomes negligible.

To some extent then, the double standard does prevail in Sangam times. Obviously a woman is not expected to marry after her husband's death, while there is no indication of man's being bound to his wife's memory by sacred law. And besides, there is plenty of evidence that prostitutes were a very disturbing factor in society, and Sangam literature is full of the vexation that they can bring into home-life. When the Tamil man boasts of the chastity of the women of his country, let him not forget that the prostitute also was a specimen of Tamil womanhood. Yet there are some

strong factors in favour of a happy home life in Sangam times. One is that the prostitute is never honoured, not even in court-life. We do not come across a single prostitute commanding anything like respect or influence, unlike the aristocratic prostitutes of China, Japan and even Aryan tradition. Chozhan Nalankilli, before proceeding to face his enemy in battle, seals his heroism with the oath, 'If I do not fight valiantly, may my garlands mix with the garlands of false women.' Pootha Pandiyan, on a similar occasion declares, 'If I do not defeat the enemy, may I have to leave her of the beautiful eyes (his wife)'. One remembers that Sangam romance is nearly always the wife's romance, or the romance of the girl who shall be the wife. Hers is the love, and man's is mainly the protective, gracious acceptance of that love. It is woman's privilege, or destiny, to love passionately, and man's to rejoice in that love. While eroticism and the attitude of the Kama-sutra is quite absent from Sangam literature, prudery also is absent. Woman's sex-life is accepted as a major part of her existence, and to be true in that life is to rise almost to the status of a deity. No less a man than Tiru-valluvar says that a woman who worships her husband has but to command, and the rain will descend. In a land that depends for existence on the whims and fancies of the monsoons, this simply means that the prosperity of a land depends on its good women. Even in modern days of scepticism, religious and moral, we have to accept that the faithful woman is the mainstay of society. It is she who maintains the unity of home. After all, nothing, except religion, is likely to bind the normal man loyally to his wife as much as the consciousness of an honourable love and faith that he would not like to betray. In Tamil society of Sangam times, religion was not a strong factor. What else could keep a man bound to his home, if not the devoted love of his wife? Hence the worship of noble wifehood becomes almost a religion with the ancient Dravidians, and it is fully in keeping with their chivalrous instinct. Wifehood, rather than mother-

hood,—the latter being taken for granted, is the corner-stone of ancient Tamil society. It must be observed here that the ancient Tamils have no value for that chastity that is for ever to be enforced on woman, by the protection of her father, husband or son, as stated by Manu. Tiru-valluvar expressly states that the good woman is her own guardian. On her, of course, devolve the duties of home, and the bread-winner looks to her, not merely for the fulfilment of his emotional life, but for the discharge of his debts to society, such as the duties of hospitality. The Sangam woman is never shown in connection with her in-laws. Was she, or was she not, subject to them, as in later Tamil life under the spell of Aryan culture? It appears she was not. Besides the negative evidence in Sangam literature, in a major work of the next period we find two newly-weds sent house-keeping on their own account, all with the blessings of parents who did not want to interfere with their happiness. Child-marriage, we could say, is unknown, if we compare the marriageable age of the ancient Tamil girl with that of the ancient Aryan girl. This by itself is a decided factor raising the status of the ancient Tamil woman in her youth. Yet we observe that girls after puberty are kept as far as possible out of the reach of romance by vigilant mothers, though pre-marital romance and elopements are not unknown.

Yet another very strong factor in favour of the ancient Tamil woman is monogamy. For monogamy is the rule, consistently the rule at least among the masses. The few ancient passages that have been occasionally interpreted as showing the likelihood of polygamy, can generally be interpreted without injury to the theory of monogamy. True, a man does have 'women', in several instances, but these instances are, emphatically, not from the masses, where monogamy is tenderly, often touchingly, highlighted, as in the beautiful passage, where the warriors, before leaving for battle, "In kissing their sons' flower-like eyes, conceal their sorrow from *the wife*." Kings and chieftains might find excuses

for their fancies, and build round them an atmosphere alien to their tradition, though even they, too, are mostly subject to ideals of conjugal fidelity, and even among them *illāl* or *manaivi*, meaning 'she of the home', is used only in the singular. By the way this also proves that the home was run by the wife, not the mother. The Sangam poets also understand wifely jealousy, unlike Kanva of Sakuntalam, and wifely jealousy would be a terrible inconvenience in a polygamous society. And the ancient poets just ignore polygamy, as if it does not exist. Not one wife is shown in relation to her co-wife either by the Sangam poets or Tiruvalluvar. Hence the position accorded to the wife in early Tamil society is distinctly higher than in the mediaeval period.

In the Post-Sangam age one finds a conspicuous poet proceeding to idealise a prostitute on the level of a wife. Both are equally single-hearted in their devotion to Kovalan. Surely it is but a step, and a short one, from this to polygamy. For the first time in Tamil literature, a poet who wanted to show the tragedy of prostitution, has painted a prostitute in the most refined and delicate colours, with the result that the Tamil mind does not find it possible to throw stones at Māḍavi. It hardly stops to consider the injury that Māḍavi has done, however unwittingly, to Kannahi. Now the bought woman is, even today, not a completely unknown feature in Tamil society, though of course only where wealth abounds and the consequent vices breed. Artist and humanitarian though Ilango was, he has handled the situation so as to preclude the possibility of a hero in his epic. Kōvalan is, after all, a sorry piece of manhood, and both wife and prostitute rise to heights far beyond him. This lesson, however, is lost in the self-sacrifice that the man of luxurious habits in Tamilnad comes to expect of his wife, in comparing her with Kannahi.

The next age passes breathlessly before us, for it is the age of the great Bhakti Movement in Tamilnad—seventh to ninth century—in which one expects there is no time to think of women. The reverence

paid to good women is quite forgotten in new emotional trends, newly found passions. Yet society cannot go on without woman, and she does get involved in its currents. Sundarar, one of the major Saivite poets, married, not one woman, but two women. And the Bhakti movement brought down upon Tamil society a whole flood of Sanskrit literature and Aryan customs, neither of which was calculated to improve woman's status. Child-marriage; women's seclusion and absolute subjection to father, husband and son; and, worst of all, polygamy. With religious sentiments to enforce them, no wonder woman passes silently into the background. Whatever influence she exercised on man thereafter must have been as devoted slave in the background. Perhaps her power as mother rises in this context, and with it is laid the foundation of the Hindu joint-family system, where woman, denied the happiness of wifedom, ruled as mother. After all, womanhood must let off steam somewhere. Upper-class Tamil society, in so far as vested in the power of the men, tended naturally towards the adoption of Aryan customs, though there is little reason to think that they filtered down to the masses. Polygamy is generally an expensive luxury, beyond the means of all but the aristocrat, and it looks as though the impecunious man had still to be content to look for romance in the wife of his youth who took with him the challenge of poverty. Yet, as means improved for him, society had by now legalised the temptations likely to come within his reach. Jain and Buddhist influences must also have counted in the gradual degradation of Tamil womanhood, even though we observe that in the pre-Bhakti age they are able to do little in this direction, except perhaps to wean women of 'good' family from the arts.

The next great movement in Tamilnad is one of protest against the corruptions of organised religion,—the Siddhars'. Fearless and powerful writers, they brought down their whip with a crack on the worst features of organised religion, namely hypocrisy, casteism, and the substitution of elab-

orate rites and external cleanliness for the deeper human virtues. You would perhaps expect them to champion the cause of womanhood. Alas! The Siddhars, with their overpowering consciousness of sin and the temptations of this world, dragged woman also into the pillory. Poet after poet turns his battery upon this snare of human life, till upper-class woman in Tamil society must have been ready to sink for shame, shame of sex, shame of romance, shame of life itself. Already subject to the whims and fancies of man as dictator, she was now to find herself in the position of the Evil One, and far worse than Victorian was the prudery which all this brought down on her. Had it not been for the fundamental need that society has had of her, the Tamil woman of the upper class could easily have become an extinct species by now. Does any one wonder today at her reserve and shyness? But here again, her grief was one which did not touch her poorer and apparently unfortunate sister, who went through life conscious of but one Enemy, and that was poverty. Poverty breeds its own requirements, its own ethics, and its own crimes, and the woman of this class, by far the largest group in the Tamil life of this age, perhaps found her humble happiness in working shoulder to shoulder with her husband.

The British period brought a mass-awakening in the direction of woman's freedom. English education was an eye-opener in Tamilnad, despite all that its opponents have declared to the contrary. True, English education affected only the elite of the Tamil population, only the so-called upper classes, but then it was they that needed it most, for it was on them that social evils had fastened their claws, even before the Muslim entry. The British Government's forbidding of child-marriage and *sati* has had its salutary effect. So has women's education. Still custom dies hard, and here and there even today are isolated voices, mainly religious, raised in favour of the old customs. There is no guarantee that they will not come back, no guarantee whatever that the sheltered Tamil girl of

today will assert her rights or her daughters'. She has lived far too long in a patriarchal society, a tame dove, and the lessons that the West has given her of feminine freedom are often far from attractive.

There is yet another aspect of Tamil womanhood to be considered, namely her original contribution to Tamil literature. As the pulse rises and falls with the temperature, so we find her literary output rising and falling with her hold on Tamil society. Thus it is that her greatest literary activity is in the Sangam period, the Golden Age of the Tamils. What is remarkable about Sangam literature is that women of not more than labourers' classes are represented. Fine ladies might have written in the ancient Tamil anthologies, but then princesses and fine ladies have written in aristocratic literatures, even in Chinese and Sanskrit. Occasionally a fine lady gets the privilege of education, whatever be the customs of her society. But Sangam literature boasts of 'daughters' of the hunters, potters, kuravas etc., among the talents represented in the anthologies. Certainly not all the Sangam poetesses belong to the dancing class. It is evident that the Sangam age was the age of the ordinary woman as it was the age of the common man though under the protection of the kings, and the ordinary woman was then not forced behind the curtain. Our eyes are dim as we read of the respect paid to the remarkable Sangam poetess Avvai by Adiyaman, who gave her the Nelli fruit, guarantee of immortality, rather than eat it himself. And she richly deserved it.

Woman's activity goes down into the Bhakti Age, between the seventh and the ninth century A.D. Does all India know that the Morning Star of Tamil Bhakti poetry, and hence of Indian bhakti poetry, was a Tamil woman? She is simply known as *Kārai-kāl Ammai* or *Ammai*, the Lady of *Kāraikkāl*. And she was just the wife of a tradesman. Maybe she was not a major poetess herself, but she kindled the torch that set the whole of Tamilnad, and in its wake, the rest of India, aflame. There is

one major poetess in the Bhakti movement itself—*Āndāl*, a sort of spiritual great-great-grandmother of Mirabhai. *Āndāl* is one of the twelve *Ālvārs*, and her love of and devotion to Krishna are famous in song and legend. The beauty of *Āndāl's* poetry is like the beauty of China, so finished, so exquisite, and yet so fragile, that if you disturb a word out of its proper setting, the poetic effect is destroyed. *Āndāl* is the second great poetess in Tamil. Yet it is true, that after *Āndāl*, the voice of the Tamil woman has remained quite suppressed till recently, with one notable exception, namely, the second Avvai, the Avvai whom the Tamil children know, the People's Poetess, and the Singer-for-Gruel.

It is significant that this Avvai, one of the dearest personalities in Tamil literature, the most often-quoted Tamil poet without exception, the poet who is familiar friend and wayside companion to the Tamil labourer, and who also forces her way into the home of the Tamil aristocrat by the back-door, should belong to the beggar-class in Tamil life. She is one of those strange characters in Tamil literature, who fling their defiance at poverty and social humiliation, believing that there are things that can make the humblest immeasurably rich. Life is her chief teacher, though indeed she has picked up her prosody from more sophisticated quarters. What need she care for the conventions and social evils of high-class Tamil life, and how does she mind if the Siddhars or other preachers fling mud at her sex? Her philosophy of life may be saddening at times: 'What we eat is one measure; what we wear is four feet long; the thoughts that we think are eighty million.' But its ripeness of wisdom is not to be questioned, and the familiar phrases spring to our lips without effort. While she gives no impression of depth and magnificence like Kamban, and no serious and studied reflection like Tiru-valluvar, yet there is perhaps no Tamil who has not known, or repeated Avvai, and Tamil literature would not be itself without her. She is indeed its most characteristic feature. In

what other language has woman played a role equal to hers?

After this Avvai, the Avvai of the twelfth century, 'the rest is silence'. One does not doubt the existence of mute inglorious Avvais, all the time, but just here we are concerned only with the women who find literary expression. The atmosphere is far too masculine for woman to assert her personality in high-class literature, and till very recent times she seems to have confined her songs to the cradle—the one stronghold of hers that has never been questioned,—her permanent sanctuary

through the ages. Today, however, she attempts to speak in literature again. In fiction, short-story, and even literary discussion, she participates, though she still does not speak from all ranks of society, and though we have not yet had a third great Avvai. But Avvais are uncommon phenomena, and no one knows how many centuries may elapse before we have another instance of Tamil womanhood in its ripest wisdom, before which the heads of men and women shall bow in reverence, and which shall pass into the daily life of a people.

"Ideology" in Social Change

By P. R. DASWANI

WE shall try to see here, with reference to social change, what ideology in general is, to what social function does it roughly correspond and what are the conditions of its realization in society. This short analysis will serve to provide the frame-work of thought within which an ideology may have to be construed, its limitations understood and its possibilities valued. Though the discussion revolves round the Communist ideology in particular—assuming it to be a somewhat familiar ideology to readers—it will not be difficult to see that it applies equally to other ideologies. The illustrative use of Communist ideology should not confuse the reader: no comparison of the merits of any other ideology with those of Communist ideology is intended. The purpose is to understand, with reference to social change, 'ideology' as a general concept without evaluating any of its particular forms.

WHAT IS IDEOLOGY?

Ideology is both a factor and a product of social change. It is a factor because from ideas springs action and from divergent social action springs social change. It is a product because no idea would emerge if there were not already a changed situation in society raising difficulties or problems both particular and general in nature. Thus Communist ideology is a factor in the world scene because it presents channels along which social change is desired and activated. The same ideology is a product of modern technological development resulting from rapid industrialization and consequent changes in social structure.

But mere ideas do not come to wear the

garb of an ideology though they are constituent elements in it. It is true that ideologies start from a narrow group of ideas pertaining to an aspect of social life. The comparative poverty of the 'working' class produced the seeds of Communist thought. But such scattered ideas alone would at best be opinions or views on particular problems. When they are raised to the plane of a social theory, which is made to cover the general relationships or values in a social group or society and ready to test itself by providing consistent and systematic answers to every social problem, maladjustment or difficulty, an ideology is in the process of birth. Thus Communist ideology must not only assert the importance of the 'working' class, it must give a theory explaining why and how the class is socially important. It must show that power in the State must belong to that class, that all economic wealth arises on account of it, that education preparing for technical excellence is the best education, that its interests require that the opposing class—the bourgeoisie—be exterminated and that a classless society, meaning the society of the working people, be created. A 'good' ideology must go a step further. It must find its justification in the realm of abstract thought. Communism must prove its worth by appealing to the history of the evolution of society showing that it is governed by dialectical materialism—a materialistic process involving a thesis, an antithesis and a synthesis. It must brand itself a scientific system—true to the philosophic tenor of the times. It must express its opinion on the place of religion in society. In short, it comes to compass the whole thought,

ideals and practice of society and to a lesser degree of the universe.

But the process of the formation of an ideology does not end here. A complete social theory, if it is the creation of an individual, would be an individual philosophy but not an ideology. Until Marx could found the Communist League and publish the 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', the group of ideas that he called Communism could only be called his individual philosophy. An organisation — however small — bringing together people who are supposed to be of nearly the same thought and bind themselves to work for the realization of their ideas is an essential requirement for the formation of an ideology. Until that organization comes into being the force of the ideas representing an advocated theory will be an unorganized force in the society — a complete system worth studying but with no perceptible direct influence. When it is backed by an organization it becomes an ideological force making its presence felt directly — a force which a responsible person must take into account and either accept or oppose, but which he can hardly afford to overlook. Even if a social theory were not the creation of a single individual but prevalent generally in society, in the absence of an organized attempt it would at best remain a 'doctrine' — for example, the *laissez faire* doctrine — but would not be an ideology. These two conditions — a more or less complete social theory and an organization backing it — are therefore necessary to constitute an ideology. It is however true that the existence of an organization may itself induce formulation of a social theory; it is not essential that such a theory should precede the attempt at organization. But unless the two combine no ideology can be said to exist in the strict sense adopted here.

FUNCTION OF IDEOLOGY IN SOCIETY

Next, what purpose does ideology serve in social change? We can see at any

moment, very generally speaking, two sets of forces acting on society — let us call one 'conservative' and the other 'radical'. Social change occurs through the interaction of these two sets of forces. Polarity between them occurs because society is always in a flux and because its progress is not uniform and balanced. Yet in becoming new it retains much of the old, though it can never remain the same old long enough. The radical forces tend to push it to new horizons — some attainable and others too visionary. The conservative forces tend to hold back change, and in doing so the attempt becomes partly salutary and partly futile. Without the radical element society will degenerate into senile weakness; without the conservative element it will leap into a stormy whirlpool. Both have their role in society: the actual course that society takes of course depends upon the logic of circumstances and the dictates of expediency. The role of ideologies corresponds to this role of social forces but is not identical with it. An ideology is never wholly conservative nor wholly radical. On one question the same ideology may take a conservative stand and on another a radical one. On one question it may appeal to the past wisdom, on another to the future vision. To classify ideologies into conservative and radical depending upon the 'dominant' element in each would be a facile over-simplification. Whenever the terms 'reactionary' and 'utopian', indicating a perverse conservatism and radicalism respectively, are used in respect of an ideology, they are so used with reference to a single question or a group of questions and are true only in relation to the viewpoint of the person using them. The doctrine of 'the withering away of the state' in gradual steps is to many a radical doctrine, but to an anarchist probably it is otherwise. The Congress economic programme in India is conservative in the eyes of a Communist, but to many it is radical. Communism itself, though in many ways radical, sometimes appeals to the pristine state of society when people

produced and enjoyed 'goods' in common, in other words, when they all lived as good Communists though on a lower level of existence. In spite of these difficulties of classification of an ideology, it is useful to understand the social function of an ideology in terms of the two general sets of forces in operation, to understand that an ideology is not necessarily in conflict with the course of society if it takes a conservative attitude on a group of questions nor fatal for the normal functioning of society if it takes a radical one.

CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS OF AN IDEOLOGY

The existence of an ideology by itself is not a guarantee of its success however. Social change may well occur along opposite or different lines. An ideology, however, presents, while it exists, an organized force — a persuasive insistent force — at one moment gaining ground, at another receding into the background, but always remaining an invitation to social action. Under what conditions does social action based on the ideology materialize is a different question. It depends upon external factors such as the force of other ideologies, the values, habits and customs of the people, and the so-called 'social realities', that is, those elements in the social milieu which need immediate and prior attention for the achievement of a satisfactory state of the society. In addition, it depends upon internal factors such as the vitality of the ideology, the inner strength of the organization propagating it and the fact of possession of those means which help in the realization of the objectives of the ideology in the context of existing circumstances. These conditions are not logically independent of each other; one may imply another. They may occur singly or in combination depending upon particular circumstances.

Thus in the present conditions in India the fact that a Communist ideology construed in the widest sense and not confined to its political aspect alone is in existence

does not of course mean that its success is on the way. Whether social action in future comes to be based on that ideology will depend upon how potent other ideologies have proved to be, how far the values and traditions of the Indian people permit its application, and the extent to which the economic interests of the lower classes have assumed importance in the society, for it is to those interests that Communism primarily makes an appeal. These are the external conditions. Success will also depend upon the extent to which the ideology adapts or reconciles itself to material facts or to the changes in the social environment and thus proves its potency for retaining logical consistency and social value. This was precisely what the Communists tried to do in Kerala, adapting themselves to the frame-work of parliamentary democracy and working within the requirements of the rule of law. How far they succeeded in reconciling their theoretical principles with these facts is recent history. Another requirement is that the organization should be able to present a united front. A dissension among its own ranks, however minor in the initial stages, may prove to be the greatest stumbling bloc to the successful realization of its ideology. But all this is not enough. There must be means available for the exploitation of the circumstances in which the organization finds itself. In present-day India an organization must be ready with a big machinery equipped with all resources for propaganda and public work to attract new adherents to its ideology and also, in the case of an organization with political aims, for successfully contesting in parliamentary elections. In the China of the nineteen-forties the Communists could exploit the situation because they had a well-equipped army ready to face the Nationalist forces and defeat them in battle. Under the circumstances then existing in China, the lack of armed strength would never have brought success to the Communists.

By the success of an ideology, however, is not meant the complete realization as a

fact of all its aims. It only means that the ideology has come to be accepted as the basis for action and, if necessary, for planning by the society. Even after this achievement, some of the aims may have to be greatly modified or forsaken in the light of experience. A basis for action is not the same thing as action itself. The acceptance of an ideology does not mean its complete realization. It is necessary to

keep this distinction clear in mind. Communism has been adopted by Russia since 1919 but one of its basic aims — that the State will wither away — has instead of approaching fulfilment receded farther from it. The principle of abolition of private property has received numerous modifications. Yet Communism has not lost the power to remain as the basis for social action in Russia.

To be tortured by tyranny is tolerable but to be deluded into the worship of a falsified idol is humiliating for the whole age which by chance is submitted to it.

There have been times when history has played tricks with men and through a combination of accidents has magnified the features of essentially small persons into a parody of greatness. Such a distortion of truth often finds its chance not because these men have an extraordinary power in themselves but because they represent some extraordinary weakness of those whom they lead.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

*Social and Political Ideas of Henry David Thoreau*¹

By RAJENDRA AVASTHI

THOREAU holds that there is something everlasting, a universal constructive genius, which underlies all creation. Thus all life is one. To this oneness, and not to small human segments, he clings and seeks to be united with. 'I am universal; I have nothing to do with the particular and definite', observes Thoreau. Human life implies oneness with Nature, and tensions prevail if this oneness is ignored. Man is primarily related to Nature and not tied to the institutions as is generally believed. So he is not only a social but universal organism. Nature is 'goodness crystallized' and a lover of Nature is pre-eminently a lover of man. The source of knowledge, as he explains, lies in the unity of soul with Nature. It "does not come to us by details but by 'Lieferungen' from the gods". It can be attained by living experiences. Facts must be translated by the individual in a way to be grasped by his senses and 'the truth respecting his things shall naturally exhale from a man like the odour of the muskrat from the coat of the trapper'. Philosophy or doctrinisation on the other hand, carries the recipients far from the facts and truths, and so to gain knowledge education must be based on living experience. 'Better dive like a muskrat into the mud, and pile up a few weeds to sit on during the floods, a foundation of your own laying, a house of your own building, however cold and cheerless'.

Truth is known with reference to the feeling that is within man and not to any outside standard. To realise truth man should seek the inward light and should suffer no authoritative intermediary between himself and Nature. Truth corresponds to love, because truth is realised by establishing a direct communication with

Nature, and with man through Nature since a lover of Nature is pre-eminently a lover of man; and since truth corresponds to love, to speak truth is to speak lovingly. 'The intellect should never speak; it is not a natural sound'. 'Man can only tell his relation to truth, but render no account of truth to herself'. 'A fact barely stated is dry... It must be the vehicle of some humanity in order to interest us... Ultimately the moral is all in all'. The basis of moral goodness is intuition. The cause of repentance is not that we have no faith, but that we have no faithfulness, for faith is earned by faithfulness.

Evil arises when man is not one with Nature. So, man is the cause of his happiness and also of his miseries. The responsibility lies wholly on him. To blame one's lot or to ascribe all that is evil to the circumstances neither solves the problem nor is justifiable. 'If this is sour, or that rough, or the other steep, let him think if it be not his work. If his look curdless all hearts, let him not complain of a sour reception; if he hobble in his gait, let him not grumble at the roughness of the way; if he is weak in the knees, let him not call the hill steep'. His life is not so bad as he himself is.

But since Thoreau holds that there exists the Ultimate Truth which can be grasped only by the divine grace, he also explains that evil cannot be completely eliminated from human life and can only be minimised. Disease is one of the permanent conditions of life; life is a struggle, and the diseases answer to the troubles and defeats of the spirit. 'It is as a seer that man asserts his disease to be exceptional'. But this does not mean that one should not strive for the eradication of evil. If one confi-

dently endeavours to advance forward to the goal, one will meet with success.

To minimise evil, man will have to look into himself first of all. That duty being fulfilled, the rest, that is, the reformation of society, will follow naturally and automatically for 'what we should do thereafter would be as vain a question as to ask a bird what it will do when its nest is built and its brood reared'. Economic and social reforms can do no good and can never be accomplished unless the individual reforms himself; and the former become superfluous with the accomplishment of the latter. A man as an individual can tune himself to Nature, and the society will be transformed if all do the same. But even if a few of them carry it out, then at least those few have saved themselves. All emotional heights and depths are completely resolved only in Nature. One who lives in the midst of Nature has his senses still, and can never suffer a deep melancholy.

Thus the starting-point must be the individual himself. His evils are not only the result of some such factors which are primarily concerned with the physis or the body, but are also the result of 'the stagnation of the spirit'. He should follow his impulses and should be driven neither by traditions nor by others' advice. The formula is: 'Follow your own genius', and be what you are, whether you are by your own nature a hunter, or a wood-cutter, or a scholar. Instead of submitting himself to external impositions the individual should be sensate and experience the realities subjectively. So to live a proper life is to live according to one's instincts but the instincts should be in harmony with each other and none of them should be preferred at the cost of the other.

The optimistic precepts in Thoreau's philosophy leave no margin for frustrations. Perseverance remains the centre of all human activities which overcomes frustration that is caused when the goal sought for is not achieved. Thoreau explains that though Nature be slow, yet it is sure, and

that it works no faster than need be. 'If every acorn of this year's crop is destroyed, never fear! She has more years to come. It is not necessary that a pine or an oak should bear fruit every year, as it is that a pea-vine should'. The individual should only fulfil his duties and admit no distinction whatsoever. Despair and postponement should have no place in such a process, for they mean cowardice and defeat respectively. An individual should mind only fulfilling his duties with a detached outlook, caring not for the consequences, and he will succeed ultimately because men are born to succeed and not to fail.²

Evil is minimised when man becomes conscious of himself and perceives the realities of life. One should be conscious not of the material gains or rewards but of the divine life, for to be thus conscious is to live. In this context Thoreau insists on the necessity of choice. One should voluntarily choose to live on as little of material things as one can, and thus to simplify one's living. For every inferior earthly pleasure we forego, a superior celestial one is substituted. Thus human relations should be based on confidence and faith instead of on pecuniary or material interests, because the only essential factor for friendship is that 'trust should have been reposed by the one in the other'. 'It is not words that I wish to hear or to utter, but relations that I seek to stand in. . . . If I can believe that we are related to one another as truly and gloriously as I have imagined, I ask nothing more, and words are not required to convince me of this'. The feelings of 'mine' and 'thine' should be eliminated and one should consider the other as one's own self. 'Let men cultivate the moral affections, lead manly and independent lives; let them make riches the means and not the end of existence, and we shall hear no more of the commercial spirit. . . . This curious world which we inhabit is more wonderful than it is convenient; more beautiful than it is useful; it is more to be admired and enjoyed than used.' Love is capable of any wisdom because it is a

mutual confidence which preserves harmony and balance.

Most of the ills of human life are resolved if the individual simplifies his living. For then, by accomplishing the necessities for his subsistence, man will have enough leisure to attend to the higher callings of life, while at present 'most men are so taken up with the cares and rude practice of life that its finer fruits cannot be plucked by them. Literally, the labouring man has not leisure for a strict and lofty integrity day by day.' 'It would be glorious to see mankind at leisure for once'. To be absorbed in the material life is to go astray and to nourish ignorance, for, to maintain oneself on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime. Money is a necessity in the present structure of society and every one needs a certain amount of it; but beyond that amount, it is a luxury which breeds evil and should not be acquired. For, the primary aim is to be free from all bondages, specially from the material cravings. One should love 'to indulge the mind rather than the body'. Hence 'the order of things should be somewhere reversed; the seventh should be man's day of toil, wherein to earn his living by the sweat of his brow; and the other six his Sabbath of the affections and the soul, in which to range this widespread garden, and drink in the soft influences and sublime revelations of Nature.' The individual should simplify his needs to the point where the very little money which he can earn will suffice. For, the soul can get along without the luxuries of the conveniences.

Underlying such voluntary poverty should be the idea that the material things are meant for all the living beings, and that to accumulate more than one consumes for his subsistence is to commit a sin against the race. Prudence, inasmuch as it means to hoard against the day of misfortune is to be discarded and faith should take its place. In the span of time, life is affiliated only to the present. 'I live in the present. I only remember the past, and anticipate the future. I love to live.' Thus

to bother about the morrow and to arrange for it in advance is to deny one's life. The mode of living only for the present will solve problems such as theft and robbery, for none will have more than he needs for the present. Not possession of material things but enjoyment should be every body's wealth, and this can be acquired only when one lives in the present and is thus free from past memories and future anxieties.

Even while earning one's livelihood one should be conscious that earning is also serviceable to mankind. All work should be an absorbing pursuit for then it combines the largest proportion of the powers and desires of man's nature. Such work integrates personality and keeps the person actively conscious of himself. 'A man had better starve at once than lose his innocence in the process of getting his bread'. 'To have done anything by which you earned money *merely* is to have been truly idle or worse. If the labourer gets no more than the wages his employer pays him, he is cheated, he cheats himself.' Cooperation in place of competition can be substituted if men have faith amongst themselves that they should live together and that each one of them should fulfil his duties. In spite of Malthus and the rest, there will be plenty of room in this world, if every man will mind his own business'.

The importance of physical labour is also explained in the context of earning one's livelihood. Everybody should work each day and should perform physical labour not only as one's duty but also for one's moral and spiritual development. Physical labour is a true method of refining one's thoughts; it makes the higher life and communion with Nature possible for the individual. But there is a limit to physical labour and it should not cross it. Men should not work if they are exhausted, for beyond that physical labour instead of leading to development will breed tensions. Nature has enough to supply the requirements of man; and man should follow to fulfil only the bare necessities of life. For

this a little work each day will produce enough to live on.

The machine as a labour-saving device reduces man's individuality and wipes out human elements. But this does not mean that the machine and all the material inventions of civilisation should be altogether dispensed with, much less its intellectual refinements. They should be accepted and employed adequately, for, 'though the race is not so degenerated but a man might possibly live in a cave to-day and keep himself warm by furs, yet, as caves and wild beasts are not plenty enough to accomodate all at the present day, it were certainly better to accept the advantages which the invention and industry of mankind offer'. The necessary step is to find out how many tools and conveniences are really necessary and at what point they begin to cost more in time and effort than they are worth. One should seek to get away not so much from the things that surround one as from the demands one has made upon oneself.

But the machine, as it is employed to-day, instead of curtailing the demands, increases them and introduces such a form of division of labour which proves disastrous. Due to such division of labour some are engaged in performing labour for the production of the means of subsistence while others get theirs without contributing their share of physical labour. As a result not only the labourer who works with the machine is robbed of the human qualities and impoverished in his personality-equipment, but those who do not work with it also bear the same lot. So, 'it is not the tailor alone who is the ninth part of a man; it is as much the preacher, and the merchant and the farmer'. The present social structure with its labour-saving devices and division of labour breeds unemployment and its allied evils. Thoreau, on the contrary, believes in a division of labour by which all perform the body-labour for the production of their necessities and thus all have leisure and opportunities for the higher pursuit of life also.

While dealing with social and political

problems, Thoreau observes that present institutions are sheer impositions and the least resistance on the part of the individual will bring them crumbling down.³ All the aims and values which the present organised society cherishes are radically wrong. The need is not to correct this or that recognised injustice or failure but its whole conception of what men should live for. Thus Thoreau is against business, government, and religious and social institutions. 'My desire for society is infinitely increased; my fitness for any actual society is diminished', he writes. For the highest type of life, he will suggest the abnegation of marriage and family life because he holds that the real significance of human life lies above and without sex, material interests and social institutions. Men commonly couple with their idea of marriage a slight degree at least of sensuality, whereas every lover believes in its inconceivable purity. Thoreau is sure that the design of God when he brought man nearest to woman was not propagation but rather maturation of the species, and so man is capable of love of woman quite transcending marriage. 'Woman is a nature older than I and commanding from me a vast amount of veneration—like Nature. She is my mother at the same time that she is my sister, so that she is at any rate an older sister. . . . I cannot imagine a woman no older than I'.

The State is an institution based on violence, and never confronts man's moral sense but only his body and physical senses. The government does not concern Thoreau much, and he bestows the fewest thoughts on it. He accepts in theory the motto that the best government is that which governs the least, and suggests that in practice it should imply that the best government is that which governs not at all. A State cannot be free from evils unless it recognises the individual as a higher and independent power wherefrom it derives its own authority. A really healthy society is not one in which all citizens actively participate in government but one in which no one thinks of participating. Though government be one of the vital functions of

society, yet the vital function should be performed in such an unconscious way as are the vital functions of the body. A healthy citizen should be no more aware of his government than a healthy man is aware of the functions of his body.

A good government aims at making life more valuable. So whenever it is felt that the government has become tyrannical and highly inefficient the people have the right to resist and revolt against it. Under such tyrannical government, it is not at all wise to wait till the majority acknowledges the tyranny. It is a revolution which can begin now, and which each man can make for himself. But the means applied for the purpose must be non-violent, for non-violence is the greatest strength and the strongest is always the least violent. It is a passive resistance to society signifying the refusal of the individual to engage in activities and competitions which he does not want to engage in. 'I quietly declare war with the State after my fashion, though I will still make what use and get what advantage of her I can, as is usual in such cases'. The technique is that of civil disobedience, and it is explained that 'under a government which imprisons any unjustly, the true place for a just man is also a prison. I know this well, that if one thousand, if one hundred, if ten men whom I could name, ay, if *one honest man*, in this State of Massachusetts, *ceasing to hold slaves*, were actually to withdraw from this co-partnership, and be locked up in the county gaol therefore it would be the abolition of slavery in America. For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be; what is once well done is done for ever'.

Thoreau is against democracy insofar as it results in the imposition of the majority and undermines the development of the individual's personality. Any kind of imposition, whether it be in the form of democracy or authoritarianism, is not acceptable to him since it implies coercion. Not man, but Nature alone is the great master, and man can hardly say anything for her. He opposes democracy because as

against man in the mob he is an advocate of the man with his individuality and personality. In a mob, the worst and most destructive features of man are brought to the surface while his constructive genius sinks down. So Thoreau is also against the popular institutions which represent mentality. Newspapers, magazines, churches are all destructive and dull. They are wrapped in a falsity which men must abnegate. They are of a sectarian character and express the superfluous activities of a few only.

Democracy is the rule of the majority neither because it is right nor because it is fairest to the minority but only because it is physically strongest. 'Seeing so many people from day to day, one comes to have less respect for flesh and bones, and thinks they must be more loosely joined, of less firm fiber, than the few he had known'. Democracy functions not through originality of excellence but demands at best an average man, that is, average thoughts and actions. In the modern democratic State with a vast territory, decisions by votes signify nothing: 'I cast my vote, perchance, as I think right; but I am not vitally concerned that right should prevail. I am willing to leave it to the majority'. 'Voting for the right is doing nothing for it; it is only expressing to men feebly your desire that it should prevail'. A wise man will not leave the right to the mercy of chance, nor wish it to prevail through the power of the majority. For, there is but little virtue in the actions of the masses. The problem which is to be dealt with is not the problem of the masses, but of each and every man. To leave one's own problems to be decided by the masses is to be careless to know the truth and the right. So Thoreau refutes laws made by such a government and justice established by it. The only government he recognises is that power which appeals to the conscience of the individual and thereby establishes justice in the land⁴. An individual should maintain himself in whatever attitudes he finds himself through obedience to the laws of his being, which will never be one

of opposition to a just government. 'We do not live by justice, but by grace'.

The remarkable point in Thoreau's philosophy is that he said what he himself practised. That way his philosophy may be regarded as a way of life. His starting-point was an impulse rather than an idea and his philosophy grew as he lived. Hence the emphasis on the regeneration of the individual in his philosophy. He considered external reforms as no more than having a secondary purpose and claimed that he came into the world not chiefly to make it a good place to live in, but to live in it, be it good or bad. He was primarily engaged in self-development and the love of freedom compelled him to rebel against the yoke of custom. All that is mechanical is the source of evil, and as a solution he offered that life should be sweepingly spontaneous and swimmingly progressive. He made his wants few and supplied them himself and thus chose to be rich and happy. The means for the enjoyment of life, he found in the bare necessities for subsistence. "The opportunities of living are diminished in proportion as what are called the 'means' are increased." When asked at table which dish he preferred, he answered 'the nearest'.

He held that regeneration is possible only insofar as each man regenerates himself and that all other attempts to save mankind are destructive. Thus he was determined to move away from public opinion, from government, from an institutionalised church, from education, and from society.⁵ He stuck to his individualism and practised his non-resistance and non-participation. He would not 'live in this restless, nervous, bustling, trivial, Nineteenth Century, but stand or sit thoughtfully while it goes by'. Emerson aptly remarks that it was much easier for Thoreau to say no than yes; and for not hating himself when he was constrained to say no, Stevenson says that Thoreau was 'almost shockingly devoid of weaknesses'.

He was convinced that his way of life dated back from an older era than the agricultural and that there was in his

nature a singular yearning towards all wildness. So he held that though gardening be civil and social yet it wanted the vigour and freedom of the forest and the outlaw. 'I want to go soon and live away by the pond, where I shall hear only the wind whispering among the reeds. It will be a success if I shall have left myself behind', he wrote, and three and a half years later he actually took up his residence by the ponds. Thus, as Henry Miller remarks, he was at home in Nature, where man belongs, and held conversation with bird and beast, plant and flower, star and stream. Emerson points out that snakes coiled around his legs, wild squirrels nestled in his waist-coat, fishes swam into his hands and he pulled them out of the water and the wood-chuck out of its hole; the foxes ran to him for protection when chased by the hunters.

Because of this wildness in his nature Krutch critically remarks that it is the solitary rather than the social aspects of life which seemed to Thoreau to be more important, the non-human rather than the human part of the universe the more significant, and that to him the proper study of mankind was not man but Nature. Krutch also remarks that the Robinson Crusoe Complex was very highly developed in Thoreau.

But it may be pointed out that Thoreau wanted to be away from the present society in order to establish communion with Nature, and thus it was not isolation which he wished or intended. If it be at all solitariness, it brought him a sense of richness rather than emptiness. At any rate, he was not an escapist as those who seek solitude usually are. He pointed out: 'It is in vain to dream of a wildness distant from ourselves... I shall never find in the wilds of Labrador any greater wildness than in some recess in Concord i.e., than I import into it'. As for Robinson Crusoe complex, it may be pointed out that he lived in solitude by his own choice and rejoiced in it, while such a complex is the result of one's helplessness and breeds pessimism. Thoreau, on the contrary, was

free from these traits, and Dreiser aptly remarks that because he was more primitive than modern, so he was more sensate than social, more optimistic than pessimistic¹. To realise the Greek formula 'Know thyself' and to practise the Kierkegaardian precept 'Choose thyself' Thoreau presented the 'Simplify thyself' formula as the means, and he himself applied that means. But even in theory he was not demanding or imposing any rigid standard of simplicity on others.

However, unlike the Quakers, Tolstoy and Gandhiji, his emphasis on non-violence was not thorough-going and comprehen-

sive. He was more a rebel against the existing social institutions than a preacher of non-violence. Emerson points out that there was something military in his nature, not to be subdued, always manly and able, but rarely tender, as if he did not feel himself except in opposition. Because of this, one of his friends once expressed that though he loved Henry yet he could not like him and as for taking his arm, the friend would as soon think of taking the branch of an elm-tree. Stevenson also remarks that Thoreau aspired to be an oriental philosopher, yet he was always a very Yankee sort of oriental.

¹ The quotations appearing in the article have been taken either from Thoreau's works or from *Living Thoughts of Thoreau*, (London, 1946) presented by Theodore Dreiser. For the remarks of R. W. Emerson and Henry Miller see Walter Hardings (ed) *Thoreau: A Century of Criticism*, (Dallas, 1954) and for R. L. Stevenson's and Joseph Wood Kitch's comments see their *Familiar Studies In Men And Books*, (London, 1900) and *Henry David Thoreau* (London, 1946) respectively.

² Cf. 'Think of the fox prowling through wood and field in a winter night for something to satisfy his hunger. Notwithstanding cold and the hounds and traps his race survives. I do not believe any one of them ever committed suicide'.

³ Cf. 'They want me to agree not to breathe too hard in the neighbourhood of their paper castles. If I should draw a long breath in the neighbourhood of these institutions, their weak and flabby sides would fall out, for my own inspiration would exhaust the air about them'.

⁴ Cf. 'The murderer always knows that he is justly punished: but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step towards its own dissolution'.

⁵ To quote Emerson: 'He was bred to no profession: he never married: he lived alone; he never went to church; he never voted; he refused to pay a tax to the State; he ate no flesh, he drank no wine, he never knew the use of tobacco; and, though a naturalist, he used neither trap nor gun'.

⁶ Dreiser explains 'primitive' as 'someone who is less dependent on men than most are today, and can see beyond a race, a time, or today, and praise the whole'.

LETTER FROM NEW YORK

By WILLIAM PHILLIPS

SUDDENLY, the cold war has begun to shake up the country. Official thinking has become tougher, though its consequences often remain a secret. A new right has been flexing its muscles. A wave of anxiety and frustration has swept over those who feel powerless, both on the left and on the right, though the effect on the intellectual left is very much different from that on the rest of the country. But since our system is designed to conceal rather than express change and conflict, many of these new attitudes have been cropping up in odd forms, almost eccentrically, and without disturbing too much the homogenized picture of American politics designed for home consumption as well as for export abroad.

The reasons for these changes are not hard to find. The cold war is unnerving in itself, but even worse is the feeling that no way out is in sight, as illustrated by the grim euphony of the choice of "red or dead". The idea has begun to sink in that American power is no longer absolute. Hence an overall policy becomes all the more important. But who knows whether it is possible to devise a policy that will at once satisfy something amorphous called the national interest and at the same time come to terms with the revolutionary movements breaking out all over the world? At the same time the range of speculation and action — outside of government — has been shrinking because 'the bomb' hovers over everything we do or think. The constant threat of nuclear destruction, even if it never happens, is destroying politics by reducing it to diplomatic manoeuvres and calculations.

The shock has been enormous. For the first time the idea of progress, which really boils down to the notion that everything will become better by remaining the same, can no longer be counted on to keep up our spirits in times of stress. The feeling is growing that history, which we assumed

to have an inner logic, may have gotten out of hand. Not to know what lies ahead of us has become the accepted view. And since Americans have always favoured the empirical over the ideological, the lack of perspective has been converted from a national prejudice into an historic truth.

The old theory that crises make for polarization certainly seems to be working today. I don't know whether the right or the left is growing, probably neither in the conventional sense. But there has been new life at both ends, and one can say that on the right the old 'know nothingism' has invaded the area of foreign policy, while on the left various anti-nuclear movements, of which unilateralism is the most extreme have taken a stand in the name of moral sanity. Both trends come from frustration, though the emphasis on the right is on readiness to die, while on the left the stress is on staying alive.

The new right, which runs from Senator Goldwater and the National Review, to the John Birch Society, and for the first time has picked up some following on college campuses, thrives on the fear of communism and the failure so far to come up with a simple panacea. At the most demagogic extreme, as in the John Birch Society, the old McCarthy game of smear and double talk is being played again, but it has been brought up to date with an appeal to red-blooded Americanism and to masculinity — which seem to be the same thing. Leave it to the lunatic fringe to connect he-manship with anti-communism. But even the saner and more honest spokesmen of the new right are trading on the notion that the reason for all the trouble with the Russians is that we have been too soft, too full of doubts and scruples, hence unable to fight or even to act tough, and this because we have been infected with the viruses of communism, socialism and liberalism, all lumped together. More and more, as the crisis gets

worse, the liberal-left is being made the scapegoat for the failure of the country as a whole to cope with revolutionary movements all over the world by waving the status quo at them and reading them lectures about freedom on the side. What the right is really up to is the naked brandishing of power, at the very moment when America no longer has the power to brandish. And all the pertinent social and political questions are treated as though they were the occupational disease of the liberals and radicals.

So far, this new trend to the right has been more of a nuisance than a menace, since the country naturally takes to the center, which is a working combination of liberalism and respectable conservatism, though I suppose it is bound to grow if the frustrations of the cold war continue. But it is having one bad effect, it must be said: the identification of anti-communism with strength, with Americanism and with conservatism, makes it that much easier for the communists to line up with reform, progress and liberation.

At the other extreme, disarmament movements have been mushrooming, most of them multilateral, but some unilateral. SANE has been the most balanced and energetic of the multilateralist organizations: two of its prominent leaders are Norman Cousins and Norman Thomas and, generally, the bilateralists have been acting as a moral pressure group on those who make policy. The least eccentric of the unilateralists is H. Stuart Hughes, historian and professor at Harvard, but the idea of our disarming and taking our chances on what the Russians do is too masochistic to make any headway in this country. Surrender is not to be confused with disarmament.

Some of these ideas and movements have their counterpart abroad. But there is one important difference between what is happening here and in the rest of the world. In other countries, intellectuals tend to take 'purer' positions, and are generally more relaxed in their thinking and less concerned about the immediate consequence of

their opinions, because, in a sense, there are no immediate consequences. Everyone here, however, — whether of the left or right, whether for or against the policies of the government — everyone shares the feeling that what this country does is decisive. In the United States, even the socialists and the pacifists find it hard to disengage from national concerns, and thinking as a whole rarely strays too far from practical considerations. Recently 'responsible' thinking has reached epidemic proportions, the most typical variety being the new breed of 'military intellectuals' (London Times) — like Kahn, Morgenthau, Schelling — who try to think the way generals would think if they were able to think.

The big thing sweeping the country, and getting more attention than either armament or disarmament, is the do-it-yourself bomb shelter. There is a good deal of wild talk connected with it, that sounds like a mixture of fear and frontier bravado, as though we were fighting the Indians again, and every man had to dig in to save himself and his family from a surprise attack. Many — how many I don't know — are being built in suburban back yards, but furtively: partly out of shame, mostly to keep one's neighbours out. Some tough spirits, who have not been softened up by humane considerations and who are determined to survive at all costs, have gone so far as to stock their shelters with guns to shoot down anyone trying to crash in. The justifications for the private shelters run all the way from the purely military argument (that shelters are part of total armament and of cold war strategy), which is plausible, to a vigilante spirit based on some primitive notions of free enterprise and individual action. But through the shabby arguments — if the military one is correct, shelters should be built by the government just as machine-guns are — one sees a pathetic effort to save one's own skin parading itself as a way of saving civilization. This extension of private property underground might be taken as a sign of defeatism if it weren't so absurd

And even if a large number of people could save themselves in this way, (since home-made bomb shelters have had mostly a rural vogue and seem impossible in the big cities) what would be saved would be what Marx called 'the idiocy of the village' at the expense of urban civilization.

The bomb shelter boom is a grass roots movement, like vigilantism, lynching, etc. But here, too, there has been a left-right polarization. For while the shelters are a movement of the right, there has been a kind of intellectual grass roots activity on the left in something called the Committees of Correspondence, which has been circulating informally a bulletin of ideas and polemics about the current crisis. The most active and best known in this group are David Riesman and Eric Fromm. Aside from the position of the bulletin, which has tended to be socialist and pacifist, the interesting thing about it is its underground and seemingly undocinaire character, an attempt to develop a position, spontaneously, from below, rather than in an organized and formulated way from above. A good deal of organized thrashing and question raising is also on display in the pages of *Commentary*, now edited by Norman Podhoretz, one of the most intelligent of the younger writers.

Nothing so dramatic has been happening in the arts. A few good books and a few interesting ones have appeared. Bernard Malamud's new novel, *A New Life*, a very amusing and moving book, is quite striking in the way the personality of the writer has been able to work those moods of the outsider that often went into avant-garde fiction into more established forms. One suddenly realizes that much of our best modern fiction after the years of experiment and wild vision has become domesticated. Faulkner may be the last of the 'experimental' line, and lately he has taken to imitating himself. This is pointed up in another way by J. D. Salinger, two of whose well known stories, *Franny* and *Zooey*, have just come out in book form. Salinger uses a remarkably free-wheeling

prose reminiscent of Faulkner and Joyce and he builds a story with seemingly 'far out' associations, but the story itself has many conventional elements.

A remarkable book that has just appeared is Robert Lowell's collection of translations, or, better, recreations of classic poems from the French, Italian and Russian. How often does one succeed, as Lowell has, in giving poetry from another language a kind of native personality? Also notable are two recent essay collections by Mary McCarthy and Hannah Arendt. Miss McCarthy's essays deal mainly with modern fiction and drama, and some of them are based on talks given for our State Department in Poland and other communist countries. In reading these essays, one is struck by Miss McCarthy's intelligence, a quality people tend to overlook in their zeal to point out her satirical use of her wit. The fact is her impatience with sloppy thinking was a function of her intelligence. Miss Arendt's intelligence has been properly celebrated; and here I might add that the qualities of her writing I find most attractive are her range of speculation and her readiness to take an unconventional position, qualities which seem to be atrophying today. One other book should be noted, a collection of essays dedicated to the achievement of David Riesman. Most interesting is the fact this book appears at the moment when Riesman has become the symbol of radical discontent in this country. Yet not so long ago it was Riesman who led the return of intellectuals to the national womb, after a period of alienation and left-wing politics.

If a synoptic view were possible, one might say most of the country is waiting for history to show its hand, while a minority is thrashing, some anxiously, some stridently. On the official side, the sense we have of our new administration is how intelligent and civilized it is, at least by contrast, but that it is constantly rattled by pressure from the right and held back by the vast inertia of smugness stored up by decades of contentment, and that it lacks a theory of history of the kind which, unfortunately, is usually bred on the left.

A R T S

Twelve Months as a Film Critic

By JYOTIRMOY DATTA

THIS is not an inside view of the racket: what astronomical sums must an actor earn to be called a 'star'? What is the real relation between Swapan Kumar and Kalpana Kumari, such a sweet and cooing couple, off the screen? Interesting questions, and I am sure one could write a charming piece answering these and more such. But I must warn my readers this article is unlikely to satisfy their curiosity about the secrets of movieland. Not that I consider such curiosity unnatural; in fact, I regard it as not only natural but laudable. Only that it is not within my power to satisfy it for, although I have been a film critic for these twelve months, I have hardly learnt any of this glittering world's secrets. I have had no chance to kiss an actress or have a peep at her secret account book where she keeps track of her 'black money' earnings in figures that look like a procession of ants. I am not even sure whether most actresses have such account books, nor whether they know enough of subtraction and addition to keep track of their fabulous earnings. It is certain, however, they are paid mostly in 'black money'. But that is common knowledge; I cannot claim to have hit upon it after I took up this job.

My adventures as a film critic were strictly limited to sneaking in and out of those dark houses which people are supposed to visit for entertainment. Of course this is a myth. To be shut up for three

hours in a dark hall where the air is foul with the breathing of a thousand noses and the stink of urinals is the furthest from even a pervert's idea of a pleasant evening. And one is not even allowed to smoke in the hall; nor is it possible to sneak away to a bar for a hurried whisky.

People do not see films for entertainment but to get the sort of kick the Romans got from a gladiatorial show. Why did crowds gather to watch public executions on Tyburn Hill? What 'pleasure' did precious young ladies get from watching the guillotine blade come down? If these exhibitions are 'pleasurable' or 'entertaining', we must find some other word to describe the feeling evoked by a colourful sunset or induced in one by good food and wine enjoyed in the company of witty men and pretty women. At the cinema or on the race course, the pulse ticks faster and nerves become tense. Beauty in nature or the good things of life fills one with a feeling of contentment and relaxes tension.

But what happens in art? Does not the sight of Macbeth's head brought in on a platter thrill the spectators? In Marlowe's play, Tamburlaine has his chariot drawn by captive kings; what greater thrill could Bombay or Hollywood devise? And yet Macbeth is art. What makes MGM's *Ben Hur* or Rajkamal's *Stree* different?

Not the 'thrills'. The spectacular and the thrilling have their place in the *Mahabharata* and the Homeric epics, in Elizabe-

than drama and even in the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky. Of course it is not the presence of these elements that makes the epics or the novels such moving experiences; there have been works of ART that are free of all that is vulgar or spectacular. But in those rare periods of history when art becomes also popular, when art ceases to be anaemic, arty, clever, esoteric, academic, puritanic, socialistic, or propagandist, when art comes close to life, art can accommodate elements that shock, thrill or horrify because it can take in all of life. Men want to be thrilled. They crave for excitement. They want to gamble and fornicate. And the epic poets, or the Elizabethan dramatists, or the 19th century novelists were not ashamed to portray men as such.

But from their recognition of man as a creature who is occasionally possessed by the gambling devil 'and the worse devil that is between his thighs', they created novels that are no substitutes for the casino or the brothel. Does anyone feel the thrill of gambling by reading *The Gambler*? Share the insane lust of Eugene Irtenev as he reads *The Devil*? I am unable to put into words the state of my feelings after finishing each of these novels but of this at least I am sure: it is different from the state of exhaustion, apathy, even self-condemnation (especially if one has a long run of bad luck) that overtakes one after an afternoon at the races or a night in a brothel. Instead, after reading a good novel one feels as if he is somehow more receptive to experience, in some sense more alive than ever before.

In contrast, one is left with almost no feelings at all after an evening at the cinema. Most films¹ leave one dazed; the excitement one felt in the evening when the hero was about to receive a bash on his head, the laboured breathing at moments

of suspense, the high tension, take their toll; one feels as if all one's energy has ebbed away. Many viewers (not all of them suffering from bad eyesight) complain that they invariably have a bad headache after seeing a film. I have also noticed that after the excitement has ebbed away the palms of my hands and feet feel moist and cold.

A MILD HANGOVER

Those who have cared to examine their feelings after a couple of quick drinks will be able to identify the post-evening state of the viewer's nerves as a mild hangover. Any strong nervous excitement leads to depression later. During and immediately after a few drinks the pulse rate rises fast but one does not feel it; it is only later that the breast seems to be knocking against the ribs. One also feels initially warm but when the effect of the drinks works off, one feels cold and the palms of one's hands grow moist. This happens after seeing a film too. As for the pulse rate, I know mine rises to above 100 in a minute after a film show.

By now, my readers must have guessed what I am driving at: the mystery of the phenomenal popularity of films, the effect they have on the fans and their content, the organization of the industry and the taxes levied on it cannot be understood unless one rids oneself of the notion that the urge which leads people to see films is akin to that which makes people read novels. There are some films which people see because they are interested in tales of sentiment or pathos; there are a few others which stimulate the viewer's sensibility and intellect. But the majority of film-goers are addicts and the industry, without being aware of it, has developed into a gang of dope peddlers.

The State too, without formulating any precise policy, has adopted an attitude towards the film industry which is similar to its attitude towards the turf or that of certain medieval kingdoms towards the oldest

¹ Later in course of this article I have made clear what I mean by 'most films'. I have divided films into three classes: the 'art films', the 'story films' and the commercial 'formula films'. Most films belong to the third class.

profession. In the kingdom of Vijaynagar, the State took a fat cut out of the revenue of brothels; in West Bengal, the State takes a third of the value of each three-rupee ticket. The Centre charges a heavy duty on imports of unexposed films and in the 1960-61 Budget imposed a cess ranging from 10 to 15 nP on every foot of exposed film. Moreover, the Films Division takes 1% of the gross box-office receipts from most show houses as rent for its documentaries which they are statutorily forced to exhibit. And like Vijaynagar, the modern State carries out its responsibility of seeing that the patron of the establishments get wholesome stuff by appointing sanitary experts, I mean, the censors.

But gambling or prostitution can never be as big a fact of Indian life as the cinema. How big a fact it is can be guessed from the figures for the number of new films released every year. In 1949 over 400 full-length features were shown in the over 4,000 show-houses in the country. While it has not been possible for me to extract from either the industry or the Government any precise figure, I guess over five hundred million tickets are sold every year. This a very conservative estimate; I have assumed that on an average only 200 people attended every show, and, although exhibitors in most big towns hold three shows a day, I thought it safer to multiply 4,000 by 730 to arrive at the total (584 million) for the number of people who visited the cinema. Granted that this is no way 'scientific', it still provides at least a rough basis to make some comparisons.² In June, 1959, there were only 1.6 million licensed radio sets in India. This must also be the figure for the total number of sets, licensed and unlicensed, because, as I have learnt to my cost, none but a criminal genius can keep an unlicensed receive-

er for any length of time and not get caught. And in 1958 the total registered circulation of daily newspapers was a paltry 3.8 million—or only one copy of a daily for every one hundred Indians. The real figure can only be smaller because most newspapers inflate their circulation not only to bag more advertisement but also to get larger quotas for newsprint for which there is a flourishing black-market.

All this means that as a medium of communication, the cinema commands the largest audience. But do films communicate anything? It is my guess that they do not, although the common belief is they do. Nehru said, during the world film festival held in Delhi in October, that films have become a major instrument of mass education which could be used either for good or evil. A similar sentiment was expressed by the Vice-President while opening the festival. But though widely held, this appears to me to be a myth and a dangerous one because the censors act according to it. Neither the Press, nor the radio or TV, nor the cinema can aspire to both lead public opinion and also to have mass appeal. It is strange but true that those newspapers that have the largest circulation are hardly those that are also the most influential. As Lord Northcliffe learnt, the mass-circulation Press can only pander to the public taste, never change it, let alone persuade the people to adopt a new political or moral course of action. The reason for this is that although the mass-circulation pictorial weekly appears to be just another paper (as 'The Spectator', say, is also a weekly), the only difference being that it has a larger circulation, it is in fact a quite different thing. While the 'quality' papers seek to inform their readers, the yellow Press seeks to titillate or excite them, give them a similar sort of thrill as that given by the formula films.

The Indian Press, chiefly the English-language dailies, has a middle-class readership. It has not yet had its Northcliffe. It is still informative and, of course, dull. As for the A.I.R. broadcasts, they are not only

² There are only four racing centres in India. Even for major racing events the crowd hardly exceeds 50,000. Calcutta, which claims to have the largest number of poets and prostitutes of all cities in India, has a brothel population of 40,000. I hope it is needless to point out the obvious deduction from the previous figure.

dull but not informative either. The reason why the Indian cinema has changed faster than either the Press or radio is clear. A.I.R. is run according to a stuffy policy laid down by Ministers and carried out by a timid, puritanic and bourgeois bureaucracy. No change can overtake such a fortress of the establishment easily. The Press, on the other hand, is changing, although slowly. The vernacular papers are printing more blocks, smearing their front pages with large smudges of black, playing up sensational stories and local scandals. Their heading types are louder, language racier, and their reporting livelier than that of the English-language newspapers. The pace of change, however, is not fast for, alas, the rise in newspaper circulation is inevitably linked with the ability to read while films appeal to all except the deaf and the blind. With increasing industrialization and 100% literacy, the Press too, I am afraid, will go the way of the Indian cinema.

INDUSTRIALIZATION & MASS CULTURE

At this point, I notice a gloating look in the eyes of the follower of Acharya Vinoba Bhave whose favourite pastime is to burn up cinema posters. He does not like industrialization. He does not like the Yellow Press. If he does not want all films banned it is solely because he does not want to be deprived of the pleasure of poster burning. He is, therefore, pleased by the concatenation of these three phenomena: films, yellow journalism, industrialization. 'Alas', I hear him sigh, 'all this is called progress! In the old days, the villagers would gather under the cool shade of a bewhiskered, ancient banyan tree and listen to the tale of Rama and Sita. It might sound monotonous to you but that was better far than this city with its dirty films and its gutter Press'. I try to point out to him it is merely a coincidence (and I suppose a happy one) that any rise in literacy goes with increasing industrialization; no other society

except modern ones ever attempted to teach all how to read and write. And although it is true that films could not have been produced if there was no industrial revolution, societies that are still feudal provide excellent markets for films. 'Or think,' (I try to coax him to undertake an activity unfamiliar to him—he leaves it to his leaders to do all the thinking for him), think of the way the *Ramayana* was changed in the process of translation. As long as it was in the exclusive possession of the pundits, it remained a work without a flaw of taste in it. But when it reached the people! The vernacular version that I know of, the Bengali translation by Krittibash, contains those very elements you condemn in films. There is the same attempt to impress and amaze, there is the same 'vulgar' obsession with incredible ogres and enchantresses, the rancid jokes and treacly sentiment, that you would find in films. And you find the same things too in Shakespeare. Or Dickens. Or even in Dostoyevsky.

In all ages and countries, more people have liked to gamble or drink, watch cocks or men and bulls fight, listen to tales which make the heart beat fast, rather than be charmed by poetry. Previously, the poetic and the prophetic, the vulgar and the spectacular could exist together; now these elements have separated. They could come together again as they did in Elizabethan drama or the 19th century novel. But do not imagine that it is industrialization which is responsible for this craving for strong nervous stimulants, or irritants if you prefer, which films satisfy now and the tale of Sati Behula did previously.

And if industrialization or parliamentary democracy or penicillin or H-bombs had any effect on the way people respond to films, the more industrialized a country, the more 'vulgar' would have been its cinema. West German films would have been more 'vulgar' than French ones, and French more than Indian. In the Middle East, say in Saudi Arabia or Jordan, where the social order has hardly changed in the

past few centuries, there would have been no demand at all for the products of Bombay or Hollywood.'

I look around to find the lover of the rustic way of life has disappeared. Bored by my long speech, he must have knocked off to revive himself by burning a few lewd or vulgar cinema posters. He does not understand. He cannot. He has not spent a year doing films three evenings a week.

Yes, one has to go through that ordeal to discover that films are not lewd or pornographic; they do not fulfil the desires that French cards do. It takes a year, it may even be less, to become an addict and realize that films stimulate one sexually no more than gambling or drinking do. In fact one becomes a little less 'virile' because of the exhaustion and weariness that follows in the wake of the stimulation. The 'stars' are not desired but adored and often the fans of actresses are women and those of actors men. Of course the 'stars' contribute much to the mass appeal of a film but they cannot, even partly, satisfy any sexual urge however perverse or secret.

THE 'SEX APPEAL' MYTH

This last remark goes against a popular myth and therefore merits elaboration. It is a fact that pictures of actresses grace the walls of many a bachelors' den. Naughty

remarks are often scribbled on film posters, especially on ones pasted on the walls of public urinals. But this proves nothing at all. Pictures of plump Radhas cuddling close to lecherous Krishnas, or matronly Shakuntalas winking at bourgeois Dushyantas, are displayed in pan shops and cheap eating places without taking away the poetry from the Radha myth or Abhigyana Shakuntalam. I also remember coming across a naughty rhyme scribbled across the photograph of a minister while looking through a newspaper file. The Minister was a woman and, unlike most of her sex who take up politics, also pretty. The lines are unprintable for various reasons, but edited they read: 'Sometime I will catch you alone, Mrs. Ninanina Sinha, Then God save you. I can't, being a poor sinner.' If more political leaders were pretty women, more such lines would surely have been written. But politics, though often compared (and not without reason) to prostitution, would still have been incapable of directly meeting any sexual need of the voters. In fact, if the sex of politicians has any bearing on the course of elections, it is that of a woman catching more votes of the members of her own sex and a man more of those of men.

So it is with film 'stars'. If 'the adulation which the public showers on the denizens of the entertainment world'³ was due to a suppressed desire of the men to bed with the pretty actresses and of women with the brawny screen heroes, then no fan would have admired a 'star' of his or her own sex. A woman would have only been jealous of the actress who plays opposite the man of her secret desire. Similarly, youths would not have gone mad (but they do) over either Dev Anand or Shammi Kapoor (who co-starred recently with one of the film world's innumerable 'beauty queens') except in jealousy.

The question-answer columns of film magazines are, I suppose, dependable guides to fan psychology. While going through such columns one is struck by the sexwise line-up of fans. For instance, of the 33

³ This is a mutilated part of a grandiloquent sentence delivered by an American Judge. It is worth quoting at least the grammatical sentence in full because it betrays a common attitude — the envy that many bureaucrats, intellectuals and old or dyspeptic people feel for successful athletes, actors, boxers etc. The following quotation is from the magazine, *Time* (Feb. 2, '62): 'In New York Supreme Court, where Sophia (Loren) was suing Bronston Production, Inc. because she was billed below Charlton Heston on a Broadway sign ballyhooing *El Cid*, Justice Samuel Hofstadter chucked out her requested injunction. Said he: 'Such vanity doubtless is due to the adulation which the public showers on the denizens of the entertainment world in a profusion wholly disproportionate to the intrinsic contribution which they make to the scheme of things.'

It would have been amusing to ask the pompous judge what 'intrinsic contribution' do judges make to 'the scheme of things' either.

questions put to the presiding oracle of a film magazine (*Jaisha*, Vol. IV, No. 4), 14 showed either a worshipful attitude towards the 'stars' or curiosity about their private lives. Of these, eight were asked by either women about actresses or men about actors. Only two questions were asked about actresses by men. The other four were by those who showed equal interest in both actresses and actors.

The illusions about the sexual appeal of 'stars' have to be cleared because of an apparently paradoxical reason: the 'stars' are indeed one of the chief money-catching elements in films. To the vast majority of viewers the story that a film pictures is of little interest. They do not care who the director is. They often forget the title of a film they have just seen.⁴ They go to see a film because their favourite actors are acting in it or because 'the melody queen,' or Shankar-Jaikishan, has done the music score.

THREE TYPES OF FILMS

In the relation between the director, the author of the script or the novel on which a film is based and the star lies the key to the distinction between films that are works of art, films that tell a story, and the mass-appeal films. In the making of such films as *Parash Patha* or *Aparajita*, it is the director who gives shape to everything. He not only chooses the plot and the actors but uses them as mere tools to create a new object

in which all the diverse elements have lost their separate identities. As a composer uses brass and wind and percussion instruments and the talents of the men who play on them to create a symphony, Satyajit Ray uses the outlines of a story, the cameraman, the actors and the music score as pliable material with which to give form to his imagination. His films succeed or fail as original works of art. But in the story-films, the guiding factor is the original novel. For instance, in the films based on Saratchandra's novels, the director has a passive role; he tries to give a faithful visual version of the story, departing as little as possible from his 'master copy'.

Most Indian films are neither works of art nor running illustrations of works of fiction. The story is of little interest; the viewer, after he has seen a couple of these films, can accurately predict each turn of the plot, for all stories are written according to a common formula.⁵ Many directors avoid the needless expenditure of buying up the film rights of novels by having hacks patch up a plot. Five of the films released in Calcutta in the past three months had this interesting credit line: 'Story—Story Dept.'

It is therefore unfair to apply similar standards to all films. They in fact belong to wholly different genres. While for story films the stars are chosen to fit in with the characters in the novel, in formula films the 'stars' are often chosen first and the plots

⁴ Like the great Gauss, who used to test the simplicity of his solutions by trying them on his kitchen-maid, I often try to gauge the popular response to a film by questioning our cook who takes three evenings off a week, being an assiduous film-goer. She never remembers the title of a film and can only give a very garbled version of the plot. She can only identify a film by the stars who acted in it. Interestingly, while giving her version of the plot, she refers to the characters not by the names in the story, but by those of the stars who acted those roles. She is not aware of the existence of the director. This is as surprising as it would be if one admired a landscape not for the way it was painted, nor even for the view depicted, but for the canvas or brush used for the painting.

⁵ The Bengali novelist, Protibha Bose, tells of a successful Bombay producer who wanted to buy the film rights of one of her novels. 'Which novel?' asked she, flattered by the interest shown by the film tycoon in her works. 'How should I know? Give me any you like,' replied FT. 'Do you know what my novels are like?' asked the novelist, now feeling more surprised than flattered. 'How should I know! I have not yet had the chance to glance at your scripts'. 'Haven't any of your men read my books?' It was FT's turn to be surprised. 'Books! You needn't bother with books! You see a dozen films, American and Indian, borrow a little from this one and another bit from that one, mark the places where you want songs and dances put in with crosses, or leave the music business to others. That's how one should write. Why do you want them printed? What a waste of good money just to see one's name in print!'

to suit them are cooked up later. And in Satyajit Ray's films there are no 'stars'. In every film he puts in new faces. He often picks out people from the crowd that has gathered to watch a shooting and makes them act in the scene that is being shot. The Darjeeling correspondent of a daily who went to interview him about a film that was in the making found himself taking part in it. In fact, it is not the actors in his films who act but Ray himself.

In contrast, the formula films are built around the 'stars'. They are paid fabulous sums. The exact figures can never be known because stars, like blackmailers or kidnappers, demand their ransom in loose cash, usually in small denomination notes, to avoid income tax.⁶ This is what has been christened 'black money'—probably by some irate producer who had to pay through his nose. It is said that some stars even get as high a price as Rs. 5 lakhs for each film, but this probably is an exaggeration, circulated maybe even by the stars themselves to boost their prestige and raise their prices in future deals. Most of them probably receive no more than a tenth of that sum; a handful, possibly, have crossed the six-figure mark.

MARTYRS OF FILMDOM

But, of course, the stars are paid handsomely. They and the distributors are in fact the people who make most out of films. Although the profits officially go to the producer he is often up to his ears in debt to the distributor. There are no really big producers in India except a few giant com-

bines in the South; a few distributors have, on the other hand, carved up northern India into six or seven large empires. The typical Indian producer is a sad figure who stakes his all on one film hoping to make a dream profit out of it, who finds his resources run dry before half of the film is shot, who has to sell his claims on the profit to the head of a distribution network to avoid losing the money he has already spent and who finds little but notices and bills waiting for him at the end. Naturally most producers have made but one film each. Of the 4,909 films made in India between 1939 and 1956, as many as 1580 were made by producers who bid farewell to producing after their maiden ventures had left them broke.

The reason why distributors are so well off is a question for the economist to answer. Why do the 'sole selling agents' make such big profits when the producers of the goods they sell are pleased merely if they can avoid big losses? Why is the Indian farmer so badly indebted to the mahajan whom the poor peasant in his awe has named the superman? It would be sheer bad manners for a film critic to try to answer, or even to ask, such questions. But I hope it is within his rights to ask why the 'star' is paid so well?

The money the star receives is akin to rent, says the economist. It might well be; it does not matter because I do not know what the economist means by 'rent'. But of this I am sure: none except bull fighters or owners of horses or famous boxers can ever hope to make as much money as 'stars' because the public is willing to spend only on shows that thrill them. And a star is in many ways like a racing horse or a matador—physically he must be clean of limb, and preferably, goodlooking. Like a race horse, he should have his points. But chiefly he must be able to exude a sense of physical vitality. There are many stars who are not really handsome, like say Dev Anand, but who impress with their toughness and vitality. And, in the past one year, I have watched a procession of handsome

⁶ This form of payment may be one of the reasons why many actors have such a hard time after they fall from public grace. Too much loose money, most of which has to be spent quickly and in ways that do not attract the notice of the tax collectors, is unlikely to induce thriftiness. Of course there is such a thing as occupational habits, and actors have always led a fast life. Incidentally, what is the effect of prohibition on Bombay stars? Are they able to save more? I guess less, for drinks have become dearer. Their working life also may have been further shortened because the bootlegged stuff, according to most authorities on the subject, is real poison.

men and beautiful women make their first appearance on the screen and then disappear, having failed to click despite their beauty, because they were too fine, or too velvety or too anaemic for this world of shocks and thrills.

It is a hard world. There is room only for stock shock characters. It is a world which does not know the meaning of the word 'psychology' for events do not take place in it, only incidents occur, and the seemingly human figures react to them mechanically. No lovers part because one of them, for some mysterious goings-on in that unpredictable thing called the human heart, ceases to feel for the other; in this world lovers are always separated because of some misunderstanding, words overheard and wrongly interpreted, or the machinations of a villain. Here all unhappiness is the result of accidents and, therefore, easily remediable; if improbable accidents can make things go awry, another chain of accidents, equally improbable, can put everything aright. And after lovers return to each others' embrace, there is no remorse for the cruel words said or the evil things done because these are creatures who react to experience in some robot fashion. If they did not, and with them also if the viewers did not, the whole thing would have turned into a nightmare instead of a mere chain of nervous thrills. No screen heroes would then have been able to gloat over the

battered bodies of their rivals, nor would the viewers have gone home without feeling that prick of sympathy any man feels for the victim. In this world deaths do not sadden nor murders repel.

Bang, bang, bang, the incidents go off like a chain of Chinese crackers, each explosion no different from the previous one. The songs express no mood or sentiment, but beat tune to the viewer's quickening pulse — raucous, loud, pure energy. At every opportunity, the director puts in a loud noise, or shows a motorcar chase, or people falling down cliffs. In some ways, as I have noted earlier, this is like Elizabethan drama. The Elizabethans too liked to hear fanfares and cannon off stage; at the end of a play their stage too was littered with corpses. Could not the cinema turn into that medium of artistic expression for 20th century Indians which the theatre was for 15th century Englishmen? A medium at the same time popular and poetic, which would excite the masses as also illuminate reality? One wonders. One wishes. One hopes it might turn out so. A crop of geniuses could create out of the conventions of the Indian cinema great works of art. The Elizabethan conventions were bad too, almost shocking. And if shocking conventions provide the best ground for great popular art, there are reasons for hope because the present conventions of the Indian cinema are shocking, shocking, shocking.

SHORT STORY

The Price of Cucumber

By CHATURSEN SHASTRI

TODAY the whole appearance of Delhi has changed for the worse. The markets, the shapes of the houses, the customs and manners and the very roads have all got a peculiar Western air. All this has happened since Delhi became the capital of India and the strange city of New Delhi, more dazzling by far than Chicago, was established; it may be a province separate from the Punjab, even so Punjabi traits have crept in disastrously. At the time when this new city was established, hordes of Punjabis, Sikhs and other enthusiastic characters—having built strong bodies with Punjabi wheat, *urd* and grain—descended on New Delhi. From the merest coolie to the very contractors themselves, they are all Punjabis—at the beginning they bought land for a song and settled down here. Now they are the leaders of Delhi and move about in shining motor cars—all the pleasures of the world are open to the hard-working. The lean and thin inhabitants of Delhi have disappeared somewhere else. New hotels have opened up all over the place. You can see rows of Khalsa hotels in the bazars of Delhi with big sign-boards announcing that '*jhatka*' meat is sold there. Here you find innumerable Sikhs eating thin *chapatis* either on their cots or tables, with their big turbans and long flowing beards, and dressed in pants, coats and boots. They have banished untouchability from Delhi at one stroke, along with its delicacy and refinement. Go to Chandni Chowk any evening, and you will find

middle aged and young Punjabi women dressed in thin *dupattas* and *salwars* eating potato chops round the *Kachanluwals*.

Sometimes in a marriage procession one can see that elegant pointed turban on the heads of some old-fashioned people. But those loose-armed robes, *vasli* shoes, thin *dupalli topis* and thin *sherbatti dupattas* have completely disappeared. The young women of Delhi are no longer to be seen wearing these things. We look in vain for engraved golden ornaments decorating their bodies—yet formerly about two thousand engravers and five thousand goldsmiths used to earn their livelihood from the demand. Now-a-days in Chandni Chowk the eyes are weary of thin crepe silk fashionable sarees with fancy designs of creepers, and sleeveless blouses in which half the breast and one whole arm can have free play—all this being perched on high-heeled multi-coloured sandals. Among these shameless country sisters very few are educated—most of them are crows in the borrowed feathers of the peacock. Anybody can tell this from the inexperienced way they put their powder on their faces, from the deep pink colour of their lipstick and the pungent perfumes of their handkerchiefs—not to mention their artificial shining graven hair-pins. Sometimes our stomach gives a queer twist, when we see wrist watches on the delicate arms of these semi-memsahibs along with their golden bracelets and innumerable bangles, and on their feet high-heeled sandals along

with indigenous jewellery — especially when we find their completely domesticated husbands trailing behind them carrying with great enthusiasm the bundles of their purchases looking like hired lackeys with their crumpled ill-fitting coats over their pants.

II

38 years ago. At that time in Chandni Chowk—where today we have beautiful pavements for the pedestrians—there were roads of pebbled concrete along which *ekkas*—two seater horse-drawn carriages—and phaetons used to ply. Water used to be sprinkled on the road twice a day. The place where now we have a pucca cement road there was just a narrow embankment road alongside a canal. Both sides of this road had very big shady trees. Even in the hottest afternoons of May and June a fresh cool breeze could be enjoyed there. On that road various vendors used to have shops under huge cane umbrellas of different shapes and sizes. There used to be general merchants, cap-sellers, fried grain and chop and boiled potato sellers, dry and fresh fruit sellers. Even among them, the small shop-keepers used to sell their wares by hanging them in a tray from their neck. Several hundred people used to doze off in the afternoon under those shady trees. Just below the clock tower in front of the huge building of the Municipal Offices, where now you have a statue of Queen Victoria, there was a big image of an elephant which the elderly people used to call the elephant of Jaimal Fatey and they used to tell all manner of stories, lying in the shade of those trees with their dreamy and tobacco-intoxicated eyes. There was a peculiar softness in the language of the Delhi people and even the cries of the vendors had a certain tenderness. Among vegetables the Delhiwalas used to consume only the first arrivals of the season. Lady fingers and *karelas* so long as they sold at a rupee a seer and unripe mangoes when they sold at 12 annas a seer, were considered fit edibles for the inhabitants of

Delhi and when they sold at cheaper rates nobody touched them. They used to eat the *bers* removing the skin with a knife and wrapping the fruit in silver paper. There was a delicacy and refinement in everything they did and their standard of living was as befitted a highly cultured people.

III

The month of Fagun had begun, spring was in its last stage, the cold had decreased and the cool breeze was very pleasing. In the bazar tender thin cucumbers had begun to appear for sale. They were as yet very expensive and so they were considered fit for consumption by the rich. A young fruit vendor was selling cucumbers in his carefree manner with an orange coloured turban loosely tied about his head and a bit of pan in his mouth. He was dressed in a loose *tangeb* kurta, with a multi-coloured *lungi* round his waist and delicate flower-patterned *salam* type shoes on his feet. He had a beautiful cane basket. In it lay two tender cucumbers amidst rose flowers on banana leaves, and the basket was finely balanced on his right hand.

Rolling his watery big eyes all round, he was shouting in a halting brawling voice: 'Buy tender cucumbers—lovely as the fingers of Laila or the ribs of Majnu! Come and buy these lovely *kakdis*!'

Somebody called from behind—'O you, *kakdiwalay*, come here!' Shouting in the same carefree manner, he turned round. The man who had called him was a *kahar*; he was an old man with a big white moustache, dark complexioned, dressed in a jacket of *latha* cloth, wearing a thin *dupalli* topi and with an ordinary crisscross patterned towel on his shoulder. Eyeing the cucumbers, he said, 'You only have two little ones'.

'This is not the season for cucumbers. It's just by chance that I bought four small tender ones—I've sold two and the other two are left and I shall charge you four annas. No bargaining. Take them if you want them.'

The old *kahar* had no time to reply before a young man in a loud voice said, 'Take this eight anna bit and give me the cucumbers'. This strongly built young man was also a *kahar* by caste and his moustache had just begun to sprout.

He looked laughing at the old man and threw the eight anna bit with a bang into the basket.

'I was buying the cucumbers and so I will buy them—Here is a rupee. Give me the cucumbers, young man'.

The fruit-seller was momentarily startled and looked inquiringly at the young man. The young man said, 'Never mind, I will give you two rupees'.

'I will give you five'.

'I will give you ten'.

'Take these twenty rupees and I have bought these cucumbers'.

'Take twenty-five—the cucumbers are mine'.

'I will pay thirty'.

The young man's forehead was wrinkled and he said, 'I will buy them for fifty rupees. Give me the cucumbers'.

The old man smiled and looked at the young man in a commanding manner and said in a loud voice, 'I will buy both the cucumbers for Rs. 100/-'.

The young man continued to look at the old man in a worried manner. The old man addressed him in tones of victory, 'If you have courage—why not make a higher bid? I will however take the *kakdis* even if I have to pay five thousand rupees!' Hundreds of people had gathered there. The young man quietly went away filled with great shame and anger. Several people shouted, 'Bravo old Mehra! Why not, you are the employee of a rich family the pride of all Delhi.'

The old man counted out the money to the fruit-seller, took the cucumbers and went to his master's house in a manner which suggested he had conquered a kingdom.

IV

The old servant placed both the cucumbers wrapped in flowers and banana leaves

before his master Lala Jagat Narainji. It was almost dark and the Lala asked, 'You only got two?'

'Yes, in the market there were only two cucumbers, which your humble servant was able to buy at a price of rupees one hundred.' After that he narrated the whole story of the incident in the bazar. The Lala kept quiet for a while listening to the whole story and then he undid the golden necklace round his neck and put it round his servant's neck and wrapped him in his own shawl and then embraced him. Then the Lala began to weep and then with full throat he said, 'Well done my Ramdeen, you have saved my prestige in the market'. After that he put the cucumbers among the flowers on a silver plate and covered them with a thin handkerchief and said, 'Take this to Lala Shiva Prasadji and give him my compliments and request him kindly to honour me by accepting this as a humble gift from me'.

V

Hearing all that had happened that evening in the bazar from his servant, Shiva Prasadji rolled down from his *masnad*. He spat the pan from his mouth and the servants were very much alarmed. But nobody could say anything to him. After some time, old Ramdeen respectfully placed the silver plate before Lala Shiva Prasadji and with folded hands conveyed the message of his master. Lala Shiva Prasad quietly eyed the two cucumbers placed on the silver plate. After a while, he sent the plate inside and filling another plate with gold mohurs, said, 'This is your reward and please give my compliments to Lala Jagat Narainji'.

Old Ramdeen saluted him respectfully.

VI

The next day at sunrise, the news went round the city that Lala Shiva Prasadji had committed suicide by taking poison. He had left a short note on a piece of paper explaining that he had been insulted in

the bazar and now he could not show his face anywhere in the world.

VII

The names of both the Rais mentioned above are imaginary. Both the families are still in existence in Delhi today. However, the man who was given the imaginary

name of Jagat Narain has today become very poor. His old palace has crumbled down and only a couple of rooms are intact in which his descendants pass their time with the greatest difficulty. The descendants depend on income derived from renting the bottom story of the dilapidated house to some people.

(Translated by N. N. BANERJI)

In order to avoid unnecessary delay all contributions (except book-reviews) and correspondence regarding these should be addressed to **The Editors, 5, Pearl Road, Calcutta 17.** Book-reviews, books for review and all correspondence concerning business matters are to be addressed to **The Business Manager, Quest, 148, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 1.**

POETRY

IMAGE

The early light leers
At the sleeping face
Dreaming of its fears.
And I, awake, place
My lips on her eyes
To make the nightmare
Vanish. Nothing dies
Between a wedded pair,
But holds its breath
And then repeats its promises.
Habit, fear, faith
Rises (or sinks) to kisses.
Here am I, defined
In the early light,
The unheroic mind
Shaking off its night.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

IN THE GARDEN

It seemed to me so much like you,
To find the planning of the garden
Faulty, and the birds too few.

Your walk was slow, informal there
Among the trees whose names you knew,
And flowers commonplace or rare.

The elephant of broken stone
Deserved, you said, a closer view
Than animals of flesh and bone.

The spacious lawns with sand defined
Where children shouted, breezes blew,
Or water like a lucid mind

Negotiates obstructive rocks;
And bridges modesty designed;
Were better than the tower of clocks,

And hedges ruining every view—
At which I felt your kindness harden:
It seemed to me so much like you.

NISSIM EZEKIEL

THE HUNT

That day the doe was killed
I saw them coming slowly
Against a sky that was dim,
Colourless, and their faces blurred.
Outside, the fires were lit and flaming
Voices like flies (suddenly turned bees)
Gathering up the sounds around them ...
They came in slowly and put her down;
Hushed voices and loving hands lifted her;
Beside her, the fawn rested content.
They gave her looks like her lover,
Caressing her smooth loins tenderly
And then suddenly left her, to others.
Then they stripped, hacked and cut,
And put aside the sorrow in her eyes.

That day may child cried with doe eyes
And the food on the plate was warm ash.

IRA DE

DRY NO EYES

Dry no eyes;	O fall of leaf,
There must be tears	O fall of tree,
As there is beauty,	O dawn unveiling
And as fall the years.	Night's inconstancy!
Man is no stone	Our spirits bless
To lie unmoved;	What hands surrender.
Lovers are mortal,	It is the vanishing
And all the loved.	That makes us tender.

G. C. S. MARAR

THE SATYR MOON

HE
 Lazy leaps,
 And falls on clouds,
 Painting goat hair
 Golden,

 and curls a sleepy
 snore
 Around lamposts.....

 looks down
 over roofs. To
 extend a hoof.
 To lift, a cool shaft
 OF LIGHT.

S. R. RAJAN

DISCUSSION

National Integration I

By M. RUTHNASWAMY

SIDNEY Smith the famous English wit speaking on the House of Lords' rejection of the Reform Bill of 1831 compared them to 'Dame Partington with her mop trying to push back the Atlantic which in a heavy gale had poured its waters into her house and who was excellent at a slop or puddle but should never have meddled with a tempest.' It is of her that one is reminded by the recommendations of the National Integration Committee and of its off-shoot the Emotional Integration Committee. Against the growing fissiparous movements in the country the National Integration Committee recommended the use of the Preventive Detention Act to curb the activities of anti-national communal groups and their leaders, amendment of the Indian Penal Code and collective fines to discourage the plotters and participants in communal riots. Mass contacts was another device recommended. The Emotional Integration Committee which was charged with the duty of making educational proposals towards the end of national integration has in its Interim Report recommended that admissions to educational institutions and awards of scholarships and fellowships should be granted on the basis of means and merits rather than of caste and religion, that application forms for admission to educational institutions and forms of application for admission to the public services should not contain any column on caste or religion, that the three language formula should be the basis of the education of the future, also

the taking of a national pledge by students twice a year, daily singing of the national anthem at the beginning of the morning session in the general assembly of the school, provision of a common uniform dress in schools, organization of a world seminar and a national seminar on text-books and the holding of a world-exhibition of text-books, and that as regional languages are bound to become the medium of instruction in schools and colleges and universities, the change over from English must be accompanied by strengthening the language which would serve as a means of inter-State communication, i.e., Hindi.

If the makers of these recommendations had any sense of humour or of reality they would not have made them. For they either — like the use of the Preventive Detention Acts or collective fines or banning of communal 'parties' and the mention of caste or religion in application forms — deal only with the symptoms or — like mass-contacts or the teaching of 3 languages and of the regional language or adoption of the common medium of instruction at universities — betray the lack of a sense of humour. How could mass contacts produce a sense of national unity when this is a product of education and any kind of education is a long-term process. And how could the learning of a number of different languages lead to national unity. The Tower of Babel was destroyed and a multiplicity of languages introduced just to prevent the growth of unity and con-

quest of power. As for the imposition of Hindi as the national language of India, that must be a century-long process, taking into account the resistance of the peoples of the south with Dravidian languages having a much longer history and much superior literature.

More fundamental and realistic are the recommendations of the Union Minister of Education who, when he was inaugurating the 36th All-India Educational Conference at Trivandrum early this year said, that 'if they were to root out the evil (of communal animosities) they would have to make a start with the family and the neighbourhood where the children acquire their earliest and most permanent impressions.' But if we are to start with the family we must start with caste, for it is on caste-marriages that the vast majority of families are built. It is with this fundamental fact of caste that all thinking and acting on national integration must be concerned. As long as marriage in India is based on caste the spirit of cast which is the spirit of division cannot be exorcised. And therefore one can only wonder at the audacity of the recent Congress party statement that 'caste having declined in social life it has entered politics and public administration.' Again a sense of reality would have taught people who make such statements that caste influences the course of politics and public administration. It is because Ministers suffer from the influence of caste that a Minister of one caste promotes members of that caste out of their turn in the public service or goes to their rescue when they are punished by Heads of Departments. In selection of candidates for elections to the representative legislatures of the country, party organizations — the Congress foremost and prototype among them — select them according to the caste-complexion of the constituency — even in this year of grace (God save the mark) of 1962. Even in commercial and educational life where one would have thought that the profit and money motive would be the prevailing consideration, appointments at any rate to the high ad-

ministrative posts are made on the caste or community basis — a Marvari firm appointing Marvaris, a Gujarati firm appointing Gujaratis, a Brahmin appointing Brahmins and so on *ad nauseam*. Caste is so much one of the categorical imperatives of Indian social life, that it is shutting one's eyes to a fact to ignore caste in any discussion on national integration. All the theories on national integration put forward by these Committees on National Integration are killed by this one fact of caste.

Education with a full recognition of the fact of caste, of this spirit of division, is the surest way to national integration. Once this spirit of division were exorcised from intimate social life, that social life would take on the forms and shapes of unity. How to organize this education is the task placed before those interested in the subject. The Union Minister of Education looks to our schools. The reform, he hints, must start with the Managing Committees of those schools. In the choice of the Headmaster and the teachers caste or community considerations should play little or no part. It would be a living daily lesson in national integration if the pupils saw the teaching staff composed of members of different communities and religions in addition to being good teachers. The Minister also advises that courses of study, syllabuses and text books should be all directed towards education into national integration. While urging that 'the richness and variety of Indian culture should be the most sustained theme in the educational system of the country and every child should understand that the fabric of Indian culture was woven out of multi-coloured threads he had to acknowledge that there were many contradictions in Indian culture which would have to be got rid of if they were to emerge as a strong nation.

The logical conclusion of the Minister's argument is that the culture that we should get our children and ourselves to imbibe is not the traditional culture predominantly Hindu but the culture that is the result of the evolution of the ages of Indian

history from its first origins in the marriage of Aryan and Dravidian culture which contributed more than one strand of philosophic thought—Karma, Yoga and Bhakti and is composed of strands of Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, Muslim and Western culture. It is the culture that is the end-product of this evolution that can unite all the peoples of India—Hindu, Muslim, and Christian. Any other single culture would only divide. That Indian culture would be a blend in philosophy and religion of the monism of the Vedanta and the monotheism of the Muslims and the Christians; in literature it is the result of the marriage of the mysticism and renunciation of Sanskrit poetry with the realism and modernity of Tamil poetry and English literature, in art it is a reconciliation between the art of the Bengal and the Bombay schools of painting. We find it illustrated in the poetry of Rabindranath Tagore the novels of Mulk Raj Anand and R. K. Narayan, in the painting of Bhabra and Hebbar, in the sculpture of Roy Chaudhuri. The folk-dances are more unifying than the stylistic religious school of Bharata Natyam. In music the blend between the melody of India and the harmony of the West has yet to be achieved. The popularity of film music and song as compared with Carnatic music shows which way the wind is blowing. The lesson of all this cultural evolution is that in any scheme of education towards national integration it is the things and ideas that are common to all the people of India that must be included and the things that divide which must be kept out.

That is why it is surprising that in the Union Minister's suggestions for the improvement of our school courses of study he does not include teaching and learning in the permanent things of India—its trees, its animals, its rivers, its mountains—the geography, geology, flora and fauna of India—elementary in the primary classes and growing in content and extent till the age of specialization is reached. It is the land of India that is common to the whole people of India. The land of India has

never divided us, it is we that have divided the land of India. With the powerful arms of the Himalayas and the seas that embrace and hold it, India has always been a physical unity. It is the land of India that can make the political unity of India. All education towards national integration must centre on love of the land of India. In the home, stories of the ancient and medieval heroes, Yudhishtra, Arjuna, Rama, Akbar, Sivaji, Chand Bibi, Padmini should be among the first stories children listen to as well as folk tales of India. In the school beside lessons in the geography, botany, and zoology of India—starting with the objects found in the neighbourhood of the school, the pupils at every turn should be reminded of the land of India—by a map of India hung in every class room and pictures of the beautiful features of the landscape of India—from the snowy Himalayas, through the forest-clad mountains of the Vindhayas and the Satpuras, the downs of the Dekhan, the Blue Mountains of the Nilgiris and the Palnis, with the great rivers on the way: the Ganges, the Jumna, the Brahmaputra, the Nerbadi, the Tapti, the Krishna, the Godavari, the Cauvery, and the Tambraparani down to the tip of Kumari. To be loved, a country must be lovely, said Burke. India is beautiful and its features should be displayed to the young. The youth of India must be educated into love of the land of India. And in all discussion of this problem the learned abstract jargon of 'national integration' should be displaced by the good old honest word patriotism—which is love of *patria*, the fatherland.

This projection of India must be displayed before the adult population of India. The problem cannot wait unsolved till all the young are educated—especially as the rate of increase of literacy is 1% per year. By means of the modern mass media of communication—the picture poster, the cinema, the radio—the loveliness of India must be displayed all over the country in railway stations, at bus-stops, on electric standards, in the village *chavadi*. Poets, painters, song-makers may be encouraged

to write or paint or sing of the physical loveliness of India. Statesmen should deem it their first duty to improve the land of India with their agricultural forest, anti-erosion land reclamation programmes. The defence of the land of India should be their foremost concern. The love of the land of India cultivated extensively and intensively may bind the people in a unity over-riding the divisive tendencies of caste, religion, culture—even politics.

And to this end the implementation of the programme should be entrusted to an independent, whole-time dedicated body. Men of culture taken from the professions of teaching, medicine, law, industry should be members of this body. Politicians and party-men and Ministers from the highest downwards should be excluded from it—for ministers and politicians view even the unity of India with party-coloured spectacles and from the standpoint of their plans and projects. All that the Government should do is to contribute, along with men of wealth interested in these objectives, to the funds required for their work. A National Trust for the promotion of the unity of India and with the projection of India towards this end should be constituted. The unity and projection of India will then be secured.

In all policies and programmes of national integration we must concentrate on the things that unite. It is useless to knock our heads against the facts of our social and political life by merely condem-

ning them by legislation or administration. Only our heads will suffer and the cause of Indian unity. We must do as modern medical science advises us to do in regard to our health. Against disease the best protection is to build up the strength of the body. Prophylactics are better than curative drugs. Against the diseases that attack the body politic—linguism, caste, communalism, religious intolerance—the best protection is to build up the ideas and institutions that unite. Fostering the new common Indian culture instead of any sectarian culture is one political body builder in India. Another is retaining English as the medium of instruction in higher education and as the language of higher administration. That will keep the educated classes at least united through a common political language. The Defence and the Central Civil Services must be kept as national as possible—allowing no part or section or community to predominate, especially keeping the balance between the north and the south. The unity of India cannot be brought about by the ideas and institutions that have obtained elsewhere. It is only quacks that would attempt to cure India of its ills by food and medicine used elsewhere. It is the history of India and the facts of contemporary India that must determine the adoption of the ways and means of national integration. As the Scottish proverb puts it “We must dree our own weird”.

National Integration II

By SATISH C. SABERWAL

THE current spate of discussion and conferences relating to 'national' or 'emotional integration' has been widely hailed as a belated, but necessary recognition of a basic malady in the Indian society. Regarding the existence of a malady there can be little doubt; this essay argues that something has gone seriously wrong in the diagnosis and in some of the prescriptions currently being discussed.

The basic problem, in my judgment, flows from the fact that the overwhelming majority of our citizens place their loyalties with a particular kind of social group—groups based on caste, religion, or language, wherein membership is ascriptive (determined by birth) and not achieved. These loyalties carry high emotional tones. Further, the concept of social justice has struck only very shallow roots in our belief system; consequently, when the interests of two groups clash, individuals take their cues from considerations of group interest and not of social justice. I submit that this diagnosis holds for most graduates of our universities as much as for illiterate villagers.

That this situation creates serious problems in the daily social round needs no reiteration. I only propose first to summarize my impression of the current quest for solutions, then to notice certain dangers in this trend, and finally to suggest an alternative approach.

In the current flood of statements on emotional integration, two factors can be isolated. The first assumes that the people need an alternative focus for emotional investment; the nation, India, is the most suitable focus for such alternative allegiance. 'We are all Indians; our nation can achieve greatness only if we stop quarrelling in terms of our small groups. Anyone using the caste, linguistic, and religious entities in electoral and other competitions

is hurting our nation; therefore, he should be penalized.'

The second factor in this mode of thinking assumes that if certain overt symbols of these groups are removed—from the names of political parties and universities, possibly of hotels and hostels—the continuing reality of these groups will somehow lose significance. One has at times the impression that the whole operation is one vast effort at sweeping the dirt and putting it under the charpai. The dirt remains.

What are the defects in and the dangers of this style of thinking? First, it ignores the psychological bases of the strength of group loyalties. It is safe to bet—and the bet is based on what social psychologists know of stereotypes in many societies—that eight-year-olds in India have fairly elaborate images of what a bhangi and a bania and a brahmin, a mussalman and a madrassi are like; investigation into the stereotypes held by highly educated adults is likely to show little difference from the images held by eight-year-olds. The out-group images are almost invariably adverse; and discrimination against an out-group can be quickly rationalized in terms of the stereotypes that have grown since one played on one's mother's knee. The demands of social justice are irrelevant.

Second, it ignores the sociological bases of the strength of group allegiances. A caste group—within the larger religious and linguistic groups—is an endogamous or in-marriage kinship group. However large the number of people who assert that the caste system was abolished by the constitution, it is a matter of fact and daily observation that a marriage outside one's caste is among the rarest of things. These vast kin groups persist. When opportunities are scarce a man running a business or standing for election or making governmental appointments all too frequently yields to

pressures from his kinsmen; co-members of his caste, language, or religious group. That social justice demands that the unrelated man be considered on merit is unlikely to haunt very many men. Charity, we are reminded, begins at home.

Third, it emphasizes emotions and ignores factual knowledge, the possibilities of personal experience, and the necessity to develop the ability to imaginatively take the other man's place. It is proposed to transfer the focus of the people's emotion to a mythical entity, the nation. The course of history is heavy with the millions who were sacrificed in the pursuit of such glorious abstractions. The prospect of developing the image of a 'nation' and charging it heavily with emotion is fraught with dangerous long-run consequences.

What are the dangers of an emotionally charged national image? It creates a climate of public opinion wherein heresy is taboo; anyone who defies the men-in-power on matters considered sacred by these men invites persecution. If I were to argue for a plebiscite in Kashmir today, I would undoubtedly run into this kind of sanctity. It is significant that Sheikh Abdullah, yesterday's man of the people and lion of Kashmir, finds no friend in India. (Any would-be friends remember Mridula Sarabhai's fate.) We are led to believe that in Kashmir's case it is the canons of legalistic hair-splitting and not social justice (in this case the right to self-determination) that are to be applied. The story is told of an eager young man who went to meet a well-known, saintly man active in public affairs during B & K's visit to India in 1955. After discussing village uplift and other things the young man asked, 'Do you think it was morally right to let these visitors go to Kashmir at a time when its political future is under discussion at an international organization, knowing the kind of statement they would make?' The venerable man replied, 'I think we can trust Nehru's judgment on foreign affairs.' One looks in vain for dissent from the official position: not even a faint echo of the British public protest to the Suez action or the United

States minority opposition to the Cuban affair. How does the five-yearly-march-to-the-polls avail, if we—the people—refuse to make our rulers apply the principles of social justice?

I am arguing that emotional integration is a sickness when it is sought as the goal and not as the by-product of rational decisions dictated by the canons of social justice. Gandhi taught us certain techniques for resisting social injustice; when these techniques are used today at all, it is to serve the goals, not of social action, but of political action (and of self-interest: witness the hunger-striking students who have failed at an examination). American students of Gandhi's techniques have successfully adapted these for integrating public facilities for Negroes with those for Whites throughout the United States. Groups of Whites and Negroes have gone to use restaurants, buses and bus-stations, beaches and so forth previously reserved for Whites only. They have suffered punishment together at the hands of the foes of such equality; and hostile State governments have jailed them for long periods. Students from the finest universities, church leaders, labour leaders—all have participated in this mode of non-political social action. Vinoba Bhave excepted, how many Indians have suffered with the Harijans, the Muslims, and other persecuted groups because they are not permitted to draw water from the upper caste wells, eat at 'Hindu' restaurants, live in exclusive residential areas? How many upper caste Hindus have invited Harijans, Muslims, and Christians to their homes for a meal? How many of our speech-makers have themselves married, and would encourage their kinsfolk to marry, outside their caste, religion, and linguistic group? The slogan-mongering continues; it helps in the elections. The dirt is being put out of sight, but:

'Slowly the poison the whole blood
stream fills.

It is not the effort nor the failure tires.
The waste remains, the waste remains
and kills.'

(WILLIAM EMPSON)

National Integration III

By SUDHIR CHANDRA

NOT long ago, whether as an outcome of Jubbulpur and the Akali agitation, or as a part of pre-election strategy, a hue and cry was raised all over the country regarding the urgent necessity of national integration. Obstacles to national integration are many. One of the most prominent and dangerous of these is caste which is a perennial source of friction and division.

Much has been said and written about the origin, evolution, functioning and myriad other aspects of caste. Little has been suggested by way of its complete liquidation even though the leaders of the country feel and openly declare that caste should be done away with. The Government of India, however, is guilty of deliberate blindness, in other words, of hypocrisy in this matter. A recent episode may well illustrate the point. When Taya Zinkin was correspondent in India for the *Manchester Guardian*, she gave a talk over the All India Radio. Her broadcast included the word 'caste'. This was changed to 'group' because 'as far as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting is concerned there is no caste in India except Untouchability, which has been abolished'. Perhaps the Government of India feels that just by denying the existence of caste in India, it has successfully chased it away from the country. Apparently, the experience recorded by Taya Zinkin is little more than amusing. Stretched to its logical implications, however, it raises an issue of far-reaching significance. It virtually amounts to the fact that since in the eyes of the Government of India no such phenomenon as the caste system exists in the social life of the land, there is no question of an all-out assault by the Indian Government on this hideous system. We fight against an enemy only when we recognise his exist-

ence, not against one whom we think, rightly or wrongly, to be dead. Only a fool would believe that the Government really does not know that caste is still pivotal in the everyday life of the majority of the people. This denial therefore can only be attributed to hypocrisy. The hard and disappointed fact is that although the secular leaders of secular India have done much to eradicate the evil of untouchability, they have done nothing whatsoever to destroy caste. But untouchability is only a constituent of this larger problem. This indifferent attitude of the Government will have to be changed if we are really serious about national integration — which is another way of saying, if we are to survive as a nation.

There are others who, though more reasonable than the Government of India, feel that the system of caste has outlived its utility and as such will soon die in the natural course of things. With the spread of secularism, the advances of technology and technical culture, the advocacy of rationalism and the extension of the roots of democracy, these people argue, caste will automatically vanish away. A cursory glance at the history of caste will show how untenable this view is. This and similar other arguments have been put forward for the last fifty years and more. No appreciable ground, however, seems to have been gained so far. Caste, by showing remarkable adaptability, has managed to perpetuate itself even in an uncongenial atmosphere. Moreover, we have arrived at a stage of national crisis when it is no more possible for us to let caste go its own obstinate way. We have to destroy it before it destroys us as a nation.

Almost all responsible Indians are agreed on the abolition of caste; they differ only

in regard to the means of bringing it about. While realising as well as any other man that the problem is difficult, I submit that it is not one that eludes all possible solutions. There is at least one solution which will strike the system of caste at its roots. The measure I am going to suggest is not complex, spectacular, or even original; my only surprise is that it has not found sufficient publicity so far. Caste has no autonomous continuity of its own; it survives because of the fresh lease of life that it gets from every new generation which comes to hold the reins of power in society. We should try in every way to protect the plastic minds of young boys and girls of the new generation from being polluted during their impressionable years by the mention of their respective castes and sub-castes. Loyalty to caste, let us remember, is not innate. It is carefully cultivated in the mind of every child by his family and community. To rule out all possibilities of such poisonous cultivation, what I have to suggest is the prohibition of the use and, therefore, mention of caste or sub-caste along with a person's name. The Government of India should legislate to that effect. However, not much can be hoped from the present generation. Even those of it who speak against the system of caste suffer from a strange schizophrenia. While being opposed to caste intellectually, they betray emotionally an almost unconscious leaning towards it. Edward Shils was perhaps right when he pointed out this unconscious hold of caste even upon Indian intellectuals.

There are some who assert that constitutional measures like the one proposed above will be ineffective unless a radical psychological transformation has been brought about in the hearts and minds of the people. The argument emerges from a rather narrow interpretation of the jurisdiction of the legislature. Legislation, according to it, should not be imposed from above, it should come from below. It might be true, only to some extent, of politically stable and experienced democratic countries. In countries which have

but recently attained their independence, the legislative body has not only to validate what has already been unofficially accepted and passed by the people; it must also pass laws on matters which may not be very pleasing to the majority. We have two alternatives at the moment: either not to pass measures for the abolition of caste until people have themselves stopped believing in it (in other words, when there is no necessity of such a legislation); or to pass, without the least delay, such measures as are likely to create an atmosphere in which caste is not able to prolong its existence. To the sensible the choice is quite clear.

There are still others for whom the problem is essentially economic. This being so, their logic proceeds, 'piecemeal' constitutional reforms can make no lasting contribution to the solution of the problem. There is no denying the fact that the aspect of the problem related to the removal of untouchability is really economic, and has, therefore, to be dealt with as such. But as far as the general problem of abolishing caste as a whole is concerned, to regard it as basically economic is fallacious. If we take the three upper castes and their sub-divisions we cannot point out which one is economically backward and which well off. They are all alike, having in their respective folds all possible economic cross-sections. The entire superstructure of caste is based on discrimination which is not economic but social. Naturally, therefore, the problem is not one of improving the material position of this or that caste but of making more and more people realise that such inhuman distinctions are a denial of elementary justice, of the inalienable rights of man.

Besides this all-important solution which will be more or less ineffective so long as the Government is not persuaded to give up its false position, there are some simple measures which can be adopted by those who really wish to see caste go. In the first place, they may give inter-communal and inter-provincial names to their sons and daughters. The example of an illustrious

son of India can be followed by other broad-minded Indians. This illustrious son of India is neither a politician nor a social reformer. He is a musician. I am referring to Ustad Alauddin Khan. It may be news to many that the names of two of the daughters of this doyen of Indian musicians are Sarojini and Anusuya. Similarly, a North Indian acquaintance of mine has named his son Sundaram. Unfortunately, this is done only rarely. Even if a few thousand parents, to begin with, could follow this wonderful example or at least delete surnames denoting caste or sub-caste, a decisive blow would have been struck at the vicious system.

Encouraging inter-caste and inter-provincial marriages is also a sure way of promoting an egalitarian society. Although much will depend here on the youth of the country, liberal parents can also contribute their share. All that can be expected of

them is the willing abdication of their traditional right, vested in them by virtue of their being Indian parents, of arranging their children's marriages. Inter-caste and inter-provincial marriages, after all, have to be marriages of love, not of parental negotiations. This, however, requires an extension of educational, rather co-educational, facilities. The existing system of co-education would scarcely serve this purpose. For, in most of the existing co-educational institutions in India boys and girls live in two water-tight compartments with negligible chances of mutual intercourse. What is required is a free, healthy and uninhibited environment without any segregation of male and female students. There is, however, no artificial device for producing love marriages between boys and girls of different castes and communities. All that can be done is the creation of a suitable atmosphere.

Talking About Books

By SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH

THE best anthologies are personal and generally have a nexus with Nature. They are seldom about *angst*, red flags, *et hoc genus omnes*. It is just and appropriate that R. S. Thomas, the most Blundenish of the younger poets should have edited a beautiful and perceptive anthology of *Country Verse*. It is just, too that Batsford should be the publishers. Thomas says in the Preface: 'The environment of the majority of our population to-day is that of science, technology and industry. The natural world is presented fitfully and transitorily. Yet nature was man's background for thousands of years; the seasons provided a lovely rhythm to his life and thought. The Country is still linked dearly and beautifully with us through our childhood memories. My first hope, therefore, in compiling this anthology has been to reawaken those memories.' Memories stirred by Amiens' song, Thyrsis and Edward Thomas will be widely shared. The Chestnuts will please all tastes and I hope Robert Graves approves of the extract from 'Philip Sparrow'.

There is the same preoccupation with Nature in Richard Church's *Calm October* published by Heinemann. It is, in a sense, unfortunate for Mr. Church that Heinemann have established a primacy, almost a monopoly, in the publication of essays. They are the publishers of Max Beerbohm and J. B. Priestley, (not to mention the belles-lettres of Somerset Maugham) and judged by those exacting standards, Mr. Church just does not make the grade. He waffles a lot about apple orchards and cherry blossom time but does not quite get across. He has the style but not the soul of an essayist. He is not a real ruminant and his regret that 'the essay has been dropped as a favourite literary medium' is merely a sense of disappointment at the closing of a market. Still it is a book of essays and ostensibly about Nature. It does not do to sniff at small mercies or big books.

There ought to be, but is not, a great interest in India about Lord Attlee's Memoirs. Francis William's *A Prime Minister Remembers* published by Heinemann is excellently contrived. Williams

who has been the Hannen Swaffer of the Fifties, hit on the idea of having long interviews with Attlee which were tape-recorded. These form the main core of the book, together with some official letters. The essential Attlee emerges from the pages of the book. This was the man who fixed the date for Indian Independence, who saw the folly of bombing China during the Korean war, and who was petty and unbecoming in his correspondence with Harold Laski. It will revive sharp, nostalgic memories of contemporary history.

Keats; a Reassessment edited by Kenneth Muir and published by Liverpool University Press is a very scholarly book; it consists of ten essays. Joan Grundy discusses Keat's debt to the Elizabethans. Miriam Allott analyses 'Isabella', 'The Eve of St Agnes' and 'Lamia'. Kenneth Muir's brilliant essay on the meaning of the odes naturally involves some revaluations and debunkings. Much the same is true of the two other writers on the odes, and Arnold Davenport thinks that Herford was wrong in saying that the *Autumn* ode does not include the 'sense that beauty, though not without some glorious compensation perishes'. Kenneth Muir in an essay on the 'Meaning of Hyperion' suggests that the revolutionary climate of the time contributed to, if it did not suggest the subject of the poem. Not, I think, one of Kenneth Muir's happy efforts. What, one wonders, is the point of this sentence: 'Garrod's witty but misleading book was written to show that Keats' best work was written only when he escaped from philosophy, politics action and character into the world of pure imaginative forms'? The one who is nodding — and misleading — is not Garrod but Muir.

Irving Howe's *Politics and the Novel* (New Left Books: Stevens) is a stimulating, Orwellian book. There is something sad about the American Socialist. America has never had a party of Labour as such and the radical has had to live with the knowledge that he cannot hope for any real political power. Howe is not one of these defeatists. He gets to grips with his subject, though he reaches the disturbing conclusion that the best political novelists have often been reactionary.

The greatest of them, according to him is Dostoevsky. Starting with Stendhal, he takes us through Dostoevsky to Conrad, Turgenev and James, dealing only with those novels that suit his particular theme, which is, briefly, the conflict within a novelist between his characters and his political ideas. Among the twentieth century novelists he considers Malraux, Silone, Koestler and Orwell.

V. S. Pritchett's *When my Girl comes Home* published by Chatto and Windus is his new book of short stories. Pritchett's nuances are perfectly adjusted to his different milieus. In 'The Wheelbarrow' a gospel preacher helps a widow burn her dead father's belongings, is attracted by her, then denounces her to his congregation, failing to mention what he made on their transaction. In 'The Fall' an accountant repeatedly demonstrates at an Annual Dinner the stage-fall taught him by his film-star brother. Eventually he finds that he has never learned to bow and falls flat on his face. In 'The Snag' a rackets divorce jilts the rackets narrator in favour of a pedantic bore — with whom she is very happy. In 'On the Scent' a daydreaming elderly museum assistant whose slang has dated a bit, is revealed as an ex-Intelligence man with a phenomenal memory. Pritchett has outgrown the trick surprises of the imitation O. Henrys. His stories live because of their awareness of the transience of things and the nature of contemporary tensions. Also, maybe, Pritchett's respect for chaos.

Claud Cockburn is a political gadfly with a streak of Elia. The third Volume of his autobiography, *View from the West*, published by MacGibbon and Kee is a worthy sequel to 'In Time of Trouble' and 'Crossing the Line'. He disclaims a lowdown on most things, including the purpose of the Universe. The satirist's is a hazardous occupation in the modern world. The Establishment has insidious methods of silencing him. There are men — Lord Altrincham, Malcolm Muggeridge, Claud Cockburn stand out — however, who refuse to be silenced. The rich quality of Claud Cockburn's satire is seen here: 'If you try to deal much with personalities under our British libel laws you find that the people you mention had better emerge as pretty nice folk. The sparks, — unless the Fraud Squad positively has the goods on them, turn out to be warm-blooded creatures and the whores, more particularly if they are rich, titled or your proprietor's cousin have hearts of spun gold'. After this, his views on matters which tickle the Establishment, like Malcolm Muggeridge's article on the Monarchy may be easily guessed.

I have always regarded *The Concise Cambridge History of Literature* by George Sampson and published by Cambridge University Press, a highly satisfactory book. I regret to say the impression is marred by the new edition. The main corpus of the book, of course, remains unaltered and excellent. The new Chapter 'The Age of Eliot' by R. C. Churchill is quite unworthy of the book. It reveals the kind of capricious partisanship which has marred the Pelican History edited by Boris Ford and called 'The Modern Age'. What useful purpose is served by statements like: 'It will be disputed by few that T. S. Eliot is indeed the foremost living English writer'? One naturally expects a man with such predilections to prefer Hopkins to Housman and De la Mare, but a History of Literature is hardly the forum for singular preferences. The two most significant living poets — Edmund Blunden and Robert Graves — are dismissed in one line. His survey of the novel reveals the same supercilious arrogance towards Maugham, Frank Swinnerton and Sir Compton Mackenzie. Angus Wilson's work is not mentioned. But perhaps the really tainted section is the one on criticism. To describe Eliot and Leavis as great critics and to fail to make suitable acknowledgment to the great work of Sir C. M. Bowra, F. L. Lucas and Wilson Knight is insidious and irresponsible, unworthy of a serious history of literature.

Bernard Bergonzi in *The Early H. G. Wells* published by Manchester University Press reminds us that in Wells's strangest fantasies, there is an element of exhilaration and release, of kicking out against the past. The scientific romances, he argues persuasively are myths which dramatise Wells's inner conflict over the possibilities of evolutionary man. Wells had a genius for potted history. Another kind of potted history is provided in Osbert Lancaster's *Signs of the Times* published by John Murray. Lancaster is much more than a clever cartoonist. He is a real humorist who knows that nothing dates so quickly as the topical joke. 'Who now remembers the Lynskey Tribunal or can recall exactly what it was that Dr. Edith Sumerskill said about cheese?' Nonetheless, in registering the climate of opinion at a moment of crisis the cartoonist is providing a permanent footnote to the history of the times. And Lancaster's jokes about the beatniks and 'genuine teddy-boys' will long be remembered. Though the best I think is about a 'supposed' best-seller — 'The Highway Code'; 'Well darling, I've not actually read it, but it's been a 'must' on my library list for almost as long as

'Paradise Lost' and 'Brothers Karamazov'.⁴⁴ That is rich.

I have never met William Empson but I fancy he must be Nature's antidote to F. R. Leavis. His most engaging trait is his humility and this comes out in his *Milton's God* published by Chatto and Windus. His main thesis is that Milton was doing his best with a hopeless assignment, the defence of the 'Christian God'. Professor Empson emphasises that Milton never really overcame this initial handicap. Raleigh and Grierson have discussed this before. Of considerable interest is the way in which Empson gets round Milton's supposed ambivalence about Satan; 'Milton would not seriously despise Satan for disbelieving his creation; nor should we read that into the poem, because Satan is not meant to become contemptible until his character collapses after he has doubted his own thesis upon Niphates' top. C. S. Lewis, on the other hand, jeers at him heartily for it, saying that he is beginning to incur the Doom of Nonsense, so he thinks he just grewed like Topsy. Milton thought it proper to be sardonic about the enemy of mankind; but he was scrupulously careful to give him strong arguments for his fall.' But does this really affect the poetry of *Paradise Lost*? The interest of *Paradise Lost* does not lie here but in the doctrines that Milton lived by and to which he gave memorable expression; the doctrine of creation, the doctrine of Providence and the belief that the root of all goodness is freedom. In Helen Gardner's words, 'Milton's passionate belief in God as Creator and Ruler and in the freedom of the will, allied to his noble confidence in reason as the master faculty of the human mind, produces a God seen almost wholly in terms of Power and Will, who argues his case at the bar of human reason'.

Norman Kelvin's *A Troubled Eden* published by Oliver and Boyd is a study of George Meredith. The ineptitude of Siegfried Sassoon's book on Meredith made such a book absolutely necessary. Meredith did not reflect the Victorian temper—better reflected by Tennyson, Arnold and at an extreme point by Thomas Hardy—about man's relation to Nature. Like his friend, Swinburne, he saw Nature as an active and benevolent principle that reveals to man his kinship with the rest of creation and that teaches him how to order his private, public and political life. That is the theme alike of 'Modern Love' and 'The Woods of Westernmain'. In 'Melampus' and in 'The Day of the Daughter of Hades' Meredith insists that complaints about the transience of life are pointless; man should rather take joy in the processes

which make up the sum of his existence. Aristippus of Cyrene would have endorsed the attitude.

George Orwell was far and away the most significant prose writer of this century, and in publishing a uniform edition of his works, Secker and Warburg are rendering great service. The second edition of Orwell's *Collected Essays* brings together all the essays in 'Critical Essays', 'Shooting an Elephant' and 'England Your England'. Orwell was unique in his awareness of the isolation of the individual. Unique, too, in his awareness of the maladjustment of the intellectual and the importance of Good English. 'One can write nothing readable unless one constantly struggles to efface one's personality' he wrote and he was keeping his personality out of his books all the time. The result is that his prose is like a window-pane, which was his model for the best prose. It would be a mistake to lump Orwell with mere political writers like Koestler, Silone, Malraux or Salvemini. He ranks far higher. He was one of the *Vates* and said prophetic things in 'Politics vs Literature', 'Writers and Leviathan' and 'Inside the Whale'. His pure, precise, pinpointed prose was an index of his honesty. 'He was passionate over the purity of prose' writes E. M. Forster, and in another essay he tears to bits some passages of contemporary writing. It is a dangerous game, but it ought to be played for if prose decays, thought decays and all the finer roads of communication are broken. The essays are Orwell's explorations of this contradictory and disquieting world and some of them may outlive *Animal Farm* or *1984*.

Geoffrey Tillotson is a recognised authority on Pope and his *Augustan Studies* published by the Athlone Press is a delightful book to review. As in his studies on Pope, Professor Tillotson emphasises the need of understanding the special Augustan conception of Nature. 'They superimposed upon Nature what they considered at certain times to be desirable. They made a selection from Nature of elements that suited their interests'. All this makes a close study of the Augustan poetic diction an urgent thing. The reasons why eighteenth century poets use the diction are among the main reasons why they write poetry at all. Much of it, *pace* Wordsworth was neither gaudy nor inane. And even when it is second-hand, it is sound. Gray's 'Ode on the Spring', says Tillotson, is a pat example. The rhythm is spry. Gray was not exhibiting the new things he had discovered in the spring, as Wordsworth was to do; he was reminding us of the spring already known to ourselves and mankind generally. He draws

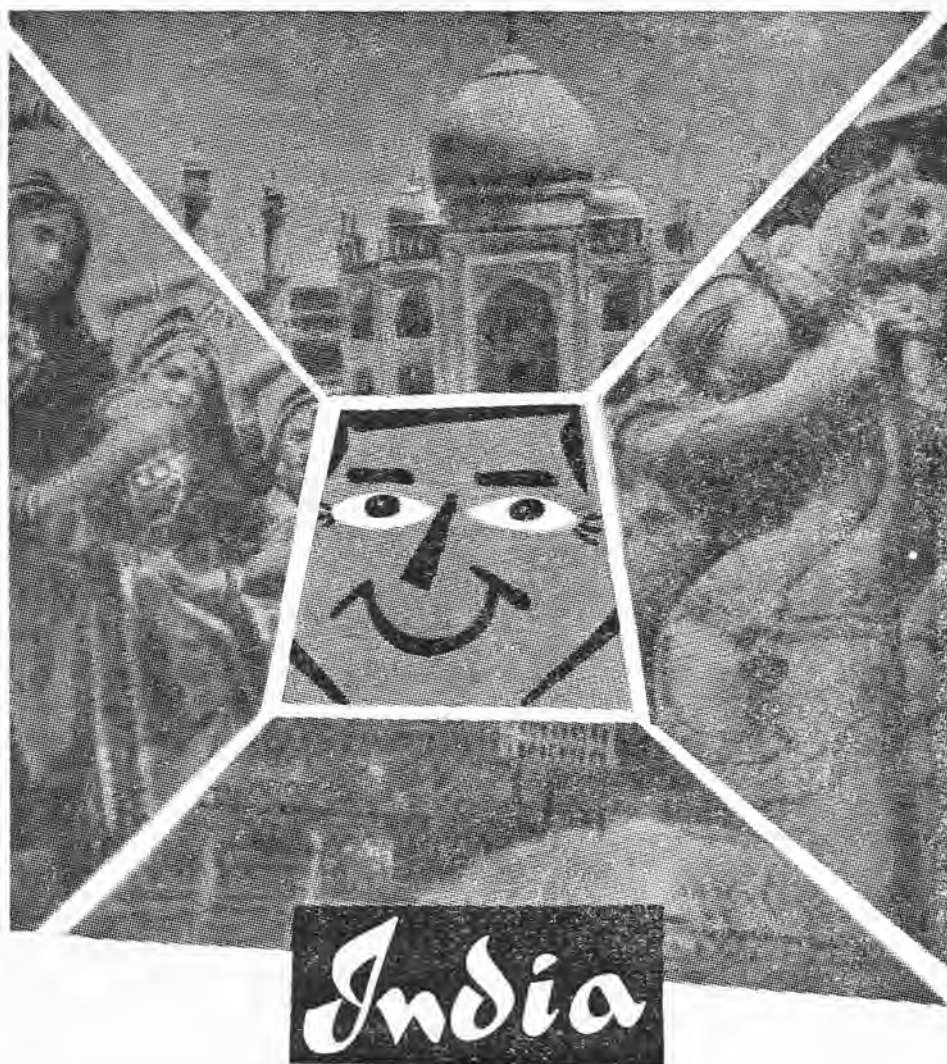
heavily on the *Georgics* but so what? Finally, I will advise even persons allergic to the eighteenth century to read Tillotson's delightful essay on Johnson's *Dictionary*. It is a Dictionary that can be read and in practice we find ourselves reading it. In other works it is made to serve the ends that are served by the *The Rambler*, *Rasselas* and *Lives of the Poets*. When Anne Seward said that all Johnson's writings were poetry she made an exception of his orthographical works. But she need not have done so.

Methuens have fully established their primacy as publishers of *Shakespeareana*. They are fortunate in having Professor Wilson Knight on their list. Their paperbacks are beautifully produced and judiciously selected. An example is Edmund Wilson's *Wound and the Bow*. Their famous *New Arden Series* has been found indispensable to the academic world and even to the general reader of Shakespeare. The ones edited by M. R. Ridley and Kenneth Muir are particularly dependable. Kenneth Muir is a Folioophile and in his *New Arden* editions of *Macbeth* and *King Lear* he has more or less stuck to the text of the First Folio. He reveals a catholicity of temper in his Introductions which Dover Wilson, when he was younger, might have emulated with profit. Thus in his Introduction he acknowledges his debt to Danby in elaborating Shakespeare's ambivalence about Nature. He handsomely acknowledges his considerable debt to the great work of Wilson Knight and even to earlier critics like Granville-Barker. He is chary of the last word and the final judgment, the crucial test of 'Negative Capability' in a Shakespearean critic. One can see this when in his discussion of the Fool in *Lear* he cites both Keats and Hazlitt. He reveals the same sanity in discussing the interpolations in *Macbeth*. About ten scenes have been marked out by one disintegrator or another. Kenneth Muir rejects most of these suggestions and considers only the Porter-scene and the Hecate scene. He firmly plumps for the authenticity of the Porter-Scene. Basically, his reason is the same as Gilbert Murray's — and, of course De Quincey's — viz that the scene increases, instead of diminishing, the horror. ('If we laugh it is not the laughter of oblivion'). The Porter-scene suggests the inner conflict, — within *Macbeth* — between sin and grace. He finds the Hecate scenes spurious, and internal evidence strongly supports Muir — and the consensus. It is, however possible that the Hecate scenes were intended to emphasise the other aspect of the Weird Sisters. The prime movers of *Macbeth's* crime are seen here as the

instruments of his punishment. Their function is akin to that of the Erinyes.

Leonard Woolf's *Growing* published by Hogarth Press is a continuation of *Sowing*. This is the autobiography of his years as a Civil Servant in Ceylon. Most of his time was spent at Jaffna, Kandy and Hambantota. He is a broadminded and candid man and his moving tribute to the religion of Gautama Buddha is obviously sincere. His remarks on Islam reveal his insight and if he finds Hinduism more a metaphysic than a religion, that should not be set down against him. He is not prejudiced against Hinduism as his sometime friend, E. M. Forster obviously is. But, from a literary point of view, the years at Ceylon were definitely not the seven years of plenty. At the end of it all, Leonard Woolf returned to his Cambridge friends living in or about Bloomsbury. He disliked Imperialism (the contrast between the similar reactions of Leonard Woolf and George Orwell is an illuminating one) and did not return to Ceylon. He had fallen in love with Virginia Stephen and married her. *Growing* is a satisfactory book if it is considered as an interlude. We will await Leonard Woolf's third volume.

Sir Maurice Bowra, reviewing my monograph on 'Tragedy' wrote that George Steiner's 'Death of Tragedy' published by Faber was so full of stimulating things that it was indispensable for all serious students of the subject. And so it is. Its formidable title notwithstanding, the book is not an obituary notice of Tragedy. It is a series of sparkling, thoughtful, percipient essays on Tragedy. Tragedy was born in Greece because the notion of the blindness of Necessity is a Greek one. The fall of Jericho or Jerusalem is merely just, whereas the fall of Troy is the first great metaphor of tragedy. A city may be destroyed because it has defied God, but its destruction is a passing instant in the rational design of God's purpose. Its walls shall rise again, on earth or in the kingdom of heaven, when the souls of men are restored to grace. The burning of Troy is final because it is brought about by the fierce sport of human hatreds and the wanton, mysterious choice of destiny'. He thinks that Claudel and Brecht were the last dramatists even to approximate to tragedy. Neither Sartre nor Camus nor Beckett made the grade and 'Waiting for Godot' is a kind of anti-drama. But Brecht was another matter. His characters have a tough vitality. 'When Brecht's name has passed into the burial of literary history, Mutter Courage shall continue to pull her wagon through the winter night'.



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BOOKS

Another Unknown Indian

PUNJABI CENTURY 1857-1947 by Prakash Tandon (Chatto & Windus, 256 pp. 21s.)

I CAN think of many reasons to recommend this volume — its mature wit, its engaging sincerity, its unaffected modesty, its subtle blending of sentimentality and matter-of-factuality — but its anecdotal glory is one of the strongest. Memoirs tend to move into extremes, the Wordsworthian growth of a poet's mind on one side of the scale and the Pepysian brass tacks of daily life on the other; happy (and unknown to literature) the man who combines both. Mr Tandon clearly believes in brass tacks, but he polishes them with immense artistry, with the result that his account of three generations in his family's history has the appearance of a superbly-worked piece of *bidri* metalware or an embroidered, colourful Kashmiri shawl such as Punjabi ladies love to wear.

Take those thirty-two pages which deal with the marriage of Mr. Tandon's uncle, then twenty-four years old ('an unusual age among us to remain unmarried') Dwarka Prashad, to a girl called Savitri ('she was dressed simply, without any jewellery, as became a virgin...her figure was childish, her breasts immature, and although she was seventeen mother thought she looked less.')

There is a detailed account of the marriage preliminaries: the singing of the auspicious songs, the wearing of the choora, the sending of gifts from the bride's family, the 'tedious hours' of the actual ceremony, the lavish dinner, the scattering of rose petals, the departure of the guests; 'the last one to leave her was the dai.'

Now, it is easy to say that all this is simply the cataloguing of 'native' detail so popular with the Indo-Anglian novelist who has an eye on the foreign reader; and, if put as blandly as I unfortunately have put it, it must no doubt appear to be just that. But it isn't; it is, in fact, an extremely moving bit of writing, a fluent narrative that leads us from beauty to beauty, from one shining sympathy to another, until we realise that Mr Tandon has done all this deliberately, in order to highlight the poignance of Savitri's death while giving birth to her first child. 'Slowly life was leaving Savitri's body, burning with the heat of the fever, her baby lying already lifeless beside her'. To me the Savitri episode has all the sweetsick purifying flavour of a Greek tragedy; one can only cry kudos to Mr. Tandon and leave it at that, for it is as difficult to communicate the tragic experience of Savitri's death as it is to explain why Oedipus is furiously pursued, why Lear undoes his button, why Antony becomes a strumpet's fool, why Falder is ground down by the chariot wheels of Justice. The men who gather to mourn and cremate Savitri sit silently, with covered heads: with occasional sighs they praise God and depart. 'What God gives He takes back; who are we to protest?'

I am reminded in some ways of Raja Rao's Savithri in his brilliant new novel *The Serpent and the Rope*, and of his sentence, 'India is not a country like France is, or like England; India is an idea, a metaphysic.' In Mr Tandon's exploration of that metaphysic as it manifests itself in the Punjab, the accent is often on suffering, irreparable loss, the cycle of birth and death; at the end of the book, it is a steady, frightening look at the horrors of

Punjab's partition in 1947. 'Dear Prakash,' said the brief postcard from his uncle Dwarka Prasad, 'Come and get us out before it is too late.' Muslim friends had come to Prasad late one night and said with tears in their eyes that they were unable to offer him protection any longer.

The journey from Gujerat, the crossing of the river Chenab, the corpse-littered Grand Trunk Road, the sanctuary in Delhi are described with an antiseptic objectivity which makes the migration even grislier than the lurid, bloated pictures of it painted by Khrushwant Singh in *Train to Pakistan*. 'Today we have no one left in Gujerat. All the Hindus came away at partition. It is strange to think that in all the land between Ravi and Chenab, from Chenab to Jhelum, from Jhelum to Indus, in the foothills and in the plain down to Panjnad, where the five rivers eventually merge, land which had been the home of our biradaris since the dawn of history, there is no one left of our kind.'

Common enough, you might think: who hasn't experienced or heard of the hair-raising evils of partition in Punjab and Bengal? But Mr Tandon doesn't stop at macabre scenes. He rounds off the partition chapter with a compelling human story of a young Sikh who persuades a wild crowd of Hindus to spare a pretty Muslim girl, whom he marries. The wife is expecting a second child, and the young Sikh delivers her in a pit dug for her (they are hiding from the police). The next day she runs a high fever, and in three days she is dead. The Sikh did not dare take her to a hospital for fear the social workers and the police would take her away from him.

Melodramatic? Sentimental sob-stuff? Perhaps; but not in its context. Such writing is didactic in the finest sense: it teaches because it embodies the truth of a lived and made-meaningful experience. 'There is no comparable evocation of India as it used to be, except Kipling's *Kim*,' says Maurice Zinkin in his Foreword, but he adds wisely, '*Kim*, is one of the world's

great stories, but Mr Tandon writes from the inside.'

And writes so well that it is a pleasure to walk by his side and listen as he raconteurs his way through three generations. The style is like transparent glass—not a touch of egoism (so irritating in a reminiscer) in it. I had thought Mr Tandon would allow himself a gentle excess when describing his romance (in London and Stockholm) with the girl he married, Ingegard. Alas no. He describes her as 'chubby and green-eyed with a flat pale face and sturdy ankles'—but 'what took my fancy was her nose. Its Scandinavian arch ending in an up-tilting tip was something I had never seen before, because our Punjabi noses are often straight, with sometimes a middle-eastern curve, but they never point upward.' And life would have carried on in a lazy current, he notes, with him ending on the mud flats 'if she had not arrived on the scene.' That's all: no roses, no Juning, no mooning, no swooning—a pucca (but this time tongue-in-cheek too) Punjabi romance. His father had warned him to stay away from English females, and he had promised; so, with Punjabi practically, he chose a Scandinavian.

I find his mischievous wit all over the place. The Punjabis were puzzled, says Mr Tandon, at the first sight of the English rulers—'never had they seen people so incredibly red-faced, and dressed in such quaint tight clothes displaying their bottoms so indecently' (this in 1811; one wonders what their reaction would be to bikinis!). Grand-uncle could speak English; that is, explains Mr Tandon, he could 'git-mit git-mit', as the villagers said. When his father explained to him that 'Wine in, wit out' meant losing your wits as soon as a drop of wine went in (his father was a teetotaller), young Tandon protested that that couldn't be the interpretation of the proverb, because the English were rather fond of liquor. 'That nettled him, for he was inwardly sorry that they drank. He almost felt they let him down.'

Punjabi hospitality is deftly analysed: it was a matter of pride and social obligation. 'If a person from your village or a relation was visiting your town, but was staying with someone else, you went formally to invite him and his family.' He protested—again by the rules of etiquette—wherever he was he was eating your food, 'so why should you trouble.' You insisted and he protested, and later he 'very modestly agreed'.

Biradari justice is shrewdly described. The sins and virtues of the joint family (specially the unhappy position of the young widows) gets detailed comment. Rainy days, rare in the Punjab, evoked applications from schoolboys addressed to the Headmaster in this fashion: 'Honoured Sir: Today, by the grace of God, is a fine day. Therefore, we the students of the Government High School, Gujrat, Punjab, request that a holiday should be declared.' The holiday was invariably granted; but to make the best impression the application had to be written in English; 'it also had to invoke the grace of God, just in case God changed His mind and the sun came out.

A splendid chapter re-creates the Lahore milieu: only a Lahori can catch Mr Tandon's nuances here. And there is an incredibly poignantly funny account of the time when Mr Tandon, swayed by the hypnotic piety of a preaching Scotsman, nearly got converted. 'But I had a problem which no one understood. I had a vague idea that a Christian saving meant a baptism, and that meant a public bath. For one thing, it was freezing cold, and for another, I did not like the idea of undressing in public to be dipped under the gaze of all, so I did not take the risk and held fast.'

I invite your attention to that innocuous yet, to me, key remark, and to the manner in which it is made. For it is a very Punjabi remark, in its spontaneous dry wit and drier horse sense, in its pride and practical jocularly. The fear of physical exposure to water in public in a London winter is surely not the reason for Mr

Tandon's refusing to become a Christian. The reason is that he wasn't really impressed by the preacher's tamasha. He had a ringside seat; he enjoyed the show; but a tamasha is a tamasha, a mela is a mela, and no Punjabi takes a mela seriously. Take away the word mela, and put *life* in its place, and you have the curiously paradoxical attitude of the Punjabi to the myriad play of forms that surrounds human existence. He loves it, is stimulated by it, but it doesn't deceive him; the most serious outlook on life is not to take it seriously. Who is the greater philosopher, Falstaff or Hamlet?

But I am becoming garrulous (all Punjabis do, when impressed or excited). I recommend this book with all the enthusiasm I can summon; as a *kattar* Punjabi myself, a once-upon-a-time insider who has succumbed to the various seductions of Bengal as Mr Tandon has fallen victim to the charms of Bombay, I know what Mr Tandon is writing about. His book is tremendously vital in style, in theme, and deserves a *Shabash!* and calls for an encore. Or, as a Punjabi would say, 'May I die if I could write such a book!'

P. LAL

The Future of our Village

A STUDY OF LAND REFORMS AND GROUP DYNAMICS by Baljit Singh (Asia Publishing House. 135 pp, Rs. 9.50)

THIS new book by Mr. Baljit Singh evokes ambivalent reactions in this reviewer. For the sake of orderly procedure, we shall first summarize the author's argument, then note the welcome features of this important study, and finally criticise its less praiseworthy aspects.

Mr. Singh and his associates gathered the primary data presented here in six villages of Uttar Pradesh: three each in the western and the eastern districts. The methodology of the field investigation will undoubtedly be evaluated by the relevant

professional journals; we shall focus on its more substantial aspects.

The low productivity of Indian agriculture is again documented, and the author contends that the poorest of the villagers have lost further ground in the last decade. Insofar as only a few castes own most of the land, these employ their land-based power to dominate the other castes. Singh reports that the landless villagers strongly favour land-ceilings and land-redistribution; understandably the outnumbered land-owners oppose the idea. Conflict between these groups is frequent, sometimes violent. (pp. 37-54). Within land-owning castes there were several factions in every village, and their operation is described with insight (pp. 8-12).

Mr. Singh underlines the urgency of land reform. The Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, enforced in July 1952, increased the number of proprietary households from 9% to 25% in the sample villages (p. 27). This measure removed only the intermediaries between the state and the cultivator; some cultivators continue to own large areas (we could find no data for the sample villages, but for the whole of U.P. about 4% of the cultivators held 25% of the land in lots of 15 acres or more), usually tilled through hired labour and share-cropping (p. 33). Land-ceilings followed by land-redistribution (*a la* Japan) appear to Singh to be more or less inescapable. (On this premise he argues that the recent land consolidation in Uttar Pradesh strengthened the large cultivator and was therefore untimely.)

The author tells us that his informants feel the need for (1) land redistribution, (2) ceiling on existing holdings, (3) consolidation of holdings, and (4) cooperative farming and other reforms—in that order. The last of these 'felt needs' is based on an 8% positive response; but Mr. Singh feels that this 'is not so significant and does not deserve as much emphasis as the fact that some cultivators in howsoever small a minority, are already experiencing the need for cooperation in their enterprise.'

(p. 57.) Again, 'the village people have only a vague notion of cooperatives for joint cultivation. Sometimes they are misguided about its true form by interested people who are opposed to joint farming. (p. 62) It is clear that Mr. Singh is strongly committed to cooperative farming. He advocates cooperative farms composed of 15-acre or smaller units owned by individual farmers; a long roster of 'principles' is shown to be in accord with his proposal.

This book has several virtues. It is an indicator of the growing empirical temper of our time. A great deal of legwork has gone into the data used to support the author's preferences. It is a contribution to the slowly growing corpus of field reports on Indian villages. (May we hope that more of Mr. Singh's primary data, in less expensive format—such as cyclostyling, would be published for the professionals in this field?) In considering the reports from Tepoztlan, Mexico, Singh takes a small step towards recognizing that Indian peasantry is not unique; more systematic attention to the characteristics of peasant societies elsewhere is likely to yield a useful, comparative perspective for further work on Indian peasant society.

However, it also has many disconcerting aspects. That the author generalizes for the whole of India from six Uttar Pradesh villages is only partially mitigated by the various Surveys used; at the very least he should have presented the field data and the attempt at extensive generalization in separate sections.

More disturbing is the author's tendency to extrapolate his data startlingly. For example, he finds that his villagers are more responsive to the idea of credit co-operatives than to any other form of service cooperative. To one of these, designed for 'joint ownership of costly farm equipment' a clear majority of the informants is opposed. However, Singh says:

'A fact that emerges out (sic) from the above analysis is that not only will most of the service cooperatives be acceptable to the rural households but their

acceptability is higher for those types, e.g. credit, of which they have an experience than for others. This proves that each type of service cooperative will grow in popularity as people have gained experience of its working.' (p. 62.)

This manner of deriving proofs is, to put it mildly, rather bewildering; Mr. Singh uses an unusual brand of logic.

The most deplorable fact about this book is the attempt simultaneously to report primary field data, to generalize freely upon the data, and to sell to its readers certain proposals that appeal to the author. These proposals have no demonstrated relationship whatsoever to the author's data. Their advocacy belongs more properly to political pamphleteering, an honourable occupation in its own right; however, to mix a political pamphlet with a scientific monograph violates the integrity of the social sciences. This should not be done.

SATISH C. SABERWAL

Two PEN Symposia

DRAMA IN MODERN INDIA & THE WRITER'S RESPONSIBILITY IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD (PEN All-India Centre, 202 pp. Rs. 5.50)

TWO symposia held in October 1957 at the Baroda session of the fourth PEN Conference are included in this handy volume along with addresses on the occasion by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Smt. Hansa Mehta. *Drama in Modern India* is the theme of the first symposium while the second relates to the *Writer's Responsibility in a Rapidly Changing World*.

Sixteen writers participated in the first and we have here within two covers, a report of the progress of drama in 16 languages of India. Our Constitution mentions only 14 excluding English. For the purpose of the symposium, English is con-

sidered (and rightly so) an Indian language and two more, Maithili and Sindhi are included. There is no report on drama in Kashmiri, although it is one of the languages mentioned in our Constitution.

In choosing the topic for the symposium, the PEN had made an excellent choice: *Drama in Modern India*. But the various writers have not understood it as such; there are eight varying captions given to their respective essays. Implication of the word *Modern* has been missed by many.

Whether the stage brings forth new dramatic talent or whether the powerful drama sustains and continues the tradition of the stage, may be a debatable point. Another such point is about the place of the radio play, whose requirements in technique of writing and performance are so very different. It was perhaps not stated whether or not the radio play fell within the scope prescribed for the symposium. As a result, some of the writers have referred to it; while others are silent on that point.

Beginning with Assamese, B.K. Barua traces the origin and growth of the drama with masterly details. His method of giving a translation of the title of the play along with its transliteration in Roman is helpful. Narendra Dev writing about the Bengali drama lists more than two hundred plays with their authors and one is delighted to scan the subjects treated. Gulabdas Broker who tells about Gujarati drama, mentions just seven plays, out of which two belong to the Sixties of the past century. K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar has covered the field of English dramas by Indian playwrights, observing that enterprising Indians have 'essayed drama in English', but seldom for actual performance on the stage. T. P. Kailasam's themes from the Mahabharata, rendered 'brilliantly in the intellectual idiom of our own day' are appreciated as they should be.

Induprakash Pandey, while surveying the drama in Hindi, has recorded what

Western authors, and which of their plays have been rendered into Hindi. Had he given the titles of such translated plays it would have been more helpful. V. K. Gokak in his review of the Kannad drama sounds authoritative and shows deep study. The many trends that preceded the modern serious social plays in Malayalam have been cleverly shown by N. R. S. Kurup. 'Unlike Bengal and Maharashtra there is no Calcutta or Bombay in Mithila' bemoans Jayakanta Mishra while recording the progress of drama in Maithili, and thinks this to be the main reason why Western influence (in the form of translations) has not been felt on Maithili.

For the Marathi drama, D. G. Nadkarni thinks that 'the most outstanding contribution to modern drama is that of Vijay Tendulkar and Sarita Padki'. He also mentions 'a big group of white-collar playwrights who have risen from the Bombay mill area theatre and whose plays sell into several editions unlike the artistically conscious efforts of the others'. These, Nadkarni asserts, 'seem to be motivated by a desire to compete with the middle-class playwrights, and naturally end in failure.' (p. 93)

In the post-script to the 16 papers, there is a paper based on what B.V. (Mama) Varerkar said at the symposium. His observations about Bengali and Marathi drama require critical examination. 'In the agitation to squash the partition of Bengal' says Varerkar, 'the theatre there played a notable part.' (p. 151) Further it is said that Bengal soon became a 'renegade' and it was left to Maharashtra to exploit the drama as a weapon of mass agitation.

In the list of Bengali plays there are at least sixty titles which seem to suggest political themes and direct approach while in the Marathi drama, only two, one mythological and the other historical with suggestive political bias.

Contemporary Oriya drama, in the opinion of K. Panigrahi, is more or less Ibsenian in spirit, content and technique. The

playwright of today is in search of the new man as a hero for the Oriya play (p. 99). The Punjabi drama, says Pritam Singh, is being used for making the audience 'finer, wiser and worthier social beings.' (p. 109). The happiest surprise of the symposium is the progress of the drama in Sanskrit, the so-called dead, classical language. A political play in it, *Bharata Vijaya Nataka*, originally written in 1937, depicting modern Indian History and ending on a happy prophetic note of the British withdrawal, handing over of India to Gandhiji. No wonder that, by 1952, it had run into three editions!

Drama in Sindhi has not yet fallen into professional hands says M. U. Malkani in surveying Sindhi Drama. In the opinion of K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, the Tamil drama has yet to evolve a simple, sparkling and artistic prose. Telugu playwrights have a problem of their own. Dearth of actresses has been responsible for the creation of plays without any female roles. Urdu drama has not yet been able to reach its proper heights, because of the total absence of the Urdu stage, as shown by Mohammed Hasan.

Had the symposium been well planned and had a detailed directive been issued well in advance, the utility of the 16 reports would have been immense. The writers too do not seem to have been properly chosen. Beyond expecting a better performance next time, we can do precious little now.

In the second symposium, only 6 writers participated and only one among them, A. S. Ray, seems to have fully grasped the problem and its implications. A writer must not write to order, he asserts in a well reasoned argument and concludes that there can be a writer without a reader. To prescribe responsibilities to the writers over the heads of the readers is wrong. It is unfortunate that other contributors to the symposium have not seen things as clearly as A. S. Ray has done.

S. R. TIKEKAR

Kabir on Education

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

by Humayun Kabir (Asia Publishing House pp. 256 Rs. 12.50)

THE book which Professor Kabir has given us with this pretentious title is made up mostly of convocation addresses and similar ephemeral pronouncements. Professor Kabir himself has been much too preoccupied with current educational policy to be able to devote much time for the presentation of a coherent and comprehensive study of educational philosophy. It must be said that he himself is well aware of this and in several places cautions the reader about the many limitations of the book. The title has emerged out of two talks he delivered at Oxford in 1956 on education in ancient and medieval India. Building upon this, he added another section on education today and a lecture that he delivered at San Francisco in 1960 on education and national development. The other pieces, also gathered together from the past six years, have the advantage of being directed to Indian audiences.

If the reader expects to find here some mention of the great educational work of the Brahmoes of Bengal, the Arya Samajists of the North, the Theosophical Society in the South, the secularists of the Elphinstone Institute (later College) and the Decan Education Society of Western India, he is bound to be disappointed. Professor Kabir has more to say for Macaulay than for Ram Mohan Roy. It is strange to find, where there are so many omissions, a rather long discourse on the contribution to education of Vivekananda, Aurobindo Ghose, Gandhi, Tagore and Iqbal. But Professor Kabir obviously restricted himself before a foreign audience to known names.

What is more surprising is that, where he has spoken at length of Sir Syed Ahmed, all he has been concerned about is Sir Syed's failure to come 'to terms with Indian history'. The Aligarh venture was intended

to develop an elite; other Indian educational efforts were directed towards extending education on as wide a basis as possible.

Contrary to the prevailing impression, it was not Aligarh so much as other external forces that made Indian Muslims conscious of a religious brotherhood which for them, at any rate, countered national sentiment. Around 1881, Djemal ed Din, founder of the Pan-Islamic movement, came to India from Afghanistan and had confidential talks with Muslim leaders. Gandhi's own advocacy of the Khilafat Movement contributed to this development. It was not Sir Syed's work which introduced a third force but political errors and miscalculations. Sir Syed was too pronounced an admirer of the British to favour anything that would oppose the British Government, and the Western-oriented elite he sought to produce would have had little effect on the mass movement which came up after 1920.

Professor Kabir's convocation addresses contain much that is original. When he is away from his favourite theme of Basic Education, he has a human approach to education which is refreshing in one associated with the Government. He condemns all those who criticise the educational system and asks what help it can be to tell students who have just completed their studies, that they have been badly educated. He might well ask too what purpose can be served by telling students yet to pass that the system under which they are studying is worthless.

On questions like compartmental education, national integration, the need for integrated education, he says a great deal which, if it has been said before, can well bear repetition, and he says it well. It is something too that, despite the lapse of time, most of the speeches still read fresh. He seems, however, to be puzzled by the failure of Muslims and Christians to 'accept pre-Muslim and pre-Christian heroes and traditions as part of their heritage.' There is nothing surprising in this. Where the older traditions and heroes do not form

part of the living faith of the majority community, it is common for some assimilation to occur. Where they do, the distinctness of the minority communities lies in repudiating the past, the more so with a society like that of the Hindus which has a genius for assimilating the heroes, habits and traditions of other societies in proximity to it.

S. NATARAJAN

Mixing up the Economy?

INDUSTRIAL ENTERPRISE IN INDIA

by Nabagopal Das (Orient Longmans, 256 pp. Rs. 10.00)

THE secretariat of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries no less than the pamphleteers of the Left are agreed that we have and might continue to have a mixed economy. Consequently mixed economy, like non-alignment, is one of those things so easy to be eloquent about as long as no specific policy is to be derived from them. But Indian economic development calls for the making and applying of specific policies all the time and in all the spheres. In practice, therefore, this remarkable agreement on mixed economy amounts to an unending controversy on whether a particular new enterprise should be in the public or the private sector or how far the present demarcation between the public and private sectors is arbitrary and in need of change. Since the objective of economic development is greater equality and the obvious consequence of whatever development has taken place is greater inequality, maybe the debate is irrelevant.

Economic thinking and writing would be closer to our efforts if it concerned itself with finding out whether the logic of economic development in the Indian conditions pushes it along a particular direction. To write a book about industrial enterprise in India without asking this question is to keep the present debate at the level of lessening relevance. Mr. Nabagopal Das has not only written such a book but has so written it as to mute its angrier overtones.

This is achieved, in a large measure, by the very urbane quality of his scholarship and a style, at once polite and professorial but uncommonly clear.

After a comprehensive survey of the hundred years of industrial enterprise in India at the beginning of the Third Five Year Plan he thinks there are 'cogent reasons for cherishing the hope that business enterprise in the private sector will continue to flourish.' The book, in a sense, argues the case for such a comforting conclusion. Before coming to it, however, he examines the various aspects of the joint-stock company as it has been the principal instrument of industrial development. The growing complexity of the twin problems of financing and managing industries, in his presentation, has been met by the increasing skill and resourcefulness of the Indian entrepreneurs. It is in this context that he has analysed the birth and growth and the strength and weaknesses of the system of the managing agency and the crucial role it has played in creating the industrial base for our future economic development. A parallel though rather formal examination is made of the effect of Company Law on this system and the control which has come over its dubious methods of functioning. Once again it is suggested that the system has not been all that bad and under the vigilant eye of the Company Law Administration it could not do much mischief.

This revised third edition ends with a longish discussion of such topical socio-economic issues as the concentration of economic power, the impact of a powerful public sector and of its bigness and bad management on national life, the inhibiting effect on private investment of the unconsidered exercise of the regulatory power of the State.

His final exhortation to 'secure a very wide dispersal of the ownership of equity capital' reminds one of the blue-chip counters in big department stores in Tokyo or the American share-brokers' advertisements. But one sorely misses throughout

the awareness of what Professor Thomas Balogh calls the 'primeval underemployment' of India and of the necessity to remove it through galloping industrialisation.

The underlying thinking of the book antedates the period of planning although the book itself is semantically up-to-date.

MAHESH DESAI

Brecht as a Story Teller

TALES FROM THE CALENDAR by Bertolt Brecht (Methuen, 124 pp. 15sh.)

SINCE Bertolt Brecht died in 1956 he has become a world-wide vogue and a legend in Europe. It is chiefly through his plays that Brecht has captured the attention and loyalty of an ever-increasing following. In West Germany, the frequency of the production of his plays has surpassed that of George Bernard Shaw's and is less frequent only than the production of Shakespeare's plays.

This slim volume contains most of the short stories Brecht wrote and considered worth preserving; it also contains a few of his poems. In giving the book its title, Brecht recalls the 'peasant calendars' of an earlier age, when collections of satirical tales, fables, aphorisms and little descriptions of historical or everyday episodes were a traditional form of popular instruction and entertainment in rural areas. Brecht's deliberate revival of the name and his choice of the contents are in accord with his clearly-expressed view that the function of literature — whether in drama, verse or prose — is to stimulate, through entertainment, the wits, the social consciousness and the moral sensibilities of ordinary men and women.

Both the prose and the verse of Brecht in this book display a disarming simplicity. As such, they are in perfect consonance with his basic approach. Brecht's skill as a writer of prose rests soundly on his capacity and power to communicate a story in brief, conveying the effect of rapid action in a few vivid strokes.

The purpose of his play 'Galileo' was, he said, 'to teach us to survive'; many of his tales and poems also concern people who are the mute symbols of humanity's will to endure. The 'Brechtian moment' of his plays — man selling his fellow-men — is also the theme of some of the work in this collection. But while he found men and women acting inhumanly towards each other, he accepted that they themselves were but victims of their social environment. Brecht, plagued by the defeat of goodness in life, evolved into a cynic, but like most cynics he retained a hard core of pity. 'The Augsburg Chalk Circle' and 'The Heretic's Coat' show Brecht at his most humane. With quiet understanding, compassion and tenderness, Brecht, in all his stories, shies away from the dramatic and the spectacular; he contains himself and evokes a response through his narrative lucidity.

But perhaps the most entertaining and engrossing stories are those which deal with a major event in history or with the men in history. 'The Experiment', 'Caesar and his Legionary' and 'Socrates Wounded' are amazingly fresh stories. It is as though a hidden facet of that individual or event were suddenly illuminated by the clear light of Brecht's vision and narrative power.

Those who have never encountered Brecht before — and in India the number would be legion — let them make their acquaintance with him first in his plays; for, enchanting as most of the stories and poems in this book are, they are not of the same scope and power as his plays. But once you have made an acquaintance with Bertolt Brecht, you will want to read all he has written.

A word about Brecht's political creed which is so much talked about. Was he a leftist? Read his works. His political views just couldn't matter less. If he, as a writer, had any creed to expound, it was his ferocious pacifism as an anti-militarist. But above all else, Brecht comes through to the reader as a compassionate cynic, with

an eye for the humour in most situations, and a dogged, determined love for life, such as it is.

FARROKH K. R. MEHTA

English as we Write it

INDIAN WRITING IN ENGLISH by K. R. Srinivasa Iyengar, (Asia Publishing House, 340 pp. Rs. 18.50)

DR. Srinivasa Iyengar, Professor of English at the University of Andhra, has been cultivating this field, so he tells us, 'off and on for the last thirty years,' and has now produced the most comprehensive survey — not merely an expansion but a rewriting of his previous books on the subject. The present book arose out of a series of lectures under British Council auspices at the University of Leeds in 1959. It brings in everybody — from 'the beginnings: Ram-mohan Roy' to the latest novels of Raja Rao and Balachandra Rajan or the poetry of Writers Workshop Calcutta, from Derozio ('not inaptly compared to Keats') to Ved Mehta ('the brave blind boy').

Novels, short stories, poetry, essays, journalism, speeches, even Sastri's lectures on the *Ramayana* (and Rajaji's) everything is here. Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao each get a chapter to themselves, while Sri Aurobindo gets three. Indian literature in English is interpreted in its widest sense to include Jawaharlal Nehru (one chapter), Gandhi and Gandhi literature (two chapters), and even Rabindranath Tagore (two chapters) not only as translated by himself but also by others e.g. Marjorie Sykes. In his fervent defence of Gandhi ('who was certainly a Mahatma') Professor Iyengar wanders far beyond the normal confines of Indo-Anglia, expounding the ideas of non-violence, *brahmacharya*, education through crafts and the corruption of the cities ('blind mad pursuit of technological power') with a zeal that would be more in place in *Gandhi Marg*.

This is the outstanding feature of the

book — for praise or blame according to your taste — that it is more concerned with spiritual than with literary values, more with aura than with words. A certain 'spiritual' bias is everywhere in evidence. Professor Iyengar objects to Anand Lall's *House at Adampur* not so much for its crude magazine style and presentation (on the contrary, this 'facility' is found an 'asset'), as for its 'unsavoury' subject matter — 'It would be a pity if foreign readers thought that *The House at Adampur* is a portrait of the real India' — and in 'the Gandhian Age' too! For similar reasons, one suspects, Nirad Chaudhuri's *Autobiography* is found 'morbid' and is covered in a quarter of a page, while 'Vighneswara' receives five and a half. M. N. Roy of course is no more than a name in a list. Govind Desani's *All about Mr. Hatterry*, considered by some the most interesting experiment in Indo-Anglian writing, gets a single sentence, while Professor Iyengar finds that Sudhin Ghose's novels pall on him, apparently because he is unable to appreciate fantasy, delight in the immediate, constantly changing, for its own sake.

The patron saint of the book is Sri. Aurobindo, who is by no means confined to his three chapters (plus a quarter of the one on drama) — he is brought in all over the place: to elucidate Tagore and Gandhi, to confirm the divinity of the cow (ref: Raja Rao), or the possibility of a poet who is also a philosopher (ref: Harindranath Chattopadhyaya), or the worth of Indian writing in English (ref: the Introduction). Criticising new-style journalistic prose as slipshod, staccato and puerile, Professor Iyengar adds: 'To redress the balance, however, there is the colourful, poetical, polyphonic prose of Aurobindo and the Aurobindians, with its global sweep in thought and expression.' And the book closes with Krishna Prem's eulogy of *Savitri*.

This devotion is more than just a question of belief — it involves an attitude to language. Sri Aurobindo may well have 'imposed his empire on all languages and

spiritual disciplines,' *Savitri* may well reveal 'its encyclopaedic grasp of the totality of human experience and knowledge,' — these things are best not disputed, for the follower of Aurobindo tends to retire into the silence of the Seventh Heaven when the tenets of his faith are questioned by minds below the supramental — but when Professor Iyengar asserts: 'Considered merely as a poet and critic of poetry, Sri Aurobindo would still rank among the supreme masters of our time,' some protest is necessary. Clearly the *Life Divine* (of which we get a full exposition) is not passionately involved in concrete reality, the 'feel' of things — the realm of the supermind is lifted beyond it. As Goethe said, those whose heads touch the clouds are the plaything of the winds. To an ordinary mortal this 'Overmind poetry' is vague, abstract and long-winded — in a word (and Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto has said it) Tennysonian; far from being struck by its 'amazing modernity', we recognise the charged language of late nineteenth century cosmic wonder ('Something stood there, unearthly, sombre, grand...' etc.) It's as simple as that — the divinisation of humanity may or may not take place, but *Savitri* is Tennysonian. Aurobindo said in *The Future Poetry* that this poetry must be like the *mantra* — I always thought a *mantra* was short and concentrated, but *Savitri* is 24,000 lines long — 3000 lines longer than *The Ring and the Book* as Professor Iyengar triumphantly tells us, adding that when reading it 'one is rather struck by the rounded fullness of the poem.' Professor Iyengar takes P. Lal to task for attacking Aurobindo in the Introduction to his *Modern Indo-Anglian Poetry*: 'We can admire a pebble without foaming at the Himalayas.' But I would sooner have a good solid pebble than a hollow mountain.

Of course Professor Iyengar is pleading for tolerance ('both epics of the soul and lyrics of everyday life'), as in the Introduction he pleads for 'an open mind'. But this involves a great risk: the failure to discriminate at all. Professor Iyengar

realizes that 'The critic has to sift if he can the permanent from the ephemeral, the universal from the personal,' but in practice he is too kind, his mind too open. Can there be anything of permanent literary value in this:

When I was young and spruce and gay
My mind within me sang all day;
But, as youth and I did part,
'Twas not such fun
When one by one
They tore up the roots of my heart.

Critical comment: "A 'Shropshire Lad' quality." Or this:

Your body's bowl is brimming over with ven-
omous bubbles.
I quaff that liquor and slowly my eyes close in
death.

Critical comment: 'sensuous — even sensual — poetry with a vengeance.' Poems published in 1960 and 1944, believe it or not! The quality of language determines the value of a poem. The following is simply ludicrous:

Oh to be flowery,
Dripping and balmy,
Call up the showery
White clouds, an army!

Critical comment: 'singing for the sheer joy of singing.' And how much more is quoted that is banal, gushing, or trivially pretty. And how much outworn poetic diction ('Nay, part not so...', 'Wilt thou?', 'beauteous', 'twixt', 'twas', 'Yon'; flowers 'ope', cheeks blush, eyes glow, moons are 'orbs', people wear 'vestments', etc.) is passed over in silence.

For Professor Iyengar's own critical vocabulary and approach are of the same Victorian romantic period, making free use of words like 'galvanize' and 'vintage'; of Manmohan Ghose it might be said 'that his soul was like a star and dwelt apart,' of Tagore: 'When he strikes his lyre, vivid imagery breaks out into sudden life like sparks from the anvil.' Prose is 'distinguished' (Balachandra Rajan) or 'enchanted' (Raja Rao), while we are told of 'the terrific intensity and concentration' of *Untouchable*. There are many rash comparisons: 'Four Chapters' is Tagore's

Doctor Zhivago, *Red Oleanders* is compared with Kafka's *Castle*, "Malgudi" is Narayan's *Casterbridge*", Aurobindo's dramas are Elizabethan, Rajaji is 'the Socrates of the Tamil country' and a typical speech-day peroration of his ('Be patient and kind always. Do not give way to jealousy or the desire to boast. Be not rude. Do not always insist on having your own way.' Etc.) is described as 'almost Upanishadic'. And can we really believe that Gandhi's *The Great Sentinel* is 'among the classics of English prose', when it begins: 'The Bard of Shantiniketan has contributed to the *Modern Review* a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint...' Critical comment: 'How dignified is the exordium.'

All this may seem harsh on a book written with such good will and after painstaking research, but an important issue is at stake: is Indian literature in English going to set itself standards or not, and are those standards to be Victorian or modern? Is it to produce song-birds or poets, books of the month or serious testimony? Is it to come to grips with mature experience or sentimentalize? here on earth or in the Seventh Heaven? And let us not be taken in by the fulsome compliments of English scholars and critics which this book quotes ad lib (Edmund Gosse and Arthur Symonds and H.A.L. Fisher on Toru Dutt for instance — 'by sheer force of native genius earned for herself the right to be enrolled in the great fellowship of English poets'). Bloomsbury good breeding and a bad colonial conscience do not make for the clearest judgement. Above all let us not encourage Indian writing in English to be regarded as a dog walking on its hind legs. Excellent writing has been done by Indians in English; great work may be produced—but not from complacency and self-indulgence.

When these urgent reservations have been made, it remains to be said that *Indian Literature in English* is a most useful book. It quotes extensively and covers a vast range of material. It is packed with

information, including many a quaint item — that *The Hound of Heaven* was one of Gandhi's favourite poems, for instance, and that at Gandhi's request Rajaji wrote a gloss on it; or the hypothesis that Rummon Loll in Thackeray's *The Newcomes* was a caricature of Rammohan Roy. As a reference book it is indispensable, and its coverage includes retelling stories, outlining lives, resuming ideas. It concludes with an exhaustive bibliography. Professor Iyengar has diligently cultivated his field — now somebody must pull out the weeds.

DAVID MCCUTCHION

Bohemians at Large

ADRIFT IN SOHO by Colin Wilson (Victor Gollancz, 224 pp. 16s.)

WITH his very first book, 'The Outsider', Colin Wilson overwhelmed the critics with the obscure, various depths of his reading and, quite literally, quoted his way to fame. Harry Preston, the hero of his latest novel, 'Adrift in Soho', is cast in much the same image as his author, in fact he is only a thinly fictionalised Colin Wilson. He is nineteen, has literary pretensions and is prone to interrupt his thoughts and comments with light allusions to Gracchus Babeuf, Grillparzer, Aksakov and Pisemsky, to name a few of his favourite writers. However, what was merely an alarming, if pedantic erudition in Colin Wilson writing a tract on the state of civilisation seems a little out of character in the case of Harry Preston, just thrown out of the R.A.F. because of 'nervous unsuitability' and presumably with little or no university education.

Upset that working in a stone quarry has not produced the catharsis that his disillusioned young soul requires and spurred on, mystically and inexplicably, by the death of a grandparent, Preston decides that London and what he naively calls 'freedom' are just the things to bring out the best in him. For instance, they can help him, he thinks, to 'write a great play or a great novel.'

While this literary event is in the offing he arrives in London and running smack into coffee-bar society, finds it interesting, intellectual and 'free' despite the fact that its members try almost without exception to spend his money for him. Meanwhile, through the eyes of this rather tiresome young man we meet many of the stock characters of bohemia from the inevitable homosexuals, the marijuana smokers, the professional parasites, the bearded youths in duffle-coats, the arty-looking girls in red stockings and the consumptive young men with long blond hair and sunken eyes to the ravaged-looking middle-aged women who mix drinks in chamber-pots. As we move from double-beds containing at least three people apiece, soup cooking in buckets and tea boiling in earthen-ware, lidless tea-pots, to the studio of a dedicated artist we find, not surprisingly, the same conceits, smallnesses and problems of identity that Preston thought he had escaped when he entered the special world of Soho. Attempting a justification of the bohème, someone says 'The thing people don't understand... is that all the great reformers have been vagabonds and layabouts, socially unrepresentable.' The touch of bravado in this statement is quite unconscious.

Never understanding that these people aren't after all importantly different from those he is running away from, it is no wonder that a nagging sensation of futility pursues Preston throughout the book. Talking of 'the tasteless substance of everyday life' he asserts that 'there was no doubt in my mind that certain lives bear a stamp of futility'. Frequently he is superlatively futile: '...all my impressions merged in a sense of futility'; and one cannot help agreeing with him that he goes about 'meeting futile people and absorbing a futile, gritty experience.' Nevertheless it is a pity that a well-written novel containing some excellent evocative descriptions (such as of the *ménage* at Ladbroke Street) and some telling observations should, after a display of much knowledge but little wis-

dom, turn out to be finally boring and, yes, futile.

LINA MAYADAS

Moral Reasoning

THE PLACE OF REASON IN ETHICS

by Stephen Toulmin (Cambridge University Press, pp. 828)

A PURPOSE of this book is to extricate ethics from metaphysical issues and to consider the subject purely in its practical — or, rather, social — perspective. As Professor Toulmin words his problem, it is to discover 'what kinds of argument, of reasoning, is it proper for us to accept in support of moral decisions? We shall have to examine the question itself — abandoning most of our intellectual machinery and presuppositions, and attempting to discover, from our knowledge of the practical situations in which this and similar questions become important, what kind of answer it calls for'. (64).

It is undeniably true that problems of morality are felt only within their social setting and that the best understanding of them can be gained only in the light of that. In other words, that their social significance is pertinent to ethical problems need not be denied. Problems of economics, of politics, each have their social setting within which alone they can be comprehensively understood.

'The concept of duty, in short', says Prof. Toulmin, 'is inextricable from the "mechanics" of social life, and from the practices adopted by different communities in order to make living together in proximity tolerable or even possible'. (136). It is this emphasis which seems to make ethical concepts merely tools for the achievement of social results that is particularly objectionable. Sociality does not exhaust morality. For, even where ethics is 'a part of the process whereby the desires and actions of the members of a community are harmonised' (136), the ideal upon which the ethical organization of the society may be based rises above its social significance.

Thus the function of ethics, according to

Stephen Toulmin, is 'to correlate our feelings and behaviour in such a way as to make the fulfilment of everyone's aims and desires as far as possible compatible' (137). Prof. Toulmin goes on to trace the development of ethical concepts with reference to the growing awareness of a community.

What Prof. Toulmin fails to make with sufficient clarity is the distinction between a moral principle and an established practice of a society. The result is the rather limited place he assigns to reason. There are two kinds of moral reasoning, according to him: (i) Reasoning which is concerned with the justification of a practice by reference to the ideal of social harmony; and, (ii) Reasoning which is concerned with the justification of a particular action which is done by showing that it is an instance of an established practice or principle.

Thus, 'the notions of 'duty', of 'obligation', of 'morality', are derived from situations in which the conduct of one member of a community prejudices the interests of another, and are to be understood as part of the procedure for minimising the effects of such conflicts' (157).

This leads Prof. Toulmin to consider that 'X is right' is a case of 'X is the thing to do in these circumstances, to encourage others to do in similar circumstances, etc., etc.' That is, 'which kinds of reason are required in order to show that something is right (i.e. the thing to do, to encourage others to do, etc.)—(i) that it is an instance of a rule of action, or (ii) that is the alternative likely to have the best results' (154).

In other words, 'when someone asks of two superficially similar institutions, from different ways of life, "Which is the better?", one may have to say that, by themselves, they are not comparable: all that can be compared are the ways of life as *wholes*. And *this* comparison is, if anything, a private one: which is to say, not that it *cannot* be reasoned about, but that reason as you may, the final decision is personal' (153).

Primarily, Prof. Toulmin neglects the concept of the moral 'ought' which charac-

terizes the ethical approach to experience. 'Ought' involves a specifically moral judgement ('you can, you may or you may not, but you ought to') and raises the issue to the valuational level. For, what is the thing to do is the thing *worth* doing.

Further, though one may grant the significance, in a community, of ethical codes whose arrangement with reference to the majority of its members characterizes the way of life of that community; and which, strictly speaking, cannot be altered even in some of their aspects without the consequent relative change in the way of life—yet it cannot be said that 'given this, the question, "which is the better?", has the force of, "If we changed from one to the other, would the change have happy or unhappy consequences on the whole?"' (153).

For though consequences do count in ethical reasoning, the question of the rightness of a particular course can be discussed independently of its consequences and, often, discussions as to rightness, in this particular sense, are considered characteristically moral. A Hindu Brahmin, for example, might consider the rightness of marrying outside his caste, though his decision to do so might cause unhappiness to other members of his caste. And the question of the worth of an institution, though so intimately linked with its social interconnections, is moral even when it questions the propriety of the social system itself. (In a sense, the whole way of life need not always alter when there is a change in a social institution).

Prof. Toulmin rejects three approaches to ethics which he characterizes as the objective approach, the subjective approach, and the imperative approach:

'(i) the advocates of the objective doctrine talk as though two normal, factually-informed people could not help agreeing about values (in the way in which they agree about properties);

'(ii) the advocates of the subjective doctrine talk as though people could not help having different standards of value (in the

way in which they have independent tests of, say, pleasantness);

'(iii) the advocates of the imperative doctrine talk as though the purely hortatory nature of some ethical arguments were something which applied to all ethical arguments, and could no more be helped than the hortatory nature of exhortations.' (61).

The book has the virtue of clarity. It is the place of theories of ethics that the author questions—their validity in our ethical reasonings. 'A *descriptive* account of our ethical concepts is what we need' (194). Prof. Toulmin's quotation from John Wisdom might make the point clearer. 'What is wanted is some device for bringing out the relation between the manner in which ethical sentences are used and the manners in which others are used—so as to give their place on the language-map' (194-5).

What perhaps is basically pertinent is to distinguish the ethical approach to experience, though that is not to belittle Prof. Toulmin's purpose.

K. D. VALICHA

Indians in the West Indies

A HOUSE FOR MR. BISWAS by V. S. Naipaul (André Deutsch, 531 pp. 12s.)

HOW do these Indian communities scattered around the world—in the Far and Middle East, in Africa, in the West Indies—live? Don't bother to read reports by governments and earnest scholars in search of doctorates. You will learn far more from Mr. Naipaul's novels and stories than from any number of reports. And needless to say, far more interestingly.

In telling the story of the life and death of Mr. Mohun Biswas, one-time reporter of the *Trinidad Sentinel*, Naipaul has painted a picture of a family that is Indian but away from India, flavoured it with the flavour of



The Indian Middle Classes

Their Growth in Modern Times. By B. B. MISRA. 'It will take its place among the select company of modern books which every student of Indian history will be well advised to consider indispensable background reading.' *TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT*

Indian edition Rs 25

Food in India

An Analysis of the Prospects for Self-sufficiency by 1975-76. By R. P. SINHA. The present pattern of food consumption and the deficiencies in the Indian diet are discussed, and a forecast is then made of the pattern fifteen years hence when the country's population will be of the order of 621 million.

Rs 12.50

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SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN describes the influence of Islamic, Christian, Greek and Jewish thought on the religions of India, stressing the universal ideas transmitted by their common heritage. He emphasizes that the lost religious values of reverence and wonder are needed to avert the grave dangers that now threaten civilization.

(Harvard) \$1.50

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By SARVEPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN. 'An important and beautiful book written with earnest conviction and conspicuous ability.'

Dr W. R. Inge in *PHILOSOPHY* Rs 10

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS



the robust West Indies, and given us something vitally and fascinatingly alive.

Naipaul's humour is original, penetrating yet gentle. Mr. Biswas shares some of this humour with his creator and it is impossible not to like this little man as he struggles ineffectually against the trials of his harassed life. The stars were inauspicious at his birth, and whether he is going to school to chant and learn that 'ought oughts are ought', or working as a sign painter, shopkeeper, overseer or reporter, there is something pathetic about Mr. Biswas. A youthful and very mild indiscretion leads him to marriage into the Tulsí family and the rest of his life is a series of attempts to escape the clutches of this all-embracing family. A large house and a store, a dominant mother, a strong masculine lead, miscellaneous shadowy relatives hovering on the fringes, and numerous children: this is the household that draws Mr. Biswas to its bosom.

It is only towards the end of his life that Mr. Biswas manages to acquire a house of his own where he can feel master of himself and his family. And it seems only typical that this is, in fact, a jerry-built unfinished house that he is bamboozled into buying for an exorbitant price. But it is, all said and done his own, and when he is dying, it is comforting to know that it will be in his own house. 'How terrible it would have been, at this time, to be without it: to have died among the Tulsís, amid the squalor of that large, disintegrating and indifferent family. . . . worse, to have lived without even attempting to lay claim to one's portion of the earth; to have lived and died as one had been born, unnecessary and unaccommodated.'

There have recently been some vigorous writers from the West Indies and among them V. S. Naipaul must rank as the most eminent and polished. He gives more than the flavour of the West Indies in his work, for in his characters there is a breath of all humanity.

A. A.

SHORT NOTICES

Lack of space prevents us giving full-length reviews to all the books we receive. Those we think are likely to have some interest for our readers are briefly noticed in these columns.

FOUR STUDIES OF WAR AND PEACE IN THIS CENTURY by W. K. Hancock (Cambridge University Press, 129 pp. 18s.6d.)

THE AUTHOR SAYS that his attempt should be regarded as a four-pronged reconnaissance of territory in large measure unknown to me'. He persuades himself to make the effort only in view of the urgency of academic research in this field. The study is thus tentative and sketchy, but at the same time it bears the distinct mark of scholarship.

In the first chapter the author endeavours to show that although the 'long haul' method of fighting a war has been rendered obsolete by the nuclear revolution, all wars, big or small, have a common economic basis in the principle of 'maximum slaughter at minimum expense', and that, therefore, the old method of the long haul is still applicable to the economic aspect of the war preparations of the big powers. In the second chapter Mr. Hancock analyses some of the complications involved in a big peace settlement with special reference to the experience of General Smuts at Vereeniging in 1902, and concludes that 'we must not deny to human intelligence the prospect of pulling itself upwards, inch by inch, on to the shore of survival'.

In the third chapter the writer gives a very sympathetic analysis of the Gandhian 'technique' of non-violence, with special reference to Gandhi's experiments in South Africa. He doubts the universal applicability of the Gandhian method, and suggests that what was possible within the general framework of British constitutionalism in South Africa and India might fail in a totalitarian political set-up like that of Hitler's Germany. In the last chapter of the book the author analyses the prospects of the international community and concludes that '*homo sapiens* need not despair of his own rationality unless and until he gets proof to the contrary'.

In his concise but scholarly study the author has succeeded in maintaining that academic objectivity which is expected of a trained historian in an open society. It is true, as he says, that it will take a lot of proof to make him a determinist.

It may be noted, however, that the author is a great admirer of General Smuts, whom he quotes extensively, in war and in peace. This is understandable for as the publishers tell us, he is currently engaged in writing a biography of the great General.

J. BANDYOPADHYAYA

INDIAN HISTORY A Study in Dynamics
by Y. A. Raikar. (M. S. University of Baroda,
52 pp. Rs. 5.00)

IN THIS SHORT ESSAY, the author has attempted to summarise the meaning of Indian history in 'a single synoptic chart.' The chart has been visually expressed and is then verbally explained, with considerable plausibility. Basically, the dynamism of Indian history is seen as a conflict between centripetal and centrifugal forces operating in broadly defined geo-political units. These are graphically illustrated. The chief river basins of India are designated 'Areas of Attraction' and their 'unbroken political vitality throughout history' is convincingly demonstrated. The role of the foreign element is soundly grasped and related to the rest of the picture.

From his argument, emerges the interesting fact that 'large empires are only a short-lived and feeble feature of Indian polity through history.' This is not a case against unity, because constant internal migrations established cultural homogeneity. Regionalism developed in periods of the absence of central authority and attained its own cultural individuality. The author is against any doctrinaire emphasis on the unity of India for the purpose of advancing the cause of national integration. What is required, he argues, 'is a graceful acceptance of the centrifugal forces.' Following British rule, and the industrialisation of India, particularly through large multi-purpose projects which require co-operation between the regional units, the case for unity has been vastly strengthened. Mr. Raikar's book is of 'an interpretative nature' and does not, therefore, claim to be based on the scrutiny of primary sources. Neither does it add any new material to the data. It is based mostly on standard works. Within this limitation, it is a provocative little study which ought to be widely debated.

N.E.

PREHISTORIC INDIA by Stuart Piggot (Penguin Books, 293 pp. 5s.)

THIS ACCOUNT by the Professor of Prehistoric Archaeology at Edinburgh University was first

published in 1950. It claims to be 'a coherent story of the general course of events in prehistoric India from the earliest times to 1000 B.C. There is also an attempt to relate the subject to the archaeology of Western Asia. The bulk of the book covers the Bronze Age of Western and Northern India, from about 3000 to 1500 B.C. After a chapter of general introduction, which is critical of much of the excavation work done in India, there is a survey of the Indian Stone Age and of the subsequent Peasant Communities of Western India. The cities and towns of Sind and the Punjab are described in some detail, followed by a chapter on 'The Time of Troubles...' during the middle of the second millennium B.C. In the concluding pages, the way of life of the Rigveda writers is assessed. Illustrated generously.

N.E.

THE GREAT EXPERIMENT by Frank Thistlethwaite (Cambridge University Press Paperback, 335 pp. 12s.6d.)

SUB-TITLED, 'An Introduction to the History of the American People', this book offers to meet the need for a survey of the subject 'by an Englishman'. Its object is to 'provide the British student with a point of departure', the emphasis falling on 'the chief distinguishing qualities of the American people'. Common British misconceptions about American history and culture are very sensibly combatted and 'the interconnectedness of American and European history is clearly established. The first chapter is entitled 'Provincial Society in America in the time of George III' and the last, 'Democracy in Modern America'. The main picture is sympathetically completed by taking account 'of the co-existence at all levels of powerful dissents' and of regional influences.

N.E.

THE MIGHTY AND THEIR FALL by I. Compton-Burnett (Victor Gollancz, 221 pp. 16s.)

MISS IVY COMPTON-BURNETT's eighteenth novel is similar in style and technique to all the others. Those who found the earlier ones unreadable should not embark on the latest. Fascinated readers will not be able to resist *The Mighty and their Fall*, for the mixture as before is in this case a potent drug. Since 1925, at fairly regular intervals, these novels with their characteristically uniform titles, have appeared as exercises in a set manner. The titles suggest contrast. *Brothers and Sisters*, *Darkness and Day*, *Parents and Children*, *Mother and Son*, and the content is nine-tenths

dialogue in which the contrast is explored with a relentless series of repartee and contradiction.

'The best thing about wealth is that it is never shared.'

'It ought to be', said Lavinia.

'That almost seems to make it better.'

'The good thing about it is the power to share it.'

'But a better one is that the power is not used.'

All the characters speak in the same way, including servants and children. Things happen but the characters don't change. There is no action, properly so called. Wit and wisdom co-exist, but uneasily and in grim disguises. The level of intellect and sensibility is pitched high and evenly maintained. All who have not yet read a novel by Miss Compton-Burnett are recommended to try the experiment with an open mind and to join the ranks of either the unaffected or the disciples. There are no other classes among readers acquainted with her work.

N.E.

CHRISTIAN CONCERN IN HINDUISM

by P. D. Devanandan (*Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, 142 pp. Rs. 3)*

THE UNDERLYING OBJECTIVE of the six magazine articles here collected is 'to understand and interpret the living reality of Hinduism' and to relate it to the social and intellectual responsibilities of the Christian community in India. The author points out, at the outset, that Christians in India 'live in the midst of Hindus no longer as aliens but as kinsmen'. His book seeks to encourage a Christian initiative in establishing with Hindus 'identity in cultural interests and social concerns.' An allied and not less important purpose is to discuss the task of 'the presentation of the Gospel in terms of its application to contemporary social issues and community development.' The first chapter, on the 'Resurgence of Asian Religions' is followed by these comprehensive statements on Hinduism today as a living force and the modern movements within it. Of more directly Christian interest, narrowly interpreted, is the essay entitled 'The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual' and a discussion of 'Our Task Today' concludes the argument. That 'task' is to 'bring to bear the standards of Christian judgement on all movements that work for reformation and reconstruction of contemporary world life.'

N.E.

MODERN ART OF ASIA edited by Japan Cultural Forum (*Toto Shuppan Co. Ltd. pp. 147, \$8.50*)

WHEN THE JAPAN CULTURAL FORUM held its first Young Asian Artists Exhibition in Tokyo in November 1957, it was decided to bring out a history of the Modern Art of Asia. From Burma, Ceylon, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, papers on the history and development of painting in their respective countries were collected and brought together. These papers form the first half of the book. The latter half offers reproductions of paintings hung at the exhibition. There are six plates in full colour and fifty in black and white. For the fact that this volume makes its appearance nearly four years after the exhibition, 'responsibility rests on the Japanese side,' as the editor puts it. However, the delay is not likely to have changed, in any significant degree, the premises on which the book is based.

It might be recalled that Husain's paintings created a sensation at the Tokyo exhibition. His prize-winning work *Zameen* has been used as a frontispiece. An Indian may be pardoned for believing, after going through this book, that Husain emerges as the most considerable figure among the artists in Asia to-day.

Most of the articles on the state of painting in the different Asian countries give a clear and authentic picture. The unsigned article on modern Chinese painting (written perhaps in Hong Kong) and the one on Thai art are particularly illuminating. The paper on Indian painting is by R. Bartholomew of Delhi.

L.F.

THE LONGEST JOURNEY by E. M. Forster—(*Oxford University Press, 333 pp. 7s.6d.*)

IN ADDING THIS TITLE to their World Classics series the Oxford University Press found themselves in the unique position of being able to ask the author himself to write an introduction to a masterpiece published more than fifty-five years ago. E. M. Forster says in it that when this book first appeared, the reviews were encouraging. 'One of the reviewers pleasantly calculated that the percentage of sudden deaths amounted to over 44 percent of the adult population. But the book did not sell. . . .' This is not surprising. Such subtly shaded novels do not easily become best-sellers. 'It is the least popular of my five novels, but the one I am most glad to have written. For in it I have managed to get nearer than elsewhere

towards... that fusion of mind with head where the creative impulse sparks.'

Forster feels that the work has dated badly. Insofar as no great novel can ever date, this is not true. But the externals, the physical environment,

has changed. In writing about his beloved countryside Forster was, after all, describing it at a time 'before its roads were too dangerous to walk on and its rivers too dirty to bathe in....'

L.F.

OBITUARY

In the early days of **QUEST** a very young man walked into our office in Bombay; he said he liked our journal and offered to do office chores for us in his spare time. That was the way **QUEST** got to know Pratap Chatterji, a man of many interests and much enthusiasm for every facet of life. He became one of our regular book reviewers. Some readers may remember his reviews in our earlier issues; they were highly entertaining as well as intelligent and just.

Several months ago Pratap Chatterji discovered that he had a form of cancer for which there is no cure. The last year of his life was a desperate and courageous struggle against the disease. He died on the 17th of March this year at the age of thirty. We offer our sympathy to his wife and his family.

Our Reviewers

P. LAL is a poet who teaches English at St. Xavier's College, Calcutta.

S. NATARAJAN is the Secretary of the Council for Economic Affairs, Bombay.

S. R. TIKEKER is a free lance journalist of Bombay.

LINA MAYADAS. A Bombay housewife who is a free lance writer.

DAVID McCUTCHION teaches English at Vishwa Bharati University.

SATISH SABERWAL is attached to Cornell University, U.S.A.

MAHESH DESAI is a Trade Unionist of Jharia, Bihar.

FARROKH MEHTA works for an advertising firm of Bombay.

K. D. VALICHA teaches Philosophy in a Bombay College.

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

G. V. KARANDIKAR, a noted Marathi poet, teaches English Literature at the S.I.E.S. College, Bombay. His article is based on the paper he contributed to the All-India Writers' Conference recently held at Bombay.

AGEHANANDA BHARATI, a Viennese Indologist, was Reader in Philosophy at the Banaras Hindu University from 1951 to 1954 and is at present Associate Professor of Anthropology at Syracuse University, New York. His controversial book *The Ochre Robe* was published by George Allen & Unwin in 1961.

H. R. PASRICHA says "I am afraid to disappoint you and others but I am no writer". He held the rank of Lt. Colonel in the army as Consulting Surgeon to Western Command from which position he retired at his request to resume private practice as an orthopaedic surgeon.

JOHN A. RAMSARAN was born and educated in Trinidad and later joined the King's College, University of London, from where he took his M.A. degree. He is at present a lecturer in English Literature at the University College, Ibadan, Nigeria.

HEPHZIBAH JESUDASAN teaches English at the College for Women, Trivandrum. She has published, besides a collection of her own poems in English, a book of translations from Subramania Bharati (*The Song of the Cuckoo and other poems*), and the *History of Tamil Literature* written in collaboration with her husband.

RAJENDRA AVASTHI is Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Lucknow.

WILLIAM PHILLIPS is a wellknown American writer and editor of the distinguished quarterly *Partisan Review*. These letters from New York are exclusive to *Quest*.

JYOTIRMOY DATTA, Calcutta poet, critic and journalist, is a regular contributor to *Quest*.

IRA DE is a New Delhi housewife and wishes to be publicised like that—writes a friend through whom we received her poem.

G. C. S. MARAR has contributed verse to *Extension*, *Atlantic* and *Poetry* of U.S.A.

MARIADAS RUTHNASWAMY has been professor of history, principal, vice-chancellor, legislator and editor; he was actively associated with several Catholic associations of which he founded the Catholic Union of India in 1945.

SATISH C. SABERWAL is working for his Ph.D. in anthropology at Cornell University, New York.

SUDHIR CHANDRA writes that this will be his "first article to be published in other than college and hostel magazines".

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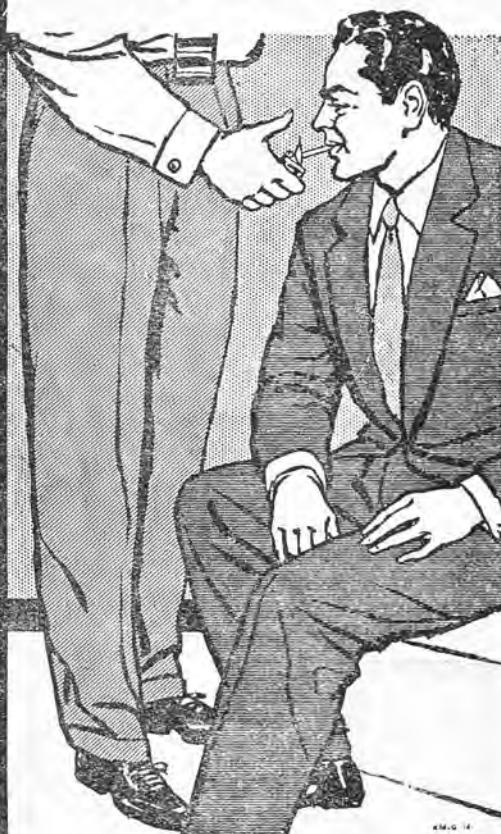
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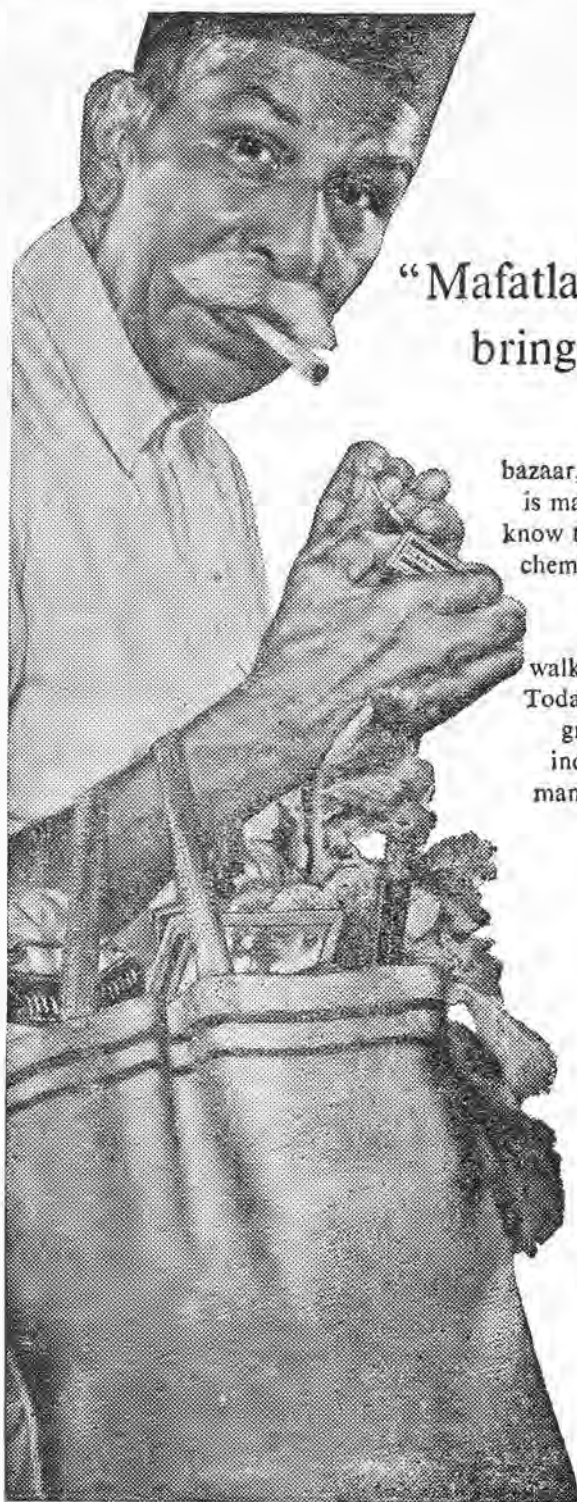
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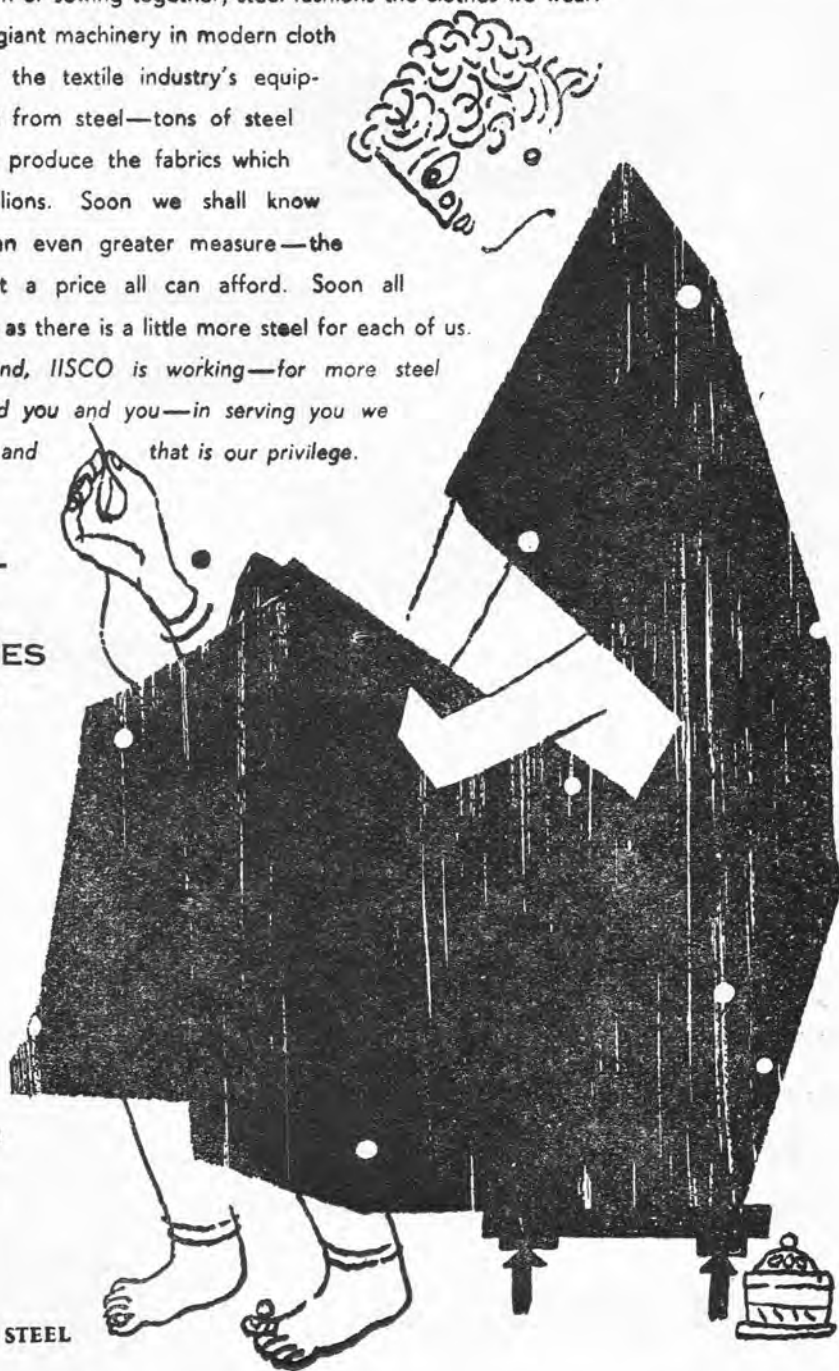
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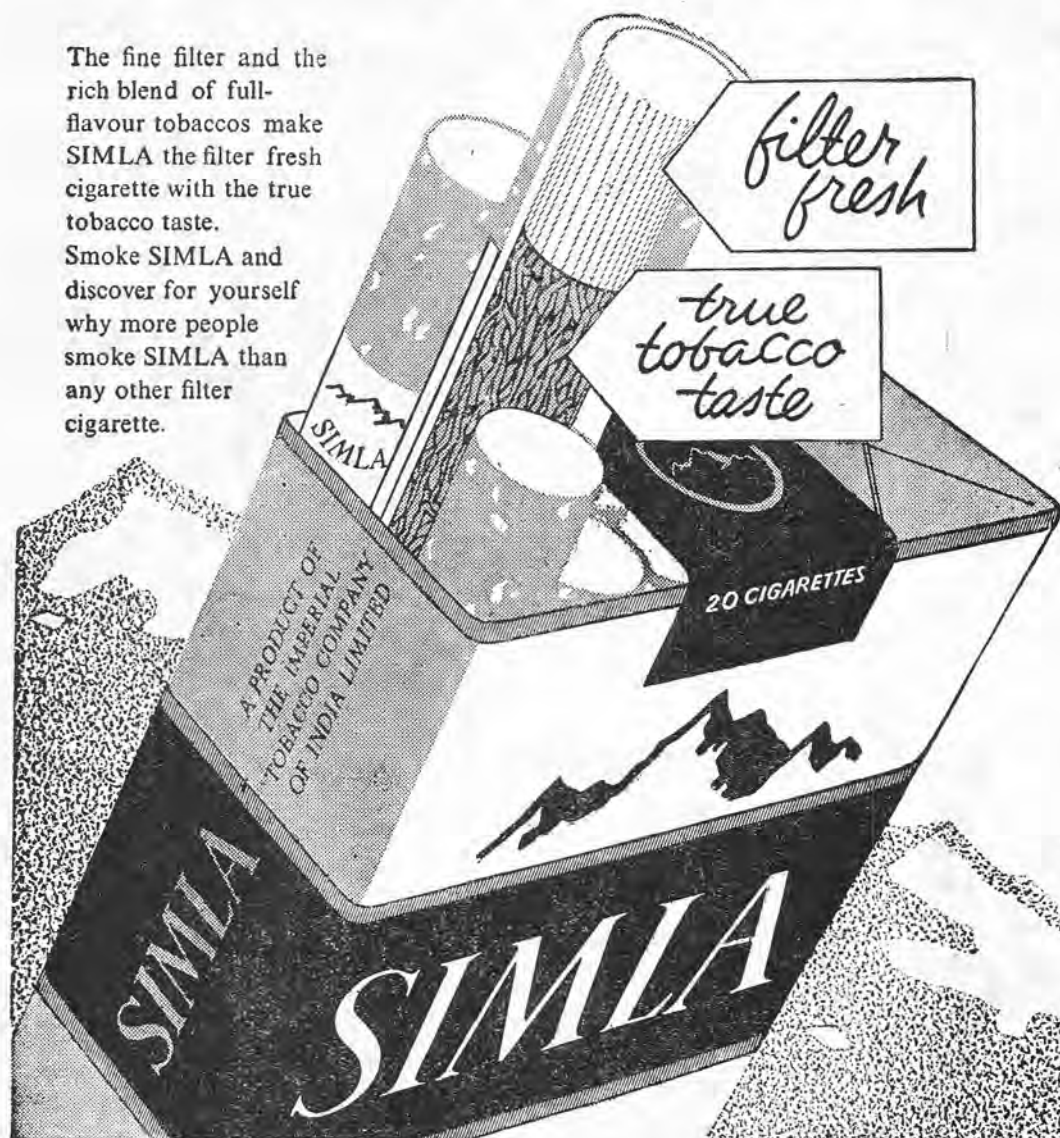
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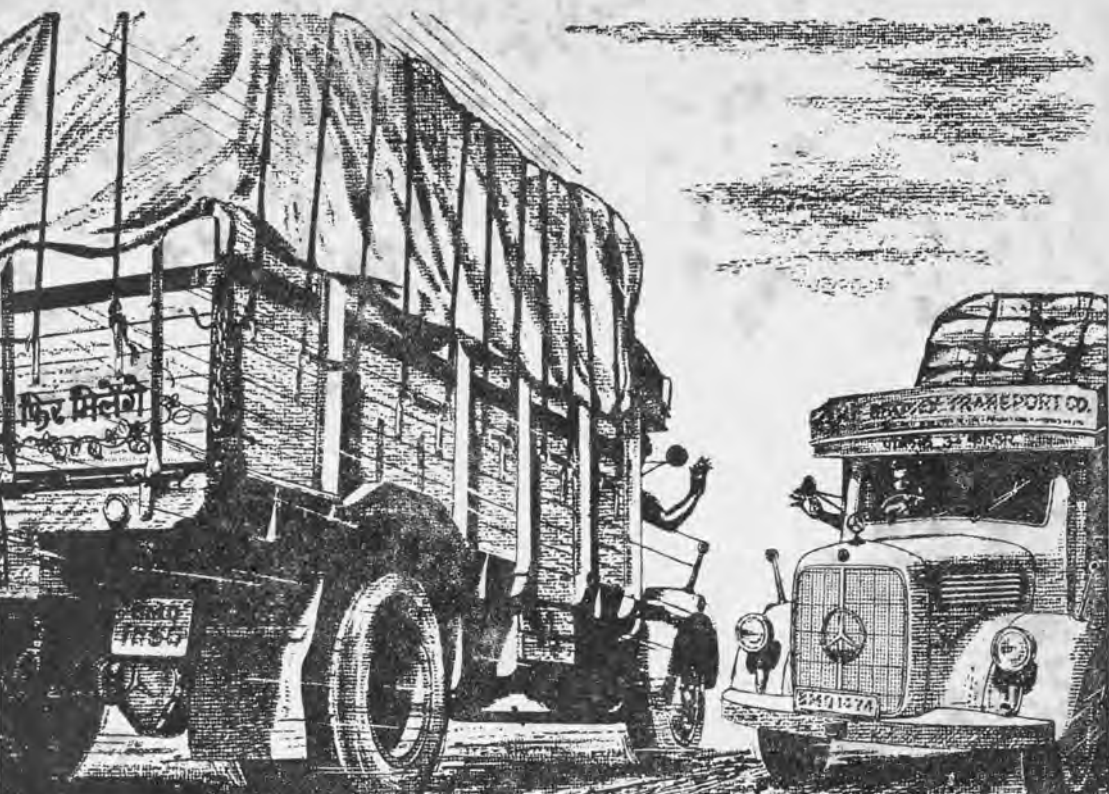
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