VOLUME 30
2010
NUMBERS 1 & 2

THE ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES

Aligarh Muslim University

Editor
S. N. Zeba

DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH
AMU, ALIGARH

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THE ALIGARH JOURNAL OF ENGLISH STUDIES
(BI-ANNUAL)

Statement under Section 19-D Sub-section (b) of the Press and Registration of Books Act read with Rule 8 of the Registration of Newspapers (Central Rules) 1965.

1.	Place of Publication	:	Aligarh
2.	Period of Publication	:	Bi-annual
3.	Printer	:	Aligarh Muslim University Press
4.	Publisher	:	S. N. Zeba
5.	Editor	:	S. N. Zeba
	Nationality	:	Indian
	Address		Department of English Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh - 202002
6.	Owner	:	Aligarh Muslim University Aligarh

7. I, S. N. Zeba, declare that the above-mentioned particulars are correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

S. N. Zeba
Publisher

Reg. No. 29062/76

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Annual Subscription
Rs 120 / US $ 10

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies

Editorial

Founded by Prof. A. A. Ansari in 1976, the Aligarh Journal of English Studies presents work of a high quality in English literature, its history, traditions and criticism from a multidisciplinary and multicultural standpoint. The Journal has attracted literary contributions from all segments of the disciplinary spectrum of English studies and from scholars across the globe. It caters to the needs of academics interested in the development of their subjects as well as those seeking innovation outside their areas of expertise. The Journal places great emphasis upon readability, discussion of controversial issues, and the inclusion of various shades of opinions and perspectives. In addition to scholarly and innovative articles and researches on archival documents, the Journal also includes contributions that perceptively compare texts or traditions from European and non-European literatures and insightful book reviews, particularly of those texts where the authors challenge existing assumptions or endeavor to make differences to the practice of the discipline.

The present issue is a collection of articles and essays, diverse in theme and import, but with an intense critical approach as the common denominator. Criticism acquires value only when it addresses impulses that underlie literary and aesthetic creations. Sincere and impartial literary criticism has an important role to play in inculcating a

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genuine appreciation of literary values. If genuine and great literature, capable of forging the minds and souls of human beings, is born of an individual's emotions and impressions, its genuine criticism must distill out of the critic's own impressions and by his alert and unprejudiced critical faculty.

Due to certain unavoidable circumstances, the 2008 and 2009 issues of *The Aligarh Journal of English Studies* could not be published. Our sincere efforts shall be to maintain regularity.

It is my pleasant duty to place on record the great effort put in by the primary contributors as also the editorial board members who make up the intellectual foundation of the present issue__ Prof. Farhatullah Khan, Prof. Sohail Ahsan, Prof. A. R. Kidwai, Prof. Asif Shuja, Dr. Raihan Raza and Dr. Seemin Hasan. My thanks are due to Dr. Seemin Hasan who has looked after the Journal at the academic level as well as its layout before it is sent to the press.

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Masum Khan

Lawrence's 'Songs of Death': Dirge of a Self-proclaimed Phoenix

In a consolatory letter to his childhood friend Gertrude Cooper, who was then undergoing treatment for tuberculosis, Lawrence wrote: "Don't weaken or fret. While we live, we must be game. And when we come to die, we'll die game too"[1]. According to OALD "game" used as adjective denotes someone eager and willing to do something risky; hence, brave. What Lawrence meant by being "game", according to John Worthen, is: "being unflinching, clear sighted".[2] Writing was Lawrence's pathological tool for exploring the pains of living, a constant honing of which, he believed, would help him achieve a verbal articulation of his own anguish. Just a month before his death he wrote: "My field is to know the feelings inside a man, and to make new feelings conscious. What really torments civilized people is that they are full of feelings they know nothing about; they can't realize them, they can't fulfill them, they can't live them"[3]. Lawrence referred to the subjects of sex, loss, and isolation. Since his birth Lawrence had suffered from multiple ailments that eventually added up to his terminal illness: tuberculosis. He refused to admit that he had been suffering from this fatal disease; instead, he would often lightly name it flu, pneumonia, malaria, bronchitis, influenza, fatigue and so on. He would even liken the illness to menopause in women[4]. Frieda recollects in her memoir of Lawrence that he "fought on

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and he never lost hope"[5]. An Austrian doctor, confirmed that stage of Lawrence: "An average man with those lungs would have died long ago. But with a real artist no normal prognosis is ever sure. There are other forces involved"[6]. This would further corroborate Lawrence's own vital energy and the gift of endurance that he celebrates in his writings.

It would be worthwhile to find out how Lawrence dealt with his impending death, especially in his writings, 'taking into account the comment of Richard Aldington about the poems in *More Pansies and Last Poems* that they "are a kind of diary of the last year of Lawrence's life." The aim of this essay is to explore how "game" Lawrence himself was while facing death. This essay proposes that the last eighteen poems in *Last Poems,* one of which is entitled "Song of Death," are Lawrence's avowal of death as a new hope, a renewal of his being as "new blossoms."

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Richard Aldington explains in his notes how the poems in the anthology titled *More Pansies and Last Poems* (found after Lawrence's death in two manuscripts) are arranged. The poems written in the last year of Lawrence's life explored some issues such as the persecution of law, the unkind attacks of journalists and reviewers, and his ongoing irritation because of his fatal disease. Whatever tortured his mind found its expression in the poems. The last group of poems anthologised in *Last Poems* beginning with "The Ship of Death" is followed by seventeen more poems. Different in sizes, these poems have a common

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thread running through them like "a vein of fire": the gripping issue of death. In fact, Aldington would like to think that poems starting with 'The Ship of Death' were meant to be "only one poem." Due to his consumptive irritations Lawrence could not complete his work.

In "The Ship of Death" Lawrence is calling out to his soul to get ready, for

"Now it is autumn and the falling fruit/and the long journey towards oblivion . . .And it is time to go, to bid farewell to one's own self, find a exit from the fallen self1 (1-7). His body is "badly bruised" and the soul is "eozing through the exit of the cruel bruise" (33-34). He tells himself that "all we can do/ is now to be willing to die" (50-51).

He has realized that this is the time for him to die and renew himself as his old-self is fully exhausted due to the physical and mental agonies. This poem uses the concept of Noah's Arc and the Deluge. The Deluge was imposed upon the whole world because of men's disobedience to God. Noah rebuilt the whole world after the Deluge. Lawrence is using the myth of the Arc and the flood as a symbol of destruction and regeneration. Death for him is like the portals in science fiction through which his soul is going to be renewed. He says, "And die the death, the long and painful death.That lies between the old self and the new" (30-31). Building "the ship of death" which is for Lawrence means getting ready for the "longest journey,"

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the journey of the soul into dark floodwater. Dying is a kind of cleansing, a metamorphic act rather than absolute annihilation. "The flood subsides, and the body, like a worn sea-shell/emerges strange and lovely" (97-98).

Drowning or death by water deserves some attention. There is a positive significance of water in Christianity. The word Baptism comes from Greek "baptcin" meaning "to dip." In the act of Baptism, the child is wholly or partly immersed in water, or a few drops may be sprinkled or placed on the head. Hence, the child is believed to be cleansed of all sins and is admitted to the Christian Church. Water is used as a symbol of purification in many other religions: the water of the Ganges in India, the Euphrates in Babylonia, and the Nile in Egypt is used for sacred baths. T. S. Eliot and James Joyce refer to death by water and the corresponding fertility myth in *The Waste Land* and *Ulysses* respectively. The title of section IV of *The Waste Land* is "Death by Water," where Eliot mentions the name of Phoebes, a Phoenician who was drowned. The theme of degeneration and regeneration is the central theme of Eliot's poem. The reflection of Joyce's Leopold Bloom, in the Hades section in *Ulysses*, is: "Drowning they say is the pleasantest"[8].

Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance*[9] is a seminal work that provided information for Eliot, and through him Joyce might have come across the concept. Jessie Weston, says that each year at Alexandria an effigy of a head of a god was thrown into water. Later it was received

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and worshipped as a god reborn. Lawrence's drowning by water and re-appearing as some lovely seashell is a resonance of the fertility myth or the concept of aqua Baptism.

Lawrence begins "The Ship of Death" by saying "Now it is autumn." This autumn is more than the autumn in the calendar; it stands as a metaphor. Autumn is the time when all living beings reach their maturity. Reaching this maturity also implies that winter is approaching; it is time to get ready for the end. Like the leaves, he, too is ready to 'fall'. He starts getting himself ready for new beginning. Like some fallen apples he is bruised and through this wound he will exit the old body. The mood and the season in "The Ship of Death." and in the second last poem in the series "Shadows," are the same as that of Keats's "Ode To Autumn" where Keats sings of 'the last oozings," "mourning gnats, and "full-grown lambs" and 'gathering swallows' making preparations for the forthcoming winter. Lawrence's death poems set in autumn bear the same significance as Keats' poems Autumn, the "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," is the time just before winter and is a "close bosom friend of the maturing sun." Autumn itself is both the time of ripeness and the time that marks the beginning of the end. After autumn comes winter when nature would go through death, but it also foreshadows a new beginning, as Shelley says: "When winter comes, can spring be far behind!"

In Lawrence's opinion getting ready for death is important, for those who are unable to face death suffer a lot.

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This is the main theme in "Difficult Death," "All Souls Day." The Houseless Death" and in "Beware the Unhappy Dead." In "Difficult Death" he agrees that "It is not easy to die, O it is not, easy/to die the death." Those unwilling to die, "moan and throng in anger" and, in "The Household Death" he says, they "'moan and heal/ against the silvery adamant walls of life's exclusive city" Lawrence, as in the first poem calls out to get the self ready, for there is no point denying the fact that one has to die to come into possession of a new-self. Lawrence triumphs over death like Tolstoy's Ivan Illych through acceptance of death. The latter experiences the same crisis and resolves it similarly: as long as he is unwilling to accept death, he moans and groans in his deathbed. Only when he accepts, does dying become a short passage through a dark tunnel with a luminous light awaiting him at the end. Ivan llyeh's last realisation is "Death is finished," he says to himself. 'It is no more (257)[10] Lawrence finishes with death in a similar way. Oblivion is a recurring word in the last eighteen poems in question. Death for Lawrence is a passage to oblivion, a blank state of being. In "Song of Death" and "The Hand the Beginning" he says that this state of oblivion lies under several layers of "dark whorled shell." Once one travels through these dark whorls, i.e. death, s/he is in "the core of soundless silence and pivotal oblivion" (724).

Lawrence characterizes this oblivion as being "utter forgetting/and ceasing to know, a perfect ceasing to know/ and a silent sheer cessation of all awareness" (724). In "Tabernacle" he says that he is willing to build a temple

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where underneath seven layers of veils oblivion would live. Once the soul crosses those veils 'The silent soul may sink into God at last."

To Lawrence, "God is a deeper forgetting far [deeper] than sleep" ("Tabernacle" 8). This concept is Platonic. Once the soul is in a mortal body, according to Plato, it becomes "confused and dizzy" with all the perceptible knowledge in the world; once it becomes free, after the death of that mortal body, "it achieves stability and wisdom"[11]. In his "Immortality Ode" Wordsworth expresses a similar view about soul. In his poem, he laments the loss of divinity of soul. says:

> Full soon thy heart shall have calmly freight.
> And custom lie upon thee with a weight,
> Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life! (127-29)

Worldly knowledge and customs corrupt the soul, and the more soul gathers this knowledge, the farther it goes away from God. After death, Lawrence believes, his soul will reach a stage where it will be able to forget all knowledge, it will be at a state of "not-to-know." and it will become the part of divinity again. For Lawrence God could be reached in oblivion or in the state of not-to-know. For him oblivion becomes synonymous to God. David Ellis explains in the biography of Lawrence that God in his later works, i.e. prose and poetry, does not mean an anthropomorphic deity; rather, it is something more akin to a pagan or animistic creative force which is identical with the universe itself (520). In "Forget" he reconfirms, "To be able to forget is to be able to yield/ to God who dwells in deep

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oblivion" as "Only in sheer oblivion are we with God" (1-3). For Lawrence becoming forgetful of one's bodily existence makes one be at one with the whole universe,

Apart from floodwater, sleep is another metaphor for death in these poems. In "Sleep," "Sleep and Waking" and in "Fatigue" he is using this sleep-metaphor for death:

> Sleep is the shadow of death, but not only that.
> Sleep is the hint of lovely oblivion.
> When 1 am gone, completely lapsed and gone
> and healed from all this ache of being. ("Sleep" 1-4)

After "waking from this soundest sleep," Lawrence thinks that he will be "waking new." after a sleep "The world is created afresh." He has not forgotten the harm man has caused to nature: in "Fatigue" he says, "....man has killed the silence of the earth/ and ravished all the peaceful oblivious places/ where the angels used to alight." Lawrence is always conscious of the harm men have done to the places, which carried divine spirit for a delicate person like him. Even when he is dealing with death he has not forgotten the environmental issues. John Donne, in Holy Sonnet X: "Death be not Proud," says that death should not be proud of itself, because death is like sleep from which he expects much more pleasure than what he gains from rest or sleep, and that after death "we wake eternally,/ And death shall be no more; death, thou shall die." Lawrence compares death to sleep like that of Donne. Both poets see death as a doorway or a passage through which one reaches the other world, and once one passes

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the passage, death for that person dies forever.

In "Shadows" Lawrence is drawing a summary of all his thoughts scattered so far in these death-poems. He asserts that death is a deep sleep to him after which he will wake up "like a new-opened flower," and it is the state of being dipped into God who will make him "new-created," Even when he feels that his soul is darkening and that "a strange gloom" pervades his thoughts, he does not feel down hearted for he believes that he is closer to God. While he is plunged into the pain of disintegration, he feels that a deep shadow is folding around the soul that is engulfing him into the deep oblivion for a renewal. The pain that he experiences, he knows, is the pain of breaking down, for he is going through "the changing phase" after which he will be renewed- This renewal is like being husked by the farmer during autumn:

> I am in the hands of the unknown God,
> He is breaking me down to his own oblivion
> To send me forth on a new morning, a new man. (30-32)

At the beginning of this cluster of poems what is just passing through the waters of oblivion, by the end of these poems Lawrence believes that it is God that has put him through all the agony to make him "a new man."

The last poem is entitled "Phoenix." According to mythology, the phoenix is a legendary bird that lived in Arabia. The phoenix consumed itself by fire every five hundred years, and a new, young phoenix sprang from its ashes. According to ancient Egyptian mythology, phoenix

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represented the sun, which dies at night and is reborn in the morning. Early Christian tradition adopted the phoenix as a symbol of both immortality and resurrection. After asserting the importance of willingness to die he says that this is important, for there will not be any change unless he experiences death. Like the phoenix he is burnt alive in the agony of illness and out of the burnt down body he is expecting the augment of a new-self. Phoenix is an emblem for Lawrence, for he believed his spirit would rise like a phoenix. The central theme of this cycle of death poems by Lawrence has been the destruction and regeneration theme; the image of Phoenix works as a pictogram.

The comment that these poems were meant to be one single poem is valid. Between the two versions of the "Ship of Death" included in Appendix III of *Complete Poems*[12] (961-965), the first one shows that there are some stanzas that eventually became separate poems in the *Last Poems*. Lines 40-46 in the first version are entitled "The Houseless Dead" in the anthology, while lines 47-57 "Beware the Unhappy dead!" Some lines of 'After all Saints' Day" are also used in this version. There are some phrases in this version of the poem which are scattered around the eighteen poems in question. As mentioned earlier, writing for Lawrence was a continued self-transformation and self-transcendence, through which he would plunge forward and lift up his soul. Lawrence as a poet always believed that self-conscious artistry should not take the place of uninterrupted expression of emotion and feeling. He was aware of the bitter attack on his poetic style; he wrote

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to Edward Garnet. "They want me to have form; they want me to have their pernicious, vociferous, skin-aim-grief form, and I wont" (Letters 87). In the poems of death Lawrence followed the same schemata.

Celebration of death in poetry is seen in the works of some other major Western poets. Walt Whitman in "Song of Myself' illustrates his conception of death as an integral part of living, an event to be faced with open arms and a lack of fear, an occasion, even, for joy. Donne in his sonnet with his characteristic style says that death is just a doorway to the other world. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* discusses his acceptance of his best friend's death and in the poem he describes the journey of the soul through some veils, which is quite similar to what Lawrence has said in "Tabernacle." "Bavarian Gentians." a poem by Lawrence which does not fall in the cluster of death-poems, deals with a journey into "the darker and darker stairs" where the Bavarian gentians become the guiding torch.

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About forty years after Lawrence's death, Swiss-born American psychiatrist Elisabeth Kubler-Ross[13] in her *One Death and Dying* conceptualized five stages of one's terminal illness; denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. This is known as "The Kubler-Ross Model," which is widely accepted by thanatologists who also recognize that these stages occur neither with predictable regularity nor do they appear in any set order. A close reading of Lawrence's cluster of poems on death reflects some of these stages. Initially, he refuses to accept that his dis-

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ease is leading him to death. Although the anger-stage is not prominent in the poems. at the end he accepts death as a passage to a new self. Kenneth Rexroth's observation of these poems is that "these materials alone make a small book of meditations, a contemporary *Holy Dying*... and such book would have been a favorite gift for the hopelessly ill[14] and that "The Ship of Death" poems have an exaltation, a nobility, a steadiness, an insouciance, which is not only not of this time but is rare in any time" . In fact, these eighteen poems are an example of how an artist like Lawrence encounters death.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1& 2, 2010, pp. 15-36

Ankur Sharma

"God's revealed plan" and What Man has Made of Man: Treatment of the Idea of Transcendence of Self in The Hairy Ape

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After his violent encounter with the representatives of the so-called civilized world in the Fifth Avenue, Yank, the eminently unheroic hero of Eugene O' Neill's *The Hairy Ape,* is arrested and sent to solitary confinement in the prison on the Blackwell Island. There, a prisoner from an adjacent cell reads out to him a few extracts from a senator's speech, which says that the industrial workers like Yank pose a real threat to modern civilization; for, according to him,

> They would tear down society, put the lowest scum in the seats of the mighty, turn Almighty God's revealed plan for the world topsy-turvy, and make of our sweet and lovely civilization a shambles, a desolation, where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape! (61) 1

The "Almighty God's revealed plan" that this senator refers to is, in fact, the old biblical idea of man's innate potential for transcending his limitations and shaping his own destiny. This is how one of the most quoted passages during the Renaissance first describes the story of the Creation of the world and then concludes God's address to Adam in the following words:

> In conformity with thy free judgement, in whose hands

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> I have placed thee, thou art confined by no bounds; and thou wilt fix limits of nature for thyself. I have placed thee at the centre of the world, that from there thou mayest more conveniently look around and see whatsoever is in the world. Neither heavenly nor earthly, neither mortal nor immortal have we made thee. Thou, like a judge appointed for being honourable, art the moulder and maker of thyself; thou mayest sculpt thyself into whatever shape thou dost prefer. Thou canst grow downward into the lower natures, which are brutes. Thou canst again grow upward from thy soul's reason into the higher natures which are divine."[2]

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The present paper is an attempt to demonstrate that, thematically, *The Hairy Ape,* enacts in reverse this old biblical idea of man's capacity for self-transcendence which dominated the thought of Renaissance men in Europe in the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries and which found its reincarnation in the American Dream in the nineteenth century America. For *The Hairy Ape,* it seems to me, demonstrates how man's pursuit of self-transcendence without any reference to God and heaven has led to the creation of a world in which man has gained mastery over the elements of nature but lost contact with his own humanity and become either a lifeless marionette like the inhabitants of the Fifth Avenue or an animal like Yank.

As the play begins, Yank claims in his ignorance that he is already a transcendent figure. He boasts of his being at the centre not only of the transatlantic liner in which he works but also of the whole world. Making fun of his physically inferior fellow stokers like Paddy and

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Long and displaying what Marden J. Clark has called "a frighteningly blind hubris,"[3] Yank claims to have acquired the attributes of God, the Prime Mover, who causes all things to move even though He Himself remains unmoved:

> Everyting else dat makes the woild move, somep'n makes it move. It can't move without somep'n else, see? Den yuh get down to me. I'm at de bottom, get me! Dere anin't nothin' foither. I'm de end! I'm de start! I start somep'n and de woild moves! It—dat's me! -de new dat's moiderin' de old! It—dat's me! —I'm de ting in coal dat makes it boin; I'm steam and oil for de engines; I'm de ting in noise that makes yuh hear it; I'm smoke and express trains and steamers and factory whistles; I'm de ting in gold dat makes it money! And I'm what makes iron into steel! Steel, dat stands for de whole ting! And I'm steel!—steel—steel! (17).

Ironically enough, Yank's speech reads like a parody of the detailed description of God's attributes by Lord Krishna in the *Bhagvad Gita*. Take, for example, the following verses from Chapters IX and X:

> I am the supreme goal, supporter, lord, witness, abode, refuge, disinterested friend, origin and end, the resting-place, the store-house [in which all things are merged at the time of universal destruction], and the imperishable seed. (IX, 18)

> Arjuna, I am the self-seated in the heart of all beings; so I am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings (X, 20).[4]

This is not to suggest, however, that either the illiterate Yank or even his creator, O'Neill, had necessarily read the *Bhagvad Gita*. The idea is found in all Western thought

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and is as old as, if not older than, Pythagoras. This is how Pothius, the Byzantine lexicographer, paraphrased the Pythagorean doctrine in his *Life of Pythagoras*:

> Man is called a little world not because he is composed of the four elements (for so are all the beasts, even the meanest) but because he possesses all the faculties of the universe. For in the universe, there are gods, the four elements, the dumb beasts and the plants. Of all these man possesses the faculties: for he possesses the godlike faculty of reason, and the nature of the elements, which consists in nourishment, growth and reproduction.[5]

More significantly still, this notion of human self-sufficiency, which is but one limited aspect of the Renaissance idea of self-transcendence, found its echo in the myth of the Adamic hero so much celebrated in the nineteenth century America. This is how R. W. B. Lewis describes this hero of popular American imagination: "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of the family and race; an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources."[6] As Yank shares, or believes that he shares, most of these attributes with the mythical hero, it would seem that O'Neill has fashioned him, albeit ironically, after such a hero so as to point out where the notion or illusion of human self-sufficiency could lead a man.

Both the setting and the spectacle at the beginning of

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the play, however, mock Yank's hubristic and blasphemous rhetoric. His speech is uttered against the background of the stokehole of the transatlantic liner in which he is but only one of the several stokers whose job is to shovel coal into the furnace of the ship. As the stage direction describes them at the beginning, they "all are hairy-chested, with long arms of tremendous power, and low, receding brows above their small, fierce, resentful eyes" (s. d. 5-6). Because the ceiling of the stokehole "crushes down" upon their heads, none of them can stand upright. This "accentuates their natural stooping posture which shoveling coal and the resultant over-development of the back and shoulder muscles have given them" (5). Their coal-besmeared bodies, their dungaree trousers, their naked torsos, their heavy ugly shoes, and their stooping posture give them the appearance of the Neanderthal man. Yank is the self-appointed leader of this group simply because he is "broader, fiercer, more truculent, more powerful, more sure of himself than the rest" (6). The respect that he receives from other stokers is "the grudging respect of fear" (6). In other words, Yank's superiority is due to his superior physical strength, or at best due to his being "the most highly developed individual" (6) of the Neanderthal species; otherwise, he is very much like them.

It is obvious that Yank is conceived as a kind of modern day Everyman. His nickname *Yank*—and he has trouble remembering his real name, which is Robert Smith—is the nickname given in a derogatory sense to all Americans. O'Neill's stage direction and expressionistic technique,

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however, make Yank and the other stokers representative of not only the modern civilized Americans but also all modern men: "All the civilized white races are represented, but except for the slight differentiation in colour of hair, skin, eyes, all these men are alike." In a letter to the *New York Herald Tribune* of November 16, 1924, O'Neill explained his intention in the following words:

> *The Hairy Ape* was propaganda in the sense that it was a symbol of man, who has lost his old harmony with nature, the harmony which he used to have as an animal and has not yet acquired in a spiritual way. Thus, not being able to find it on earth nor in heaven, he's in the middle, trying to make peace, taking the "woist punches from bot' of 'em." This idea was expressed in Yank's speech. The public saw just the stoker but not the symbol, and the symbol makes the play either important or just another play. Yank can't go forward, and so he tries to go back. This is what his shaking hands with the gorilla meant. But he can't go back to "belonging" either. The gorilla kills him.[7]

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This shows that, while writing this play, O'Neill clearly had in his mind the old idea about man's middle place in the hierarchy of being, an idea that many Renaissance thinkers had expressed in their own way and described in terms rather flattering to man.[8] O'Neill's purpose in *The Hairy Ape* seems to demonstrate what man has made of himself because of his misguided efforts to transcend his middle status in the traditional hierarchy of Being and acquire godlike knowledge and power. Great knowledge, great power, and also great wealth have of course come, but in the process man has lost his own identity as man

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and become something rather different, a beast or a machine, without any trace of real humanity left about him. Though the illiterate Yank describes his plight as the loss of belongingness, the basic idea underlying his plight, which is also the plight of the modern man, is a variation on the theme of self-transcendence: Man's collective pursuit of self-sufficiency and his effort through the ages to rise above his limitations have made him build a highly developed civilization without any reference to God, but it is a civilization in which he himself has become a lost being or, at best, a mere figure like W. H. Auden's "Unknown Citizen" who has no identity and individuality of his own even though everything about him is known and recorded. O'Neill thinks that as a playwright it is his duty to make his spectators and readers aware of what is amiss in the modern materialism. In a letter to George Jean Nathan in 1928, he wrote, "The playwright must dig at the roots of the sickness of today as he feels it—the death of the old God and the failure of Science and materialism to give any satisfying new One for the surviving religious instinct to find meaning for life."[9]

As the idea may appear to be an extreme one, O'Neill has employed an extremely unrealistic dramatic technique—expressionism—to highlight this vital issue by exaggerating it. And lest we should take Yank as a traditional tragic hero with whom we can empathize and even identify, O'Neill uses what Bertold Brecht has called the "alienation effect" to distance his hero from the spectators so that he is looked upon objectively and without any touch

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of sentimentality.[10] For this reason O'Neill has made all the stokers look alike and speak in the same hoarse voice like the sound of a worn-out gramophone record. It is also for this reason that he emphasizes Yank's brutish nature, his petty thefts in the past, his violent threats to fellow-stokers and, of course, his sickening misogyny: "Dey're all tarts, get me? Treat 'em rough, dat's me". The result is that the spectators not only react with Yank but also react to what he says. This makes them both critical of and sympathetic to him.

At the beginning of the play, thus, Yank's centrality and individuality are due largely to his physical superiority over the other stokers and his contempt for all who dare to differ with him. A man with an unenviable background, he has nothing but contempt for the nostalgia that Paddy feels for the romantic past when the sailors sailed and sang under the open sky and felt quite at home in the sea. What Paddy emphasizes is the close harmony that once existed between man and man, and between man and nature. But Yank dismisses Paddy's nostalgia for this harmonious past with a mere shrug of the shoulders: "Aw hell! Nix on dat old sailing-ship stuff! All dat bull's dead, see? And you're dead, too, yuh damned old Harp, on'y yuh don't know it" (11). Even Paddy's comparison of himself and his fellow stokers with apes in a zoo—"caged in by steel from a sight of the sky like bloody apes in the Zoo!" (150)—fails to make Yank see the reality about him and the stokehole.

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Yank is equally critical of Long's references to the Bible and his socialistic critique of the exploitation of the working classes by the capitalists: "De Bible, huh? De Cap'tlist class, huh? Aw nix on dat Salvation Army-Socialist bull. Git a soap-box! Hire a hall! Come and be saved huh? Jerk us to Jesus, huh? Aw g'wan!" (12). In his hubristic self-confidence, Yank is so sure of his "belonging" and self-sufficiency that he is not troubled by any thoughts of love or beauty, of his relation to the past or present, or even of his relation to society. He thinks that only he truly belongs while none else, neither the fellow stokers in the stokehole nor the people who travel first class, do. Even the repeated sound of the engineer's whistle to announce the beginning of the new shift does not make Yank realize that he is after all a mere stoker, who is bound to follow the sound of the whistle and begin work or be threatened with dismissal. On the contrary, he takes Paddy to task for his nostalgia and turns his back on him scornfully saying, "Aw, yuh make me sick! Yuh don't belong!"19.

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But all his hubristic self-confidence is shattered in Scene 3 when Yank encounters Mildred Douglas, the daughter of the president of Nazareth Steel and chairman of the board of directors of this ocean-line. Mildred is a pale, anaemic young girl, the decadent product of the artificial materialistic society. A student of sociology, she has whimsically planned to work for the upliftment of the poor people without having any first-hand contact with them or any understanding of their condition. In fact she is as she describes herself in Scene 2:

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> . . . a waste product in the Bessemer process—like the millions. Or rather, I inherit the acquired trait of the byproduct, wealth, but none of the energy, none of the strength of the steel that made it. I am sired by gold and damned by it, as they say at the race track—damned in more ways than one. (22-23)

It is no wonder, then, that she recoils in horror as soon as she sees Yank inside the stokehole. This is how O'Neill's stage direction describes the encounter between her and Yank:

> He [Yank] sees Mildred like a white apparition in the full light from the open furnace doors. He glares into her eyes, turned to stone. As for her, during his speech she has listened, paralyzed with horror, terror, her whole personality crushed, beaten in, collapsed, by the terrific impact of this unknown, abysmal brutality, naked and shameless. As she looks at his gorilla face, as his eyes bore into hers, she utters a low, choking cry and shrinks away from him, putting both hands up before her eyes to shut out the sight of his face, to protect her own. This startles Yank to a reaction. His mouth falls open, his eyes grow bewildered (32).

"Oh, the filthy beast!" is all that the stupefied Mildred can utter before she faints and is carried out of the stokehole. Bewildered and furious, Yank finds himself insulted in some unknown and indefinable way. His spontaneous response is "God damn yuh!" followed by the hurling of his shovel after Mildred and her companions have left and the door of the stokehole has just closed. Describing Yank's throwing the shovel after Mildred as an extension of the semiotics of "the clenched fist," Ulrich Halfmann says that most often in O'Neill's plays this gesture "stems from the

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desperate-impotent rage of a person who cannot make out the target of his rage and so cannot get at it."[11]

All this, however, happens suddenly and spontaneously, without any evil intention on the part of either Yank or Mildred. Indeed, both of them have been so much inside their self-made cages that neither of them can think of the other as a human being. If Mildred involuntarily thinks of Yank as a beast, Yank too, equally involuntarily, sees her as an apparition. But this single confrontation makes Yank realize for the first time in his life that far from being a transcendent figure, he is not even acceptable as a human being to Mildred and her class. It is not surprising, therefore, that his impulsive reaction is to avenge himself on Mildred and her artificial society and prove that he is what he thinks he is and not what they call him. Yet deep down in his heart he begins to wonder whether Mildred is after all right in calling him a "filthy beast." It is in this state of mind that he decides to embark on his agonizing search for identity in a world in which man has lost all communion with his fellow beings, harmony with nature, and belief in religion and God, all of which used to give some meaning and purpose to human life in the past.

O'Neill devotes one full scene, Scene 4, in which Yank and the other stokers express their reactions to Yank's confrontation with Mildred in the preceding scene. Ironically enough, the scene begins with Yank sitting in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker," a sculpture which represents the humanist ideal of man. As Yank is trying to "tink"

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about his shocking experience, other stokers, led by Paddy and Long, think in terms of class-bias and find fault with Mildred. When Paddy taunts Yank saying that he has fallen in love with Mildred, Yank breaks his silence and bursts out that he has, instead, "fallen in hate" (36). Though Mildred had come to the stokehole with a noble though whimsical intention, Long comes out with his usual socialistic interpretation and describes her visit to the stokehole as an insult to the workers: "Hinsultin' us! Hinsultin' us, the bloody cow! And the bloody engineers! What right 'has they got to be exhibitin' us 's we was bleedin' monkeys in a menagerie? Did we sign for hinsults to our dignity as 'onest workers? Is that in the ship's articles?" (36). He goes on referring to the articles of their contract with the firm and of the labourers' rights as citizens of a free country. He also speaks of seeking redress from the law and of forcing the Government because they are voters and citizens who are equal not only before the law but also "in the sight of God" (37).

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Yank, however, will have nothing to do either with Law and Government or with religion, all of which are, after all, the formulations of the human mind. In any case, love, law, government, God and religion are meant for man, but in his case a question has already been raised about his very humanity. It is not surprising, therefore, that Yank's underdeveloped brain tells him that somehow Mildred has hurt him somewhere in his very being. When Paddy gives this otherwise unintended insult to Yank a specific name by saying that "Sure, 'twas as if she'd seen a

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great hairy ape escaped from the Zoo!" (38), Yank can think of nothing but revenge. He must prove that he is a human being and a better one than Mildred and her likes. And, ironically enough, the only way he can think of proving his humanity is by using his brutal strength and hurting her and her class physically, without realizing of course that such an action on his part will only prove Mildred right! It is this intention that leads him to the Fifth Avenue, the posh area inhabited by people like Mildred's father.

When Yank does meet the people of Mildred's class in the Fifth Avenue three weeks later, what he sees is not a group of human beings but a "*procession of gaudy marionettes, yet with something of the relentless horror of Franksteins in their detached, mechanical unawareness*" (44). In other words, they are pale, dehumanized figures looking more like well-dressed robots than men and women. As Santosh K. Bhatia describes them, "These men seem to have no will, no mind, no soul. Bereft of emotions and compassion, they are anything but human."[12] In contrast, though the stokers in the transatlantic ocean liner look and speak alike, they do at least show some signs of individuality: Yank, for example, is characterized by his superior physical strength and aggressiveness, Paddy by his nostalgia for the past, and Long by his socialistic ideology. But the people in the Fifth Avenue do not betray even the minimal sign of individuality. As they come out of the church, "*sauntering slowly and affectedly, their heads held stiffly up, looking neither to right nor left, talking in toneless, simpering*

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voices" (49) they all look and sound alike. "*The women,*" we are told, "*are rouged, calcimined, dyed, overdressed to the nth degree. The men are in tail coats, tall hats, spats, canes, etc.*" (50). What is more, their thinking is also alike. The chapel for them is not a place of worship where they can have communion with God as well as their fellow men; it is, instead, a place where they come to discuss business. And although the Almighty has, many a time, torn the veil of the *sanctum sanctorum* which keeps Him hidden from the common man, these people will not allow Him to do so. They will, instead, "organize a hundred percent American bazaar" to repair this veil and keep Him hidden there, so that they can go on with their Mammon-worship without being pricked by their conscience.

Thus dehumanized and alienated from God as well as from their fellow human beings, these people have lost their real vitality and become rather mechanical. Ironically, it is from these people that Yank seeks an assurance of his own humanity. It is no wonder, then, that their response to his efforts to establish some kind of contact, even if it is inimical, is rebuffed by all of them either with a "mechanical unawareness" of his existence or with a cold and "callous indifference" expressed in the stereotypical phrase "I beg your pardon." They are far more interested in monkey furs, rubies and pearls, and glittering diamonds than in human beings like Yank and Long. And when Yank, frustrated by their indifference, tries to force himself on them by insulting them and calling them all sorts of names, they call the police, get him beaten and arrested, and sent

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to prison.

Once again the reference to "apes" makes Yank burn with a desire for revenge against Mildred's society, though his earlier efforts have been futile. With this aim in mind, he wants to know more about the I. W. W. from the newspaper. Significantly, he sits in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker" once again and realizes for the first time that he does not and cannot belong to such a thing as steel because that would mean belonging to "cages, cells, locks, bolts, bars" (62). But still mistaken about what he can do in a world that he does not and cannot control, Yank would now identify himself with fire because it melts steel. And as he may not be able to do so single-handedly, he decides that he will go to the I. W. W. office and enlist himself as a member when he is released from jail.

Yank's experience inside the local office of the I. W. W. is different from but no better than what it was in the Fifth Avenue. Fully convinced that the I. W. W. is nothing but an anarchist organization, he tries to assure the Secretary and his people that he is ready to commit any act of sabotage for them. But as the I. W. W. is, in fact, a trade union believing in peaceful and democratic methods to fight for the workers' rights—the senator's speech which described them as terrorists and anarchists was, after all, a totally biased view about this trade union—the Secretary thinks that Yank is either a spy, an agent provocateur, or a lunatic sent to them by the capitalists. So no plea on the part of Yank makes them understand his plight; on the

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contrary, the Secretary thinks of him as the biggest practical joke put on them by the industrialists. He too calls Yank a "brainless ape" and has him thrown outside the office. Yank would at first like to "get even" with the I. W. W. people in the office but he finds the door of their office shut. Seeing no way out and not knowing what to do next and where to go, he sits in the attitude of Rodin's "The Thinker" right in the middle of the cobbled street and ponders over his plight: "So dem boids don't tink I belong, neider. Aw, to hell wit'em!" (71). Though he still continues to call his problem one of belonging and many critics describe it as such,14 Yank realizes for the first time that his problem is primarily existential, even though he does not have the exact words to formulate and express it:

> Aw, hell! What does dat get yuh? Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly. Feedin' your face—sinkers and coffee—dat don't touch it. It's way down—at de bottom. Yuh can't grab it, and yuh can't stop it. It moves, and everything moves. It stops and de whole woild stops. Dat's me now—I don't tick, see?—I'm a busted Ingersoll, dat's what. Steel was me, and I owned de woild. Now I ain't steel, and de woild owns me. (72)

When a policeman arrives on the scene and asks him what he has been doing, Yank gives a simple but disquieting answer: "Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure, dat's the charge. Write it in de blotter. I was born, get me!" (72-73). And as there is no solution to his problem, Yank asks rather pertinently, "say, where do I go from here?" (73).

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Having been rejected by the human world, both by the world of the capitalists and that of the workers led by the I. W. W., Yank makes one final desperate effort to "belong" to this world by trying to identify himself with animals. Perhaps he has in his mind both the legacy of Darwinism and the remark of the senator which was read to him inside the Blackswell prison—"... where man, God's masterpiece, would soon degenerate back to the ape!" (61). So he goes to the cage of a gorilla in the Zoo and, envying the lot of this simian, tries to fraternize him saying,

> You're de champ of de woild. But me—I ain't got not past to tink in, nor nothin' dat's comin' on'y what's now—and dat don't belong. Sure, you're de best off! Yuh can't tink, can yuh? You can't talk neider. But I kin make a bluff at talkin' and tinkin'—a'most git away wit it—a'most!—and dat's where the joker comes in. (*He laughs.*) I'ain't on oith and I ain't in Heaven, get me? I'm in de middle tryin' to separate 'em, takin' all de woist punches from bot' of 'em. Maybe dat's what dey call Hell, huh? But you, yuh're at de bottom. You belong! Sure! Yuh're de on'y one in de woild dat does, yuh lucky stiff! (76).

Needless to say, Yank's speech to the gorilla reads like a shattering parody of many Renaissance treatises which fervently mention man's middle place in the hierarchy of being, emphasizing how man, within the limits of his manhood, had the potential for transcending his limitations and becoming whatever he liked.[14] O'Neill's irony does not, however, stop here. Yank goes on with his apostrophe to the gorilla and opens the cage so that both of them can supposedly join hands in fighting the people in the

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Fifth Avenue. The gorilla comes out of the cage, "wraps his huge arms around Yank in a murderous hug," throws his body inside the cage, shuts the door, and walks off into darkness, leaving the dying Yank to bid his tragic farewell to the audience: "He got me, aw right. I'm trou. Even him didn't tink I belonged" (78). And to this, as if it were not enough, O'Neill adds his cryptic, one-sentence comment: "And, perhaps, the Hairy Ape at last belongs" (78).

The refusal of the gorilla to accept Yank as one of his kindred souls is indeed a sarcastic comment on the alienation of the modern man who belongs neither to earth, nor to heaven, nor even to the world of animals. It is also a bitter comment on the pursuit of self-transcendence without reference to and the blessing of God, a pursuit which the Faustian minds started during the Renaissance and which has reached its culmination in the modern scientific, industrial and technological age. Although the achievements made by man in science and technology have given him tremendous power over the forces of nature and made him a kind of minor god in the present-day Godless world, they have also cut him off from his cultural and spiritual heritage which could have given him a sense of identity and belonging and, thereby, a meaning and purpose to his existence. But as this has not happened, the modern man has become either an animal like Yank or a marionette like the inhabitants of the Fifth Avenue, who have no feeling or individuality of their own. O'Neill does not suggest any solution to this existential problem in *The Hairy Ape* simply because his suggestion will be yet an-

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other formulation of the human mind and therefore as good or bad as the other ideologies which his play rejects. Being a dramatist, O'Neill is content to dramatize the existential anguish of the modern man and to present it for what it is, showing how the Renaissance dream of self-transcendence has come full circle and become a modern nightmare.

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Notes and References

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2. See *Pico della Mirandola on the Dignity of Man, On Being, and the One, Heptaplus*, transl. Charles Glenn Wallis (Indianapolis: The Library of Liberal Arts, 1965).11.
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5. *Also see* Santosh. K. Bhatia, "The American Dream as Nightmare: A Critical Appraisal of *The Hairy Ape*," in his edition of *Indian Response to Drama: An Anthology of Critical Essays* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 2003), 239.
7. O'Neill, cited by Doris Falk in her *Eugene O'Neill*

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8. See, for example, note 2 above and note 15 below.
9. Quoted in D. G. Kehl, "The 'Big Subject' in The Hairy Ape: A New Look at Scene Five," *The Eugene O'Neill Review* 17 (1993): 42.
10. Describing the "alienation effect" in the Chinese plays, Bertold Brecht writes, "The alienation effect intervenes, not in the form of absence of emotion, but in the form of emotions which need not correspond to those of the character portrayed. On seeing worry the spectator may feel a sensation of joy; on seeing anger, one of disgust. When we speak of exhibiting the outer signs of emotion we do not mean such an exhibition and such a choice of signs that the emotional transference does in fact take place because the actor has managed to infect himself with the emotions portrayed, by exhibiting the outer signs." See *Bertold Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. John Willet (New York: Hill and Wang, 1986), 94.
11. Ulrich Halfmann, "'With Clenched Fist . . .:' Observations on a Recurrent Motif in the Drama of Eugene O'Neill" in *Eugene O'Neill and the Emergence of American Drama*, ed. Marc Maufort (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1989), 114.
12. Bhatia, 243.
13. See, for example, Peter Egri, "'Belonging Lost: Alienation and Dramatic Form in Eugene O' Neill's

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The Hairy Ape," in *Critical Essays on Eugene O' Neill*, ed. James J. Martine (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1984). Egri writes, "*The Hairy Ape* is

14. For example, this is what Cusanus wrote about the status of man "The realm of humanity embraces God and the universe within its own human power. Man can therefore be a human God and, as God, can, in a manner appropriate to his human nature, be a human angel, a human animal, a human lion, or bear or anything else. For within the limits of human power, all things exist after their own fash ion." Cited by Sukanta Chaudhary in *Infirm Glory: Shakespeare and the Renaissance Image of Man* (Ox ford: At the Clarendon Press, 1981), 28. 79.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1& 2, 2010, pp. 37-67

R. L. Bhattacharjee

Love and Mysticism : Shelley and Indian Bhakti-Poets: A Comparative Reading

In every culture, love is recognized as a fundamental emotion which leads up to experiences of a deeply 'meta-physical' nature. Whether we consider Shelley, or a sufi, or the Indian Bhakti-poets (love poets), mysticism of one kind or another is an important dimension of their philosophy of love. The mystical way to the Supreme Reality lies through the feeling of aesthetic fascination felt for a thing of beauty. The word mysticism is often misapplied to vague magical phenomena. But properly understood, mysticism is a genuine experience attested by trustworthy minds in all cultures and in all ages. Shelley's love poetry has a profound mystical element and the sustained heights he scales are also those reached by the Indian love (bhakti) poets.

Critics who allow them to be led by Matthew Arnold or T.S. Eliot would hold that there is not much substance in Shelley's poetry, not to talk of meta-physics and mysticism. However, it is impossible to deny Herbert's argument that Shelley is as much concerned with profound meta-physical questioning as are Coleridge and Wordsworth, To many, he may appear to have gone even farther than Wordsworth in an attempt to understand the true nature of life - human or cosmic. As Read has sug-

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gested, Shelley was always conscious of the question 'What is Life?' And he had provided an answer too which is very much valid on the strength of his philosophy and metaphysical experiences corroborated in his many superb poetical renderings. "That love, which he declared as the secret of morals, he also regarded it as the guiding principle of the universe. We know, here again, he was following Plato and more particularly - Dante. In the detail of his conception, he is much nearer to Dante than Plato; but as a confessed atheist, he did not want to identify this 'Unseen Power' with a divine agency. He therefore gives him an 'awful throne ... in the wise heart', from which it springs to fold over the world its healing wings. This Universal Love, is clearly and definitely humanistic in character its spells are faculties within the titanic frame of man's imagination."[1] Yet Read does not go deep enough into the philosophical thought of Shelley when he calls the latter's conception of universal love as 'clearly and definitely humanistic in character'. Whereas, Shelley's conception of love and reality are transcendental beyond the limits of metaphysics, and depend on mystical states of the poet's mind. Shelley gives testimony to an experience of mystical nature in the following lines as indeed in many other places:

> ... ,but ever gazed And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw. The thrilling secrets of the birth of time. (Alastor, 11. 125-29)

The way to the mystical experience start with a compulsive feeling of love in the presence of a thing of

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beauty through that extra-dimension which extends a vague (in earthly sense) but an unmistakable apprehension of the elements of a supra-reality. After the first shock of love, the poet becomes aware of a mystical unity with the beautiful vision and has a strong feeling that the object of his devotion represents the divine counterpart of his own soul. A.M.D. Houghes while commenting on *Alastor* remarked:

> In a dream a veiled woman, whose voice was like the voice of his own soul's' is seated by him, talking of the sovereign things: Truth, Virtue, Freedom, Poetry. Suddenly the veil is swept away; she is a dream of no abstraction, but of the human lover, his own 'antitype', who waits for him somewhere in the wilderness he must needs travel'

In the same poem the poet tells us that his heart 'ever beat in mystic sympathy/ with nature's ebb and flow'. But after he has seen the vision and perceived the mystery of nature and love, his perspective on the world is completely changed. The change has started with the departure of vision:

> The boat fled on
> With unrelaxing speed, - 'Vision and Love:
> The Poet cried aloud, 'I have beheld
> The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
> Shall not divide us long (Alastor, 11, 365-69)

In the *Revolt of Islam*, the twin ideas of mystical unity and divine reality recur:

> "She spake in language whose strange Melody
> Might not belong to earth!"
> (Canto I, stn, xix, 11. 289 - 90)

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and further

> Her voice was like the wildest saddest tone, Yet sweet and some loved voice heard long ago.
>
> (Ibid-5. xxii.ll. 316- 17)

In *Epipsychidian*, Emilia does not only represent the Platonic 'Idea' of Beauty, she also becomes Shelley's Beatrice, and as in Dante, leads to a mystical apprehension of reality. Clarifying the point Baker has observed:

> The Idea which bears the name of Emilia in *Epipsychidian* may be defined as that part of the inmost soul which participates in the World-soul. Shelley has attempted an exposition on this mystical idea in the prose fragment on love
>
> "It is in itself sexless as an angel for on the spiritual plane where Shelley is standing, sexual distinctions are of no consequence. He indicates its completely ideal character by comparing it to a special kind of selective mirror which 'reflects only the forms of purity and brightness. This is the Idea behind the figure - Emilia, in *Epipsychidian.*"

The poem is concerned with higher love which rises spirally to encompass and penetrates everything. "This higher love, surely, need not be limited to a single individual. Plato's lover proceeds from the love of one form to that of two and that of two to that of all beautiful forms, and from beautiful forms to beautiful institutions and doctrines, and thence to the love of supreme beauty itself."[4] Shelley's beloved is never a mere individual. She is a spiritual luminary mystically united 'with and epitomizing life':

> At length into the obscure forest came
> The Vision I had sought through grief and shame,
> Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns

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Flashed from her motion of splendour like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead
(Epipsychidian, 11. 321 -26)

and again:

Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is change to love, this glorious one
Floated into the cavern where I lay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As, smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light:
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years - that it was Emily.
(Ibid, II. 335-44)

Referring to this in *Prometheus Unbound*, B. P. Kurtz has judiciously remarked:

> She is that Platonic Idea of beauty, that 'Intellectual Beauty' of the Symposium, which constitutes both the meaning and inspiration, of so much of Shelley's poetry.[5]

But in the play, she is also subtly inter-linked with the mystical understanding of the final reality. Shelley's love is never confined to the physical plane and the beauty he perceives is never merely sensuous. The 'unearthliness' of Love and Beauty can be detected even in apparently descriptive passages. In his sustained attempts like *'Epipsychidian'* and *'Prometheus Unbound'*, the poet soars on the wings of Love and Beauty to the sublime heights of mysticism. Although to follow Shelley at such sublimity becomes often difficult for a, common reader owing to the fact that, as Kurtz rightly comprehended:

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> To feel and see, as well as conceive, the meaning of the poem, one should first remind himself of the deepest passions of beauty he has himself known, when the mood of the beautiful was raised to the sublime and he seem to feel his way, so to speak, almost into heaven itself.

This may remind one about the contemplative poet Edward Carpenter, explaining the mystical experience of love:

> The youth sees the girl; it may be a chance face, a chance outline amidst the most banal surroundings. But it gives the cue. There is memory, a confused reminiscence. The mortal figure without penetrates to the immortal figure within and there rises into consciousness a shining form, glorious, not belonging to this world, but vibrating with the age-long life of humanity, and the memory of a thousand love-dreams. The waking of this vision intoxicates the man; it glows and burns within him; a goddess (it may be Venus herself) stands in the sacred place of his temple; a sense of awestruck splendour fills him, and the world is changed.
>
> (The Art of Creation, p. 137)

Indian Religio-love (Bhakti) poetry is either clearly mystical as in Kabir, Jaisee and Tagore or rises to mysticism in its philosophy of love and the perception of the Reality beyond appearance. Love, has been recognized as a valid 'way' (Bhakti-Marg), a path to God. The Christian concept - 'agape' experience of the saints and mystics is somewhat nearer to this Bhakti-Marg/ prem (love) experience, which is opposite to the earthly love – 'eros" between man and woman. Bhakti-Marg is different from the path of Knowledge (Jnan Marg), the path through rational enquiry to know and realize God - The Ultimate Truth. The

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very idea that love can lead to knowledge of God and Supreme Reality contains in it the germ of mysticism. To Meerabai (1498- 1546), a poetess of 16th century India, love is a mystical source of light which permits one to see both the inner and outer reality:

> Surat nirat Ka deola sanjole, mansa ki karle' bati, Pre'm ghati kate'l mangale", jagai rahadin rati."
>
> (Meerabai ki Padavalii, pada - 20)

Or again, in the mystical poems of a 15th century saint poet Kabirdas (1398 -1495), the unearthly arid typical mode of experiencing the mystical nature of this love has been explained as:

> Kabira badal pre'm ka ham pari varshya aaei,
> Antari bhingi atma hari bhari banarai:
> (Kabir Granthavali, p - 46)

(When the showers of love fall on the devotee, the cob-webs are removed from his inner eye; his soul is purified and piercing the veil of 'maya', he experiences reality in its genuine form.)

Besides, in some yogic sects (c.f. Tart tra- Yoga), copulation is given a mystical significance and considered the basic source of the highest kind of experience. The whole cosmos is conceived to be centered around the meeting of two principles — Purusha and Prakriti; and the interaction of the two elements goes on eternally. What takes place in macrocosm is occurring in microcosm. The meeting of the two elements is the source of spiritual joy.

According to many Indian philosophers, Sufis and poet-philosophers, the world itself is the result of 'Desire'

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- the desire of God to see 'Himself'.

"EKOHAM BAHUSHYAMI"
"I AM THE ONE, SHALL BE MANY", 'Now first arose desire, the primal seed of mind'.

(Vivekananda)

And also:

"Tasamanaditwam Chashisho ityatwat"
(RajYoga, Sutra - 10)

This describes that 'The thirst for happiness being eternal, desires are without beginning. All experience is preceded by desire for happiness. There was no beginning of experience, as each fresh experience is built upon the tendency generated by past experience; therefore desire is without beginning.'

(Vivekananda)

And both Shelley and Indian Religio-love poets and poet-philosophers conceive love as the quintessence of the nature of man and by implication (for the Romantics the whole Universe was in self) the universe: " we dimly see our intellectual nature, a miniature as it were of our entire self, yet deprived of all that we condemn or despise, the ideal prototype of everything 'excellent or lovely that we are capable of conceiving as belonging to the nature of man. Not only the portrait of our external being but an assemblage of the minutest particles of which our nature is composed, a mirror surface reflects only the forms of purity and brightness; a soul within out soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise, which pain,

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and sorrow, and evil dare not overleap. To this, eagerly refer all sensations, thirsting that they should resemble or correspond with it."

When a Sufi pierces the veil of appearances - 'Maya', and tries to perceive reality, he perceives nothing but love: As poet Jaisee has remarked:

> "Teeno lok chaudah khand sabai parai mohee sujhee,
> Pre'm chandi nahi laun kichu, je dekha mun bujhi."
>
> (Jaisee Granthavali, p - 46)

(Beyond the three worlds and its fourteen parts, what I perceive is but love.)

Once love is seen to constitute the 'being' of the entire cosmos, an apparent paradox arises: the world is one and many at the same time. The mystical search of the poet leads him to remember many kinds of antithesis, or better, to perceive the truth of paradox. Discussing the 'Character of all life', Shelley observed:

> The words I, you, they, are not signs of any actual difference subsisting between the assemblage of thoughts thus indicated, but are merely marks employed to denote the different modifications of the One Mind."

Here the word 'One Mind' - is used as a synonym to the Ultimate Reality by Shelley. And, in his another popular essay 'On Life', this idea, 'the character of all life' is made crystal clear: "Each is at once the centre and the circumference, the point to which all things are referred, and the line in which all things are contained .. ."[9] And thus, the remarks made by Kurtz about Shelley's poetry

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that "there is more in a ghost than meets the eye" conveys the truth about the mystical aspect of all his poetry and prose writings. In this connection, the remarks of E. R. Wasserman are pertinent:

"With no sense of contradiction, he wrote in his 'Essay on Life' both that 'the basis of all things cannot be ... mind and that 'Nothing exists but as it is perceived ....' In the 'Essay he rejects not only materialism and subjective idealism but also the dualism of the 'popular philosophy of mind and matter' for what he calls the 'Intellectual philosophy'.[10]

While analyzing the significance of Demogorgon's role in the *Prometheus Unbound,* and referring critic's remark that Demogorgon is the missing link between mind and matter, Kurtz has tried rather to indicate the mystical significance of the symbol - Demogorgon:

> Rather, he stands for that mystical persuasion, vague but intense, that mind and matter are an untrue antithesis, and that what we call mind and matter are somehow one without any erasure of the desperateness of individual things. For in the true mystical state multity is not carefully sacrificed to unity. In other words, mystical experience is beyond reason, indefinable by the being-categories of the Occidental logic; and therefore, to the non-mystic contradicts reason. It is an experience in which the paradox of unity and variety is solved without sacrificing either term of the anti-thesis, but by uniting them in what the mystic believes is higher, supersensory, super-definable awareness. Demogorgon is but a name for this mystical state of mind, I believe, and positively to define the state is to misconceive its nature ...."

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Therefore, in Shelley's philosophy, the mystical unity is not only a simple Pantheism as can be inferred from the oft-quoted passage from *Adonais*:

> He is made one with Nature: There is heard
> His. voice in all her music, from the moan
> Of thunder, to the song of the night's sweet bird;
> He is a presence to be felt and known
> In darkness and in light, from herb and stone, Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
> Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
> Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
> Sustains it from beneath and kindles it above."
>
> (*Adonais*, Stz. XLII, II. 370 - 78)

In a similar vein of mystical symbolism, Kabir admonishes the soul not to be drooping, for, the source of life is close to her; indeed she is born and sustained in the Universal life:

> kahe re nalani tu kumhalani,
> Te're" he nal sarober pani,
> Jal me utpati, jal me' bas,
> Jal me' nalani tor nibas,
> Na tai lapati, na ooper aag,
> Toe he'tu kahu kasani lag,
> Kahe Kabir je udik saman,
> Te" nahee mua liamari Jan.
> (Kabir Granthavali, pada, 64)

Further, Kurtz puts the Platonic veil concept, which is death, according to him, at par with life. He says that "very different is the Platonic 'veil which is death, though mortals call it life, the removal or lifting of which discloses the immortality of spirit. But the figuring of the two ideas under the one device of a lifted veil is very Shelleyan: death as a symbol of cruelty and all ugliness, and death as a

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biological fact. Both the deaths release perfection, one of society, the other of spirit."[12]

But the above interpretation is not enough since for Shelley 'veil' and 'death' are two different entities and are not two facets of a single entity. 'Veil' is the ignorance, 'painted veil' is the life, and deaths is an 'immortalizing winter'[13], the gateway to immortality. The veil concept has often been associated with darkness by the poet. In one of his poems, viz. *Mutability*, he says:

"We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restless they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly: - yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost forever."

(II. 1 - 4)

and, in another poem the 'painted veil' concept is equated with life:

"Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: Though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread, - "

(Sonnet, 11. 1 - 4)

Again, in *Epipsychidian* (c.f. 11. 470 - 77), Shelley uses the word 'veil' in the context of an abstract dividing line between the real and the unreal, between Ideal and its mutable prototypes. It is platonic in fervour but uniquely Shelleyan in its figurative and literary technique. With regard to this, A.T. Strong too in 1921 in his study had observed about the special significance of the veil image, which according to him has been used by Shelley "as an

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emblem of thinness of the barrier separating the finite and infinite".[14]

Thus foregoing citations make it clear beyond doubt that the 'painted veil' is life to Shelley where Fear and Hope lurk, and it is quite different from his concept of 'veil - the abstract dividing curtain between the Real and the Unreal. Added to it is the concept of 'death' which is equated with neither of the above. And it is in this light therefore, that after the 'painted veil' is lifted, death is met; that is, apparent Life ends in Death. Shelleyan 'veil' is rent with the aid of love and not with Death. Renting the 'veil', a lover can see the glimpses of Reality. Love can repel the fear of death from human heart but it can not win over the natural principle - Death. Hence, Death is the essential aspect of Life itself; and therefore, the poet calls Death, the Sister of Life. However, with the aid of death - which is a gateway, the purified soul of a lover gets entry into the world of Immortality.

In this connection, one important point needs to be understood in its clear perspective. Some scholars of English Literature confuse the above Shelleyan concepts of 'veil' arid 'painted veil' with the Indian concept of *'maya';* and also the Shelleyan death concept with the Indian idea of death; for, neither to Shelley nor to the Indian Religio-love poets death is an antagonistic phenomena of life. This similarity in the attitude of both the sides warrants that, we shall understand the right dimensions of the terms used by the poets - as it will take us to a clear philosophical and mystical understanding of the poets vis-

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a-vis Shelley and Indian Religio-love poets (Prem Yogins)/ Bhakti poets.

The term *Maya* occurs in the Rigveda in the sense of magical power 'such as the power of a deity or demon to change shape or create illusory effects by supernatural means.' Whereas in the Upanishads the word stands for false knowledge, or 'the negative principle', which ascribes to the manifestations of the manifold universe, an identity and distinctiveness apart from and independent of the true reality which is 'Brahma'.

"According to Advaila doctrine, there is but one reality - Brahma. The phenomenal world of nature and the identities of all beings have no real existence, but are illusive -the result of *'Maya'*. It is temporal, negative, a deceptive veil of creation, the obscuring force denature (c.f. Shankara) and the result of 'avidya' or ignorance."[15]

Thus, *'Maya'* is a concept raised to explain the phenomenal world and to relate it to the Ultimate Reality. It is assumed that what we perceive with the sense is only appearance; it is either a delusion or not the whole truth. The delusion presents us with false aims and like the deer in 'mriga-trishna', we merely chase mirages. Maya blinds our vision and causes ignorance from which stem all kinds of sufferings:

"In created beings maya causes a state of moha or (mohana) 'delusion', in which consciousness of the ultimate reality is lost, and bewildered men believe in the reality of the manifested world presented to their senses,

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it is a Cosmic delusion which draws a veil across man's perception, leading them to error and to infatuation with the world and the flesh, obscuring from the mind the vision of their true destiny. The veil of 'maya' is rent when it is realised that Brahma alone is real. He who has this knowledge attains 'moksha' or salvation."[16]

In some systems, Maya, like Holy Ghost in Christianity is a fundamental entity or the power of God by which this world is created and maintained. For the Indian Religio- love poets Maya is nearer to this concept rather (o the general theory of Maya found in the Indian Thought. As for Shelley, Kurtz says that his answer to this question, "What is Life?" in the poem 'Triumph of Life" is nothing but 'desire'. The phenomenal reality is the result of Desire. The world is 'sportive diversion (vilasa) or (leela) of Brahma. It is the expression of his whimsical urge to become many: "Ekoharp Bahushyami".

When one more entity, the individual self is added to Brahma and Maya, a triangular reality is pictured; and the perception of the same truth behind this triangular - reality is a mystical experience for the mystics and mystical-poets.

Asserting the unity of 'jiva' (individual soul) and brahma, Palatudas, a saint-poet observes that as there is ink in the written word and word in ink; gold in ornament and ornament in gold; pitcher in clay and clay in pitcher; in the same way there is Brahma in jiva and jiva in Brahma, (c.f. Palatudas ki Bani, pt. 3i, Sabda - 92)

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In several of Tagore's songs this idea is finely woven in colourful images:

'That I should make much of myself and turn it on all sides, thus casting coloured shadows on thy radiance - such is thy maya.

> Thou settest a barrier in thine own
> being and then callest thy severed self
> In myriad riotes, This thy self-separation has taken body in me.
> The poignant song is echoed through alt the sky in many-coloured tears and smiles, alarms and hopes; waves rise up arid sink again, dreams break and form. In me is thy own defeat of self.
> This screen that thou hast raised is painted with innumerable figures with brush of the night and the day. Behind it thy seat is woven in wonderous mysteries of curves, casting away all barren lines of straightness.
> (Song No. -71, p. 66)

In the above song, a similitude of 'painted veil' - a Shelleyan (like figure is used to denote the colorful transitory life - can be detected in 'screen painted with innumerable figures'.

The Radha-Krishna cult of love-poetry is accommodated within this broad philosophical outlook. As Ramswarath Chowdhury has explained: Brahma took the form of male and female for the sake of Leela, and Radha and Krishna are basically the two shapes of the same fundamental Reality, (c.f. Madhur Ras:Swaroop aur Vikas, pt.I & II), In a sonnet of 1818, Shelley compares the phenomenal world with a 'painted veil' which 'those who live/ Call life', hinting at the futility of attempting to find

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truth in it and refers to the mystical experience of lifting of the veil. The unreality and shadow-like quality of things is stated. The lifting of veil seems to have given the poet a glimpse of the Reality whose impact inspires love:

> "I know one who had lifted it - he sought,
> For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
> But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
> The world contains, the which he could approve.
> Through the unheeding many he did move,
> A splendout" among shadows, a bright blot
> Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
> For truth, and liked the Preacher found it not".
>
> (11. 7-14, p.-569)

In the *Witch of Atlas* the relation of phenomenal to ideal beauty is symbolized by , using the veil image:

> ..., she took her spindle
> And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
> Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
> The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she
> As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
> In the belated moon, wound skillfully;
> And with these threads a subtle veil she wove
> A shadow for the splendour of her love
>
> (Stn. XIH, 11. 145-52, p. 375)

Now the above study and analysis establishes one major truth: that both the Indian Religio-love (Bhakti/ Prem) poets and poet-philosophers and Shelley grant the unreal and illusory nature of worldly things, but the understanding of Shelley is from a Platonic standpoint. He conceives the Supreme Reality in terms of an ideal which has its shadows or imitations in this world. Life, as we know it, is itself the veil or rather a prism which breaks

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up the unity of the basic element (whatever it may be) into the plurality of forms:

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly; Life,
> like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments.
>
> (*Adonais.* Stn LI, 11. 460 -64, p. 443)

The perception of the veil and the unreality of the things lead Shelley to a new definition of death, True life, as conceived in Shelleyan terms, begins after death; death is the gate to a real life containing the genuine entities, not shadows and illusory things or illusions. Like all other things, death itself may be just a shadow:

> It is a modest creed, and yet
> Pleasant, if one considers it,
> To own that death itself must be,
> Like all the rest, a mockery
>
> (Sensitive Plant, II. 127 - 30)

Not only here but also in the Earth's Spirit's reply to Asia, the 'Death' and the 'veil' concepts get merged in a mystical way leaving probably no room for a rationalist to comprehend the mystical unity of the apparently different concepts:

> Death is the veil which those who live call life:
> They sleep, and it is lifted:
>
> (Prometheus Unbound, Act -in, Sc. III, 11. 113 -14)

Nevertheless, for Shelley, death is much more than mere shadow or mockery; it is an entrance to and means for achieving true life and to be sought as a release from the bondage of illusion. Kurtz has devoted a whole book to

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this thesis. The significance of death is symbolically suggested in The Cloud, Ode to the West Wind, as well as in To a Skylark:

> Waking or asleep,
> Thou of death must deem Things more true and deep
> Than we mortals dream,
> (To a Skylark, II. 81 -84)

and again in Prometheus Unbound, Earth Spirit remarks:

> To blow there are two worlds of life and death:
> One that which thou beholdest: but the other Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit The shadows of all forms that think and live
> Till death unite them and they part no
> (Ibid, Act -1, 11. 195-99)

B.P. Kurtz has in his own way established the trinity of Love, Death and Eternity while commenting on the famous but unfinished work of Shelley: viz. *Una Favota*, where Death standing before the love-lorn youth says:

> " ...'I dwell with love and Eternity, with whom the souls
> Whose love is everlasting must hold communion.'

So, the aesthetic trinity of Love, Death and Eternity is faithfully and mystically set up and worshiped."

In *Chandogya Upanishad*, chapter one, part fourth and fifth, and again chapter sixth, part eleven deals with the concept of death at length which can be put in a few words thus: When life giving energy (the soul) goes away from the human frame, then the forlorn body is declared as dead having achieved death. That is, the capacity of action, physical or spiritual, is stopped forever in respect to the very body. The editor of Upanishad Granthavali,

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himself a great Vedantist and a mystic, Swami Gambhirananda observed in this respect that, "Birth, life and death are but old superstitions. None was ever born, none will ever die; one changes one's position - that is all. This takes us to the extreme of the mystical unity of the individual soul and the Cosmic Soul breaking all the barriers of the possible experiences through our conscious, sub-conscious and supra-conscious mind. This means that according to Vedantists, Death too is Maya (illusion since, as understood in rationalistic way, it is due to our simplistic knowledge or ignorance of the Truth). When this body dissolves, the Vital forces of man go back to his mind and the mind becomes dissolved as it were into Prana, and that Prana enters into the soul of man, and the soul of man comes out, clothed, as it were, with what they call fine body, the mental body or spiritual body,...

Such is the step-by-step transformation, we know as death. But strangely enough, the Indian bhakti-poets have seldom bothered about this aspect in some such Vedantic or Platonic way. Their ways are natural to the understanding of common folk. They have no fear of death. They believe death to be a common factor in this mundane life. It is also, for them a facet of 'Maya', as life itself is another. And a lover being steeped in love (bhakti/prem) loves death as well as he loves life on this earth:

> Even so, in death the same unknown
> Will appear as ever known to me.
> And because I love this life, I know
> I shall love death as well.
> The child cries out when from the

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Right breast the mother takes it away,
In the next moment to find in the
Left one its consolation.
(Gitanjali, Song No. 95, Stz. Ill & JV)

And, such death is always aspired for by the poet:

O thou that last fulfillment of life, Death
my death, come and whisper to me!
(Ibid, Song No. 91,II. 1-2)

Thus both Shelley and Indian Bhakti/Prem poets have alluded to a mystical experience of immortality. Once the veil of death is pierced and true life is glimpsed, a mystical experience of immortality can be had. Referring to lines 13 - 76 of 'The Cloud' by Shelley, B.P. Kurtz remarks:

> "'I change, but I cannot die'", et-cetera," there is a reference to death, is the culmination of this lyric or what I should like to call Cosmic Gladness; were not such phrase long since spoiled by cheap usage on the part of superficial mystics. "[20]

In congruence to this, it will not be out of place to mention that the above words not only ascertain the mystic state of Cosmic Gladness enjoyed by the poet, but are also an assertion of the transient nature of life and the negation of the natural principle - death: and here Shelley the mystic -is nearer to Vedantists for whom 'birth, life and death' are but old superstitions',

Discussing Shelley's mystical experiences, one is reminded of Carl Grabo's analysis of *Adonais* where he very judiciously comments:

> "The union with One is seemingly some transcendent experience which is like human love, but more expan-

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> sive, more serene, less personal. So at last it must be if we are to accept, as we must, the evidence of the mystics. If not a universal experience, it is yet one sufficiently common that it cannot be denied as a fact. Shelley pretty certainly had himself experienced it and in *Adonais* as elsewhere also, he endeavours figuratively to express it. *Adonais* survives death as art individual and he is yet made a part of the plastic spirit of the universe, who is one; the seeming paradox is expressive of unity in multiplicity.[21]

'Brahimananda', the blissful state of a devotee, in Indian Schools of thought, is a mystical state of highest Bliss; it has been variously indicated as identification with God, or the Ultimate Element, or the Cosmic Power, or nearness to God, realization of Self, perception of the Supreme Truth etc. There are many means to attain this coveted state. Love as defined in Bhakti /Prem-yoga is one of them. Indeed this experience is similar to the feeling of well-being resulting from loving someone and is the highest development of such intense feeling. According to Ramanuja (1017 - 1137 A.D.), the great philosopher and propounder of the theory of Vishist-advaita or qualified monism, the best means of salvation is devotion, and the best yoga is Bhaki-yoga (Prem-yoga), since according to him, God in essence transcends in the quality of Love and Beauty.(c.f.)[22]

And again, Sandilya in his Sutras, defines 'parabhakti as 'anuraktir Ishvra - that is an affection fixed upon Lord. It is as a clinging of the heart which follows upon the knowledge of the greatness of God. It is very distinct from the knowledge (Jnan) of God but it is not the same

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as faith 'Sradha', or belief because the effect of bhakti/ prem (love directed towards God) is to make he bhaktas/ premies (devotees) strictly and steadily abide in God. It is just the opposite of 'dvesa', hatred. In the state called 'para-bhakti', the devotee perceives himself in everything and this gives him a kind of pleasure that cannot be described in words. He finds himself united with the source of eternal love and begins to 'drink' the love-elixir':

Kabir Hariras yun piya, baki rahi na thaki,
Paka kalas kumhar ka, bahuri charhi na chaki.

(Kabir Granthava, p. - 17)

In this way, with a solidly built, though by no means unquestioned tradition of philosophical thought behind them, the Prem-yogins or Indian Bhakti poets or poet-philosophers, unlike Shelley, do not have to go in search of a fit object of their devotion. It is closer to them from the very beginning as to who deserves their devotion/love (bhakti). Therefore, they directed their emotion of love to God, either Sakar (on an object) or Nirakar (on an unseen quality). When his emotions have reached a sublime height, the devotee /poet points to his experience in conjugal symbolism; And for him each object of ordinary life receives a novel meaning: In 'Saguna-cult' (Sakar Sadbana), Gopi's reply to Udhava, a Nirakari devotee, is remarkable: It shows their Love-intoxicated state; they have no other image except Lord Krishna in their conscious mind:

Syama (the blue bodied Krsna) is our body,
Syama is our mind, Syama is our wealth;
O Uddhava, all the twenty-four hours we

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are occupied with Syama
Syama is in our heart, Syama is the breath
of our life, without Syama
We can have no satisfaction.
The name Syama is our only support,
Like the blind man's staff;
Syama is our refuge, Syama is our thought,
Syama is the Lord of our life.
Our happiness lies in Syama, who is the
bestower of all happiness and the
store-house of all beauty.
Uddhava, you are, indeed, mad that you
come running with the Gospel of Yoga.
Where shall we keep your knowledge
of 'Yoga', when every pore
of our body is filled with Syama.'
(C.L.Goswami, Trans. Surdas ke Pad, p. 34)

Finally, we must discuss the concept of the highest being in Bhakti-yoga/Prem yoga and Shelley. We must begin by admitting the fact that in spite of a great deal of discussion by critics, we are, probably, still not in a position to say that Shelley approached the problem with consistency and at times without ambiguity. Broadly speaking, Shelley believes in a 'Universal Spirit' whose apprehension is quite mystical: On the one hand it is a definite Being and on the other, it is the Universe. Commenting on the nature of the Ultimate Being in Shelley, A.M.D. Houghes has observed:

> So much of it as we may experience imparts pleasure in the highest degree, and we may use that word, if we will, of the Influence itself: Nature, or God, or Love or Pleasure.

According to this interpretation, Shelley identifies

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the Being now by one attribute, now by another. Shelley has called it the Great Mother, the Spirit of Nature, the Spirit of Love, World Soul, Spirit of the Universe, and also, Intellectual Beauty:

> Earth, ocean, air beloved brotherhood !
> If our great Mother has imbued my soul
> With aught of natural piety to feel Your love, and
> recompense the boon with mine;
>
> (Alastor, II 1-4)

> Spirit of Nature' ! thou Life of interminable mullitudes;
> Soul of those mighty spheres Whose change less paths
> through Heaven's deep silence lip;
>
> (Queen Mab, III, II. 226 - 29)

> Soul of the Univers Eternal spring Of life and death, of
> happiness and woe, Of all that chequers the phantasmal
> scene,
>
> (Ibid. VI, (I, 190 - 92)

It appears quite pertinent in this connection to mention that R.H. Gogle found the true perspectives of imagery in the meaning of the apparent abstractness in Shelley's poetry. He says: "It is not too daring, I think, to assert that this finite-infinite relationship is the focal point of Shelley is imagery. *(Shelley is intellectually a Monist, emotionally and instinctively a Dualist).* (Italics minej He is always attempting to reconcile these two poles of his nature and never quite succeeding. He is continually putting together Time and Eternity, Relative and Absolute, Fluctuating and Fixed, Seen and Unseen, to determine how they will relate and interact."[25]

All such ideas are gathered in *Adonais* which re-

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veals poet's culminating mystical experience and firm understanding regarding the Ultimate Reality:

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe

> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me,, Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.
>
> (Stn. LIV.)

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Now, considering this question in the Platonic framework Prof. A. Sen has noted: "With the gradual development of his mental powers Shelley came to see that perfect intelligence results in perfect love: The spirit of Intellectual Beauty is also the spirit of Love. It is the essence of all things - this all absorbing, ever-lasting, sole-existing substance."[26] In this vein of study, Herbert Read too attempted to give a still broader and deeper view of the mater: "A fire, a white radiance, a transfused glory, a plastic stress, the splendour of the firmament of time - Shelley uses many such phrases to describe the immanent Spirit of Universe, the Ultimate Reality. They are concepts of the imagination, remote from revealed religion, but implying an endless resonance of love, beauty and delight."[27]

But it is just not correct to conceive the Ultimate

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Reality merely as an imaginative entity. Shelley appears to be profoundly aware of its mystical touch, "... the Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite perception of its influence, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay. These meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion."[28]

Therefore, it can well be maintained that Shelley's conception of the Ultimate Reality, no doubt, is monistic: "The purely monistic concept which is common to the Eastern and Western philosophy supplies the theme as Shelley's glowing poetry, and it is summed up in stanza LII of Adonais."[29]

In the Indian Bhakti-cult or Prem-yoga there is no search for an Ultimate Reality; it is already taken for granted. The task of the bhakt or prem-yogin or a religio-love poet is to describe the entity. As has been already made clear, all Indian bhakti poetry is directed towards God. God is worshiped in two aspects: Sakar and Nirakar.

The Sakar mode of bhakti/prem or worship was perhaps conceived to answer the particular need of bhakta-yoga/premyoga, and at the basis of it lies the philosophy of love, as Brihadaranyak Upanishad reveals; In order to promote the spiritual and physical devotion in this world, God has been attributed with some qualities, shapes and colours; otherwise, God is beyond all lhese.[36] So, side by side, both aspects of God - one that is within the easy reach of mortals through their physical

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means , and the other, God as Infinite are advocated: that is, attributes of God are helpful in getting the devotee realize the Reality of God. However, the love of God itself inspires and attracts the hearts of His creation towards Himself. Therefore, love automatically achieves the state of a sovereign means to the realization of God:

> Bhakta vatsalya swameva sarvebhyo mokshyavigneebhyo bhaktinishthan servan paripalayti, sarvabhisthan prajachchati, mokshan dapayati.
>
> (Tripadatbibhuti Upanishad, Intro.)

In this way, the philosophy of devotion (Love) has been given both the Sakar and Nirakar, equal status, and has had thus equally valued them, as the final object of spiritual pursuit.

Now to sum up, the above comparative study of Shelley and Indian Bhakti-poets has brought into light the facts, that in both the ultimate realization of Truth is apprehended through visionary and mystical process which defies literal transcription for the poets. Both concluded to call this life - the result of desire or Maya. To put an end to the chain of birth and death, it is essential to win over the factor, Desire; and for it, they advocate the practice of love - Bhakti-yoga/Prem-yoga.This Cosmic Love when glimpsed through vision or mystical state as experienced by both, is the Cosmic Effluence, or 'Cosmic Gladness' or state of Brahmananda' or 'Turiya Avastha. This state dispels the fear of death from the heart of the lover

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or devotee. Death, for both becomes a gate-way towards salvation. Both took Life and Death as two ends of a natural principle on this earth. For both, the real life begins after death, for, this mortal life is unreal, a mere effect of desire - the result of Maya, which Shelley calls 'painted veil'- To drop this 'painted veil', of necessity, there must be the lifting up of the 'veil' - the ignorance: and now Death is seen as a gate-way to the Real Life. It is here that the ideals and prototypes are merged and shingled into one Ideal Love or God - the Ultimate Truth. The culminating remark can thus be that Shelley achieves this Ultimate Truth through spiritualistic love like those of Sufi poets; where as, the Indian bakhti-poets through their theistic love

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1& 2, 2010, pp. 68-82

Shikoh Mohsin Mirza

Fabula and Suzet: The Concepts and Their Problematics

Fabula and Suzet are universally accepted as the more enduring concepts bequeathed to narratology by Russian Formalism. The Russian Formalist Viktor Shklovsky initially made a distinction between the two related concepts in his famous essay, 'Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary'. Yuri Tynyanov and Boris Tomashevsky, both Russian Formalists, are also credited with having emphasized the distinction between two levels of narrative structure, and their importance for the interpretation and understanding of narratives.

In 'Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*: Stylistic Commentary', Shklovsky writes:

> The idea of plot [suzet] is too often confused with the description of events, with what I propose provisionally to call the story (fabula). The story is, in fact, only material for plot formulation. (Shklovsky 1,p. 25)

The plot, according to him, provides form and shape to the 'material', which he calls 'story'. It is not difficult to see the logical steps that made the Russian Formalists conceptualize the twin concepts of fabula and suzet. The two concepts certainly help to explain what happens when we read narratives.

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Consider a story that is recounted in reverse order, or told in 'flashback'. If we designate the sequence of events in discrete terms, then we can show the chain of events in a narrative recounted in 'flashback', as 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1. Naturally, once the flashbacked narrative has been read, the natural sequence of occurrence of events falls in place. This would now be 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9. There are many permutations and combinations possible. The same story can be told as 698734521 (in medias res) or 345987621 (again in medias res), and so on and so forth. However, here one thing is obvious. We have two levels of narrative the level of occurrence of events and the level of narration of events. The former is termed as fabula, while the latter as suzet. The foregoing makes it obvious that the act of telling the story is a resilient process involving either recounting the events as they would actually occur or, as happens in mystery novels, revealing the early events in the suzet only towards the end.

Fabula and suzet are therefore two very real aspects of narrative. A narrative is made up of events occurring to 'characters'. The events are, however, recounted selectively. The reader is provided with the suzet and he reconstructs the fabula from the dues and events in the suzet.

One should emphasize that fabula and suzet do not exist independent of each other. The concepts of fabula and suzet and the relationship between them is, however, paradoxical. Theoretically, fabula exists before the suzet, and from the author's point of view suzet is a recounting of the events occurring in the fabula. The author rearranges

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the events, ignores some events while highlighting others. In this process, the author necessarily breaks the 'continuum of events' into units of events, which are rearranged in deference to the shape-giving plot of the narrative text. Thus the suzet is constructed out of an imagined sequence of events. On this view, the fabula logically and conceptually exists before the suzet- either in reality (history, historical narrative, biographical fiction.) or in imagined reality (narratives, fictions, epics). In both the cases, however, fabula is a chronological sequence of events as they would actually occur in any world where events are possible. The author might map out the fabula beforehand in his notes and paraphrases, or imagine it as he writes. The fact remains that a referencing to an abstract chronology of events, or fabula, continually occurs. This is evidenced by the fact that no 'flashback' and 'in medias res' narrative can happen unless at least some semblance of such a fabula pre-exists.

If, however, the fabula is already given, or fixed, the construction of suzet involves many interesting and complex transformative steps. This happens in the case of historical and, now burgeoning, biographical fiction. In such cases, the chronology of events, or major events, is pre-given in the public domain, and the author constructs, or pretends to construct, the suzet from this 'raw material', The same is true of history and Roman plays of Shakespeare, based on pre-existing chronicles of English monarchs and Plutarch's lives of Roman historical figures. Among the Greeks also the usual practice was to write

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plays on well-known cultural myths. In all such cases, the chronology of events is well known to the cultural community, yet the suzet -historical and biographical novels and plays- is considered the unique creation of a particular writer. The explanation is obvious. Suzet transforms the cultural fabula into a distinct artifact.

The transformation involves procedures that may be formulaic and stylised, dictated by generic conventions. Alternatively, they can be highly ingenuous and original, defying all the conventions of the genre. The suzet can, in either case, articulate a historical sense, angst, Zeitgeist and personal tragedy of the historical and mythical figures. The theme can equally be contemporary, personal, and universal. This becomes possible due to the unique arragement of events in the suzet.

The essential point that emerges is that suzet performs a 'meaning transforming act' on a sequence of events apparently existing in a neutral, meaningless world.

In Russian Formalists' conception, the fabula is characterised as a continuum of infinite events that are essentially indivisible. Creation of suzet, however, entails three procedures. First, the continuum of events has to be divided arbitrarily into discrete units (events). During this procedure, the chronological order of events is established. Then the causality among the events is emphasized. Certainly, the three procedures may occur simultaneously, may have no fixed order. We can call them respectively- unitization (eventing), chronologization, and cause-effect relationization. When an author plans out a novel, he de-

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termines the events and the cause-effect relationship among them. In the chronology of events in the fabula, an author's role is limited, as it is dependent on the 'reality model' selected by him. However, the arrangement of events in the suzet and the articulation of their cause-effect relationship is the author's discretion. In fact, these have far reaching implications. Take the example of Kafka's short story, 'Metamorphosis'. The short story's chronology of events and eventing (unitization) are 'realistic (real world model). Yet the transformation of Gregor Samsa into a 'bug', is entirely unrealistic. Nothing like that ever happens in the real world. The 'causality of transformation' remains unexplained in the world of fabula. The effects of the story derive from this unexplained cause. In the fictional world of suzet, once the 'reality model' has been subverted, causality is explained either in mythical terms, or surrealistic, or magic realist terms. All the subsequent interpretations emerge due to subversion of cause-effect relationship. The symbolic, metaphorical, and mythical transpositions all occur in the suzet. However, this happens only in contrast to the fabula. One can therefore surmise, that the suzet always develops in relationship to Tabula, and is played off it.

A very interesting aspect of the arbitrary division of events in the fabula is that the selection of events does not exhaust the number of events in the fabula. The events in the fabula remain unlimited and can be invoked at will. In the famous example of Sterne's novel *Tristram Shandy*, this is exploited for ludicrous as well as philosophical ef-

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fects. The awareness of this gap is important and is necessary for many effects.

One may point out that the breaking up of the continuum of fabula into discrete units is entirely arbitrary. However, in the case of chronology of events there is absolutely no arbitrariness involved. The order of events in the fabula is natural, which means it would occur in the order in which they happen in the real world. The distortions of the suzet do not change the order, in fact they tend to emphasize it.

The most problematic and complex aspect pertains to the cause-effect relationship between events. Does causality belong to fabula or does suzet create it? Certainly the chronological sequence of events implies cause-effect relationship. It also invokes a model of reality based on human world in realistic fiction, and on futurist world derived from hypothetical models in science fiction. But suzet has the capacity to change causality, distort it, make it ambiguous, or even to subvert it for various effects, as happens in postmodernist fiction. This is where an awareness of the dialectics between the two is crucial for the interpretation of fiction. In the case of fiction, narrator's voice shapes the suzet, and invokes the fabula in the background. The voice - third person or first person- constructs a suzet in the process of telling . In the case of unreliable narrator the distortions of the suzet can only be discovered after recuperation of the fabula. Interestingly, the fabula is recovered inspite of the distortions. Indeed, the author puts in clues to enable the reader to discover the distortions,

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Thus the distortions can be read as distortions only against a fabula without distortions. The voice is thus an important aspect of the suzet.

In contrast, the fabula is assumed to be a neutral domain, though this is possible only theoretically, for once one begins to articulate the events the shaping voice takes over and the neutrality is affected.

From the reader's perspective, one certainly recovers a skeletal fabula, again an abstraction, also known as 'paraphrase'. One should emphasize that the chronological order of events in the fabula always occurs in natural order. The suzet might or might not use the same order. It can either use it in that order or distort the chronological order according to its own thematic exigencies. Its function thus essentially remains to give shape to an amorphous 'raw material', and thus acts like Aristotle's mythos.

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One can safely assume that Aristotle's mythos corresponds to Russian Formalists' suzet. In the Poetics, mythos is defined as 'an arrangement of incidents', and it must have a logical structure, a unity and a coherence. In chapter 8, Aristotle states the significance of unity and coherence for mythos in the following terms:

(T)he mythos, as an imitation of action, must represent one action, a complete whole, with its several incidents so closely connected that the transposition or withdrawal of any one of them will disjoin and dislocate the whole. (Bywater,51a 31-34).

If we accept the characteristics of Aristotelian mythos as applicable to suzet, it has far reaching conse-

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quences. The construction of suzet will now depend on a 'logical structure' derived from the properties of unity, coherence, and relevance. This helps remove the problem of superfluous events interwoven around a particular character. Aristotle declares in clear terms that the unity of mythos does not consist, as some suppose, in its having one man as its subject. An infinity of things befall that one man, some of which it is impossible to reduce to unity; and in like manner there are many actions of one man which cannot be made to form one action. (Bywater, 51a 6-9). In the context of postmodernist fiction, an interesting paradox can be discovered. In many novels, the suzet appears to be incoherent, full of contradictions and gaps, and deliberately mystifying. Despite that a 'logic of incoherence', makes it coherent since mythos cannot exist without a 'logical structure'. Suzet then contrasts with the natural order of fabula in a constructive and meaningful manner.

The suzet arranges the 'sequence of events' either in the same order or differently depending on the thematic requirements of the author. It is at this juncture that the possibilities of story telling multiply. The skeletal framework of the fabula, the natural arrangement I 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9, can be disrupted and re-arranged, in any order as mentioned earlier. But there are more possibilities. The different events can be iterated or elided. The repetition of events can introduce many themes like fixation and obssession. The elision, an important device in Modernism and Postmodernism, creates supense, mystery or may be just

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a 'red herring'. The point is that the abstract fabula can be utilized by the author to create unlimited numbers of , suzet. Fabulas with similar events and story lines can be transformed according to a writer's particular thematic considertions. This explains the originality of writers who borrow myths, legends, and stories from other writers, yet succeed in writing original works.

There are extreme possibilities. One tabula may generate many suzets, or a suzet may project many fabulas. An interesting illustrative example of the first case is French novelist Raymond Queneau's Exercises de Style. The book presents ninety-nine versions of one story (fabula). Two versions of the story run as follows:

Litotes

Some of us were travelling together. A young man, who didn't look very intelligent, spoke to the man next to him for a few moments, then he went and sat down. Two hours later I met him again; he was with a friend and was talking about clothes, (p.23)

Metaphorically

In the centre of the day, tossed among the shoal of travelling sardines in a coleopter with a big white carapace, a chicken with a long, featherless neck suddenly harangued one, a peace-abiding one, of their number, and its parlance, moist with protest, was unfolded upon the airs. Then, attracted by a void, the fledgling precipitated itself thereunto.

In a bleak, urban desert, I saw it again that self-same day, drinking the cup of humiliation offered by a

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lowly button, (p.24). The two suzets are the transformed versions of the supposedly neutral 'sequence of events' presented by Quinoa as follows: Notation. In the S bus, in the rush hour. A chap of about 26, felt hat with a cord instead of a ribbon, neck too long, as if someone's been having a tug-of-war with it. People getting off. The chap in question gets annoyed with one of the men standing next to him. He accuses him of jostling him every time anyone goes past: A snivelling tone which is meant to be aggressive. When he sees a vacant seat he throws himself on to it. Two hours later, I meet him in the Cour de Rome, in front of the Gare Saint-Lazare. He's with a friend who's saying: "You ought to get an extra button put on your overcoat." He shows him where (at the lapel) and why. (p. 19)

The 'sequence of events' in the three versions is more or less the same. The shifts of emphasis, however, bring about transformations that have to do with suzetization. The flippant opacity of the metaphorical language contrasts with the understated first version, endowed with quaint seriousness. Even though the third version, titled 'Notation, is a suzet, since expressed in the medium, i.e., language, an abstract, neutral combination would come close to it. It is amply clear that many suzets can be created based on a single fabula. In the case of a more complex fabula, the suzets can be innumerable, and thematically complicated, dense and rich. An interesting example is Lawrence Durrell's novel, *Alexandria Quartet.* It presents the same 'combinatiion of events' from four perspectives. Based on Einstein's concept of four dimen-

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sioned universe, each book of the tetralogy is a different suzet. Though a fabula, a particular 'sequence of events', is sensed, events acquire a different significance as a consequence of a dialectical relationship of each different suzet with the fabula. In Alain Robbe-Grillet's novel, *La Jalousie*, ambiguities in the suzet affect the kind of fabula to be recovered. The French title stands for 'jealousy' as well as for 'the jalousie window'.

The creative situation is also ambiguous. The narrator can be taken to be third person limited omniscient', or 'first person homodiegetic'. In the latter case, the narrative is supposedly recounted by the husband of the protagonist The wife seems interested in the neighbour of their banana plantation. The jealousy of the husband becomes obvious through many signs in the suzet, especially the mark of the squashed centipede on the wall, whose recurrence becomes symbolic of transgressed sexual propriety. However, one has to account also for the distortions caused by jealousy of the husband. In case, the narrator is supposed to be 'third person', the minute details of the narrative have to be interpreted differently. The repetitions and gaps become real and meaningful only in contrast to the 'combination of events' in the fabula. Thus, due to its repetitive description, the centipede mark becomes a sign of the husband's obsessions, despite the fact that it can occur only once in the fabula.

In the case of of narration by 'unreliable narrators', the reliable 'sequence of events', i.e., fabula, has to be necessarily recovered to understand the full import of the

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narrative in the conceptualization of fabula by the reader, however, no distinction is made between the fabula visualised by the author prior to the creation of the suzet, and the one recuperated by the reader. The assumption seems to be that the two are exactly the same. The possibility however remains that the readers' fabula is somewhat different from the author's or even one reader's from that of the other.

The question then arises whether it is necessary to make a move from suzet to fabula. The procedure is necessary for an understanding of a narrative. It happens unconsciously and consistently during the reading of a text.

To sum up, this procedure is necessary

i) to put the events in chronological order, especially the arrangement of events that are flashbacked or recounted in medias res,

ii) to understand the cause-effect relationships between events, and in most importantly, to interpret the significance of repeated or elided events, gaps, red herrings, misrepresentations, and distortions.

The last is the most important aspect. There is a dialectical relationship between the fabula and the suzet. In the reading process, the fabula emerges from the suzet, and when the two are played out against each other, the suzet acquires new meanings and significance. To illustrate how the dialectical relationship between fabula and suzet leads to various effects- both thematic and stylistic- one need only consider the following famous passage from Laurence Sterne's *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy,*

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Gentleman describing the fall of Shandy's father:

The palm of his right hand, as he fell upon the bed, receiving his forehead, and covering the greatest part of both his eyes, gently sunk down with his head (his elbow giving way backwards) till his nose touch'd the quilt; - his left arm hung insensible over the side of the bed, his knuckles reclining upon the handle of the chamber pot, which peep'd out beyond the valance, - his right left (his left being drawn up towards his body) hung half over the side of the bed, the edge of it pressing upon his shin-bone. (Shklovsky, p. 194) The passage is specially mentioned by Shklovsky in his essay, The Parody Novel: Sterne's *Tristram Shandy'*, as an example of defamiliarisation (foregrounding). In the fabula of the novel, based on the real life model, it would take only a split second For Shandy's father to fall and lie sprawling on the bed. An observer would also take in the whole scene within a few seconds. However, Sterne describes the fall in the suzet with excruciating precision, thereby slowing down the time. The fabula-time and the suzet-time are contrasted, rendering the scene foregrounded and hilarious. Not content with that, the author slices the scene into miniscule images, splitting it into extreme close tips, contrasting the normally observed scene of the fabula with the exuberance of descriptions in the suzet. The particular effects are achieved as the two play against each other.

Finally, it should be reiterated that fabula is conceptualised as a 'continuum of events', and whatever the 'sequence of events' in the suzet, there is an infinitude

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of events that is impossible to recount ;.is has been amply illustrated by Sterne in *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman.* However, this fact can be exploited by an author, for structural as well as thematic effects. There are also other resources at the authors' disposal, like temporality, causality, and perspective, that render the dialectical relationship between fabula and suzet as an essentially creative technique for the narrative. A comprehensive and richer interpretation of a narrative text is only possible when the relationship of these dimensions with the coherence -making force behind the suzet, namely, the narrator is fully understood.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1& 2, 2010, pp. 83-98

Mohammad Asim Siddiqui

Making Sense of His In-betweenness: Hanif Kureishi's Appropriation of his Family's Narratives

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Writers sometimes complain of problems in choosing their subject matter. That a subject should be original and unexplored is every writer's concern. Hanif Kureishi, who has written quite a bit about his writing process and has conducted workshops on writing for budding writers, was troubled about choosing a new and unexplored subject for his fiction. He mentions in *My Ears at His Heart: Reading My Father* (2004) how as a teenager starting his literary career he would often think about subjects which have not been explored by other writers. Aware of the fact that writers and filmmakers of his generation took serious interest in 'myriad tensions of life under Thatcher'...(and) 'challenge of a Conservatism that had , at last, admitted to being an ideology', Hanif Kureishi wanted to chart out a different territory.[1] His choice of depicting life in suburbs in *The Buddha of Suburbia* was one of his attempts in this direction. He also realized that most writers did not discuss the issue of drug use though there has been a widespread use of various kinds of drugs by young people since the mid1960s. He was quick to see that 'There hasn't been much fiction about this subject and the life that goes with it'.[2] This discovery gave him an oppor-

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tunity to present the issue of drug use in many of his stories and novels.

In his search for a new subject he also hit upon the idea of talking about his father in his stories. The figure of a father, his father in most of the cases, recurs in his stories and novels. Probably no other writer has talked so much about his father in his books. His book *Dreaming and Scheming* was the first book of non-fiction in which he wrote about his father. But *My Ears at His Heart: Reading My Father* is distinctive in its treatment of his father's life and literary career in great detail.

Hanif Kureishi is not very sure about the form of this book. Is it fiction or non-fiction? By all accounts it is non-fiction in that it talks at length about his interests, his family and his experience of life in Britain particularly in the context of his identity, racial,British,multicultural or postcolonial.In one sense this book is considered by him a piece of fiction because of his view that opinions about one's parents and other family members are hardly very authentic as they are marked by a fair degree of subjectivity. But then no piece of writing is free from the element of subjectivity. All through this work he is presenting three narratives, his father's, his uncle Omar's and his own. It is his own narrative, subsuming the other two, which resists easy and neat categorization. It seeks to trace roots of Kureishi's family, its distinctive qualities and its characteristics in relation to British values. Where does Hanif Kureishi stand in relation to multicultural Britain and the supposedly undemocratic Pakistan as also the pre-parti-

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tion India is the concern of the writer in this book. It also appears that all through this book Kureishi is explaining something either to a brash West or to the difficult East. The failure of both the East and the West to understand each other is very much Hanif Kureishi's problem. He himself is torn between two different poles of his self. He derives pride from the fact that his family has had good education and a secular and liberal orientation, something which would be considered valuable in the West. He is also proud of the fact that his family has had a distinctive irreverent and gossipy tone in presenting its narrative. Obviously a gossipy and irreverent tone is very much the distinctive feature of Hanif Kureishi's writing. It strengthens the link between Omar's and his own books.

In the very first chapter of this book, Kureishi wonders about the form this book will acquire. He plans to write a book which will try to throw some light on his readings since childhood. He believes that by retrieving the context and circumstances of his reading of various authors he will be able to capture his younger self. In a way the discovery of contexts will give him material to write about his childhood, adolescence and his early adulthood. He also finds it very useful for his writing purposes that his many diaries and notebooks contain a record of his impressions about some authors which he read in his childhood and adolescence. The fortuitous discovery of his father's unpublished novel titled *An Indian Adolescence* lends a different prospective to his book. A few chapters later Kureishi also has a chance access to some autobio-

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graphical writings of his uncle Omar.It is difficult to accept Kureishi's narration of the chance discovery of these 'sources' for this book.It appears not very different from Nathaniel Hawthorne's description of his 'discovery' of the scarlet letter and some half a dozen pages containing the account of the circumstances in which one Hester Prynne was made to wear that letter in the seventeenth century Boston. In effect *My Ear at His Heart* acquires what Kureishi calls a free form, not very different from a collage. How he came to write this book is itself the subject of this book. It is very banal to say that writing is a process of discovery but it certainly explains the free form of this book. Kureishi discovers many subjects on the way.

Kureishi has been a great admirer of Chekhov. He has even written a story titled "Lately" (included in *Love in a Blue Time*) modeled on Chekhov's famous story "The Duel". In *My Ears at His Heart* he comments that his book will offer opinions on Chekhov. However, it will not be a piece of literary criticism but will rather take the form of a journal. True to his declaration early in this book Kureishi offers his impression about the work of Chekhov. However, one cannot make a neat distinction between recording one's impressions about an author and writing and practicing literary criticism. To a contemporary reader Matthew Arnold's famous essay on John Keats appears nothing but a collection of his strong opinions on the young poet. In fact, much of structuralist criticism in its obsession to find a grammar of literature considered the criticism of earlier periods a kind of inane gossip. 'It is less

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easy after Greimas and Genette to hear the cut and thrust of the rapiers in line three, or feel that you know just what it feels like to be a scarecrow after reading "The Hollow Man" '.[3] Kureishi's remarks on Chekhov's theory of fiction also reveal Chekhov's influence on Kureishi's own theory of fiction. Like Chekhov Kureishi can also develop a narrative from a very ordinary situation. If Chekhov's stories are what Kureishi calls 'free form' and which find the meaning and significance 'in anything, in the everyday, rather than in the more notably dramatic',[4] then Kureishi's own stories are very much like Chekhov's and this book very much finds significance in the everyday event. Kureishi also finds Chekhov's characters unhappy. It can be recalled that almost all of Kureishi's characters are unhappy and depressed. And it is not only Chekhov on whose works Kureishi offers opinions in this book. He also discusses Freud, Philip Roth, V, S, Naipaul, Dostoevsky and Joyce. Thus Philip Roth's opinion that there is too much reality around us and 'whatever was happening in America was irrelevant compared to his personal disarray' (211) inspires Kureishi and seems to offer an insight into Kureishi's own stories and novels. For Kureishi also his doubts, his moods, and his own chaos is far more important than anything else. Philip Roth's book *Portnoy's Complaint* inspired some of Kureishi's friends to practice some sexual positions. This fact was of immense interest for Kureishi . Freud's opinion that writing is therapeutic also impresses Kureishi. As for V.S. Naipaul Kureishi himself met him and found his opinions very in-

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teresting. It can be said that Kureishi offers opinions on literature which cannot be distinguished from literary criticism though of a very impressionistic nature. Literature is often seen in the image of criticism. By that token Kureishi's opinions on the works of some writers and his making sense of his father's and his uncle's books is a piece of a literary criticism.

In the postcolonial theory there is a lot of interest in both postcolonial reading and postcolonial writing . Kureishi's book is both an example of postcolonial reading and postcolonial writing. His father had written an autobiographical novel. In that novel he talked about his years in Pune and Bombay. His father mentions his sense of dislocation when his family had moved from Pune to Bombay. His story is set against the background of the imminent partition of the subcontinent. Kureishi's reading of it in a patronizing tone is an example of an English writer reading literature by a native. All through this book Kureishi discusses his father's book in a very condescending tone. He is aware that he is acting as an editor and a critic in reading his father. However, it can be argued that Kureishi is acting only as a critic and editor but not as a literary agent for his father. Books worse than his father's are published routinely, thanks to the proliferation of literary agents in our times.

Ironically this can be considered a replication of a colonial trope in the act of reading. The patronizing tone of Kureishi is suggested by his finding many flaws in his father's book. Thus the change in the narrative voice from

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personal narrative to impersonal one, the loose structure and inauthentic characters are flaws discovered by Hanif Kureishi in his father's book. Kureishi is also quiet convinced that his father's writing was not published because it was not worth getting published. It is too obvious that Hanif Kureishi is a bit unsympathetic to his father's work. At such places it is not literary criticism but rather a very judgmental reading of his father's work akin to a colonizer controlling his subjects. He breaks one important convention of reading literature which stipulates sympathy as the pre-requisite of reading. At such places he is one with many Orientalists reading 'native' literature. It may be recalled that there has been a tradition of Westerners' condescending attitude towards the literature by the colonials. Macaulay's infamous remark on the Oriental knowledge is too well known to be quoted here.The whole tradition of English translations of Oriental texts reveals a history of West's domination of the East. 'The Orient was "translated" and made available for self-definition not only to the Europeans, but also to the Orientals themselves.'[5] The textual domination has been an aspect of political domination. Reading from a superior position acquires the shape of colonial appropriation when Kureishi writes his book based on his father's book. The pain, suffering, toil and sweat of his father in writing his book is important only for providing literary material for Hanif Kureishi's own book. Like Chekhov any situation is good enough for Kureishi to develop his own stories and his father's book offers him many such situations. And like Philip Roth

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Kureishi finds the element of the personal too valuable to be missed in his father's book.

However, Hanif Kureishi cannot wish away his Asian connection. Much as he tries to recreate life in contemporary Britain with English characters his in-between position also shapes his writing. Almost all 'non-English' writers write on issues relating to diaspora identity realizing it through their roots. The concern with roots is also a concern for routes that their quest must take account of. As John McLeod says that 'discourses of nationalism, ethnicity or 'race'... are models of belonging which attempt to root the individual within a clearly-defined and homogenized group. But these models or 'narratives' of belonging no longer seem suited to a world where the experience and legacy of migration are altering the ways in which individuals think of their relation to place, and how they might 'lay claim' to lands that are difficult to think in terms of 'home' or 'belonging'. Instead new models of identity are emerging which depend upon reconsidering the perilous 'in-between, position of someone like Kureishi as a site of excitement, new possibilities, and even privilege.'[6] His father's book has enough in it to make Kureishi embark on a journey in search of his roots. Kureishi can take pride in the fact that his family has had education for many generations. He also feels proud of the fact that literature has always been discussed in a routine manner in his family. His father and uncle were always very good at cricket, a colonial sport. The hidden pride that Kureishi derives from his family history takes the form of a postcolonial

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moment in this book. Kureishi can show off his roots. And while his English mother's family was into the business of grocery, his father's side can boast of producing books. The pride in his family history offers a postcolonial challenge to the view that natives lagged education and hence enlightenment.

Nowhere is this pride more apparent than in Kureishi's reading of his uncle's writings particularly his recounting of his uncle Omar's career as a writer and cricket administrator. Omar had written three autobiographical works titled *Once upon a Time, As Time Goes by* and *Home to Pakistan.* In addition to these works he had also written a book titled *Out to Lunch,* a collection of his essays. Kureishi is less patronizing in commenting on Omar's books. Omar talks about partition, and his own state of indecision about migrating to Pakistan. It can be said that Kureishi's re-reading of his father is slightly unfair because his father was less successful than Omar. Hanif Kureishi presents a very positive image of Omar probably because of the fact that Omar was far more successful than his father. A celebrity in his country, he was friends with Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto. Omar's success presents Kureishi family in a very positive light. Kureishi mentions another uncle of his who was very fond of reading and who had introduced Hanif Kureishi to Sigmund Freud when not many people knew Freud. Kureishi is predictably filled with pride to narrate his uncle's reading of a difficult thinker like Freud.

Obviously *My Ear at His Heart* is also a narrative of Kurieshi family developed round the discussion of litera-

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ture and cricket. It is not only literature but cricket also which is part of Kureishi's history. His uncle was associated with Pakistan Cricket in the capacity of a commentator and also a manager. He toured with the Pakistan national cricket team wherever it went. His father was also a good player before he decided to pursue a career in literature. Kureishi's book appears to be by someone who has difficulty of belonging. All through his life Kureishi has resisted being typecast as a post-colonial writer. Yet he cannot wish away his pedigree. Kureishi also feels very uncomfortable with religion. He is very eager to show to others that religion has absolutely no significance in his life. He is quiet happy about the fact that his family has been a peculiar family all through in which religion has not played any significant role. He narrates the life history of Omar and Colonel Murad, his grandfather, touching upon many practices like partying, drinking and merry making which go against the spirit of Islam. However he is quiet puzzled by Omar's vision for Pakistan articulated in his third volume of his autobiography. He quotes Omar to the effect, 'I wanted Islam to be the guiding star, its moral direction...it social philosophy, its dynamic message of the dignity and the equality of all(112).' Hanif Kureishi is quite uncomfortable about the fact that a liberal and literary man like Omar pins 'social hope and justice in a religion' which for him is a "betrayal of our family values(112).' This reliance on Islam Hanif Kureishi considers a skeleton in his family's cupboard. It can be recalled that in many of his writings Kureishi takes a stance against orthodox Islam.

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This is the subject of *the Black Album* and his famous story 'My Son the Fanatic'. In as much as he derives pride from his family's love of literature he would not share Omar's optimism about religion. It appears that a Western writer Kureishi is being unnecessarily touchy about some of the opinions expressed by Omar almost in passing. The judgment on Omar appears harsh as it relies on one single passage from a person who lived his life in a liberal and secular manner. Probably it is Kureishi's 'more faithful than the King' attitude which finds one passage from Omar too important to pass judgment on him.' It appears that Kureishi is in a hurry to sever his links with Islam. He may write a book about his roots and can take pride in it but as a Western writer any positive discussion of religion embarrasses him.

Kureishi appears too much of an Orientalist in many other sections of the book. Though he can find faults with the education system in the West when he analyses his own education, a few pages later in the book, the same education appears too superior to education in the subcontinent. He also talks about life in Pakistan which is full of chaos, corruption and turmoil quite forgetting that he has also written about the turmoil and disorder in Britain. There is one particular description in the book which reveals Kureishi as an Orientalist. He dwells on his dad's story which talks about the world of snakes and snake charmers. In many Orientalist discourses India is reduced to an exotic land with snake charmers being the stock characters in it. The description of snake charmers and snakes

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is a kind of Orientalist trope in this work. There is another example of Orientalism in Kureishi's selection of a passage in his father's book when he mentions a trip to a town near Ahmedabad and the journey was undertaken on the back of a camel.

If the works of his father and Omar are of autobiographical nature then the critical opinions on these works by Hanif Kureishi rely on the biographical approach. In literary criticism biographical approach is known for its limitations .About Kureishi's use of this approach it can be said that possibly he has not read the works of Omar and his Father in right perspective. May be it is a blessing in disguise if the critic does not know too much about the life of an author. In this case Kureishi probably knows too many details about his father's family. A greater distance from his father could have made Hanif Kureishi to be less exacting and less critical in his analysis. It is a distance between the colonizer and the colonized which explains the patronizing tone of Hanif Kureishi , the distance of a person whose mother tongue is English and the one for whom English is a second language.

Kureishi also treats the issue of sibling rivalry in this book. He notices that his father's sense of alienation results from his rivalrous relationship with his brother. Though father would deny any rivalry, the rivalry between an unsuccessful man who works in Pakistan Embassy in London all his life and produces works which are not published and a very successful elder brother who distinguishes himself in everything he does cannot he ruled out.

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There is also a sense of rivalry between the father and the son. Kureishi noticed his father's sense of unease when *The Buddha of Suburbia* was published. His father was of the opinion that he could have written a better work. However, what Hanif Kureishi does not say but can be discerned from his writing is that he also is in a rivalrous relationship with his father. He needs his unsuccessful father to define himself. His father's incompetence or failure provides a yardstick for his own success. In other words his father is a part of Hanif Kureishi himself which is everywhere in his writings. In Hanif Kureishi's writings rivalry, competition and envy are not bad things. In fact, many of his characters come out of their depression when they are filled with a sense of envy and competitive spirit. A sense of competition is important for the growth of career of many characters in his stories. It is an aspect of life principle. It propels a person to realize his potential and fight his blues.

Kureishi's narrative remains incomplete if the issue of race is not discussed. He says that race was not a big issue when his brown father married his English mother in the fifties though even at that time this alliance was seen with disapproval. He further mentions the prevalence of race issue in the sixties and the seventies when he was growing up. When he compares London of his time with the racial prejudice in pre- partition India he finds London tolerant if not understanding. Much as the champions of multiculturalism would like to celebrate difference, London remains a city of different racial groups that

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don't mix with each other much. Hanif Kureishi's father faces racism both in India and in Britain. Hanif Kureishi says that he himself suffered from racism at school and on the street, 'the kind which made you lose faith in the rationality and justice of the British political system, which had both required immigrant and collaborated in their persecution (129).' It seems that Kureishi has given himself away in writing on racism in chapter eight of this book. He digresses enough in this chapter to offer a long discourse on racism. He is sad about the fact that despite the so called process of decolonization, racism continues to exist in different forms. He is not convinced that culture offers a privileged position to non-whites. 'But allowing non-whites to sing and dance isn't the same thing as ceding political power. The white man is in charge and imagines he always will be, even as he becomes more and more paranoid, like Enoch Powell(131).' There is another unpublished novel of his father, titled *The Redundant Man* which is about the issue of racial prejudice. It also talks about father's relationship with his son. He also touches on the consumerism of the sixties when new household items were being bought and disposed off with monotonous regularity.

My Ear at His Heart also provides a context for understanding many of Hanif Kureishi works in a better manner. It offers an insight into parent -children relationship, a motif which is explored at length in *Gabriel's Gift.* Kureishi's view that parents and children don't know each other enough is treated through Gabriel's relationship with

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his parents. *My Ear at His Heart* also explains Hanif Kureishi's father's interest in spiritual matters as also in literature, something that he uses in *The Buddha of Suburbia* through the character of Haroon. There is also a section in *My Ear at his Heart* where Father's love of suburbs is expressed. Kureishi's father was never willing to move out of suburb. The book also talks about the phenomenon of people filling their houses with consumer items in the sixties and re-doing their homes. All these ideas are treated in *The Buddha of Suburbia* through Haroon's personal and professional relationship with Eva.

It can be said that *My Ear at His Heart:Reading My Father* has given Hanif Kureishi a chance to trace his family history, his in-betweenness and his place in the multicultural Britain.The writing of this book makes him realize that 'he does not have secure roots which fix him in place, in a nation, or an ethnic group; rather he must continually plot for himself itinerant cultural routes which take him, imaginatively as well as physically, to many places and into contact with many different peoples."[7] The intertextual connections between this book and his father's and uncle's are so many that it is inconceivable if he could have written this book without help from their books. The writer in him has made a capital out of his father's and uncle's books.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1& 2, 2010, pp. 99-109

Book Review

Payal Nagpal

Zahida Zaidi, Modes of Communication, Aligarh : Aabshar publications, 2005. pages :231

Modes of Communication is a collection of essays on Modern Drama. It comprises nine essays that trace the developments in drama from the late nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century. The writer, Professor Zahida Zaidi chooses dramatists that have contributed in a significant way to the formation of drama in the modern world. The introductory chapter, "Modes of Communication in Drama", helps the reader understand the techniques of dramaturgy and the relationship between the audience and the actor. This is followed by a discussion of the varied phases in modern drama beginning with Henrik Ibsen. The chapters in this collection focus on modern philosophical thought and its presentation by the dramatists of the twentieth century. These ideas are entwined into a discussion of the fragmented position of the individual in the twentieth century.

The author considers dramatic art as a form of creative expression and the relationship between the actor and the audience as an integral component of drama. Zaidi theorizes on the notion of dramatic function and its use of illusion. She defines the language of drama while paying close attention to the subtext that is brought about through intonation, gesture, and movement. As she says:

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> This interplay of mystery and irony creates a highly charged atmosphere which enables the spectator to respond to subtle moods and nuances. It also enables him to grasp complex and profound ideas and reach out to meanings unknown. And this is the true realm of drama. (30)

Zaidi draws attention to the individual styles of dramaturgy of Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht, Konstantin Stanislavsky, Richard Wagner, Adolphe Apia, Gordon Craig and strings together the ways in which they influence each other. In discussing the idea of "Total Theatre" she studies the influence of Adolphe Appia and Richard Wagner who fused music with drama. Gordon Craig stressed action and artistic unity whereas V.E.Meyerhold, a part of the Russian avant-garde of the early twentieth century,brought in the use of Kathakali dance and Kabuki Theatre. According to Zahida Zaidi, where V.E.Meyerhold challenged Konstantin Stanislavsky, Eugene Vakhtanghov combined the two into a projection of the inner world of the characters. This is an important segment of the book as it widens the horizon of the reader by focusing on the relationship between theatre and other creative forms. The discussion ends with an analysis of Antonin Artaud's theatre of cruelty and Bertolt Brecht's idea of drama as an instrument of social change.

In the chapter titled "Early Masters of Modern Drama" Zaidi categorises Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg and Anton Chekhov as the proponents of naturalistic drama. Where she considers Ibsen's realism to be of the

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highest order, G.B.Shaw and Chekhov's realism is regarded as poetic in form. This chapter has a section on each of these dramatists that carries significant comments on the important plays while pointing out their entire dramatic oeuvre. This enables the reader to get a panoramic view of the movements of naturalism and realism and the way they are moulded in the hands of the different playwrights.

She focuses on the origins of naturalistic theater and its development in the hands of Ibsen. This is coupled with an analysis of Ibsen's own dramatic career. According to Zaidi it is only with Ibsen that drama is able to strike new ground. She draws attention to the crude "well made play" in the hands of Augustin Scribe and Victorien Sardou and its shortcoming as a theatre that lacked commitment. This is significant as it helps underline the importance of the advent of naturalistic drama and its impact on society. According to Zaidi:

> Henrik Ibsen was a. Norwegian dramatist who rose to the stature of a European dramatist and was the harbinger of a significant revolution in the very concept of drama...His plays portray both the inner anguish of the artist and strains and pressures of the external world. (35)

She traces the first phase of Henrik Ibsen's career with Peer Gynt and reveals *The Doll's House* as the turning point. *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabbler* mark the next phase of Ibsen's tryst with drama that is finally complete with

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The Master Builder. According to Zahida Zaidi, Strindberg brings the modern existential anguish into drama but his use of naturalism is quite different from that of Emile Zola. She then looks at Strindberg's use of the dream technique in the context of some of his plays such as *Lady Julie, A Dream Play* and *Road to Damascus*. Zaidi considers *A Dream Play* to be "a powerful realization of this technique, which portrays the subconscious movements of its author's mind". Zaidi completes the analysis of the early masters of modern drama with a discussion of Anton Chekhov's plays. Naturalism reaches its final stage with Chekhov in whose hands it achieves a kind of poetic sensitivity as never before. The writer places the playwright both in the context of modern drama and also in line with the other dramatists of this period. According to Zaidi, Chekhov's style might appear.

> But indeed it is a highly subtle and sophisticated art hiding under apparent casualness and effortlessness, not only acute perceptions, fine discriminations and profound psychological insights, but also a richness of texture, amazing artistic control and a well-considered architectonic quality. (44)

This is brought out in her analysis of *Three Sisters* and *Cherry Orchard*. This completes the movement from naturalism .to a use of symbols that internalize and present the naturalistic landscape of the mind. According to the writer, G.B.Shaw must be included in line with the early masters of modem drama but immense familiarity with

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his works and his vast oeuvre make her frame the discussion on Shaw as a separate chapter.

The next chapter titled, "Hell in Shaw and Sartre" takes existentialism to be the next breaking ground in terms of philosophical thought and the way in which this has a strong bearing on drama. G.B.Shaw and Jean Paul Sartre's concept of "Hell" is the point of discussion. With extensive excerpts from Shaw's *Man and Superman* and Sartre's *No Exit* she brings out the similarities and differences in the attitudes of these two playwrights who belong to two different time periods. This is a unique and useful comparison as it unifies the strands of drama and also brings to light the differing philosophical trends. This reveals how drama encompasses philosophical trends and uses them to present the human predicament. For Shaw's Don Juan 'hell' is an unreal place but for Sartre it is a place that exhibits bad faith. According to Zaidi this comparison is significant as:

> Both Shaw and Sartre invert the Christian myth of Heaven and Hell to suit their specific purposes, and both use it to project their different philosophic outlooks. In both these plays, hell is not, primarily, an account of life after death, but for all its trapping of the hereafter it is essentially a certain state of being and a choice of existence in this world. (58)

In the following chapter, "The Seagull: Magic Lake Lots of Love and the Lure of Literature", Zaidi does justice to the poetic realism of Anton Chekhov in her analysis of *The Seagull*. She explains the way in which the magi-

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cal lake functions as a unique symbol in the play and deals with the relationship between the writer and his society. She articulates the views of other critics but only to explain her own position on the play reflecting clarity of thought. She considers Nina and Trepilov in *The Seagull* as making an "impressive contribution to the theme of art and literature". This is in contrast to the widely held view that Nina and Trepilov are sharply contrasting characters—"Nina representing the triumph of creative spirit and Trepilov as a miserable failure".

In the chapter on Tennessee Williams, "Tennessee Williams: The Evolution of His Dramatic Form" Zahida Zaidi discusses the American playwrights'' idea of theatre. According to her:

> Drama for Williams is a projection of the totality of existence in concrete images and symbols. It is concerned with the realities of the subconscious mind and the dream world as much as with surface existence and the rational world. Consequently the realistic technique, he believes, is inadequate for the purposes of a dramatist. (96)

It is Williams' use of the symbols and images that relates him at once to Garcia Lorca, Anton Chekov, Luigi Pirandello and Eugene O'Neill. His prefaces can be used to construct the theory of plastic theater. Williams' theories of drama have been studied in the context of *The Glass Menagerie Camino Real, Suddenly Last Summer, The Night, of the Iguana and The Milk Train Does Not Stop Here Anymore.* This expands the discussion of modern drama in a much

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more meaningful way. Zaidi regards *Camino Real,* the most "ambitious" work of Williams, as an "allegory of modern times" in which he brings out legendary characters in the contemporary situation. Zaidi then compares Tennessee William's *'The Milk Train* with Eugene lonesco's *The Chairs* and *Exit the King* and with Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* while pointing out that Williams' plays are primarily lyrical in nature making a "compelling dramatic statement".

This collection of essays is unique as it combines American and English dramatists with European playwrights. In this context Maxim Gorky deserves special mention. His *The Lower Depths* has a totally different kind of realism. At the outset it appears to be a realist play, but according to Zaidi this realism is "totally different from the naturalism of the French School".

> In *The Lower Depths* Gorky maintains a delicate balance between reality and dream, hope and despair, violence and compassion, faith and irreverence, social protest and existential probings, moral idealism and revolutionary zeal, ruthless realism and symbolic suggestions. (146)

Where the other dramatists choose their protagonists from the middle class, Gorky's characters are from the world of the downtrodden. They are people who do not figure in the economic ladder. Characters such as Natasha, Nastaya, Bubnoff, Luka and Saline leave an impression on one's mind. These characters not only represent a segment of society that has been totally obscured, Gorky uses them in The Lower Depths to focus on the ex-

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istential predicament as well.' Zaidi offers an interesting comparison of *The Lower Depths* with Eugene O'Neill's *The Iceman Cometh*. According to her there are striking resemblances between the two plays but the possibilities of locating answers to the problems of the modern man are totally different. Where Gorky suggests an optimistic outlook and faith in a "revolutionary transformation of society" O'Neill's play ends on a note of gloom and pessimism. She also presents a broader perspective by drawing similarities between Gorky's idea of dramaturgy and that of Luigi Pirandello, Jean Genet, Harold Pinter, Edward Albee and Samuel Beckett. However, the author argues that the differences between these dramatists are probably more poignant than the similarities and ends by emphasizing the "freshness of approach" in Gorky.

In the next two chapters, "The Image of Man in Absurd Drama and "The Dark world of Samuel Beckett", the author's astute understanding of the absurd tradition in drama is evident. Zahida Zaidi uses an excerpt from William Barrett's *Irrational Man* and! juxtaposes its assumptions about modern art with avant garde drama. In the "Image of Man in Absurd Drama" she draws attention to the general aspects of absurd drama through one of the most famous of Samuel Beckett's works— *Waiting for Godot* and Eugene lonesco's *The Chairs*. She focuses on the varied aspects of absurd drama—the use of humour, irony and the predicament of humans in the world of absurd drama. In the sections that follow there is a close analysis of the two plays that lead to the final section in

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which the connections between Absurd Drama and Existentialism have been explored. This leads to a separate unit on most of Beckett's works and the development of the Absurd tradition in drama. She begins her analysis with Murphy followed by a detailed study of Beckett's fictional works primarily the trilogy – *Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnameable*. The writer also draws attention to his "single actor play" *Without Words*. Zaidi again shifts focus to *Waiting for Godot,* placing it in line with the other works of Beckett. In fact this chapter makes a special note of his radio plays – *All That Fall and Embers*. The analysis of each focuses on the dramatization of the absurd as a creative process. The enriching and engaging discussion on each of Beckett's plays spells Zahida Zaidi's expertise and specialization. This chapter ends with a study of *Happy Days* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. According to Zaidi, *Krapp's Last Tape* with its use of the tape recorder helps "project the fragmentation of experience and the elusiveness of human identity". Happy Days is seen as a "poetic image that has to be experienced in totality". This chapter is particularly enlightening as she also mentions Beckett's drama of sound and visual images titled *Play*.

> Action is completely eliminated. The drama is conceived as a musical composition, with the light performing the role of the conductor. Except for the moving shaft of light the stage is in complete darkness. (205)

The characters repeat the stories of their lives from the earthen jars. According to Zaidi this reminds one of

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Beckett's novels. This chapter helps the reader to get a complete overview of Beckett and his position in Modern Drama. Playwrights such as Bertolt Brecht and Harold Pinter get only a brief mention as they are beyond the purview of this collection. This is because the focus rests on playwrights that make use of existentialism in Absurd drama.

The final essay in this collection "Contemporaneity of *Prometheus Unbound*" points towards P.B.Shelley's play *Prometheus Unbound* and the way in which it makes use of ideas that later form an integral component of modern drama. This chapter is original in its outlook as it marks a development in terms of thought, time period, history and dramaturgy. Zaidi traces the dream technique developed by August Strindberg, the use of the mask and face in Luigi Pirandello's *Henry* and *Six Characters in Search of an Author* to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*. The lack of a "systematic pattern of thought", "the passion for reforming the world", "the imaginative and intellectual sweep" were traits that ignited ideas to be taken up by the craftsmen of modern drama.

Modes of Communication targets both the undergraduate scholar of modern drama and the research scholar. The lucid tone of this collection will appeal to the student who has just been initiated into this area and its vast canvas will provide the research scholar with a complete and dynamic picture of modem drama. The detailed references at the end of each chapter provide a guide to further research. There are other collections of essays on

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Modern Drama such as *Theory of Modern Stage* edited by Eric Bentley, *Sociology of Literature and Drama* edited by *Elizabeth and Tom Burns* and Raymond Williams' *Drama From Ibsen to Brecht*. However, the first two do not offer any analysis of the playwright's' works Raymond Williams' book focuses primarily on the playwrights of the early twentieth century; those of the Absurd tradition have been grouped under "Recent Drama" and only one play of each playwright is briefly mention. Another collection that comes to mind is Martin Esslinjs *The Theatre of the Absurd*. But even this is deficient in terms of providing a meaningful view of modern drama. This is because Esslin's concern is only with the playwrights of the Absurd tradition and he therefore does not position writers such as Maxim Gorky or Tennessee Williams. *Modes of Communication* covers most of the dramatists of the mid-twentieth century and provides an overview of their entire dramatic oeuvre. This is accompanied by an in depth analysis of the major plays. The writer leaves the reader free to position her/himself in terms of any of the playwrights and their ideological import. Zahida Zaidi's ability to combine drama with painting, music and other movements is significant and provides a meaningful insight into the plays of this period.

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies, Vol. 30, Nos. 1 & 2, pp. i-iv

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