MOTHER INDIA

MONTHLY REVIEW OF CULTURE

JANUARY 1980

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The enormous rise in the cost of paper, production and distribution and the change in some other factors have forced us to raise by a small margin our subscription from 1980. We have kept the margin as small as possible because the cost of living is everywhere on the increase. In passing, we may state that the cost to us of each copy of *Mother India* is more than Rs. 3/-. It is only the donations and advertisements that help us out to a great extent.

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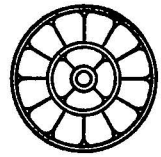
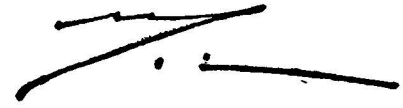


Lord, Thou hast willed, and I execute,

A new light breaks upon the earth,

A new world is born.

The things that were promised are fulfilled.



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"Great is Truth and it shall prevail."

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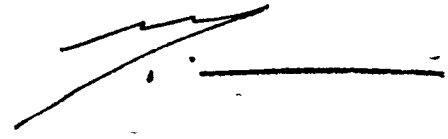
THE MOTHER'S NEW YEAR

To Thee, Supreme Dispenser of all boons, to Thee who justifiest life by making it pure, beautiful and good, to Thee, Master of our destinies and goal of our aspirations, was consecrated the first minute of this NEW YEAR.

May Thy love be manifested,
May Thy reign come,
May Thy peace govern the world.



THE MOTHER'S LOOK AND THE RIGHT SPIRITUAL STATE

TWO TALKS OF THE MOTHER

3 March 1971

I have the feeling that your look has changed much. (Mother nods approvingly.) *For more than a year, and more and more, it is like that of Sri Aurobindo.*

YES?...(*Mother smiles*) Possibly!

Before, your look was a "diamond look", a look...it was yourself, powerfully yourself. Now it is becoming like that of the infinite.

Oh! But my way of seeing is not the same.

Yes, just so, I wanted to ask you: when you look at people in this way, what is it that you see?

I believe I see...most exactly, it is their condition, the state in which they are. Especially, there are some who seem as though closed, who, as far as I am concerned, do not see, who are altogether in their outward consciousness; and then there are those who are open—there are... some children, a remarkable thing, who were as though entirely open (*gesture as of a flower to the sun*), ready to absorb. It is particularly the receptivity of people which I see, the state in which they are: those who come with an aspiration, those who come with a curiosity, those who come... as though with a kind of obligation, and then there are those who thirst for light—there are not many of them, but there are quite a few children. Today I saw one who was charming!... Oh! wonderful!

And I see only that. Not what they think, what they say (all that appears to me superficial, uninteresting); it is the state of receptivity in which they happen to be. It is that particularly which I see.

(*Silence*)

I believe really that it is among the children that will be found those who can begin the new race. Men are... crusted over.

Well, I am constantly struggling against people who have come here so that they may be comfortable and "free to do whatever they like", so... I tell them, "The world is big enough, you can go out"—there is no soul, no aspiration, nothing.

You know my feeling? They are all, all old and I am the only one who is young!

It is that, yes, this flame, this will... what they call "push". To be satisfied with petty personal satisfactions... which take you nowhere, busy with what they are going to eat, oh!...

I have the feeling that now there is a sort of "display" (you know, "display"?), a show of all that should not be.

Yes.

But the flame, the flame of aspiration (*Mother shakes her head*), there are not many who bring it.

Provided they are what they call "comfortable", it is all they need—and free to do some nonsense which they would not do in the world!... On the other side, one feels that to hasten the coming—one *could* hasten it if one were... if one were a conqueror!

22 May 1971

If the Lord wants success for us, *it can be something tremendous.* There is the possibility of a tre-men-dous success—not in the air, but here. The whole thing is to know whether the time for that success has come.

(*Long silence*)

Everywhere there is the possibility, I tell you, of an... extraordinary success. Has the moment come? I do not know.... As for myself, I make myself like this (*gesture of smallness*), physically quite small, and I leave... (*gesture of arms open wide towards the Lord*).

You see, there is the Will that is coming down and then there are all these formations that get in and delay its execution—I would like, I would like my atmosphere to be... a limpid, altogether limpid transmitter. I do not try even to know what it is, for that too brings in an ordinary humanity.... The limpid, limpid transmitter: let it come like that (*gesture of descent*), pure, in all its purity—even if it be formidable.

In reality, we do not know why this is like that, why that is like that, and we have a vision...even if our vision englobes the earth, it is so small, so small—so exculsive: we want this, we do not want that.... First of all, the *very first* thing is to make the instruments...one must be *limpid*, limpid, letting things pass without deformation, without obstruction.

Indeed, I am spending my time at that: trying to be like that.

But this possibility of victory that you are feeling, is it something recent?

Yes.

It is recent. Because, apparently, the circumstances are evidently not so good—apparently.

Oh! you know...all the circumstances seemed to organise themselves for a catastrophe.

Yes.

Only a few days ago it was as though the catastrophe was impending. And then, at that moment, my whole being was, as though...(how to say it?) it was, yes, one might call it an aspiration for the true Victory, not that which this one wants or that one wants or...but the real Victory. It is this which seems to have brought in *all* the difficulties (these exclusive wills). And then, all at once there appeared as though a light: the possibility of the Victory. It is still...it is not miraculous, but it is the Intervention...the intervention of the Supreme Wisdom. Will it be concrete? We will see. It seems to come, it seems to come in this way (*gesture of a certain height, the two palms turned downward*), as a possibility.

No, it is recent, quite recent. I cannot say, for it did not come suddenly, but it is a question of days.

Yes, because for some time I was feeling a great pessimism.

That is a bad attitude.

I did not have that attitude, however, but it was as though a pessimistic atmosphere was coming in.

All that does not want the Divine creates this atmosphere purposely to discourage those who want the Divine. You must...you must not pay attention. That, that is the way of the devil. Pessimism is the demon's weapon and he senses his situation (*gesture of shaking*). Well, if what I see as possible is realised, it will be truly a decisive victory over the adverse forces—naturally, he defends himself as best he can.... That, it is always the devil; as soon as you see even the tail of pessimism, it is the devil. That is his great weapon.

THE PSYCHIC AND THE SUPRAMENTAL BEING

FROM A TALK OF THE MOTHER

1 July 1970

I HAD an experience which was for-me interesting, because it was for the first time. It was yesterday or day before, I do not remember. Huta was there just in front of me, and I saw her psychic being, dominating over her by so much (*gesture indicating about twenty centimetres*), taller. It was the first time. Her physical being was small and her psychic being was so much bigger. And it was an unsexed being, neither man nor woman. Then I said to myself (possibly it is always so, I do not know, but here I noticed it very clearly), I said to myself, "But it is the psychic being, it is that which will materialise itself and become the supramental being!"

I saw it, it was so. There were particularities, but these were not well-marked, and it was clearly a being that was neither man nor woman, having the combined characteristics of both. And it was bigger than the person and in every way overtopped her by about so much (*gesture surpassing the physical body by about twenty centimetres*); she was there and it was like this (*same gesture*). And it had this colour...this colour...which, if it became quite material, would be the colour of Auroville.[1] It was fainter, as though behind a veil, it was not absolutely precise, but it was that colour. There was hair on the head, but it was somewhat different. I shall see better perhaps another time. But it interested me very much, because it was as though that being were telling me, "But you are busy looking to see what kind of being the supramental will be—there it is! There, it is that." And it was there. It was the psychic being of the person.

So, one understands. One understands: the psychic being materialises itself... and that gives continuity to evolution. This creation gives altogether the feeling that there is nothing arbitrary, there is a kind of divine logic behind and it is not like our human logic, it is very much superior to ours—but there is one, and that was fully satisfied when I saw this.

It is really interesting. I was very interested. It was there, calm and quiet, and it said to me, "You were looking, well, there it is, yes, it is that!"

And then I understood why the mind and the vital were sent out of this body, leaving the psychic being—naturally it was that which had been always governing all the movements, so it was nothing new, but there are no difficulties any more; all the complications that were coming from the vital and the mental, adding their impressions and tendencies, all gone. And I understood: "Ah! it is that, it is this psychic being which has to become the supramental being."

[1] Orange. Editor's Note: The mention of Auroville is all the more appropriate here in connection with the sadhika's soul (psychic being), for it is she whom the Mother appointed Guardian of Matrimandir which, according to the Mother, is to be the Soul of Auroville.

But I never sought to know what its appearance was like. And when I saw Huta, I understood. And I see it, I am seeing it still, I have kept the memory. It was as though the hair on the head was red (but it was not like that). And its expression! Extraordinary.

And you understand, I had my eyes open, it was almost a material vision.

So one understands. All of a sudden all the questions have vanished, it has become very clear, very simple.

(*Silence*)

And it is precisely the psychic that survives. So if it materialises itself, it means the abolition of death. But "abolition"...nothing is abolished except what is not in accordance with the Truth, which goes away...whatever is not capable of transforming itself in the image of the psychic and becoming an integral part of the psychic.

It is truly interesting.

BUDDHISM

THE mind wanders into this meditation
just as mighty blasts of wind
buffet the hungry nose
and are sucked swiftly through the throat.

The mind sinks down to the nethermost toes,
notices they are icy cold, is aware
of bubbling pain in the locked knees
and quietly pretends not to care,

then rises to feel the warm, fragile
throbbing of the relentless heart
feeding on the fading blood of paradise.
The mind hurries away with a passing thought,

for these worlds that begin with primal craving
end only when that howling storm of breath
sweeps down upon the gates of a pure repose
that cares not whether they open or close.

GORDON

SRI AUROBINDO'S PASSING AND HIS WORK AFTER IT

A TALK OF THE MOTHER ON 14 MARCH 1970

I REMEMBERED the time when Sri Aurobindo was there.... Well, the inner part of the being was in a consciousness that felt, that saw things according to the higher consciousness: altogether different; and then, just when Sri Aurobindo fell ill and when there were all those things, first of all the accident (he broke his thigh)...then the *body*, the body was saying all the time: "These are dreams, these are dreams, this is not for us; for us, the body, it is like that (*gesture indicating under the earth*).... It was frightful!... And all that is gone. It is gone completely after so many years, so many years of effort, it is gone; and the body itself felt the divine Presence, it had the impression that...all must necessarily change. And then, some days ago this formation that had left (which is an earthly formation, of all humanity, that is to say, of those who had the vision, the perception, even only the aspiration for the higher Truth—when they come back to the Fact, they stand before this terribly painful thing, this ceaseless negation of all circumstances), this formation from which the body had been completely liberated has come back. It has come back, but...when it came back, when the body saw that, it saw it as one sees a falsehood. And I understood how much the body had changed, because when it saw that, it had the impression...it looked at that with a smile and the impression, ah! that it was an old formation with no truth in it any more. And this was an extraordinary experience: that, the time for that has ended—the time for that has ended. And I know that this Pressure of the Consciousness is a pressure so that things as they were—so miserable, so small, so obscure, so...inescapable as well, apparently—all that is gone behind (*Mother makes a gesture over her shoulders*); it is a past that has passed. So I really saw—I saw, I understood—that the work of this Consciousness (which is without pity, it does not care whether the thing is difficult or not, probably it does not even care much for apparent ravages), is so that the normal condition should no longer be a thing so heavy, so obscure, and so ugly—so low—and that it should be the dawn...something breaking out on the horizon: a new consciousness—something more true, more luminous....

And it is the experience of the body. Before, those who had inner experiences used to say, "Yes, up there it is so, but here...." Now the "but here" very soon will no longer be. This is the conquest that is being done, this tremendous change: that physical life must be governed by the higher consciousness and not by the mental world. It is a change over of authority.... It is difficult. It is hard. It is painful. Naturally there is breakage, but....But truly one can see—one can see. And that is the *real change*, it is that which will enable the new Consciousness to express itself. And the body is learning, learning its lesson—all bodies, all bodies.

(*Silence*)

It is the old division made by the mind: up above, it is quite all right, you may have all the experiences and everything is luminous, wonderful; here, nothing to be done. And the feeling that when one is born, still one is born in the world where nothing can be done. That explains, moreover, why all those who had not foreseen the possibility that things could be otherwise, used to say, "Better to depart and then...." All that has become so clear. But that change, the fact that it is *no longer* inevitable, that is the great Victory: it is *no longer* inevitable. One feels—one feels, one sees—and the body itself has had the experience that soon here also it can be more true.

There is, there is truly something changed in the world.

(*Silence*)

Naturally, it will take some time before it is really established. There, it is battle. From all sides, on all levels there is an assault of things that come to say externally, "Nothing has been changed"—but it is not true. It is not true, the body knows that it is not true. And now it knows, it knows in what direction.

And what Sri Aurobindo has written in these aphorisms, just what I am looking at now, is so prophetic! It was so much the vision of the True Thing. So prophetic.

(*Silence*)

And I see now, I see how his departure and his work so...so vast, yes, and so constant in the subtle physical, how much, how much it has helped! How much it has (*Mother makes a gesture of kneading Matter*) helped to prepare things, to change the physical structure.

All the experiences that others have had, which were in order to come in contact with the higher worlds, left here below the physical as it is....How to say it? From the beginning of my life till Sri Aurobindo's departure, I was in the consciousness that one can go up, one can know, one can have all the experiences (indeed, one did have them), but when one came back into this body...it was the old mental laws, for-mi-da-ble, which ruled things. And then, all these years have been years of preparation—preparation—liberation and preparation, and these days now it has been...ah! the *physical* recognition, made by the body, that it has changed.

It has to be "worked out", as it is said, it has to be realised in all the details, but the change *is done*—the change is done.

That is to say, the material conditions elaborated by the mind, *fixed* by it (*Mother closes her two fists*), that appeared to be inevitable to such an extent that those who had a living experience of the higher worlds thought that one must flee from the world, give up this material world if one wanted to live in the truth (that is the basis of all these theories and faiths); but now it is no longer like that. The physical is capable of receiving the higher Light, the Truth, the true Consciousness and of *manifesting* it.

It is not easy, it needs endurance and will, but a day will come when this will

be quite natural. It is just, just the door opened—that is all, now one must go on.

(*Silence*)

Naturally, what was established clings and struggles desperately. That is the cause of all the trouble (*gesture indicating the earthly atmosphere*)—it has lost the game. It has lost the game.

(*Silence*)

It took...a little more than a year for this Consciousness[1] to win this victory. And still, naturally, it is not visible except to those who have the inner vision, but... but it is done.

(*Long silence*)

It was this, the work that Sri Aurobindo had given me. Now I understand.

But it is as if from all sides—all sides—these forces, these powers of the mind rose up in protest—in violent protest—to impose their old laws: "But it was always so!"... It is finished, however. It will not be always so. There!

(*Silence*)

Something of this battle had been going on in this body these last days.... It was really very interesting.... There was outside, coming from outside, an attempt to submit the body to experience in order to compel it to recognise: "No, what has always been will always be; you may try, but it is an illusion", and so something happened, quite a little disorganisation in the body, and then the body answered with its attitude: a peace like this (*gesture of immobility*), and its attitude (*gesture of hands open*): "It is as Thou willest, Lord, as Thou willest."... Like a flash everything disappears! And this has happened several times, at least a dozen times in a day. Then—then the body begins to feel: "There it is!"... It has this delight, this delight of...having lived the Marvel. It is not as it was, it is *no more* as it was—it is no more as it was.

One has still to fight on, one must have patience, courage, will, confidence—but it is no more "like that"; it is the old thing that seeks to cling—hideous! hideous. But...it is no more like that, no more like that.

There!

(*Silence*)

And this also: how far, how far will the body be able to go? This also, it is... *perfectly* peaceful and happy: it is "What Thou willest."

(*Long silence*)

[1] The superman consciousness, which manifested on 1 January 1969.

All the rest appears so old, so old, like something...belonging to a dead past—that seeks to resuscitate itself, but cannot any more.

And all, all, all the circumstances are as catastrophic as possible—the worries and complications and difficulties, all, all have risen up violently, like wild beasts, but...it is finished. The body *knows* that all this is finished. Perhaps it will take centuries, but it is finished. For it to disappear, that may take centuries, but now it is finished.

This realisation, altogether concrete and absolute, that one could have only when one came out of Matter (*Mother lowers a finger*): it is sure, it is sure and certain one will have it *even here.*

(*Long silence*)

This is the fourteenth month since the Consciousness came—fourteenth month, twice seven.

(*Silence*)

Today is the fourteenth?

Yes, the fourteenth.

Then, it is interesting.

(*Silence*)

How much he has worked since he left! oh!...all the while, all the while.

MY DESIRE

My desire is to burn
To the last drop of oil
Emitting light of love,
Fighting the dark glories
Of achievement.

I must scatter,
Not heap
The grains of goodness,
Liquidating
All my being.

The end must come
Automatically
As the final act of living,
As the squeezing up
Of the last petal.

M. L. THANGAPPA

A REVISED EDITION OF *THE FUTURE POETRY*

Compiler's Note

SRI Aurobindo's *Future Poetry* was first published serially in the monthly review *Arya* between December 1917 and July 1920 in thirty-two consecutive instalments. It did not appear in the form of a book until 1953, when it was reprinted by the Sri Aurobindo Ashram.[1] The only difference between the text of the 1953 edition (which was reprinted in the Centenary Edition of 1972 and subsequently) and the text as printed in the *Arya* are two additions to Chapter XIX. It was thought that these passages, dictated by Sri Aurobindo to his amanuensis Nirodbaran and together amounting to about two pages, were the only work of revision he had been able to do on the book, although it was known that he desired to revise it thoroughly. As it turns out, a full revision was undertaken. A complete set of pages from the *Arya* with his marginal and interlinear corrections and additions has recently been found among his manuscripts.

The revision was done during two distinct periods: (1) sometime during the 1930s and (2) sometime after 1945, most probably in 1950. The earlier revision was written by Sri Aurobindo in the hand he used for his correspondence between 1928 and 1938. Seventeen chapters—2 to 14, 16, 25, 27 and 32—were revised during this period. The work done ranges between light touching up to very heavy rewriting of entire chapters. The revision of the later period is written in the hand of Nirodbaran. Nirodbaran relates in his *Twelve Years with Sri Aurobindo* (1973, p. 271) that in 1950 "the [Ashram] Press sent up a demand for a new book from him. *The Future Poetry* was given preference and some passages which were meant to be dovetailed into the text of the chapter were written." The passages referred to are the two added to Chapter XIX mentioned above. But besides these large additions, which were written on separate sheets of paper and not on the pages of the *Arya*—so escaping the oblivion that overtook the rest of the revision—there are in Nirodbaran's hand additions and corrections scattered throughout the book. A total of eighteen chapters were revised during the later period, twelve of these being chapters also revised during the earlier period. Most of the later revision is relatively light, but there are considerable additions to two or three chapters.

All this shows that a full-scale revision of *The Future Poetry* was not only proposed but begun and proceeded on to a considerable extent. Unfortunately it was not completed. Nirodbaran's report in *Twelve Years* continues: "Since [Sri Aurobindo] wanted to write something on Modern Poetry and works of modern poets were needed for reading, orders were sent to Madras for them. . . . Since we had to wait now for the arrival of the books, he said, 'Let us go back to *Savitri*.' " (pp.271-72.)[2] Sri Aurobindo never returned to *The Future Poetry*.

[1] The first nineteen chapters of *The Future Poetry* were reprinted in *Mother India* between February 1952 and August 1953.

[2] Amal Kiran had suggested to Sri Aurobindo that he ought to fill the gap left by his omission of the Metaphysical Poets of the seventeenth century A treatment of these poets was under consideration by Sri Aurobindo

Altogether twenty-three chapters of *The Future Poetry* were revised to a greater or lesser degree: in four of these only a word or two were added. The remaining nine chapters were not revised at all. In the forthcoming issues of *Mother India* the nineteen significantly revised chapters will be reproduced for the first time.

*

The first chapter of *The Future Poetry* is one of these which ultimately received no revision. It begins practically as a review of the book that moved Sri Aurobindo to start his work—James Cousins's *New Ways in English Literature*[1]—and contains much that is of only occasional interest. For this reason Sri Aurobindo, working with Nirodbaran in 1950, at first decided to omit the chapter altogether, and marked the second chapter "Part I, Chapter I". Later he began to dictate a new chapter to replace the old first chapter, but managed only to finish a paragraph before abandoning the idea. The old chapter was kept with the addition only of a title: "The Mantra." We shall not reproduce this chapter in *Mother India*, but reprint from *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research* (Vol. 3, No. 1, p. 19) the new paragraph dictated to Nirodbaran. This in its incomplete condition can, of course, not replace the old chapter. It will be included in the revised edition of *The Future Poetry* as an appendix.

PART I CHAPTER I

The Mantra

A supreme, an absolute of itself, a reaching to an infinite and utmost, a last point of perfection of its own possibilities is that to which all action of Nature intuitively tends in its unconscious formations and when it has arrived to that point it has justified its existence to the spirit which has created it and fulfilled the secret creative will within it. Speech, the expressive Word, has such a summit or absolute, a perfection which is the touch of the infinite upon its finite possibilities and the seal upon it of its Creator. This absolute of the expressive Word can be given the name which was found for it by the inspired singers of the Veda, the Mantra. Poetry especially claimed for its perfected expression in the hymns of the Veda this name. It is not confined however to this sense, for it is extended to all speech that has a supreme or an absolute power; the Mantra is the word that carries the godhead in it or the power of the godhead, can bring it into the consciousness and fix there it and its workings, awaken there the thrill of the infinite, the force of something absolute, perpetuate the miracle of the supreme utterance. This highest power of speech and especially

[1] The seed of the chapter and of *The Future Poetry* is contained in an actual, incomplete review of Cousins's book published for the first time in *Sri Aurobindo: Archives and Research*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (April 1978), pp. 17-18.

of poetic speech is what we have to make here the object of our scrutiny, discover, if we can, its secret, regard the stream of poetry as a long course of the endeavour of human speech to find it and the greater generalisation of its presence and its power as the future sign of an ultimate climbing towards an ultimate evolution as a poetic consciousness towards the conquest of its ultimate summits.

TWO POEMS

THE FEAST

A SUMPTUOUS table awaits my coming.
It is a banquet for more than gods.
The Word is the food and it is served by Dreams,
At Imagination's spring is its flow.

The nectarous drink of a Vision of Truth
Is the nourishment for the soul.
And if the body, too, will partake of this sweet
Our honeyed lives will never cease to grow.

PRASAD

"Food is the Brahman," the sages have said,
And I would take them at their word.
But to gulp down God as fast as can be
Has never been called righteous and good!

There is still a holy word that is used for this act,
And perhaps it holds liberation's key.
That is, when prasad is Grace and the body is God,
I can feed Him, instead of me!

PATTI

A SONNET BY NIRODBARAN

WITH SRI AUROBINDO'S CORRECTIONS AND COMMENTS

Under the white felicitous eye of the moon
wings drunk with the infinite
My heart spreads slowly (the infinite-drunk wings)
lost
In wide blue spaces of air, (still) in a swoon,
It floats like a glad song from height to height.
(From height to height like a lark merrily sings.)

Earth's narrow cage dwindles into a dot,
emerald
The(se) hills and trees with their cool (verdant) shade
Seem like old memory's fast vanishing spot
On life's horizon of dim shadows made.

Now the stars' fragrant breath runs in the veins
And lightning-tremors murmuringly flow:
One with the astral body's lambent glow
flaming
My (awakened) sight a new world-vision gains

Where all creation is (like) a God-ward cry
In a vast plenitude of ecstasy.

20-5-1937

Exceedingly fine. With the exception of the fourth line all is tiptop—the first line and the last two magnificent; along with the second (after my manipulation) they may be attributed to O.P.[1]

Q: In the 2nd line, how about the anapaest?

A: Since you are in for an irregular movement, let's enhance[2] and get something magnificently out of the way.

This lark [4th line] is too trivial and common. Also if as the punctuation suggests, it is the lark who sings and flies upward (or ascends) in a swoon, it is too surrealistic.

Q: The poem doesn't seem very successful.

A: Marvellously successful, sir, except for one ornithological detail.

[1] O. P.=Overhead Poetry.

[2] doubtful reading.

Q: Sounds rather big, doesn't it?

A: Not only sounds, but is.

Q: Anapaest of the Ist line can go, but eye of moon rather empty.

A: No, sir. Anapaest here quite effective. Trochee, iamb, iamb, anapaest, anapaest make a magnificently heterodox combination.

Q: Rhythm of the 2nd line?

A: Won't do. I have improved it by making it worse from the orthodox point of view.

My hēārt/ sprēāds slōwly/wīngs drūnk/with the In/finite

Q: Lightning-tremor can murmur?

A: Yes, if you make it do so. A listener can always murmur.

Q: World-vision not too loud, and the couplet?

A: Good heaven's, no! Magnificent.

Q: My awakened sight etc. (12th line) reminds me of your sonnet on 'Other Earths'.

"World after world bursts on the awakened sight."

Does it matter?

A: Yes.

No use cribbing unnecessarily.

O PAIN

WHAT art thou to man, O Pain,
A scout of Grace or a message of Death?
Art thou a giver of a greater breath
Or the woodman's axe that cleaves the heart and brain?

Art thou the punishing rod of Law supreme
Or the boon behind a hiding mask?
Art thou the chisel of a sculpturing task
To fashion the marvel of the spirit's dream?

Art thou a rung for soul to climb up high?
Or to glide in the deep dark world
Art thou not a curse, by Nature hurled
That man on this earth may writhe and sigh?

Whatever thou art—whether friend or foe,
Man's soul without thee can never grow.

CHAITYA PURUSHA

A VISION AT THE LAKE ESTATE

RELATED BY CHAMPAKLAL

I WAS just sitting on the window-sill of one of the houses at the Lake Estate of the Ashram and looking at the Lake. The sight of a vast landscape always makes me happy. There was no water in the Lake—even then I very much enjoyed the view. Whenever I see such a scene, I go on looking at it and, after some time, there is a tendency to close my eyes. Such sights draw me within. At times I see something or I get peace and joy.

Today I saw some children emerging from the wide space. They were of different ages. There were young boys also. I was surprised to spot some of our people who are no more with us. I saw almost all of those who had passed away in the Ashram as well as those from outside who were connected with the Ashram but were no more living. Tirupati and Krishnashashi were also there. They were all standing with folded hands in a deep prayerful mood, with their heads uplifted towards the sky—some with eyes open and some with closed eyes. Their simplicity and genuine faith without any kind of pretension were really striking and admirable. Such sights delight me and make me extremely happy. I very much enjoy watching the expressions of people. Near the Mother, I always had a chance to see and still the Mother is continuing this privilege. I saw all our brothers and sisters there. It was drizzling and the atmosphere was filled with a nice earth-smell. They all began to dance. A little later, they came out and went away in different directions. Soon after that there was a heavy rainfall. Now the Lake was full. I got up and went in the direction where I had seen them going but could not find anyone!

I walked further and saw a beautiful place. There were pretty houses with small gardens around them. They were situated at different places in harmony with nature; some were on top of the hill, while some were deep down. I remember the Mother once said that in Japan She had seen that they do not just build the houses anywhere but set them in a harmonious blending with nature and have a garden around each. The plants too are grown in a natural way—everything in rhythm with nature. I also saw small natural ponds at different places—some of them full of lotuses white and red, and some with lilies of various colours. Everything was so harmonious and beautiful. As I went further, I saw fruit-gardens but the trees appeared different than usual. Under the trees I saw some children with luminous faces. They stood here and there with closed eyes and folded hands. A little later they opened their eyes, looked up and opened their palms. I was surprised to see fruits in their hands. Again they did namaskar, bowed and left smiling. Their expression was worth seeing when they stood under the fruit trees.

As I walked further, a very charming young boy came towards me in such a way as if he knew me. I too had the same feeling of familiarity. He spoke smilingly: "The Mother has said: 'When Champaklal comes, bring him to me.' " I walked with

him. On the way, I saw many birds and animals moving freely, and some children played with them freely. I saw deer, elephants, horses, cows and some other animals. I looked around for tigers and lions but they were not to be seen. I enquired from the boy whether they were there. He replied: "The Mother has said that the time has not yet come for us to go where they are." We went further. There were different groups moving about here and there. This charming young boy took me to several places one after another. As we went on, I saw from a distance the Mother with children. She was giving some lessons to them. When I reached that place, the Mother said to me, "So you have come! Now you will see how things are developed here. This child of mine will take you around."

We proceeded and after walking some distance I saw the Mother again! She was giving lessons to grown-up boys. I turned and looked back to the place from where we had come. The Mother was there also with the children! But I did not see myself there. I laughed and laughed. The boy did not ask me any question but he too began to laugh. When we reached the place where the Mother was with grown-up boys, She asked me: "Champaklal! What makes you laugh so much?" I replied: "Mother, I saw you there. And you are here also at the same time! But I did not see myself with you there. If I had seen myself there and here also with you, how amusing it would have been! As soon as this thought came to me, I saw myself there as well as here with you, Mother! This made me laugh. Mother, how interesting and delightful it is when we see ourselves with the Mother!"

Wherever we went, I saw the Mother at each place, giving lessons. I too was there with her. The boy now remarked that it was the last place where we would see the Mother. Here She was with elder boys. She told this charming boy: "Take Champaklal to Prasad Bhavan." On the way, the boy stated: "Only inmates of this place are allowed to go there."

Far off, I saw a beautiful bower. It was covered with various kinds of creepers—full of beautiful flowers. When we reached the place, I saw a gigantic Service Tree full of lovely flowers—the atmosphere was filled with their fragrance. Some of the branches of this tree were touching the ground and there was no way to get in. I observed a small pillar nearby. The boy went towards the pillar and stepped upon it. I noticed the branches going up slowly. We entered and the path got closed again. The boy led me further. There was a small beautiful pond and in its midst an exquisite dome-shaped building covered with creepers, which I had seen from far. But there was no way to go to the building. We stood on a platform and to my surprise a very artistic bridge emerged from below and led up to the Prasad Bhavan. As soon as we reached the platform on the other side the bridge disappeared.

We entered the Prasad Bhavan and felt a very peaceful atmosphere filled with a sweet, pleasant, fragrance. No windows or doors could be seen—only one whole graceful wall which was made of a peculiar substance I could not identity but I can only say that it was magnificent. I had a feeling that this Prasad Bhavan was not only for seeing but to get experience. The boy first stood just in the centre of the

Prasad Bhavan with folded hands. He turned around with his closed eyes for a few seconds. He opened his eyes and turned again all around. Slowly he went towards a golden circle in the wall and pressed his finger upon it. At this, on the upper side of the wall a small door slided open inward and I could see a bright sun with its rays pouring down. Then this door closed and another door opened from the wall below the golden circle. A dish came out and the door closed automatically.

We came out of the Prasad Bhavan and again stood on the platform. The bridge emerged as before and disappeared as we stepped on the platform on the other side. While returning, I noticed from the bridge exceptionally pretty fishes of varied forms and colours. Some of them I had not seen even in the best aquarium of India at Madras, which I had visited in 1920.

Before going to the Prasad Bhavan, the charming boy had informed me that absolute silence was observed there and that the Mother was very particular about it. After we returned he explained: "There are 5000 shelves like the one shelf we saw. In future we shall get our cooked food from there. It is not yet complete. All this is done by the Mother's instructions and under Her guidance only." It dawned on me that in future cooking would be done by solar energy. He then asked me whether I felt the Mother's presence in the Prasad Bhavan. I replied: "Yes—that is why I was often looking back. I did not see the Mother but felt as if She was coming behind us." The boy remarked: "I did not say anything beforehand because I wanted to know whether you felt the presence or not." He then led me further to a place where the Mother was with elders and was explaining about Her work. She asked me: "Champaklal, you saw the Prasad Bhavan?" "Yes, Mother!" I replied; "no words to say what I experienced there!" The Mother added: "But the place is not yet complete. I shall call you. Do not be impatient. The time has not yet come for you. I am with you all."

My eyes opened.

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: Sri Aurobindo uses the terms "Soul" and "Being" as synonymous, but the Mother says they are not the same—Being is not Soul. If there is a difference, what is it? And how are the two views to be reconciled?

A: "Soul" and "Being" are not in themselves synonymous for Sri Aurobindo in all places. I do not believe that he has made any sweeping statement that they are. Nor has the Mother said that they can never be the same. She and Sri Aurobindo are at one in their usage.

"Being" *per se* simply means "that which exists" and, fundamentally, it means the basic Existence or the basic Existent.

As contrasted to "Becoming" in the sense of "Nature" (Prakriti) or else "Super-Nature" (Para-Prakriti) it stands for Purusha, the Witness, the Sanction-giver, the Ruler. In that case it is also called "Soul", as in Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita.*

The same significance, but with a particular shade stressed, we find in Sri Aurobindo's *Future Poetry*. There "Soul" represents broadly the true inner consciousness that is deeper than the subtle-physical, the vital and even the mental consciousness known to us as ourselves and as the source of our activities in both life and literature. This true inner consciousness is secretly in touch with the Universal and Transcendent Consciousness. All genuine poetry, from whatever plane, comes atmosphered with or steeped in it. And because of it the authentic poetic expression is a great formative and illuminative power.

The usage in *The Future Poetry* can be well summarised in a statement in *The Synthesis of Yoga*:[1] "The secret self within us is an intuitive self and this intuitive self is seated in every centre of our being, the physical, the nervous, the emotional, the volitional, the conceptual or cognitive and the higher more directly spiritual centres. And in each part of our being it exercises a secret intuitive initiation of our activities...."

It is necessary to understand the usage in *The Future Poetry* because otherwise we may mix up the meaning here with the connotation of the term "Soul" as it has become current among us from Sri Aurobindo's later writings, especially his letters on Yoga.

In these writings, "Soul" is employed, strictly speaking, for the Divine Principle present in the evolutionary process on the earth. More generally, it applies also to the individual formation that takes place around the Divine Principle by experience through life after life—chiefly after the human stage has been reached. Then the term is equivalent to "the psychic being".

If we do not differentiate the usage of the letters from the one in *The Future Poetry* we would infer that all poetry comes ultimately from the psychic level. Actually the poetry from that level is to be marked off from what issues poetically from the subtle-physical (as in Homer), the vital (as in Shakespears or Kalidasa), the mental

[1] *The Synthesis of Yoga* (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 1955), p. 918.

(as in Dante or Milton or Vyasa) and from "overhead" or "above-mind" (as mostly in *Savitri*, often in the Rigveda, the Upanishads, the Gita and occasionally in the "mantric" moments of other poets Eastern or Western).

The Life Divine, in its revised version, speaks of "the Double Soul in Man" as well as of the "the Divine Soul". The being of the emotional-vital movements is called the Desire-Soul, a surface entity. Behind it is the real psyche. This psyche or psychic being is, in the evolutionary process on earth, the delegate of the Divine Soul, the ultimate spiritual Individual, who is above the evolution and automatically one with the Universal Being and, on the supramental plane, with the Transcendent.

Here one must speak of the true human soul and the ego which we take to be our individual being and which rigidly limits one individual being from another. But, just because the true soul is contrasted to the desire-soul, we must not confuse the latter with the whole ego. It is only a part of the ego-formation which covers the mind and physical no less than the vital-emotional. The contrast is apt simply because the occult seat of the true soul, the psychic being, is behind the vital-emotional, the so-called "heart" of the human complex.

Q: Please explain the terms "Self, Spirit, the Divine, the Supreme Reality".

A: "Self" is the one essential Being, the same on all the planes. "Spirit", like "Soul", has various senses depending on the context. In general, it stands for the basic triune Reality, *Sat* (Existence), *Chit* (Consciousness)—or, as Sri Aurobindo would put this term, *Chit-Tapas* (Consciousness-Force)—and *Ananda* (Bliss).

"The Divine" is the Spirit in its role as the origin of its manifestation. The Divine is the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer of the worlds, or, in other words, the Lord of Manifestation, having various relations with what is manifested. Sri Aurobindo names it "Supermind", which carries in itself the truth of everything in the manifestation and which he equates to "God" considered as "omniscient, onmipotent, omnipresent".

"The Supreme Reality" is Self, Spirit and the Divine as well as the Ultimate Unmanifest on the one hand and on the other the secret stuff of all that is manifested, including even the Inconscient which seems its very antithesis and negation.

Q: What happens to us after death? Where do we go? Do we reside in the vital world till the vital body is dissolved? But at times it takes thousands of years for dissolution, doesn't it? How about the mental body?

A: After death—that is, the dissolution of the physical body—the true soul in us, the psychic being, has to shed the several sheaths in which it has worked—the subtle-physical, the vital, the mental—and then return to its own plane for a luminous "internatal sleep" which prepares it to return to earth in the role it selected while leaving its physical body.

Something of the vital sheath can be earth-bound for even three years. But that is an exception. And I do not believe the psychic being lingers in this remnant.

The thousands of years which you mention may apply to the psychic being's time of return to the earth. But usually it comes back much more quickly. There is no fixed rule here. Undeveloped souls may be reincarnated almost immediately.

As for her disciples, the Mother will take them at once to the psychic world by relieving them of their other surviving sheaths. Ordinarily the dead person may have to pass through diverse experiences before reaching the Soul-world. Whether the experiences are pleasant or unpleasant depends on the type of forces with which we have been in contact during our lives. Forces from beyond the earth act on us and in us and, when we leave our bodies, we come into direct relationship with them until the soul exhausts what is called its Karma, the outcome of our deeds during life.

At times the mental personality is so well organised around the central being in us, which is the psychic, that it persists into the next birth of the soul. Perhaps the vital personality may continue in the same way. Even something of the subtle-physical may go on. I remember once remarking to the Mother that when her hands were poised by her in a certain way they looked so very similar to Mona Lisa's as painted by Leonardo da Vinci. She answered, "Sometimes physical traits pass on from birth to birth." This statement sheds a double light. It provided me with a bit of general occult knowledge and also with a direct hint of a personal kind regarding a past incarnation of the Mother's.

Q: When one is ready to take a new birth, from where do the mental and vital bodies come? The physical, of course, comes from the parents.

A: As a rule, new vital and mental sheaths are made when the soul reincarnates. They are built out of the universal vital and mental substance.

Q: What is the function of the psychic being? To help the evolution?

A: The psychic being, which comes from the Transcendent, has the function of leading towards the Divine a universe which starts from the complete darkness and all-submergence that is the Inconscient. But it is not meant merely to refine the evolving elements and then use them as a jumping-board in order to escape to a supra-terrestrial existence. Its mission is not to abandon the rest of the being but to prepare it to receive and manifest the Divine here and now. This is the Aurobindonian view, insisting on total and integral transformation.

The rest of the being consists of the mental, vital and physical Purusha-Prakriti teams. The psychic Purusha-Prakriti has to serve as the divine centre to them and bring them under its influence and rule so that they may consciously become the "satellites" of this ever-pure true individual consciousness and manifest in their own distinctive terms its super-sweetness, super-light and super-strength.

AMAL KIRAN

THE CLOUD MESSENGER

A NEW TRANSLATION OF KALIDASA'S *MEGHADUTA*

Introduction

THE poems and dramas of Kalidasa stand as at once the loftiest and the most attractive peaks of literary expression left to us by India's classical age. They are not, indeed, the very Himalaya of the grand cultural evolution whose chief medium of utterance was Sanskrit, "the language of the Gods". They do not strive to match the antique sublimity of the Vedic and epic creations from which they descended. Yet they form a most impressive and appealing Vindhya of the inspired imagination, and from their eminence one can view through the master poet's eagle eyes the whole teeming panorama of life in India's most sensuously luxurious and intellectually stimulating era. One of these summits of literary artistry—not the largest or highest but among the most graceful and fascinating—especially concerns us here. The proper metaphor for this particular manifestation of Kalidasa's poetic genius is not a mountain, however, but a cloud.

The suggested image of Kalidasa's poetry as affording a panoramic aerial survey of the India of the time applies quite literally to the *Meghaduta* or *Cloud Messenger*, although the exact succession of scenes presented to us and the specific elements of the natural, human and superhuman landscape singled out for our notice are very much conditioned by the central theme pervading the work. For the cloud that transports us across central and northern India to a region beyond ordinary maps is no mere bearer of rain but a messenger of poignant love and longing. The cloud's journey, which is portrayed not in the realm of physical actuality but in the emotionally charged imagination of a desolate lover, carries us consequently over a peculiarly amorous and predominantly feminine countryside. Nevertheless, characteristic Aryan values of nobility, friendship and devotion are sufficiently intertwined with the dominant motif of romantic love to preserve a classical balance, and there is a richness of descriptive and reflective content that gives *The Cloud Messenger* enough breadth of scope to be thoroughly representative of Kalidasa's works.

Two major attempts at translating Kalidasa in such a way as to bring him to life for the English-speaking world were made by one who was probably better equipped for the task than anyone before or since. Sri Aurobindo, who combined an inside view of Indian culture and keen appreciation of Kalidasa with first-rate genius as an English poet, somewhere around the turn of the century rendered the drama *Vikramorvashi* (The Hero and the Nymph) as well as the *Meghaduta*. About Sri Aurobindo's *Hero and the Nymph* the only complaint that might be made is that it was not followed by a similar rendering of Kalidasa's greatest drama, the *Shakuntala*. *The Hero and the Nymph* has not received the recognition it merits—a *Shakuntala* of equal quality might have attracted more attention—but the accomplishment is there

for anyone interested, and remains perhaps the only really convincing English version of any of the larger masterpieces of classical Sanskrit literature. Sri Aurobindo's *Cloud Messenger* must have been of a comparable excellence. "Must have been", judging from the few fragments that survive. For this effort suffered a far more serious neglect than mere lack of acclaim. Neglected by the man with whom it was being kept during the early Pondicherry-sequel to Sri Aurobindo's turbulent political days in British India, the manuscript was—alas!—crudely enjoyed once and for all by an assembly of white ants before any more deserving audience could get a chance to taste its pleasures. Our only consolation is that a handful of lines Sri Aurobindo had happened to quote in some essays on Kalidasa and in a letter to his elder brother escaped the holocaust and can be consulted for an exact idea of what the lost translation was like.

It was from a comparison of these accidentally preserved lines of Sri Aurobindo's vanished *Cloud* with various other English renditions of the same segments of the Sanskrit original that the present project came about. For although the striking superiority of Sri Aurobindo's treatment of these passages is necessarily due in part to the inimitable touch of Sri Aurobindo himself, to a considerable extent it results also from a discovery of the right metrical form and rhythmic movement for conveying the flavour of the *Meghaduta* in English, in addition to a right approach to certain pervasive difficulties in bridging the gap between Kalidasa's culture and our own. It seemed to me that while one could certainly not resurrect the very body of Sri Aurobindo's lost work, it should be quite possible to take advantage of the precious scraps that are left, as well as their author's detailed account of his method, to arrive at a more adequate English version of the *Meghaduta* than is currently available.

This is precisely what I have tried to do to the best of my ability. I hope that the results of my labour will be found not too unworthy of Kalidasa's poem or the association with Sri Aurobindo. Most of Sri Aurobindo's own surviving lines have been worked in at the appropriate points. They occur mainly near the middle of the poem and will be printed in italics. The form of the translation is terza rima, which came to Sri Aurobindo "by an inspiration" as he says and which he quickly realised to have "both the necessary basis of recurring harmonics", unlike blank verse, and the needed capacity, unlike other rhymed forms, "to represent the eternal swell and surge of Kalidasa's stanza". I have never ceased to marvel at the felicity of the metrical choice. It is not at all an obvious solution to the problem of a formal equivalent for the irreproducible Sanskrit rhythmic scheme. Yet despite the apparently forbidding difficulty of the triple rhymes, the terza rima has repeatedly behaved in practice as a virtual magic wand able to dissipate seemingly insuperable obstacles to the rendering of this most challenging poem.

The central criterion my translation has constantly aspired to fulfil is that formulated by Sri Aurobindo in his essay "On Translating Kalidasa": "It is the inability to seize the associations and precise poetical force of Sanskrit words that has led many European Sanskritists to describe the poetry of Kalidasa which is hardly sur-

passed for truth, bold directness and native beauty and grandeur as the artificial poetry of an artificial period. A literal translation would only spread this erroneous impression to the general reader.... Closeness [to the text] is imperative, but it must be a closeness of word-value, not oneness of word-meaning; into this word-value there enter elements of association, sound and aesthetic beauty. If these are not translated, the word is not translated, however correct the rendering may be."

(Poem in the next issue)

RICHARD HARTZ

FROM ILLNESS TO HEALTH

TWO UNCOMMON INSIGHTS

THE catch in our breath when we are startled, the tension in our guts when we're worried, the exhaustion we feel from our anxiety, are as much a part of our illnesses as are the bacteria and viruses which attack us—and can, in fact, be just as debilitating, just as deadly.

DR. RONALD GLASSER

*

OVER 2,000 years ago Aristotle described the habit of laughter as "a bodily exercise precious to health." And philosophers and psychiatrists from Plato to Freud agree that the act of laughter is characterized by a sudden release of tension. Few activities can produce such wide-spread beneficial effects. Laughter aids digestion by increasing glandular secretion, relaxes the muscles and brings a blush to the skin and a sparkle to the eyes. "I've seldom been called upon to help a person who had a sense of the ridiculous," one psychiatrist observed, "and I've *never* had to treat anyone who could really laugh at himself."

DONALD NORFOLK

THE POET AND HIS DAIMON

I

IT IS a very ancient view that occult purposes act from behind the exterior psychology to produce works of poetic excellence. For, all great poets have believed in invoking what they called the Muse: no poet denies that in his perfect moments a rare superhuman force rushes through his ordinary consciousness. However, in various poets the force functions in various ways. Byron did not believe that inspiration could come by sitting and waiting for it, and to disprove that Wordsworthian notion he conducted a series of experiments: evening after evening he sat with a pen in his hand and a sheet of paper in front of him, asking the Muse to come down and make him write. Critics who do not relish "milord" 's poetry may say that inspiration could never have visited Byron because he was not a true poet at all; but this is rather to overshoot the mark, for there are passages even in Byron bearing the authentic stamp. A poet who could write about Lucifer that

> ...his eye
> Glared forth the immortality of hell

might with reason expect the Muse to dictate sometimes to him when he had invited her descent long enough. The failure was due really to his positing wrong conditions—conditions unsuitable to his temperament.

A poet like Wordsworth could draw inspiration by a patient waiting, but Byron's mind acted by an easy natural movement: to make it a blank was rather to obfuscate than clear its receptive mood. He shared with Shelley a spontaneous flow, a rapid inspiration, though one cannot put on an equal footing the rhetorical rush of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and the visionary fire of *Prometheus Unbound.* Byron began his poetic career by dictating oriental tales to his valet while dressing for dinners: not in the least an irrational method—we can well imagine Shakespeare to have dashed off pages of *Hamlet* in the green room while some actor was tidying himself up and chatting to him over his shoulder. For inspiration acts according to the peculiarities of a writer. Schiller could not compose his dramas unless he had a boxful of rotting apples under his table, and Milton could not continue fluently his *Paradise Lost* between the vernal and the autumnal equinoxes: wintry dullness which might freeze the genial current of other poetic souls let loose cataract on cataract of words in his. The point is that an extraordinary power possesses the poet, deploys itself capriciously, fills him with tense music, then lets him drop into loose verbiage, and returns at odd moments to string him up anew.

It is possible to regulate the power somewhat, but beyond a certain degree no poet can be sure of it. And during his contact with its miracles, he is conscious of plumbing some divine depth in himself or is borne on a burning breath of rapture or,

with a hand stretched as if in sleep, plucks strange fruit from an invisible tree. The dim profound, the luminous wind, the magic wood are all unknown things—larger than the individual and existing beyond his day-to-day thoughts and desires. They are his symbolic experiences of the Muse within him, the daimon or in-dwelling presence with whom he is identified on rare occasions but whom he recognises as a mighty independent spirit standing on a threshold between the waking intelligence and the dream-state. When the poet is genuinely inspired, a part of him is as though hypnotised by ideas, images, words into an absorbed aloofness from the outer mind; he becomes self-withdrawn, he wears a look of surrender to the incalculable. Even when he tries forcibly to get the right effect it is a frantic cry to the Muse to come and conquer him, a flinging of himself into the Muse's arms rather than a masterful grasping of her to wrench out the *mot juste.*

This daimon has in each great poet a certain curve of progress to trace: whether the curve comes full circle or not depends upon a large complex of circumstances. Among English poets, only two got to the end of their journey—Shakespeare and Milton. Spenser fell within eyeshot of his goal: nobody else did even so much. Coleridge did famous things, but his destination remained vague because Wordsworth's soul-composing mind-assuring simplicity was removed from his neighbourhood and he was left drowning in the oceans of his own labyrinthine restlessness. Wordsworth himself lapsed after a brief decade of keen beauty into benevolent dullness because not only did his philosophy have its initial root in Coleridge but even his poetic sensibility had been lit by Coleridge's inflammable temperament and could not long keep a living glow on its own. It was Wordsworth who had sustained Coleridge's already awakened genius, but it was Coleridge who by his contact gave Wordsworth's music a noble accent. Tennyson had a half-morbid half-visionary strain in him which with his curious eye for scenic detail would have brought us colourful and quivering or magically intonated masterpieces on a large scale, if he had not allowed it to superficialise itself into inane sentimentalism and a habit of uttering platitudes with a pensive air. Swinburne fared better, yet lived through most of his manhood and old age in a condition of lop-sided growth: his expansive power kept developing beautiful intricacies of rhythm whereas the faculty to brood and concentrate and delve deep went numb, waking up at rare intervals in an excitement which carried most precious poetic wealth but soon exhausted itself.

There are, however, other circumstances more catastrophic than a long yet unconsummated career; and their classical victims are Keats and Shelley and, before them, Marlowe. They did not have even an opportunity to answer the command which the daimon lays upon the outer life.

Keats has left us his precise plans—namely, to write poems combining the colour of *St. Agnes' Eve* with a greater stress of character-play and psychological motive, as a prelude to some strong and rich dramatic projection in the Shakespearean style. His *Hyperion* would most probably have remained for a long time a fragment; for Keats was getting disgusted with epic and mythological themes. The resonant lang-

uage which, while treating them, he beat out for himself he would have wished to use for fashioning, in place of gods and titans, personations of powerful human moods, some disillusioned Othello or frustrated Coriolanus, some Antony blinded to all the world by the dazzling darkness of a Cleopatra's eyes. But would Keats have realised his wish? If he had had the slightest capacity to create live character—and without that no drama worth the name can exist—it would have displayed itself, at least to some degree, in his extant dramatic efforts. These efforts make no living gesture, and Keats would have, in the last analysis, ill-used his mature years by running after the Shakespearean ideal. He was sure to have discovered his mistake—but perhaps at much cost, just as the ludicrous *Cap and Bells* frittered away the precious energy he should have spent on continuing *Hyperion.*

Shelley's development was much more certain; his death too was more lamentable, since Keats died and inspired *Adonais* and so in a way his passing was compensated for, while the remembrance of Shelley's dust has never bloomed into immortal poetic beauty. If he had lived, his progress would have been towards reflective mysticism. We are too apt to ignore the intellect Shelley possessed: Mary's reminiscences as well as his own prose writings afford us a convincing proof of it. His philosophic spirit, brooding over life's riddle, solved it at first by a lyric vision of a world free in its heart and imagination from superstitious no less than political chains, but he was bound later to arrive at some more clear and controlled thought-process and some more definite spiritual experience side by side with the lyric impulse and the symbolic vision. Shelley could never have stopped growing and in the right direction for his peculiar genius: not since Shakespeare, had a poet been so completely in rapport with his daimon—his inspired fluency Milton himself had never rivalled. From that point of view a wider gap was left in English verse by the squall in the Bay of Spezzia which drowned his voice for ever than by the coughing lungs that wasted the life-breath of Keats in Rome; besides, even the inspired fluency of Keats can be compared in swiftness with Milton's and not with Shakespeare's.

From another point of view, that squall was more disastrous than the stab which ended Marlowe; for I believe that, despite his premature end, Marlowe's daimon, unlike Shelley's, was not cut off from sovereign fulfilment. Only, it fulfilled itself after Marlowe's own death and under new conditions of consciousness.

Let me explain the paradox. No two poets can write always in exactly the same style and with the same psychological attitude. But if the essence of one poet's drift got mingled in another poet with new qualities and somehow coloured them into its own likeness amid all variations, it might not be impossible to detect the phenomenon. My statement about Marlowe rests on a feeling that such a phenomenon has occurred with regard to him. We must, nevertheless, keep in mind that what he himself would have produced by way of a *magnum opus* would have been something unique, something no other poet could have written because temperamental differences were bound to interfere. So if the phenomenon I have spoken of has taken place we should best appreciate its meaning and extent by a comparison between the

hypothetical *magnum opus* and the novel form I suppose to have been assumed by the essence of that eruptive energy whose literary flash and detonation we know as Christopher Marlowe.

What was that essence? Marlowe's purple patches and terrible episodes bewilder the mind with their infinite of utterance, so to speak—a stupendous power directed in the main to an expression of wilful personality straining, with magnificent disaster, against the universe and the Divine. The first bodying forth of Marlowe's daimon, the occult greatness which seems to have tried his life-force as its vehicle, we find in that unwieldy colossus of his early twenties, *Tamburlaine*—a work meant to be a drama but destitute of all constructive artistry, a manifold confusion through which the figure of its hero moves in a storm of word-thunder and imaginative lightning. The conception underlying it is the titan-soul's battle with destiny: Tamburlaine, a Scythian shepherd, raises the banner of revolt against Persia and rides victorious over half the world in a gigantic beauty of arrogance and ambition and defiance of man and God, with only one joint in his armour—the love which ravages his heart for his wife Zenocratè. Through this joint he receives his mortal wound, for in the midst of his glory death carries away Zenocratè and soon after lays low the conqueror's own life.

The same theme of personal grandeur towering against the forces of Nature and Providence to a last toppling point runs through all of Marlowe's later production in one form or another of imaginative life-force cast into dramatic movement with no sure success anywhere in that particular mould. There is a certain power of dramatic occasion at his command, but we feel at the same time as though his was a mind which attempted to dramatise with initially a poor constructive gift a natural epic vein, with the result that its sole triumphs were individual scenes such as that most perfect climax to *Faustus*. For, the daimon who would somehow be out saw in him possibilities both epic and dramatic, and tried to struggle with his rather unbalanced temperament towards some definite and harmonious issue. Before the experiment could come to any satisfying conclusion Marlowe died a violent death at the age of twenty-nine. What would his twofold impulse have ripened into? Would he have penned an epic? Would he have mastered the drama?

In *Edward II* he was moving towards dramatic structure; but such a framework seems to have run counter to his purely poetic urge and wearied and weakened it by too stringent and preoccupying a check to his impetuousity. To me he seems an experiment wherein the occult voices were conceiving an epic drama with the central conception bodied forth a little loosely in semi-dissolving scenes. When some harmonising instinct would have emerged and he would have gained a more uniform control over his blank verse which usually tended, apart even from lack of enjambment, to be a little disproportionate by some musical defect in sentence-formation, then his crowning achievement could have most naturally been a work with Satan as its principal character, the *Paradise Lost* prefigured in a huge phantasmagoria of a play. For, what else is *Paradise Lost* save an epic *n*th degree of a grandiose

egoism up in arms against the universal Law, a titan ambition warring disastrously with the inscrutable Divine—the basic Marlovian idea consummated?

Of course, important contrasts strike one: Milton was an intellectual and his hero could never be Marlowe's sheer life-force, the mind with its deliberate experiences, its half-spiritual "exultations and agonies", has come on the stage; but the salient feature remains that Milton has thrown himself heart and soul into a theme and figure than which nothing more to Marlowe's taste could be conceived, especially after his almost skirting Milton's domain in the legend of Faustus. It is as though what had moved the old life-force has now appeared behind the new intellectual being and Marlowe's daimon risen to Milton's mental level, making Satan a transfigured Tamburlaine, a sublimation of Barabas, a high unity of Faustus and Mephistophilis. That is why after revolving about a hundred subjects in his mind, many of them scriptural and the rest from British history, Milton fixed on an epic idea and tone so much in Marlowe's line, and as soon as he crossed over to other parts of his epic, parts less Marlovian, his inspiration marked a comparative decline. In addition, have we not his own record that his original design was to embody his poetry in a form of drama and that he had drawn up a whole scheme suited to that treatment—a Marlowe-tendency again, relinquished because of his own more mental and less vitally creative nature?

Take his blank verse itself, the strength and the amplitude of it: what he has governed and modulated by a technical pattern of line-overflow, scrupulous shift of pause, and rolling yet compact syntax, is the thunderous "infinite" of Marlowe intellectualised. That this author was not his favourite study adds only an extra interest to the occult way in which the Elizabethan's penchant in substance and in quality of style appears to have been repeated in him under the conditions of the intellect and a new technique. Is this Tamburlaine or Satan described?—

> Of stature tall, and straightly fashionèd,
> Like his desire, lift upward and divine;
> So large of limb, his joints so strongly knit,
> Such breadth of shoulders as might mainly bear
> Old Atlas' burden.

And whose vaulting ambition speaks thus—the Scythian conqueror's or the Archangel's?—

> Give me a look, that when I bend the brows
> Pale death may walk in furrows of my face;
> A hand that with a grasp may gripe the world;
> A royal seat, a sceptre and a crown,
> That those that do behold them may become
> As men that stand and gaze against the sun.

Is it not possible to catch Miltonic correspondences in lines like:

> There angels in their crystal armours fight
> A doubtful battle with my tempted thoughts,

or those others:

> Come, let us march against the powers of heaven
> And set black streamers in the firmament
> To signify the slaughter of the gods;

or in that resounding vaunt:

> Give me a map; then let me see how much
> Is left for me to conquer all the world.
> Here I began to march towards Persia,
> Along Armenia and the Caspian Sea,
> And thence into Bithynia, where I took
> The Turk and his great empress prisoners...
> And thence to Nubia near Borno-lake
> And so along the Ethiopian Sea,
> Cutting the tropic line of Capricorn,
> I conquered all as far as Zanzibar...
> Look here, my boys; see what a world of ground
> Lies westward from the midst of Cancer's line
> Unto the rising of this earthly globe,
> Whereas the sun declining from our sight
> Begins the day with our Antipodes!
> And shall I die, and this unconquerèd?
> Lo here, my sons, are all the golden mines,
> Inestimable drugs and precious stones,
> More worth than Asia and the world beside;
> And from th' Antarctic Pole eastward behold
> As much more land which never was descried,
> Wherein are rocks of pearl that shine as bright
> As all the lamps that beautify the sky!
> And shall I die, and this unconquerèd?—

or, again, in the colloquy between Faustus and Mephistophilis when the former has asked, "How comes it then that thou art out of hell?" and the reply rings forth:

> Why, this is hell, nor am I out of it:

Think'st thou that I who saw the face of God
And tasted the eternal joys of heaven
Am not tormented with ten thousand hells
In being depriv'd of everlasting bliss?

Faustus, who is in seed-form the complement of Mephistophilis for half of Milton's complete Satan to get evolved from, flings a reproach at the fallen spirit's torment:

What, is great Mephistophilis passionate
For being deprivèd of the joys of heaven?
Learn thou of Faustus manly fortitude,
And scorn the joys thou never shalt possess.

The last line is perfect Miltonese, just as these two where the idea that hell is an inward condition essentially—an idea whose converse is Satan's famous cry that heaven too is an inward condition and the mind can turn hell into heaven—is taken up by Mephistophilis:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscrib'd
To one self place; for where we are is hell.

No less Miltonic are the words a little before, when it is questioned how Lucifer, "arch-regent and commander of all spirits", has become the "prince of devils":

O, by aspiring pride and insolence;
For which God threw him from the face of heaven—

and those put in the mouth of Faustus elsewhere:

Now by the kingdoms of infernal rule,
Of Styx, of Acheron, and the fiery lake
Of ever-burning Phlegethon, I swear.

Here even the verse-movement is like Milton's, but in all these excerpts the essential attitude and energy is so anticipatory of *Paradise Lost* that to anyone with an occult sense of the poetic afflatus it would seem that the epic possibility lost in Marlowe attained its goal through Milton, though from a different plane.

We might say it attained its goal in a far more consummate manner, too, because of the Puritan poet's maturer, more stable, constructive and intellectual disposition; but in spite of the flaws we might expect to accompany Marlowe's hand, there would have been in his composition not a greater fire but, as distinguished from an organised conflagration, brighter spurts of fire arising from his recrudescent vitality on

the one hand and on the other his usual technique of end-stopped lines. The latter, though depriving him of the organ-music possible to enjambment, would have induced his genius for power to put into it in the day of his full poetic growth a preternatural rage of colourful phrase so that the means by which alone the absence, on a large scale, of overflow from one line to another could be supported might perform its function with the utmost effect. I do not think his Satan would have had to such a superb and unrivalled degree the adamantine will of Milton's: a less heroic figure, he would have alternated between defiance and despair, not submitting or yielding but gnawed more miserably by a secret remorse. Whereas, if the poet had gone beyond the loss of heaven to the temptation of Adam and Eve and if the incidents in the Garden of Eden had inspired him, even as much or as little as Milton, the first man and the first woman would have passed to their doom with a more vivid and dynamic disobedience. They would also have had a more dreadful aftermath of repentance: one remembers Faustus's cry—

> O, I'll leap up to my God!—Who pulls me down?—
> See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament!
> One drop would save my soul, half a drop: ah, my Christ!—
> Ah, rend not my heart for naming of my Christ!
> Yet will I call on him: O spare me, Lucifer!—
> Where is it now? 'tis gone: and see, where God
> Stretcheth out his arm, and bends his ireful brows!
> Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!

Another certainty is that Marlowe's God would have spoken more grandly than Milton's and matched the eloquence of Satan instead of being, as in *Paradise Lost*, mostly a prosaic paragon, omnipotence distilled to never-ending dullness.

What Marlowe could never have supplied was, apart from the masterful and many-mooded artistry of *Paradise Lost*, the nobility of soul which permeated its power and which derived from its author's unique individuality. A religious intensity of the intellect was one of the wings to Milton's inspiration, while Marlowe had only his *élan vital*: from a false sense of reverence the former may generally have made his God passionless in speech, but his own fervour for the Divine gave the poem the prophetic overtone that counterbalanced his massive imaginative obsession by Satan's figure—nay, subtly interfused with it and suggested some inner mystic depth at the same time as the outer titanic height. Where this fervour had an unfettered play, the music was most remarkably from a plane inaccessible to Marlowe—graver than his in substance and rhythmic ecstasy and to the intellectual self of man more satisfying: no one except Milton could have written the stately opening of *Paradise Lost*, the beautiful and poignant invocation to Light with which the third book begins, the tremendous prelude in the seventh to Urania. No one else could have thus worded

Belial's fear of extinction at the hands of All-Might as a cure for misery:

> Sad cure! for who would lose,
> Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
> Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
> To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
> In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
> Devoid of sense and motion?

This was, psychologically, beyond Marlowe; in especial the Miltonic summit of the line,

> Those thoughts that wander through eternity—

a line in which the words are borne on a rhythm which gives perhaps the grandest vibration, in all European literature, of a feeling of contact with what Dr. Otto calls the "numinous" and Emerson the "Oversoul". But Marlowe could have brought a power as splendid in its own way if more loose, an equal strength of voice if less volume and a less noble intonation. Though he was more sharp in his impact while Milton had more breadth, his own pinnacle—

> See, see, where Christ's blood streams in the firmament

—is no whit inferior as imaginative poetry or weaker in essential force. He could also bring mass and volume—

> Mountains and hills, come, come, and fall on me,
> And hide me from the heavy wrath of God!—

yet these again have an element of keenness, of restlessness, which is unlike Milton's more collected grandeur. The difference results to a considerable extent from the fact that in Marlowe the dramatic and the epic tendencies were mixed together. Even when Milton's thunder came nearest the Elizabethan word-fury—

> Him the Almighty Power
> Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky,
> With hideous ruin and combustion, down
> To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
> In adamantine chains and penal fire,
> Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms—

even when Milton composed a passage like that, he was most unMarlovian by his kind of tone, a mental and deliberate rhythm helped out by his inversions, his linked

syntax, his length of poetic phrase. Still, in English poetry there can be found nothing outside Marlowe to measure its power: he alone catches again and again its vast dynamic, though he employs it in successive passionate outbursts where Milton marshals prolonged resonances: Marlowe has not the identical kind of tone, but he has identical pitch. Moreover, he is ruled by that rebellious mood of the hero of *Paradise Lost*, from which the poem's terrible beauty is born. There are, throughout *Paradise Lost*, thousands of lines far removed from Marlowe's style: in fact the whole scheme of the epic is alien to Marlowe's mentality; yet the underlying Satanic megalomania and the boundless poetic Will to Power are close-allied to the "infinite" of Marlowe. It is in this sense that I conjecture the daimon-drive behind the dissimilarities of the two poets to be at heart one and the same.

(To be continued)

K. D. SETHNA

NIGHT-FALL

THIS is the pool of loveliness
In the quiet of the dream-song,
This is the lotus of white flame
Inwardly burning, intensely strong.

This is the apple-tree orchard
Under the shade-and-light of sky,
And then this is the dragon-bird
As though it shall never wake to fly.

This is the grain of mortal fear,
Horrid, thrown by the grim hand of Death,
This is the vale of no-return:
Once trapped the soul would sink beneath.

This is the fishermen's wharf, old,
Caught in the network of Night's tide—
Indeed this is the miracle-world
By an unknown Power being tried.

RENUKADAS DESHPANDE

POEMS BEFORE AND AFTER

POET'S NOTE

Before my coming here in February of 1973 to have Birthday Darshan with Mother and to live in the Ashram, my poetry with few exceptions, reflected the Western malaise of loneliness and despair, an empty moving towards death.

As distillation of my experiences since 1973, notes made in the past four years are now being shaped into poems and new poems are being written.

While reading, a short time ago, poems written before 1973, an unexpected analogy became apparent to me. There are similarities of theme and image in many of the poems written before and after 1973, but the new poems are a complete reversal, and evidence a tremendous change, a coming into life and love. It is as if the promise of "New Creation", the first flower given to me by Mother that crucial Birthday Darshan in 1973 is being fulfilled.

Where the poems are analogues, they are offered together or sequentially. Where there are no counterparts, they are simply offered.

OFFERING I: LO! KEEN-EYED-TOWERS—1968

Lo! keen-eyed towering Science
making successive absolute Fiats....
Walt Whitman

TOWERS turning
To eternal flame,
When shall we return
To look and listen?
For we have come
To stand at last
As in a dark house,
As in an empty room,
Silence.

About us
Radiant feast,
Fruits and flourishes
Not to be seen by eyes
Choosing Fool's Gold,
Not to be heard by ears
Choosing cymbals and clashes;
Flashes of resonance, white
Crashing and sibilant light
And we in anger feed
On acid juice.

Our sour corruption
Explodes dark up!

We have
A notion of things
Moving in stillness,
Moving like wind,
Moving in pallor,
Moving in shapes
Of pattern and colour
Nothing contained.

A tree surrounds its shape
And all is contained

A peony,
Petals pinked and purely
Sweet, not to instruct
But to profound
Unseen, un-naming Flame,
A band of iron and a burning
Rock, entabulature to
Absolute, the Host and Ark.
Man, to what image of man
Committed, obdurate form,
In blindness plucks
The wind.

The loaf diminishes
The lens of Time.

Substantial night
Prefabricates a solemn
Symmetry and singles
To sonorous light.
Stars on out-curving
Macro-limbs of space,
Bud on impersonal branch,
The protean cell.
Caught in the slotted noon
Of Infinite, all yields
Exposed.....

And we?
We hold this wonder.
We hold wonder like a sickness
In our hands.

ELIZABETH STILLER

THE ARTS AND THEIR INTERRELATIONS

MANY foreign visitors to the United States in recent years have been surprised to find so much interest and activity in the arts. Some of them had been told that Americans were interested only in mechanical gadgets and in chasing dollars. Hence their amazement, on going from city to city, to find palatial art museums filled with masterpieces of ancient and modern art and crowded with visitors, including school children. They were surprised to find the interest in concerts of good music over the radio and television; to find popular magazines devoting page after page to coloured illustrations of fine art from all parts of the world. Schools, universities and academies of visual art and music are crowded with students eager to become proficient in some kind of art. As in any country, the majority of people are interested only in enjoying the arts and not in making a serious study of them. But there are many thousands in this country, especially among the younger generation, who want to learn about them in a serious way.

There are many different ways of studying the arts. One is to learn how to practise or perform them—to play the piano, to paint, or to act in a play. This often leads a student to try to create original works of art. For this purpose he may study creative writing or the principles of musical harmony or industrial design. Many college students take courses on the history of art from prehistoric times to the present. Some wish to become teachers of some art and, therefore, learn the methods of education in that field. Others become critics of art, writing books or articles for newspapers and magazines, and still others enter an administrative career such as museum direction or the management of an orchestra or a magazine.

There is one more approach which I have not yet mentioned. That is to try to understand the arts in a theoretical, scientific way. The subject which concerns itself with making a theoretical study of all the arts and their interrelations is called aesthetics. This subject is attracting more and more attention in American universities and colleges. Courses and books on it have multiplied. A quarterly magazine is published, called 'The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism' and many articles are written for it by scholars, artists, and teachers.

What is aesthetics? It is a very old subject, although the name "aesthetics" came into use only in the eighteenth century. Plato, Aristotle, and most of the other great philosophers had something to say about art, beauty, and the value of art in human experience. They expressed their opinions about what makes a work of art good or bad, and what kinds of art should be encouraged by society. This older type of aesthetics was usually taught by the philosophy department of a college. It was very abstract, and dealt with rather vague problems such as "the meaning of beauty". In recent years, there has been a great change in aesthetics, especially in the United States. The emphasis now is on a scientific approach to the study of art. Instead of expressing only our personal opinions and getting nowhere, we now try to learn as much as possible about the arts, and about how people create and use them.

Aesthetics is related to art criticism, but it is more broad and general. The art critic usually discusses one particular art, one artist, or a few of them, and tells what he thinks about them. Aesthetics deals more with broad topics such as the nature of form and style in the various arts and the standards of value which are used in deciding whether a work of art is good or bad, great or trivial. In saying that it deals with all the arts, we mean that it is not limited to the visual arts such as painting, sculpture, architecture, and furniture. It is just as much interested in music, literature, ballet, the stage and film. It looks with care at the popular arts which are emerging in our newspaper cartoons and on the radio and television. The popular arts are significant expressions of the interests and attitudes of a people at a certain time. They show what people admire and dislike, envy and fear, believe and disbelieve.

In such studies, aesthetics draws upon the knowledge and the insight of other sciences. It examines what anthropology and psychology tell us about the cultural and social background of our own and other peoples. We learn from them the motivations that lead people to create a certain kind of art. We learn from the social sciences how art fits into a certain kind of social and economic system. We can better understand why art assumes the forms it does if we know more about the minds and behaviour of the groups and individuals who made it. Modern aesthetics is also helped by having, for the first time, a wide sampling of works of art from all important periods and cultures, both civilized and primitive. In the eighteenth century, our knowledge about art was almost entirely limited to the arts of Greece, Rome, and Western Europe. Now we are filling our museums with the great art of China, Japan, India, the Near East, and Africa. Their music is being recorded on discs and tapes. Their literature is being translated into English and other European languages. Now scholars who are interested in aesthetics can base their conclusions on direct observation and comparison of the various styles of art.

Some of these scholars are interested in history rather than in theory. They trace the origin and development of art from ancient to modern. Aesthetics is closely related to the history of the arts, but it organizes its knowledge more in a theoretical than in a chronological order. However, they have many problems in common. One branch of aesthetics deals with the principles of art history. Aesthetics asks whether there is any definite pattern, law, or persistent tendency in the history of the arts. Some philosophers say there is and others that there is none. Some philosophers have said that art and culture develop as parts of the one great process of evolution, but others disagree on that point.

Modern aesthetics has several branches. One of them is called the morphology of art, which means the study of form in all the arts. A symphony has form, and so does a cathedral or a painting. Another branch is stylistic analysis, in which we study the great historic styles such as Classic and Romantic, Byzantine, Gothic, and Baroque. Another branch of aesthetics is called the psychology of art. This deals with the mental and physical processes by which an artist creates, and an observer appreciates art. The sociology of art tells us of the social and economic factors which

influence style and public taste. It asks, for example, who supports and controls the arts in various periods.

Still another branch of art and aesthetics deals with the interrelations of the arts. It is sometimes called the system of the arts or the classification of the arts. "Classification" sounds like a dry, technical study, but in this case the subject-matter is very much alive and the problems are significant. The attitude which people have taken towards the arts at various periods of history is revealing.

In ancient Greece and Rome, in the Middle Ages, and on into modern times, the arts were divided into two groups—the liberal and the servile or mechanical. The liberal arts were supposed to be those which elevated the mind and were suitable for a lady or gentleman to practise. The servile arts were supposed to be suited only for slaves and manual labourers. Some of our most respected arts, such as painting and sculpture, had a low social status because the artist had to work with his hands. His status was still lower if he made useful things such as chairs or clothing. As time went by, the manual and useful arts rose in the social scale. Our attitude towards them is now more democratic. Educators think that all arts, if rightly used, can liberate and develop the mind.

Recent scholars have tried to work out some scheme by which all the arts could be classified, just as botanists classify the species of plants, and zoologists the species of animals. Some of these classifications are well known. In a college catalogue we may see the heading "Fine Arts." That is a very ambiguous term. Sometimes it means only the visual arts which have no useful or practical purpose, such as painting and sculpture. Sometimes it includes music and literature also. Libraries have worked out systems of classifying books on the arts, in order to organize their collections and their filing cards. Some other terms which are used to describe the interrelations of the arts are "theatre arts", "representational arts", and "decorative arts." The theatre arts are, of course, those which are usually performed in a theatre. They include stage plays, ballets, films, and marionettes. The opera is called "mixed" art, because it makes use of music, literature, acting, stage design, lighting, costume, and other arts. These have to be combined to make a unified, harmonious effect. Painting and sculpture were formerly classed as arts of rest, while acting, poetry, and music were classed as arts of change or motion. But now, through the technique of the film projector, the pictorial arts have been set into motion. New arts of mobile colour and abstract films are being developed.

Thus our classifications have to change in response to the changes of art itself. Painting and sculpture were formerly classed as "representative arts." It was supposed that they always tried to represent the human figure or some other object in a realistic way. But now we have a great many styles of painting and sculpture, which do not try to represent anything at all. They are called abstract or non-objective. What then shall we do with our old classification of painting and sculpture as representative arts? A new set of headings has to be worked out. There are practical reasons for doing this not only to classify objects in art museums and courses in univer-

sities, but also to organise the workers in various crafts and professions, as in guilds or unions of actors, composers, or playwrights. The United States Government has worked out elaborate classifications of the arts and other occupations in terms of job analysis. As in other fields, a distinction is made between the top levels of creative design or management and those in which an artisan obeys orders with more or less skill and technical training.

Another approach to the study of the arts and their interrelations is the historical. Art history can be studied in a very specialized way, as when we read a book on the history of painting or of music in the nineteenth century in Germany. There is also a very broad, comprehensive kind of history which is called cultural history or the history of civilisation. It tries to fit together the histories of all the particular arts; to see how they were related to each other and to contemporary political, social, religious, and intellectual events. The whole culture of an age is studied, such as that of Baroque or seventeenth-century Europe, and the part played by each art in the life of the time is described. The cultural historian has his own way of studying the interrelations of the arts. He wants to know how the various arts influence each other at a certain time and how they sometimes change together.

A great movement such as Romanticism can affect all the arts in a certain period. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the Romantic movement spread through music and literature, painting, sculpture, dress, architecture, and garden design. It led to some of the greatest operas and stage plays of the century. It affected not only the arts but even philosophical, scientific, and religious ideas and attitudes. It was accompanied by parallel movements in economics and politics; in business and government. In all these fields the Romantic ideals of freedom, individualism, equality, emotion, and imagination were emphasized. Over and above all national and individual differences, there was a certain general spirit in common which allows us to call them all Romantic.

Another such trend is called Naturalism. It shows the effect of science in and after the Renaissance. The curiosity of the scientific mind about the facts and operations of nature was paralleled by the artist's interest in representing it faithfully. Sometimes these interests were combined in one man such as Leonardo da Vinci.

In the late nineteenth century, the movement called Impressionism was expressed not only in painting but also in music and poetry. Sometimes a painter and a composer would both try to express certain ideas or represent the same objects. For example, Monet was interested in showing the coloured reflections of light on water, while Debussy tried to suggest its flowing, shimmering movement through his music.

This raises the question of how the various arts resemble each other and differ from each other. To what extent can they really express the same moods and ideas? What are the strong and weak points of each art? For example, printed literature is weak in the directness and intensity of sensuous images, by comparison with music

and painting. Music gives us vivid auditory perceptions and painting gives us rich and colourful visual images. But literature is more capable of suggesting a complex system of ideas. It can express abstract reasoning more clearly and tell a story in great detail.

(To be continued)

THOMAS MUNRO

NOISE-POLLUTION

IT all begins
With the first sip of inauguration
At the corner stall,
Brewing the punch of babel
Mixing mikes and cups.
All the screaming extravaganza
Of the silver screen
Raping ambient anthems,
Thumps up, gargling banalities.
A little away in a nook,
The chords of the speaker
Scale up a barrier of jars,
Amidst idol-planting pietists.
A new-born church
Wakes up mike-captive and goes
On hot-gospelling
Through the sabbath sun of God.
The auspicious reign of pipes
In solemnisation
Is swallowed up by the tyranny
Of sounding splurge.
When demagogy sits poised
Through avenues of neon
To hurl down a sky-lab of drivel,
The mike of might
Performs its coup capturing
The finer cadences of the air.

G. VISWANATHAN

THE NŌ THEATRE OF JAPAN

To World Drama, Japan has contributed three theatres of eminence, namely: Nō, Kabuki and Puppet. Though the Kabuki and Puppet are very popular theatres among the commoners, they were greatly influenced by the ancient aristocratic theatre, the Nō. It was a fashionable amusement of the aristocracy and the warrior class and was hardly open to the commoners.

Origin and Development

"The unseemly behaviour of her brother very much disgusted the sun goddess. To be away from him she shut herself up in a cave and thus deprived the world of light. Darkness reigned over the world. As the sun was necessary for all the worldly activities, people appealed to another goddess who performed a mimic dance on a resonant tub to lure the sun goddess out. Her effort yielded fruit."

Scholars have attributed to this 8th-century Japanese legend the origin of the Nō theatre. As centuries passed, the Nō supplemented itself with rustic exhibitions of acrobatics, Chinese recitations and dances, as well as with a species of elementary opera called '*dengaku*'. The theatre achieved literary status in the latter half of the 14th century, "a feudal period in Japanese history that witnessed a general flowering of the arts", when two sharp-witted aristocrats Kwanami Kiyotsugu and his son Seami Motokiyo refined the style of the Nō and codified it in a series of works. Their works were to the Nō theatre what Aristotle's *Poetics* was to the Western theatre. The Nō reached its acme of perfection in the 17th century by drawing its forms and materials from myth, legend, poetry, folk and ritual dances of China and Japan and the Buddhist scriptures.

Structure of the Stage

The stage on which the Nō plays were enacted had two principal areas: the Stage Proper and the Bridge. Raised some three or four feet from the ground, the stage proper was a floor of polished cypress wood eighteen feet square, and specially constructed for resonance. The ornate roof, the eaves of which were some twelve feet from the ground and the ridge twenty feet, was supported by four sturdy pillars. These pillars had 'conventional spatial values and determined the pattern of the actors' movement'. Extending from the left side of the stage proper, there was a roofed passage way, called the *hashigakari* or the Bridge, which was six feet wide and some forty feet long. It connected the dressing room of the actors with the stage proper and was used by the actors for their entrances and exits. On the right of the stage proper was a balcony which served the purpose of accommodating the chorus of ten singers in native dress. The musicians sat with their instruments at the rear of the stage. The stage projected into the auditorium and the audience occupied two, and in some extraordinary situations three, sides of it.

Scenery

There was no scenery, except "a stylized pine tree on the rear wall of the stage, the painted bamboo design on the narrow wall to the side of it, the strip of white pebbles between the playing areas and the auditorium and the three small pine trees in front of the bridge". The movable scenery was exiguous and allusive. An open framework suggested a boat or chariot, four light posts covered with a board represented a temple or a palace or a house, as the play required and most other properties were only sketch-like. The scenery on the Nō stage demanded 'imagination' from its audience and they in no way lacked it.

Actors and Their Costumes

The actors were all men, and all female parts were enacted by them. It was the 'Single Sex Theatre' of the East. Right from their infancy, the actors were trained in their art by their actor-fathers, and from simple to more complicated roles they progressed slowly. The Nō being a nonrealistic theatre, all actors were mainly singers and dancers. While defining a perfect actor, Seami Motokiyo, the populariser of the Nō, wrote, "the perfect actor is he who can win certain praise alike in palaces, temples or villages, or even at festivals held in the shrines of the remotest provinces." The Nō actors, till they mastered the composite form of artistry, never made their début on the stage. If there was a flaw in their acting, their mentors mocked at them, and sometimes punished them for their negligence. So the actors took pains to act their roles perfectly well.

The number of actors on the Nō stage was very limited and only two to six appeared and enacted the plays. The central or principal figure (*shite*) with his close companion (*tomo*) or supporting actor (*tsure*), the secondary figure (*waki*) with his close companion or supporting actor, a child (*kokata* or *korata*) and sometimes a supplementary actor (*ahi* or *ai*)—these alone were allowed to appear on the stage.

The actors wore opulent costumes that were passed on from generation to generation and many of them were extremely old. The *shite* and occasionally the *tsure* or *tomo* wore masks that were marvels of artistry, while none of the other players was masked. The wearing of the Nō masks was itself an art and the most expert actors wore them only very late in life. The masks utilized "light and shade in an uncanny way, achieving change and variety of expression." The split-toed Japanese stockings called *taki* were of immense use to the actors, for the Nō demanded dancing most of the time.

Dance and Music

The dance was usually composed of five movements and the dancers used a fan, a sword or a magic wand as and when the action demanded. But the most frequently used accessory was the folding fan which when closed, partially closed or opened

conveyed many a meaning, for example a letter, a tea-cup, a cascade, a mirror or even a severed head. The audiences were not muffs to misunderstand them. Since the floor of the stage was highly polished and specially constructed for resonance, the dancers with their *taki* on, tapped, beat and stamped with their feet. To provide a rhythmical background, the musicians sitting at the rear of the stage employed a large flat stick drum, a small hand drum, a smaller thimble drum and a transverse flute. And thus the orchestral dance provided the total effect for the Nō.

Classification of the Nō

The day-long performance of the Nō drama consists of a play from each of the five following groups.

1. The God Piece (*kaminō or wakinō*):

In this piece, also known as 'congratulatory piece', the main character, the sun goddess, appears to praise the prosperity of the country and impart moral instruction.

2. The Warrior Piece (*shura-monō*):

The ghost of a warrior appears to narrate some past bold or adventurous act. The 'Battle Piece' was another name given to this category of plays.

3. The Woman Piece (*kazura-monō*)

Known popularly as the 'the Wig Piece', it is the most lyric form which features some noble, elegant and beautiful woman.

4. The Mad Piece (*kyojo-monō*) and Living Persons Pieces (*genzaimonō*)

The largest group of miscellaneous plays dealing with insanity, obsession, historical characters and the dead whose earthly passion causes them to return to earth.

5. The Supernatural Piece (*Kirinō*)

A piece concerning supernatural creatures such as demons, elves and goblins. It was also known as the 'Demon's Piece'.

A short humorous piece or an interlude called *kyōgen* was played between the individual plays that constitute a Nō sequence. The actors performed the *kyōgen* without masks and in ordinary dress just to relieve the emotional tension of the aristocratic audience. The *kyōgen* spared none and nothing was sacred to it. The monk, the glutton, the shrew, the boaster and almost everyone in the world were all put to ridicule; the customs and manners of the feudal lords (*daimyo*) were pooh-poohed. The Nō had magic and the *kyōgen* had counter-magic.

Performance

The sound of the transverse flute announced the beginning of the performance. Each of the five individual plays had three sections: *jo*, *ha* and *kyū*.

In the first section, *jo*, the second actor (*waki*) quite often a priest or monk makes his appearance on the bridge and with his short introductory chant indicates the order to which the play belongs. Then advancing to the stage proper he identifies him-

self in a prose passage and then sings a journey song. At the close of it he retires to his pillar—the front pillar on the right. With the appearance of the central figure the *shite*, who is most often a ghost or a deity in disguise, the second section, *ha*, commences. Sometimes accompanied by a *tsure* or *tomo* the *shite* sings a more developed entrance song. After that the *shite* and the *waki* converse and develop the theme of the play and the emotions it is capable of evoking. This section is prolonged by the chorus, which sings three passages in irregular verse, at the close of which the *shite* exits. A *kyōgen* actor relates the story of the play in the simplest possible language and with it the *ha* section ends. The last section, *kyū*, opens with the *waki*'s waiting song and the *shite* reappears in his real person as god or hero, to narrate some past event. Before the final dance that lasts for about twenty minutes, a dialogue goes on between the *shite* and chorus that gives an account of the *shite*'s essential being and provides a setting for the rest of the play.

Influence

The Nō, being essentially a drama of soliloquy and reminiscence, has not only attracted the oriental world but also influenced the occidental. Among the many who drank deep from this perennial fountain of Japan, Maurice Maeterlinck, Bertholt Brecht, William Butler Yeats and partly some of our Indian playwrights deserve mention.

P. RAJA

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4. *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre*—Ed. by Phillis Hartnoll
5. *Masters of the Drama*—John Gassner

and, of course, my 'scissors and paste.'

IN THE NAME OF THE LORD

AN OLD LEGEND

NARAD Rishi was a great devotee of the Lord. He was also a man of knowledge—a Jnani. He was a Jnani-Bhakta.

Generally such a person has no ego. But sometimes an evil moment comes in his life and he becomes proud. Such a moment came in Narad's life and he fell a prey to false pride.

He said to himself, "I am a great devotee of the Lord! The greatest of all. Who is there like me? I have no equal."

The Lord being omniscient knew Narad's mind. The Lord crushes his devotee's pride, but in his own way and at his own time.

Once Narad became curious about the world. He wanted to know what was going on in it.

So leaving his heavenly home he came to Vishala city on the earth.

On the outskirts of the city there was a temple dedicated to Shiva-Mahadev. The temple was very fine. Narad liked the place and so made it his abode.

Some time passed and one Sundari aged about twenty came for the puja of Mahadev, with a dish of flowers in her hand.

Sundari did the puja with all the devotion she could command and retraced her steps.

While returning, her gaze fell on Narad. She bowed with devotion and invited him to her place for bhiksha—food.

Narad had seen Sundari doing puja and was pleased with her devotion, so he accepted the invitation and accompanied her to her place.

The atmosphere of Sundari's house was very pure. Sundari's husband welcomed the sage. Both Sundari and her husband were devotees of the Lord. They were living a sattwic—virtuous—life.

With great devotion, they offered food to Narad.

Narad was very pleased with them.

At the time of departure he said, "I am pleased with both of you, ask some boon."

Sundari replied, "Maharaj! by the Lord's grace we have more than sufficient wealth, by His grace we are healthy and we have more than one building, so nothing is lacking, except a pound of flesh—a son. So if you are pleased, bless us that we may have a son."

Narad said, "I will pray to the Lord to bless you with a son."

Then he departed.

After some days, Narad went to see the Lord.

At sight of Narad, the Lord said, "Welcome, Narad, you are just back from a tour of the world. Any news worth hearing?"

Narad said, "Lord! There is nothing new worth special attention, but I saw

injustice in your reign."

The Lord answered, "What are you saying? Injustice! and that too in my reign? Tell me the facts."

Narad said, "Lord! There is a city named Vishala. One Sundari and her husband live there. Both are your devotees and they are living a very sattwic life. They are happy in all respects but one. They lack a pound of flesh. Is it not injustice that such a sattwic couple should have no son? I pray to you to fulfil their wish."

The Lord replied, "Narad! Sundari and her husband, I know, are my devotees, but they are not fated to have a son. Not only in this life alone, but in the next six lives to come they will not have one."

Narad had nothing to say after this clear and bold statement of the Lord.

Some years passed and Narad again came to Vishala city and took up abode in the same temple.

Hardly half an hour had passed when he saw Sundari coming for puja, with two boys, one on each side. The boys were like Rama and Lakshmana.

Narad was wonderstruck. He could not believe his eyes—what was he seeing? Was he awake or sleeping and dreaming? By whose boys was Sundari accompanied? He rubbed his eyes to make sure that what he saw was true. But it was Sundari coming and there were two boys. He remembered well the Lord's words, "They are not fated to have a son." And here was Sundari coming with two boys. What was this? How had it happened? He was very eager to know the truth; so, when Sundari came within hearing distance, Narad at once blurted out, "Sundari! whose boys are these?" Sundari said, "Maharaj! These boys are mine, a saint's blessing always comes true."

On hearing this, Narad became angry and said to himself, "The Lord told me a lie. I will go and curse Him. Let Him also know what it is to tell a lie to Narad, His greatest devotee, who has no equal!"

And Narad at once started for the Lord's place without saying a word to Sundari.

Sundari stood amazed at the behaviour of Narad. She felt sorry that he had gone away without taking bhiksha at her place.

The Lord divined Narad's wrath. So He thought of avoiding it. He found a remedy.

The Lord feigned sickness. He complained of acute stomach-ache and began to shout about the pain.

Narad came full of wrath and demanded of the door-keeper, "Where is the Lord?"

The answer was, "The Lord is suffering from acute stomach-ache and is in bed and shouting."

When Narad heard about the sickness of the Lord, he became calm and with silent steps approached Him and inquired, "What ails my Lord?"

The Lord told Narad of his pain. Narad said, "Lord! take some medicine. How are you going to recover without medicine?"

The Lord answered, "There is a medicine but it is very difficult to prepare." Narad exclaimed, "Lord! what do you mean? Tell me and I will get it prepared at any cost."

The Lord explained, "Narad! first of all we have to collect 100 human heads. When the heads have been pounded in a mortar, oil is to be extracted and then the oil is to be applied on the stomach. We have been able to collect 99 heads, but the remaining one head is not available and so the medicine cannot be prepared and there is no remedy."

Narad said, "Lord! what are you saying? There will be many persons ready to give their heads for you. I am just going and shall return like a bad coin with the head." With these words Narad went out to find the wanted head.

Narad went to cities, towns, villages, he visited banks of rivers, ponds, shores of seas, doors of caverns, he even explored mountains and glens. Wherever he went, he shouted, "Is there anyone ready to give his head in the name of the Lord?" But none came forward.

Narad retraced his steps towards the Lord's place, disgusted, frustrated, tired, despair written on his face, lamenting that people had become atheists.

Before reaching the Lord's place, he had to pass through a maidan—a big open field. There he saw that a wood-cutter was collecting wood. On seeing him Narad shouted. "Is there anyone ready and willing to give his head in the name of the Lord?" The wood-cutter heard this and said to Narad, "Sadhu Maharaj! don't waste your breath, nobody is going to give you his head. But wait! there is one chance. Do you see that man sitting in samadhi? Perhaps he will give his head in the name of the Lord. Go to him and shout your demand in his ears."

As a drowning man catches at a straw, Narad as a last attempt thought it fit to do what the wood-cutter had advised. He went where the person was sitting in samadhi and shouted in his ears, "Is anyone ready and willing to give his head in the name of the Lord?" There was no movement. Narad repeated his demand. Still there was no movement. Narad tried for the third time. This time the man came out of his samadhi and asked, "What's the matter?" Narad said, "I want a head in the name of the Lord." On hearing this the man said, "In the name of the Lord?" So saying without any second thought he took a scythe which was lying nearby, severed his head and gave it to Narad.

Narad was pleased, overjoyed, at last he had succeeded in gathering a head. He ran towards the Lord's place and when he reached the door he shouted, "Lord, Lord, I have brought the head, now there is no cause for worry!"

But the Lord was sitting on the bed, a smile hovering on his face. The Lord said, "Narad, a miracle happened. After you went the ache subsided automatically. So now the head is of no use. But please tell me why you had come at the time when I had been taken ill."

Narad was a bit ashamed and answered, "Lord! to tell the truth, I had come to curse you." The Lord exclaimed, "To curse me? for what fault of mine? Even

in the human world nobody is punished until he is found guilty. What was my fault?"

Narad answered, "Lord! You know, some years back I prayed to you to give a son to Sundari who lives in Vishala city. At that time you told me that Sundari was not fated to have a son, not in this life only but in the next six lives to come."

The Lord said, "Yes, yes, Narad, I told you so. But what of that?"

Narad said, "Lord, now you have given Sundari not only a son, but two sons. Why did you tell me a lie?"

The Lord asked Narad, "Who says that I have given two sons to Sundari?" Narad was a bit agitated and declared, "I myself have seen her two sons and still you say that you have not given her two sons. Then who else?" The Lord replied, "I have not given her two sons." And then the Lord uttered the following words with emphasis:

"Narad! I have not given two sons to Sundari. Some devotee ready and willing to give his head in my name, without a second thought, must have given sons to Sundari."

While the Lord spoke these words, an enigmatic smile played on His lips. He was driving at something indirectly, but Narad was not able to understand that something.

The Lord repeated the words but Narad was at a loss to understand what the Lord was driving at.

So the Lord repeated the words a third time, laying emphasis not on each word but on each letter and this time Narad understood what the Lord's drift was.

The Lord was putting a question to Narad. The question was:

"You went to cities, towns, villages, you visited the banks of rivers and ponds, shores of seas and doors of caverns, you even explored mountains and glens for a head in my name. May I know where your own head had gone? You claim to be the greatest devotee of mine, without any equal, and you looked for somebody else's head!"

When Narad understood this, his head bent down in shame. He repented for his anger and his foolish idea of cursing the Lord. His pride of being the greatest devotee of all without an equal was crushed and he could not look at the Lord straight in the face.

But the Lord is all-compassionate. He took Narad by the hand and embraced him and a miracle happened. All the dross that had gathered around Narad's soul evaporated and he became his old self again—a humble devotee of the Lord.

VALLABH SHETH

THE TEACHER, SHYAMA AND HER THAKUR*

A SHORT STORY

DR. Roy was a stranger to me. I didn't remember to have heard his even name. It is only the other day that my ex-classmate Sunil stormed into my mess-room with the news, "You are really a lucky chap, Dr. Roy has read and liked your article."

"Dr. Roy! My article!" I groped in my mind.

"Yes, your article on Education published in the magazine, *The Flame*."

"Oh, that is a past episode of University days. But Dr. Roy?"

"Why, Dr. Bhabesh Roy, the educationist, haven't you heard his name? He is a relative of mine."

"I see, but how does he come into the picture?"

"He wants to see you. You can go any day between 4.30 and 5.30 p.m. Here is his address. By the way, have you got employed anywhere already?"

"No, it's really a pity, Sunil, nobody cares even to reply to my application."

I went to see Dr. Roy hesitatingly, apprehending at each moment to be interrogated on intricate problems of education. But no, he simply said in a soft and sympathetic voice, "I want to give you the charge of Shreyash, my son. No more than an hour a day will suffice. I myself find very little time now to help him in his studies. So long as you don't get a suitable job, I think this will be the best possible alternative for you. You will be benefited both ways, mentally and monetarily. As a lover of education you will find in Shreyash enough food for your thought and study...."

I accepted. Shreyash is a very good student. Teaching him is not confined to the college course. He is very inquisitive and has a great thirst for knowledge. As a result I have to read and work a lot to keep abreast of his questions and problems. But it gives me an unspeakable joy. In fact I am happy to have the opportunity of becoming a student again. Everything goes on very well with me and Shreyash.

One day unexpectedly Dr. Roy visits us in the study-room. I get surprised and don't know what to say. But before I can brush aside my perplexity he requests me in his usual soft voice, "Why don't you take charge of Shyama also? It is very simple, come half an hour earlier. Hope this won't be much of a difficulty for you."

"Oh no, not at all. I shall come at 7.00 p.m. from tomorrow."

"Please do come," a happy smile plays on his face and he leaves the room satisfied.

"Who is Shyama?" I ask Shreyash.

"Why, she is my sister. Haven't you seen her?"

"How could I?"

"Yes, that's right. She doesn't come this side at all, especially when you are here."

* Adapted from the Bengali by the author.

Next day, as arranged, I go half an hour earlier and stand still on stepping inside.

A little girl of about eight is silently sitting in Shreyash's chair. She is very pretty and fair and, with the white garment on, looks like a fairy.

"Hallo, little one, please go and tell Shyama that I have come, will you?"

She frowns, "What are you saying? I am myself Shyama." ("Shyama" literally means one whose complexion is dark.)

"Is it so? I thought you are Gauri." ("Gauri" means one whose complexion is fair.)

"Ha, ha, ha...why should I be Gauri? Thakur calls me Shyama Sundari." ("Sundari"=the paragon of beauty.) The frowning face of a minute back smiles with an angelic sweetness.

"Oh, a very good name indeed. Now let's begin our study. Please bring out your book."

Her beautiful eyes flash from under the hanging curly hair on her forehead. Without heeding what I say she warns me, "Mind you, I have already learnt to see the time."

"I see, it's really good of you."

"Just up to half past seven, not a minute more. I shall be off. Daddy has agreed to it."

"Yes, not a single minute more. Now show me your book."

She pulls out from her bag a shining new book with a nice get-up and hands it to me. I open it and see that on every page there are a number of pictures of different objects with their names given at the bottom in a single word except for the last picture which is usually of a scenery. The description of the scenery is also given in a few simple sentences.

I push the book in front of Shyama and ask, "Now read, what's this?" "Tree," she answers. "And this?" "Flower." "This?" "Bird." "And this?" "Moon."

"Very good, you have read everything quite correctly. Now read the last one," I point out to her the description given at the bottom of the last picture on the page.

Shyama recites rhythmically, "The flowers bloom, the moon smiles and the stars shine in the purple sky above..."

"What! What are you reading?" I get startled, "Where do you get smiles, stars, purple sky, etc.? It is clearly written, 'The flowers have bloomed, the moon has risen.' "

"But should there not be stars at night in the sky?" she argues.

"That is a different thing. Should you not read what is written here?"

"How can I? Do I know how to read?"

"W-h-a-t! You don't know how to read?"

"No, I answer seeing the picture."

"If so, why do you say stars, sky and all that, there are no stars in the picture."

"What can I do if they don't give them? As it is night and as the moon is in the sky there must be stars also. Isn't that so?" Suddenly her mood changes. She be-

comes tender and docile and very intimate towards me. She says, "You know, every night I go to the terrace and look at the sky. Below all around there are plenty of flowers in the pots. But above in the sky innumerable stars shine. They twinkle, smile and appear to convey something to me which I cannot grasp clearly. I gaze, I brood, I search and try to know which one is who. Thakur says, after death a man becomes a star. Thus Saptarshi Mandal consists of seven Rishis...."

As she speaks on, self-absorbed, I observe her minutely. I see her pretty nose, dreamy eyes, bright forehead and the whole face beautiful with an inner emotion. But all on a sudden it occurs to me that her face betrays some sorrow and longing....

Her voice is fine, pronunciation flawless, gesture fresh and lively but still there is something wanting in her. Is it due to her dissatisfaction for not knowing how to read her mother tongue? Perhaps not; were it so she would show some interest and urge to learn it. On the contrary she is quite indifferent and negligent. Now how can I teach her if she is not willing? In fact it is not so simple a task as Dr. Roy suggested. Anyway, I must try. I interrupt her and ask, "Well, Shyama, do you know Arithmetic?"

Disturbed in her flow of emotion, she remains silent for a while and then replies with her natural smartness, "You mean calculation? Oh, that I can do very well. So many times I help Thakur to settle his market account."

"Is it so? Then tell me: if four sandeshes cost sixteen paise, how many of them will you get..."

"Where, in which shop do four sandeshes cost sixteen paise?"

"Any shop, you just suppose."

"No, what is the good of supposing?" then changing her tone, "Please tell me where I can get them. Oh, it is ages since I tasted a sandesh!"

Her pathetic pose is amusing. However, controlling my smile with difficulty I suggest, "Suppose you get them in Nabin Mayra's shop."

"No, no, it's impossible. They don't sell them so cheap, I know."

"Then you tell me how many they will give for sixteen paise."

"How many? Ha, ha, ha...not a single one. Thakur says, sandesh is not available in the market due to milk shortage."

I cannot help bursting into light laughter and then I confess my ignorance. Frankly speaking, I have been out of touch with marketing and market rates for long. I change the topic, "Shyama, let's forget sandesh, you told me that you have learnt how to read time. Now tell me if that long hand of the wall-clock takes five minutes to..."

"My God, it's already half past seven. I must go." She snatches the book from my hand and rushes out of the room. Befooled, I look on after her as she goes.

"What is it that you are looking at, sir?" Shreyash has come for study.

"Shreyash, do you know where Shyama has gone now?"

"Most probably to Thakur in the kitchen."

"Thakur, you mean the cook? Will she take her food now?"

"No, she will listen to stories told by him."

"Such a hurry for stories?"

"She is like that, sir," says Shreyash lightly and starts arranging his books.

I feel uneasy, nay, much annoyed with Shyama and her Thakur. A third-class man, perhaps addicted to tobacco, wine, opium and whatnot, is spoiling the tender and innocent girl by telling all sorts of rubbish. Probably that is why Dr. Roy is so worried about her. No, such a state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue any more.

I observe strictly, "Shreyash, tell your cook that from tomorrow he should tell stories sitting over here in this room. You understand. In fact it is not a healthy habit for Shyama. Why doesn't your mother object to it?"

"I have no mother, sir."

"No mother?" I get a terrible shock.

"No, sir. After her death Thakur has been bringing her up. He brought up my mother also and accompanied her over here after her marriage."

A dumb pain tortures me, I recall Shyama's face bright with emotion but with a touch of unidentified concealed sorrow. Her voice rings in my ears, "I gaze, I brood, I search and try to know which star is who..." I feel ill at ease and taking leave of Shreyash come out of the study....

Next day in due time I stand awe-stricken at the door of Shreyash's study. The atmosphere inside has completely changed. It seems to be steeped in an unearthly peace and tranquillity....

An old man is sitting at the centre of the floor in a lotus pose. His body is absolutely calm and poised. Shyama leans on him resting her elbow on his knee and supporting her chin on her palm. Her raised face, beautiful as a flower in bloom, is quite near that of the old man. The man's white long beard has come down stream-like to mix with the black sea of Shyama's curly hair.

He seems to be quite oblivious of the world around. His eyes are winkless and look one-pointed—as if he were busy seeing some scene of an unseen world. Sound-waves rippling up from the depth of his being are breaking at the shore of his lips sweet, soft, melodious vibrations. He is telling a story to Shyama, perhaps from the Puranas.

.....Vishnu is lying on the boundless expanse of the causal ocean in deep Yogic slumber. Meanwhile two fierce Asuras, Madhu and Kaitabha, prepare to kill Brahma. Who will save him from the attacking Asuras except Vishnu and who else has the power to kill them?

Brahma is the creator and Vishnu is in charge of saving and sustaining the creation. But He is under the spell of Yogamaya and is in profound sleep. So the first and foremost task now is to free Him from the influence of Yogamaya. For that the only means is to have the Grace of Mahadevi (the supreme Goddess)—because without Her Grace and Compassion this can never be accomplished. So, helpless Brahma, finding no other way, thinks it wise to pray to Mahadevi. He starts praying first of all in praise of Her:

"O great Goddess, Thou art at the origin of creation. It is only Thou who supportest and protectest it, Thou art Jagatdhatri. Again during Pralaya it is Thou who destroyest it. Thou art Eternal and Enlightened. Thou art Gayatri, the Mother of the three worlds. Thou art Mahadevi, Mahamedha, Mahasmriti and Mahamaya. Thou art Beauty, Benediction and Supreme Shakti. At the same time Thou art destructive, fierce and bringer of Pralaya also.

"Thou art Divine Peace, Power, Light and the Sea of Bliss. I salute Thee once, twice, a hundred times, and times without number...."

The old man lifts up his folded hands and touches his forehead with deep devotion and tears of spiritual joy flow from his eyes...

"Sir, what's the matter, you are sitting there on the floor?" Shreyash's surprised voice startles me. I don't know when, without my knowing it, I sat down at the doorway and got absorbed in listening to the sublime utterance of the old man...

Meanwhile the old man, becoming conscious of the surrounding and seeing me sitting on the ground, is much ashamed and apologizes to me over and over again and then walks out of the room slowly with Shyama closely following him.

I sit on motionless, wondering who is the right and real teacher of Shyama, myself or that Rishi-like person in the disguise of an ordinary cook? Then it occurs to me whether it was to pose this question practically that the educationist Dr. Bhabesh Roy called me, a mere writer of an article on education.

CHUNILAL CHOWDHURY

INDIAN LIFE IN ENGLISH WRITINGS

(*Continued from the issue of December 1979*)

Part III: India Looks at Herself (Men's View)

HISTORY and travelogue certainly caught certain intimate lines of Indian life. The writer of fiction, on the other hand, went to life as his model and to actual characters as his components. If he did not do so, his story would be, at best, a fairy romance fit for children in the nursery, as Shaw put it. Therefore the writers of fiction altered their style, subject-matter and approach according to the age in which they found themselves. A fiction-writer could thus be said to be a mirror of the life he was placed in. He suited himself to conditions; thus he had no definite pattern, no unchanging aspect. If we studied the novels themselves across the centuries from Richardson up to contemporary fiction, be it English, American, Continental or even Indian, we would be struck by the variety of the panorama presented, both in style and substance.

The Indian story-writer was a more recent comer in the field, just like his Canadian, American and Australian counterparts. While Canadian fiction was relatively new and its output meagre (some of it was adapted, from the French mode of expression), it had yet to acquire a distinctive stamp of individuality. The American fiction had an older tradition with Hawthorne, James and Dreiser, ending with novels fast-moving, slang-ornamented and often with a pornographic façade.

Indian fiction began as a trickle a century ago, more as an experiment than anything else. It began to gather momentum as the decades passed, till with the passing of the Second World War and the advent of Indian freedom it brought in a greater output, making itself felt both within India and outside. In the third decade of the century Mulk Raj Anand ushered in a new movement in Indian fiction in spite of his apparent crudities. Another name was Venkataramani.

After them a host of authors followed, like Raja Rao, R. K. Narayan, Bhavani Bhattacharya, Arun Joshi, Manohar Malgaonkar and Khushwant Singh.

Women authors did not lag behind. One of the earliest novelists was Toru Dutt, and curiously her fiction was written in French and not in English. The novel was *Mademoiselle Arvers*. 1932 saw the publication of a novel by a totally unknown woman author, Iqubalunissa Hussain; it was truly an event, though in itself it was not much of a literary creation. The novel was about the suffering of a Muslim woman, the tragedy of her down-trodden existence. Others writing were Kamala Markandeya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sehgal, Padmini Sengupta, Ruth J. Jhabvala, Bharati Mukherjee and some others.

We have a host of authors whose books were translated into English from their original vernaculars, such as Prem Chand, Satinath Bhaduri, Takazi S. Pillai, Yashpal Jain, Lokesh Bhattacharya, Amrita Pritam, Tarashankar Banerjee, Bhagavati Charan Varma, Rama Mehta, Indira Parthasarathy, Meena Mahadevan, Manoj

Das, to name only a few.

Each writer brought with him or her a peculiar vision, a particular attitude to life and art, and of course his or her genius or talent which went to crown the opus with success or to mar it as a failure. With some the driving force was an *idée fixe* as in Raja Rao, or a particular movement in society like the revolutionary movement as in Satinath Bhaduri; some excelled in psychological study as in Arun Joshi, others brought in the rural scene with success as in Takazi Pillai or Premchand. Writers like Khushwant Singh had a predilection for sex and sex-behaviour or, again, writers like Manohar Malgaonkar introduced sensational elements like murders to enliven their fiction.

But whatever was produced by each of these writers was a slice of life, an aspect of existence, modified by the author's interpretative skill and vision.

Maitreyi Mukherjee had remarked in her study *The Twice-Born Fiction* that a whole gamut of literature ran along the Gandhian theme. One such work was *Kanthapura* by Raja Rao. Raja Rao worked with almost a fixation. In *The Serpent and the Rope* the central theme was Vedanta, in the other Gandhi and Gandhism. In both the author himself came before us: as Rama, the Vedantic sensualist, in the former, or as Moorthy, the super-hero who posed as a minor Gandhi, in the latter. The same impracticality met us, with the same quality of hypocricy, an exaggeration with which he attempted to impress us, but the mask was thin, and we saw the man behind parading with false bravado and even more false egoism.

In *Kanthapura* the narrator was an old village-woman in Karnataka who spoke of Moorthy, but her account was not chronological in time.

Raja Rao introduced the book by informing us that it was *sthalal puranam* or local history of the village Kanthapura, as each village in India possessed such a history. But in fact it was, as the critic Srinivas Iyengar commented, *Gandhi Puranam*, the historys of Gandhi, for indeed all the tenets of Gandhism were prominent here with its spinning wheel, non-violence, non-cooperation and the rest of the technique for winning home-rule.

At the outset, painting the background, the author delineated Kanthapura as a small village with only twenty-four houses in it. But when he spoke of the Brahmin locality, the *pariah* street, the merchants' centre, the potters' locality, the post office, the washermen's huts, the coolie barracks, Skeffinton coffee estates and the Cardamom plantation, we were puzzled. It was the description of a small township; a village does not possess all these, including a police station.

In order to make the book more realistic, the author introduced such quaint expressions as Water-fall Venkamma, Nose-scratching Najamma, Gold-bangle Somna. (These ludicrous names have been pointed out by other critics as well.)

As usual, there were two sections in the village, the oppressors and the oppressed. The oppressors were the Patil, the village headman, Badekhan, the policeman, the two managers of the coffee estates and Swami, the landlord.

The oppressed were the *Pariahs*, the coolies and, the spokesman of these,

Moorthy, a petty landlord himself.

One thing of note: there were two parallels to *Kanthapura*, one was *Godan* and the other was *Cheemeen*. All the three portray rural life. Hori, Gobar, Bhola, Dhania, Shobha, Heera, Datadin and Mr. Mehta, Rai Bahadur, etc. were real tangible characters, whereas the characters in *Kanthapura* were just names without any formal substance. They are sketchy, vague and quite unrealistic. The atmosphere of the village was not felt as in *Godan*. It was apparent that Premchand had lived in the villages and the rural life was in his very marrow. But Raja Rao had presented a superficial image of the village and village-life, just to put his *idée fixe* in some form because he was not concerned with person or land.

In *Godan* too there were the oppressors as in the Patwari, Datatin, the Rao Saheb and the oppressed as in Hori and his whole family and, to speak the truth, the entire village. This oppression was ruthless, cruel and unmistakable, whereas *Kanthapura*'s oppression was an abstract symbol.

Even in *Cheemeen* the heroine Karuthamma, her parents Chemban Kunzu and Chakki, Karuthamma's beloved Parekutti were living persons, they were taken from life. The conflicts between ambition and superstition, love and family honour were well-brought out. The life of the fishermen, their ways and their miseries were well delineated, whereas *Kanthapura* did nothing of that sort, because Raja Rao did not go to life for his model and was satisfied with having some ideal as his guiding principle.

Ideals did exist both in *Godan* and *Cheemeen* and even in *A Handful of Rice*. But this was brought out by the turn of events, the characters themselves, and the approach, whereas Raja Rao framed his events to suit his ideals, to put forth Gandhism as the one existing truth. The characters did not themselves form events, guide the action, as they did in the other three books.

The hero was not introduced to us at the outset, the *venue* was the Skeffington coffee estates where men and women came from all parts of the state for jobs with meagre pay and hovels for homes and dishonour and harsh treatment as their rewards.

The old manager was cruel but at least he did not touch the women coolies. With his retirement came a young Englishman who had his eyes on girls and young women. He would send his *maistry*, the supervisor, for the woman chosen.

Raja Rao had never seen a tea- or coffee-plantation, or encountered a real estates-manager. These creatures were cruel indeed, but they would not debase themselves in such an open or blatant manner. Mulk Raj Anand or Manohar Malgaonkar had written about such plantations. These managers did ogle pretty wenches, but it was done discreetly and with subtlety, not by throwing all precaution to the winds, for they had their own girls at clubs, the Kittys or Nellies, etc. who were easily available. So why should they dirty their hands with trash?

One day the new manager set his eyes on a Brahmin girl. As usual he sent his man. The father of the girl refused. The father was whipped and then his whole

week's salary was cut. But even then when the old man was adamant, the manager came himself white with rage and shot the man with a revolver.

The coolies stared at the murder dumbly, including the girl whose father had done all this to uphold her honour. Not a voice of protest or woe or lamentation arose, which seemed all the more strange.

Then the manager rushed to the Deputy Superintendent of Police in the town, where he lodged a complaint against the coolies.

The case came up before the city court, where the matter was hushed up by the 'red-man judge'. Instead, a policeman, Bade Khan, was installed in the village overtly to maintain peace but covertly to procure women for the manager.

Moorthy appeared on the scene. He impressed the local public by spreading the Gandhian gospel, telling how Gandhi was once like Krishna killing the demon-king Kamsa; at another time Gandhi was shown as Shiva killing the serpent Kaliya.

To atone for the sins of others, Moorthy began a three days' fast, drinking salted water only. People dissuaded him from this fast, some jeered at him while others applauded him for this act of courage.

On the fourth day he broke his fast and began his movement; banning foreign goods, he lectured among the untouchables, introduced the spinning wheel among the villagers. There was opposition from the well-to-do, including the village landlord Swami. The latter threatened to ostracise him; even his own mother Hasamma greatly disliked all his actions.

He raised funds and sent them to the provincial Congress office. Kanthapura became registered as a Congress centre.

He also narrated how he had met Gandhi who had asked him to return to the village and do the work of non-violence, non-cooperation and to follow Truth.

Although the older generation opposed him, the younger set like Shankar and Kittu followed him.

During Diwali festivities Moorthy was arrested by the police. People were outraged and wanted to put up a fight. Moorthy stopped them by declaring, 'Let there be peace. Let them arrest me.'

Seventeen agitators were arrested along with Moorthy. But all these except Moorthy were released; Moorthy was sent to prison, then tried at the Karwar court where he was sentenced to three months' hard labour. The proceedings were long.

The day Moorthy's jail sentence was declared, everyone fasted in Kanthapura.

A *Shastri,* who gave *Harikatha* recitals in the evenings, suddenly died. The whole village was plunged in mourning. Just as the farmers were preparing to sow seeds, news came of Moorthy's release. There was jubilation in the village.

After long and expectant waiting, Moorthy made his appearance. He disclosed his plan of action—to ban British goods, to non-cooperate, to speak the Truth and do welfare work for the *Pariahs.* He informed the people of Gandhi's march to Dandi to prepare salt, and later of his arrest.

Moorthy's next target was the toddy shops of the village—these shops must be

closed down.

He, together with several men and women, went to the toddy shops and to the coconut plantation where toddy juice was extracted. The police came on the scene. Blows, lathi-charges and other violences followed. Many were wounded but everyone held his ground.

This movement spread to other villages. Other toddy shops were picketed. There began a mass-movement where the police abused, ill-treated and man-handled the agitators. Even one girl, Ratna, was raped. This proved to be the turning point of her life. She became an ardent follower of Gandhi, for no apparent reason.

When there was a large procession, the police attacked with sticks and bayonets. An old man, a potter, died. More persons, including many women, joined the movement. There were a number of arrests, some of them were of women.

Then suddenly the movement ceased. The detained persons were released. This was because Gandhi was going to England for the second Round Table Talks.

The following extract could be taken as typical of Raja Rao: 'Mahatma is a noble person, a saint, but the English know how to cheat him and he will allow himself to be cheated. Have faith in your enemy, he says, have faith in him and convert him.' (*Kanthapura*, p. 287)

Whether this saint converted his enemies and succeeded in his ventures is a question on which historians seriously differ.

(*To be continued*)

ROMEN PALIT

BOOKS IN THE BALANCE

Nolini—Arjuna of our Age. *Edited by V. Madhusudan Reddy.* Published by Institute of Human Study, 2-2-4/1, University Road, Hyderabad-500768, India. Price: De luxe Rs. 40. Popular Rs. 30.

HE is Dean of the Faculty of Languages of the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, a yogi, a seer, a poet, the Secretary of the Ashram, a consummate thinker, a member of the Ashram Trust, a brilliant ex-sportsman, editor of *The Advent*, of the *Bulletin of Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education*, of *Vartika*, editorial advisor to *Srinvantu*, a born revolutionary, a great patriot, a one-time adept in lathi and dagger play, a serious student of Sri Aurobindo's Intergral Yoga, a polyglot and above all a prolific writer.

O God! Who is this many-sided personality? One wonders. The answer is: Who else other than Nolini Kanta Gupta, a life-long associate and the oldest disciple of Sri Aurobindo.

The book under review celebrates the ninetieth birthday of this versatile genius affectionately called 'Nolinida' by the inmates of the Ashram.

The dust-jacket that carries the admirable portrait of Nolinida by the Mother —a treasured rarity—is the speciality of the book.

'Every man is a novel, if you know how to read him.' In the first section of this book five eminent men read Nolinida and the result is several biographical essays. His birth, his academic career, his role in the making of bombs to explode the British ('he thought of reading chemistry purely from the point of view of learning the principles of explosives'), his first meeting and interview with Sri Aurobindo and later with the Mother, his literary career, his Ashram life—all these pieces of information are served as food. We digest them and turn to Nolinida for 'clarity, confidence and guidance'. His writings and his translations of Sri Aurobindo follow. The first part tells us something about Nolinida the man.

As we go through the second part of this book, we are easily carried away by the ten scholarly articles on the literature, philosophy and yoga of Sri Aurobindo. Consequently we forget Nolinida completely. But after ninety pages, Satadal's 'Bonne Fête à Nolinida' (a birthday encomium with the passport-size photographs of the Mother and Nolinida inset) appears all of a sudden and makes the readers remember that the present book is Nolinida's Ninetieth Birthday volume. Is it a book on Nolinida, on Sri Aurobindo or on both?

This book, on the whole, makes the readers learn as much of Sri Aurobindo as of Nolinida, through the quotations culled *verbatim* not only from the works of Nolinida but also from those of Sri Aurobindo.

Broken letters and pages daubed with printing ink strain our eyes here and there. Poor proof-reading at places makes certain words take different meanings.

In spite of its small technical weaknesses, the book is well worth its price and can be recommended to the students of Indo-Anglian literature.

P. RAJA