1972

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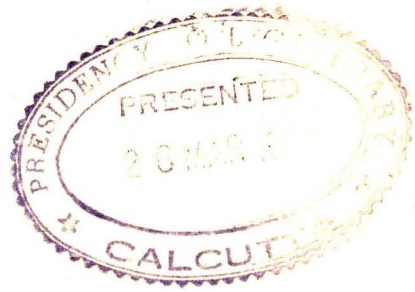

সূর্য পরিক্রমায় সুদীর্ঘ তিন বৎসর অতিক্রান্ত হয়ে গেল। এই তিন বৎসরের মধ্যে আমাদের কোনও মুখপত্র প্রকাশিত হতে পারেনি। শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রে বহু অরাজকতার দিন এর মধ্যে অবলুপ্ত হয়ে আছে। নানা প্রতিবন্ধকতায় ছাত্র-সমাজের মেরুদণ্ড ভেঙ্গে যাবার উপক্রম হয়েছিল। সকালে কলেজে এসে বিকেলে ফিরবার নিশ্চয়তাও তাদের মধ্যে ছিল না। এহেন জীবন্মৃত অবস্থায় মুখপত্র কোনও দিনও বের করা সম্ভব হবে কিনা সে বিষয়েও সন্দেহ ছিল। তাই আজ যখন আমাদের পত্রিকা ছাপা হতে চলেছে তখনও বিস্ময় কাটেনি। সেইজন্য এই পত্রিকা প্রকাশ করার প্রচেষ্টা একটা বলিষ্ঠ পদক্ষেপ। যদিও পদক্ষেপে তালভঙ্গের অপরাধ থাকবে কিন্তু অবিনাশী প্রাণসত্ত্বার পরিচয় বুকে নিয়ে এই মুখপত্র প্রকাশিত।

সৃজন-প্রতিভার দিক দিয়ে বিচার করলে পূর্বসূরীদের রচিত পত্রিকার তুলনায় আমাদের পত্রিকার অনেক ত্রুটি। আমরা অন্যান্য পত্রিকার সংখ্যায় যা চিন্তাশীলতা বা রচনাশৈলীর পরিচয় পেয়েছি তা স্মরণযোগ্য। প্রাক্তন ছাত্ররা মানব জীবনের বহুমুখীনতাকে কত রচনার ভিতর দিয়ে প্রকাশ করেছেন। আমাদের এবারের মুখপত্রে রকমারি লেখার সমাবেশ ঘটাতে পারিনি।

বহুজনবাঞ্ছিত সম্পাদকের কর্তব্য হাতে আসলে বুঝলাম এ কাজ কত দুরূহ। সব রকম ঐতিহ্য বজায় রেখে আমাদের পত্রিকা প্রকাশ করার খুব ইচ্ছা ছিল কিন্তু সম্ভব হল না। কোনও কোনও ব্যাপারে মামুলী রীতির পরিবর্তনও করতে হয়েছে। তবুও প্রচণ্ড আত্মপ্রত্যয় নিয়ে যখন সম্পাদনার কাজে হাত দিলাম তখন প্রথমেই মনে হল সতীর্থদের প্রতি কত অকরুণ হতে হবে। দু-তিনখানা মোটা ফাইল থেকে যখন মাত্র দু-চারটে লেখা পছন্দ করতে হল তখন এই অনভিপ্রেত কাঠিন্যের জন্য নিজেকে অপরাধী মনে হয়েছে। একান্ত নিরুপায় হয়ে গুণগত যোগ্যতার অভাবে কত কবিতাকে ফাইলের অভ্যন্তরেই রাখতে হয়েছে—বিচারহীন আবেগের ভারে জর্জরিত কত ছোটগল্পের স্তূপ একই কারণে ফাইলের ভিতর সমাধিস্থ করতে বাধ্য হয়েছি। দুঃখের সঙ্গে জানাচ্ছি ভ্রমণ কাহিনীর মত মনোজ্ঞ রচনার প্রাপ্তিযোগও ঘটেনি। আর বিজ্ঞান বিভাগের ছাত্ররা বিজ্ঞান সংক্রান্ত মৌলিক রচনায় অত্যন্ত কার্পণ্য করেছে।

আমাদের মধ্যে এই অক্ষমতার কারণ বিশ্লেষণ করতে গিয়ে মনে হয় ছাত্রদের খুব দোষও দেওয়া যায় না। কয়েক বছর ধরে আমাদের ছাত্রদের যে ভাবে মরে-মরে বাঁচতে হয়েছে, তার মধ্যে ভাল প্রবন্ধ, কবিতা বা গল্প হাত দিয়ে বের হওয়াই মুস্কিল। ঘরে বাইরে, রাস্তায় ঘাটে,

কলেজে, খেলার মাঠে মৃত্যুর সঙ্গে পাঞ্জা লড়ে তারা হারিয়েছে জীবনের বৈচিত্র্যবোধ। অন্তহীন নীরসতা আমাদের গ্রাস করে নিয়েছে। পারিপার্শ্বিক অস্থিরতা জাগিয়ে তুলেছে অনাস্থা, জ্ঞান সঞ্চয়ে অনীহা। সর্বোপরি আর্থিক অনটনে অনেকের মন থেকেই চিন্তা, কল্পনা, যুক্তি, তত্ত্ব তিলে তিলে নিঃশেষিত হয়ে গেছে। সর্বশেষ আঘাত এসেছে ইদানীং কালের শিক্ষার নৈরাজ্য থেকে। শিক্ষার মান ধাপে ধাপে অবনতির পথে দ্রুত ধাবমান। এই ক্রমাবনতি যথাযোগ্য লেখার অভাবের জন্য অনেকখানি দায়ী।

ঐতিহ্যময় এই কলেজের ছাত্র হলেও জ্ঞান পিপাসা তীব্রভাবে সকলের মনে জেগে ওঠেনি। এই অনুন্নত দেশের নিরুপায় ছাত্র-সমাজ অনেক সময় ওষুধ খাবার মত করে উচ্চশিক্ষাকে জীবনের সঙ্গী করে নিয়ে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ভীড় জমাতে বাধ্য হয়েছে। পরীক্ষা সংক্রান্ত পুঁথির সীমা ক্ষুদ্র, তাই পরীক্ষাগৃহের বাইরে লেখনীর প্রয়োজনীয়তা নিঃশেষিত। এই বিকৃত পরীক্ষার পদ্ধতিও লেখার অসঙ্গতির জন্য অনেকাংশে দায়ী। এই শিক্ষা সমস্যার বিশ্লেষণ করে মান উন্নত করা একান্ত প্রয়োজন বোধ করে আমাদের কলেজকে পৃথক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে পরিণত করার দাবী উঠেছে।

এই প্রসঙ্গে আর একটা কথা না উল্লেখ করে পারলাম না। প্রাপ্ত লেখাগুলিতে বাংলা লেখা অপেক্ষা ইংরাজী লেখার মান উন্নত। বাংলা লেখা পাওয়া গেছে বেশী, কিন্তু ছাপা হচ্ছে কম। এর থেকে প্রমাণ হয় যে বাংলা ভাষা আমাদের উচ্চশিক্ষার মাধ্যম নয় বলেই প্রচণ্ডভাবে অবহেলিত। পরবর্তী সংখ্যার পত্রিকায় এর বৈপরীত্য আমার কামনা।

যা হোক বহুদিন পরে এই প্রচেষ্টার জন্য আমরা নিজেরাই সম্মোহিত। শত শত বিশৃঙ্খলার ঝড় ঝাপ্টায় ছাত্র-অধ্যাপক সম্পর্কে যে ফাটল ধরেছিল, পরস্পর পরস্পরকে সন্দেহের দৃষ্টিতে যেভাবে নিরীক্ষণ করতে অভ্যস্ত হয়েছিল,—সব কেটে গেছে। চেনা পথে সতীর্থদের মধ্যে আবার সৌভ্রাত্র ফিরে এসেছে। সন্দেহ বিলীয়মান।

তাছাড়া পত্রিকার মুকুরে নিজেদের প্রতিচ্ছবি দেখবার সুপ্ত আকাঙ্ক্ষা প্রায় সব ছাত্রদের মধ্যেই থাকে। এইজন্য সারগর্ভ রচনা সব বিভাগ থেকেই রাখবার চেষ্টা করেছি। যারা আমাদের কাছে লেখা পাঠিয়েছে আমি সকলকেই আমার আন্তরিক অভিনন্দন জানাচ্ছি—দুর্ভাগ্যবশত যাদের লেখা ছাপাতে পারলাম না তারা আবার পরের সংখ্যায় লিখলে সুখী হব।

এইবারকার মুখপত্রে চারজন বিশিষ্ট ব্যক্তির তিরোধানে আমরা ব্যথাহত হৃদয়ে শোক প্রকাশ করছি। তাঁরা সকলেই কোনও না কোনও সময়ে অক্লান্ত সেবার ভিতর দিয়ে বা অনবদ্য অধ্যাপনার ভিতর দিয়ে আমাদের কলেজের সৌষ্ঠব বৃদ্ধি করে গেছেন। তাঁরা লোকান্তরিত কিন্তু আমাদের কাছে তাঁদের স্মৃতি অমলিন।

এই পত্রিকা যখন যন্ত্রস্থ হতে চলেছে তখন বহু তিক্ত অভিজ্ঞতায় আমরা একদল ছাত্র আশাহত হয়ে বিদায়োন্মুখ, আরেক দল ছাত্র বুকভরা আশা নিয়ে নবাগত। এশিয়ার অন্যতম বৃহত্তর কলেজে সারস্বতমণ্ডলীর ছায়ায় পুষ্ট হবার জন্য সবাই মিলেছিলাম—সেটাই আমাদের সেতু-বন্ধন।

শ্রদ্ধেয় অধ্যাপক হীরেন চক্রবর্তী ও আমার স্নেহাস্পদ অনুজসদৃশ রুদ্রাংশু মুখোপাধ্যায়কে আন্তরিক ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি। তাঁদের সহযোগিতা বা সাহচর্য আমি অকুণ্ঠভাবে স্বীকার করছি।

আমাদের পরে যারা রইল তাদের জানাচ্ছি, অনেক রক্তের বিনিময়ে আজকের দিন ফিরে এসেছে। আমাদের অক্লান্ত প্রচেষ্টায় এ মহাবিদ্যালয়ে যে ভয়ংকরী নিশীথিনীর অবসান হয়েছে, যে নৈরাজ্য বিদায় নিয়েছে তাদের যেন অগস্ত্যযাত্রা হয়।

তারকনাথ সেন ঃ জনৈক ছাত্রের দৃষ্টিতে

শমীক বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়

প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজে ইণ্টারমিডিয়েট শ্রেণীতে যখন পড়তে আসি, তখনই অধ্যাপক তারকনাথ সেনকে প্রথম দেখি। তখন মনে হত, কলেজের আর্ট্স লাইব্রেরিরই যেন অংশ, ঐ লাইব্রেরির মধ্যেই পড়ন্ত দুপুর থেকে প্রায় রাত পর্যন্ত সপ্তাহের চারটে দিন সতত উপস্থিতি, নিঃশব্দ যাতায়াত, সমাহিত কর্মব্যস্ততা। কলেজে আমাদের প্রথম দুটো বছর দূর থেকে দেখা, যশ, জনশ্রুতি, এইই সম্পর্ক। হাতের লেখার ছাঁদটা চিনতাম—আমার বাবার বইয়ের সংগ্রহে সযত্নে রক্ষিত একটা 'অফপ্রিণ্ট্' পেয়েছিলাম, ১৯৪০-এর এপ্রিল সংখ্যা মডার্ন ল্যাংগুয়েজ রিভিউ-এ নানারি দৃশ্যে ওফেলিয়ার প্রতি হ্যামলেটের আচরণ বিষয়ে তাঁর প্রবন্ধটির কপি, ওপরে লেখা :

With best compliments of the writer :

তার পরের ছটা বছরে তারকবাবুর সেই মূর্তি আমাদের চোখের সামনে প্রাণ পেয়েছিল, মূর্তিকে মানুষ বলেই জেনেছিলাম।

আমাদের সময়ে রীতি ছিল, বি. এ. অনার্স শ্রেণীতে বিভাগীয় প্রধান ডঃ সুবোধচন্দ্র সেনগুপ্ত প্রথম এক মাস অনার্স ছাত্রছাত্রীদের ভাগ করে চারটি গ্রুপে টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাস নিতেন; তারপর সুবোধবাবুই চারজনকে বেছে দিতেন তারকবাবুর টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসের জন্য। বাকি ছাত্রছাত্রীরা অন্য অধ্যাপকদের টিউটোরিয়াল গ্রুপের অন্তর্ভুক্ত হত। তারকবাবুর টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসে যা শিখেছিলাম, এক কথায় শৃংখলাবোধ, লেখায় ও পড়ায়। এবং এ শিক্ষা উপদেশে

নয়; সুচিন্তিত সুগ্রথিত 'মেথড্'-এর মধ্য দিয়ে। বস্তুগত, শৈলীগত, ব্যাকরণগত পঁয়ত্রিশ রকমের সম্ভাব্য ত্রুটি তারকবাবু প্রথমেই নির্দেশ করেছেন, সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই প্রত্যেকটি ত্রুটির জন্য এক বিশেষ ইংগিতও নির্দেশ করেছেন। টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসের কোন লেখা জমা দিয়ে পরে যখন ফেরৎ পেতাম তাতে জায়গায় জায়গায় লেখার নিচে লাল কালির রেখা, পাশে কখনও *Irr* অর্থাৎ *irrelevant, BA* অর্থাৎ *bad arrangement, F* অর্থাৎ *error of fact, Taut* অর্থাৎ *tautology, Pl* অর্থাৎ *pleonasm, Pr* অর্থাৎ *prolixity,* কিংবা নিতান্তই বিস্ময়চিহ্ন অর্থাৎ absurd! তারপর আমাদের দায়িত্ব, ইংগিত অনুসরণ করে আত্মসংশোধন, তারকবাবু বলতেন "self-correction"। এই রীতির অভ্যাসে আমরা শিখেছিলাম বস্তুনিষ্ঠ আত্মসমালোচনা, শিখেছিলাম নিজের লেখা প্রতিটি ছত্র বা শব্দ দ্বিতীয়বার বিচার করে দেখতে, নিজের লেখা থেকে নির্দয়-ভাবে পরিবর্জন করতে। ঐ শিক্ষা থেকেই এখনও লেখায় বা কথায় কোন অসতর্ক, অসাবধান, চমকপ্রদ উক্তি করতে ভয় পাই। কোন প্রবন্ধ শেষ করতে বিলম্ব হয়, সম্পাদকেরা বিরক্ত হয়—যে-কোন একটা কথা লিখতে গিয়ে সংশয় আসে, লেখা ফেলে আবার পড়তে বসি, এই প্রবল আত্মসমালোচকী বিবেকই তারকবাবুকে এমন কৃপণ লেখক করেছিল। আর সেই বিবেকের তুচ্ছাতিতুচ্ছ ভগ্নাংশ আমরা যারা পেয়েছি, তারা, আর কিছু না পারি, বিনয়ী হতে শিখেছি।

আমাদের তৎকালীন অনার্স পাঠক্রমে (এখনও কোন মৌলিক পরিবর্তন ঘটেনি) অনেক-গুলো ফাঁক ছিল। এই ফাঁকগুলি ভরাট করে নিতে তারকবাবু আমাদের সাহায্য করেছিলেন। ইংরেজি সাহিত্যের অনেকগুলি তাৎপর্যময় প্রদেশ এই পাঠক্রমে অবহেলিত ছিল। গ্রন্থপঞ্জী নির্দেশ করে তারকবাবু এই প্রদেশগুলিতে প্রবেশের পথ চিনিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন—আমরা অর্নাস আমলেই হোমার, গ্রীক নাট্যকারবৃন্দ ও দান্তে পড়েছিলাম (বলা বাহুল্য, অনুবাদে), অ্যাংলো-স্যাক্সন কবিতা ও মধ্যযুগীয় নাটক পড়েছিলাম, মধ্যযুগীয় ইংরেজি কবিতা পড়েছিলাম, রেস্টোরেশন নাটক পড়েছি। আজ আমার টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসের পুরনো খাতা খুলে দেখছি, তারকবাবু এই বিভিন্ন প্রদেশে স্বতন্ত্র পাঠ্যসূচী নির্দেশ করে তার জন্য অনেক ক্ষেত্রে সময় পর্যন্ত বেঁধে দিয়েছেন, যেমন ইংরেজি নাটকের আদি-পর্বের জন্য এক পক্ষকাল, শেক্স্পীয়রের এলিজাবেথিয় পটভূমির জন্য এক মাস।

সার্থক অধ্যাপকের অধ্যাপনা ও বড় অভিনেতার অভিনয়, দুইই শিল্পকলা, দুইই অবর্ণনীয়, অননুকরণীয়। তাই তারকবাবুর মৃদু অবিচল উচ্চারণ, কবিতার ছন্দে টেবিলের উপর লম্বা আঙুলগুলোর ওঠাপড়া, নাটক পাঠে সযত্নে নাটকীয়তা পরিহার অথচ ছন্দ ও অর্থের নিশ্চিত বোধে এম্ফ্যাসিসের সযত্ন বিন্যাস, এমনই অনেক উপাদানে গঠিত সেই শিল্পকলা যার সমগ্র চারিত্র্য আজ আর বর্ণনায় সম্পূর্ণ তুলে ধরা যায় না। বরং বলা যায় তারকবাবুর স্বকীয় অ্যাপ্রোচ-এর কথা। যে-কোন রচনা পড়াবার শুরুতেই তারকবাবু জোর দিতেন পটভূমির উপর। শেক্স্পীয়রের নাটক পড়বার আগে তাই আমরা পড়েছিলাম শেক্স্পীয়রের যুগের পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ বিবরণ, বিশেষত ঐ যুগের মঞ্চের অবয়ব সম্পর্কে বিস্তৃত বর্ণনা : টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসে আমাদের প্রত্যেককেই সেই মঞ্চের ছবি এঁকে তারকবাবুকে দেখাতে হয়েছিল। তার পরে নাটকবিশেষের প্রথম পাঠের পরেই শেক্স্পীয়রের আদি উৎস গ্রন্থটি পড়ে তুলনামূলক বিশ্লেষণ। এই সবই আমরা নিজেরা করতাম তারকবাবুর নির্দেশে—তথ্যসংগ্রহ, তথ্যবিচারের প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা হল আমাদের এইভাবেই।

অবশ্য পটভূমি প্রক্ষেপণের আরো রোমাঞ্চকর দৃষ্টান্ত তারকবাবুর 'স্যামসন আগোনিস্টিস্' পাঠন। পুরনো ক্লাসনোট্স ঘাঁটতে গিয়ে দেখছি, শুরু হয়েছিল আরিস্টট্ল্ থেকে, গ্রীক

এই সংখ্যায়

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FOREWORD

With the present issue the *Presidency College Magazine,* which first appeared in November 1914, completes its fifty-eighth year. It is now older than any of us in the College and has become an institution by itself. I wish it many more years of prosperity.

The Magazine is appearing after three years. A break in its life is not unprecedented : there had been no publication during the greater part of the Second World War. This time the reasons were somewhat different and rather unfortunate, but I am sure the Magazine will from now on continue to appear uninterruptedly and maintain its traditional reputation, though of course allowing for welcome novelties in changed circumstances.

I must congratulate the Professor-in-charge, the Editor and the Publication Secretary on the rich fare they have provided. I would especially like to draw everyone's notice to the case which has been made out for the transformation of Presidency College first into an autonomous institution and then into a university.

Perhaps I should stop now, remembering what Professor Kuruvilla Zachariah once wrote in a mood of charming cynicism : "Principals write serious 'forewords', but they fall as seed on stony soil and inspire neither reaction nor response". Students nowadays are more alert than in the days of Zachariah and encourage optimism. They appreciate that the last five years have been momentous in the history of Presidency College in particular and West Bengal in general. The College has now entered upon a period of quiet and growth when teachers and students can unitedly look forward to a bright future.

P. C. Mukharji
Principal,
Presidency College.

November 1972

ধ্রুপদী নাটকের আন্তর সংহতি তত্ত্ব থেকে। সেই তত্ত্বের মূল পেয়েছিলেন তারকবাবু গ্রীক স্থাপত্যে, বলেছিলেন :

"Greek architecture is the best introduction to Greek tragedy".

বলেছিলেন অ্যাথেন্সের সাধারণ মানুষ প্রতিদিনের কাজের টানে যখন শহরের প্রাণকেন্দ্রের দিকে এগোত, তারা উঁচু জমির উপর দেখত গ্রীক মন্দিরগুলো—

"He looked at the temples from a distance and saw them whole. He almost unconsciously got into the habit of looking at a temple as one whole".

শুধু বলেই ক্ষান্ত থাকেননি তারকবাবু, তথ্যগত প্রমাণ উপস্থিত করতে গিয়ে স্থাপত্যের অ্যালবাম এনে ডোরিক-স্তম্ভের নিরলংকার রূপের পাশে রেখেছিলেন পারস্যের মাদ্রাসে ঈ মাদার ইশা-র গায়ে কারুকর্ম, নোৎর্দাম-এর কেথীড্রালের গথিক ছাঁদ, চিদাম্বরম্ ও মাদুরাই-এর হিন্দুমন্দিরের কারুকর্মখচিত গোপুরম। দুটো স্বতন্ত্র শিল্পাদর্শের সঙ্গে যুক্ত করেছেন যথাক্রমে দুটো স্বতন্ত্র নাট্যরীতি—গ্রীক ট্র্যাজেডির যোগক্লিষ্ট নগ্নতার পাশে এলিজাবেথিয় ট্র্যাজেডির আভরণবহুল বহুবর্ণ বিন্যাস। আমাদের টিউটোরিয়াল ক্লাসে উচ্চাঙ্গ সংগীতশিক্ষার্থী সহপাঠীকে একদিন ধরিয়ে দিলেন, ধ্রুপদ ও খেয়ালের পার্থক্য টেনে। তারকবাবু আমাদের কেমনভাবে যেন ধরিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন, সাহিত্য কেবল ভাষার বিস্তার নয়, একটা সমগ্র সংস্কৃতির মানসলোকের আত্মপ্রকাশ। গ্রীক ট্র্যাজেডির প্রাণধর্মের উৎসসন্ধানে তারকবাবু ভূমধ্যসাগরীয় প্রকৃতি লোকের মধ্যে গিয়েও পৌঁছতেন :

"Maurice Hewlett, travelling in Epirus, wrote home, referring to the wild flowers in the mountains, they are exquisite, not exalted, very frugal like all Greek beauty. The one word 'frugal' and all that it implies make Greek art Greek."

যে-কোন রচনাকেই লেখকের ব্যক্তিগত অনুভূতির অগভীর ভিত্তি থেকে মুক্ত করে বৃহত্তর সাংস্কৃতিক পরিমণ্ডলের মধ্যে স্থাপন করার এই রীতির পাশাপাশিই তারকবাবু কল্পনাজাত সাহিত্যে ভাষার ধ্বনি ও ছন্দের মূল্য লক্ষ করতেন। বলতেন :

"We must give up the fatal habit of reading poetry by the eye, for it is entirely শ্রুতি।"

আরেকদিন বলেছেন : "What is the basic unit of the form of poetry? The ultimate unit is sound; the sound is the ultimate particle of poetic form; the appeal of poetry is predominantly sensuous. While the logical part of the entity appeals to the mind, the manifold sensuous entity of poetry lies in the sheer sensuous appeal to the ear."

দান্তের 'ডিভাইন কমেডির' প্রথম ছত্র, কীট্স্-এর একাধিক ছত্রের ধ্বনিবিন্যাস বিশ্লেষ করে তারকবাবু তাঁর এই প্রত্যয় প্রমাণ করেছেন, এলিয়ট-লীভিসের মিল্টন-বিদ্বেষের যুগে তিনি মিল্টনের গ্র্যান্ড স্টাইলের যুক্তি পেয়েছেন এই ধ্বনিগৌরবে, শেক্স্পীয়রের কাব্যশৈলীর

বিবর্তনেও তিনি ধ্বনিসম্পদের বিবর্তনই লক্ষ করেছেন। ধ্বনিমাহাত্ম্যে এই ঐকান্তিক বিশ্বাস থেকেই তারকবাবু একবার আমাদের স্‌উইনবার্ণের 'অ্যাটালান্টা ইন ক্যালিডান' কেবল পড়ে শুনিয়েছিলেন : পড়বার আগে বলে নিয়েছিলেন, "নিতান্তই অভ্যাসবশে যদি কোন মন্তব্য করে ফেলি, মার্জনা কর।" শেক্‌স্‌পীয়রে পাঠান্তরের ক্ষেত্রে পাঠবিশেষ স্বীকার করতে গিয়েও তারকবাবু ধ্বনিমূল্যই প্রধানত বিচার করতেন।

আবার মেটাফিজিকাল কবিতা ও বিংশ শতাব্দীর প্রথমার্ধের কবিতার জটিল অর্থময়তা ব্যাখ্যায় তারকবাবু আনন্দ পেতেন। কিন্তু অর্থ আরোপ করার চেষ্টা না করে কবির অন্য কবিতা বা অন্য রচনা থেকে ব্যাখ্যা বিশেষের সমর্থন আহরন করতেন। আমাদের কখনও কখনও মনে প্রশ্ন এসেছে, কোন কবিতা তারকবাবুর বিশেষ করে পছন্দ? আমরা জানতে পারিনি। এত বিচিত্র জাতের কবিতা পড়েছি তারকবাবুর কাছে, সেই অন্তর্ভেদী অর্থসন্ধানের ব্যত্যয় দেখিনি কখনও। মনে হয়েছে তারকবাবু তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত ভালো লাগা না লাগা সযত্নে গোপন করেছেন আমাদের কাছে, যাতে আমাদের স্বাধীন রুচি স্বাধীনভাবে গড়ে উঠতে পারে। কবিতার সুবিস্তীর্ণ এক প্রদেশে তিনি আমাদের পথপ্রদর্শক হয়েছেন—তাঁর জ্ঞানের অনাবিল আলোকে অন্ধকার দূর হয়ে গেছে। কবিতাকে স্পষ্ট করে তোলা—প্রতিটি শব্দকে আলোকিত করে তোলা—এই দায়িত্বই নিয়েছিলেন তারকবাবু। ভালো লাগা না লাগা, গ্রহণ বর্জনের দায় তিনি আমাদের উপরেই ছেড়ে দিয়েছিলেন।

চেস্টারটন ও পরের আমলের এফ্‌. এল্‌ লুকাসের ভাষার বুদ্ধিদীপ্ত চাতুর্য তারকবাবু পছন্দ করতেন : গ্রন্থপঞ্জীতে এঁদের রচনা উল্লেখ করে বলতেন :

"Read them, if for nothing else, for their English alone".

খানিকটা সেই কারণেই বোধ হয়, খানিকটা ফর্মের প্রতি আকর্ষণেও তারকবাবু অস্‌কার ওয়াইল্‌ড্‌-এর 'ইনটেন্‌শন্‌স্‌' আমাদের সমালোচনা-সাহিত্যের পাঠক্রমের অন্তর্ভুক্ত করেছিলেন, আমাদের পড়িয়েছিলেন। পড়িয়েছিলেন বাংলা আর ইংরেজি মিশিয়ে। উচ্চতর স্নাতকোত্তর পর্যায়ে বিদেশী সাহিত্য অধ্যয়ন দেশীয় ভাষার মাধ্যমেই ও দেশীয় সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে যোগেই সার্থক হতে পারে, এই বোধে তখন থেকেই আমি বিশ্বাসী। ইতালিতে মারিও প্রাজ, জর্মনিতে ভোল্‌ফগাং ক্লেমেন কিংবা পোল্যান্ডে ইয়ান কোট তাঁদের নিজেদের ভাষাতেই ইংরেজি সাহিত্য বিষয়ে অমূল্য সমালোচনা রচনা করেছেন : আমরা এখনও সেই দিকে এগোব না কেন? যে-কোন বিষয়কে দ্বীপ বিবেচনা না করে তার শাখা-প্রশাখা যোগসূত্র উন্মোচিত করে তারকবাবু যেন এক-একটি রচনাকে বৃহত্তর এক মানচিত্রের কেন্দ্রে স্থাপন করতেন। তাই ওয়াইল্‌ড্‌-এর ইম্‌প্রেশনিজ্‌ম্‌ বর্জনের তাৎপর্য খুঁজে পান তারকবাবু : "ডেকোরেটিভ আর্টের পথ বেয়ে অ্যাবস্ট্র্যাক্ট আর্ট কোথায় গিয়ে পৌঁছয়, কানডিন্‌স্কি তার দৃষ্টান্ত। ওয়াইল্‌ড্‌ যেন এরই পথ দেখিয়ে গেছেন—

He remarkably anticipates the modern abstract art movement.

Critic ই আর্টকে নতুন রাস্তা দেখিয়ে দেয়—য়োরোপিয়ান আর্ট ওয়াউল্‌ড্‌এরই দেখানো রাস্তা ধরে এগিয়ে গেছে।" এক্ষেত্রেও তারকবাবু অ্যালবাম এনে ছবির প্রতিলিপি দেখিয়ে তাঁর কথা প্রমাণ করেছেন; আমরা হয়ত খুব প্রাথমিকভাবেই ছবি দেখতে শিখেছি, শিল্পাদর্শের সম্পর্কের মধ্যে সাহিত্য ও শিল্পকলার যোগ আবিষ্কার করেছি।

খুব অল্প সময়ের মধ্যে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ইংরেজি বিভাগ দুজন অধ্যাপককে হারিয়েছে--তারকনাথ সেন ও তারকবাবুরই ছাত্র অমল ভট্টাচার্য। দুজনের অ্যাপ্রোচ ছিল আলাদা। তারকবাবু যখনই কোন রচনা বিশ্লেষণ করেছেন, আমাদের চোখের সামনে গড়ে উঠেছে অর্থধ্বনিময় নিশ্ছিদ্র এক জটিল বুনন : তা স্পর্শ করার সাধ্য ছিল না আমাদের অসম্পূর্ণ শিক্ষায়; আমরা কেবল শ্রদ্ধায় গ্রহণ করতে পারতাম, সেই বুননের চূড়ান্ত সম্পূর্ণতায় অভিভূত হয়ে পড়তাম। অমলবাবু যেন রচনাটিকে বিদ্ধ করতেন এখানে সেখানে, কখনও বা মর্মস্থলে বিদ্যুতের মত চকিতে আলোকিত করতেন, তারপর সরে দাঁড়াতেন। আমাদের কাছে সবটা স্পষ্ট হত না, অথচ খুঁজবার একটা প্রবল আবেগ যেন প্রেরণা হয়ে উঠত। অমলবাবুর এক একটা তীক্ষ্ণ ইংগিত অনুসরণ করে এখনও অনেক কিছু আবিষ্কার করি, আর উপলব্ধি করতে পারি, আরো কাজ বাকি আছে।

অনার্স ক্লাসের শুরুতেই তারকবাবু আমাদের শোনাতেন প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ইংরেজি বিভাগের ইতিহাস—উপাখ্যানের নায়ক সেই সব অধ্যাপকদের কথা, ডি. এল্. রিচার্ডসন থেকে প্রফুল্লচন্দ্র ঘোষ :

"The last and perhaps the greatest of them all, and at whose feet I had the privilege to sit."

সেই দীর্ঘ ইতিহাস শেষ করে তারকবাবু আমাদের স্মরণ করিতে দিতেন, প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজের ধুলোয় সেই সব মহাজনদের পদধূলি মিশে আছে। আমাদের মনকে একবার প্রশ্ন করতে বলতেন, আমরা সেই সৌভাগ্যের যোগ্য কিনা। আমাদের তখন কেমন যেন ভয় করত, আমরা পরস্পরের মুখের দিকে তাকাতে পারতাম না। প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজে যতদিন ছিলাম, এই ভয়টা কোনদিনই সম্পূর্ণ কাটেনি। শিক্ষার ও শিক্ষাক্ষেত্রের যে আদর্শ রূপ আমরা কল্পনা করতে শিখেছিলাম, সেই আদলটা প্রথম চিড় খেল কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের স্নাতকোত্তর শ্রেণীর অদ্ভুত অমনোযোগী শিক্ষাহীন পরিবেশে। তখনই আমাদের কয়েকজনকে তারকবাবু একটি চিঠি লিখেছিলেন (এখনও বোধহয় শ্রীদিব্যদ্যুতি হাজরার কাছে আছে); তার প্রথম ছত্র : "Beware of the University !!!" তারকবাবু সেই চিঠিতে প্রস্তাব করেছিলেন, আমরা যদি মাঝে মাঝে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয় থেকে পালিয়ে এসে প্রেসিডেন্সি কলেজ লাইব্রেরিতে বসে ইংলণ্ডের ইতিহাসের বিভিন্ন পর্বের সামাজিক জীবনের পরিচায়ক ছবির অ্যালবাম দেখি, তাতে বিশেষ উপকৃত হতে পারি!

পরেও বহুবার আহত বিক্ষুব্ধ তারকনাথ সেন শিক্ষার মান ও মর্যাদার দ্রুত অধোগমনে তিক্ত মন্তব্য করেছেন, তাঁর সেই অনমনীয় আদর্শের নৈঃসঙ্গে ক্রমেই যেন একা হয়ে পড়ছিলেন। লাইব্রেরির পেছনের কাঁচের দরজায় সন্ধ্যার পরে কোনদিন যখন টোকা দিয়েছি, তারকবাবু এসে দরজা খুলে দিয়েছেন। আর চারপাশে শিক্ষার ক্ষেত্রে যত পাপ দেখেছি, তারকবাবুকে তার কথা শুনিয়েছি। কেন শোনাতাম, আজ আর জানি না। হয়ত তারকবাবুকে আঘাতই দিতাম। তবু মনে হয়, তারকবাবু আজ থাকলে আজও যেতাম ঐ সব কথা শোনাতে। চোখের সামনে যতই দেখি ভয়ে কাপুরুষতায় এত লোকে শিক্ষার নামে এক লজ্জাকর প্রহসনকে প্রায় ভবিতব্য বলে মেনে নেন, আমারই কর্মক্ষেত্রে দেখি ক্ষমতাসীনেরা পাপকে ঢাকা দেওয়ার হীনতর পাপে অবলীলায় নামতে পারেন, তখন যেন তারকবাবুর অভাবটা আরো বড় হয়ে লাগে। ক'জন আর এসব কথা শুনবেন, শুনে রেগে উঠবেন?

শ্রুতি ঐশ্বরিক*

সব শব্দ সব স্বর হয়েছে তোমারই
গান, বজ্র, পাখির কাকলী,
জীবনের দুঃখ আর আনন্দের ধ্বনি,
বাক্-ছন্দ লোকমুখে, মর্মরিত কথা।

সমুদ্রের সুবিশাল ফুর্তির হাসিও,
বিজিত আকাশে গুম্ গুম্ প্লেনের আওয়াজ,
মাটিকে বেগের শিঙা শোনায় মোটর,
যন্ত্রের ঘর্ঘর ক্ষুব্ধ, সাইরেনের সুতীক্ষ্ণ হুঙ্কার।

শূন্যের হাওয়ায় কে যে ফুঁ দিয়ে বাজায়
দূরের আহ্বান কোন্ রহস্যের ডাক,
রৌদ্রোজ্জ্বল দেশ আর সমুদ্রপথের স্মৃতি সব
এখন তোমারই কথা, তোমারই অবাক সুরময়।

অন্ধ এ অন্তরে এক গূঢ় সুর ঢোকে চুপি চুপি
সকলই সুন্দর হোলো তুমি আছ তুমি আছ ব'লে।

* শ্রীঅরবিন্দের *Last Poems* থেকে 'The Divine Hearing' -এর অনুবাদ। অনুবাদক : হরপ্রসাদ মিত্র।

নিহিত অভীপ্সা*

যতোই সুদীর্ঘ হোক রাত্রির তিমির তবু আমি
স্বপ্নেও বলবোনা এই ছোটো-আমি ব্যক্তির মুখোশ
আমাদের এ জীবনে ঈশ্বরের সম্পূর্ণ ইচ্ছাই
প্রকৃতির বিশ্বকর্মে শেষ ফল—চূড়ান্ত ঘটনা।

আরো এক সহনীয় অস্তিত্বের লীলা তার বুকে
তারই অভিব্যক্তি রচা চলে দীর্ঘ সময়প্রবাহে।
পাথরে পশুতে সেই ভাগবতী শক্তিরই প্রকাশ,
শাশ্বত সময়ে সে তো জ্যোতির্ময় ব্যক্তিরূপ এক।

মনের রচিত সীমা দীর্ণ ক'রে হবে সে উদিত,
পূর্বজ্ঞানী অন্তর্যামী হবে সাক্ষী সেই ঘটনার,
এই জড় অন্ধতার মধ্যেও সে ব্যক্ত ক'রে দেবে
এই প্রকৃতিতে যিনি অচেতনে সুদীর্ঘ গুণ্ঠিত।

ঘটাবে বিস্ময়কর গূঢ় অভীপ্সার রূপায়ণ—
বিশ্বব্যাপী মৃত্যুহীন আত্মার প্রকাশ নবরূপে।

* শ্রীঅরবিন্দের *Last Poems* থেকে 'The Hidden Plan'-এর অনুবাদ। অনুবাদক : হরপ্রসাদ মিত্র।

হাসপাতাল

শঙ্খ ঘোষ

নার্স : ১
ঘুমোতে পারি না, প্রতি হাড়ের ভিতরে জমে ঘুণ
পা থেকে মাথায় ওঠে অশালীন বীজাণুবিস্তার
ঘূর্ণমান ডাক দিই : কে কোথায়, সিস্টার, সিস্টার—

'হয়েছে কী? চুপ ক'রে নিরিবিলি ঘুমিয়ে থাকুন।
তাছাড়া নিয়মমতো খেয়ে যান ফলের নির্যাস—'
শাদা ঝুঁটি লাল বেল্ট খুট্‌খুট্‌ ফিরে যায় নার্স!

নার্স : ২
রাত দুটো। চুপিচুপি দুটি মেয়ে ঢুকে দেখে পাশের কেবিনে
ম্রিয়মাণ যুবাটির আরো কিছু মরা হলো কি না।

'এখনো ততোটা নয়' ঠোঁট টিপে এ ওকে জানায়
'তবে কি ঘুমোচ্ছে? না কি জ্ঞানহীন? ডাক্তার দরকার?'

'থাক্‌ বাপু' ফিন্‌ফিনে ফিঙেদুটি ফিরে চলে যায়—
'আমরা কী করতে পারি! যার যার ঈশ্বর সহায়!'

কবিতা

মণিকুন্তলা মুখোপাধ্যায়

ওরা সবাই কবি—
কবিতা,
আমি তোমায় হারিয়ে ফেলছি কি?
আমার চিরন্তনী,
তুমি অপরূপা,
আমার প্রাণে আনন্দের ফসল বোনো;
সাদায়-রঙে তোমার সৌকর্য
আমায় স্বর্গের সন্ধান দেয়।
কিন্তু কবিতা—ক্রন্দসী—
তোমার জন্মক্ষণের সেই আনন্দ-বেদনা
কই আমার?

কবিতা,
হে আমার প্রেয়সী,
তুমি আমায় ছেড়ে গেছ কি?
আমার বেদনা
সে তো আমায় ঘিরে আছে;
আমার যৌবনস্বর্গ—
চোখের মুক্তোয় তার সিঁড়ি গেঁথেছি।
আমি জানি
দূরের ঐ অন্তহীন প্রাসাদে
আমার জীবন
তুমি আলো করে আছ।
তবু তোমার কাছে যেতে পারিনে কেন?
আমি কি তবে ভালবাসা হারিয়েছি?
কবিতা,
হে আমার বেদনা,
তুমি আমায় ছেড়ে যেও না।

আমাকে কিংবা অনুরূপ আরও কাউকে নিয়ে

সোমক রায়

তুমি কে?

আমি আমি।

উদ্দাম বলিষ্ঠ যৌবন। চরৈবতির সুর কানে বাজলেও সময় বিলোপ অসম্ভব মনে করিনা। পৃথিবী কি সুন্দর! তার বোধগম্যতাই যে তার সবচেয়ে বড় রহস্য সেটা এখনও মনে উঁকি দেয়নি। কিন্তু সবুজে হলদের অনুপ্রবেশ বোধহয় আসন্ন। ব্যবহারিক সত্তা চিরবসন্তকে নাকচ করে দেবার জন্য যুধ্যমান। একটার পর একটা সত্যকে স্বীকার করে আমি ক্লান্ত।

সেরকমভাবে দেখতে গেলে, অর্থাৎ জাব্‌দা খাতায় কলম করে হিসাব মিলালে আমার কিন্তু কোন খেদ থাকার কথা নেই। কিন্তু পাদটীকাগুলো বড় মারাত্মক। অর্থাৎ কোন হিসাবের অঙ্কই চরম নয়। এই অতিমাত্রায় নগণ্য অনিশ্চয়তাটাকে (পদার্থবিদ্যার ভাষায় হাইসেনবার্গের অনিশ্চয়তা তত্ত্ব) আমি কিছুতেই মেনে নিতে পারছি না। হিসাবের খাতাটা তো মাত্র এক বছরের। পরের বছর কি পালটাবে সেটাই আমার কাছে এই বছরের লাভক্ষতির খতিয়ানটাকে নিয়ে সন্তুষ্ট থাকার আনন্দটা নষ্ট করে দিচ্ছে। উদাহরণ এক্ষেত্রে বাঞ্ছনীয়। স্থান, কাল, পাত্র এখন, এখান, আমিও হতে পারি। না হলেও ক্ষতি নেই।

শঙ্খ কবি, শঙ্খ ভাবুক, শঙ্খ দূরদর্শী, শঙ্খ তীক্ষ্মধী, শঙ্খ মদ্যপ। তার অনেক গুণ; দোষ একটাই যে তার গুণপনা সম্বন্ধে সে অতিমাত্রায় সচেতন। সেই শঙ্খর সাথে "তার" দেখা হল। রজনী তিমিরাচ্ছন্ন,—না, না কর্পোরেশনের-এর বিচ্ছিরি হলুদে রাস্তার আলো জ্বলছে (নিয়ন লাইট হলে সেটিংটা কি চমৎকার হত!)। হৃদয় উদ্বেল, যৌবননিকুঞ্জে গুঞ্জন ইত্যাদি যা যা হয় সবই হল। অর্থাৎ শঙ্খ হঠাৎ বোকা হ'ল।

শঙ্খ, তুমি কে?

আমিই সেই চিরন্তন। আমি সেই মহাসত্যের প্রতীক। আমি অমৃতের স্বাদ পেয়েছি। আমিই সার্থক, আমি ধন্য।

শঙ্খ তুমি পৃথিবীকে ভালবাস?

জানিনা। কিন্তু পৃথিবী আমায় বাসে। না বেসে পারেনা। আমি যে আমি।

শঙ্খর দূরদর্শিতা স্বপ্ন। শঙ্খর ভাবনা কবিতা। শঙ্খর ধীশক্তি আবর্ত। শঙ্খর সুরা-সক্তি পরিতৃপ্ত। কিন্তু শঙ্খর অহং?

শঙ্খ তুমি কি পেয়েছ?

সব, সব।

কি দিয়েছ?

কিছু না। দরকার হয় না, আমি পাবার জন্যই জন্মেছি। তোমাদের সে শক্তি নেই। সে উদ্যম নেই। সে অধিকারও নেই।

মূঢ়, দিলিনা কিছুই, নিতে কি পারবি?

শঙ্খ সেটার উত্তরও জানে। অতএব :—

মুখোস॥ আমি বড্ড ব্যস্ত। আমার দিবাস্বপ্ন দেখার সময় নেই।

মুখ ॥ সেই চোখ! সেই মুখ! আমাকে কেউ বোঝেনা। শুধু তুমি ছাড়া।

মুখোস॥ এত সহজ! বুঝতেই পারল না! হাঃ হাঃ। আমি কি চালাক!

মুখ ॥ সব ছেড়ে চলে যেতে আমার মন চাইছে না। জীবন কি নিষ্ঠুর!

মুখোস॥ নাঃ। মূল্যবান সময় বড় বাজে কাজে নষ্ট হচ্ছে। বড্ড দামী আনন্দ।

মুখ ॥ দিনে যে মাত্র চব্বিশ ঘণ্টা। ঘণ্টায় যে মাত্র ষাট মিনিট।

মুখোস॥ এ সবই ক্ষণস্থায়ী। রং।

মুখ ॥ এ সবই ক্ষণস্থায়ী? রঙ?

(?) আমি কিছু বুঝতে পারছি না? কি বাকী?

(?) আমি কিছু বুঝতে পারছি না। কি বাকী

হায়, হারিয়ে গেছে। হারিয়ে গেছে এতদিন সযত্নে লালিত মুখোসের সত্তা। হারিয়ে গেছে সেই সূক্ষ্ম বিভেদসূচক রেখাটা।

আশা করি ব্যাপারটা এখনও সমান দুর্বোধ্য।

[স্বগতঃ] সেখানেই ট্র্যাজেডী। সেখানেই অনিশ্চয়তা। ঠিক সেই কারণেই আমি গতকাল রাতে আত্মহত্যা করেছি।

ধনতন্ত্র, বিমুক্তিবোধ, সমন্বয়

কল্যাণ সান্যাল

গোলাকার ও দুপাশে ঈষৎ চাপা কমলালেবুর মত এই পৃথিবীতে মানুষ বহু পুরোনো হয়ে গেছে। তার সমস্যাগুলিও পুরোনো। বস্তুত এই শতকের সমস্যা বলে কিছু নেই, আছে শুধু কিছু মূলগত সমস্যা, প্রাচীন যা, শুধু বিভিন্ন সময়ের পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে বিভিন্ন কোণ থেকে আলো ফেলে তাতে নতুন ডাইমেন্‌শন্‌ যোগ করার চেষ্টা হয়েছে। সমসাময়িক সমস্যা বলে আমরা যেগুলিকে চিহ্নিত করার চেষ্টা করি সেগুলি আসলে মানুষের ওই সুপ্রাচীন সমস্যার—

চাঁদে চারচাকার গাড়ী চালাতে সক্ষম হলেও মানুষ যা জয় করতে পারেনি—বাই প্রডাক্ট্। শুধু, যেহেতু মানুষের সংখ্যা আজ অনেক বেশী, সমস্যাগুলি বিশাল ও জটিল হয়েছে। এই শতকের বিশেষ সমস্যাগুলির কথা বলতে গেলে আসলে টান পড়ে সেই শিকড়ে, কর্ণের কবচকুণ্ডলের মত মানুষের সহজাত যা।

মূলে বিরোধ একটা রয়েছে টের পাই। সে বিরোধ ব্যক্তির সাথে সমাজের—যা মূলত ধনতন্ত্রের অমোঘ ফলশ্রুতি। ধনতান্ত্রিক অর্থনীতিতে consumer behaviour এর প্রথম assumption হল "An individual always tries to maximise his satisfaction" এক্ষেত্রে বাকী সমাজ হয়ে দাঁড়ায় তার প্রতিপক্ষ। এবং যেহেতু প্রতিপক্ষ হিসাবে সমাজ ব্যক্তির তুলনায় বিশাল, এই সংঘর্ষের ফলে ব্যক্তির মধ্যে সঞ্চারিত হয় হতাশা ও ক্ষোভ। যেখানে তার সমাজের প্রতিনিধি হওয়ার কথা ছিল সেখানে সে হয়ে দাঁড়ায় তার প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী। ঠিক একই কারণে দুটি ভিন্ন ব্যক্তি পরস্পরবিরোধী স্বার্থহেতু পরস্পরের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী হয়ে দাঁড়ায়; তাদের মধ্যে কোন সুস্থ যোগাযোগ গড়ে উঠতে পারে না। আজকের পৃথিবীতে মানুষের বিযুক্তিবোধের মূল কারণ সম্ভবত এটাই। একাধিক ব্যক্তি কোনও বিশেষ কারণে সংঘবদ্ধ হলে কিছু যোগ্যতর ব্যক্তির হাতে অতিরিক্ত ক্ষমতা দেওয়া প্রয়োজন হয়ে পড়ে। কিন্তু সেই সংঘবদ্ধতা যখন বিশাল হয়ে পড়ে তখন সেই মুষ্টিমেয় যোগ্যতর ও ক্ষমতাবান ব্যক্তির সাথে অন্যান্যের যোগাযোগ ক্ষীণ হতে থাকে। ধনতন্ত্রে authority-র সাথে ব্যক্তির যোগাযোগ সবচেয়ে ক্ষীণ কেননা অর্থনীতি অনুযায়ীই ব্যক্তি সেখানে বিযুক্ত। দ্বিতীয় বিশ্বযুদ্ধে যে জার্মান সৈনিকটি নিহত হল যে ফরাসী সৈনিকটির হাতে তারা পরস্পরের সম্পূর্ণ অচেনা। কিন্তু যেহেতু উভয় দেশের মুষ্টিমেয় ব্যক্তি, যাদের হাতে দেশ পরিচালনার ভার, সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে যুদ্ধে নেমেছেন, তারা আপাতভাবে পরস্পরের শত্রু হিসাবে চিহ্নিত হল। হাস্যকর। কোটি কোটি মানুষের ভাগ্য নির্ধারণের ক্ষমতা কতিপয় ব্যক্তির আয়ত্তে থাকার ফলে, ও যেহেতু তাদের সিদ্ধান্তের সাথে একটি সাধারণ মানুষের যোগাযোগ ক্ষীণ, মানুষের বহু কাজ হয়ে দাঁড়ায় অর্থহীন। অর্থাৎ যা তার করার কথা নয় তাই করতে হয় থাকে। মানুষকে দিয়ে এই কাজগুলি করিয়ে নেওয়ার জন্য সৃষ্টি করা হয়েছে "দেশপ্রেম" "আত্মত্যাগ" "সমষ্টি কল্যাণ" ইত্যাদি কিছু ধারণা যা আফিংএর মত ছড়িয়ে যায় মস্তিষ্কে ও অসহায়, বিষণ্ণ মানুষকে দিয়ে এই ভয়ংকর অর্থহীন কাজগুলি করিয়ে নেওয়া হয় নিপুণভাবে। কিন্তু এই কার্যকারণ সম্পর্কহীন কাজগুলি সম্পর্কে ব্যক্তির অবচেতনে একটা প্রচ্ছন্ন প্রতিবাদ থেকে যায়। অথচ সামাজিক জীব হিসাবে সে যেহেতু এগুলি করতে বাধ্য, এই দুই বিপরীতের দ্বন্দ্বে ব্যক্তির সত্তা খণ্ডিত হয়ে পড়ে ও সেই খণ্ডগুলি পরস্পরবিরোধী। ফলত, সত্তার অন্তর্গত এই পরস্পরবিরোধী অংশগুলির দ্বন্দ্ব মানুষকে স্থির থাকতে দেয় না, ছুটিয়ে নিয়ে যায় এ রাস্তা থেকে ও রাস্তায়। মানুষের এই কার্যকারণসম্পর্ক-হীন কাজগুলির ভয়ংকরতা এই শতকের মানুষ প্রথম গভীরভাবে বুঝতে পারল দ্বিতীয় বিশ্ব-যুদ্ধে। ফলে যুদ্ধোত্তর ইউরোপ ও আমেরিকার সাহিত্যে, ফিল্মে, নাটকে এসে ভীড় করল অসহায় ও যন্ত্রণাদীর্ণ কিছু চরিত্র তাদের অন্তর্গত পরস্পরবিরোধিতা নিয়ে যা মূলত ব্যক্তিসত্তা ও সামাজিক সত্তার বিরোধ। আমেরিকার 'হিপি' আন্দোলনের কারণ হিসাবে এই বিরোধকেই দায়ী করা চলে।

এখন প্রশ্ন : একটি সমাজতান্ত্রিক দেশ এই বিরোধের কতটা সমাধান করতে পারে? প্রবন্ধকারের ধারণা সমাজতন্ত্রও এই বিরোধের সম্পূর্ণ সমাধান করতে সক্ষম নয়। কেননা সমাজ-

তন্ত্রে ব্যক্তিসত্তা, যদিও সম্মিলিত মালিকানার প্রভাবে তার potency অনেকটা হারিয়ে ফেলে, সম্পূর্ণ লোপ পায় না; ব্যক্তিসত্তাকে বাঁচিয়ে রাখার জন্য অন্যান্য বহু উপাদান সমাজে থেকে যায়। সম্মিলিত মালিকানা সত্ত্বেও, যেহেতু কতিপয় যোগ্যতর ব্যক্তির হাতে কিছু বেশী ক্ষমতা থাকে, ব্যক্তির প্রতিপক্ষ হিসাবে খাড়া হবার মত একটা authority সহজেই গড়ে ওঠে। ফলে সংঘর্ষ অনিবার্য হয়ে পড়ে। তখন স্বভাবতই প্রশ্ন ওঠে যে সমষ্টির স্বার্থে যদি একজন ডক্টর জিভাগোর জীবন ধ্বংস হয়ে যায় তাহলে তা কতখানি সহনীয়। কিন্তু সমাজতান্ত্রিক দেশগুলি (যেহেতু সেখানে ব্যক্তিস্বার্থের বিকল্প হিসাবে সমষ্টির স্বার্থকে সম্পূর্ণ গ্রহণযোগ্য করে তোলা যায়নি কেননা ব্যক্তিসত্তার বিকাশ ঘটানোর মত প্রয়োজনীয় কিছু কিছু পরিবেশ এখনও সেখানে রয়ে গিয়েছে) এই শতকের এই ভয়ংকরতম প্রশ্নটিকে এড়িয়ে যায় নিপুণভাবে। ফলে সলঝিনিৎসিনকে কারারুদ্ধ হতে হয়, পাস্তারনক্‌কে করুণ ও গ্লানিময় জীবন যাপন করতে হয় মৃত্যুর আগের দিন পর্যন্ত।

ব্যক্তির ও সমাজের মধ্যে বা ব্যক্তি ও ব্যক্তির মধ্যে যোগাযোগহীনতার কারণ হিসাবে ধনতন্ত্রকে দায়ী করা যায় আরেকভাবে। ধনতন্ত্রে বা মিশ্র অর্থনীতিতে, যেখানে ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানা স্বীকৃত, কিছু লোক (যারা শ্রম ব্যতিরেকে অন্যান্য factors of production আয়ত্তে রাখে, অর্থাৎ বুর্জোয়ারা) শ্রমকে ভাড়া করে। যেহেতু অন্যান্য factors of production বিশেষত capital বা land -এ তার কোনও অংশ নেই, উৎপাদিত দ্রব্যে শ্রমিক তার ভূমিকা সম্পর্কে সম্পূর্ণ উদাসীন থাকে। এইভাবে ধনতন্ত্র শ্রমকে নিয়ে যায় গণিকাবৃত্তির পর্যায়ে, মানুষের মধ্যে জন্ম দেয় তীব্র বিযুক্তিবোধ।

এই বিযুক্তিবোধের তীক্ষ্ন দাঁত থেকে মুক্তি পেতে হলে আমাদের দরকার সমন্বয়ের যার পটভূমিকা হবে বিশাল। সমাজতন্ত্রে যে সমন্বয়ের কথা বলা হয় তাও যথেষ্ট বলে মনে হয় না। বস্তুত সমন্বয়কে এমন এক পর্যায়ে নিয়ে যেতে হবে যেখানে ব্যক্তিসত্তা সম্পূর্ণ মিশে যাবে সমষ্টির মধ্যে। ব্যক্তিকে যদি সমষ্টির এক অবিচ্ছেদ্য অঙ্গ হিসাবে ভাবতে বাধ্য করা যায় তাহলে সমষ্টি আর ব্যক্তির প্রতিপক্ষ হিসাবে চিহ্নিত হবার সুযোগ পাবে না। ব্যক্তি ও সমাজের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা লোপ পাবে। উপরন্তু ব্যক্তি নিজের সম্পর্কে ক্লান্ত হয়ে পড়লেও সমষ্টির অঙ্গ হিসাবে তার বাঁচার অন্য শর্ত থেকে যাবে। শুধু factors of production -এর ক্ষেত্রে সম্মিলিত মালিকানা নয়, প্রতিটি ব্যক্তির চিন্তাধারাকে আমূল বদ্‌লে দিতে হবে যাতে চিন্তা ও চেতনার জগতে সে নিজেকে সমষ্টির অঙ্গ হিসাবে ভাবতে শেখে।

প্রশ্ন তবু থেকে যায়। যেমন মৃত্যু, যা কিনা মানুষের একাকীত্বের বাহক, সম্পর্কে আমাদের মনোভাব কিরকম হবে। মৃত্যু, সমস্ত ব্যক্তিগত সচেতনতার শেষ ও অমোঘ যা, বোধহয় সভ্যতার আদিকাল থেকে মানুষের সবচেয়ে বড় শত্রু! একদিন যেতে হবে, যেতে হয়, এই বোধ মানুষের কাছে আমূল অর্থহীন করে তোলে দেশলাই জেবলে সিগারেট ধরানো থেকে সাঁতরে ইংলিশ চ্যানেল পার হওয়া পর্যন্ত সমস্ত কাজকে, রক্তের ভেতর আচম্বিতে মেঘ করে আসে। এই মৃত্যু-চেতনা মানুষকে একা করে দেয়, ভেঙে যায় তার সাথে বাকী পৃথিবীর যোগাযোগের সবকটি সেতু। মৃত্যুর বিরুদ্ধে মানুষ আজ পর্যন্ত যতগুলি যুদ্ধঘোষণা করেছে তার সবকটিই ব্যর্থ বলা চলে। Prophet-রা মৃত্যুর প্রতিষেধক হিসাবে মানুষকে অনেক কিছু

দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করেছেন বিভিন্ন যুগে, কিন্তু মৃত্যুবিষয়ক ব্যাপারে তাঁদের খুব সফল বলে মনে হয় না।

একটা কথা আমাদের বোঝা দরকার। মৃত্যু যদি ব্যক্তিগত সচেতনতার শেষ হয়, তবে ব্যক্তির কাছে তার নিজস্ব মৃত্যুর কোনও বিশেষ অর্থ আছে বলে মনে হয় না। কেননা অস্তিত্ব-হীনতা কোনও শোকাবহ স্তর নয়, শোকের জন্যও অস্তিত্বের প্রয়োজন। কিন্তু সমস্যা অন্যত্র। মৃত্যুর অমোঘতা আমাদের এই বোধ দেয় যে যারা আমাদের প্রিয় তারা একদিন চলে যাবে। এইখানে সমন্বয়ের কথা ভাবা যেতে পারে। ব্যক্তিসত্তা যদি সম্পূর্ণভাবে সমষ্টিসত্তার মধ্যে মিশে যায় তাহলে কোনও মৃত্যুর প্রতিক্রিয়া ব্যক্তিকে একা বহন করতে হবে না। যেহেতু ব্যক্তির নিজস্ব কোনও অধিকার বোধ থাকবে না, সমষ্টিগতভাবে মৃত্যুর প্রতিক্রিয়াকে বহন করা হবে। ফলে মৃত্যুশোক আরও সহনীয় হয়ে উঠবে। শোক মানুষকে একা করে দেয় এ একটা ঘোরতর বুর্জোয়া ধারণা। আবার, "মরন তুঁহু মম শ্যামসমান" এই ধরনের ব্যক্তিগত আলোয় মৃত্যুর ওপর অপ্রয়োজনীয় মহার্ঘতা আরোপ করারও কোন অর্থ হয় না। একমাত্র সমন্বয়ই মানুষের কাছে মৃত্যুকে সহনীয় করে তুলতে পারে।

এই ধরনের সমন্বয়ের পথে আর একটি বাধা নরনারীর সম্পর্ক কেননা এই সম্পর্ক ব্যক্তিগত অধিকারভিত্তিক। শিল্প-সাহিত্যে ভালবাসাকে তুলে ধরা হয় একক আনন্দ হিসাবে। এই ভুল শিক্ষা মানুষকে ভালবাসার ব্যাপারে আত্মকেন্দ্রিক হতে শিখিয়েছে। এ প্রসঙ্গে একটা কথা মনে রাখা দরকার যে, একটি পুরুষ ও একটি নারীর মধ্যে বিবাহ নামক বিশেষ সম্পর্কটি এসেছে সঞ্চিত সম্পদের উত্তরাধিকারের প্রশ্ন থেকে। ব্যক্তির কাছে সম্পদ সঞ্চিত হলে তখন সেই সম্পদের উত্তরাধিকারী হিসাবে তার সন্তানকে বিশেষভাবে চিহ্নিত করার প্রয়োজন দেখা দেয়। তখন একটি বিশেষ পুরুষ ও একটি বিশেষ নারীর মধ্যে একটি স্বীকৃত সামাজিক সম্পর্ক স্থাপন করে তাদের সন্তানকে ঐ ব্যক্তির সম্পদের উত্তরাধিকারী হিসাবে স্বীকার করে নেওয়া হয়। যদি ব্যক্তির সঞ্চিত সম্পদের প্রশ্নটি না থাকে তবে একটি বিশেষ পুরুষ ও একটি বিশেষ নারীর মধ্যে ঐ বিশেষ সম্পর্কটির প্রয়োজনীয়তা হ্রাস পায়। এ বিশেষ ক্ষেত্রটিতে সমন্বয় আপাত দৃষ্টিতে ভয়ংকর মনে হলেও, যদি সম্ভব হয়, ব্যক্তিসত্তাকে সমষ্টিসত্তায় মিশিয়ে দেওয়ার ব্যাপারে আর একধাপ এগিয়ে যাওয়া যায়।

মনে হয় এই চূড়ান্ত সমন্বয় সম্ভব নয়। যুগযুগান্ত ধরে সঞ্চিত ভুলশিক্ষাই এর অন্তরায়। ধনতন্ত্রে ব্যক্তিসত্তা ও সমষ্টিসত্তার সংঘর্ষে যে বিযুক্তিবোধের জন্ম, সমাজতন্ত্রেও যার উপযুক্ত প্রতিষেধক নেই, তাকে মানুষের নিয়তি বলে মনে হয়। অন্যান্য সমস্ত ব্যাপারে সমন্বয় সম্ভব হলেও মৃত্যুচেতনা ও প্রেমচেতনা মানুষের একাকীত্বের বাহক হিসাবে চিরকাল থেকে যাবে। ফলে ব্যক্তির সাথে সমষ্টির সংঘর্ষও থেকে যাবে অবচেতনে, প্রচ্ছন্নভাবে। সভ্যতার আদিতে মানুষ যে সমস্যার জন্ম দিয়েছে, এই দীর্ঘ পথপরিক্রমার পর যা আরও জটিল, বিশাল ও বহুতলবিশিষ্ট হয়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে, তার সমাধান আর সম্ভব নয়। বৃথাই সক্রেটিস হেম্‌লক্‌ পান করলেন, বৃথাই মানুষের মুক্তির জন্য সারা গায়ে আগুন জ্বালিয়ে অকম্পিত পুড়ে মরে বৌদ্ধ সন্ন্যাসী, আসলে মানুষের আর কিছুই করার নেই। "আমিই পথ, আমাকে অনুসরণ কর।" যীশু একথা বললেও, বা "Working men of all countries, unite"— এই বলে *Communist Manifesto* শেষ হলেও এই বিযুক্তিবোধের হাত ধরেই মানুষের অন্তহীন পথপরিক্রমা।

রাসেলীয় অপবর্গঃ তার স্বরূপ ও সিদ্ধি

অরিন্দম চক্রবর্তী

॥ এক ॥

"Three passions, simple but overwhelmingly strong, have governed my life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and the unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind."—*Autobiography* (1st Part)

সকালবেলা বাড়ি থেকে বেরুতে গিয়ে সাইকেলের প্যাড্‌লে পা দিয়ে হঠাৎ যিনি তাঁর প্রথমা স্ত্রীর প্রতি আকস্মিক অনাসক্তি অনুভব করে সেই মুহূর্তে বিবাহবিচ্ছেদের সিদ্ধান্ত করেন, আত্মহত্যার প্রাক্কালে শুদ্ধগণিতের অনুরাগ যাঁকে জিজীবিষু করে তোলে, কিংবা

বার্টনের অ্যানাটমি অব মেলাংকলি শীর্ষক গ্রন্থপাঠে যিনি অনায়াসে দৌর্মনস্য কাটিয়ে ওঠেন, অথবা "অ্যাপ্রিকট" ফলের নামটির অভিনব ব্যুৎপত্তি আবিষ্কার করায় যাঁর কাছে ফলটি হয় স্বাদুতর, সেই অলোকসামান্য নিষ্কাম জ্ঞানসাধকের বুদ্ধিলোকে প্রবেশ করলে আমাদের আরামী বিশ্বাসপ্রিয় মন অস্থির হয়ে ওঠে; ঝলসে যায় তার শাণিত ঔজ্জ্বল্যে, শ্রান্ত হয় তার অবিরাম অস্বস্তিতে, যন্ত্রনার্ত হয়ে ওঠে আমাদের স্নেহলালিত বিশ্বাসগুলির নিষ্করুণ নিহননে।* এই স্ফটিকস্বচ্ছ বুদ্ধিলোকের মধ্যে দৃষ্টিপাত করলে যতদূর চোখ যায় শুধু দ্বিপ্রাহরিক দীপ্তিই আমাদের চোখে পড়ে। কিন্তু এ অন্তহীন মরুদাহনের পশ্চাতে গভীর বিশ্বাসের যে ছায়ানীড়টুকু আছে রাসেল-মানসের সেই মূল্যজগতের সন্ধান প্রথম আমরা পাই ১৯০৩ সালে প্রকাশিত Freeman's Worship প্রবন্ধে। যুক্তিযুগের ধর্মহীন মানুষের জন্য তিনি এখানে এক নতুন মূল্যবোধের সন্ধান দিয়েছেন—যা সমস্ত প্রাচীন মতাদর্শ থেকে ভিন্ন হয়েও তাঁর মতে মানুষকে অন্য এক পথে মুক্তি দিতে পারে এই দুঃখ ও যন্ত্রণাবোধ থেকে। নিঃশ্রেয়স সম্বন্ধ তাঁর এ যুগানুগ ধারণাই এই প্রবন্ধে পর্যালোচ্য।

পূর্বজীবনে গণিত, পদার্থ-বিদ্যা, জ্যোতির্বিজ্ঞান প্রভৃতি বিজ্ঞানের সশ্রম ও সানুরাগ অধ্যয়ন করেছেন রাসেল। মধ্যবয়সে ইতিহাস রাষ্ট্রনীতি ও অর্থনীতির জ্ঞান তাঁর ভাণ্ডারকে করে তুলেছে ঋদ্ধতর। প্রবীণ অবস্থায় তত্ত্ববিজ্ঞানের চর্চা ও স্বাভাবিক সুতীক্ষ্ণ বিশ্লেষণী মনোভাব তাঁর দর্শনকে করে তুলেছে গোঁড়া অভিজ্ঞতাবাদী ও বস্তুবাদী। ভাববাদী অধিবিদ্যা ও বুদ্ধিবাদী জ্ঞানবিদ্যার প্রতি তাঁর ব্যাঙ্গোজ্জ্বল পরীবাদী (cynical) দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী দৃঢ়-প্রোথিত। রক্ষণশীল নীতিশাস্ত্রের অনেক মূলনীতিই তাঁর কাছে যুক্তির পরীক্ষায় টেঁকেনি বলে স্থানবিশেষে অত্যন্ত মঙ্গলপ্রদ হ'লেও গ্রহণযোগ্য হয়নি। সর্বোপরি ঐতিহ্য হিসেবে খ্রীষ্টধর্মের প্রতি তাঁর শ্রদ্ধা থাকলেও এর অনেক ভিত্তিস্থানীয় সত্যই তাঁর কাছে অবৈজ্ঞানিক ও যুগের অনুপযোগী মনে হওয়ায় তাঁর পেগান বিবেক কোনদিনই এই পবিত্র বিশ্বাসগুলিতে কোনো আলম্বনীয় ভূমি খুঁজে পায়নি। সারাজীবন ধরে একটিমাত্র সাধনায় তাঁর স্থির-লক্ষ্য প্রয়াস—সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণে যুক্তিমাত্র নির্ভর হওয়ার সাধনা। এর জন্য তাঁকে বহু ত্যাগ স্বীকার করতে হয়েছে। কেননা মানুষের স্বাভাবিক যে আবেগিতা ও যুক্তিবিরোধী অনুভূতিপ্রবণতা—তার কথা জোর করে ভুলে গিয়ে তিনি সত্য সন্ধান করতে চেয়েছেন। ফলে আশ্রয় হিসেবে কোনো ঈশ্বরকে সামনে পান্নি "প্রমাণোভাবাৎ"। দৃশ্যজগতের অন্তরালে কোনো শুভ না থাকলে এবং মানবজীবনের ভগ্ন বৃত্তচাপগুলির অন্তে কোনো স্বর্গীয় বৃত্তের বা অতিমর্ত্য সান্ত্বনার আশা না থাকলে আমাদের চিন্তা ব্যথিত হয়, মানুষের এই দুর্ভোগ ও উপভোগকে নিষ্কারণ ভাবতে ভাল লাগে না—সুদ্ধ এই জন্য তিনি শূন্যে কোনো ঐশ্বরিক বিচারালয়ের কল্পনা করতে পারেন নি। তাঁর চিরজাগ্রত যৌক্তিক বিবেক তাঁকে মানসিক তৃপ্তির জন্য সত্য-বিকৃতি ঘটাতে দেয়নি। আর তাই প্রথম থেকেই তিনি বুঝেছেন এ জীবনে স্বস্তিকর অনেক কিছুই তাঁকে ছাড়তে হবে সরল সত্য লাভের আশায়—যার মধ্যে প্রধান হল তাঁর আস্তিক্য। বৌদ্ধিক নির্লিপ্ততার এ কঠিন তপশ্চর্যায় প্রথম ধাক্কা খেলেন রাসেল নিছক বৈজ্ঞানিক অনুসন্ধিৎসার অন্তিম নিষ্ফলতায়। কিভাবে মানুষের এ নিছক জ্ঞানপিপাসা শেষপর্যন্ত তাকে

* বিবাহসম্পর্কে আমাদের প্রথাগত মূল্যবিশ্বাস, ধর্মসম্পর্কে ক্রীশ্চান শ্রদ্ধাবোধ, শ্রমের মূল্য সম্পর্কে চিরাচরিত নীতি, বিজ্ঞানসম্পর্কে আস্থা, দর্শনের বিভিন্ন ভাববাদী মতবাদ—যথাক্রমে *Marriage and Morals*, *Why I am not a Christian*, *In Praise of Idleness*, *Sceptical Essays*, এবং *Mysticism and Logic* গ্রন্থে খণ্ডিত।

নৈরাশ্যের মধ্যে এনে ফেলে তার এক নিষ্ঠুর বর্ণনা তিনি নিজেই দিয়েছেন তাঁর Science and Values প্রবন্ধে।

"পদার্থবিদ্যার যত উন্নতি হ'তে লাগল ততই ক্রমে ক্রমে বহির্বিশ্ব সম্পর্কে আমরা এতকাল যা জানতাম বলে মনে করে এসেছি—তার থেকে ক্রমে ক্রমে বিজ্ঞান আমাদের বঞ্চিত করতে থাকলো। বর্ণশব্দ, আলো-অন্ধকার, আকৃতি ও প্রকৃতি এর একটিও নাকি প্রকৃতপক্ষে—যে বহিঃপ্রকৃতিকে দেবীর আসনে বসিয়েছিলেন জগদ্ভক্ত আয়নীয় দার্শনিকেরা—তার নিজস্ব ধর্ম নয়। শেষপর্যন্ত দেখা গেল যে এই সমস্ত ধর্মই প্রিয় বস্তুজগতের কাছ থেকে প্রেমিক দ্রষ্টার মধ্যে চলে এল আর প্রিয় বস্তুটির বিশুদ্ধ স্বরূপ হিসেবে পড়ে রইল একটা শুষ্ক অস্থিময় কঙ্কাল মাত্র—শীতল এবং ভয়ংকর—হয়তো বা শুধুই একটি প্রেতসত্তা।" এখানে রূপকের ভাষায় রাসেল যা বলতে চেয়েছেন তা হ'ল আধুনিক পদার্থবিদ্যার সুদীর্ঘ জড়োপাসনার শূন্যময় ফলের কথা। নির্মোহদৃষ্টিতে যতই পদার্থবিদেরা তাদের পরমপ্রিয় বস্তুসত্তার প্রকৃতিকে জানতে চেয়েছেন ততই তাঁরা দেখেছেন যে Matter বলে যাকে নিয়ে আমরা এত মাতামাতি করি এবং অন্ততঃ যার দ্রষ্টানিরপেক্ষ (objective) বাস্তব অস্তিত্ব সম্পর্কে আমরা এত নিঃসন্দিগ্ধ—শেষ পর্যন্ত তার প্রকৃতি অপ্রণিধেয়; তার অস্তিত্বের কোনো সন্তোষজনক যুক্তি খুঁজে পাওয়া যাচ্ছে না। একটা আলেয়ার মত সে জ্ঞানপিপাসুর সামনে থেকে সরে যাচ্ছে একটি একটি করে তার সত্তার অংশগুলিকে দ্রষ্টার মনের (subject) সম্পত্তি করে দিয়ে। আমরা যতই ভাবি না কেন "Matter is solid" আসলে এ বিশ্বাসও অসহায় মানুষের প্রিয় কুসংস্কার। কেননা আজকের পদার্থবিদ্ বেশ জানেন— "it is a wave of probability undulating in nothingness"। হাইসেনবার্গের অনির্ণয়বাদ আমাদের জানালো যে বন্ধু-জগতের আদি উপাদান ইলেকট্রনের নৃত্যচ্ছন্দ অনিয়মিত। আর এই খামখেয়ালী তরঙ্গের আধার ইথার সম্পর্কেও অনস্তিত্ব অন্ততঃ অস্তিত্বের সমান যুক্তিসহ। আর তাই শেষ পর্যন্ত সান্তায়ানার ভাষায় বলতে হয় যে বিজ্ঞানের অনেকখানিই জান্তব বিশ্বাস (animal faith) আর বাকীটুকু তার মনোমত অ্যাব্‌স্ট্রাক্‌শান্।

বিজ্ঞানের সমস্ত কীর্তিই ব্যর্থ হয়ে যায় যদি সে বস্তু বিশ্বে একটি একরূপতা না দেখাতে পারে, যদি সে প্রকৃতির কোনো বিশেষ বিভাগে জ্ঞাত তথ্যাবলী থেকে অজ্ঞাত ঘটনাবলী সম্পর্কে নিঃসংশয় ভবিষ্যদ্বাণী না করতে পারে। অথচ এই সুদীর্ঘ তপস্যার পর আজও তাকে প্রশ্ন করতে হয় "কখনো কি এমন পরিস্থিতি আসে যাতে এক গুচ্ছ জ্ঞাত ঘটনা থেকে আমরা কোনো ঘটনান্তর অনুমান করতে পারি পূর্ণ নিশ্চিতি অথবা অর্ধাধিক সম্ভাব্যতার সঙ্গে?

যদি এ জিজ্ঞাসার উত্তর হ'তো ইতিবাচক তাহ'লে বলা যেতো যে অদৃষ্ট ঘটনাবলী সম্পর্কে আমাদের সব সামান্যকরণই (যা আমরা কোনো প্রশ্ন না তুলেই করে থাকি হামেশাই) যুক্তিযুক্ত। আর যদি এর উত্তর হয় নেতিতে তাহলে আমাদের সমস্ত বিজ্ঞানই মধ্যযুগীয় কুসংস্কারগুলির মত অন্ধ। এযাবৎ নৈয়ায়িকরা এ প্রশ্নটিকে অনেক তাত্ত্বিক প্যাঁচে ফেলেছেন বটে, কিন্তু এর নগ্ন সোজাসুজিভাবে কোনো উত্তর এঁরা কোনোদিনই দিতে পারেননি। রাসেল নিজে বলেছেন—এর কোনো উত্তর তাঁর জানা নেই, অথচ—

"Until an answer is forthcoming one way or other... our faith in the external world must be merely animal faith."

অথচ অন্ধ বিশ্বাস বর্জনের সংকল্পে যিনি অটল তাঁর কাছে শুধুমাত্র তাঁর সযত্ন-গঠিত বিজ্ঞানের ইমারতের ভিত্তি বলেই কোনো অপ্রামাণ্য বিশ্বাস গৃহীত হতে পারে না। আর সেজন্যই আজকের তাবৎ পদার্থবিদ্‌কে বলতে হয়—নাঃ, পারমার্থিকতঃ পদার্থ বলে কিছু নেই। সবই নেহাৎ আকস্মিকতা। মনোবিজ্ঞানী স্বীকার করেন—মন বলে কিছু নেই। আছে কেবল পরিবর্তমান মানস অবস্থা, যাদের অলাতচক্রবৎ ধারা আমাদের মনে একটা ঐকিক অবিচ্ছিন্ন অস্তিত্বের অধ্যাস জাগায়। এভাবে, শেষ পর্যন্ত বিজ্ঞান আত্মঘাতী।

আজ বিজ্ঞানের দ্বারা অতিরিক্ত স্পষ্টীকৃত এ মরুময় জগৎচিত্র দেখে আতঙ্কিত মানুষ নিঃসহায় চোখ ঢেকে বলছে ক্যামুর আর্তনাদী পতিত সত্তার মত—

"Truth, like light, blinds. Falsehood, on the contrary, is a beautiful twilight that enhances every object."

কিন্তু এ সুবিধাবাদী অনৃতানুরাগ কখনোই রাসেলের নয়। কোনো স্থিরবুদ্ধি সত্য-সন্ধানীই একে মানতে পারবেন না যতই অনন্যোপায় হোন না কেন। এই যুক্তিলোকের শূন্যতা, বিজ্ঞানপ্রদীপিত ব্রহ্মাণ্ডের এ অন্তিম উদ্দেশ্যহীনতা, জড়প্রকৃতির এ অসহ নিশ্চেতনার অনস্বীকার্য সত্যের সঙ্গে অবিরোধী কোনো মুক্তির উপায় তাঁকে খুঁজতে হবে।

মানুষ হিসেবে রাসেলকে স্বপ্ন দেখতেই হবে। তবু যতদূর সম্ভব সেই স্বপ্নকে তিনি করতে চান জাগ্রদবস্থার অপরিপন্থী—যাতে স্বপ্নভঙ্গে নৈরাশ্যের আঘাত তাঁকে পঙ্গু করে না ফেলে। আর "মুক্তমানবের উপাসনা" প্রবন্ধে এই স্বপ্ননির্মাণের কাজেই তাঁকে আমরা নিরত দেখি।

॥ দুই ॥

"There is a stark joy in the unflinching perception of our true place in the world, and a more vivid drama than any that is possible to those who hide behind the enclosing walls of myth."—*Dreams and Facts*

কোনো মরনোত্তর অনন্ত জীবনের সুখকর মিথ্যা দিয়ে রাসেলের মোক্ষবাদ তৈরী নয়। তিনি জানেন মানুষের জীবন সংক্ষিপ্ত ও শক্তিহীন। তার ওপর ও তার সমগ্র প্রবংশের ওপর মন্থর অথচ নিশ্চিত মরণ নেমে আসে নীরন্ধ্র নিষ্করুণতায়। তার সমস্ত ভালমন্দ বিচারের প্রতি অন্ধ, ধ্বংসে অবলীল, সর্বশক্তিমান জড়প্রকৃতি দিবারাত্র তার ওপরে নর্তমান। মানব সন্তানকে আজ হারাতে হয় প্রিয়জনকে, কাল নিজেকে। এর মধ্যে, যতক্ষণ না সেই অমোঘ দণ্ডাজ্ঞা আসে ততক্ষণ সে জীইয়ে রাখতে পারে তার শুভবোধ ও মহৎচিন্তাকে—যা তার ক্ষুদ্র আয়ুষ্কালটিকে শ্রেষ্ঠ সার্থকতা দেয়; অনিবার্য অদৃষ্টের দাসত্ব না করে' সে যদি তার স্বনির্মিত আদর্শবেদিকায় তার উপাসনার অর্ঘ্য সাজায়, জড় জগতের এই অনিয়ত আকস্মিকতার কথা জেনে তার ওপর তার শুভাশুভবিচার বা আদর্শগুলিকে আরোপ না ক'রে আবার তার শুভহীনতাকে নিন্দাও না করে, যদি সে তার চিন্তাকে ব্যাপৃত রাখে মানুষের সাধারণ মঙ্গলচিন্তায়—তা হ'লেই সে

জীবন্মুক্ত। মর্ত্যের ওপর কোনো ঠুন্‌কো ঔচিত্যবুদ্ধিজাত মিথ্যা স্বর্গের ধারণা আরোপ না করেই যদি সে তার চিন্তাজগতে একটা আদর্শলোক নির্মাণ করে পৌঁছতে পারে এক ভালবাসার জগতে; এ নিষ্করুণ জগতে তার নিজের ক্ষুদ্রতা অনুভব করেও এবং পরিণতিতে তার সমস্ত আশানিরাশা সহ তার নিশ্চিত অবলুপ্তির কথা মনে রেখেও যদি সে সাহসীর মত যেমন-তেমন-ভাবে এই বাস্তবের মুখোমুখি হ'তে পারে—একটা অনাত্ম্য দৃষ্টিকোণ নিয়ে—সামনে রেখে এক নতুন ধ্যানচিত্র—যার অশোকাকিরণে নিজ্ঞাত হয়ে তার প্রাত্যহিক প্রতিটি কর্ম হয়ে ওঠে প্রেমসুন্দর —তবেই সে হয় মুক্ত।—মুক্ত তার চিন্তায় ও আদর্শ-অভীপ্সায়, তার এ সীমিত অস্তিত্বের পার্থিব বন্ধন থেকে,—মুক্ত এই ব্রহ্মাণ্ডের তুলনায় কণাতুল্য ছোট্ট গ্রহটির থেকে—যার 'পরে তার বিন্দুসম দেহটি, নির্বল, হাতড়ে চলেছে। এমনকি এক অর্থে সে মুক্ত মৃত্যুর করালতা থেকেও—অন্ততঃ যতদিন বাঁচে। কেননা মহদ্ভয় কালকে সে জয় করেছে নিরাকাঙ্ক্ষতার দ্বারা তার কামনার নদী এত সমুদ্র-উদার হয়ে গেছে যে কোনো উপকূলকে সে আর ভয় করে না। এইভাবে একদিকে আমাদের ঈপ্সার সংকোচ ও সমর্পণে ও অন্যদিকে অবাধ চিন্তার মধ্য দিয়ে বিজ্ঞানসাধক আবার ফিরে পাবে বিচার-পূত তার পুরাতন মূল্যবোধগুলিকে।—তবে এবার আর সে ভুল করবে না মূল্যজগত ও বহুজগতের মধ্যে কোনো ঐক্য খুঁজে। বাসনাভারাক্রান্ত চিন্তার কাছে যে শিব-সুন্দরের মঙ্গললোককে মনে হয়েছিল বাস্তববিরোধী-নিরাসক্ত বুদ্ধি তাকেই আবার ফিরে পাবে অনীপ্সিত ধনের মত। কেননা রাসেলের মতে ঘটনার পরে আমাদের মানবিক মূল্যবোধগুলির অন্যায় আরোপ জড়প্রকৃতি সহ্য করে না। রূঢ় আঘাতে তাকে চুর্ণ করে, কিন্তু তাকে জানতে গিয়ে যদি আমরা ভালমন্দ বিচারকে একদম সরিয়ে রাখি—তাহ'লে সে কৃপা করে আমাদের মূল্য বোধগুলিকে সহ্য করে যায়।

রাসেল কল্পনা করেছেন এক স্যাডিষ্টিক ক্রীড়াময় ঈশ্বরের—যিনি ভালোমন্দহীন এই অনুপাস্য জড়সৃষ্টির মধ্যে মানুষের মত একটি উপাসনাপ্রবণ প্রাণী সৃষ্টি করেছেন শুধু তার ইচ্ছেগুলিকে, স্বপ্নগুলিকে ঔচিত্যবোধগুলিকে বাড়তে দিয়ে—বাস্তবের নির্দয় আঘাতে তাদের শোচনীয় বিচূর্ণনের দৃশ্য উপভোগ করার জন্য। এই ন্যায়-শুভ-সুন্দর ইত্যাদির প্রতি সম্পূর্ণ উদাসীন বাস্তবজগতকে জয় করা যাবে শুধু তার অনিবার্যতা মেনে নিয়ে এবং তারই মধ্যে মানব-প্রেম ও উচ্চভাবনার মধ্যে দিয়ে, সে আমাদের চিন্তা ও আবেগের যেটুকু স্বাধীনতা মঞ্জুর করেছে, তার শ্রেষ্ঠ উপযোগ ঘটিয়ে।

রাসেলের ভাষায় তাই পরমপুরুষার্থ হ'ল আমাদের সহমরণশীলদের (fellow-mortals) এই মৃত্যুময় পথযাত্রায় যতদূর সম্ভব সাহায্য করা, তাদের ব্যর্থতায় সান্ত্বনা দেওয়া, দুঃখে সহানুভূতি দেওয়া এবং এইভাবে তাদের মরণাভিযানের সংক্ষিপ্ত পথটিকে সাধ্যমত আলোকিত ও কণ্ঠকরমুক্ত করা। বাস্তবের নিষ্ঠুরতাকে স্বীকার করে নেয় যে অকুণ্ঠ প্রেমের আদর্শ—তার উপাসনাই রাসেলের মতে মুক্তমানবের একমাত্র উপাসনা।*

বিজ্ঞান আমাদের বারবার জানিয়ে দেয় যে প্রকৃতির মহান শক্তির কাছে মানুষের জীবন, জিজ্ঞাসা ও আশানিরাশা অত্যন্ত তুচ্ছ জিনিস। বাইরে মানুষ আসলে এই জড়জগতের দাস; তাকে "কাল", "অদৃষ্ট" এবং "মৃত্যু"র কাছে নতজানু হ'তেই হবে শেষ পর্যন্ত—কেননা তার সমস্ত ঈপ্সিত দ্রব্য এমনকি সে নিজেও এদের গ্রাসগ্রস্ত। কিন্তু বাইরে—কায়িকভাবে সে এত

* "If strength indeed is to be respected, let us respect rather the strength of those who refuse that false 'recognition of facts' which fails to recognize that facts are often bad."

বন্ধ হ'লেও অন্তরে সে মুক্ত, তার কল্পনায় সে অপাপবিদ্ধ। বাস্তব হোক্ না শুষ্ক, অসুন্দর এবং অশিব। সে তার মহৎকল্পনার আলোকে তার সীমিত গণ্ডীর মধ্যে কি তাকে সুন্দর করে তুলতে পারে না?

"When without the bitterness of impotent rebellion, we have learnt both to resign ourselves to the outward rule of Fate and recognize that the non-human world is unworthy of our worship, it becomes possible at last to transform and refashion the unconscious universe, so to transmute it in the crucible of imagination, that a new image of shining gold replaces the old idol of clay."

আবার শুধুমাত্র ব্রহ্মাণ্ডের নিরাবেগ ঐশ্বর্যের (Passionless Splendour) চিন্তাও আমাদের এনে দিতে পারে নির্বাণ। এবং তখন আমাদের আর দুঃখের সঙ্গে ধার্মিকদের মত এই অনিত্য-অসুখ-দুর্দশাময় জগতের কাছে অনিবার্য আত্মসমর্পণ করতে হয় না, আমরা তার সঙ্গে নিজের আমি-গুটিয়ে-নেওয়া সত্তাকে একাকার করে তাকে আত্মস্থ করে ফেলি। এর ফলে বন্ধ হয় স্বার্থসংঘাত, অস্থায়ী ইষ্টের জন্য উদগ্র কামনা; তার পরিবর্তে জন্মায় চিরন্তনের জন্য এক শুদ্ধতর পিপাসা। এই— "to burn with passion for eternal things"-ই তাঁর মতে মানুষের আসল অপবর্গ। আর এ অপবর্গের অন্যতম উপায় হ'ল "Contemplation of fate"। কারণ দুর্বার নিয়তিই যদি আমাদের ভাবনাধীন হয় তবে কালাগ্নি আমাদের মধ্যে আর কোনো দাহন সৃষ্টি করতে পারে না।

॥ তিন ॥

"A truly scientific philosophy will be more humble, more piecemeal, more arduous, offering less glitter of outward mirage to flatter fallacious hopes, but more indifferent to fate, and more capable of accepting the world without the tyrannous imposition of our human and temporary demands."

—*Mysticism and Logic*

আমাদের যুগে যা সবচেয়ে বেদনাদায়ক তা হ'ল যে এযুগে যারা নিশ্চিন্ত বোধ করে তারা আকাট নির্বোধ আর যাদের বিন্দুমাত্র বোধশক্তি বা চিন্তাশক্তি আছে তারাই সন্দেহাকুল ও সংকল্পহীন।* কিন্তু রাসেলের ধারণা এই ধরনের একটা উভয়সংকট অনিবার্য নয়। তাঁর মতে মানুষের যুক্তিনির্ভরতা বজায় রেখেই আমরা এক সুন্দর শান্তিময় নিশ্চিন্ত সমাজ গড়ে তুলতে পারি। এবং

"Such a world is possible, it waits only for men to wish to create it."

কিন্তু কি করে তা সম্ভব—সে সম্পর্কে কি রাসেল যথেষ্ট স্পষ্ট এবং স্ববিরোধমুক্ত?

এই অনুচ্ছেদে আমরা তাই আলোচনা করব। রাসেলীয় অপবর্গের ধারণায় যে ক'টি আপাতবিরোধ দেখা যায় একে একে সেগুলি বিচার করে তার সমাধানকল্পে রাসেলের বক্তব্য কতটা গ্রহণযোগ্য তা হবে আমাদের বিচার্য বিষয়।

* *New Hopes for a Changing World* গ্রন্থের প্রথম প্রবন্ধ দ্রষ্টব্য।

তাঁর চিন্তায় যে প্রথম বিরোধ আমাদের চোখে পড়ে তা হ'ল একই সঙ্গে বিজ্ঞানের যথেষ্টতা মানা ও না মানা। প্রাথমিকভাবে তিনি স্বীকার করেন নির্দ্বিধায় যে শুধুমাত্র বিজ্ঞানের অগ্রগতি আমাদের কখনও চরিতার্থতা দেবে না যদি তার সঙ্গে যুক্ত না হয় জীবনের লক্ষ্য সম্পর্কে একটা সঠিক ধারণা—বা wisdom যেটা কখনই বিজ্ঞানচর্চা থেকে আসতে পারে না। কাজেই বৈজ্ঞানিক জ্ঞান আমাদের মূল্যবোধ দেবে না—তাদের কাছ থেকে তা আশা করাই অন্যায়—এবিষয়ে অন্ততঃ রাসেল বিজ্ঞানবিরাগী টলস্টয়ের সঙ্গে একমত।* শুধু বৈজ্ঞানিক আবিষ্কারের ভিত্তিতে কোনো সমাজ হলে তা হ'বে অসম্পূর্ণ এবং হয়তো বা অশুভ। কেননা মানুষের বৈজ্ঞানিক জিজ্ঞাসাই তার একমাত্র প্রবৃত্তি নয়—এর সম্পর্কে রাসেল স্পষ্টই বলেছেন :

"As ingredients they are good ; as the sole driving force they are likely to be disastrous."

অর্থাৎ মানবপ্রকৃতির শুধুমাত্র বৈজ্ঞানিক দিকগুলিকে একচ্ছত্র আধিপত্য দিলে তারা মানুষের আবেগ ও অনুভূতি ইত্যাদিকে নষ্ট করে তাকে যান্ত্রিক করে তুলবে—আর এ বিপর্যয় হবে মারাত্মক, কেননা এক দুর্বল মুহূর্তে জ্ঞানসাধক রাসেল নিজেই স্বীকার করেছেন :

"Even more important than knowledge is the life of emotions."

একদিকে এই ঔদার্য থাকলে কি হবে অন্যদিকে বারবার রাসেল বলেছেন মানুষকে বিজ্ঞান-মাত্রনির্ভর হতে, শুধু যুক্তি ছাড়া আর কিছুকে না মানতে। যদি বৈজ্ঞানিক যুক্তি না পেলে কোনো কিছুকে মানা আমাদের অনুচিত হয়, অথচ যদি বিজ্ঞান আমাদের আদর্শের সন্ধান না দেয় তা হ'লে আদর্শ না মানাই কি আমাদের কর্তব্য নয়? অথচ রাসেল একই সঙ্গে বজায় রাখতে চান তাঁর যুক্তিভক্তি ও আদর্শভক্তি, এমনকি যুক্তির দ্বারা আদর্শকে পাওয়া যায় না জেনেও। এই সমস্যার সমাধান হ'তো যদি রাসেল এক্ষেত্রে বিজ্ঞানের অভাবপূরক অন্য কিছুর সন্ধান দিতে পারতেন।

কিন্তু তাও তিনি পারেন না। জীন্‌স্‌ বা এডিংটন যেভাবে ঈশ্বরকে খুঁজে পেয়েছেন বলে মনে করেন তার সম্পর্কে তাঁর ক্ষমাহীন বিদ্রূপ :

"The poor physicist, appalled at the desert that their formulae have revealed, call upon God to give them comfort. . . and the answer that the physicist think they hear to their cry is only the frightened beating of their own hearts."

শুধু নিঃসহায় হয়ে পড়েছেন বলে আবার ভাবাবেগের ভূমিতে নেমে আসবেন, সে পাত্র রাসেল নন।

সেদিক দিয়েও তিনি সংস্কারবর্জনের সংস্কারে বদ্ধ। Kant বা Spencer-এর মত স্পষ্টভাবে যুক্তিরাজ্য ও বিশ্বাসের রাজ্যে স্পষ্ট সীমারেখাও তিনি টানতে পারছেন না। এবং বারবার মেনে

* অবশ্য এ ব্যাপারে টলষ্টয় শুধু বিজ্ঞানের নীতিহীনতা দেখিয়ে ক্ষান্ত নন্‌—তিনি তার দুর্নীতি-পরায়নতা দেখাতেও উদ্যত। এই প্রসঙ্গে *Anna Karenina* -তে লেভিনের স্বগতোক্তি স্মর্তব্য—

"Would reason ever have proved to me that I must love my neighbour instead of strangling him, . . . ? Not Reason . . Reason discovered the struggle for existence and the law demanding that I should strangle all who hinder the satisfaction of my desire."

এ যুগে নীট্‌শে প্রভৃতি যাঁরা সারভাইনিজম্‌ থেকে এ ধরনের শক্তিপূজার নীতি টেনেছেন—রাসেল্‌ও অবশ্য তাঁদের পছন্দ করেন না। তাঁর মতে বিজ্ঞান যেহেতু নীতিনিরপেক্ষ সেহেতু তার অস্তিমূলক সিদ্ধান্ত থেকে নীতি বের করলে তা দুর্ণয় ছাড়া আর কিছু হবে না।

নিয়েও তিনি বিজ্ঞানের বা সত্যসন্ধানের অ-পর্যাপ্ততা স্বীকার করতে পারেন না। ঘুরে ফিরে বলেন :

"Knowledge, if it is wide and intimate, brings with it a realization of distant times and places, an awareness that the individual is not omnipotent or all-important, and a perspective in which values are seen more clearly."

এই সংঘাতের সমাধান করতে গেলে রাসেলকে ঝুঁকে পড়তে হয় তাঁর বিরুদ্ধবাদী দার্শনিক Spinoza -র intellectual love of God -এর প্রায়-সমগোত্রীয় আদর্শের দিকে—যার ফলে দেখা দেয় নতুন এক আত্মবিরোধ।

তৃতীয় স্ববিরোধ রয়েছে তাঁর সৃষ্টিতত্ত্ব ও নীতিতত্ত্বে। সৃষ্টিতত্ত্বের বর্ণনায় তিনি দ্বৈতবাদী : মানুষ ও জড়প্রকৃতির মৌলিক পার্থক্য স্বীকার করেন। এবং মনে করেন যে অচেতন, ও যদৃচ্ছাক্রমে নৃত্যন্তী প্রকৃতির বুকে সহসা এই আশাভরা মানুষের উৎপত্তি একটা আকস্মিক ঘটনা। এইভাবে একদিকে বাস্তবের শক্তিমত্তা ও অন্ধতা অন্যদিকে মানুষের দুর্বলতা ও চক্ষুষ্মানতা তাঁর দর্শনে ঘটনা ও আদর্শের দ্বন্দ্বকে আরো ঘনিয়ে তুলেছে। অথচ শেষ পর্যন্ত তিনি এ দুয়ের এক আশ্চর্য সহাবস্থানকে সম্ভব মনে করেছেন ও এই নীতিবর্জিত বস্তুলোকেই মানুষের আদর্শগুলিকে স্থান করে দিতে চেয়েছেন।

"Amid such a world, if anywhere, our ideals henceforward must find a home."

উত্তর-শিল্পবিপ্লব বিজ্ঞানপ্রভাবিত সমাজে যেসব আদর্শবাদী কবিরা এই দোটানায় পড়ে, বৈজ্ঞানিকসত্যের ধ্রৌব্যে বিশ্বাস রেখে জগতকে পাপী ও অকরুণ জেনে বাস্তবের বিরুদ্ধে প্রমিথীয় আস্ফালনে ফেটে পড়েছিলেন, জগতের প্রতি তাঁদের সেই সঘৃণ মনোভাবও রাসেলের পছন্দ নয়। কেননা তাঁর মতে এ ধরনের জগৎবিরাগও বন্ধনস্বরূপ। কিন্তু শুধুমাত্র নির্বাসনা হয়ে তথ্যসন্ধান করার নৈতিবাচক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গী থেকেই বা জীবনে মূল্যবোধের সঞ্চার হবে কি উপায়ে? এই সদর্থক মূল্যই বা কি—যদি তা না হয় কোনো পারমার্থিক ন্যায়দণ্ডে বিশ্বাস বা ঐশ্বরিক করুণায় আস্থা?—রাসেল উত্তরে বলবেন যে এ হ'ল "respect for what is best in man." কিন্তু শুধুমাত্র এ দিয়ে কি মানুষ বেঁচে থাকতে পারে? আর এইটুকু মূল্যবোধই বা কোন্ যুক্তিপরায়নতা আমাদের দেবে? এ প্রশ্নের কোনো স্পষ্ট উত্তর রাসেল কোথাও দেননি। মনে হয় এ ব্যাপারে রাসেলের উপলব্ধিই সম্বল আর তাই তিনি এখানে নীরব। হয়তো এই কারণেই পরবর্তীকালে Freeman's Worship এ প্রচারিত এই ধোঁয়াটে উপলব্ধিনির্ভর আদর্শ-পূজাতে তিনি আস্থা হারান। তথাচ তিনি শেষপর্যন্ত স্বীকার করেছেন যে আধুনিক বিজ্ঞানের সংশয়িতা যাঁদের সবরকম ধর্মবিশ্বাস থেকে চ্যুত করেছে তাঁদের পক্ষে দুঃসহ নিরাশার মুহূর্তে এই রকম একটা মোক্ষচিন্তা, একটা আত্মিক পরাজয় (inward defeat) থেকে তাদের বাঁচাতে পারে।

তবে শেষপর্যন্ত এই মুক্তিপথ সাধারণ্যের পক্ষে কতটা তৃপ্তিদায়ক হতে পারে সে নিয়ে সন্দেহ থেকে যায়। "এ পর্যন্ত কোনো মিথ্যা দিয়ে নিজেকে সুখী করিনি"—এ গর্ব প্রখরবিবেক রাসেলকে সারা জীবন ধরে যে পরিতৃপ্তি দেয়—এবং শুধুমাত্র "মানুষের দুঃখ কিছুটা লাঘব করেছি" এই সন্তোষ মানবদরদী রাসেলের জীবনে যেভাবে আর সব মহৎ মূল্যের অভাব পুষিয়ে নেয়—তেমন কজনের ক্ষেত্রে সম্ভব? কজন তাঁর মত যুক্তিপরায়নতার শুদ্ধ আবেগের 'পরে

বেঁচে থাকতে পারে, এবং তজ্জন্য সংশয়দীর্ণতাকে "arduous uncertanity" বা "stark joy" বলে মহিমান্বিত বোধ করে!

এই প্রয়োগগত অসুবিধে আমাদের রাসেলীয় চিন্তার শেষ তাত্ত্বিক অসংগতিতে পৌঁছে দেয়। তিনি নিজেই বলেছেন যে অধিকাংশ মানুষই তাদের ইচ্ছানুযায়ী বিশ্বাস তৈরী করে। এবং আমাদের বিশ্বাসগুলি হল আসলে এক ধরনের দিবাস্বপ্ন, যা অতিরঞ্জিত ফ্রয়েডীয় ব্যাখ্যানুযায়ী আমাদের বাসনাসঙ্ঘের চিত্রায়িত পরিপূরণ। বরং বাস্তব জগতের রূঢ় আঘাতে এই মায়াময় বিশ্বাসের জগতে দুয়েকটি প্রমার প্রবেশই আকস্মিক। যদি তাই হয় তাহলে হঠাৎ একদিন এই স্বপ্নপ্রিয় মানুষ জাগ্রৎস্বভাব ও যুক্তিবাদী হয়ে উঠবে—এই ধরনের চিন্তাও কি যা ঘটলে ভাল হয় তা দিয়ে যা বস্তুত ঘটবে তা নির্ধারণ করার দৃষ্টান্ত নয়?

এর উত্তরে অবশ্য রাসেল বলবেন যে তিনি দেখিয়েছেন যে বিজ্ঞানে বিশ্বাস ও মূল্য-বোধের মধ্যে কোনো কার্যকারণ সম্বন্ধ না থাকলেও তারা পরস্পর বিরোধীও নয়। আর তাই আমাদের জ্ঞানলোকে যুক্তিবাদিতাকে বজায় রেখেও আবেগ ও কর্মজগতে শুভৈষণাকে প্রতিষ্ঠা করা অসম্ভব নয়। আর যা অসম্ভব নয় তা এযাবৎ ঘটেনি বলে ভবিষ্যতেও ঘটবে না—এ যেমন ভাবা যেতে পারে তেমনি তা এযাবৎ না ঘটলেও ভবিষ্যতে ঘটবে—এও ভাবা যেতে পারে। কেননা এক্ষেত্রে "hope for the future is at least as rational as fear"।

॥ চার ॥

"রঙ্‌চঙে সার্সির মধ্যে দিয়ে রকমারি আলো, ধূপদীপ স্তবস্তুতি—ওসবে আমি নেই। শুনতে শুনতে কত কী ভাব আসে—মনে হয় ওরা চক্রান্ত ক'রে আমাকে দিয়ে আস্তিক্যের তরফে অনেক কিছু বলিয়ে নিতে চায় যা বলতে আমার বুদ্ধির মানা।"—[তীর্থংকর-গ্রন্থে দিলীপ রায় কর্তৃক বিধৃত রাসেলের উক্তি রবীন্দ্রনাথের প্রতি]

রাসেলকে আমরা শ্রদ্ধা না করে পারি না তাঁর এই অগুপ্ত স্বতোবিরোধের জন্যই। তাঁর মধ্যে রয়েছে মিস্‌টিসিজ্‌ম্‌ ও লজিকের সে চিরন্তন দোটানা যাকে তিনি নিজেই আদর্শ দার্শনিকের গুণ বলে মনে করেন। একদিকে তাঁর মিস্‌টিক্‌ প্রবণতা তাঁকে স্বপ্নপ্রিয় ও ভালো-বাসার পিপাসু এবং দিৎসু করে তুলেছে, অন্য দিকে তাঁর কঠোর যুক্তিবাদ—যাকে রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছিলেন "বুদ্ধির গুরুবাদ"—তাঁকে করে রেখেছে সন্ন্যাসীর মত সংযমী। প্রাণপণে বিশ্বাস করতে চেয়েও তিনি অনেক কিছুতে বিশ্বাস করতে পারেননি গোঁড়ামী বর্জনের একটা কৃচ্ছ্রতর গোঁড়ামীবশে। এর ফলে এমনকি নিজের জীবনেও রাসেল স্বোদ্ভাবিত রাস্তায় মুক্তিলাভ করেননি—করেছেন ভিন্নতর উপায়ে—নারী প্রেমের পথে।

আর তাই জীবনের অন্তিমলগ্নে যতক্ষণ পর্যন্ত না তাঁর শুষ্ক অথচ অতিশ্রদ্ধেয় (cold but lofty) জ্ঞানলোক পরিত্যাগ করে প্রেমের নিবিড় স্বর্গে তিনি উপনীত হয়েছেন—ততক্ষণ তাঁকে আক্ষেপ করতে হয়েছে—

> "দীর্ঘবর্ষগুলি গেল আমি খুঁজে চলি শান্তি, একা!
> পেয়েছি সুতীব্র সুখ একাকীত্ব উন্মাদনা এবং যন্ত্রণা, তবু
> শান্তির মেলেনি আজো দেখা।"
>
> [আত্মজীবনীর উৎসর্গপত্র]

ছাত্র-সংসদের কথা

নীপেশ দাশ

অনেক বাধা-বিপত্তি, ঝড়-ঝঞ্ঝা অতিক্রম ক'রে গত ২৫শে ফেব্রুয়ারী, ১৯৭২-এ আমাদের বর্তমান প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজ ছাত্র-সংসদ গ'ড়ে উঠেছে।

কলেজের মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ শ্রীপ্রতুলচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায়ের সভাপতিত্বে আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদ সমস্ত কার্য সম্পন্ন করে। এবার আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদের গত সাত মাসের কার্য পর্যালোচনা করে দেখা যাক, আমরা আমাদের পরিকল্পিত কার্যাবলীকে কতটা সার্থক করে তুলতে পেরেছি।

বর্তমান ছাত্র-সংসদের সর্বাপেক্ষা উল্লেখযোগ্য অগ্রগতি হয়েছে সাংস্কৃতিক বিষয়ে। প্রায় তিন বছর কলেজে কোনও সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান সম্পন্ন হয়নি। ১৯৬৯-এর সেপ্টেম্বর মাসে

কলেজের প্রেক্ষাগৃহে অনুষ্ঠিত বিচিত্রানুষ্ঠানের দীর্ঘকাল পরে প্রেক্ষাগৃহের বন্ধ দরজা ২১শে ফেব্রুয়ারী ১৯৭২এ বাংলাভাষা দিবসের শহীদদের প্রতি নিবেদিত সংগীতানুষ্ঠানের মধ্য দিয়ে উন্মোচিত হোল। একটি সহজ সুন্দর সংগীতালেখ্যর মাধ্যমে শ্রদ্ধার্ঘ্য অর্পণ করা হোল শহীদদের উদ্দেশ্যে। অনুষ্ঠানে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন কলেজেরই ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা। এই অনুষ্ঠানেই দেখা গিয়েছিল ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ও অধ্যাপকবৃন্দের পরিতৃপ্ত সহাস্যমুখ। তাঁরা যে কলেজের সাংস্কৃতিক কার্যকলাপের প্রতি কতখানি আন্তরিকভাবে উৎসাহী তা অনুষ্ঠানটির প্রতি তাঁদের আগ্রহের মাত্রা দেখেই বোঝা গিয়েছিল। তার পরের উল্লেখযোগ্য অনুষ্ঠান রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদ কর্তৃক নিবেদিত রবীন্দ্র-নৃত্যনাট্য 'শাপ-মোচন'। গত ১৯শে মার্চ সন্ধ্যাবেলায় পূর্ণ প্রেক্ষাগৃহে এই অনুষ্ঠানটি অতি সাফল্যের সঙ্গে অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। কলেজের ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরাই এই নৃত্যনাট্যে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন এবং দর্শকের আসনে উপস্থিত ছিলেন অসংখ্য ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, অভিভাবকগণ ও অধ্যাপকবৃন্দ। অনুষ্ঠানটিতে সভাপতিত্ব করেন মাননীয় অধ্যক্ষ মহাশয়। ২৯শে এপ্রিল প্রাক্তন ছাত্র-পুনর্মিলন দিবসে আর একটি মনোজ্ঞ অনুষ্ঠান অনুষ্ঠিত হয়। কলেজ প্রেক্ষাগৃহে আয়োজিত সভায় সভাপতিত্ব করেন এই কলেজেরই প্রাক্তন ছাত্র, পশ্চিমবঙ্গের মাননীয় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী শ্রীসিদ্ধার্থশঙ্কর রায়। ছাত্র-সংসদ আয়োজিত সান্ধ্যকালীন চা-পান আসরের পরে কলেজের কৃতী ছাত্র-ছাত্রীদের পুরস্কার বিতরণ করেন মাননীয় মুখ্যমন্ত্রী এবং সভা শেষ হয় তাঁর বক্তৃতার পরে। গ্রীষ্মের ছুটির আগে দুদিন ব্যাপী একটি অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়। প্রথম দিন ৫ই মে সন্ধ্যাবেলা কলেজ প্রেক্ষাগৃহে ছাত্র-সংসদের নাট্যবিভাগ নিবেদিত দুইটি নাটক অভিনীত হয়। কলেজের ছাত্রীগণ অভিনয় করেন আশাপূর্ণা দেবী রচিত 'নয়-ছয়' নাটকটি এবং ছাত্ররা অভিনয় করেন রতনকুমার ঘোষ রচিত নাটক "পিতামহদের উদ্দেশ্যে"। এই দিন অনুষ্ঠানে সভানেত্রীরূপে উপস্থিত ছিলেন "নয় ছয়" নাটকের লেখিকা শ্রীমতী আশাপূর্ণা দেবী। ছাত্রদের অভিনীত নাটকটি দর্শকদের দ্বারা উচ্চ প্রশংসিত হয়। তারপর দিন ৬ই মে রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদ কর্তৃক রবীন্দ্র-জন্মোৎসব পালন করা হয় একটি ছোট্ট বিচিত্রানুষ্ঠানের মাধ্যমে। অনুষ্ঠানটিতে সভাপতিরূপে উপস্থিত ছিলেন—প্রখ্যাত লেখক শ্রীসন্তোষকুমার ঘোষ। কলেজের অধ্যাপকগণও এই অনুষ্ঠানে যোগদান করে আমাদের সহযোগিতা করেন। বিচিত্রানুষ্ঠানে অংশ গ্রহণ করেছিলেন কলেজের এবং বাইরের শিল্পীবৃন্দ। তাঁদের মধ্যে শ্রীমতী চিত্রলেখা চৌধুরী ও শ্রী শ্রীকুমার চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের নাম উল্লেখযোগ্য।

নবাগতদের অভ্যর্থনা জানাবার জন্য ৪ঠা অক্টোবর একটি অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করা হয়। সেই অনুষ্ঠানে স্বনামধন্য শ্রীমতী সুচিত্রা মিত্র, শ্রীঅশোকতরু বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়, শ্রীসাগর সেন ও শ্রীঅরবিন্দ বিশ্বাস প্রভৃতি বিশিষ্ট শিল্পীরা তাঁদের সঙ্গীত-সুধা পরিবেশন করে আমাদের প্রচুর আনন্দ দিয়ে গেছেন।

আমাদের বিতর্ক বিভাগও প্রশংসনীয় অগ্রগতির পরিচয় দিয়েছে। ছাত্র-সংসদ গঠিত হবার পর কয়েকটি বিতর্ক সভার আয়োজন করা হয়। একটি বিতর্ক সভা অনুষ্ঠিত হয় কলেজের বর্তমান ছাত্রগণ বনাম অবশিষ্ট দলের সঙ্গে। এই বিতর্ক সভায় কলেজের বর্তমান ছাত্রদের পক্ষে অংশগ্রহণ করেছিলেন সর্বশ্রী কল্যাণ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, অনুপ সিংহ, অশোক নিয়োগী এবং ইন্দ্রজিৎ গুপ্ত ও অবশিষ্ট দলের পক্ষে ছিলেন সর্বশ্রী উদয়ন মুখোপাধ্যায়, গৌতম চক্রবর্তী, সৌমিত্র ভট্টাচার্য এবং শ্রীমতী তিলোত্তমা চট্টোপাধ্যায়। বিতর্কটিতে দলগতভাবে জয়লাভ করে প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজের বর্তমান ছাত্রগণ। দ্বিতীয়বার একটি বিতর্ক প্রতিযোগিতার

আয়োজন করা হয় কলেজের পক্ষ থেকে। প্রতিযোগিতায় দলগতভাবে প্রথম হয় "শ্রী শিক্ষায়তন" কলেজ এবং ব্যক্তিগতভাবে প্রথম হয় যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ছাত্র শ্রীশান্তনু চক্রবর্তী।

আর একটি মনোজ্ঞ বিতর্ক মেলা হয় যার বিষয় ছিল The way to Truth is through Controversy. বহুজন প্রশংশিত এই বিতর্ক সভা খুবই আকর্ষণীয় হয়েছিল। এ ছাড়াও ম্যাক্সমুলার ভবন আয়োজিত বিতর্ক সভায় প্রথম হয়ে আমাদের সংসদের সদস্য শ্রীঅশোক নিয়োগী প্রথম পুরস্কার স্বরূপ ৩০০৲ টাকা পেয়ে আমাদের কলেজের গৌরব বাড়িয়েছেন।

আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদের আর একটি বৈপ্লবিক সিদ্ধান্ত খুবই প্রশংসনীয়। আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদের পক্ষ থেকে প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজকে পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে রূপান্তরিত করার যে প্রস্তাব আনয়ন করা হয়েছে সে প্রস্তাব কলেজের প্রায় প্রত্যেক ছাত্র ও অধ্যাপক সমর্থন করেন। প্রস্তাবটি কার্যকর করার জন্য আমরা যে আন্দোলন করেছি তা সফল হয়েছে এবং আশা করি আগামী দু'এক বছরের মধ্যে প্রেসিডেন্সী কলেজ একটি পূর্ণাঙ্গ বিশ্বাবিদ্যালয়ে রূপান্তরিত হবে।

ছাত্র-সংসদের অন্যান্য বিভাগ—যেমন জুনিয়ার বয়েজ কমন রুম ও সমাজ-সেবা বিভাগের কার্যকলাপ ও উল্লেখযোগ্য। জুনিয়ার কমন রুম আয়োজিত টেবিল টেনিস টুর্নামেণ্টে কলেজের ছাত্রগণ অংশগ্রহণ করেন এবং বিজয়ী হন ইতিহাসের তৃতীয় বর্ষের ছাত্র শ্রীঅমিত বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়। সমাজ-সেবা বিভাগ রেডক্রশ সম্মেলনে প্রতিনিধি প্রেরণ করে সম্মেলনে অংশ গ্রহণ করেছিল এবং কলেজে একটি রেডক্রশ সমিতি স্থাপন করেছে।

শিক্ষাসংস্কার বিষয়েও আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদের অবদান উল্লেখ করবার মত। ছাত্র-শিক্ষকের সম্পর্ককে মধুর এবং সহজ করবার জন্য শিক্ষা-দান পদ্ধতিকে অধিক বাস্তবায়িত করার জন্য ও পরীক্ষা পদ্ধতির সংস্কার সাধনের জন্য স্টুডেণ্ট-টীচার-কাউন্সিল গঠন করার প্রস্তাব করা হয়েছে। ছাত্র-সংসদের উদ্যোগে প্রতিটি বিভাগ থেকে একজন অধ্যাপক এবং তিনজন ছাত্রকে নিয়ে এই কাউন্সিল গঠিত হবে।

পরিশেষে আমি ধন্যবাদ জানাই আমাদের ছাত্র-সংসদের সভাপতি মাননীয় শ্রীপ্রতুলচন্দ্র মুখোপাধ্যায়কে এবং নাট্য বিভাগের সম্পাদক হরষিত মুখোপাধ্যায়, বিতর্ক বিভাগের সম্পাদক কল্যাণ চট্টোপাধ্যায়, সমাজসেবা বিভাগের সম্পাদক অশোক নিয়োগী, কলেজ পত্রিকার প্রকাশন সম্পাদক রুদ্রাংশু মুখোপাধ্যায়, জুনিয়ার বয়েজ কমন রুমের সম্পাদক সোমক রায়, এবং রবীন্দ্র-পরিষদের সম্পাদিকা সোনালী নন্দীকে। এঁরা ছাত্র-সংসদের প্রতিটি কাজকে, প্রতিটি অনুষ্ঠানকে তাঁদের ঐকান্তিকতা ও কার্যকুশলতার দ্বারা সফল করেছেন।

সংসদের অন্যান্য সদস্যদের কাছেও আমি কৃতজ্ঞ। বিশেষ করে "জুনিয়ার বার্সার" শ্রীতিলক গঙ্গোপাধ্যায় বহুভাবে আমাদের সাহায্য করেছেন। সকলের সমবেত সহানুভূতিপূর্ণ সমর্থন না পেলে এই বিভিন্ন কার্যকলাপ সার্থক করে তোলা সম্ভব হোত না। কলেজের ছাত্র-ছাত্রী, অধ্যাপক ও অন্যান্য কর্মচারীদেরও আমি আন্তরিকভাবে ধন্যবাদ জানাচ্ছি : তাঁদের প্রত্যক্ষ ও পরোক্ষ সহযোগিতা আমাদের অগ্রগতির পথে এক প্রধান সহায়।

পরিচিতি

অরিন্দম চক্রবর্তী॥ দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ দর্শন বিভাগের ছাত্র; বিতর্কে উৎসাহী; ক্ষৌরকর্মে অপারগ, খাদি প্রতিষ্ঠানের একমাত্র আশা।

কল্যাণ সান্যাল॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র; এখন কলকাতা বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে প্রথম বর্ষে অর্থনীতি পড়েন; কবিতা লেখায় উৎসাহী; সার্ত্রে-প্রেমী ও কফি-হাউস পৃষ্ঠপোষক।

নীপেশ দাশ॥ তৃতীয় বর্ষ উদ্ভিদবিদ্যার ছাত্র; কলেজ ছাত্র-সংসদের সাধারণ সম্পাদক; ক্রিকেট খেলতে চেষ্টা করেন।

মণিকুন্তলা মুখোপাধ্যায়॥ দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ ইতিহাসের ছাত্রী; আমাদের বাংলা বিভাগের একমাত্র লৌখিকা সম্বন্ধে কিছু লিখতে আজকের দিনের 'শিভ্যালরি'-তেও আটকাচ্ছে।

শঙ্খ ঘোষ॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র; যাদবপুর বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে বাংলার অধ্যাপক।

শমীক বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায়॥ প্রাক্তন ছাত্র; রবীন্দ্রভারতী বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ে ইংরাজির অধ্যাপক।

সত্যজিৎ রায়॥

সোমক রায়॥ দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ পদার্থবিদ্যার ছাত্র; বিতর্ক ও রাজনৈতিক কাজকর্মে উৎসাহী; বাক্‌স্ববর্স্ব বিশ্বপ্রেমিক যাকে পড়তে হয়েছে বিস্তর, বুঝতে হয়েছে অল্প।

হরপ্রসাদ মিত্র॥ বাংলার বিভাগীয় প্রধান।

A Case for Creating an Institution Deemed to be a University at Presidency College, Calcutta

The case is simple : Presidency College, Calcutta fulfils all important criteria for being awarded the status of an autonomous degree-granting institution. Its history, present standing and future potential, all set it apart from other colleges and point to the necessity of a special status.

Further, the present state of the University of Calcutta—with its burden of 225,000 students in nearly 200 colleges—is such that some degree of decentralization is being recommended by nearly every authority in the field of higher education. This fact alone indicates that a high-quality, research-oriented institution like Presidency College does not fit into the present structure of the University of Calcutta ; also that such institutions should be allowed to pursue their own lines of development unfettered by considerations of the lowest common denominator amongst a large number of colleges whose sole aim is producing graduates.

We regard the above statements to be evident ; and their implication—again obvious—is that Presidency College, Calcutta should immediately be

awarded the status of an Institution Deemed to be a University. What is obvious to the insiders and the specialists would still require a public justification. We submit below a public defence of our thesis.

WHAT EXACTLY DO WE WANT ?

What we do *not* want is another university doing part of the job that the University of Calcutta is supposed to do. In other words we do not want an affiliating university responsible for a number of colleges. Presidency College should become an independent unit responsible for all academic matters relating to its own students. We do not foresee a large expansion either of staff or of the number of students. Roughly we want to have the right to maintain our standards, perhaps improve them, without encroaching on anybody else's business and without imposition from others.

JUSTIFICATION

Two questions are involved here :

(1) What is so special about Presidency College ?

(2) Granted that there are very special features about Presidency College, is a degree-granting status necessarily indicated ?

I. *SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PRESIDENCY COLLEGE, CALCUTTA*

(i) *History*

Presidency College has, throughout its history, led the field of higher education in eastern India. This is too well-known to need elaboration. What is sometimes not fully understood is the pace-setting character of this leadership. The College has never been *only* a good teaching institution—the best in examination performance and in the average quality of its students ; it has also set the standards for university education. Presidency College professors have virtually created the current traditions of the University of Calcutta ; Presidency College students have always provided the overwhelming majority of the distinguished professors of the University. It was a professor from Presidency College who founded the scientific tradition of the University ; in Statistics and Geology the College departments formed the nucleus of the University departments. The first chair in Economics in eastern India was instituted in Presidency College, an act later emulated by the University.

Similar examples could be cited regarding nearly every department in the College.

(ii) *Present Standing*

The College retains this position of leadership today ; only, unfortunately, the University is unable to accept the lead. The teachers from the College are much sought after for postgraduate lectures, both by the University authorities

as well as by the students in the MA/MSc classes. In undergraduate teaching the reputation of the College has, if anything, grown. The over-all reputation of a significant proportion of the teaching staff is now so high that any university expansion appears to start by raiding Presidency College for Professorial appointments. The number of such offers is in fact much larger than the number of acceptances; one must not overlook the very important tradition here of loyalty to this exceptional institution. Even so we have, during the last three years, supplied Burdwan University, Jawaharlal Nehru University and Calcutta University with seven professors in all.

This situation arises from the fact that in Presidency College teaching has always been wedded to scholarship and research, so that our best are not only excellent teachers but also fine scholars. And such men are not easily available elsewhere.

This means that the College is perfectly capable today of mustering sufficient talent for matching the best of Indian Universities. This pool of talent is being largely wasted within the confines of the current system whereby the slow-moving dinosaur dictates the pace at which the sprightly two-legged mammal must develop.

(iii) *The Future*

One thing is clear: Presidency College and the University of Calcutta do not have the same potential for development in the future. The College, as it stands, is poised for a leap forward to autonomy and a full flowering of its wealth of human material and the library and laboratory facilities already fit for a high-grade university. If we require high-class educators, research scientists or administrators we have to have a system whereby high-quality education is available.

Presidency College can fulfil this need, no other institution can. A good university department requires good scholars who are interested in teaching as well, and good library and laboratory facilities. All this is already available here in the College. The number of vacant chairs in West Bengal universities and the fact that Presidency College departments usually have more professors than university departments substantiate the above claim.

2. *THE NECESSITY OF DEGREE-GRANTING STATUS*

That the University of Calcutta in its present state cannot handle any kind of higher education is clear from the concern expressed by all relevant authorities involved with a proper reorganisation of the affairs and the jurisdiction of the University. Indeed one of the experts—a professor at the University—recommends complete decentralization.

Our case is more limited in scope: the kind of education offered at this College is becoming progressively out of gear with the principal pre-occupations of the University, namely large-scale BA and MA examinations. An examination covering students of 150 colleges requires that only minimum standards can—at best—be protected; an MA examination where 1200 candidates appear

cannot, by the very nature of the situation, insist that the candidates *master* any given branch of the Arts. Perhaps such examinations are necessary ; however, the other kind where we insist on high standards, on the mastery of a whole discipline, is also necessary. Thus there must be at least two types of degree course, perhaps several types, each appropriate to a class of institutions.

Presidency College, Calcutta, should have the right to grant its own degrees, tailoring the teaching and the examinations to its exceptional resources of staff, student, library and laboratory. This is not predicated on the current mess at the University of Calcutta ; go back a few years when the University system had not broken down so patently, and even then we would have had a very strong case based on the disparity between this College and a system based on nearly 200 colleges. The actual situation at present merely reinforces our case.

Fine tools have to be used in delicate and complex operations. One does not use a surgeon's knife to sharpen pencils. The State has already vested a good measure of resources in building up this very fine institution ; simple commonsense tells us that this fineness be preserved from misuse. Only a degree-granting status can do justice to this College.

Looking at this issue from another angle, unless this special status is granted the College cannot hope to maintain its quality in the face of usurpation and encroachment. We have an excellent staff here, but how long can the quality be maintained if we are to remain second-class citizens in the academic world? Ninetythree universities in India have the authority to set their own syllabus, to teach as they like and to conduct examinations in the way they consider best. Members of the staff at Presidency College—often invited as experts to select Professors and Readers at the universities—cannot be expected to remain meekly at their posts for life, facing the winds that blow from the University of Calcutta.

The special quality of the College is a great attraction ensuring a great deal of loyalty ; this loyalty does not however extend to giving up one's natural right of being a full-fledged member of the academic community. The present system, if continued, is certain to lead to erosion of the solid basis of quality in the College ; and tradition is a very tricky thing—once gone no amount of administrative or political dickering will bring it to life in less than a century.

3. *SOME NON-QUESTIONS*

The phrase "special treatment" immediately raises the hackles in certain circles. This is a conditioned reflex ; no cerebration is involved. Some questions—often rhetorical questions—are however raised in objection. It is impossible to anticipate all of these. We try to answer here some of the standard reactions.

One general point has to be made first. *Any* change in the system—however desirable—hurts some people. This is often used as an argument for *status quo ;* the fact that the *status quo* itself hurts others is not considered by the people who use this argument. Those who have become used to power and privilege tend to yell hard when their interests are likely to be affected—often more loudly than their longsuffering victims. This is not a *reason* for anything or against any action.

PANACEA?

Would making Presidency College a University solve the problems of university education in West Bengal? If not why should one *etc.*?

The answer is really another question: would *not* making Presidency College a University solve anything?

WIDENING GAP ?

Won't the proposed change lead to a wider gap between the standard of education received by the students of Presidency College and that available elsewhere?

Answer: we expect it would; we hope this isn't so. It all depends on what others do. There is already a very marked disparity. What should we do under the present regime—try to teach our students badly so that the gap is smaller?

ELITISM?

Well, yes. A sad fact of life is that it is not for everybody to become a good nuclear physicist, a noted literary critic, a good economist or indeed even a good professor. These are people of special ability, requiring special attention. Mass lectures will not do for training such people in the manner that they deserve. If we find another potential Ramanujan, we have to give him leisure, attention, the best teaching and the best intellectual atmosphere or else we fail in our duty.

Let us *ask* one question: where in the world are the best academics given the highest privileges? Answer, USSR, where ready-made ivory towers are available to real academic merit.

The only equality viable in civil society is the equality of opportunity, not identity of treatment for one and all. We do not try to train doctors in arts colleges. Regarding equality of opportunity, Presidency College has a very strong tradition of admitting students on academic criteria alone, a tradition that has prevailed over even ministerial attempts at intervention. Can other institutions claim the same record?

PROXIMITY TO C. U.?

Won't the taint spread from the university to its nextdoor neighbour?

The answer is that it might, it does so quite often now. Alienation cannot make it worse. Why not remove the source of the taint? After all it was the University of Calcutta which thrust its proximity on Presidency College, not the other way about.

That the Calcutta University authorities have been physically decentralizing over the past few years support our position. If they carry on the good work a little further things should work out nicely for both of us.

$ 64?

Where will the money come from? Can we afford another showpiece while schools and colleges starve? There is a very simple answer: Presidency College

requires only marginal financial assistance for take-off. The long run will be somewhat more expensive; which growing institution does not require more and more money with time? Compared with the expenses of running the worst and the least popular university the additional expenditure involved here would be minuscule.

WHY NOT AN AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE?

The best minds of this College found the university system unsympathetic to their views on teaching and research. P. C. Ray solved the problem in one way, moulding the University College of Science to his own specifications; this model was no longer viable for J. C. Bose or P. C. Mahalanobis, who had to found their own Institutes. The main reason for this was that Presidency College without full autonomy covering undergraduate work to Ph.D., was too limited for these great men. This is not the standard mode in first-rate academic centres. Even great men are content to work together at Cambridge, Harvard, Göttingen. Extreme individualism is forced on to the best minds if no provision is made to allow them the utmost flexibility. This is a loss, a leakage that can be stopped if Presidency College itself is given *full university status.* Partial autonomy within the University of Calcutta will not do because whatever part remains outside the sole jurisdiction of this College will serve as a reminder of our vassaldom, alienating both sides. Proper cooperation survives only amongst equals. For the Calcutta University as well as for Presidency College only total severance of past relations can furnish the base of future amity. Also the two spheres are essentially separate; the College can offer flexibility where the C. U. is constrained by considerations of uniformity. An institution of the size of Presidency College offers easy communication and facilitates control of the centrifugal forces that a large institution necessarily generates. We have seen too much of the dinosaurs; let some others have their day.

4. *EXPERT OPINION*

The question of university status for Presidency College is often seen as a battle between the University of Calcutta and the College, between right and wrong or good and evil according to one's point of view. We respectfully suggest that the question be examined by well known academics who do not have an obvious commitment one way or the other. We feel that the weight of academic opinion is on our side. We quote below the opinions of some famous names; that most such men in West Bengal were students of Presidency College is something that we cannot help, nor regret.

Edward Shils, the internationally noted sociologist, from the University of Chicago and Peterhouse, Cambridge, writes in his essay on "The Academic Profession in India", in *Elites in South Asia* (Cambridge University Press, 1970):

"Occasionally a teacher encourages one of his best pupils to enter on a career of scientific research but, except possibly for Presidency College, Calcutta, I know of no higher educational institution in India where teachers encourage their best pupils to enter the academic profession". (pp. 177-8).

"' . . . except in very few colleges, research facilities are totally non-existent'. (*UGC: Report of Standards of University Education,* New Delhi, 1965 p. 41). Presidency College, Calcutta is the only Indian College at which teachers had the opportunity to do, and actually did, important research. J. C. Bose, P. C. Ray, P. C. Mahalanobis *et al.* did much of their important research while at Presidency College". (p. 188n).

"Calcutta University was the first to teach a scientific subject; its university department of Chemistry was established in 1915. These developments were largely the result of the initiative of Sir Asutosh Mukherjee, when Vice-Chancellor of Calcutta University. In the praise given to Sir Asutosh for this accomplishment, it is usually forgotton that one of the by-products of the development of postgraduate studies in the university was the frustration of the plans, initiated by Henry Roscher James, the Principal of Presidency College, to develop the latter from a college restricted by the university into a self-governing, non-affiliating university (*Calcutta University Commission, 1917-1919, Report,* Calcutta, 1919-1920, Vol. I, p. 416). It is a serious question whether India did not lose more by this refusal to allow this important innovation than it gained by the establishment of postgraduate studies in the university. Had James's aspirations been fulfilled, the soul-crushing academic 'lock-step' imposed by the university might have been alleviated". (pp. 186-187n).

Sir Jadunath Sarkar, on the occasion of the centenary celebration of the Presidency College remarked:

"The first and foremost pressing question of today is how to maintain the proper standard in our teaching and examinations; Gresham's Law is operating in the academic world, bad coins are driving good coins out of our market. In the name of local autonomy Free India is being covered by mushroom universities—without money, without men and without that catholicity of mind which is the root meaning of the word university.

"In the name of democracy these universities are running a race for cheaper degrees. At the same time in a narrow parochial spirit they are engaging only local men as teachers and not the ablest available for the pay.

"In the past century, Presidency College had often fought a lone battle, by the precept of its teachers and the example of its students, in defence of the highest academic standard. In the coming century they cannot escape that very unpopular duty if India is not to lapse into medieval darkness."

Dr. D. M. Bose, Director, Bose Institute, Calcutta, writes in his essay on the *Future of Presidency College*:

"There is however a danger that unless special efforts are made to revitalise in some new way to suit the present conditions, the pioneering spirit of distinguished founders and teachers, the inherited tradition of the Presidency College is in danger of obliteration. Colleges, now affiliated to the Calcutta University, are liable to be converted into institutions for mass production of graduates. The present practice of setting questions based on written syllabi by external examiners, and the assessment of the merits of the examinee solely on written scripts, with no possibility of ascertaining their performance during the College years, makes it more and more difficult to separate the outstanding from the mediocre, and to provide special opportunities to the former for fully developing their intrisic talents.

"For this reason and for others which I discuss later, I would welcome the idea of the Presidency College being converted to unitary teaching university, with freedom to experiment on methods of teaching, to make alterations in the syllabi to suit the changing demands for specialized training and to assess the performance of the students from class records and periodic tests.

"The Presidency College has so far been more or less under the control of the Education Directorate. Such control was probably necessary in the early stages of the College, otherwise it would not have been possible to recruit outstanding teachers from at home and abroad. This had helped in creating the traditions of its high academic standard. The academic tradition having been established, the time has come that such tradition may be allowed to flower in an atmosphere of freedom and autonomy."

Dr. Srikumar Banerjee
A Personal Memoir

Subodh Chandra Sengupta

It was half a century ago that I first met Professor Srikumar Banerjee as an Intermediate student at Presidency College. But I had heard about him earlier from my father who was Headmaster of the High School at Hetampur when Srikumar Banerjee was himself an Intermediate student there. Hetampur was then a remote, sleepy village, and although it had a College, it had never seen or never saw afterwards, a pupil of Srikumar Banerjee's calibre, and no one had any idea about his remarkable powers. This modesty was shared by Srikumar Banerjee himself, for when he passed out high in the Intermediate examination and came to Calcutta to read for B.A. Honours, he joined the Scottish Churches College rather than the Presidency College. He told me later on that for a boy hailing from a remote village in Birbhum, Presidency College seemed to be too big a place.

He did not produce much of an impression at the Scottish Churches College, too. He was shy, and he also stuttered in speech ; in the College tests he was never at the top. But he formed warm friendships in a mess in Manicktala where he met a cross section of the student community of Calcutta, from scholarly book-worms to entertaining truants. To the last day of his life, he retained vivid impressions of those days and regaled us with stories of his friends, the lively

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pranks, adventures and exploits of Benoy Motilal, Khagen Roy, Naresh Chandra Mittra, and last and first, the great Sisir Kumar Bhaduri. Sisir Bhaduri is known to us as an eminent actor who re-created the Bengali stage. But he was also, we gathered, a keen student and connoisseur of literature and passed his infectious enthusiasm to his friends. Srikumar Banerjee always recalled with the warmest admiration how Sisir Bhaduri stimulated a true appreciation of poetry amongst his friends and how particularly he introduced them to the poetry of Tagore in a society that was yet enthralled by Madhusudan, Hemchandra and Nabinchandra. Srikumar Banerjee remembered his friends with the glowing affection of youth, and till the last he was the most regular visitor of Sisir Bhaduri's theatre. He had a remarkable capacity for carrying on with serious work even in the midst of distractions and diversions. It was a usual sight for us that he would be reading and writing and yet participate in an *adda* where the other members would be hilariously discussing cabbages and kings. When one day a colleague expressed surprise at this remarkable power of concentration and diffusion, he humorously retorted, 'Don't forget I was in my student days a chum of Sisir Bhaduri !'

The Manicktala mess and the friendships he cultivated there widened his interests in other directions. He became a lover of chess and bridge and never felt at ease unless he could spend part of the evening at a club where these games were played. During his last days when he had practically lost the power of his legs, he said to me that he could have a restful night only if he could visit the Union Club and watch younger people playing bridge in which he himself was then too weak to participate. It was from his Manicktala days, I believe, that he began to frequent the maidan in the football season. Although no footballer himself, he watched the game with relish and developed a keen insight into its niceties. Later on he became a living historian of Calcutta football and would dilate on the different styles of its more magnificent exponents—Sivadas Bhaduri of Mohun Bagan, Ellson of Middlesex, Graves of H. L. I. and Rashid of Mohammedan Sporting.

II

The digression about the Manicktala mess has interrupted my narrative which must now be resumed. Although in the Scottish Churches College, Srikumar Banerjee was outshone by more flamboyant pupils, he performed a marvellous feat in the B.A. Honours examination of 1910. He passed out first in the first class and annexed the coveted Eshan scholarship which is awarded to the student who gets the highest marks of all the candidates in all the subjects. In the long history of the University of Calcutta, he is the only graduate who bagged this scholarship by virtue of his proficiency in English, for though some students of English secured this distinction in the spacious days of double honours and triple honours, they secured it on the strength of their performance in the other subjects rather than in English. I wonder if Srikumar Banerjee was not also the youngest Eshan scholar, for he was in 1910 well within his teens.

He repeated his success in the M.A. examination of 1912 where he topped

the list in the first class with, I have heard, phenomenally high marks. Immediately on passing M.A.—some say even before the results were formally out—he got a job in what was then the Ripon College where Surendranath Banerjea the founder reigned supreme. Surendranath appointed him verbally—at that time formal letters of appointment were not always issued—on a salary of Rs. 125/- in recognition of his exceptional merit, although the normal pay of a beginner in those days was Rs. 100/-. When the first month was over, Surendranath seemed to have forgotten the promise and offered him the usual salary of Rs. 100/-. His reaction was revealing; it brought to the surface the latent fearlessness of his character. 'Either your memory is wrong or mine', said he, 'but since I am the younger of the two, I believe mine is correct.' The great Surrender-not was taken aback and yielded.

Within three months of his joining Ripon College there was a vacancy at Presidency College. He had not applied for the post, but some time after the vacancy occurred, at the instance of Professor P. C. Ghosh, he saw Principal James who had examined him at the M.A. examination and sized his worth. James, who had already made his nomination, said he was helpless, adding characteristically, 'Look here, Srikumar; other people desire but they do not deserve. You deserve, but do not desire.' But he cancelled his earlier nomination, and Srikumar Banerjee was appointed towards the end of 1912. And at Presidency College he remained, with a brief spell at Rajshahi, till 1946 when on the strength of his monumental contribution to the history of the Bengali novel, he was appointed Ramtanu Lahiri Professor of Bengali at the Calcutta University.

There is something paradoxical about a teacher's work. The successful teacher speaks neither to an invisible public nor to an unknown posterity and is greeted with the rapt faces of spell-bound students. But although no reward is comparable with this beaming responsiveness, the pupil's experience is ephemeral and can neither be communicated nor re-captured. All that may be attempted is a bare summary, a faint shadow of what was once so full of life. When Srikumar Banerjee joined Presidency College, he had certain initial handicaps. He was young, very young; he was also unimpressive in appearance and halting in speech. But he made an immediate impression on his pupils, and soon came to be regarded as one of the best teachers of poetry, a worthy confrere of the great Manmohan Ghose. His lectures on poetry, particularly romantic poetry, were a revealing experience to all who attended them from year to year. Although a fine scholar, his teaching was less scholarly elucidation than re-creation of the life that is in poetry. Adapting A. C. Bradley's language, I may say that we his students learnt to apprehend the ideas and symbols in romantic poetry with a somewhat greater truth and intensity so that they assumed in our imaginations a shape a little less unlike the shape they were in the imagination of their creator. Or, to put it in another way, the teacher opened before the mind's eye of his pupils a new world not only resplendent with colour but also palpitating with life, a world peopled by forms more real than living man. Here, for the first time for many of us, reading of poetry seemed to be not a matter of hunting for synonyms or writing substances and paraphrases but a living experience.

It will, however, be giving a limited view of Professor Banerjee's intellect and imagination to look upon him as a professor of romantic poetry alone. When Calcutta University prescribed Maeterlinck's *The Buried Temple* at B.A. English Honours, at the instance of Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, the other distinguished teachers of Presidency College felt somewhat non-plussed. Professor P. C. Ghosh, although an excellent French scholar, thought the prescription an eccentric intuition of a master-mind, for Maeterlinck was not an English dramatist and *The Buried Temple* was not even a drama but a book of essays ! Classically minded J. W. Holme was allergic to mysticism in all forms—in essays as well as in what is called creative literature. The novel burden fell on Professor Banerjee's shoulders, and he proved more than equal to the occasion. With his penetrating insight and unrivalled powers of analysis, he showed the interaction of different strands in Maeterlinck's thought, and his lectures were a marvel of lucid exposition and imaginative re-creation. When Professor M. Ghosh died, Professor Banerjee had to take up Swinburne's *Atalanta in Calydon,* a drama written on the Hellenic model, and here his critical ability was displayed in an unfamiliar field. He showed, in the refreshingly original manner so characteristic of him, how Swinburne's rebellious and exuberant imagination grappled or failed to grapple with the demands made by a form so alien to it. Once on account of a sudden change in the routine he had to give us two lectures on such an unpoetical, uninteresting subject as the History of English literature, which few teachers like to handle. These were impromptu talks, but his scintillating mind illuminated this subject as it illuminated the poetry of the romantics.

There was, indeed, something impromptu even about his major critical endeavours. He was not interested in critical theory ; he liked the finished literary product whose beauty he would analyse and reveal. One day in 1924-25, I had a talk with him about the controversy between Wordsworth and Coleridge on poetic diction, which formed a half paper in M.A. in our days, and he casually commented on the superficiality of the standard books we read. I was not a little surprised because at least one of the books seemed to be satisfying to us. He did not say anything more then but consulted that deep, silent scholar, the late Professor Rabindranarayan Ghosh, and produced, after two to three years, his *Critical Theories and Poetic Practice in the Lyrical Ballads.* Here he re-treads a familiar field but at every step he breaks new ground. C. H. Herford and Oliver Elton, who examined it as a doctoral dissertation, were agreeably surprised at the discovery of a mind—their words—bent upon pursuing the subtlest filaments of its own thinking. Four decades have gone by since then, but the subtlety has not worn off, and the book is now a recognized classic on the subject.

It was, again, in a very casual manner that he got embarked on his *magnum opus—Banga Sahitye Upanyasher Dhara.* When the one time famous Bengali journal *Navya Bharat* was revived under the editorship of the late Mrs. Phullanalini Raichaudhuri, Prabhas Chandra Ghosh, a pupil and close neighbour of Professor Banerjee, began to hang about him for critical writings, with all the tenacity of an enthusiast and an eccentric. At first he found a slippery customer in the Professor, but he was not a person to be easily put away. He would wait and wait for hours in an ante-room when the Professor would be

writing his essays on Bankimchandra—that is how this monumental work began—in his study. I have elsewhere written at length on Dr. Banerjee's contribution to Bengali criticism. I can only say here that in my opinion, he is the first pure critic in Bengali literature, and so far, the greatest. By a pure critic I mean one who makes 'interpretation' the sole aim of his literary pursuits, and who is not deflected from his work by any ethical, philosophical, sociological or political bias, and who in Arnold's language, wants to see the object—here the literary work—as it is.

Although writing was only one of the Professor's many occupations, his mind worked very swiftly and his output was enormous. Scattered in volumes of journals, some of them ephemeral, are articles of permanent literary value, distinguished alike for thought and expression. I may mention in passing the tributes he paid on the deaths of old teachers and friends—Heramba Chandra Maitra, Rabindra Narayan Ghosh, J. L. Banerjee and P. C. Ghosh and others. The most moving of all these was, as could be expected, on Professor P. C. Ghosh, and it could rank with the finest products in this genre. Reading it, a colleague of ours said, 'I am ready to die to-day if I were assured that I would be the subject of such a handsome obituary tribute.' The speaker, a professor of science, some years senior to Dr. Banerjee, is, happily, alive to-day!

In a sense all his literary works were occasional pieces, undertaken at the impulse of the moment or to meet a particular demand. But all of them bear testimony to his industry and his original literary insight.

III

I have already referred to Srikumar Banerjee's ever-widening mental horizon. Quite early in his career as a teacher, be began to take interest in music, particularly classical music, and learned to sing—as a vocal exercise that might and did cure his stuttering speech. Even till a late day, when he had got out of the practice of singing, he would spend whole nights attending musical soirees and listening with an expert's avidity to the exhibition of expert skill.

Sir Asutosh Mookerjee, who had a hawk's eye for discovering young talent, recruited him as a teacher for the Post-graduate Classes when these were newly started at the Calcutta University. But Sir Asutosh, like Surendranath, had a bit of pleasant surprise, for,—I have been reliably informed—this young recruit would often raise his lone voice against the formidable master whose word in the University was law. Professor Banerjee had a high sense of academic life and he would always stand up for standards when he saw that these were being sacrificed to convenience or expediency. This aspect of his character came to the surface when he was, I believe in 1926, made a Fellow of the University Senate. This brought him to the forefront of administrative affairs in the University, and there was hardly a body from the Syndicate to the Sports Board on which he did not serve at one time or other, and he also filled many of its highest elective offices such as the Presidentship of the Post Graduate Council in Arts or the Deanship of the Arts Faculty. Participation in the administrative affairs of Universities means an involvement in academic politics, and if you want to

maintain standards, you must run your head against vested interests, and what is more dangerous, against aspiring, would-be vested interests. Here is an 'expense of spirit' which must end in frustration and in 'a waste of shame.' I did not like this involvement and warned him that in trying to maintain academic standards he was sacrificing his own academic pursuits.

After retirement from Government Service, Dr. Banerjee joined active politics and became successively a member of the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. He also joined various educational, cultural, social and religious organizations, attending various committees and conferences and addressing meetings almost every evening. Politics is a strife-torn scramble in which it is difficult to say what the rules of the game are and still more difficult to observe them. There will be two opinions whether Dr. Banerjee should have joined the political fray at all. What is beyond doubt is that this incursion into politics interfered with his academic and cultural occupations, and his work there will soon be forgotten. But in politics as in the many other subsidiary fields of activity in which, till almost the last day he moved with unbedimmed zest, he never failed to show his extraordinary mental powers. He was as much the master of details as of general principles and would never lose sight of the wood in the trees or of the trees in the wood. At the meetings of University Boards and Committees which I attended with him, I found that he had so thoroughly grasped the agenda and so dutifully prepared himself for the discussions that the other members soon found themselves out of their depths. Indeed, occasionally his old friend of Scottish Churches days, the late Satish Chandra Ghosh, had to remind him that in his headlong devotion to objective standards he did not make sufficient allowance for the human frailties of the other members—'member-*babus*,' as he called them—their penchant for distribution of academic patronage. I do not know if Dr. Banerjee ever visited what popularly used to be called East Bengal in pre-partition days—the eight districts of Dacca and Chittagong Divisions. But as a member of the School Committee of the University, he acquired an intimate knowledge of the schools with which the area was dotted, their geographical position, equipment, quality, and above all, the squabbles and intrigues with which their Managing Committees were torn. In those days the Governing Bodies of Government Colleges—particularly the Governing Body of Presidency College—had large powers ; they functioned as administrative councils and service commissions. When as Bursar Dr. Banerjee became a member of the Governing Body of Presidency College—a coveted distinction at the time—he dominated the proceedings by virtue of his cogent reasoning and mastery of facts. It showed also great independence of character in those days of rigid official hierarchy for a relatively junior officer to come so much into the limelight, and at least one English Principal, the second seniormost member of the I.E.S., felt uncomfortable at being thus outshone. One of the beneficiaries of this independence of character was the writer of the present article, whose appointment he carried against the combined opposition of the Principal of the College and the D.P.I. These offices have been so much devalued during the last twentythree years that a modern reader would not be able to appreciate what a courageous act it was in 1929.

IV

I have spoken of the gradual broadening of Dr. Banerjee's interests. The last chapter in this process of expansion was unusual and unexpected; it was more a transformation than a mere enlargement of interests. In 1955, he joined the Order of Sri Sri Sitaramdas Omkarnath, into which he and his wife were initiated by the Thakur himself. How the religious consciousness was stirred in him and how he was drawn to the Thakur, I do not know, and as an outsider, I never enquired. Probably the keen rationalist felt that there are more things in heaven and earth than can be measured by logic. Others more knowledgeable and competent than I will speak of the religious side of Dr. Banerjee's character and of his contribution to our religious literature. I can quote only a single instance to show how he derived sustenance and fortitude from his contact with the Master. Some years ago his wife fell ill and all that a loving husband could do proved unavailing; her agonies increased from day to day, and she died after a painful illness patiently borne. Dr. Banerjee faced the tragedy in a mood of unruffled peace. 'I believe', said he to condoling friends and relations, 'that the soul is deathless and there is life after death. In heaven she will get the relief and rest we could not give her on earth.' In his own last illness it was a great solace to him that the Thakur had seen and blessed him.

V

A man of varied interests, possessed of a tenacious memory and an observant eye, Dr. Banerjee was a sparkling talker with an interminable fund of anecdotes. He was a wonderful raconteur and his stories were both witty and apt. Professor P. C. Ghosh was possibly a more brilliant talker and certainly more vivid and more literary. His humour as well as his narration was redolent of his multifarious scholarship. The substance of Professor Banerjee's anecdotes was more homely but his humour was penetrating and deep. The stories he told smelt of the earth and never of the library. Here I would recall only two, both I believe, derived from his experiences of men in Birbhum. An elderly Brahmin used to play Hanuman in village *yatras;* the rural audiences roared with laughter at his acrobatics but his sons felt embarrassed. When they came of age and were prosperous members of the village, they objected to the father's participation in *yatras,* and unable to restrain him in other ways, confined him in a locked room. 'They talk of prestige', shouted the irate father from within, 'well, if they want to show off their respectability, why not give the father a golden tail which will be a real advertisement of their social distinction?' The second story is about a son who was performing his father's *Sradh* with some grandeur. When his father's friends, who had been invited, congratulated him on the way he was discharging his filial obligation, he replied with befitting modesty, 'Sirs, you have come to bless this ceremony which I am performing for my father. How pleased would he have been to see you here on this occasion!'

Speaking of Dr. Banerjee as a man, I readily admit that like all of us, he had his limitations, and if he had a large circle of friends, he had also not a small circle of detractors and enemies. Part of the animosity he aroused was due to

his sleepless vigilance about academic standards which others talk of glibly but do not observe. Part of it must have been due to his own failings. Of these latter this is not the occasion to speak, and were it the occasion, I am not the man. I shall stress what I consider the outstanding trait of his character. This was generosity of spirit. I have already referred to his capacity for warm friendship. He tenaciously remembered all his friends and would often jeopardize his own interests by trying to espouse the cause of a friend or a pupil. This generosity communicated itself even to his literary work. Although professedly a critic, he would try more to interpret than to criticize. He would reveal the possibilities of a novel or a poem from within rather than judge it from without. There were occasions when this generosity was over-stretched, but it was this quality of his mind that made his interpretations so illuminating.

Another manifestation of his generosity of spirit was an almost absolute freedom from personal rancour. I remember once a pompous pseudo-critic made a savage attack on his great book on the Bengali novel. It did not ruffle Professor Banerjee at all; rather he asked me to write out a rejoinder elucidating his,—the Professor's—point of view. But I did not comply and preferred to treat the shower of vituperative brickbats with the contempt it deserved. Professor Banerjee's attitude was refreshingly different. Conceding that the aggressor had a new point of view, he got him appointed to an endowed Lectureship at the University and then sponsored the publication of these lectures to which he contributed a laudatory introduction. He would have gone a step further but was dissuaded by me and then by my friend Professor Gopinath Bhattacharyya, who exposed the hollowness of the pseudo-critic's philosophical pretensions.

When young Srikumar Banerjee became celebrated as a teacher and acquired prominence in the University, he awakened the envy of some of his own friends and colleagues, who, in Shakespeare's phrase, felt that under him their genius was rebuked and indulged in a whispering campaign of slander and ridicule. It was an embarrassing and disgusting phenomenon, but he did not mind, for he did not see what others saw. At first, I thought that this was only a pretence, but later on discovered that he did not really see it; the argus-eyed intellect had a blindness about his own people. For him friends were friends, and enemies only misunderstood. Once in a meeting that was convened with the express purpose of felicitating him, a former pupil, now appropriately a political leader, made a sarcastic, largely ill-founded, attack upon him. In reply Dr. Banerjee good-humouredly said that he was glad to see that even in his life-time apocryphal stories were being woven around him! Outside the meeting, he did not say a word against the ex-pupil's bad taste and never bore him any ill-will.

I should apologize for ending these rambling reminiscences on a personal note. I knew him for fifty years, and for the best part of this half century our association was very close and my indebtedness unremitting. He captivated me by his first lecture, and my devotion to him never wavered. As I look back on the years that have passed by, I think that unswerving loyalty to him at a time when the bosses in the Government and the University were his enemies—and their enmity was never tepid—is the best thing in my otherwise undistinguished life and career.

Professor P. C. Mahalanobis

A. M. Gun

The death occurred on June 28 this year of Professor Prasantachandra Mahalanobis in a south Calcutta nursing home. With his death ended a very eventful career and also the first and, perhaps, the most glorious chapter of the history of statistics in India.

Prasantachandra was born on June 29, 1893 in a renowned Brahmo family of Calcutta. He had his early education in the Brahmo Boys' School, Calcutta, from where he passed the Entrance Examination in 1908. He then joined Presidency College and passed the I.Sc. Examination in 1910 and the B.Sc. Examination with honours in Physics in 1912. From here he went to King's College, Cambridge and took the first part of the Mathematics Tripos in 1914. But he changed over to Physics for Part II of the Tripos, which he took with a first class in 1915. He won a senior research scholarship at King's College and obtained his M.A. the same year. He settled upon a research project at the famous Cavendish Laboratory and returned home for a short vacation. But once in India, he soon changed his mind, and then began his long association with Presidency College on the one hand and with statistics on the other.

His uncle, Professor Subodhchandra Mahalanobis, was then Head of the Department of Physiology in Presidency College. Soon after he returned to India, he was introduced by Subodhchandra to Principal James of the College. Just at that time a senior member of the teaching staff of the Physics Department had gone on leave on war service. Principal James asked young Mahalanobis if he could take this teacher's classes. Mahalanobis agreed and decided to stay in India for the time being. It was still his intention to return to Cambridge and do research work in physics. But soon afterwards he gave up the idea, as he found here plenty of things to hold his interest. He was made Professor of Physics in the College and a member of the Indian Educational Service. He continued in this post till 1945, being concurrently Head of the Department of Physics from 1922 to 1945. From 1945 to 1948 he served as Principal of the College. After his retirement in 1948, he was appointed Professor Emeritus of Physics.

II

Mahalanobis's interest in statistics came from a rather casual remark made by his Cambridge tutor, W. H. Macaulay, drawing his attention to the journal *Biometrika,* and the *Biometrika Tables,* both edited by Karl Pearson, who had already become famous for his pioneering work in the field of statistics. Mahalanobis brought copies of these to India and, while going through them, got seriously interested in the subject. It was thus by a chance coincidence that a physicist by training and profession made statistics his main field of interest.

He carried out a number of statistical studies, either on his own or at the request of the Government or the University of Calcutta. For some time he carried on his studies in his own home with the help of part-time computers engaged by him. Gradually, a group of young and talented scientists gathered round him, among whom were S. S. Bose, R. C. Bose, S. N. Roy and H. C. Sinha. They belonged to diverse fields, but Mahalanobis brought them together by kindling their interest in statistics. They worked in what came to be known as the Statistical Laboratory, located in the room of Professor Mahalanobis in Presidency College. (One may still find the Professor's name-plate atop the entrance to this room on the ground floor of the Baker Laboratory Building.) With the expansion of their activities, they felt the need for a separate Institute solely devoted to the study of statistics. The Indian Statistical Institute was founded in 1931, but for about twenty years it remained almost a part of Presidency College, housed in a set of rooms of the Physics Department. It was only after this period that the ISI was shifted to its present site at Baranagore.

The ISI was a very small institution in the beginning. A part-time computer was the only paid worker the ISI had during the first year of its existence, the total expenditure being Rs. 238/- In course of time it has grown into an enormous organisation with an annual budget of over 1.75 crore rupees. It has been carrying on such diverse activities as fundamental research in statistics, project

work, consultation and a comprehensive programme of education and training. The ISI Act of 1959 has recognised the ISI as an "institution of national importance" and has empowered it to confer degrees in statistics, thus giving it the status of a university. From the inception of the ISI till his death, Mahalanobis remained at the helm of the ISI, occupying the twin posts of Honorary Secretary and Director.

But the tremendous organising ability of Mahalanobis did not confine itself to the ISI. It was at his instance that *Sankhya*, the Indian Journal of Statistics and one of the finest of its kind in the world, was started in 1933, and Mahalanobis remained its editor till the last day of his life. Large-scale sample surveys were started by the ISI on behalf of the Government of India. Mahalanobis organised the first Indian Statistical Conference in 1938, which was presided over by the celebrated British statistician, R. A. Fisher. Mahalanobis arranged to start a post-graduate course in statistics for the first time in India in Calcutta University in 1941 and remained honorary head of the Department of Statistics till 1945. (Incidentally, the Department of Statistics in Presidency College also owes its origin to Mahalanobis's initiative. Started in 1944 for imparting Honours-level teaching in statistics, the Department had in the beginning virtually no staff of its own. Some workers of the ISI taught on a part-time basis. And for more than eight years it had no accommodation of its own ; the ISI, however, allowed the Department to use a couple of cubicles in one of the rooms it was occupying in the College.) At Mahalanobis's instance, again, the Indian Science Congress decided to have a separate section for mathematics and statistics in 1942. Against tremendous odds, he was soon able to have a separate section for statistics alone. Some Science Congres bigwigs are reported to have exclaimed at the time: "If there is to be a section for statistics, why not one for astrology!"

Official statistics had so long been collected only as a by-product of administration. Mahalanobis persuaded the Government to improve the system of data-collection. A Central Statistical Unit was started by the Government in 1949, to work under the technical guidance of Mahalanobis as Statistical Adviser to the Cabinet. Two years later the Central Statistical Organisation was established to co-ordinate the work of the various statistical agencies of both the Central and the State Governments. The National Sample Survey was created in 1950 for the collection of socio-economic data through sample surveys on a continuing basis ; for many years it worked almost as a part of the ISI. Nor did Mahalanobis ignore the industrial sector ; it was largely at his initiative that Indian industrialists adopted statistical techniques in such fields as surveying consumer demand and consumer preferences, and controlling the quality of products. Every manufacturing or trading concern worth the name in India has now a statis-wing.

III

Let us now turn to Mahalanobis's own contributions as a researcher. During his long career as a statistician, he produced about 200 papers and a number of

books. But in this short discussion we can consider only the more outstanding of his contributions.

Very early in his career Mahalanobis carried out a number of anthropometric studies. These led to the formulation of the D^2—statistic, which has come to be known in statistical literature as *Mahalanobis's generalised distance* and has proved a valuable tool in taxonomy and many other fields including economics and geology.

A disastrous flood had occurred in north Bengal in 1922, following which the Government appointed an expert committee of engineers to investigate its causes and make recommendations. The committee was about to suggest that expensive retarding basins be constructed to hold up the flood water, when the question was referred to Mahalanobis for his opinion. He made a statistical study of rainfall and floods in the region extending over a period of about fifty years and found that the proposed retarding basins would be useless. Floods were occurring because of obstructions to the outflow of excess water by river and railway systems without adequate bridges; the real need was improvement of the drainage system and not provision for holding up the flood water. Mahalanobis made specific recommendations, many of which were implemented and proved effective. He did similar work on floods in Orissa rivers, which formed the basis of the Hirakud hydroelectric project.

Mahalanobis's work on river floods is noteworthy, being really in the nature of Operations Research, which was introduced as a separate discipline much later after the Second World War.

Soon after the establishment of the ISI came the epoch-making investigations on the technique of large-scale sample surveys, with which Mahalanobis's name will always be associated. Large-scale sample surveys of the acreage and yield of all important crops in Bengal and Bihar were followed by sample surveys for collecting socio-economic data, for assessing public preferences, *etc.* These demonstrated the utility of large-scale sample surveys for collecting information quickly, economically and with sufficient accuracy for most purposes. Three important contributions were made to the technique of large-scale sampling, *viz.*, the concepts of optimum design of a survey, pilot surveys and interpenetrating sub-samples. By an optimum design is meant such a design of a sample survey as would lead to the highest precision (of the final estimate) for a given cost or to the minimum cost for a given level of precision. The use of pilot surveys provides a systematic method for progressively improving the design of the survey, utilizing the prior information on the cost of sampling and variance. It represents a very general approach, of which a significant example is sequential sampling developed about ten years later by A. Wald.

The problem of national development had been engaging the attention of Mahalanobis for a long time. In 1954, he undertook, at the request of Prime Minister Nehru and the Planning Commission, a study to devise means for increasing national income at a reasonably rapid rate and at the same time solving the problem of unemployment. On the basis of this study, he developed

econometric models (known as Mahalanobis's two-sector and four-sector models) for determining optimum investments in different sectors of the national economy. His findings supplied a rational strategy for economic development and formed the basis of the Second and Third Five-Year Plans. He continued his interest in the planned economic development of the country as a member of the Planning Commission.

Mahalanobis's last important contribution was the technique of fractile graphical analysis. This powerful tool was developed out of a need to compare the socio-economic conditions of groups of people, differing in place and time, in the light of the data collected in the different rounds of the National Sample Survey. The method is graphical and is based on a geometrical concept of error, which enables us to study the relationship between two variables and also provides a measure of the separation or difference between two different "universes" of study.

IV

Mahalanobis's distinguished services to the cause of science in general and that of statistics in particular won recognition both at home and abroad. He was held in as great esteem by his fellow scientists in India as by those in Moscow, London or New York.

Oxford University awarded him the Weldon Medal and Prize for biometry. He received honorary doctorates from Calcutta University, Visva-Bharati, Delhi University and Sofia University, Bulgaria. In 1945 he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society, mainly in view of his work on sample surveys. He was also a Fellow of numerous other societies—the International Econometric Society, the Royal Statistical Society, the American Statistical Association, the Indian Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Sciences of India, to name only a few. He was also made a Foreign Member of the Soviet Academy of Sciences and an Honorary Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. He was general secretary of the Indian Science Congress from 1945 to 1948, presided over its anthropology section in 1925 and mathematics and statistics section in 1942, and was its general president in 1950. In 1957 he was made honorary president of the International Statistical Institute, having been its member since 1937 and honorary member in 1952. Mahalanobis had been a member of the U. N. Statistical Commission since 1942 and was its chairman from 1954 to 1958. From 1947 to 1951 he was chairman of the U. N. Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling.

V

One cannot but marvel at Mahalanobis's versatility. Originally a man of physics, he gradually shifted his interest to statistics. But in the course of his work as a statistician, he also got interested in such diverse fields as anthropology, meteorology, river research, education and psychology, and economics.

Besides, he was a man of letters, having a remarkable mastery over both Bengali and English. Even when one goes through his scientific writings, one is struck by his philosophical outlook and lucidity of expression. He was also a delightful speaker in both these languages.

Mahalanobis took a deep interest in the social and intellectual movements Bengal, especially in the life and work of Raja Rammohun Roy. We should also refer here to his long and close association with Rabindranath and Santiniketan. He played an important role, through his work in the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj and otherwise, in forging a close link between Tagore and the intelligentsia of Bengal. Incidentally, it was Mahalanobis who edited the first anthology of Tagore's poems, *Chayanika,* for which he made use of an opinion poll conducted among the educated elite of Bengal. When Visva-Bharati was formally inaugurated in 1921 Mahalanobis became its secretary, holding this post for ten years. He was also editor of the *Visva-Bharati Patrika* for a while. He applied himself so earnestly to the work of this newly-founded institution that a high-ranking official of the Education Department was said to have ruefully observed at that time that the Government had lost a member of the Indian Educational Service to the Visva-Bharati. Later in life, he played host to the poet on several occasions and accompanied him on a number of foreign tours. Tagore, in his turn, took a lively interest in the work of Mahalanobis and in the ISI too, whose sylvan setting in many ways resembles that of Santiniketan.

VI

It is true that not all those who came in contact with Mahalanobis found him a likeable man. Indeed, he was known for his vanity, and while he had a rather uncanny capacity to recognize talent and attracted some of the best scientists to the ISI, he paid scant regard to their amenities and susceptibilities. The case of the renowned British biologist, J. B. S. Haldane, who came to the ISI full of enthusiasm but had to leave in a huff, naturally comes to mind.

He was also contemptuous of routine rules and regulations. Although he received for the ISI large sums of public money, he was always reluctant to let the Government have a say as to how that money should be spent. On a number of occasions, the way he was running the ISI and especially his handling of the work connected with the National Sample Survey came in for bitter criticism from the press and Parliament.

Even so, one cannot question his achievements as a scientist and as an organizer of scientific activity. Indian statisticians, in particular, should ever remember him with affection and gratitude. He introduced statistics in India as a separate scientific discipline when it was virtually an unknown subject even for some of the advanced countries of the world. And it was mainly through his efforts that statistics was placed within a short time on a firm footing in the academic as well as in the administrative set-up of the country. Not only that, the work initiated by him and carried on by his associates at the ISI has brought India almost to the very centre of the world statistical map.

Professor Amal Bhattacharji: A Tribute

Jasodhara Bagchi

Dignified, handsome, impeccably dressed, with a solemn, sensitive face and a smile that was prized all the more because of its rarity, Professor Amal Bhattacharji was a teacher of English Literature with a difference. Refusing resolutely to put a seal of finality on any aspect of the subject he taught, his endeavour was to keep his students *alive* to the subject taught. The originality of response and the intellectual dexterity in communicating the response that informed his teaching, have become increasingly apparent to his pupils as they have grown in their response to literature. A "critical response" (to borrow one of his own happy coinages) was what he himself brought to his teaching; it is also what he tried to cultivate in his pupils.

Belonging to this extraordinary city where literary sensibility proliferates side by side with squalor, Amal Bhattacharji's unflinching pursuit of a highly exacting standard of literary scholarship has something of a fable about it. Scrupulously cultivating a healthy scorn for mere orthodoxy (as opposed to tradition, in which he was deeply interested), Amal Bhattacharji's life rather resembles that of an explorer. Tragically cut short by a premature death, it should be understood in terms of a quest.

Born on the 22nd of May, 1919, Amal Bhattacharji matriculated from Hamilton High School, Tamluk in 1935. For the Intermediate Arts he joined the Scottish Church College, some of the boisterous goings-on of which he recalled in later life with obvious relish. In 1937 he joined the English honours classes in Presidency College along with a group of bright young undergraduates, which included Sri Sailendra Kumar Sen, Prabhat Kumar Ghosh and others. From this date, therefore, began his association with the English Department of Presidency College, to which he was to commit the greater part of his working life. As an undergraduate he caught the attention of his teachers, such as Dr. Subodh Chandra Sen Gupta and Sri Tarapada Mukherji and Sri Taraknath Sen for the depth and range of his reading and for the unusual command over the language he used. He delayed sitting for his M.A. examinations by two years. It is to this time that one can clearly trace the beginnings of the ill-health that was to

dog him throughout his life, he went down with malaria and jaundice which left his constitution permanently damaged. He finally took the M.A. examination in 1943. Sri Rabindra Kumar Das Gupta, then a young lecturer in the Post-Graduate classes of the Calcutta University was so struck by the power and the originality of his answers, that he was heard to declare openly that he had detected an intellectual superior, a feeling to which he testifies very warmly even to this day.

So far the story is a conventional one. But the striking quality of intellectual curiosity and sensitiveness which he displayed as a student of English Literature was not simply a matter of bookish learning with him, to be exploited for earning a living and to be scrupulously set apart from the life he saw around him. By 1942 India was facing a tremendous upheaval and social crisis. The international situation further sharpened the contradictions within the Indian society. It was primarily as a response to this acutely uncomfortable political situation that he began to take a deep interest in Marxism. Not prepared to sacrifice his intellectual quest, he did not allow Marxism to develop into a strait jacket in which to stifle all his doubts and possibilities of future development. However, he never really turned his back upon the framework of thought which he mastered with a great deal of intellectual effort : it remained with him all through his life as manifest in his conviction about the material base of human civilization and culture. It is a proof of the richness of his sensibility that he avoided the aridness that might have gone with such a conviction and captured a sense of complex and concrete view of human civilization from it. It also left him with an acute awareness of the hopeless muddle of values that constitutes the modern Indian society.

It was probably his zeal for current politics that made him take up journalism as a profession. Between 1945 and 1947 he served on the permanent staff of the *Saturday Mail* and edited a radical journal called *Zigzag* with his friend and contemporary Sri Sisir Chatterji. During this time he published a short pamphlet *Far East in Turmoil* which, though dated, has the kind of brilliance one has come to associate with his writings. Together with his fiancée Sukumari Datta, who was to become his wife in 1948 he contributed several scintillating review articles in Bengali to *Sahityapatra* and *Arani*. The most outstanding among his literary output of this period was a long analysis of the writings of James Joyce published in two consecutive numbers of *Zigzag*. It is a matter of great regret that the second part of the writing cannot be traced anywhere in Calcutta.

Journalism, however, failed to keep him satisfied for long. The ephemeral quality of the profession probably horrified him and he developed a life-long antipathy for the facile generalisations which form the staple of most journalistic writings. He took up teaching instead, and started his new career in December 1947 at Krishnanagar Government College. Among his pupils in this College was Sri Nirupam Chatterji, later his colleague, whose devoted attention to Professor Bhattacharji during the last few months of his illness will be remembered by many. In 1949 he came to Sanskrit College arriving nearer home. Following the usual circuitous route laid down by the Government of West Bengal he eventually came to Presidency College in 1950. It was here that he spent the remaining twenty years of his life, with the exception of a short spell from July

to September 1959 as the Principal of Hooghly Mohsin College. The story goes that each day of his exile from Presidency College at Hooghly, he used to send a postcard to his friend Sri A. W. Mahmood, then the A.D.P.I. West Bengal, which said "How long, O Lord, how long!"

While teaching at Presidency College Amal Bhattacharji began the spectacular course of intellectual exploration. In some ways, the story is a remarkable one. A voracious reader with an unusual capacity for absorbing what he read, Amal Bhattacharji, like all live students of literature, started with a very deep interest in modern literature. Possessing first editions of many contemporary poets who have subsequently become classics, he was an *avant-garde,* without any of the strenuous jargon-mongering that went with it. As far as one can trace, way back in 1941 he was preparing himself for a full-length study of modern European poetry in depth. Not satisfied with a facile acquisition of the 'trends' of modern literature, which was the 'done thing' among many an intellectual of his generation, he approached the subject with a totality of commitment which characterised the man. It was his diving into the deeps of the 'modern' sensibility, and not a prudish don-like resistance to it, that eventually led him to the rich classical background of European literature. In order to understand the sources from which Eliot, Pound, Yeats and others drew their sustenance, he began to probe backwards. Unlike many Bengali intellectuals of his generation who confined themselves to translations, he actually sat down to do it the hard way—learn Italian, Latin and Greek read the relevant texts in the original and then write about them. It meant a great deal of self-restraint for an academic who had such powers of expression at his command and who was singularly free from the usual academic's inhibition about committing himself to a particular critical position. During these years of magnificent preparation he published very little. Once, when accused of being a 'perfectionist' he answered very simply, "I shall write as a convinced man."

One shudders to think of the terrifying loneliness of the difficult journey he undertook. But one should recognize two sources from which he drew his sustenance, one personal, the other institutional. His learned wife, a fellow explorer of the Indian classical mythology and literature, shared part of his quest and relieved the loneliness of the way. The other was the extraordinary Department of English at Presidency College, where, in a quiet but sure way a foundation of literary scholarship was built up. Professor Taraknath Sen with his massive scholarship gave him warm support. Generations of admiring pupils also kept him going, though they could only catch glimpses of the magnitude of his intellectual effort. Among his ex-pupils Sri Arun Kumar Das Gupta as a colleague in the Department came closest to him intellectually. In these days of a general explosion of 'universities' and 'Post-graduate' courses, it is chastening to remember the achievement of the scholars of the English Department, Presidency College—the amazing persistence with which they built up a standard of teaching and the high quality the best of them displayed. It is hard to conceive that Amal Bhattacharji would have found his milieu anywhere outside Presidency College.

He began learning Latin in 1953, Greek followed in 1958, Italian around

1963-64. Many generations of students at Presidency College will recall with pleasure his lectures on Dante which accompanied his lectures on Carlyle's *On Heroes and Hero Worship*. What a magnificent way of getting round the constricted syllabus prescribed by the University ! His repeated excursions into the Classical past of Europe and his interest in Dante and Shakespeare brought with it an interest in religion. Not subscribing to any religious creed himself, he was, however, deeply interested in religion as a manifestation of human endeavour. Way back in 1943, as a modernist neophyte he had done a lot of reading on social anthropology, mythology and psychology. Later on, with growing maturity the early interest broadened out into a more serious study of religion as it operates in literature. The study of *Macbeth* which he contributed to the Shakespeare Commemoration Volume edited by Professor T. N. Sen and published in 1966, indicates the originality of his approach to the problem.

If it is at all possible to trace the beginnings of the special methodology which he evolved for himself in the mature phase of his life it should be placed around this date. To this phase also belongs his Bengali essay on Greek civilization that he contributed to *Bhāratkosh,* and the long essay on Dickens' *Bleak House* which was published anonymously. It was a happy accident that just as he had begun to publish again he visited the University of Cambridge with his wife and daughter for a year in 1966-67. He made valuable friendships there : Professor M. I. Finley and his wife, Mr. E. P. M. Dronke and his wife, Professor Guthrie, Professor A. B. Pippard and a host of other scholars. In that one year he read at a fantastic pace, listened to music, saw plays, visited art galleries and monuments all over Europe, really enjoying himself at last. The fruit of that one happy year came pouring forth. Within two years of his return he had written three long articles on Greek tragedy and a plan for a book on the evolution of the European tragic form. If completed, the work would have been a landmark in Indian scholarship of European studies.

'Ther cam a privee theef men clepeth Deeth.' Amal Bhattacharji died, 9 August 1970, at the peak of his creative powers. After his life-long quest he had just arrived at his own approach and method. In 1969 he had taken charge of the Department of English and was full of ideas about its future development. He had also gathered around him a band of devoted scholars mostly ex-pupils teaching in various Universities and Colleges, who were prepared to try out with him new ways of making the subject alive in this context. He conceived of an approach to European studies from the modern Indian point of view. The leadership that would have come from him is, of course irreplaceable. Still one hopes that much of what he strained to achieve will be continued in the work of the younger pupils whom he encouraged to strike out paths on their own. A courageous dissenter himself, he always warmed up to young independent minds. His plan was to break away from the tyranny of mere Anglo-centrism and to introduce our own view of European civilization using the modern tools of scholarship and research at our disposal. The task is by no means an easy one, especially in his absence. But it must not be given up, or we will have belied his memory. His memory is both a challenge to forge ahead and a responsibility to do it well.

The Political Theory of Imperialism

Kuruvilla Zachariah

I must begin with an acknowledgement and an apology. It is a real pleasure to me to come back, if only for an evening, to my old University and it is an honour to come back in this capacity, to lecture on a Foundation associated with the name of one who, perhaps more than any other living Indian, has upheld, in his life and his teaching, true principles of politics and public duty. I must thank the University for this opportunity and this honour.

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* This was the Rt. Hon'ble Mr. Srinivasa Sastri Lecture delivered at the Senate House (Madras University) on Feb. 21, 1930. We are extremely grateful to Professor Sushobhan Sarkar for lending us his copy of the paper.

I must apologize for a subject which, to a certain extent, overlaps last year's. I had chosen my subject and written out the greater part of my lecture before I obtained a copy of last year's lecture ; and then it was too late to change. I have been compelled to content myself within enlarging the historical part of my treatment and curtailing the special application to India. This is the explanation of a certain disproportion of which I am conscious ; for that and for the overlapping I express my regrets.

The rôle of political philosophy has generally been to justify the accomplished fact, to prop up existing institutions with the buttresses of reason. States, like individuals, are often moved primarily by material interests and the hope of material rewards. But the moral sense generally asserts itself ; and they are uneasy till they can convince themselves that ethical principles sanction, or at any rate are not violated by their activities. Nor is this difficult, for there are few actions and few institutions for which the human intellect is not ingenious enough to devise a justification which the human conscience is not elastic enough to accept. From slavery to anarchy, there is nothing which has not had, at one time or another, its advocates or defenders.

The purpose of these lectures is to trace and analyse some of the arguments that have been put forward in defence of conquest and empire. The inquiry cannot be exhaustive, but it is possible, even within the narrow limits of time at my command, to indicate the principal grounds for the political philosophy of empire. Modern writers, as a rule, have paid little attention to the subject, for the basic assumption of modern political theory is the conception of the state as expressing the general will and commanding the good will and active co-operation of its members—an assumption generally incompatible with imperialism. But there have always been some, who, with more candour or more realism, have faced the problem of the conquering state. After all, empires are one of the recurring facts of history and have often been justified by their results, even if not just in their origin. No survey of political institutions can afford to neglect them.

The first Western people who moralized over history were the ancient Greeks ; and we may well begin our study with them, not for that reason alone, but because in Greece we can see that problem in its simplest form, without the complication of disturbing or irrelevant factors. For the Greek theory of empire, however, we have to turn to others than Aristotle and Plato. Writing at a time when the city state was already beginning to break down, they still regarded it as the only true political unit. It is in Thucydides that we find both an analysis and a theory of imperialism.

The general character of the Athenian Empire is well known. Starting as a *symmachia,* a confederacy of equal states, it was rapidly transformed into an *arche* or empire under the domination of Athens. Even in discreet official documents, the allies were sometimes described as 'states over which the Athenians rule'. After an unsuccessful revolt the oath of allegiance was sworn to the men of Athens alone. Nor did Athenian statesmen make any attempt to veil

the real character of her government. Cleon told the ecclesia: 'Your empire is a despotism and your subjects disaffected conspirators, whose obedience is ensured not by your suicidal concessions, but by the superiority given you by your own strength and not by their loyalty.'[1] Even Pericles held very similar language : 'What you hold is, to speak somewhat plainly, a tyranny.'[2] The desire for autonomy was particularly strong in Greece and the loss of liberty was felt as an intolerable grievance. Many cities, which had joined the League to secure their own and their neighbours' freedom, now found themselves through that very alliance reduced to the status of subjects. They might well be indignant. The Mitylenean envoys at Sparta voiced the general feeling : 'We did not become allies of the Athenians for the subjugation of the Greeks, but allies of the Greeks for their liberation from the Mede.'[3] 'Trust in Athens,' they added, 'we can no longer feel'. This distrust of the imperialism of Athens was universal and was shown very markedly by neutrals in the Peloponnesian War. They rightly suspected that, if they gave the Athenians an inch, they would presently take an ell, and were prepared to make peace with their enemies rather than accept help from Athens.

But the Athenians did not let the case go against them by default. They have plenty to say for themselves ; and nearly all the arguments that have ever justified empire may be found, stated with admirable conciseness, in the speeches of Thucydides. There was sometimes an uneasy feeling that, in its origin, the empire was difficult to justify. 'To take it,' admitted Pericles, 'was perhaps wrong.'[4] But these qualms were transient. The Athenian speakers at the Congress at Lacedaemon pointed out that the empire had been almost thrust upon Athens nor had it created a new precedent, 'for it has always been the law that the weaker should be subject to the stronger.'[5] When Athenian character had deteriorated through years of war and tyranny, the principle that Might is Right is put forward naked and unashamed. 'You know as well as we do,' say the Athenian envoys in the Melian conference, 'that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.'[6] And again, 'it is not as if we were the first to make this law or to act upon it when made: we found it existing before us and shall leave it to exist for ever after us ; all we do is to make use of it, knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do.'[7] It would be impossible to state more clearly an argument for imperialism that is a hardy perennial and constantly reappears. The possession of Might confers a Right to empire, almost imposes an obligation.

But this is not the only ground on which Athens defended her empire ; an even stronger one was the plea of self-interest. A state may be strong and yet not use its strength for aggrandizement ; but few states can be expected to refrain from using all their resources when their power or prosperity is threatened. Pericles, when he confessed that to take the empire was perhaps wrong, added, 'but to let it go is unsafe.'[8] The same view was expressed, in greater detail, by the Athenian speakers at the Peloponnesian congress. 'At last, when almost

all hated us, when some had already revolted and been subdued, when you had ceased to be the friends you once were and had become objects of suspicion and dislike, it appeared no longer safe to give up our empire, especially as all who left us would fall to you. And no one can quarrel with a people for making, in matters of tremendous risk the best provision that it can for its interest.'[9] 'Fear, honour and interest,' they said, combined to forbid any surrender of the empire. It was to the empire that Athens owed her position as the leading Greek state of the time; her pride was engaged in its maintenance. To abandon the empire would be to relegate herself to the level of a second-rate state. Indeed, her very independence would be threatened. The dualism in Greece, which made neutrality almost impossible, compelled Athens to employ every possible means to strengthen and extend her position. What was lost by one side will be gained by the other. Was it reasonable to demand that the city should commit political suicide? Unsought, the headship of the confederacy had developed on Athens; thenceforward, every advance was dictated by an inexorable process of evolution. Once the empire was in being and the political and economic fabric of the city adjusted to the new framework, it was impossible to retreat or retract without the certainty of dislocation. It was dangerous even to stand still, to be content with what had been achieved and decline all further acquisitions. As Alcibiades put it, 'We cannot fix the exact point at which our empire shall stop; we have reached a position in which we must not be content with retaining but must scheme to extend it, for, if we cease to rule others, we are in danger of being ruled ourselves.'[10]

This resistless inner impulse in empires which urges them to continual conquests finds abundant illustration in history; there is scarcely one empire of which it is not true. Nor is there any need to ascribe this to an insatiable lust of conquest, the appetite growing with food, though this seems true to some extent of the great conquerors, like Alexander and Napoleon. But states, whose imperial expansion is slow and gradual, are driven onward by other forces than a mere passion for power. The history of Roman imperialism is too well known to need detailed exposition. Just as the Athenian empire was the alternative to Persian domination over the Aegean, so the Roman conquest of Sicily — the first step in its victorious march to world power — was the alternative to a Carthaginian conquest. Once started, the pace might be slowed or quickened, but there could be no halt till some defensible frontier was reached, desert or sea or mountain range. In vain did men like Cato strive to stem the tide; the quest of the natural frontier opens up an almost boundless perspective.

The same tendency is illustrated by the growth of British dominion in India and, on a smaller scale, by the history of Venice in the later Middle Ages. Defended by her lagoons from Goth and Lombard, the island republic had become a great maritime and commercial power concentrating her energies on the Eastern trade. But the states on the mainland, which controlled the outlets for Venetian commerce, the rivers of Lombardy and the passes over the Alps, imposed heavy duties on her merchandise. To protect herself against this rapacity, Venice was compelled to acquire possessions on the mainland and to

become a continental and imperial power. But once this policy was adopted, it could not easily be abandoned. There are no natural frontiers in Lombardy to the west or north till the Alps are reached. The Venetian boundary was gradually pushed to the Adige, from the Adige to the Mincio, from the Mincio to the Oglio, from the Oglio to the Adda and Venice found herself committed to a task which was beyond her powers. And although, as with other imperial powers, the first step was dictated by the principle of self-preservation and the succeeding steps seemed to follow by a sort of logical necessity, this persistent advance awoke the alarm and resentment of all the neighbouring states and earned for Venice a reputation for greed and lust for territory. 'Everyone,' said Galeazzo Sforza, lord of Milan, to the Venetians, 'everyone says you want to eat up all Italy'; and a few years later, the League of Cambray protested against 'the insatiable cupidity of the Venetians and their thirst for dominion.'

Everything depends on the point of view. Interests clash; and the expansion of one state, even when it is not wanton, but the necessary means of or corollary to self-preservation, spells peril or annihilation to other states. Athens sought empire because it guaranteed her independence and prosperity and the other Greek cities hated Athens because her imperialism threatened their independence. But the Athenian statesmen did not justify the empire solely on the plea that Might is Right or that Necessity knows no Law. The best of them realised that the advantage of the conqueror was an argument too one-sided to win the moral approval of mankind. But, if to it they could add the advantage of the conquered, then indeed their title would be tremendously strengthened. The trouble was that the subjects were not as sensible of the benefits conferred on them as the rulers and preferred autonomy and isolation to the gains they derived from their association with Athens. Athens maintained that this was due to the very mildness of its rule. If its government were more despotic, there would be fewer complaints. It was precisely because it always acted in accordance with law and justice that the allies were emboldened to complain. Nor is this paradoxical claim as absurd as it might appear. Revolutions are the result, not so much of unmitigated oppression as of that consciousness of oppression which is aroused only with the dawn of liberty and material prosperity. The lot of the Greek cities was far more tolerable under Athens than under Persia or even under Sparta. Not without truth did Isocrates say: 'If they recall the trials which were held for the allies at Athens, who is so witless that it will not occur to him to reply to this that the Lacedæmonians put to death without trial more of the Greeks than all those who have come up for trial and judgment with us during all the time that we have governed the city.'[11]

It is difficult to deny that culture and civilization gained by the existence of the Athenian empire. When the tribute was no longer needed for the war against Persia, the money was used largely for the adornment of the city and the glory of the gods. Empire was apparently the historic condition of the brilliant artistic achievements of Athens during the Periclean age and these in turn seemed to justify the empire. In the words of Pericles, Athens became the school of Hellas: she charged high fees but provided a first class education. If the

allies paid her tribute, she gave them something that often cannot be bought with money, she gave them civilization. They had to pay, but they got their money's worth. She taught them not only through her art and literature but through her law, her wide outlook, her institutions of liberty and self-government. Some of the best of them made their home in Athens and drew from it their spiritual inspiration: so did Polygnotus of Thasos, Hippocrates of Cos, Herodotus of Halicarnassus. To some extent Athens led the Greeks from the old, narrow ideal of the city state to the possibilities of a larger political unity ; and many of the allies were freed from the burden of oppressive oligarchies. Pericles could with some justice say that 'Athens alone of her contemporaries is found when tested to be greater than her reputation, and alone gives no occasion to her assailants to blush at the antagonist by whom they have been worsted, or to her subjects to question her title by merit to rule.'[12]

I have dwelt at some length on Athenian imperialism because it was the first self-conscious imperialism that attempted to defend itself by reason and because the arguments it used are those which, allowing for changes in circumstances, have reappeared from age to age. The empire arose without deliberate intention on our part and almost in spite of us. The loss of it now would involve the loss of our power and prosperity and perhaps of our independence. It is a natural law of history that the weak should be ruled by the strong and we cannot be blamed for being strong. Our rule confers benefits on our subjects otherwise far beyond their reach, benefits conferred — as Pericles puts it — not from calculations of expediency, but in the confidence of liberality, fearless of consequences.

Such was the Athenian defence of empire. But these arguments commended themselves neither to the other Greek states nor to the mature reflection of the great Greek thinkers. But it was not so much the principle of domination that Plato and Aristotle condemned as the practice of domination over fellow Greeks; and in their philosophy, which was built round the theory of the city as the ideal unit, there could be no place for any extension of territory which would impair its self-sufficiency and react on its institutions. But they supplied a fresh and potent argument for empire. The distinction, which Aristotle in particular drew, between those who are freemen and those who are slaves by nature, supplied a basis for empire grounded on justice and right. He maintains that what is best for the individual is best for the state. 'That the unequal should be given to equals and the unlike to those who are like is contrary to nature, and nothing which is contrary to nature is good.'[13] But nature itself is responsible for an innate natural inequality between men: some are born to command and others to serve, not by virtue of descent, but of the character indelibly engraved on them. And it is just and natural that men and states which possess such a superiority should rule over those which do not. The whole argument is thus summed up: 'Men should not study war with a view to the enslavement of those who do not deserve to be enslaved ; but first of all they should provide against their own enslavement,

and in the second place obtain empire for the good of the governed, and not for the sake of exercising a general despotism, and in the third place they should seek to be masters only over those who deserve to be slaves.'[14] The rule of Greek over Greek is intolerable ; but the rule of Greek over barbarian is sanctioned by the laws of nature. Let us remember that Aristotle was tutor to Alexander of Macedon.

Rome did not contribute much that was new to the theory of empire, although it is worth while noting that nearly all the terms we use in this connexion are Latin terms, 'Colony, dependency, plantation, province, state, possession, dominion, empire, all directly or indirectly come from the Romans.'[15] The Roman empire developed some peculiar features, which distinguish it from earlier eastern Empires like the Assyrian or Persian and from modern empires like the British ; but few of the Romans were troubled about its justice, though some of them questioned its wisdom. The empire was such a large and imposing fact, so universal in its scope that to question it would have seemed almost like questioning the ordinances of nature. Neither against other states nor against the public opinion of mankind did it have to defend itself by words. Only in the later Middle Ages was such a justification felt to be necessary. By that time the mediaeval empire had ceased to exercise any oecumenical authority ; and it struggled to defend itself, not against the independent nation states fast rising to power, but against the militant and aggressive Papacy.

Dante is the best known of mediaeval imperialists. To Dante, as to many others of the time, the mediaeval empire was the heir and successor of the old Roman empire and to vindicate the authority of the former it was necessary to establish the right of the latter to universal dominion. In the second book of the *De Monarchia* Dante addresses himself to this task and, during the course of his arguments, produces reasons, some of which are characteristic of mediaeval thinking but alien to the mind and temper of the Greeks.

'Whatever God wills,' says Dante, 'in the society of men is to be regarded as true and pure right.'[16] But the will of God in itself is invisible and has to be understood by outward and visible signs. The Romans were the noblest of all peoples ; it was meet that they should be rewarded with the honour of empire. The public spirit they exhibited and their sincere desire for the good of the commonwealth is another proof that they had right on their side. 'The Roman Empire' — Dante quotes a saying current at the time — 'springs from the fount of compassion.'[17] Miracles, moreover, attested the divine sanction. The procedure of law also vindicated the Romans ; for the *duellum* or single combat was one of the acknowledged methods of proof in which the God of Battles intervened to defend the right—and the Roman Empire was established by a series of conflicts which were often of the nature of single combats. Another characteristically mediaeval argument was based on the current view of religion. Christ approved the claim of Augustus to the sovereignty of the whole world by obeying his decree for the enrolment of the citizens of the world. The empire was indeed

essential to the whole scheme of salvation. The sin of Adam was the sin of mankind as a whole and justice could be vindicated only by a valid punishment of collective human nature. Such a nature was present in Christ, but the punishment to be lawful had to be inflicted by an authority who had jurisdiction over all men. Both in His birth and in His death, 'at either limit of his warfare,'[18] Christ confirmed the universal power of Rome.

Such a chain of reasoning seems fantastic and has no evidential value for the modern mind. But Dante uses two other arguments which often reappear, explicitly or implicitly, in modern defences of imperialism. Success in a competition follows desert or right: it is the judgment of God. Many strove for the empire of the world; but none obtained it save Rome. The Romans, then, not only deserved empire, but won it by the will of God, that is, by right. This is one of the most insidious and ubiquitous of historical misjudgments. 'We have a theory,' says Lord Acton, 'which justifies Providence by the event, and holds nothing so deserving as success, to which there can be no victory in a bad cause; prescription and duration legitimate; and whatever exists is right and reasonable; and as God manifests His will by that which he tolerates, we must conform to the divine decree by living to shape the future by the ratified image of the past.'[19] Empire thus justifies itself and, in the process of its acquisition, there is no moral principle that we can apply, because only failure can condemn it. What is *de facto* is always *de jure*, a view that was later developed by Hobbes, and which is closely allied to the theory that Might is Right.

The second argument of Dante is derived from the Greeks, in fact, he makes acknowledgement of his debt to Aristotle. There is a harmony between natural faculties and vocation and the maintenance of this harmony leads to order and well-being. Now, some are apt to rule and others to be subject and the Roman people were ordained by nature for universal command. Did not Virgil himself say,

> *Excudent alii spirantia mollius aera,*
> *Credo equidem ; vivos ducent de marmora vultus,*
> *Orabunt causas melius, coelique meatus*
> *Describent radio, et surgentia sidera dicent:*
> *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento ;*
> *Hae tibi erunt artes, pacisque imponere morem,*
> *Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos.*

Others shall beat out the breathing bronze more softly, I do well believe it! And shall draw living features from the marble ; shall plead causes better, and trace with the rod the movements of the sky and tell of the rising stars. Roman! do thou be mindful how to sway the peoples with command. These be thy arts: to lay upon them the custom of peace, to spare the subjects and fight down the proud.[20]

But Dante and other mediaeval thinkers were not concerned to defend imperialism in general; they were concerned rather to prove the necessity for a world empire, a society coterminous with the limits of Christendom. The exist-

ence of such a society was a commonplace of political thinking, though it was no longer a historical fact, except in the spirutual sphere. It was, however, necessary to prove its rightness, its accordance with natural and divine law, for, as St. Augustine said, *'Remota justitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?'*[21] Devoid of justice what are states but mighty robbers? But the weakening of Christian influences in the 15th and 16th centuries, the return to classical antiquity, the emergence of modern nation states in an international condition of precarious balance, the decay of that organization which had hampered the free exercise of royal power, all combined together to usher in an era of 'realist' politics. The state, being a complete and exclusive sphere of obligation and right, regarded itself as absolved from the restraints of any higher law: and Machiavelli laid down precepts for the emancipated state.

It is now a commonplace that Machiavelli has been harshly judged by his own and later generations. This is so, not only because many of those who condemned him are convicted of hypocrisy by the evidence of their own words and actions. 'Three centuries,' says Acton, 'have borne enduring witness to his political veracity.'[22] But it was also because he was misunderstood or only partially understood. Meinecke, the latest and most learned historian of Machiavellianism, brings this out clearly in his *Die Idee der Staaträson*: 'It has been the fate of Machiavelli, in common with many other great thinkers, that he has been able to influence the course of history with only one part of his range of ideas. The effect of his new method, the building up of politics on the basis of experience and history, was profound and permanent. . . . . But his ideal of *virtu* faded away . . . . With it also, the ethical ideals of his politics, the idea of regeneration, was shattered to pieces. His republican ideal was not unheeded, but it was misunderstood in many respects.'[23]

Virtù, fortuna and *necessita* are, says Meinecke, the three words that ring like a refrain through the *Prince* and the *Discourses* and that are the key to the understanding of Machiavelli's political thought. And it is on the ground of necessity that he defends conquest and expansion. 'All human affairs being in movement and incapable of remaining static, they must either rise or fall : and where we are not led by reason, we are driven by necessity.'[24] 'It is impossible', he writes in another place, 'for a republic to remain long in the peaceful enjoyment of freedom within a limited frontier. For, should it forbear from molesting others, others are not likely to refrain from molesting it ; whence must grow at once the desire and the necessity to make acquisitions."[25] And again, 'men never think that they hold securely what they have unless when they are gaining something new from others.'[26] But Machiavelli is no advocate of conquest for conquest's sake, no admirer of inordinate ambition or empty glory. He is a clear-eyed student of history, realising the dangers and the effective limits of empire. 'Since, in a thousand ways and from causes innumerable, conquests are surrounded with dangers, it may well happen that, in adding to our dominions, we add nothing to our strength ; but whosoever increases not his strength while he adds to his dominions, must needs be ruined.'[27] Some states are unfitted for expansion by their constitution. His statecraft is of a utilitarian kind: conquest is good only if and in so far as it promotes the actual power of the state; and

the government of dependencies should be such as conduces to this end. Two practical conclusions are drawn from this principle. In the first place, it is better to treat those over whom you extend your authority as allies and companions, as the Romans did in Italy, than to hold them in direct subjection, like the Athenians. He quotes with approval the case of Privernum. This city rebelled and was subdued and when some citizens appeared to plead their cause, one of them was asked by a senator what punishment he thought his fellow citizens deserved. 'Such punishment,' he answered, 'as they deserve who deem themselves worthy of freedom.' And the Romans admitted the people of Privernum to the privileges of Roman citizenship, declaring that 'men whose only thought was for freedom were indeed worthy to be Romans.'[28] The Roman Empire differed, indeed, from all earlier and later empires in the gradual and ultimately universal extension of Roman citizenship. In the second place, expansion is most desirable and most durable where there is geographical, racial and linguistic unity of conquerors and conquered. We should remember that Machiavelli wrote at a time when the states of Europe had not long been constituted in their modern form. France absorbed Brittany only in 1491, Spain absorbed Granada only in 1492. In painful contrast to these stood Italy, torn by domestic dissensions, the prey of invading foreigners. Machiavelli's writings, like Dante's, are warmed by a burning patriotism. In the *Discourses,* he pours his wrath on the Papacy: 'To the Church and to the priests, we Italians owe this first debt that through them we have become wicked and irreligious. And a still greater debt we owe them for what is the immediate cause of our ruin, that by the Church our country is kept divided.'[29] In the famous last chapter of the Prince, he turns against the foreigner. 'To all of us this barbarian dominion stinks.'[30]

Machiavelli, then, is no blind champion of war or imperialism. Necessity drives states to expand, but the wise ruler or republic aims at no indiscriminate expansion, conquering only what can be absorbed and absorbing what is conquered. Such absorption is possible above all where there are the elements of national unity. Machiavelli may thus be regarded almost as the exponent of the principle of nationality. Nationality, however, is not a pacific influence and has been the cause or the excuse for most of the wars of modern history.

The *Prince* was written as a text-book for rulers and Machiavelli looks at empire from the point of view of the conquering state, not of the conquered. A wider standpoint was taken by a later writer, who pursued the same method of inquiry basing his conclusions on a broad induction, but who was informed by the humanitarian and rationalistic spirit of the 18th century. Montesquieu's defence of war and conquest is partly the same as that of Machiavelli, though it is more carefully tempered with qualifications. The right of war is derived from a severe necessity; to base it on glory or utility is to open the door to rivers of blood.[31] The right of conquest proceeds from and is the consequence of the right of war; and it should be governed by the same principles. The right of the conqueror over subjects follows four kinds of laws: the law of nature which ordains that everything should be directed to the conservation of the species; the law of natural enlightenment, that we should do unto others what we would

that they should do unto us; the law of the formation of political societies, which are such that nature has not limited their duration, and the law flowing from the nature of the act itself—for a conquest is an acquisition and the spirit of acquisition carries with it the spirit of conservation and use, not the spirit of destruction.[32] The object of conquest is conservation, not enslavement. Enslavement may sometimes be the necessary means of conservation, but it is only a means and not the end, only an intermediate step to eventual freedom and mild government. 'I define,' says Montesquieu, 'the right of conquest thus: it is a necessary, legitimate and unhappy right, which must fulfil an enormous obligation before it can pay its debt to human nature.'[33] Nor is it difficult to discharge this obligation; for a country which is conquered is presumably in a decadent condition, with a corrupt, oppressive or inefficient government. Subjection to and association with a virile state may revitalise it and rid it of the burden of unequal laws or selfish oligarchies.[34] It is only in so far as it confers such benefits and prepares its subjects for freedom that imperialism can be vindicated.

There is another strain in Montesquieu's thought which is of interest in this connexion. One of his dominant ideas, it is well known, is the influence of geographical factors on historical and political development. Climate and geographical formation fit Europe for liberty and Asia for slavery. Asia, he reckons, has been subdued thirteen times, while Europe has undergone only four great cataclysms. The results of conquest, again, are different. 'The Tartars, in destroying the Greek Empire, established in the conquered lands slavery and despotism ; the Goths, in destroying the Roman Empire, everywhere founded monarchy and liberty.'[35] Rousseau, who asserted that 'man is born free' and denied any foundation for conquest except the law of the strongest which can confer no moral right, quotes this theory of Montesquieu's with approval. 'Liberty', he says, 'not being a fruit of all climates, is not within the reach of all peoples. The more we consider this principle established by Montesquieu, the more do we perceive its truth.'[36]

Both these lines of thought, which Montesquieu, was careful to safeguard with restrictions and limitations, have been followed to their logical end by later writers. For instance, Treitschke regards war and conquest, not as a necessary evil, but as the very essence of the state, to be welcomed rather than deplored. 'Without war no state could be. . . The laws of human thought and of human nature forbid any alternative, neither is one to be wished for.'[37] 'We learn from history that nothing knits a nation more closely together than war. It makes it worthy of the name of nation as nothing else can, and the extension of existent states is generally achieved by conquest . . . War and conquest are the most important factors in state construction.'[38] 'The power of the conqueror is morally justified by its protective and consequently beneficial action.'[39] 'All great nations in the fulness of their strength have desired to set their mark upon barbarian lands . . . Those who take no share in this great rivalry will play a pitiable part in time to come.'[40]

On the other hand, differences of race have been added to those of territory and climate to justify domination and empire. In illustration, we may take the

very frank statement of Dr. Burgess. 'The teutonic nations can never regard the exercise of political power as a right of man. With them this power must be based upon capacity to discharge political duty, and they themselves are the best organs which have as yet appeared to determine when and where this capacity exists . . . They are called to carry the political civilisation of the modern world into those parts of the world inhabited by unpolitical and barbaric races, i.e. they must have a colonial policy.'[41]

By the time Montesquieu wrote, the character of political expansion and empire had changed. The opportunities for aggrandizement in Europe were now scarce, but the opportunities elsewhere were abundant. Large unpeopled or thinly peopled lands were open for colonisation and countries occupied by peoples in a low stage of civilisation offered a tempting field for exploitation. Empires grew, larger in area than any the world had seen before, but consisting almost entirely of dependent colonies settled by emigrants from the mother country and of conquered lands inhabited by barbarous or semi-barbarous tribes. These changed conditions produced a corresponding change in emphasis in the political theory of imperialism.

Colonies proper were usually endowed with institutions similar to those of the mother country ; and the revolt of the American Colonies made it clear that loyalty could be preserved only by the grant of a large measure of autonomy a lesson that was only slowly learnt. With this phase of the development we are not primarily concerned. Empire is the dominion over communities politically subject and the theory of imperialism is the analysis and justification of such dominion.

The fact that such an empire is generally exercised in modern times by civilised states over comparatively uncivilised communities has provided its apologists with a line of argument that is distinctively modern ; and most writers on the subject follow it temperately or to its logical conclusion. A characteristically moderate statement is that of Sidgwick. Where the conquered are markedly inferior in civilisation, he says, 'if the war that led to the conquest can be justified by obstinate violation of international duty on the part of the conquered, the result would generally be regarded with toleration of impartial persons ; and even, perhaps, with approval, if the government of the conquerors was shown by experience to be not designedly oppressive or unjust ; since the benefits of completer internal peace and order, improved industry, enlarged opportunities of learning a better religion and a truer science would be taken—and, on the whole, I think, rightly taken—to compensate for the probable sacrifice of the interests of the conquered to those of the conquerors, whenever the two came into collision.'[42] And again, there are sentimental satisfactions, derived from justifiable conquests, which must be taken into account . . . Such are the justifiable pride which the cultivated members of a civilised community feel in the beneficent exercise of dominion, and in the performance by their nation of the noble task of spreading the highest kind of civilisation ; and a more intense though less elevated satisfaction . . . . in the spread of the special type of civilisation distinctive of their nation.'[43]

Rather more decisive is the historian of modern colonisation, Leroy-Beaulieu. 'It is neither natural nor just.' he concludes, 'that the civilised peoples of the west should be limited indefinitely to the restricted spaces which were their first home. . . and that they should leave perhaps half the world to small groups of ignorant men, resourceless, truly helpless children, scattered thinly over an immense area or to decrepit populations, without energy or directions, truly old men incapable of all effort or corporate and far-sighted activity. The intervention of civilised peoples in the affairs of peoples belonging to these two categories is justified as an education or as a guardianship... The role of teachers and guides, which devolves on civilised peoples, is laid down by the very nature of things, especially as far as the vast territories occupied by small savage or barbarous tribes is concerned. There are countries where it seems that civilisation—the domination of man over himself and over matter, the spirit of enterprise and discipline, the sense of capitalisation and the aptitude to invention—cannot develop spontaneously.'[44]

Burgess uses even more definite language. 'The civilised states have a claim upon the uncivilised populations, as well as a duty towards them, and that claim is that they shall become civilised; and if they cannot accomplish their own civilisation, then must they submit to the powers that can do it for them. The civilised state may righteously go still further than the exercise of force in imposing organisation. If the barbaric populations resist the same, *a l'outrance,* the civilised state may clear the territory of their presence and make it the abode of civilised man.... It violates thereby no rights of these populations which are not petty and trifling in comparison with its transcendent right and duty to establish political and legal order everywhere... There is a great deal of weak sentimentality abroad in the world concerning this subject.... Interference in the affairs of populations not wholly barbaric, which have made some progress in state organisation, but which manifest incapacity to solve the problem of a political civilisation with any degree of completeness, is a justifiable policy.... The civilised states themselves are the best organs which have yet appeared in the history of the world for determining the proper time and occasion for intervening in the affairs of unorganised or insufficiently organised populations for the execution of their great world-duty.'[45]

This reasoning is clear, whether or not it is cogent. It does more than merely justify empire ; it asserts it to be a solemn obligation. Not conquest, but the refusal to conquer needs apology. Civilised nations have the mission of spreading civilisation and establishing order all over the world. Where they do not exist, they have to be introduced—and they cannot, as a rule, be introduced except by force. Imperialism thus becomes a service to humanity and that is its vindication.

This modern theory of duty is the result, in part of the changed character of empires and in part of a more widely diffused, if not more sensitive, public conscience, which demands for empire some justification less parochial and more ethical than that of mere State necessity. But it has obvious weaknesses. In the first place, to the question, who is the judge of duty? the only answer is, the conquering state. Its decision may be fortified by precedents and the ex-

ample of other states, but the fact remains that it is judge in its own cause. Such a judgment is *ipso facto* suspect ; and the suspicion is increased by the fact that the verdict is to the interest of the judge. Whatever may be the benefit to humanity and to the conquered peoples, it cannot be denied that the conquerors benefit substantially, if not most of all.

Secondly, there is the difficult question, what is civilisation? The word is generally applied to a certain form of it that has been developed in the modern West, but even in the West, it is not homogeneous. How profound national variations are may be seen, for instance, in such a wise and witty book as Madariaga's *Englishmen*: *Frenchmen*: *Spaniards*. The Germans have long maintained the distinctive character of their own culture and on the strength of that asserted their mission of world domination. It has been shown over and over again that there is little anthropological basis for political superiority, that race is not identifiable with nationality and that whatever claim the Nordic race may have to political genius, it can scarcely be translated into the terms of practical politics.[46] Common factors are, no doubt, discoverable in the civilisations of the West, but at any rate they are not the only civilisation in existence. One of the finest civilisations of the world is that of China, now in its decay, but animated, as Havelock Ellis points out, in an exceptional degree by art.[47] 'This universal presence of art,' remarks another writer, 'manifested in the smallest utensil, the humblest stalls, the notices on the shops, the handwriting, the rhythm of movement, always regular and measured, as though to the tune of unheard music, announces a civilsation which is complete in itself, elaborated in the smallest detail, penetrated by one spirit, which no interruption ever breaks.'[48] Here we have a finished culture rich in an element of great value in which Western civilisations are poor; and yet no one maintains the right of the Chinese to extension and empire. The fact is, the theory is based, like many other theories, merely on the circumstances of the moment. The creation of a civilisation strong in the qualities of organisation and military force has enabled the Western nations to occupy and rule over tracts of the earth weak in those qualities; but that fact does not by itself prove the intrinsic superiority of Western civilisation, much less its duty to impose itself on other nations. Unless, indeed, we fall back on the old principle that success justifies itself.

There is another point worthy of note. For the transmission of culture all that is needed is contact, not necessarily conquest. Thus, when the Romans conquered Greece, it was Greek civilisation that spread over the Roman world, not Roman civilisation over Greece. When the barbarians overthrew the Roman empire, Roman law, Roman religion and other parts of the Roman system survived the cataclysm. Fugitives escaping from the submerging Eastern Empire hastened the renaissance in Italy. Where a state is organised for power, it becomes expansive and imperialistic; but its civilisation may be of a comparatively low order. On the other hand, an elaborate and advanced culture may be weak in its capacity for offence or power of resistance and may be subdued, perhaps to the advantage of both, by a more virile, but less sophisticated, foe.

But the world has now been parcelled out; and the immediate problem is the justification, not of conquest, but of the retention of empire. It is all to the

good that the emphasis has been shifted, and that philosophers consider the good of the conquered peoples rather than the necessity and advantage of the conquerors, as Machiavelli did. The further question then arises, what is the good that is contemplated? Where the conquered people are in a barbarous state, with little or no organisation and culture of their own, it is obvious, on the one hand, that the conquerors can give them nothing except what they themselves possess and that the educative process must be a long one, and, on the other, that the temptations to aggression are infinitely great. The difficulties of education may be solved by extinction, as has happened, more or less, to the Indians in North America and the aborigines in Australia. Civilisation spreads more quickly by substitution than by education. This is one of the dangers of the theory of duty ; for, if the primary mission is to spread civilisation, that may be done more rapidly and effectively by settling those who are already civilised than by the tedious process of training those who are inept by nature to education. Where climate offers no barriers to settlement, this tendency is difficult to resist.

But where the subject people have a civilisation of their own and are tenacious of it, the problem becomes much more delicate. The most interesting example perhaps is India. There are several complications. First, there can be no question of simple giving on one side and receiving on the other, but rather of interaction and adjustment. The meeting of two civilisations is an event or process of uncertain issue, with possibilties for both good and evil. The frank recognition of the virtues and failings of either is a condition of any happy fusion ; but the political relation of rule and subjection is in itself an obstacle to any such recognition. Secondly, if the subject people need to be educated, a clear conception of the end of such education is necessary. For what purpose is rule exercised? For the good of the governed. What kind of good? The answers to this fall broadly into two classes, their economic and social, material and intellectual advancement and their preparation for autonomy and the ordering of their own future.

Last year, my predecessor on this Foundation, illustrated in masterly fashion the two great currents of thought in the political theory of the Government of India ; and it is not my intention to traverse the same ground or to do over again what has already been done so well. The theory of trusteeship or guardianship is now generally accepted and it is recognised that self-government is the ultimate aim. This is the only defensible ideal, because without free will there can be no morality and a state of tutelage is justified only by an education in responsibility and the art of ruling. To produce capacity, however, without providing a sphere for its exercise is not only waste, but it is the source of discord. We reach, therefore, the true but paradoxical conclusion that that imperial government only is acceptable which, sooner or later, makes itself unnecessary.

It may be and has been argued that to countries like India the ideal of self-government is not relevant, because it is counter to the traditions and alien to the spirit of the people. In illustration, I will quote Sir Charles Lucas: 'British constructive administration in India has been successful, not as having brought

in political institutions of a British type, but as having bettered what was in India already, that is, more or less personal rule. It has given what was and is understood, and not a House of Commons, which would not be understood. Self-government implies the many, not the few; and it is not until the many have in the long course of ages been wholly transformed that the sphere of rule can be assimilated to the sphere of settlement, though the few may be and are being increasingly associated in the work and training which rule implies.'[49] These words were written in 1912 and have been largely belied by the history of the eighteen years since. They contain two fundamental fallacies; first, that, for the initiation of self-government, anything approaching universal franchise or fitness for the franchise is necessary and, secondly, that a democratic country can indefinitely govern a dependency autocratically.

The assumption is constantly made that democracy implies the actual and active participation of the great majority of the people in politics, either as representatives and legislators or as electors and critics. But this assumption is not supported by the facts, even in the most advanced democratic countries. Politics is an art for which most men have no leisure and in which, except when some great and simple issue arises such as war or revolution, most men feel no absorbing interest. The Greeks were right, as usual. Leisure is the condition of any significant political activity; and even Greek democracies were built up largely on a basis of slave labour. Indeed, Aristotle declared that all ordinary labour was unworthy of the man who aspired to rule. This was perhaps not because he did not believe in the dignity of work, but because he believed in it intensely. Work was such a serious thing that one kind of work was enough for one man: if he works at government he must be prepared to work at nothing else. Almost everywhere, democracy meant at first government by a ruling class; and the extension of the franchise has been beneficial chiefly in opening up a political career to talent outside the ruling class.

It has been beneficial also in another respect. It has ensured that the few shall generally rule in the interests of all. Hence, some amount of national solidarity, a measure of agreement on essentials and the diffusion of popular education are necessary conditions. If India is not considered fit for immediate self-government, it must be not because she has had a tradition of personal rule nor because the persons who have the will and capacity to pursue a political career are comparatively few, but because she has not yet attained the necessary minimum of political and social homogeneity which enables and *obliges* the few to govern in the interests of all.

The creation of this homogeneity is one of the most important services of empire. In part, it is created directly by administrative unity and by the opportunities which common government brings of cultural and social contact. But, in part, it is produced by reaction, by the sentiment of common grievances and the realisation of the need for common action to remove them. Historical conjectures are hazardous, but it may well be doubted if the divisive elements in the American Colonies, which culminated in a civil war ninety years later, would have allowed the formation of a United States were it not for their common subjection to Great Britain. In the same way, the British Government in India

has fashioned or strengthened the bonds of national unity ; and it is precisely the lack of uniformity in the incidence of that government, the differences in the degree of control that it exercises, that creates one of the problems of modern India, the position of the Native States.

Fitness for self-government, then, there must be, though perhaps not of the kind that is usually postulated. But it follows, almost as an axiom, that both communities should have a voice in deciding whether, at any given time, the requisite degree or quality of fitness has been attained. Self-government cannot be given until it is taken. The demand for self-government by a community is evidence in itself, up to a point, that the community is fit for self-government ; for one of the conditions of self-government is self-consciousness, and the demand is proof of the self-consciousness. Other conditions, however, may still be lacking. But a demand, continually made and continually resisted, creates a psychosis in both parties that is not favourable to any rational determination of the problem.

I have attempted to sketch, in this short survey, the salient features in the evolution of the political theory of imperialism. Some elements of the theory are remarkably persistent, reappearing from age to age in different disguises—the doctrine, for instance, that the possession of superior power confers a right to empire or that state necessity, its right to security, justifies all things. Other arguments are devised to suit the facts of the time. Sometimes, a claim to conquest is made in the name of nationalism. To an age or people dominated by religious ideas, like the ancient Hebrews or the Middle Ages, empire becomes the will or command of God. In a colonising period, it is justified by differences in civilisation or national character. But generally speaking, the emphasis has been gradually shifted from the interest of the conquering state to the interest of the conquered, at least in theory. The interest of the conquered has been further equated to their training for eventual self-government. The 'When' becomes the crucial problem, which has to be solved together. This is no easy task, for, even if the dominant state accepts with a single mind the view that the dependency should be administered for the purpose of making it fit for freedom, it is inevitable that it should be reluctant to relinquish a control of long duration and should approach the question from the angle of order and security rather than of responsibility and freedom. It is always easier to regard politics a study in statics rather than in dynamics, but it is fatal. All life and growth implies and depends on adaptation and where two are concerned, the adaptation is much more difficult. The reconciliation between liberty and order is the ultimate problem of all government and no easy formula exists for its solution. That must be the result of experiment, of delicate compromises, of that perpetual movement, which, as in a bicycle, maintains equilibrium.

But the modern theory of empire has advanced yet another step. Empire is not a matter for the rulers alone, or even for conquerors and conquered together ; there are already the outlines at least of a world order.[50] The mandatory system is the first fruits of the impact of the world order on the theory and practice of imperialism. This offers a line of approach that is full of promise. It is not difficult for the dominant state to vindicate its rule to itself. To vindicate it to the satisfaction of its subjects is so difficult as to seem im-

possible. But the common sense and the common conscience of mankind are now available to help in the fulfilment of this task; and we move at once into a more serene and impartial atmosphere in which national pride, greed and hatred may gradually be replaced by a spirit of mutual respect and helpfulness.

Nothing that I have said is new and perhaps not all of it is true. But at this moment of our country's fortunes it seemed worthwhile to draw attention to the principles that fashion our destiny, not from the narrow and misleading point of view of the day, but from the wider point of view of historical development. I must apologise for my shortcomings and thank you for your patience and courtesy.

NOTES

1 Thucydides, iii. 37.
2 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
3 *Ibid.*, iii. 11.
4 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
5 *Ibid.*, i. 76.
6 *Ibid.*, v. 89.
7 *Ibid.*, v. 105.
8 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
9 *Ibid.*, i. 75.
10 *Ibid.*, vi. 18.
11 *Isocr. Panath.* 66.
12 Thucydides, ii. 41.
13 Aristotle, *Politics*, vii. 3, 6.
14 *Ibid.*, vii. 14, 21.
15 Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, 1
16 Dante, *De Monarchia*, ii. 2.
17 *Ibid.*, ii. 5.
18 *Ibid.*, ii. 13.
19 Acton, *The Study of History.*
20 Quoted by Dante, *De Monarchia*, ii. 7.
21 St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, iv. 4.
22 Acton, Introduction to Burd's edition of *Il Principe.*
23 Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staaträson*, 56.
24 Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 6.
25 *Ibid.*, ii. 19.
26 *Ibid.*, i. 5.
27 *Ibid.*, ii. 19.
28 *Ibid.*, ii. 23.
29 *Ibid.*, i. 12.
30 Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, 26.
31 Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Lois*, x. 2.
32 *Ibid.*, x. 3.
33 *Ibid.*, x. 4.
34 *Ibid.*, x. 4.
35 *Ibid.*, xvii. 5.
36 Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, iii. 8.
37 Trietschke, *Politics* (trans. by Dugdale & De Bille), i. 65.
38 *Ibid.*, i. 108.
39 *Ibid.*
40 *Ibid.*, i. 115, 6.
41 Burgess, *Political Power and Constitutional Law*, i. 45.
42 Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, 311.
43 *Ibid.*, 313.
44 Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes*, ii. 686.
45 Burgess, *Sup. Cit.*, i. 46.
46 See, *e.g.*, Barker, *National Character*, 18ff.
47 Havelock Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, 25.
48 Hovelaque, *La Chine*, quoted by Ellis, *Sup. Cit.*, 25, 6.
49 Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, 151.
50 See *e.g.* Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, iv. 4.

T. S. Eliot: Tradition and the Individual Critic

Sukanta Chaudhuri

For T. S. Eliot, all detailed criticism of literature must begin from the text itself. In "The Perfect Critic", Aristotle provides his model :

> In whatever sphere of interest, he looked solely and steadfastly at the object

whereas with Coleridge

> His end does not always appear to be the return to the work of art with improved perception and intensified, because more conscious, enjoyment ; his centre of interest changes, his feelings are impure.

This obviously distinguishes Eliot from critics making a biographical, philosophical, propagandist, or any other "external" approach to the text. More subtly, it also distinguishes him—at least in theory—from the detailed and strictly "literary" analysis of poetry on principles of Elizabethan rhetoric, neoclassical "rules", or even Arnold's "touchstones". In all these cases, the critic follows *a priori* methods—judges poetry by a preconceived set of rules, searching for certain elements only. The merit of Eliot's ideal is that it makes no assumptions on the nature of poetry, but examines the individual work and recovers every element that has gone into its composition. Therefore, he stands in a much better position to realise the full and correct nature of the piece.

Yet Eliot does not carry minute textual analysis to the length of Empson or the American "New Critics", though he provided them with inspiration. His practice is closer to Dr. Johnson's analyses in the *Lives of the Poets*. The primary aim is not to expand the significance of an individual work by discovering subtle implications, but rather to extract the essence of the author's technique and sensibility. In Dante, for instance, Eliot points out the lucid use of imagery and the formal implications of the allegorical mode ; in Marlowe, the development of his blank verse and the way this reflects his treatment of experience ; in the Metaphysicals, the "association of sensibility" ; in Milton (or Swinburne) the use of sound separated from sense. Eliot's greatest strength as a critic is this unique gift of discerning the formal principles guiding a poet's work. One can only lament with George Watson that Eliot did not write a history of English literature. It would have been the most truly *literary* history ever written, a safeguard

against any future survey sliding into the common fate of proving a half-baked history of ideas.

This sense of the underlying principle has quite a different effect from that of the superficially similar methods of many modern critics. Whereas these concentrate on the individual work, repudiating historicity, Eliot's method induces a strong sense of growth and change—a sense of tradition.

In its ideal form—which Eliot himself hardly realised—this concept of tradition is unprecedented too. Traditionalism in literature generally means subscription to a single line of practice, which becomes *the* tradition. A particularly strong example of this fastidiousness is surely Leavis's "Great Tradition" of the English novel. To a greater or lesser extent, such exclusiveness is implicit in neoclassical criticism as well as the Romantic and Victorian evaluation of literature, with its great gulf from Milton to Wordsworth.

Eliot's theory of tradition indicates a much more inclusive and fruitful approach:

> . . . a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.
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> ("Tradition and the Individual Talent")

This seems to promise a recognition of the total spirit of English literature in which Chaucer and Milton, Spenser and Pope, Donne and Swinburne would all be represented, and an attempt made to find some common spirit growing and changing through them all. It is a gigantic task, but a task that Eliot could have accomplished if any could. Perhaps Dryden and Johnson approached it inarticulately when they reshaped their neoclassical tenets in conformity with the freer and more romantic English spirit.

But in practice, Eliot hardly succeeds in establishing this deep unity in all English literature. Rather, he sets up author against author, school against school. He closes the "Augustan gulf" of Romantic criticism only to open an equally alarming gulf that begins after the Metaphysicals and touches shore again, one suspects, only with Eliot and Pound. Such gaps in appreciation are perhaps inevitable; and if I indict Eliot for failure in a stupendous task, it is because he showed a unique potential for successfully assimilating every aspect of the English literary spirit without surrendering all sense of relative value.

Perhaps traditionalism is bound to defeat its own purpose, especially in English criticism. For it implies, in Eliot's own words, "something outside the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself. . ." By and large, English poets have shown themselves most reluctant to make this sacrifice. Deep-seated traditions and conventions have been embodied in apparently irregular "gothic" forms, as in Elizabethan literature. Critics, even outside the neoclassical period, have as consistently deplored this romanticism. English poets did not *know* enough, complained Arnold; and centuries ago, Sidney even anticipated Eliot in avowing that good poetry must have the qualities of good prose:

> . . . let but most of the verses be put in prose, and then ask the meaning,

> and it will be found, that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first, what should be the last. . . (*The Defence of Poesie*).

English critics, being critics, had taken a classical bias simply because English poets took a romantic one.

Yet the more perceptive critics had recognised and valued this romantic spirit:

> Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one?
>
> (Dryden, *Essay on Dramatic Poesie*)

In Eliot, we hardly get this concession: romanticism is seen as almost entirely barren. Classicism demands tradition; in English literature, tradition demands romanticism. English critics have trod the wheel of this dilemma for generations. Eliot himself shows a way out of the maze in his poetic practice, but in his criticism he is driven (perhaps by the need for explicit evaluative statements) into accepting only a very selective tradition that seriously impairs his objectivity.

The matter is complicated by his constant call (at least in the earlier writings) that criticism should be related to contemporary poetic practice. There is a deceptive "poetic justice" in Eliot's dictum that the best poets make the best critics. The right answer is not C. S. Lewis's involved logic (in *A Preface to Paradise Lost*) but a simple recognition of the fact that a practising poet has his own axe to grind. When an important poet undertakes criticism, he may find it scarcely possible to keep his two functions sufficiently distinct. As Eliot admits in the 1947 lecture on Milton, "The scholar's interest is in the permanent, the practitioner's in the immediate."

The result of these shortcomings is that the English literary tradition, as Eliot sees it, does not run smoothly through the history of literature, but takes a bumpy flight from peak to peak of very unequal height. Moreover, he contradicts his general principles to accommodate particular favourites or damn his special *bêtes noires*. Such inconsistencies are so endemic in English criticism (perhaps made inevitable by the inveterate romanticism of English poetry) that they may be looked upon with indulgence and even relief. We find exactly the same attitude over and over again in Johnson—as when he abruptly changes position at the end of his scathing attack on Milton to declare that he "cannot wish his work to be other than it is". Our ultimate verdict must be the same for both Johnson and Eliot : a healthy empiricism, and great critical honesty, but a sign of defective or inadequate principles.

For instance, a sense of finished form must be granted to be one of Eliot't chief demands from poetry : he loves a finely ordered experience.

> The immediate appeal of Jonson is to the mind ; his emotional tone is not in the single verse, but in the design of the whole. ("Ben Jonson")

Such an emphasis on total form rather than local texture would have saved Milton from much of the 1935 attack. Moreover, this ordered formalism seems, at least superficially, to be at odds with his strictures on "dissociation of sensibility", his

admiration of the ambivalence of Metaphysical "wit". Yet he condemns the latter too, when he criticises Donne's "impure art" in "Lancelot Andrewes":

> ...without belittling the intensity or the profundity of his experience, we can suggest that this experience was not perfectly controlled, and that he lacked spiritual discipline.

This point is more fully developed in Eliot's contribution to *A Garland for John Donne* (1932).

Again, the term "auditory imagination" is constantly used to indicate a most desirable quality in verse, except where it becomes a stick to beat Milton with. But there seems to be no reason why sound should not play a major role (even Eliot did not insist it was the only element) in Milton's poetry. He granted this in his recantation, of course, but this could hardly arrest the stream of hostile Milton criticism that the first essay had done so much to encourage and which continues to the present day. Similarly, withdrawal from circulation has not quite destroyed the effects of the unpardonable essay on *Hamlet,* where, after all his strictures on his predecessors, Eliot himself falls into exactly the same error of mistaking the prince for the poem, and attributing Hamlet's causeless melancholy to Shakespeare's own alleged gloom, brought out with a defective sense of form.

In fact, the most serious fault in Eliot's critical equipment is this curious blind spot towards the romantic sensibility. No doubt there are historical reasons for it, and even a historical necessity. But it is strange that a traditionalist like Eliot should have repudiated so completely the century of literature in his own language immediately preceding his own work.

This attitude to romanticism is strikingly similar to that of a philosopher on the staff of Harvard when Eliot studied there. George Santayana's essay on *Hamlet* (actually eleven years earlier than Eliot's) reads like a mature and well-thought-out restatement of Eliot's views, avoiding the obvious pitfalls but with the same antipathy to romanticism. The influence of Santayana's "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare" was admitted by Eliot himself in "Four Elizabethan Dramatists". The former's "The Poetry of Barbarism" shows the same attitude to form and the ordered world-view of the major poet that we find all through Eliot. In a still more general way, Santayana's "The Function of Poetry" curiously anticipates Eliot:

> The link that binds together the ideas, sometimes so wide apart, which his [the poet's] wit assimilates, is most often the link of emotion.

This is very close to the concept of the "catalytic agent" in Eliot, but also to earlier theories of imagination. With his lyrical romantic prose denouncing romanticism, Santayana provides a very revealing link between Eliot and nineteenth-century criticism, showing a transmission of ideas where otherwise we would have detected no influence or even found opposition.

How deep this influence might be is perhaps indicated by the following excerpts culled from a very cursory glance through the *Biographia Literaria*:

> For the property of passion is not to *create;* but to set in increased activity. At least, whatever new connections of thoughts or images, or

> ... whatever generalizations of truth or experience, the heat of passion may produce; yet the terms of their conveyance must have pre-existed in his [a man's] former conversations, and are only collected and crowded together by this unusual stimulation. (*Biog. Lit.*, Ch. 17)

We may compare the "catalytic agent" theory, which seems in fact to be anticipated by Coleridge's many references to the "blending, fusing power" of imagination:

> ... the power of reducing multitude into unity of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling... (*Biog. Lit.*, Ch. 15)

This can be set beside "Tradition and the Individual Talent":

> ... the whole effect, the dominant tone, is due to the fact that the number of floating feelings, having an affinity to this emotion by no means superficially evident, have combined with it to give us a new art emotion.

Or, on the question of artistic impersonality, here is Coleridge:

> A second promise of genius is the choice of subjects very remote from the private interests and circumstances of the writer himself... [In *Venus and Adonis*] It is throughout as if a superior spirit more intuitive, more intimately conscious, even than the characters themselves, not only of every outward look and act, but of the flux and reflux of the mind in all its subtlest thoughts and feelings, were placing the whole before our view; himself meanwhile unparticipating in the passions, and actuated only by that pleasurable excitement which had resulted from the energetic fervour of his own spirit... (*Biog. lit.*, Ch. 15)

Almost every phrase in this passage could be paralleled from Eliot's criticism. Going through his work, one is struck by his frequent echoes of Coleridge, though the subject-matter has been clinically disinfected of Coleridge's metaphors of organic growth and his general rapt, admiring tone. One may even say, flamboyantly but not without reason, that Eliot's views on impersonality, art-emotion, and the union of diverse experiences in a single poetic form are all there, in embryo, in Shelley's "On a poet's lips I slept". That Romantic aesthetics could evolve into its own opposite is perhaps a reflection on itself, but more certainly on Eliot. He was perhaps misled by the ubiquitous "Romantic I" into interpreting it biographically, not as an artistic persona, and this denying that the romantic mode of poetic composition involved the same process of artistic distancing, depersonalising, and re-ordering of experience that he himself described.

Having dealt, perhaps at excessive length, with one sort of "critical objectivity" in Eliot, we may consider another. The early Eliot is a great defender of art *qua* art, of poetry as independent of philosophy or religious belief:

> The poet makes poetry, the metaphysician makes metaphysics, the bee

in political institutions of a British type, but as having bettered what was in India already, that is, more or less personal rule. It has given what was and is understood, and not a House of Commons, which would not be understood. Self-government implies the many, not the few; and it is not until the many have in the long course of ages been wholly transformed that the sphere of rule can be assimilated to the sphere of settlement, though the few may be and are being increasingly associated in the work and training which rule implies.'[49] These words were written in 1912 and have been largely belied by the history of the eighteen years since. They contain two fundamental fallacies; first, that, for the initiation of self-government, anything approaching universal franchise or fitness for the franchise is necessary and, secondly, that a democratic country can indefinitely govern a dependency autocratically.

The assumption is constantly made that democracy implies the actual and active participation of the great majority of the people in politics, either as representatives and legislators or as electors and critics. But this assumption is not supported by the facts, even in the most advanced democratic countries. Politics is an art for which most men have no leisure and in which, except when some great and simple issue arises such as war or revolution, most men feel no absorbing interest. The Greeks were right, as usual. Leisure is the condition of any significant political activity; and even Greek democracies were built up largely on a basis of slave labour. Indeed, Aristotle declared that all ordinary labour was unworthy of the man who aspired to rule. This was perhaps not because he did not believe in the dignity of work, but because he believed in it intensely. Work was such a serious thing that one kind of work was enough for one man: if he works at government he must be prepared to work at nothing else. Almost everywhere, democracy meant at first government by a ruling class; and the extension of the franchise has been beneficial chiefly in opening up a political career to talent outside the ruling class.

It has been beneficial also in another respect. It has ensured that the few shall generally rule in the interests of all. Hence, some amount of national solidarity, a measure of agreement on essentials and the diffusion of popular education are necessary conditions. If India is not considered fit for immediate self-government, it must be not because she has had a tradition of personal rule nor because the persons who have the will and capacity to pursue a political career are comparatively few, but because she has not yet attained the necessary minimum of political and social homogeneity which enables and *obliges* the few to govern in the interests of all.

The creation of this homogeneity is one of the most important services of empire. In part, it is created directly by administrative unity and by the opportunities which common government brings of cultural and social contact. But, in part, it is produced by reaction, by the sentiment of common grievances and the realisation of the need for common action to remove them. Historical conjectures are hazardous, but it may well be doubted if the divisive elements in the American Colonies, which culminated in a civil war ninety years later, would have allowed the formation of a United States were it not for their common subjection to Great Britain. In the same way, the British Government in India

has fashioned or strengthened the bonds of national unity ; and it is precisely the lack of uniformity in the incidence of that government, the differences in the degree of control that it exercises, that creates one of the problems of modern India, the position of the Native States.

Fitness for self-government, then, there must be, though perhaps not of the kind that is usually postulated. But it follows, almost as an axiom, that both communities should have a voice in deciding whether, at any given time, the requisite degree or quality of fitness has been attained. Self-government cannot be given until it is taken. The demand for self-government by a community is evidence in itself, up to a point, that the community is fit for self-government ; for one of the conditions of self-government is self-consciousness, and the demand is proof of the self-consciousness. Other conditions, however, may still be lacking. But a demand, continually made and continually resisted, creates a psychosis in both parties that is not favourable to any rational determination of the problem.

I have attempted to sketch, in this short survey, the salient features in the evolution of the political theory of imperialism. Some elements of the theory are remarkably persistent, reappearing from age to age in different disguises—the doctrine, for instance, that the possession of superior power confers a right to empire or that state necessity, its right to security, justifies all things. Other arguments are devised to suit the facts of the time. Sometimes, a claim to conquest is made in the name of nationalism. To an age or people dominated by religious ideas, like the ancient Hebrews or the Middle Ages, empire becomes the will or command of God. In a colonising period, it is justified by differences in civilisation or national character. But generally speaking, the emphasis has been gradually shifted from the interest of the conquering state to the interest of the conquered, at least in theory. The interest of the conquered has been further equated to their training for eventual self-government. The 'When' becomes the crucial problem, which has to be solved together. This is no easy task, for, even if the dominant state accepts with a single mind the view that the dependency should be administered for the purpose of making it fit for freedom, it is inevitable that it should be reluctant to relinquish a control of long duration and should approach the question from the angle of order and security rather than of responsibility and freedom. It is always easier to regard politics a study in statics rather than in dynamics, but it is fatal. All life and growth implies and depends on adaptation and where two are concerned, the adaptation is much more difficult. The reconciliation between liberty and order is the ultimate problem of all government and no easy formula exists for its solution. That must be the result of experiment, of delicate compromises, of that perpetual movement, which, as in a bicycle, maintains equilibrium.

But the modern theory of empire has advanced yet another step. Empire is not a matter for the rulers alone, or even for conquerors and conquered together ; there are already the outlines at least of a world order.[50] The mandatory system is the first fruits of the impact of the world order on the theory and practice of imperialism. This offers a line of approach that is full of promise. It is not difficult for the dominant state to vindicate its rule to itself. To vindicate it to the satisfaction of its subjects is so difficult as to seem im-

possible. But the common sense and the common conscience of mankind are now available to help in the fulfilment of this task; and we move at once into a more serene and impartial atmosphere in which national pride, greed and hatred may gradually be replaced by a spirit of mutual respect and helpfulness.

Nothing that I have said is new and perhaps not all of it is true. But at this moment of our country's fortunes it seemed worthwhile to draw attention to the principles that fashion our destiny, not from the narrow and misleading point of view of the day, but from the wider point of view of historical development. I must apologise for my shortcomings and thank you for your patience and courtesy.

NOTES

1 Thucydides, iii. 37.
2 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
3 *Ibid.*, iii. 11.
4 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
5 *Ibid.*, i. 76.
6 *Ibid.*, v. 89.
7 *Ibid.*, v. 105.
8 *Ibid.*, ii. 63.
9 *Ibid.*, i. 75.
10 *Ibid.*, vi. 18.
11 *Isocr. Panath.* 66.
12 Thucydides, ii. 41.
13 Aristotle, *Politics*, vii. 3, 6.
14 *Ibid.*, vii. 14, 21.
15 Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, 1
16 Dante, *De Monarchia*, ii. 2.
17 *Ibid.*, ii. 5.
18 *Ibid.*, ii. 13.
19 Acton, *The Study of History*.
20 Quoted by Dante, *De Monarchia*, ii. 7.
21 St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, iv. 4.
22 Acton, Introduction to Burd's edition of *Il Principe*.
23 Meinecke, *Die Idee der Staaträson*, 56.
24 Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, i. 6.
25 *Ibid.*, ii. 19.
26 *Ibid.*, i. 5.
27 *Ibid.*, ii. 19.
28 *Ibid.*, ii. 23.
29 *Ibid.*, i. 12.
30 Machiavelli, *Il Principe*, 26.
31 Montesquieu, *De l'Esprit des Lois*, x. 2.
32 *Ibid.*, x. 3.
33 *Ibid.*, x. 4.
34 *Ibid.*, x. 4.
35 *Ibid.*, xvii. 5.
36 Rousseau, *Contrat Social*, iii. 8.
37 Trietschke, *Politics* (trans. by Dugdale & De Bille), i. 65.
38 *Ibid.*, i. 108.
39 *Ibid.*
40 *Ibid.*, i. 115, 6.
41 Burgess, *Political Power and Constitutional Law*, i. 45.
42 Sidgwick, *Elements of Politics*, 311.
43 *Ibid.*, 313.
44 Leroy-Beaulieu, *De la Colonisation chez les Peuples Modernes*, ii. 686.
45 Burgess, *Sup. Cit.*, i. 46.
46 See, *e.g.*, Barker, *National Character*, 18ff.
47 Havelock Ellis, *The Dance of Life*, 25.
48 Hovelaque, *La Chine*, quoted by Ellis, *Sup. Cit.*, 25, 6.
49 Lucas, *Greater Rome and Greater Britain*, 151.
50 See *e.g.* Laski, *A Grammar of Politics*, iv. 4.

T. S. Eliot: Tradition and the Individual Critic

Sukanta Chaudhuri

For T. S. Eliot, all detailed criticism of literature must begin from the text itself. In "The Perfect Critic", Aristotle provides his model :

> In whatever sphere of interest, he looked solely and steadfastly at the object

whereas with Coleridge

> His end does not always appear to be the return to the work of art with improved perception and intensified, because more conscious, enjoyment ; his centre of interest changes, his feelings are impure.

This obviously distinguishes Eliot from critics making a biographical, philosophical, propagandist, or any other "external" approach to the text. More subtly, it also distinguishes him—at least in theory—from the detailed and strictly "literary" analysis of poetry on principles of Elizabethan rhetoric, neoclassical "rules", or even Arnold's "touchstones". In all these cases, the critic follows *a priori* methods—judges poetry by a preconceived set of rules, searching for certain elements only. The merit of Eliot's ideal is that it makes no assumptions on the nature of poetry, but examines the individual work and recovers every element that has gone into its composition. Therefore, he stands in a much better position to realise the full and correct nature of the piece.

Yet Eliot does not carry minute textual analysis to the length of Empson or the American "New Critics", though he provided them with inspiration. His practice is closer to Dr. Johnson's analyses in the *Lives of the Poets*. The primary aim is not to expand the significance of an individual work by discovering subtle implications, but rather to extract the essence of the author's technique and sensibility. In Dante, for instance, Eliot points out the lucid use of imagery and the formal implications of the allegorical mode ; in Marlowe, the development of his blank verse and the way this reflects his treatment of experience ; in the Metaphysicals, the "association of sensibility" ; in Milton (or Swinburne) the use of sound separated from sense. Eliot's greatest strength as a critic is this unique gift of discerning the formal principles guiding a poet's work. One can only lament with George Watson that Eliot did not write a history of English literature. It would have been the most truly *literary* history ever written, a safeguard

against any future survey sliding into the common fate of proving a half-baked history of ideas.

This sense of the underlying principle has quite a different effect from that of the superficially similar methods of many modern critics. Whereas these concentrate on the individual work, repudiating historicity, Eliot's method induces a strong sense of growth and change—a sense of tradition.

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> . . . a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order.
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This seems to promise a recognition of the total spirit of English literature in which Chaucer and Milton, Spenser and Pope, Donne and Swinburne would all be represented, and an attempt made to find some common spirit growing and changing through them all. It is a gigantic task, but a task that Eliot could have accomplished if any could. Perhaps Dryden and Johnson approached it inarticulately when they reshaped their neoclassical tenets in conformity with the freer and more romantic English spirit.

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Perhaps traditionalism is bound to defeat its own purpose, especially in English criticism. For it implies, in Eliot's own words, "something outside the artist to which he owes allegiance, a devotion to which he must surrender and sacrifice himself. . ." By and large, English poets have shown themselves most reluctant to make this sacrifice. Deep-seated traditions and conventions have been embodied in apparently irregular "gothic" forms, as in Elizabethan literature. Critics, even outside the neoclassical period, have as consistently deplored this romanticism. English poets did not *know* enough, complained Arnold; and centuries ago, Sidney even anticipated Eliot in avowing that good poetry must have the qualities of good prose:

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> The poet makes poetry, the metaphysician makes metaphysics, the bee

> makes honey, the spider secretes a filament; you can hardly say that any of these agents believes: he merely does.
>
> ("Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca")

This part of Eliot's theory shows the clearest influence of the "art for art's sake" theories of the *fin de siècle*. Yet increasingly, Eliot staunchly opposes all such theories. In *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, there is constant reference to "other functions" of literature. He had recognised these functions much earlier, when (echoing Santayana) he had accused the Elizabethan dramatists of wanting religion. His later criticism is profoundly religious. Is it possible to reconcile these two attitudes?

I think that at his best, Eliot does so with remarkable success, far more subtly than I. A. Richards's aesthetic Benthamism or the traditional "pleasure and profit" formula which represents poetry as a sugar-coated moral pill. Eliot makes his views clear in "The Social Function of Poetry":

> [The poet's] direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve. In expressing what other people feel he is also changing the feeling by making it more conscious. . . . [and he can also] make his readers share consciously in new feelings which they had not experienced before.

The poet's allegiance to language alone thus provides him with a part in social education and control, of enriching and expanding human experience so as to give life more meaning.

More notable still is another, unformulated concept. Eliot's critical process, with its "objective" concentration on the work itself, is an obvious parallel to his poetic process of impersonal concentration on experience—and that again to his wider call for impersonal spiritual concentration :

> . . . "on whatever sphere of being
> The mind of man may be intent
> At the time of death"—that is the one action
> (And the time of death is every moment)
> Which shall fructify in the lives of others : . . .

It is just this "intentness" that Eliot praises in Aristotle, in the passage I quoted at the outset. There is an astonishing correspondence between the ideas, the very phrases, of *Four Quartets* and Eliot's criticism. This does not mean that artistic composition is the principal theme of *Four Quartets*. Rather, it indicates that the artist's or the critic's work is for Eliot a form of spiritual development. His penetrating criticism makes clear that he regards the artist's use of words as proof of his entire sensibility—a way of thinking, living and feeling. The claims of art and life can therefore be reconciled, art acquiring a social and spiritual function *because of* its integrity, its refusal to turn propagandist.

This does not seem so very different from Arnold's views on the subject. The quotation from "The Social Function of Literature" reads like an expansion of Arnold's saying that poetry is a criticism of life. And Eliot's 1935

essay on "Religion and Literature" might be a sermon with Arnold's words for its text :

> A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life ;* a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life.* ("Wordsworth")

In fact, Eliot out-Arnolds Arnold in this approach to literature. Yet he treats Arnold with distaste—and this, it seems, for two opposite reasons. No doubt, as the advocate of pure form, he would disagree with Arnold's test of "high seriousness"—a test that Milton would pass but not the Metaphysicals. But much stronger and more explicit is his criticism of Arnold's humanism, his belief that literature and secular culture ranged wider than religion and could replace it. Whereas many modern readers seem to regard Arnold as too pompous for their tastes, Eliot does not consider him serious enough: the pleasures of literature compensate to him for the deep truths of religion.

The reader of *Notes towards the Definition of Culture* will find much that is valuable in Eliot's concept of the interaction of "literature", and in fact the entire "culture" or way of life of a people, with their "religion" or spiritual values and other-worldly beliefs. But he tends to give this concept a wider application than it will bear. The idea of a "culture" or way of life reflecting a system of religious belief might hold good for the Middle Ages, but hardly for the present day, unless "religion" is given a very wide, "secular" sense—which in this case is impossible, as these wider implications have already been attached to the concept of "culture". This overestimation of the role of religion in modern society—at times smacking all too obviously of wishful thinking —leads him into occasional demands that literature should be subservient to religion, a sort of superior propaganda or at least with an implicit Christian belief.

This is a complete reversal of his earlier position—which also, however, he keeps up to the end. Perhaps it was his new attitude that made him withdraw "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" from circulation. His violent criticism of Hobbes in the 1927 essay on John Bramhall expresses this impatience with non-Christian and un-Christian literature. It appears most blatantly in *After Strange Gods.* and with a more sober clarity in the social and religious writings of the last period. We can see it in 1931 in "Thoughts after Lambeth" :

> The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality The experiment will fail . . . .

One feels grateful that the blossoming of the permissive society, or the immigration of alien races into England, did not attract notice on a large scale before Eliot's death. He might well have committed himself to an extreme conservatism that would have led to much irrelevant neglect, and still more irrelevant admiration, of his significant work.

It is a pity that Eliot's search for classicism should have brought him to rest in a sort of superior Toryism. His idea of the social function of literature

depends, as in all classicism, on a rapport between artist and society which the present age has lost. Eliot revived many traditions—classical, Elizabethan, last and most strongly Christian—and wrote his poetry in their light. But these traditions are dead or dying, and Eliot accordingly put himself in the position of an elitist or neoclassicist, defending a garrison of taste, rule and judgment from philistinism. Classicist in temper, he found himself a romantic in situation. Again and again he points out the passing of a common mythology of a communal scale of values :

> What his [Blake's] genius required, and what it sadly lacked, was a framework of accepted and traditional ideas which would have prevented him from indulging in a philosophy of his own... We may speculate, for amusement, whether it would not have been beneficial to the north of Europe generally, and to Britain in particular, to have had a more continuous religious history. ("William Blake")

Yet the superficial contentment of the last period disguises this alienation of the man of letters under a surprising placidity. In *Notes towards the Definition of Culture,* Eliot admits an elite ; but having done so, he goes on to say :

> We should not consider the upper levels as possessing *more* culture than the lower, but as representing a more conscious culture and a greater specialisation of culture.

This is either a Utopian dream or an insincere sop to egalitarianism. Eliot is clinging to the ghost of the classical ideal. As a closely-reasoned piece of social theory, the *Notes* are far superior to *Culture and Anarchy ;* but one sometimes wishes for the sheer perturbed realism of Arnold's outcries against Barbarians, Philistines and the Populace . The loss of a communal mytholoy and system of values, with the consequent alienation of the artist, has been a recognised malady of European culture since the late eighteenth century at least. Now and then in his later work, Eliot is led (perhaps by his own success and social acceptance) to overlook a problem that still draws disturbed auguries from contemporary authors—quite recently, for instance, by George Steiner, in a series of lectures deliberately parodying Eliot's title (*In Bluebeard's Castle : Notes towards the Redefinition of Culture.* 1971).

But when all is said and done, Eliot made the most genuine and far-ranging effort of the century to revive tradition at all. It was nothing less than a revolution in critical methods and values—sometimes with unfortunate results, just as Arnold's humanism (at least by Eliot's account) had the unfortunate offspring of Pater's aestheticism. Criticism since Eliot has run into a number of neoclassicisms—each the application of a set of rules, valid but inadequate, to all writings whatsoever. It might be "analysis of formal principles" of Leavis's sort (like Eliot's but at a much lower level), or of some particular aspect of form: imagery by Cleanth Brooks or Wilson Knight, plurisignation by Empson, sound-values by, say, Edith Sitwell. Such fragmentary analyses, however valuable, can hardly replace Eliot's comprehensive critical insight. Even if he did not succeed in articulating the English literary tradition, it is only through his efforts that the task now appears possible at all.

The Third World

Anup Sinha

A major challenge to contemporary civilization is the complex task of pulling the countries of the Third World out of the quagmire of stagnation. There are intricate social, political and economic aspects and a million technical details over which academicians are ready to split hairs. The problem is so large that no ready-made universal solution will hold. The present author has no intentions of providing one. Moreover, this article generalizes in many places leading to what may be oversimplifications. Yet they often serve to bring to light certain important issues. Some may think that there are too many details ; specialists will think the reverse. But pedestrian observations may have some relevance too, because it is the man-in-the-street who has to throb through a mist of blood, toil and tears in the chaos and confusion of our age.

II

The countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America, which comprise the Third World vary in social, political, cultural and geographical features. Therefore any attempt to analyse the development of these countries must necessarily concentrate on certain essentially common characteristics. This level of abstraction would eliminate the peculiarities of particular cases and shift the emphasis to the common nature of the problems faced.

Talking of generalities and abstracting from the whole list of the features of underdeveloped, or, euphemistically speaking, developing countries, the common problems of relative poverty and low utilization of resources spring from the legacy of a colonial or semi-colonial past, a crippled social superstructure with a stunted economic base.

To serve its own interests capitalism checked the growth of industrialization in its colonies. This is obvious from the classic colony-metropolis relationship that emerged and crystallized during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The colonies served as reservoirs of raw materials from which the grand machines of Western Europe were fed, as well as a market for finished products. The economic fate of these colonies became attached to the uncertainties of the world market via the fever-curve of price movements. Whether brought under direct political dominance or caught in this particular pattern of international trade, all these nations, more or less, helped in accelerating and multiplying the rise in the economic surplus of the advanced capitalist countries. In the process the colonies became case studies in the neglect of mechanization.

It is useless to deny that these countries were showing no signs of development when they became colonies. Everywhere the precapitalist order was disintegrating ; the intensity and speed varied but the direction was clear. Moreover, in many of these countries there were perceptible signs of capitalist development like rising agricultural output, peasant displacements, and a grownig merchant class. The natural development of capitalism might have occurred even though the nature and length of the transition period would have varied in particular cases, if these countries had not been brought into the orbit of dependent capitalism.

The best example that comes to mind is Japan. Japan had one of the most rigid precapitalist orders. Many complex independent factors like her extreme poverty and paucity of natural wealth enabled Japan to avoid foreign economic dominance. There was room left for independent development and the transition from feudalism to capitalism was relatively fast. Moreover, she *was* able to produce a bourgeois society that served as a powerful driving force for Japanese capitalism.

On the other hand the extreme case of oppression was perhaps India. No colony was more exploited. She was bled white and the economic surplus squeezed from the masses, fed the mills of Lancashire and Lanark instead of being utilized for national development. It was British policy that was directly responsible for all of India's major problems: vested interests, lack of industrialization and neglect of agriculture. The enormous potential of India's fabulous natural resources was crippled in one of the most tragic chapters of history.

But Japan and India were on the two ends of the spectrum. The exact nature of the impact of imperialism on the economy of a colony depended on its extent and potency for development, its level of resources and its history. The general rule, however, was that every colony or dependency was removed from its natural and historical course of development. The condition of the people was miserable. The traditional crafts declined but modern industry did not grow, and in the hiatus of economic stagnation business mores were superimposed on ancient oppression by the landed gentry, resulting in systematic tyranny. Paul Baran has aptly described the situation: "Thus the peoples who came into the orbit of western capitalist expansion found themselves in the twilight of feudalism and capitalism, enduring the worst features of both worlds and the entire impact of imperialist subjugation to boot. To oppression by their feudal lords, ruthless but tempered by tradition, was added domination by foreign and domestic capitalists, callous and limited by only what the traffic would bear. The obscurantism and arbitrary violence inherited from their feudal past was combined with the rationality and sharply calculating rapacity of their capitalist present."[1]

III

The present economic structures of these countries all reflect the consequences of a colonial past. The economies of the Third World are marked by wastage

amidst poverty in a paradox of extremes. To pick up the common strands of development we must analyze the present structures.

What determines the capacity for an economy to grow is the size of its economic surplus which is roughly the excess of net production over consumption, and the way it is absorbed into productive channels. In underdeveloped economies the potential size of the surplus is low because national production is low and consumption is relatively high. On top of it the actual surplus is much lower than the potential because of wastage due to organizational and structural defects.

There are four major factors that tend to pull the actual surplus much below the potential. The first factor is the conspicuous consumption by the upper classes in trying to ape their Western counterparts. Secondly, a large portion of production is sucked off by middlemen who play no active part in production. Thirdly, the unemployed workers, existing at the subsistence level eat away a certain portion and finally, and perhaps the largest share is taken away by unproductive or extra workers (the disguised unemployed) who add nothing to production. These four ways by which a large portion of the potential surplus is lost reflects deep structural defects.

One of the chief reasons why agriculture is backward in these countries is the fact that a large surplus is wasted in unproductive use. The problem is basically organizational and not solely financial. But the core of the problem is seldom realized or carefully side-tracked. Otherwise how could one explain the obsession with trying to raise productivity and not carry out land reforms, or carry out land reforms amidst general backwardness. The primary requirement is to free agriculture from the grips of a parasitic class. Unfortunately no underdeveloped country has completed the agricultural transformation required.

Similar problems are revealed in the non-agricultural sectors. The manufacturing sector is small and the services and retail sector unwieldy. Again, we find a large class of middlemen including the lumpenbourgeoisie. In these countries, therefore, the transfer price of mercantile capitalism to industrial capitalism is very high. The problem of transforming rolling capital into fixed capital has resulted in a lack of investments that become self-perpetuating. Another inhibiting feature of underdeveloped economies is the role of foreign aid and the economic significance of foreign enterprises. The tying of aid is an open secret and foreign enterprises also extract a large part of the economic surplus and exert restrictive pressures. Take for example the countries of Latin America. In many countries foreign interests turned the fertile soil over to only mining or one type of plantations—to one-track exploitation. As a result Honduras had nothing but bananas to export and Brazil was caught in the octopus-like grip of the economically ruinous sugar cultivation.[2] However, even if foreign enterprises did help production to rise they overcompensated by extracting huge profits. The benefits of left-overs were maldistributed, the magnum share accruing to home capitalists.[3]

Therefore, in these economies the good life, "the bonanza that is capitalism" is being shared by the foreign and domestic capitalists. There is a paucity of investments as the capitalists in the underdeveloped economies do not want to

destroy their monopolistic market advantages. As a result the social benefit and private benefit of production diverge. Even on the surface, from external manifestations, the disbalance and lopsidedness of the economic structures are revealed prominently.

IV

The picture that I have attempted to draw so far cannot be viewed in its true perspective without identifying the true advanced-unadvanced capitalist relationship. No pattern of economic development can emerge by studying in isolation advanced or undeveloped capitalism. There is a tendency among economists to concentrate only on breakdown problems of advanced capitalism or only on the developmental economics of the underdeveloped countries. Breakdown analysts formulate methods for avoiding crises. It is a sort of New Dealism aided by the gamut of post-Keynesian monetary, fiscal and trade policy-tools. On the other hand development specialists prescribe 'take-off' programmes under centra! planning or state capitalism for the underdeveolped countries. Thereby. they expect these countries to follow the footsteps of Western Europe or U.S.A. or Japan. They fail to realize that capitalism grew by exploiting colonies. These countries cannot look for colonies to exploit.

The actual relationship is that the underdeveloped countries are still exploited as neo-colonies of the dollar-empire built on financial control, technical supremacy and the giant multinational corporations. That is why the labour aristocracy, growing by feeding on the crumbs of their monopoly master's tables. seem satisfied with their position. Thus advanced capitalist societies as a whole (excluding perhaps the students and the deprived ethnic groups) form part of the machinery of exploitation. Oscar Lange, the famous economist, has labelled this phenomenon as 'people's imperialism' where growth for growth's sake has become the ideology of the cancer cell. Keeping in mind this relationship we can proceed towards a better understanding of the dynamics of the Third World.

V

We will now look at some of the economic effects of the socio-political condition of the countries of the Third World. History did not bring the full bloom of industrial capitalism to these countries. A long period of mercantile capitalism under foreign rule gave birth to a large heterogeneous petit-bourgeoisie. The tiny bourgeoisie of the countries tried to accommodate themselves within the system.

In course of time movements began to grow not against capitalism but against the remnants of feudalism. In these movements sections of the upper class and the large bulk of the middle class had to identify themselves, in their own interests, with the aspirations of the common man. These movements strove for national freedom and had distinct bourgeois-democratic, anti-feudal, anti-imperialist tenets.

However, these classes leading the popular movements failed to bring in progressive capitalism. The growth of labour movements resulted in a panic (real or

imaginary) of an imminent social revolution. The middle-class slowly shifted its stand. They compromised with the landed gentry, the religious authorities and the military leadership, comprising the coalition of owning classes. But the resulting social and political order became inherently unstable—spurts of violence, occasional guerrilla activities and peasant uprisings still act as grim pointers to the latent crisis.

This instability helps the strategy of neo-colonialism[4]—of providing economic and military assistance that help to perpetuate their slavery, de facto, to the imperialist powers. The net economic implication of this instability is that profit-motivated, market-oriented, private enterprise can find no incentive for long-term investments.

It may be argued that supervision and planning by the government can provide the long-term investments required to build the infra-structure. This is not possible in the absence of a suitable institutional framework and a committed civil service. Take for example the reasons why the Mahalanobis strategy of planned economic development failed in India. The initial transference of income from the lower to the higher income groups in the hope that the rate of savings and investment would increase was proved wrong, as national savings did not rise, but the extra income in the hands of the upper classes was wasted. Moreover, there was a wilful sabotage of the implementation of the colourful legislations meant to follow-up the strategy. This proves, that where the only incentive for hard work is the prospect of sharing the privileges of the upper class, a policy aimed at reducing inequalities is bound to fail. Similarly, planned economic development of an economy living in the 'twilight between feudalism and capitalism' inevitably leads to corruption, misuse of authority and evasions of the law. The point is that in building the future of these countries the institutions must be revamped and a new collective social ethos must be found. Here much depends on what the middle-class does—whether they overcome their myopia, or become senile and commit suicide out of fear. The problem is that the middle-class has a tendency to harp on vacuous socialist terminology that can lead to disillusionment and a re-birth of fascism. (Apparently President Bhutto also pays lip-service to the cause of socialism.)

So far the middle-class has failed in leading the movement against big-capital hegemony, changing modes of exploitation and neo-colonialism. It is said that in many countries the road to 'socialism' is a left turn on Madison Avenue and 'Deutsch-marks-ism' is the only Marxism known.

VI

It would be true to say, therefore, that the possibilities of capitalist development in the satellites and dependencies, which the Third World countries are, is almost negligible if not nil. Capitalism already has a tarnished image in these countries, and its lack of feasibility is revealed by the fact that during the last twenty years the growth of national income in the underdeveloped countries was 4·5 times smaller (in spite of 'take-offs', foreign aid and indicative planning) than the advanced capitalist world. Thus, to fight neo-colonialism and raise

the pace of national development, these countries will have to skip the stage of capitalism in general and advanced capitalism in particular.

The alternative is not instant socialism, ushered in by pampered revolutionaries but a period of transformation, on what has been termed, the non-capitalist path, on the road to socialism. During this transformation period the leadership must be provided by a common front of progressive elements which can mobilize the masses and fight for economic progress. A new production principle must reaffirm meaningful work and revalue the depths of national consciousness.

The present quality of the societies of the underdeveloped countries also call for speedy change. There are cultural obstacles to progress like the 'enlightenment from abroad' and uprooted identity with the middle-class estranged and alienated from the mainstream of life. The recurrent chaos and failures, the alienation of culture from the meaningful social objective of work and production, are pointers to the futility of a system that justifies oppressions and codifies frustrations.

Accelerating waste amidst the poverty of the masses is a syndrome of dying capitalism. The Third World must realize that liberty is not possible in this system of servitude and irrational 'rationality'. Here a frustrated human existence is being violently conditioned to defend its own servitude, making room for mass madness and racism. The human essence has been outraged in places like Vietnam, Biafra and Bangladesh. Wherever poverty is a way of life, boredom amidst a mirage of variety turns into a desperate loneliness. The prime objective of any social change must be to break the myths, the illusions, the defeatism. An alternative social order must give sensitivity and sensibility its right of place.

VII

The building of a nation must be accompanied by the process of universalizing values. National liberation and non-capitalist transition provides such a scope. It is in the heart of national consciousness that international consciousness lives and grows, and this two-fold emerging is the fountain-source of all culture.

The first requirement of this type of transformation is a cementing ideology which can mobilize all sections of the people and will not be afraid to rely *solely* on the people during the course of the struggle. It will have to justify the elimination of exploitation and ensure distributive justice against relative poverty, monopoly power and accompanying rigidities. It should be remembered that a giant crisis is latent in the constraints of a colonial past, agricultural defeat, hollowness of planning, inefficiency of the public sectors, failure of trade unions, delinquency and corruption in the system of education, opiates of exotic consumption lulling our senses and the opportunism of political parties.[5]

Independent development can only be achieved by a gradual rupture of neo-colonial ties. And the way to this is a relentless fight against all forms of colonial domination and a struggle for social progress. The common front, led by the National Democrats coming from sections of the middle-class and peasantry as

well as from the proletarian and semi-proletarian strata, must evoke loyalty to mass interests. National interests are tremendously important and the non-capitalist path is a long one. Therefore closer ties with the working class is the only guard against chauvinism and obsessed anti-communism.

There must be a clear-cut revolutionary programme of the political vanguard guiding the country. It must be radical and of world outlook and its supreme interest must be in co-operating with all revolutionary anti-imperialist forces. During this period contradictions may arise between communists and revolutionary national democrats but none are insurmountable. It is basically a transitory stage in history. It is not a slogan but a manoeuvre of immense efforts and is an organic part of the transition stage from capitalism to socialism. Its prime objective is to build the economic, social and cultural conditions for socialism, and eliminate from political power the ruling coalition of vested interests, reducing the elite-mass dichotomy.

The economic policy during this period calls for rational and active intervention of the state in economic activities, to bring about structural changes and eradicate lingering imperialism and feudalism. A healthy coexistence of the big public and the small private sectors is bettter than hasty nationalization but all economic policies must have a socialist orientation to keep vested interests and the national bourgeoisie within constraints. Agrarian reforms must be implemented and a growing state sector in production must control the basic branches of production. Economic planning as a conscious effort to improve the quality of life will have to be extensive. Foreign capital must be curbed and private capital guided into channels of national interests. In other words all economic ambitions must be harnessed to social ambitions.

The non-capitalist path is a period of accumulation of quantitative changes that prepares the way for a qualitative social leap. The chief task is to cut the economy's structural links with world capitalism, otherwise penetration and sabotage of autonomous development cannot be avoided. However, in countries where fascism has already grown or a military-feudal coalition rules the alternative is a social revolution which, knowing the nature of fascism, is bound to be bloody and violent. But in other nations where the possibilities of the non-capitalist path is developing, where the working-class is well organized, where the ties with the socialist camp is strong, a world-wide challenging hegemonic alternative to every sector of bourgeois thought and culture must be constructed. Perhaps the intellectual-matrix is incomplete but it realizes that bourgeois ideology is in a state of 'rigor mortis' or moving life of the dead. Therefore, it is in the Third World that the 'new man' must be created which, as Fanon observed, Western Civilization has failed to bring to triumphant birth.

NOTES

1 *The Political Economy of Growth*—Paul Baran, P. 144.
2 For a detailed study see Josué de Castro: *The Geography of Hunger.*
3 For a case-study on Foreign Capital see A. K. Bagchi's article in *Frontier*: 25th September 1971.
4 See A. K. Bagchi's article in *Economic and Political Weekly* Annual number 1971.
5 See Asok Sen's article 'Marxism and the Petty-Bourgeois Default' in *Homage to Karl Marx* (Ed. by P. C. Joshi) P. 158.

The Hindu Critics of Rammohun

Kamal Kumar Ghatak

Hinduism in the early 19th century was in trouble. It was a "shy passive creed that used (formerly) to be ashamed of itself and stand ever on the defensive against growing foes and a diminishing number of adherents."[1] The Christian challenge with its constant attack on Hindu social and religious ideals had put the orthodox leaders in disarray. Then came Rammohun to Calcutta in 1815. He began a systematic criticism of idolatry, *Sati* and priestcraft. In the late twenties the Derozians mounted their attack on the prevailing social and religious systems. Rammohun's crusade against idolatry and the devastating criticism of the Derozians put Hinduism completely on the defensive. "The Hindu religion was denounced as vile and corrupt and unworthy of the regard of rational beings. The degraded state of the Hindus formed the subject of many debates."[2]

It is a measure of the inner strength of the Hindu religion that it survived this tremendous challenge. "Hinduism again asserted its marvellous assimilative power and changed its colour like the chameleon."[3] The significance of this challenge was realised by the Hindu leaders quite early. Gauri Kanta Bhattacharya, Dewan of Civil Court of Rungpur, wrote a Bengali book, *Jnānānyan,* refuting Rammohun. Gaurikanta was well-versed in Persian and Sanskrit, but he failed to rouse the people against Rammohun.[4] The first big work of Rammohun in Calcutta was the foundation of the *Atmiya Sabha* (1815) which became a forum for discussion of the problems of Hindu religion and society. The principal leaders were Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, Bhabanicharan Banerjee, Radhakanta Deb and Ramkamal Sen. Relgion and social reform were the main subjects of controversy.[5] It is important to note that both groups comprised men of status and affluence, most of whom belonged to the English-educated Calcutta intelligentsia. Rammohun as well as his Hindu critics believed in an authentic Indian tradition. But Rammohun differed with his critics regarding the methods of its regeneration and the place of post-vedantic Hinduism in a revived Indian tradition. Rammohun and his principal Hindu critics were all

modernisers of their own tradition rather than westernisers. Modern research on this period appears to controvert the view that Rammohun was "the earliest liberal David locked in mortal combat with the conservative Brahmin Goliaths bent on preserving a diseased social system against the inroads of humanitarianism and common decency."[6]

Mrityunjay Vidyalankar (1762-1819), *pandit* of the Fort William College and later of the Supreme Court, wrote an elaborate defence of 'the present system of Hindu worship,' in his *Vedānta Chandrikā* (1817). The *Vedānta Chandrikā* was the first significant attempt to defend the ideas, institutions and practices of Hinduism. Mrityunjay found no basic contradiction between Vedantic and post-vedantic Hinduism. He defended the validity of the *Puranas* as well as image worship. In an effort to rebut Rammohun's arguments Mrityunjay chose to write the pamphlets in Bengali and transmit his ideas to the Calcutta intelligentsia. Mrityunjay believed that God was omnipresent and without attributes. But unlike Rammohun he found nothing wrong in image worship. "Has not the worship of God been expressly ordained to be performed through the medium of idols, by unction and other ceremonies? If so, the worship of idols as ordained in the Vedanta is the worship of God. The worship of images which is included among the duties of religion, is established by various kinds of proof, by ratiocination and by experience, is observable in the customs of most ancient sages in various parts of Europe and is immemorably prevalent in Asia. But is it not certain that by this means the constantly wavering mind of man may be brought steadfastly to bear upon the object worshipped? Those who understand the Vedanta do not affirm that other things than God can be worshipped because they are totally in the dark, concerning any existence independent of him?"[7] Mrityunjay was angry with Rammohun Roy and his friends, those 'intoxicated moderns' who were recklessly tampering with their faith and transforming it into a market place theology. He had a fling at Rammohun in the *Vedanta Chandrika*: "You have a love of the world, a love of riches, a love of children and desire to enjoy worldly luxuries, and where one of these exists even the spirit of holy knowledge cannot appear."[8]

Mrityunjay Vidyalankar has generally been dubbed a social reactionary and the importance of his work *Vedāntā Chandrikā* has not been duly recognised. But the *Chandrika* "contained a crude form of the same kind of Hindu revivalism that Vidyasagar and Vivekananda could express so meaningfully in prose and poetry at a later date."[9] It is interesting to recall that Mrityunjay was the first Bengali who wrote a pamphlet on *Sati* and was quoted by Rammohun as an authority on the subject. He condemned *Sati* as inhuman, irrational and as 'an unworthy act' not based on the highest scriptural authority.[10] Mrityunjay was closely connected with the foundation committee of the Hindu College (1816) and the School Book Society (1817). His cultural position was thus very different from that of the traditional 18th century pandit. Undoubtedly he was a bitter critic of Rammohun, but he did not stand for all that was obscurantist and retrograde in Hindu society. Marshman compared him with Dr. Johnson for "his stupendous acquirements and the soundness of his critical judgement" and also for "his rough features and unwieldy figure."[11] There is no reason

why Mrityunjay Vidyalankar should remain a *bête noire* among many historians, simply because his concept of Hinduism was different from Rammohun's.

Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay (1787-1848) was another important critic of Rammohun. Marshman described him as "a Brahmin of great intelligence and considerable learning, though no pandit but remarkable for his tact and energy which gave him great ascendancy among his fellow countrymen."[12] Bhabanicharan was for sometime connected with Rammohun's *Sambad Kaumadi* but broke off due to his religious views. The *Samachar Chandrika* that he edited was equally opposed to the Christians and the Vedantists in religious matters. But the *Chandrika* consistently supported every educational reform, while conveying to its readers the "need for a well informed public of natives." Bhabanicharan was not opposed to education and enlightenment but he was hostile to the Anglophile baboo. His satirical works *Nababababvilas* (1825) and *Nababibivilas* (1831) were ment to check the growing trend towards Anglicism in social life. Bhabanicharan was determined to rouse in the young people a regard for their own religion and way of life. His *Kalikālā Kamalalay* (1823) has been described as the "first attempt by a member of the intelligentsia to hold a literary looking-glass before his peers so that they might better perceive their own social image."[13]

Bhabanicharan's most significant work was however, the organisation of the *Dharma Sabha* in 1830. The ostensible object of the *Dharma Sabha* was to oppose the *Sati* legislation, to prevent government interference in religion and protect, *'Sanatan Dharma'*. The principal members of this organisation were Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyaya (secretary), Ramkamal Sen, Radhakanta Deb, Gopimohan Deb, Kalikrishna Deb, Jaynarain Tarkapanchanan and the pandits of the Sanskrit College. The minutes of the first meeting show that its primary object was to organise public opinion against tht *Sati* legislation. The meeting was fairly well-attended and the members decided to ostracise all those who deviated from the traditional religious and social practices. The subscriptions varied from Rs. 2500 to Re 1.[14]

The foundation of the *Dharma Sabha* and the *Sati* controversy have been responsible for many popular misconceptions. Bhabanicharan and Radhakanta Deb have been depicted as the 'Tory' opponents of Rammohun's 'Whig' liberalism. The facts available from contemporary newspapers lead us to believe that Bhabanicharan played a modernising role in all educational matters. The *Dharma Sabha* rallied the Hindus to maintain their way of life and protect it against governmental interference. It is pertinent to ask whether the members of the Calcutta intelligentsia who supported the *Dharma Sabha* were Hindu reactionaries.

The career of Radhakanta Deb (1784-1867) throws a flood of light on the cultural position of the so-called 'conservative critics' of Rammohun. Radhakanta was the main spirit behind the *Sati* petition (14 Jan. 1829) and the formation of the *Dharma Sabha* (1830). He was opposed in principle to governmental interference in social and religious matters and he believed that the traditional religion alone could maintain social stability. He was a zealous member of the *Gaudiya Samaj* (1823). Ramkamal Sen was the President of the Samaj which

included men of such diverse opinions as Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay, Ramjay Tarkalankar, Kasinath Tarkapanchanan, Dwarakanath Tagore, Prasanna Kumar Tagore and Tarachand Chakravarti. The *Gaudiya Samaj* had accepted the sanctity of the Hindu scriptures and social customs. But its main work was the promotion of learning among the Bengalees.[15]

The *Sati* controversy has obscured the brighter aspects of Radhakanta's career and he has been painted as the main architect of reaction. His differences with Rammohun have really helped the latter's charismatic image. It has been claimed that "the conservative critics missed, as their modern apologists do even to-day, the epoch-making significance of the life work of Rammohun."[16] The truth seems to be that Radhakanta Deb and his followers were no less enthusiastic than Rammohun for educational and cultural changes. But Deb's concept of an Indian culture differed from Rammohun's in that he would not sacrifice Sanskrit learning for 'modernisation'. In religion he was a supporter of traditional Hinduism. Image worship was a part of Hindu religion and Deb found no necessity for its abolition. It is difficult to believe that Radhakanta Deb, a liberal intellectual in many ways, failed to see the inhuman nature of the *Sati* custom. The probability is that he was opposed to the manner of its abolition.[17] Even Rammohun did not initially approve of government legistlation on *Sati,* though he later supported it.

Radhakanta Deb was an enthusiastic supporter of English education and was connected from the outset with the School Book Society, School Society and Hindu College. But he was certainly no moderniser in the Derozian sense. The early followers of Derozio in their zeal for truth and freedom despised all social norms. Hindu religion was the butt of their ridicule. The Hindu College Committee did not take kindly to the activities of Derozio and decided to dismiss him (1831). Radhakanta Deb supported this decision which was considered necessary 'in the present state of public feeling amongst the Hindu community'. He was also opposed to the appointment of Rammohun's friend, William Adam, in the Hindu College (1832). In both cases he seems to have been prompted by a genuine concern for the good of the Hindu College students. If he had failed to appreciate Derozio, the failure was not his alone. His whole generation was far behind Derozian radicalism.

Radhakanta Deb was an ardent champion of women's education and actively supported missionary efforts in this direction. He had established a girls' school in his Sobhabazar house and encouraged Bethune to establish the Bethune School in 1849. The *Stri-sikshā-vidhāyaka* which he prepared (along with Gourmohan Vidyalankar in 1822) advocated women's education in domestic skills. Radhakanta's love for Sanskrit led him to compile a Sanskrit dictionary *Sabdakalpadrume* encyclopedia. It has remained to this day a monument of his scholarship and industry.

From 1830 Radhakanta Deb was closely connected with the *Dharma Sabha,* which remained after the *Sati* petition as a rival organisation of Rammohun's *Brahma Samaj* (1828). The *Dharma Sabha—Brahma Samaj* controversy seems to have mellowed down after Rammohun's death (1833). As a matter of fact, the *Brahma Samaj* was on the decline after Rammohun's departure for England;

Ramchandra Vidyabagish somehow maintained it till Debendranath Tagore took over the organisation in 1843. Two factors account for this tendency to rapproachment. The first was the aggressive zeal of the Scottish missionary Alexander Duff. The missionary school, General Assembly's Institution (1830) was conveniently used by Duff for Christianisation. Within a few years some bright students of the Hindu College, Krishnamohan Banerjee, Maheschandra Ghosh, Madhusudan Datta and Jnanendramohan Tagore embraced Christianity. Hindus of all shades of opinion sensed danger at the activities of Duff.

The second factor which softened the critics of Rammohun was Debendranath Tagore's attitude of compromise Debendranath sincerely believed that the *Brahma Samaj* would ultimately unite with the Hindu society. He was always anxious to introduce the superior kind of Brahma worship among the Hindus. Debendranath bitterly criticised Duff's activities in the *Tattvabodhini Patrika* and urged the need for a native school (1845). He found good response from the Debs and a Hindu Charitable Institution was established (1846). The foundation of this institution had two immediate consequences. "This did away with the rivalry between the Dharma Sabha and Brahma Sabha and all their disagreement with each other. All were ranged on the same side and tried their best to prevent children going to Christian schools and missionaries making Christian converts . . . Thenceforward the tide of Christian conversion was stemmed and the cause of missionaries received a serious blow."[19]

The missionary challenge of the thirties was a blessing in disguise. The Vedantists and the idolators joined hands to resist Christianity. Alexander Duff had at least succeeded in putting Brahmoism on the defensive along with Hinduism.

NOTES

1 J. N. Sarkar, *India through the Ages* (Calcutta, 1928), p. 121.
2 Edwards, *Henry Derozio, the Eurasian poet, teacher and journalist* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 68.
3 J. N. Sarkar, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
4 N. N. Chattopadhyay, *Mahatma Raja Rammohun Rayer Jiban Charit* (5th ed., Calcutta, 1928), p. 31.
5 N. S. Bose, *Indian Awakening and Bengal* (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1969), p. 56.
6 David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (Calcutta, 1969), p. 198.
7 B. N. Banerjee (ed.), *Mrityunjay Granthabali, Vedanta Chandrika (Translation)* (Calcutta 1871), p. 22.
8 A. Mukherjee, *Reform and Regeneration in Bengal* (Calcutta 1968), p. 158.
9 David Kopf, *op. cit.*, p. 206.
10 *Friend of India*, Oct. 1819: Extract in *Mrityunjay Vidyalankar* by B. N. Banerjee (Calcutta 1352 B.S.) pp. 32-33.
11 B. N. Banerjee, *Mrityunjay Vidyalankar* (Calcutta 1352 B.S.), p. 53.
12 B. N. Banerjee, *Bhabanicharan Bandopadhyay, Sahitya Sadhak Charitmala*, Vol. 1, (4th ed., Calcutta 1354 B.S.), p. 17.
13 David Kopf, *op. cit.*, p. 208.
14 *Samachar Darpan*, 23 January 1830 and 6 February 1830, vide *Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol. 1, pp. 300-305.
15 *Samachar Darpan*, 8 March 1823 and 3 July 1824, *Vide Sambadpatre Sekaler Katha*, Vol. 1.
16 Amit Sen, *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance* (2nd ed., Calcutta, 1957), p. 18.
17 J. C. Bagal, *Radhakanta Deb* (Calcutta 1364 B.S.), p. 39.
18 Sivnath Sastri, *Ramtanu Lahiri O Tatkalin Bangasamaj* (3rd ed., Calcutta, 1913), p. 173.
19 S. N. Tagore and Indira Debi (Trs.) *Autobiography of Maharshi Debendranath Tagore* (Calcutta 1914), pp. 100-101.

Bertrand Russell : A Hero of the Twentieth Century

Kalyan Chatterjee

Bertrand Russell's life has often been described as a magnificent failure. He sought certainty in Mathematics and found only the art of "saying the same thing in different ways." He strove to derive a purely empirical basis for science and was reluctantly forced to the conclusion that the practice of science required the assumption of synthetic propositions not known from experience. Throughout his life he wrote in clear and glittering prose, yet some of his fellow philosophers based their disagreement with his philosophy on the claim that he was incomprehensible, that he used a philosophical language which was not quite the English known to the 'Narodniks of North Oxford' (the phrase coined to describe the linguistic analysts by Professor Ernest Gellner). A person who frequently stressed the need for the free release of creative impulses and repeatedly proclaimed his acceptance of Hume's dictum that "Reason is and ought only to be, the slave of the passions',' he was accused of not according emotions their rightful place in human life. Never a doctrinaire, he was accused by some people of class-bias, and by others of being a fellow traveller". A genius who disdained the proclivity of narrow minds for narrow learning, who opposed time and again the point of view that believes in doing "every thing for the sake of something else", he had to see functional attitudes overwhelm breadth of vision and practitioners of his own line, philosophy, limit themselves to the study of common (room) usage. Georg Lukacs has called him an agent of the Pope and the Pentagon while a New York judge (McCeehan) has called him a lecher.

In these respects Russell was a failure, but in these respects very few men have been successes. What is important is not what Russell achieved though these achievements have been surpassed by none in this century. Russell's impact on the world is due to an uncompromising intellectual honesty, a readiness to suffer for one's convictions, a humanism tempered with the relisation of the unimportance of humanity in the cosmic scheme of things, and an unwillingness to follow dogmatically a particular system of doctrine.

Russell sums up his success and failure best himself while reflecting on his eightieth birthday: "I may have conceived theoretical truth wrongly but I was not wrong in thinking there is such a thing and it deserves our allegiance. I may have thought the road to a world of free and happy human beings shorter than it is proving to be, but I was not wrong in thinking that such a world is possible, and it is worthwhile living with a view to bringing it nearer".

The "theoretical truth" which he conceived was not a lofty metaphysical concept which would prove the illusory nature of the perceived world. He did not subject the truth to his ethical beliefs and reject the world as unreal because it seemed unpleasant.

Russell had at first thought that truth and falsehood are indefinable attributes of propositions: "Some propositions are true and some false just as some roses are red and some white" (Ouoted from A. J. Ayer's Russell P-67). Later on he modified this view and came to hold the classic empirical doctrine that the truth of an atomic proposition is ascertained by its correspondence to facts. ('Facts' were used in a rather different sense from the ordinary one. As Russell put it "I would not call Napoleon a fact, but the statement Napoleon existed' would be one".).

How could correspondence to fact be ascertained? Here again Russell adopted an empiricist approach, though never so radically as, for example, John Stuart Mill. The best statement of his objections to, and essential agreement with, the empiricists is found in *Human Knowledge* his last major philosophical work (P-518). That knowledge of particular facts must depend upon perception is one of the essential tenets of empiricism and one which I have no inclination to dispute. It was not admitted by those. . . who thought the characteristics of the created world deduced from God's goodness. . . . These views are now rare. . . . Most philosophers now admit that knowledge of particular facts is only possible if the facts are perceived or remembered, or inferred by a valid argument from such as are perceived or remembered." The questions as to what constitutes valid argument, when this argument is non-demonstrative (that is, not in full accord with logical rules for demonstration) makes up a sizable portion of the book.

Russell, however was bothered throughout his life by what is known as 'The problem of induction.' In *Human knowledge* he is forced to accept an *a priori* principle to get over the problem.

That this constituted no departure from his previous thinking on the subject is shown by this brilliantly succinct passage from *Our knowledge of the external world* (p. 44).

"How are empirical generalisations to be justified? The evidence in their favour cannot be empirical, since we wish to argue from what has been observed to what has not been observed which can only be done by means of some known relation of observed and the unobserved ; but the unobserved by definition is not known empirically, and therefore its relation to the observed if known at all must be known independently of empirical evidence."

Put in concise form in *Human Knowledge* (pp. 53-34) this becomes

"Do we ever know, and if so, how

(1) propositions of the form f(x) always,

(2) propositions of the form f(x) sometimes in cases where we know no propositions of the form f(a) (. . . particular propositions)".

Russell comes to the conclusion that the empiricist contention that these are known from experience is either "false, or unknownable."

The Champions of induction will contend that "given observed facts $f(a_1)$, $f(a_2) \ldots f(a_n)$ and no observed fact not f(b) the universal proposition 'f(x) always' has a probability which approaches certainty as n increases. But in the statement of this principle 'a_1', 'a_2', 'a_n' and 'f' are variables, and the principle is a universal proposition. It is only by means of this universal proposition that the champions of induction believe themselves to be able to infer 'f(x)' always' in the case of a particular 'f'." The general proposition, being required to build up empirical generalisations, must be known independently of them.

This consequence was quite serious for science, as it was thought that scientific laws were empiricial generalisations, and these were only possible by admitting *a priori* propositions. Russell's objections to empiricism had been voiced years earlier by Kant, and Russell's philosophical progress has been described as being 'from Kant to Kant'. However, unlike Kant, Russell sees no need for a transcendental deduction of the *a priori* principles. Instead he offered a scientific principle. "The forming of inferential habits which lead to true expectations is part of the adaptation to the environment upon which biological survival depends."

Fortunately, for scientists, Karl Popper has rescued scientific laws from *a priorism*. Popper contests the view, held among others by Russell, that Science consists of empirical generalisations. It has a large creative element in it (whose study belongs not to philosophy but to psychology)—This element leads to the creation of theories. The theories can not ever be 'verified.'—that is, known as true and absolutely certain—but can be subjected to test and corraborated to a certain degree, if not falsified by the test. Theories which cannot be falsified such as those of Marx, Freud and of Popper himself, belong not to science but to metaphysics. Since, now there is no generalisation from past observations, the problem of induction is avoided.

The other criticism of Russell's treatment of induction has been made by Professor Paul Edwards. This is representative of the kind of trash which passes for philosophy among academicians in the U.S.A. and England now a days. Edwards offers no arguments against Russell, does not mention Popper, and shies away from philosophical problems like a frightened horse. Russell asks do we have a reason for believing the sun will rise tomorrow. Of course we have a reason, damn it. We've seen it rise so often. If, of course, Russell takes 'reason' to mean 'logically conclusive reason' that is his own business, and he is guilty of *ignoratio dendri* by redefinition. Thus speaks Edwards, and the only new things we learn are those two words of Latin.

Returning to Russell (a relief after even the briefest mention of the linguistic analysts), we find that though he was not entirely an empriricist he was wholly out of sympathy with the Idealist philosophy which was dominant in England at the time he started learning philosophy. The claims of these metaphysicians to prove the world self-contradictory through logic, only showed, thought Russell, that something was wrong with the logic. What was wrong was the refusal to admit the reality of relations. A statement like 'A is greater than B' is not reducible to the properties of either A or B. If every such statement were composed of attributes of the subject and predicate then there would be only one

subject for the statement. 'There are two subjects' would not ascribe a predicate to either. Thus the idealist position that the world was one. Once relations are admitted, this position collapses.

Among the idealists, Russell respected Kant and Bradley, but had little admiration for the most influential of the lot, Hegel. It might not be out of place to quote here Russell's take off of Hegel in *Unpopular Essays* which reveals his sharp polemical wit.

"Hegel's philosophy, in outline, is as follows Real reality is timeless.... but there is also an apparent reality, consisting of the everyday world in space and time. The character of real reality can be determined by logic alone, since there is only one sort of possible reality that is not self-contradictory. This is called the 'Absolute Idea'. Of this he gives the following definition : 'The Absolute Idea. The idea as unity of the subjective and objective Idea, is the notion of the Idea—a notion whose object is the Idea as such, and for which the objective is Idea—an Object which embraces all characteristics in its unity.' I hate to spoil the luminous clarity of this sentence by any commentary but in fact the same thing could be expressed by saying 'The Absolute Idea is pure thought thinking about pure thought.' " Russell is even more caustic about the political implications of this doctrine. "Hegel discovered the nature of reality by a purely logical process called the dialectic, which consists of discovering contradictions in abstract ideas and correcting them by making them less abstract.....oddly enough, for some reason which Hegel never divulged, the temporal process of history repeats the logical development of the dialectic. It might be thought that since the metaphysic professes to apply to all reality, that the temporal process which parallels it would be cosmic, but not a bit of it ; it is purely terrestrial, confined to recorded history, and (incredible as it may seem) to the history Hegel happened to know. Different nations at different times have embodied the stages of the Idea the dialectic had reached at those times. Of China, Hegel knew only that it was, therefore China illustrated the category of mere Being. Of India he knew only that the Buddhists believed in Nirvana, therefore India illustrated the category of Nothing. The Greeks and the Romans got further along the list of categories, but all the later stages have been left to the Germans who.....have been the sole standard bearers of the Idea and had already in 1830 very nearly realised the Absolute Idea. To anyone who cherishes the hope that man is a more or less rational animal, the success of this farrago of nonsense must be astonishing." In a rather more serious vein, Russell had criticised Hegel earlier. For example on the Hegelian notion of 'the union of identity in difference.' Russell writes....."Hegel's argument in this portion of his 'logic' depends throughout upon confusing the 'is' of predication as in 'Socrates is mortal' to the 'is' of identity as in 'Socrates is the philosopher who drank the hemlock.' Owing to this confusion he thinks that 'Socrates' and 'mortal' must be identical. Seeing that they are different, he does not infer, as others would, that there is a mistake somewhere, but that they exhibit 'identity in difference.' Again 'Socrates' is particular, 'mortal' is universal. Therefore.....the particular is the universal. But to say this is self-contradictory. Again Hegel does not suspect a mistake but proceeds to synthesise

particular and universal into the concrete universal. This is an example of how vast systems of philosophy are built upon trival confusions which, but for the almost incredible fact that they are unintentional, one would be tempted to characterise as puns". Russell also indicated Hegel on the grounds that he used the word 'contradiction' in a way that no self-respecting logician would approve. Things or ideas do not 'contradict' each other if they are just different.

Anyway, Hegel's philosophical influence has largely died down except in the countries where he is a member of the pantheon of men—Gods. Certain types of reinforced dogmatism, bearing a certain similarity to Hegelianism, however, still persist especially in providing succour to organised religion. Gone are the days when organised religion laid itself open to attack on logical grounds. The truth is 'revealed' in a flash of mystic insight (or mystic communion). A chair is not just something to sit on but a 'blazing atom of existence.' Van Gogh's perception of trees as living torches is nearer to the truth than the ordinary man's feeling that they are trunks of wood. You cannot 'know' an object by describing it, you have to enter into its 'essence'. And the fight against scientific method takes a new turn—it justifies systems, built on a royal contempt for argument on the mystics' private vision (or 'peak experience'). Hegel at least had the courage to put something tangible down on paper so that it could be discussed. The mystic says 'The Absolute is silence. It both is and is not. It is both good and evil' and so on in an endless stream of gush.

Russell had very carefully considered the whole attitude of mysticism in several essays and a small book on *Religion and Science*. While it is undeniable that new avenues in thought are opened up by insight, this insight is insufficient to prove or to disprove any proposition whatever. It must be subjected to a test of its reliability. There are certain moods in which division seems illusory, and reality appears to be something beautiful and ineffable. This emotion is the inspirer of all that is best in man, felt Russell. But it is not a way to knowledge. "There is as little reason to believe the man who eats little and sees heaven, as to believe the person who drinks much and sees snakes." This sums up brilliantly the essential defects of mysticism whether of the type advocated by Sai Baba or that approved by Bergson or Colin Wilson.

Russell, therefore remained a lifelong enemy of organised religion, and gave up belief in God at a very early age. When somebody asked him what he would say to his Maker if he met him, Russell replied "God, why did you have such insufficient evidence of your existence"? Russell outlined his own religion in *A Free man's worship* one of the most intensely beautiful pieces of prose that I have come across. "For man, condemned today to lose his dearest, tomorrow himself to pass through the gates of darkness, it only remains to cherish ere yet the blow falls, the lofty thoughts which ennoble his little day, disdaining the coward terrors of the slave of fate, to worship at the shrine his own hands have built." The free man will be without illusions, he will realise that "even the pinnacle of human achievement must inevitably be burried beneath the debris of a universe in ruins." In spite of this he will live to create and live because he can create. This faith in creation is not incompatible with his logical and scientific turn of mind, still less is there a 'contradiction' (that is, a negation in

terms) between this faith and Russell's scientific philosophy. The faith you choose tells us about you, what you write about the world should teach us about the world. A scientist can be a christian, a solipsist, a marxist or a sun-worshipper. He may believe in the liberated man or he may desparately cling to old traditions. His science is not affected.

Russell was, however, not strictly a scientist (applying Popper's criterion). His insistence on a scientific piecemeal approach to philosophy is not borne out by the sweep and power of his own work starting from the vast system of the *Principia* through the monumental *History of Western Philosophy* (which is meant to illustrate the complex nature of the interaction between ideas and society) onto the polished edifice of *Human Knowledge*. Of course, science is not wholly piecemeal—there is a conscious effort to co-ordinate theories which have explained different groups of events. All the sciences are aiming to become part of physics. Philosophy is not a science and it is unlikely that it ever will be. For one thing there is little progress in philosophy, secondly the personal element is important, thirdly, its results are such as to be untestable. Logic is, however, capable of being made precise enough to become a part of mathematics if not of science. Whether logic is to be considered a part of philosophy depends on one's personal bias. When Russell talked about the scientific method in philosophy he was referring to his own logical works and the earlier treatment of the problems of infinity and continuity by Cantor and others. Later on the excluded these from philosophy (for example, in the preface to *Human Knowledge*). The method of rational, logical discussion remained very much part of philosophy.

How did Russell meet the contention that philosophy was sterile, a contention that most contemporary British philosophers seem to share. (They have been in the habit of calling it 'meaningless' or as resulting from a misuse of words.) To Russell philosophy was necessary in order to justify our beliefs and in order to seek beliefs which are not logically inconsistent. This applied even to the system of beliefs and unconscious prejudices known as common sense. The supposition that physics is verified by experience requires the assumption that there are physical objects. If we explain the different appearances of a table from different places and at different times as due to change of perspective and the laws of optics, we are already taking for granted the view that the table is constant and unchanging. This is an unwarranted assumption. Russell did not, however, believe that knowledge could be obtained by philosophy which could override the facts of experience. His thought was thus infused with a sense of 'robust realism', though he never regarded any knowledge, even such as appeared obvious, as absolutely certain. It would never have occurred to Russell to prove the reality of time by producing a watch as it did to Moore. Russell could never have felt as Austin did that "our ordinary language contains all the distinctions that men have felt worthmaking" thus implying that further advance was unnecessary. This critical, sceptical temper of Russell's philosophy was never liked by his successors in the analytic tradition, and Rupert Craneshay-Willams has recently tried to explain it away in a book called *Russell Remembered* as an elitist intellectual's refusal to share the beliefs of ordinary men.

The phrase 'Russell's philosophy' has occurred here several times. Perhaps it would be more apt to speak of his philosophical method as his views were never static and unalterable but changed on a mere rigorous application of the method. The first part of this method was the limited empiricism mentioned earlier. The second, perhaps the most important is given by A. J. Ayer (Russell) as—"Logical constructions should, wherever possible, be substituted for inferred entities." This implied analysis of entities, breaking them down into their constituents and logically assembling the entity again from these constituents. The third article in Russell's creed was 'Ockham's razor'—'Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity', for if they are, the risk of error increases. The fourth is what Popper calls "the one method of all rational discussion....., of stating one's problems clearly and of examining its various proposed solutions *critically.*" (*Logic of scientific discovery, p. 16*). Not for Russell, like Hegel, the ecstasy of being "so profound as to be completely unintelligible". Not for him, like Wittgenstein, the pretensions of communicating " unassailable and difinitive truths" through what Wittgenstein himself said was nonsense.

Examples of Russell's methods are strewn over fiftyfive years of philosophising. One of the problems which interested him most was on the construction of external world as seen by common sense.

In his earlier writings he admitted the existence of physical objects as the classes of their appearances. Later on he saw no need for inferring the existence of physical objects, for their functions were carried on equally well by the sense-data and sensibilia (unperceived but perceivable) which they gave rise to. Why then do certain sets of sense data appear together always? This question led Russell to formulate the concept of logical structure in organising sense data. The music from a gramophone record, and the same music on the radio have the same logical structure, for instance.

Another example of the use of Ockham's razor is Russell's original belief in and later rejection of the distinction between sense-data and sensation, and his subsequent conversion to the belief that mind and matter were aspects of a neutral 'stuff'.

Further examples can be found in the rejection of the universals-particulars dualism in favour of universalism, and so on. However, it is time that we attended to the work which, more than his close logical analysis, has made him the best known intellectual of the century. Russell was by no means a pure metaphysician. He wrote widely on ethics, first believing in objective ethical knowledge through a faculty called 'ethical intuition' and then giving up this belief. His final views on ethics are found in *Human Society in ethics and politics,* where he considers 'good' to be the fundamental concept and defines right action as that which leads to the greatest general excess of good over bad. 'Good' is not wholly indefinable, however, and is connected to satisfaction of human desire. The uitlitarianism of this position is moderated by Russell's recognition that certain acts have an "intrinsic value" and others an "intrinsic disvalue". This system of ethics is however, not the only possible logically self-consistent system. For examples on page 80, he writes "I have defined 'right'

by reference to the satisfaction of desire in general.....by taking account of all sentient beings. But I do not know how to refute a man who maintains that only the interests of the Germans should be considered.....I shall, if I argue, be compelled to resort to vulgar abuse. I can say 'Sir, you are misusing terms. Ethical intuition is a noble faculty of which you are evidently destitute.....' I may hate and despise him but I cannot refute him." Russell's ethics formed the basis for his political philosophy, and he never stomached a determinist approach to social change evidenced, for example, in the writings of Marx. Russell, however, recognised Marx's importance as a thinker, and shared his relentless oposition to a dehumanising social system. However, ideologically Russell differed strongly with Marx and the Marxists. Marxian materialism which advances for the first time the 'practice theory of truth' made fashionable later on by the American pragmatists, is not accepted by Russell though his criticism is directed more against the pragmatists than against Marx. The theory of history ('historical determinism') betrayed, according to Russell, a naive belief that logic ruled the world and that every change was a development.

As for the labour theory of value Russell pointed out that it contradicted Ricardo's theory of rent; he was also surprised that Marx included the money taken by managers as part of exploitation. Russell, however, broadly agreed with the view that political ideas and movements are dependent on the economic infrastructure though he disagreed with the details. For example, changes in the modes of production and exchange are caused by scientific discoveries and inventions—and are therefore not fundamental or basic. Secondly, though the success of new ideas depends on the economic infrastructure, old ideas (like Christianity) continue to exert a powerful influence after their economic rationale has vanished. Thirdly, political power is itself an economic force. (Marx recognised this in the chapter in *Capital* on the 'Genesis of the Industrial Capitalist' but several Marxists do not.)

Russell reached conclusions similar to Marx from his moral philosophy. In 1916, he had pleaded for a social system which encourages the creative impulses and discourages possessive impulses. In *Human Society* he gave this idea a more precise formulation. The aim of a good social system should be to bring about a world in which the desires of different people are "compossible." "Compossible" desires are those whose satisfaction for one person does not preclude their being satisfied for other people—for example, the desire for knowledge. It is one of Russell's criticisms of the existing order that it gives prominence to non-compossible desires and bases its social and ideological structure on the assumption that every man should proceed by doing down his fellow-men. In view of his emphasis on the free release of the creative impulses it is not surprising that Russell preferred the Anarchist doctrine to that preached by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, and it is even less surprising that he became a strong opponent of the bureaucratic dictatorship of the U.S.S.R. (It is to be noted, however, that Russell was doubtful whether the Soviets had any option but to be dictatorial in a country at the low level of development Russia was in, in 1917). For advanced societies, Russell was a supporter of Guild Socialism which would extend democracy to the administration of factories, and leave questions

which affected only a particular group to be settled by members of that group alone. This decentralisation of power formed one of the basic themes in Russell's political philosophy, and is dealt with in detail in a book on *Power*. Here Russell upholds the thesis that the unequal distribution of power is at the root of social tensions, and that no one form of power can be considered ultimate, basic or primary. This explains the cynicism and apathy which afflicts most people in the affluent democratic societies with respect to plans for change—it is a recognition that "they have comfort without power."

The logical consequence of such a view would be complete Anarchism with every member of the community having an equal share in power, but Russell never followed his doctrine that far. A state has to exist, and this state must have enough power to check any group of would be tyrants subjugating their neighbours through force.

Another point where Russell agreed with the anarchists was in their view that in the ideal society people should not be compelled to work. Those who would not work should be given a minimum subsistence requirement though certain luxuries could be withheld. Whatever work there was could be made more interesting so that the "process of production is replaced by the process of living creation" (Camus) or "the realm of freedom is achieved within the realm of necessity" (Marxist jargon).

This complex viewpoint has not been much liked either by the establishment or by the conventionally unconventional who have been in the habit of disposing of his political ideas as evidence of his aristocratic background. They concentrate their attack on the following passage : "Viewing the life of mankind as a whole, in the future as well as in the present, there can be no question that a society in which some men pursue knowledge while others endure great poverty offers more hope of ultimate good that none in which all are sunk in slothful comfort. It is true that poverty is an evil but it is not true that material prosperity is, in itself, a great good. If it is to have any real value to society it must be made a means to the advancement of those higher goods that belong to the life of the mind." However, and this clears Russell of the charge of being elitist, "the life of the mind does not consist of thought and knowledge, nor can it be completely healthy unless it has some instinctive contact, however deeply buried, with the life of the community."

The present system involves a tremendous waste of human talent, Russell continues since it makes available free time only for the well-to-do a small section. Some forms of socialism which will allow only licensed art and science will be even worse. Some other forms will however offer much greater scope for the individual to realise his potentialities than is available at present and therefore should be welcomed. (In view of later events in the State Socialist countries, Russell's warning seems almost prophetic.)

This emphasis on intellectual freedom was carried even by Russell into the field of education, where he spoke out strongly against all attempts to 'mould' or 'shape' (the usual euphemisms for brain washing) a child's character. "Free development, unhindered by unnecessary obstacles—this is what education should seek to provide." A passage from *Roads to Freedom* written in 1918

expresses superbly what students all over the world are desparately saying now. "The system of scholarships obtained by competition is objectionable from many points of view. It introduces the competitive spirit into the work of the young, it makes them regard knowledge from the stand point of what is useful in examinations rather than in the light of its intrinsic interest or importance ; it places a premium upon that sort of ability which is displayed precociously in glib answers to set questions rather than upon the kind which broods on difficulties and remains for a time rather dumb. What is perhaps worse than this is the tendency to cause overwork in youth" leading to "many fine minds having their edges blunted and their keenness destroyed." The solution proposed is to make every kind of education free for anyone who desires it upto the age of twentyone. Most people "will tire of education by then and this will lead to a natural selection of those with strong interests in some pursuit requiring long training."

We cannot leave Russell's moral philosophy without mentioning the effect it caused upon a world which was still in the suffocating grip of rigid puritanism. The British government put Russell in jail in 1918 for saying "It would be better a hundredfold to forgo material comfort, power, pomp and outward glory than to kill and be killed, to hate and to be hated, to throw away in a mad moment of fury the bright heritage of the ages." In 1940, an American judge accused him of occupying "a chair of indecency" and deprived him of his University job for advocating that people should be free to do what caused them pleasure provided it harmed nobody else. Twenty four years earlier, Cambridge University had also removed Russell from his Lecturership because he dared to oppose the "War to end War." In the sixties, people comfortably denounced him as senile because of the relentlessly complete case he built up against American war crimes in Vietnam. "I appeal to you, as a human being to human beings, remember your humanity and forget the rest," he cried, ("Better dead than red" replied Eleanor Roosevelt speaking for the U.S.A.). This was the person whom Georg Lukacs called an agent of the pentagon and whom E. H. Carr accused of class-bias. Many lesser people recited these glib phrases in an effort to forget the tremendous wealth of evidence, the remorseless logic of the argument, and the lucid style of the prose, which have marked Russell out as one of the greatest geniuses of the century. Not that Russell did not understand these little people. He warned them time and time again "Never try to discourage thinking for you are sure to succeed." The governments of the world continue to discourage thinking but, happily, are not wholly succeeding. There are some people who will hold first to Russell's exhortation at the time of the Cuban crisis, "Conformity means death, only protest gives a hope of life."

A summing up ? Ronald Searle attempted it in a cartoon which had beneath the caption :

"All earthly knowledge finally explored,
Man feels himself from doubt and dogma free,
There are more things in Heaven, though my Lord,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."
I doubt it.

Speculations on an Empty Stage

Jayanta Mitra

Once the poor player has departed and the stage is bare, it is time for us to feel and think. From Agamemnon to Vladmir, drama, as a social form of art, has had a special significance as a social system, as a manifestation of the human spirit and a form of life of society. I cannot exclude modern drama from my generalisation. Set against the cancerous growth of mechanised mass-media,

automatism and the apparent domination of the world by journalism and easy categorisations,[1] live drama still contains exclusive elements that may well be indispensable for the culture and psychological health of a nation. Live performers are still in direct communication with a live audience and the theatre still affords an 'open-system' of dramatic performance giving the spectator greater intellectual freedom with his own selective close-ups and editing. All this may very well be a reminder of the healthy reaction of our time against closed mechanised substitutes for art.

Todays vanguard of drama has more than one spearhead. Broadly speaking, on the one hand we have a trend that reaches back to the early 1930's and Brecht's 'Epic-Theatre' ; and on the other we have the culmination of the movement started in the 1920's in surrealist paintings of Marcel Janco, Max Ernst and later Salvador Dali, and writings of Andre Breton, Kafka and Joyce.[2] More precisely, on one wing we have a socially committed left-wing 'Epic-Theatre', and on the other an introspective, psychological, non-political, grotesque drama.[3]

Attempting to appreciate the efforts of modern dramatists, one may easily discard a sham intellectual snobbery or even a trenchant cynicism. I hope I adhere to my Wordsworth. ... Many dramatic 'poets' have carried out with deftness and brilliance that "criticism of life" which Matthew Arnold expounded as the function of all poetry. This "criticism of life" has sprung perhaps from the gradual disintegration of old and traditional beliefs and conventions both in social and individual life. Added to this is the acceptance of a nihilistic approach to life since the day Nietzsche's Zarathustra proclaimed that "God is dead." As articulators of the human conscience the artists (dramatists) from Shaw to Brecht, from Claudel to Adamov, from Strindberg to Arthur Miller, have made clarion calls for a return to religion and socialism. At least that is what we expect them to have done. But both these calls have been subordinated to a simple yet more complex mission of courage, the ultimate virtue, and truth the ultimate value. It is an honest mission striving to make man aware of the ultimate realities of life in a seemingly meaningless world, like the purposes of ancient Greek tragedy and medieval mystery plays, where, however, the ultimate realities were known and universally accepted metaphysical systems. The modern honesty is the positive side of all negative features which made headlines from syphilis in Ibsen to scurrility in Henry Miller. The vision of today's dramatist is a harsh vision of horror, as Eric Bentley says: "Dante's 'Inferno' transposed to Times Square and Piccadilly."

The trend towards truth has led to the discovery of a basic method of writing plays : the 'Bei-Spiel' or by-play, and hence the 'parable'. The 'Epic-Theatre', formulated and promoted by Bertolt Brecht is 'parable-play' in the sense that it gives a moral, warns the beggar and the king of his pride, presumptuousness, frailty and helplessness, and is able to rouse his unconcern, shocking him with the awareness of the misery around him.

The parable always centers round the individual. Brecht protested against injustice, evil, lies, the complacency and torpor of the world through a strict

insistence on freedom and the element of opposition in the modern non-conformist man. Brecht's favourite subjects for heroes and heroines are young girls like Grusha in 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle'. They are not intellectuals, but beings still marked with the innocence of belief in the good standing out against a back-drop of evil.

The term 'epic' is to be understood as the negation of the term 'dramatic', in the sense in which the latter word is used to describe the dying phase of middle-class illusionistic drama. The first attack is against the act-divided play, and the second is against the dramatisation (i.e. filling with growing excitement) of events and dialogue. The introduction of scenes with songs, the narrative style, the treatment of details for their own sake, as in the record of Azdak's career, are characteristic elements that carry the attack through effectively. Brecht's theatre is the most conscious endeavour to establish communication between the stage and the public by showing the latter supra-individual themes which move them directly in the form of a parable: "your affairs are being dealt with."[4] Brecht sought the non-identification of the audience. He evolved the theory of alienation, believing that the audience should be protected from identification with the characters in the play by constantly assuring them that what they see is not real. By a heightened, expressionistic, stylised version of external reality, Brecht was able to introduce the technique of 'distantiation' which is almost akin to the Aristotlean 'aesthetic distance', thus not denying the power of transmutation of reality by art. At the end we see that the Brechtian stage is converted into a platform for the conveyance of social and political criticism. It has nevertheless widened the range of drama by introducing narration, songs, and details studied for their own sake.

Criticism and social analysis are still prevalent. But curiosity and disenchantment, despair and the Freudian influence, have led artists to look beyond the Brechtian theatre. The 'Theatre of the Absurd' is one of the expressions of the search for a way in which man can confront with dignity a universe shorn of its living purpose, a world deprived of a universally accepted integrating principle, which has become fragmentary, meaningless and absurd. It expresses the anxiety and despair that rise from the recognition that man is surrounded by vast areas of impenetrable darkness and that no one will supply him with rules of conduct. As Camus says in *The Myth of Sisyphus*: "The certainty of the existence of a God who would give meaning to life has a far greater attraction than the knowledge that without him one can do evil without being punished. The choice between these alternatives would not be difficult. But there is no choice, and that is where the bitterness begins."[5]

Dramatists like Beckett, Ionesco, Jean Genet and Artaud have realised that once the illusions of life are broken and lost, the outcome is one of readjustment to actuality of a sincere confrontation with reality, and of a feeling of exhilaration. In the words of Democritus: "Nothing is more real than Nothing." It follows, therefore, that for those to whom the world has lost its central meaning, it is no longer possible to accept aesthetic dogma still based on the continuation of

standards and concepts that have lost their validity. What we find therefore in absurd drama, is the surprising lack of any logical sequence of events constituting the plot-scheme, no subtle characterisation, and the kind of dialogue that peters out into meaningless babble. Being introspective and psychological, absurd drama presents an objectification of subjective feelings, the internal reality by means of a symbolic poetic image. Often, as a result, the audience is carried into a world of dreams, fantasy or nightmarish ambience. (It is interesting to note how this artistic probing of the subconscious on a more realistic level has influenced film-makers like Norman Mclaren, Michaelangelo Antonioni in *Blow-up*, Jean Luc Goddard in *Pierre le Fou* and even Satyajit Ray on a justifiably elementary level as seen in the 'bird-image' in *Pratidwandi*, and permeated experimental films like Maya Deren's short-film *Meskes of the Afternoon*.) As it presents a concretized poetic image the play's extension in time is purely incidental. It is almost an intuition in depth, to be apprehended in a single moment. But since that is physically impossible, a complex image in an instant, it has to fan over a period of time. The formal structure is a device to express a complex total image, that is achieved by unfolding the image in a sequence of associated and interacting elements. The poetic image is one of the ways by which we can communicate the reality of our intuition of the world.

In the process of translation of conceptual thinking and subsequent expression in language the image is analysed and disintegrated. Ludwig Klages said that this is part of the insidious action of the critical intellect upon the creative element of the mind. Coherent language is reduced to mere patter since 'The Theatre of the Absurd' abandons discursive logic and uses language as just a component of its multidimentional poetic imagery.

Where thoughtful, coherent language is not spoken, constant characterisation is not possible. Characters in absurd drama are in a state of constant flux and have actions which sometimes remain incomprehensible. Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot* or Jerry in the *Zoo Story* are two examples in a motley crowd of hyper-comical characters. They are made grotesque and the audience is able to laugh at their predicament in spite of the fact that the subject matter of the play is grim, bitter and violent. The 'Silent Cinema', Groucho Marx and Charlie Chaplin were perhaps positive influences.

Things happen in *Waiting for Godot*, but they do not constitute a plot or story; they are an objectification of Beckett's sense of being, of the waiting from birth to death, of Beckett's intuition that nothing really ever happens in man's existence. Similar instances are found in the proliferation of chairs in Ionesco's *Chairs* or in the absurdity of the professor's action in *Professor Taranne* leading to a shocking violence.

At the end of the road "lies Huxley's Brave New World of senseless euphoric automata". Death, catastrophe, meaningless reality, are only to be faced with dignity, without fear, without illusions, they are to be transcended with laughter : "Laugh, my young friends if you are at all determined to remain pessimists." The true property of the stage which gives the quality of permanence to any play is not verbal but concrete. It concentrates the central meaning of a complex

human situation into stylised action like the poetic image of Mother Courage's cart pulled by the two sons at the opening and at the end by the lonely broken woman herself in Brecht's *Mother Courage*. Ionesco applies the same method in *Chairs*. Friedrich Durrenmatt says that in an epoch like ours where life is overorganised that responsibility is shared with each individual incapable of rising to real tragic heights. The murder of Duncan by Macbeth is the latter's own decision, but not one man is responsible for dropping the atom-bomb. Tragedy in the classic sense is improbable for characters have become mere puppets with their tragic acts having both sad and humorous dimensions. Despite Shen Te's hopelessness at the end in *The Good Woman of Setzuan* one cannot help laughing at the humour of her constant change of identities and the way she deceives other characters in the play. The tramps in *Waiting for Godot* are grotesque and comic figures though the theme of the play is serious.

Both the 'Epic Theatre' and the 'Absurd Theatre' are, therefore, essentially tragicomic. Laying stress on the fundamentals, Martin Esslin predicts, or rather suggests a merger of the two schools of *avant-garde drama.*[6] Such a fusion may provide a fluid kind of drama that will use the stage with the greatest possible freedom and be able to move from realism to a stylised version of external reality, moving from there to an inner reality of dream, introspection and obsession. John Arden and Harold Pinter have already shown hints of such a development. After all, one cannot dismiss the fact however contrasting the ideologies, however different the methods employed, the two forms have a common foundation in the cultural and spiritual situation of our age. Moreover, they are works of art, and as Camus says, "Art and Rebellion will not die until the last man dies."

NOTES

1 From 'The Climate of Contemporary Art' in *Landmarks of Contemporary Drama*, by J. Chiari.

2 Edward Lear and Lewis Caroll too may be considered. As in the 'Theatre of the Absurd', and in the infinity of the human sub-conscious, cruelty and poetry, "spontaneous tenderness and destructiveness, are closely linked in the 'nonsense' universe of Edward Lear" and Lewis Caroll. The creatures in the nonsense world of Lear and Caroll try to shatter the determinism of meaning, which cannot be shaken off in reality, as they yearn curiously for the void where both being and language cease:

> "To the horror of all who were present that day
> He uprose in full evening dress
> And with senseless grimaces endeavoured to say
> What his tongue could no longer express.
> Down he sank in his chair—ran his hands through his hair
> And chanted in mimsiest tones
> Words whose utter inanity proved his insanity
> While he rattled a couple of bones
> ('The Hunting of the Snark'—Lewis Caroll)

It is through nonsense (implying an abandonment of the straitjacket of logic and destruction of language—names in Caroll) that the mystic passion for unity with the universe is expressed.

3 Social problem plays like *A Taste of Honey*, the poetic dramas of T. S. Eliot and Christopher Fry, have not been discussed by me, not of course out of disregard.

4 From *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Modern Drama* by Siegfried Melchinger—Translated by George Wellworth; Edited by Henry Popkin.

5 From 'Le Mythe de Sisyphe', p. 94.

6 *The Theatre of the Absurd* by Martin Esslin, and *Brief Chronicles* by Martin Esslin —I am indebted to the works in particular.

An Essay Towards a Reassessment of Aurangzeb

Rudrangshu Mukherjee

Before we come to the motif of this paper, some of the actions that brought odium to Emperor Aurangzeb need recollection. It is well known that he imprisoned his father and was practically a parricide ; that his way to the Peacock Throne was stained with the blood of his brothers. Moreover, it is said that he persecuted Hindus and destroyed temples ; that he was a zealous Sunni Muslim extremely bigoted and orthodox. He is accused of burying Mughal music, art and architecture by his puritanical temperament. Remembering these, we should consider how far Aurangzeb's state policies were influenced by his 'bigoted' religious views and his belief in 'orthodox' Islam.

The traditional school of historians have looked at Aurangzeb as a proselytizing Muslim zealot who carried on *jihad* (holy war) against non-Muslim lands (*dar-ul-harb*) till they were converted into the realms of Islam (*dar-ul-Islam*). His "religious oppression" and the consequent "Hindu Reaction" is considered by these writers to be the most important cause for the downfall of the Mughal Empire.[1] This theme of religious persecution runs through Sir J. N. Sarkar's monumental work as the most potent factor, if not the only factor of Aurangzeb's

An earlier version of this paper was read in the Presidency College History Seminar on 8th March 1972. Subsequently the manuscript gained substantially from the reading and criticism it received from Dr. Barun De, Dr. Sumit Sarkar, Sri Asok Sen, Dr. Ashin Das Gupta and Dr. Hiren Chakrabarti. But the errors that remain are entirely the author's own.

reign. The theme has been reiterated by historians like Dr. R. C. Majumdar.[2] These historians were pretty categoric in their assertion that the religious motivation underlay all of Aurangzeb's policies. This view the Bengali history world swallowed, hook, line and sinker; it decorates all our text-books and our professors and teachers in our educational institutions lecture on this in class and students still reproduce this without question in their examination answers. This is of course quite natural for whatever Sir J. N. has said is the last word to us; we look to Sir J. N. with an attitude of mind which Sir Jadunath would have been the first to denigrate. While we wallow in the mire of this unquestioning Sarkarolatry, scholars outside our province—specially those of Aligarh and some other north Indian universities—have probed deeper into Mughal society and economy and have thrown new light on the period. Equipped with new methods of historical analysis, they are busy finding new evidence and new interpretations about the Mughal period. To a serious student of history there is no denying the fact that the tables are now turned on the province which once thought today what India would think to-morrow.

This paper endeavours to present some aspects of this new 'school', to attempt a modification of the popular view of Aurangzeb which holds that all of Alamgir's policies were motivated exclusively by religion and then to show the many forces that operated on the evolution of his policies. The paper aims at saying nothing original, its purpose will be served if it succeeds in convincing its readers that Aurangzeb's reign is much too complex a period about which any simplistic monocausal analysis is bound to be unsatisfactory.[3]

Aurangzeb's bigoted nature appears phoenix-like in our text-books. But the following evidences are rather irreconcilable to the above view. Once Muhammad Amin Khan, a Turani noble and a fanatical Sunni, submitted a petition to Aurangzeb for one of the Bakshiships on the ground that "both had been conferred on heretical demon-eating Shiahs" and that he would be "the means of snatching away employment from misbelievers". The Emperor wrote across the petition: "What connexions have earthly matters with those of religion? And what right have administrative works to meddle with bigotry? For you is your religion, for me is mine. If this rule (suggested by you) were established it would be my duty to extirpate all (Hindu) Rajas and their followers."[4] Far from revealing a bigoted bent of mind, this remains a classic statement of benevolent despotism. The last sentence written by the Emperor is significant. It goes to show that the Emperor was not extirpating all Hindus as some of our historians have claimed. A little digression about this thought-provoking statement of Alamgir will not be out of place here. The sentence 'for you is your religion for me is mine' is, as Dr. Barun De pointed out, a direct quotation from the Quran, the lines in *Sura CIX* entitled 'of unbelievers' containing the same words.[5] Aurangzeb was justifying tolerant policy by the precepts of the Quran. This should force the Muslim and Hindu communalists who consider a bigoted attitude to be the true Muslim attitude to reorient their ideas.[6]

To come back to Alamgir and his religious views. In one *nishan* issued by Aurangzeb to Rana Raj Singh of Mewar, he states that a "king who practises

intolerance towards the religion of another is a rebel against God".[7] Such a statement in ringing tones coming from a deeply religious person like Aurangzeb only shows that Aurangzeb basically believed in tolerance and had no intention to follow a discriminatory policy. This last statement of mine will obviously result in the raising of a number of eyebrows and the more erudite among my readers will point to Aurangzeb's re-imposition of the *jizyah* (1679) as the sign of his discriminatory policy against the Hindus. But the motives behind this tax will become pretty clear if we bear in mind the then pressure on Mughal economy—a corollary of the increasing exploitation, oppression and jagirdari crisis of the late 17th century—which becomes evident from Dr. Irfan Habib's analysis of the agrarian crisis of the Mughal Empire.[8] This aspect also receives emphasis in the writings of Thomas Roll, the president of the English Factory at Surat, and Manucci, the author of *Storia de Mogor*.[9] Manucci and Roll also stress the point that Aurangzeb wanted the non-Muslims to be converted into Islam. But this latter point is hardly warranted by facts. For, as Dr. Satish Chandra points out, the Hindus had clung to their faith for 400 years during most of which they were required to pay *jizyah*; Alamgir could hardly expect a different result.[10] Moreover there is no record of any large-scale conversions during Alamgir's reign on account of this measure. If there had been any such development it would have been noted with great zest by the Emperor's orthodox eulogists. Dr. Satish Chandra knocks off the official point of view regarding *jizyah*—the view of Muhammad Saqi Mustaid Khan, the author of *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*, and Isardas, author of *Fatuhat-i-Alamgiri*, which hold that Aurangzeb wanted to spread the law of Islam and to overthrow the religious practice of the infidels—when he says that it is inexplicable "why it should have taken Aurangzeb, who was himself well-versed in the *Sharia*, twenty-two years from his accession to the throne to arrive at the orthodox position regarding *jizyah*".[11] Dr. Satish Chandra suggests that the revival of the *jizyah* marked a deepening political crisis which followed from the deterioration of the situation in the Deccan.[12] As the Hindu proportion of Alamgir's nobility actually increased[13] after 1679, the view that the re-imposition of the *jizyah* opened an anti-Hindu policy can hardly be accepted. That Aurangzeb's motive was neither religious nor discriminatory becomes obvious by the fact that he did not abolish *zakat*—a tax meant exclusively for the Muslims. Both the *jizyah* and the *zakat* were imposed with the aim of taking the Empire out, to some extent, from the financial crisis.

That Aurangzeb was not in favour of a policy of discrimination is evident from a study of the nobility under him. During the period 1658-78, that is, before Aurangzeb embarked upon his Deccan expeditions, the total number of nobles were 486, of these 105 were Hindus, i.e. 21·19%. The break-up according to rank was thus: there were 51 nobles holding ranks of 5,000 and above, of these 10 were Hindus, i.e. 18·35%; of the 90 nobles holding ranks between 4,500 and 3,000 18 were Hindus, i.e. 20%; of the 345 nobles holding ranks between 2,700 and 1,000 77 were Hindus, i.e. 22.31%. Coming to the second period, 1678-1707, we observe a tremendous swelling in the number of *mansabdars*. The nobility consisted of 575 nobles of 1,000 and above; of these 184 were Hindus i.e. 32%. The break-up according to rank was thus: 79 nobles of 5,000 and

above with 26 Hindus among them, i.e. 32·91% ; of the 133 nobles holding ranks between 4,500 and 3,000 36 were Hindus, i.e. 27·06% ; among the 363 nobles with ranks between 2,700 and 1,000 122 were Hindus, i.e. 33·60%. The figures speak for themselves, Alamgir's policy against the Hindus must have been a queer one as he had approximately 26·59% Hindus within his ruling class. The significance of these figures becomes all the more evident when we remember that our much-admired liberal monarch Akbar had 22 Hindus among 98 nobles i.e. 22·45%. During Akbar's time the break-up was thus: of the 7 *mansabdars* holding ranks of 5,000 and above there was only one Hindu, i.e. 14·28% ; 10 nobles held ranks between 3,000 and 4,500, of these only 1 was Hindu, i.e. 10% ; among the 17 nobles holding ranks between 1,000 and 2,700, 6 were Hindus, i.e. 35·29% ; 64 nobles held ranks of 500 to 900, of these 14 were Hindus, i.e. 21·87%.[14] It appears from these figures that Aurangzeb was no more discriminatory against the Hindus than Akbar and that Aurangzeb was not following a policy of religious intolerance. Though a pious Muslim in his private life, he was not influenced by his personal beliefs in the selection of his ruling class.

While on the subject of Aurangzeb and his ruling class it is important to note that while no Rajput officer had held the rank of 7,000 during the reign of Shah Jahan, Aurangzeb promoted Mirza Raja Jai Singh and Jaswant Singh to the ranks of 7,000. Since 1606 when Man Singh had been recalled from Bengal, no Rajput noble, barring Jaswant Singh's appointment to Malwa in 1658, had been entrusted with an important province. But Alamgir in 1665 appointed Jai Singh the Viceroy of the Deccan, not as an adviser to a prince but in his own right. This was amongst the highest, the most coveted, the most important and responsible charges in the Mughal Empire with which generally only princes were entrusted. Jaswant Singh too was twice appointed governor of Gujarat (1659-61 and 1670-72). This, together with the composition of Aurangzeb's ruling class, makes us agree with Bernier when he writes that "the Great Mogol though a Mohamedan . . . always keeps in his service a large retinue of Rajas, treating them with the same consideration as his other *Omrahs* and appointing them to important commands in his armies."[15]

Once an appeal to Emperor Aurangzeb from a Muslim of Shushang was referred back to the Hindu Raja of Shushang so that justice might be done.[16] A queer religious bigot must have been this Alamgir to refer back an appeal by a co-religionist to an 'infidel' Raja !

Today it is no new thesis that the swelling of the nobility in the second half of Aurangzeb's reign was a result of his war against the Marathas. During the period 1658-78 the number of Maratha *mansabdars* was 27 in a nobility having the total strength of 486 ; i.e. 5·55%. But during the second period while the total number of nobles had increased to 575 the number of Maratha *mansabdars* had rocketed to 96, i.e. a 255.55% rise in the number of Maratha nobles.[17] In the Deccan Aurangzeb enlisted nobles on an *ad hoc* basis without any consideration of religion or creed. This is a sign of tactical shrewdness on the part of Alamgir. He realized, when fighting the Marathas, the value of the *Sardars*, and sought to absorb them in the Mughal nobility. The Marathas with their raids were a grave threat to the law and order of the Mughal Empire and Aurangzeb

as a conscientious monarch was bound to move against them ; and so long as he was unable to win a military decision against the Marathas he had to follow the policy of bribing the Maratha *Sardars* for bringing them over to his own side. Aurangzeb was only reacting pragmatically to a concrete political situation where no religious motivation interfered.

This policy of bribing was carried on to such an extent that at one point as many Marathas were fighting for Aurangzeb as against him.[18] Aurangzeb distributed *jagir* and *watan* lands with a lavish hand and the Maratha *Sardar* whose *watan* loyalty was perhaps more important than loyalty to a nascent state turned coats. This indirectly proves that the oft-mentioned "religious oppression" and discrimination of Alamgir was not the cause of what is generally known as the "Maratha War of Independence", and that the Marathas were not championing a Hindu Revival. Dr. Irfan Habib has pointed out that the revolts which constitute what is known as the Hindu Reaction during Aurangzeb's reign—the revolts of the Jats, the Satnamis, the Marathas, the Sikhs—were caused by economic and political grievances rather than religious ones.[19] Dr. Aniruddha Ray discerns similar causes for the revolt of the Matiyas (1685).[20] It is Dr. Irfan Habib's opinion that the concept of Hindu Reaction exists more in the sentiments of modern writers than in the writings of contemporaries.[21] It is also significant that these revolts did not lead to communal riots at the social level.

Dr. K. K. Datta's collection of *Some Firmans, Sanads and Parwanas (1578-1802)* has 48 grants made by Aurangzeb to Hindus.[22] Most of these grants are land grants, the majority of them being either *nankar*—grants for maintenance—or *madad-i-maash*—grants in perpetuity. All the grants are unconditional. These are gifts made to common men, to *quanungos,* to retired soldiers and last but not the least to Sanyasis and their disciples. Two of these grants need special mention. On the 11th November 1695 Aurangzeb issued injunctions to leave the *abwab* (taxes collected and assessed on land over and above the original rent) connected with *tapedari* (privileges of a *tappadar*) and *rahdari* (road tolls on grain and other merchandise) prevalent in the *pargana* of Goa in the hands of Dukharan Missir, of the village of Kundaman, who had no means of livelihood. In another grant of the 11th June 1668 Aurangzeb released 55 *bighas* of rent-free land to Lila Brahmin on account of his poverty.[23] The fact that Aurangzeb was willing to forfeit imperial revenue for two of his very common subjects testifies to his basic benevolence. Alamgir could have imposed any condition in return for these grants to the down-and-out men—he could have forced them to become Muslims. That he did not do so shows that he was not all that zealous about his religion and he did not strive to convert as many persons as he could as our traditional historians depicted him to be doing. "Protect the *raiyats* and make them prosper."[24] Aurangzeb wrote to Murshid Quli Khan—significantly *all* the *raiyats* and not only the Muslim ones—and this was the spirit of Aurangzeb's administration.

When discussing Aurangzeb and his land grants to Hindus one remembers that exciting collection by Professors Grewal and Goswamy, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar.* This collection is distinguished from all others by its size,

range and character. Jakhbar is a small hamlet in north-west Punjab that has grown round the monastery of the Natha *jogis*. All the Mughal emperors, including Aurangzeb, granted lands in perpetuity (*madad-i-maash*) to these *jogis*. The *jogis* were entitled to the revenue (*hasilat*) from the given area and were exempted from paying the land-revenue (*mal-o-jihat*) and the petty burdens imposed by officials (*ikhrajat*). Significantly, the grantees were expected to "remain occupied with praying for the permanence of the conquering Dynasty"[25] Thus we have the queer phenomenon of monarchs, who were called bigoted by historians, asking Hindus to pray for them. Another reason why the grants were given is that the *Mahants* of Jakhbar wielded enormous local influence and the emperors by granting lands to them created what Grewal and Goswamy call a "vested interest". This confirms my contention that Aurangzeb reacted to political situations and in this no questions of religion interfered.

Aurangzeb's policies, it can definitely be said, were not motivated exclusively by religion. His policies evolved as he met concrete political or economic situations. Even what the older group of historians call Aurangzeb's discriminatory policy towards the Rajputs fits into my contention. As has earlier been shown, Aurangzeb had displayed the absence of bigotry and the presence of benevolence in his mental make-up. Moreover, the support he had received from the nobles in the war of succession was "quite broad-based"—out of the 124 nobles who supported him 103 were Muslims and 21 Hindus.[26] It was at this stage that Aurangzeb was trying to conciliate the powerful Rajput nobles—Mirza Raja Jai Singh, Jaswant Singh and others. Aurangzeb sought to justify his coup of 1658-9 by emphasizing that he was far more competent than his father. To prove his point he embarked on an elaborate military policy. Shaista Khan moved into Maharashtra (1660) ; Palamau was annexed ; Mir Jumla captured Cooch Bihar and marched into Assam ; Shivaji was brought to terms in the treaty of Purandhar ; Bijapur was attacked. But by the mid-1660s this policy of expansion was shrouded in failure. Mir Jumla had had to retreat ; Shaista Khan's campaign had boomeranged into a plunder of his own camp and Shivaji's sack of Surat. The treaty of Purandhar had become just a name after Shivaji had flown from Agra. The Bijapur invasion had ended in disaster. Moreover, the Empire was now under the holocaust of rebellion ; the Jats, the Satnamis, the Yusufzais and the Afridis had taken to arms. Shivaji joined the game by sacking Surat for a second time. This was a delicate situation for an emperor who had attempted to justify his capture of the throne by greater competency. Moreover, the stifling of the urge for expansion had a similar effect on the urge for promotion among the nobles. The emperor to secure his own position had to expand the opportunities for the majority by progressively shutting out a minority. This policy, naturally, had to go hand-in-hand with an attempt to create an Islamic halo round the crown. Thus what is known as Alamgir's discriminatory policy was actually an attempt to meet an emergency.

The Rajputs as a minority were isolated and gradually eclipsed. Under Shah Jahan, the Rajputs held 178,500 of the 10,07,000 *Zat* ranks granted (i.e. 17.7%) this had decreased to 14.35% in the first ten years of Aurangzeb's reign. Though the *mansabs* granted in general had increased, the *Sawar* ranks

held by the Rajputs were reduced in absolute terms.[27] This restraint on the Rajputs becomes explicit from the fact that though in the period 1658-78 there were 71 Rajputs in a nobility of 486 (i.e. 14.6%) yet in the period 1679-1707 there were 73 Rajputs in a nobility of 575 (i.e. 12.6%).[28] The Rajputs continued to be confirmed in their *watan jagirs* but as the total *mansabs* granted to them declined, their share in the imperial *jagirs* outside their homeland declined correspondingly. In an era, when there was a growing pressure for *jagirs* these would prove specially useful, as they could be offered to the majority to rally them round the emperor. This policy of gradually closing the doors to the Rajputs was not only clever politics but an administrative necessity and it did not lead to the so-called "Rajput Rebellion". This is made clear from the *Waqa-i-Ajmer*, a series of reports by the news writer of Ajmer. These reports make clear that a difficult situation had arisen when Jaswant Singh had died without a male child and Aurangzeb wanted to exploit the situation to subvert the kingdom of Marwar. He was obviously attracted by the economic importance of Marwar which lay on one of the chief trade arteries of the Empire and its "chief mart Pali was the connecting link between the west Indian sea coast and northern India."[29] While the dispute between Jaswant Singh's officers and Raja Indar Singh, the approved claimant to the throne, raged, Aurangzeb declared that the whole of Marwar barring two *parganas* be brought into the *Khalisa*. This angered the Rathors : they were prepared to give up the whole of Marwar but their prestige hindered them from surrendering their ancestral seat of Jodhpur. Aurangzeb refused to withdraw his order and attempted to bribe Jaswant Singh's officers ; the officers refused to be bribed. Meanwhile, two posthumous sons were born to Ajit Singh and this demanded a change in the imperial decision. But Alamgir swept aside the claims of Jaswant Singh's heirs and supported Indar Singh. This provoked the Rathors and Sisodias to rebel. This was hardly a Rajput rebellion as the Kachwahas, the Haras, the Bhatis, the Rathors of Bikaner all remained loyal to the Mughals. *"The Waqa-i-Ajmer* contains report after report of Rajput contingents joining the Mughal army to fight the Rathors."[30] It should be clear from the above account that Aurangzeb's emphasis on the Islamic character of the Crown and his shutting out of the Rajputs from the nobility had hardly anything to do with the rebellion of the Rathors. Historians who propagate the idea that the Rathors were upholding the Hindu banner overlook the fact "Jaswant's chief queen Rani Hadi, even said that the Rajputs would be prepared to destroy all the temples of Jodhpur and erect mosques instead, if only Jodhpur was conferred upon the Raja's son".[31] That should be the last nail in the coffin of the "Hindu Reaction" against Aurangzeb. But what is more important is that Aurangzeb brushed aside the claims of Jaswant Singh's children in spite of the promise made by the Queen. This proves that Islam had not become an *idee fixé* with him and that factors other than his religion had motivated him. What drove Alamgir against Marwar was probably his attraction, at a time when the economy was under considerable pressure, for the prosperity of Marwar.

Historians often contrast Aurangzeb to Akbar who according to our text books was the liberal monarch *par excellence*. Recent researches on Akbar by

Mr. Iqtidar Alam Khan of Aligarh throw a different light on the monarch who is now viewed minus his former nimbus of liberality.[32] Mr. Iqtidar Alam Khan attempts a reapprisal of Akbar's early policies by raising certain points which are against the accepted interpretation that tends to ignore facts that are not in keeping with Abul Fazl's theory of the gradual "unveiling" of Akbar as the "superman" through the introduction of policies based on the principles of *Sulh-i-kul*. Mr. Alam Khan shows how racial and clan alignments within the nobility were factors in the evolution of Akbar's policies and that Akbar followed during a phase an extremely intolerant and communal policy.[33] But this policy of Akbar was a passing phase, he soon put it into cold storage and subsequently there was an unfolding of Akbar's enlightened religious policy based on the philosophy of *Sulh-i-Kul*. The orthodox policy was an attempt to befriend the Indian Muslims and conciliate Muslim orthodoxy. This policy proved abortive as it failed to make the desired impression on the Turani and Persian nobles and so released Akbar from the shackles of a pro-Islamic policy.[34] The circumstances of the time helped Akbar's development from orthodoxy to enlightenment, whereas for Aurangzeb the conditions of the time forced him into a journey to orthodoxy. But what is very important is the fact that he took to an orthodox policy not because he was a devout Muslim; his policy evolved out of the various pressures working on him via the ruling class, his military failures and other socio-economic factors. This policy did not lead to any reaction among the Hindus, thus proving its obvious political necessity.

Drawing morals from historical analysis is a difficult and dangerous proposition but it appears from this reassessment that to understand a period we must forget "single-personality-oriented history" and comprehend the multiplex forces that move history which is not so simple as to be moved by personal fads and biases.

NOTES

1 For a lucid exposition of this traditional view see Majumdar, Ray Chaudhuri and Datta, *An Advanced History of India* (London, 1946), 495-7.

2 This view of religious persecution and discrimination received a clear formulation also in Sri Ram Sharma's *The Religious Policy of the Mughal Emperors* published in 1940. For a brilliant critique of this work pointing out the "incredible inaccuracy", errors in interpretation and cases of misrepresentation, see Athar Ali's review in *Enquiry* (*No. 7*), 130-34.

3 The British historian Percival Spear also emphasizes the complexity of Aurangzeb and points out that Aurangzeb's "supposed intolerance is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts": Percival Spear, *History of India* Vol. 2 (Pelican 1968), 56.

4 *Ahkam-i Alamgiri*, a collection of letters and orders of Aurangzeb belonging to his later years, collected by Inayatullah Khan: cited by Barun De in "Some Implications of Political Tendencies and Social Factors in 18th Century India", *Studies in Social History—Modern India* (Ed. O. P. Bhatnagar) 223.

5 *Ibid.*

6 The late Dr. Mohammed Habib in his *Sultan Mahmud of Ghaznin* pointed out that a bigoted attitude is hardly in keeping with the teachings of Islam. See particularly his Preface to the second edition (Delhi, 1967).

7 Quoted by Athar Ali, *Mughal Nobility Under Aurangzeb* (Bombay, reprint 1970), 22.

8 Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India* (Bombay, 1963), 319-26. Also see Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 169-71.
9 See Satish Chandra, "Jizya and the State in India during the 17th century", *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, Vol. XII, part III, 1969, pp. 322-40.
10 *Ibid*, 324-5.
11 *Ibid*, 323.
12 *Ibid*, 336
13 See *infra*.
14 All figures relating to the nobility of Akbar and Aurangzeb have been taken from Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 31, 35.
15 Quoted by Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 23.
16 Tapan Ray Chaudhuri, *Bengal Under Akbar and Jahangir* (Delhi, 2nd impression, 1969), 68.
17 All figures from Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 35.
18 Brij Kishore, *Tara Bai and Her Times*, (Bombay, 1963), 29, 39.
19 Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, 338-51.
20 Aniruddha Ray, "Francois Martin's Account of the Rising of the Matiyas in 1685", *Indian History Congress Proceedings* (Varanasi, 1969), 195-200.
21 Irfan Habib, *op. cit.*, 338.
22 Grant numbers 27, 33, 34, 36, 45, 51, 55, 60, 64, 92, 103, 107, 108, 109, 113, 117, 130, 131, 146, 147, 148, 154, 219, 220, 221, 260, 262, 263, 272, 273, 278, 279, 283, 285, 300, 308, 314, 315, 316, 325, 326, 330, 364, 381, 397, 413, 425, 443.
23 See grant numbers 262 and 154 in K. K. Datta, *Some Firmans Sanads and Parwanas (1578-1802)*, (Patna, 1962).
24 *Ahkam-i Alamgiri*, cited in the *History of Bengal*, Vol. 2, edited by J. N. Sarkar (Dacca, 1948), 401.
25 Grewal and Goswamy, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar* (Institute of Advanced Studies, Simla), preface.
26 Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 95-135, from where I borrow extensively.
27 Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 24.
28 Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 25, points out that this was a decline generally suffered by the non-Deccani elements.
29 See N. K. Sinha's Introduction to J. H. Little's *House of Jagath Seth* (Calcutta Historical Society, 1967) iii.
30 Athar Ali, *op. cit.*, 101.
31 *Ibid.*
32 Iqtidar Alam Khan, "The Nobility under Akbar and the Development of His Religious Policy 1560-80", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1968, 1 & 2, Pp. 29-36.
33 The public manifestation of Akbar's attitude during the siege of Chittor (1568) is an expression of his orthodox policy. The fall of Chittor was proclaimed by him as the victory of Islam over infidels. In a *fathnama* issued on 9th March 1575 Akbar claims, "As directed by the word of God we, as far as it is within our power, remain busy in *jihad* and owing to the kindness of the supreme Lord, who is the promoter of our victories, we have succeeded in occupying a number of forts and towns belonging to the infidels and have established Islam there. With the help of our blood-thirsty sword we have erased the signs of infidelity from their minds and have destroyed temples in those places and also all over Hindusthan." See Iqtidar Alam Khan, *op. cit.*, 31-33 wherein other evidences to confirm the above attitude are also given.
34 See Iqtidar Alam Khan, *op. cit.*, 35.

APPENDIX

As I finished the final draft of my paper I came across a not-so-famous book, *Aurangzeb and His Times* (Bombay, 1935) by Zahiruddin Faruki. This significant work, unfortunately ignored both by the Sarkar school and its present controverters, was perhaps the earliest attempt to see Aurangzeb in relation to his environment—"Aurangzeb was the product of his time and environment," observes Faruki (p. ix). He anticipates the new school to the extent that he attempts to "envisage every situation from a broader point of view", and to interpret the tendencies of the time (p. xiii).

In a scholarly chapter on the "Critics of Islam" Faruki destroys the arguments of those critics of Aurangzeb who hold that "as Aurangzeb attempted to follow the Islamic Law . . . he was bound to adopt an extremely aggressive attitude." Faruki shows by extensive quotations from the Quran that "The basic principles of Islam are freedom and equality and anyone who endeavours to follow its laws in the right spirit cannot but be a just monarch." (p. 105). Space curbs my temptation to cite some of the passages quoted

by Faruki but one I think will be enough. Faruki says that one of the accepted sayings of the Prophet reads "Whoever torments the *zimmis* (non-Muslims) torments me."

Faruki's comments regarding the destruction of temples need a little detailed treatment. He points out that the "destruction of sacred places is not countenanced by the Islamic Law " (p. 139). Faruki distinguishes between 'freedom' ("unrestricted erection of churches and temples") and 'qualified toleration' ("the permission to repair and rebuild old temples, with a prohibition against constructing new ones"). The later Muslim jurists, our author says, favoured the latter position ; Aurangzeb also held this position. According to our author, who has made an exhaustive study of the available sources as a glance at the bibliography will show, "Apart from the *Maasir-i Alamgiri* there is no reference to the order for the destruction of temples in any other Persian history", and that there are "good reasons for holding that no such order was either promulgated or carried out." (p. 117). Faruki quotes a *firman* (dated 1659), sent to Abul Hasan, the officer in charge of Benares, which says that "the whole of our untiring energy and all our upright intentions are engaged in promoting the public welfare and bettering the condition of all classes, high and low, *therefore, in accordance with our holy law, we have decided that ancient temples shall not be overthrown but that new ones shall not be built.* In these days of our justice, information has reached our noble and most holy Court that certain persons actuated by rancour . . . have harassed the Hindus resident in the town of Benares . . . therefore our Royal Command is that, *after the arrival of our lustrous order, you should direct that in future, no person shall in unlawful way interfere or disturb the Brahmans and the other Hindus resident in these places, . . .* " (p. 119). Faruki also gives other evidences to prove his point and he explains why Aurangzeb destroyed the temple of Keshav Rai built by Bir Singh Deo Bundela at Mathura (pp. 124-5). Faruki convincingly jettisons the charge that Aurangzeb destroyed the Vishunath temple at Benares and built the Gyan Bapi Mosque in its place. Faruki's reasons demand to be quoted in full: "According to the *Maasir-i Alamgiri*, the temple was demolished in 1669, but on visiting the Gyan Bapi Mosque, I found the following inscription on a semi-circular slab of blackstone fixed in the wall near the pulpit:—

"This mosque was first built by order in the second year of accession of Alamgir. Afterwards in 1207 Hijra,—Ali (the name is indistinct), the hereditary *Mutawalli* of the mosque repaired the courtyard."

"If the mosque was completed in the second year of Aurangzeb's reign, the temple of Vishunath must have been demolished earlier than 1659 A.D. In pursuing my enquiry about the date of construction of the mosque, a piece of stone was shown to me by the *Muazzin* bearing the following inscription: *"Aiwan-i Shariat,* 1048 Hijra." This piece was discovered by him in August 1929 underneath the debris lying on the back of the mosque. As the name, *'Aiwan-i Shariat'*, can only be applied to a mosque, and the word is the chronogram for the year 1048 Hijra, the inference is reasonable that at the present site of the mosque a building existed that was completed in 1048 Hijra. The last building either toppled down or suffered destruction between 1048 and 1070 Hijra, giving place to the present mosque. That the piece of stone bearing the inscription did not belong to any other edifice is evident from the fact that there was no Muslim building in the immediate neighbourhood of the Vishunath temple. In view of the discovery of the inscriptions, therefore, the testimony of the *Maasir-i Alamgiri* does not carry much weight." (pp. 129-130).

By extensive quotations from Khafi Khan and other contemporary authors Faruki shows that the charge that Aurangzeb stopped fairs "is a historical hearsy based on a wrong interpretation of a single authority" (p. 175). He also points out that the order forbidding the use of *palkis* "made no discrimination between Hindus and Muslims" (p. 176) and was primarily a precautionary measure. In his analysis of Aurangzeb's imposition of the *jizyah*, Faruki comes very near to the modern method of studying group pressures and clan alignments within the ruling class and the Court. Faruki also compiles elaborate nobility lists to show the number of Hindus in Aurangzeb's service. He was thus anticipating the method of historians like Athar Ali and Iqtidar Alam Khan by three decades, if not more, for the author tells us that some of the chapters were written two decades before the book came to be published.

Space does not permit a survey of the entire book ; I only include here the points relevant to my discussion but interested readers may note that the book also contains a very objective assessment of the Marathas in general and Shivaji in particular ; a good description of the personal life and character of Aurangzeb ; an account of the economic and social conditions and the administrative system during Aurangzeb's time ; and also a thorough analysis of the Deccan and Rajput affairs. The chief drawback of the book lies in its rather simplistic and adolescent analysis of the causes of Mughal decline. However, it is high time that scholars of medieval India took proper cognizance of this work which has for so long remained just a name in the bibliographies, and brought it out from the twilight realm of the neglected unread.

The Concept of Muslim Tyranny : An Unbroken Tradition

Tanika Sarkar

Divine Providence at last, in its abundant mercy, stirred up the English nation to break the yoke of those tyrants [the Muslims], *and to receive the oppressed natives of Bengal under its protection.*

—Rammohun Roy's Appeal to the King-in-Council against Press Regulations, 1823.

Today the historian, looking backward over the two centuries that have passed since then [Plassey], *knows that it was the beginning, slow and unperceived, of a glorious dawn, the like of which the history of the world has not seen elsewhere.*

—Sir J. N. Sarkar, *Dacca History of Bengal,* Volume II, 1948

Throughout the nineteenth century the concept of Muslim tyranny was an ever-recurring theme with individual variations.[1] Detailed research (for which I am not equipped) is needed to explain why, when and how this concept was developed. The object of this paper is merely to state a certain position : that, on this one single point, nearly all strands of our nineteenth-century intelligentsia—be it the traditional literati, or the conservatives, or the reformists, or even the radicals—were in agreement. Derived at least partly from early British historians writing about Indian history, this set of assumptions in turn exaggerated, played down, misinterpreted and distorted facts of our so-called "Muslim period". A natural corollary was the acceptance of foreign rule with actual relief and of the loss of independence as deliverance. This was an important factor in the intelligentsia's inability to think or act outside the imperialist framework, or even to seriously question it ; even their formulation of criticism and grievances implied a tacit acceptance. 1885 in our country saw the beginnings of a certain type of reaction of the intelligentsia to the colonial set-up ; how different was the temper of the Scholars' Revolt in Annam in the same year ! Even when a genuine nationalist reaction had set in with the Swadeshi times (which, for the first time, actively tried to enlist Muslim support) various ramifications of this attitude continued to pervert its tone and, in the end, blocked its complete triumph.

This attitude towards Muslim rule was not entirely of British making, much as we would like to absolve ourselves from responsibility that way. It came from a deep-seated Hindu separatism, evident even in intellectuals in pre-British times. Bharatchandra, the eighteenth-century court-poet of Maharaja Krishnachandra Ray, for instance, has many telling passages to describe Nawabi oppression in the introductory poem in *Annadamangal Kavya.* Even when he comes to the Bargis (who, in his own words, commit exactly the same crimes, down to looting temples) he explains it as divine punishment sent upon the Nawabs[2]—

লুঠিয়া ভুবনেশ্বর যবন পাতকী
সেই পাপে তিন সুবা হইলা নারকী॥

(It may be significant that this one-sided approach is absent in Gangaram's *Maharashtra-Purana,* whose author came from more plebeian origins.) But as tracing all possible sources of this attitude is beyond the scope of this article, I shall confine myself to a very rough survey of British history-writing on Muslim India,[3] particularly because such works were an important component of our intelligentsia's approach.

With the growing political involvement of the East India Company in India, historical interest was at first limited to the immediate past and its background—the Muslim period as a whole, with special emphasis on the Mughal period. Quite early in the emerging pattern, some familiar notes had crept in. Alexander Dow, with his background of eighteenth-century Enlightenment and his critical attitude to the Company's misrule, had a deep admiration for what he regarded as the Enlightened Despotism of the Mughals.[4] (It is interesting that he makes no distinction between Akbar and Aurangzeb in their wise and tolerant policy towards Hindu subjects.) Yet he considers the British (who, he admits, shave so far a very poor record to show in India) and not the Indians themselves, to be the true successors of this splendid imperial structure. Also, however commendable the Mughal achievements had been, Dow never doubted their inherent inferiority to Western civilisation. These two assumptions persisted in all later British historical thinking on India throughout the nineteenth century, but in other respects Dow's treatment was rapidly changed. Jonathan Scott (*Memoirs of Eradut Khan,* 1786) was probably the first important historian to develop the theory of Aurangzeb's discriminatory policy and its responsibility for the downfall of the Mughal Empire. "His zeal for the Muhammedan religion", wrote Scott, "led him to deprive the Hindu prince of those indulgences which his less bigoted ancestors had allowed."[5] Gibbon's approach and method had influenced a whole generation of historians, and in this connection, his emphasis on the bigoted, theocratic despotism of the Muslims in general is significant. The Orientalist rediscovery of Hindu civilisation gave a sharper edge to this attitude and Indian history now became synonymous with glorification of the Hindu period.[6] Sir William Jones attributed the downfall of this civilisation to the Muslim conquest and this view was joyously welcomed to explain many features of the present degeneration of the Hindus. With the growing influence of the Evangelicals and Utilitarians, there was a shift from the Orientalist position, but even Charles Grant, the Evangelist, used harsher words to describe the Muslim rulers. He spoke of their religious oppression, their more "abandoned morals" and claimed that "perfidy in them was more signal than with Hindus."[7] Thus, a very familiar pattern is seen to be emerging. Mountstuart Elphinstone gave it final shape and colour by his sharp distinction between Akbar and Aurangzeb and by describing how Aurangzeb dug his own grave in the Deccan by provoking Maratha nationalism. Finally, Elliot and Dowson's avowed object of exposing Muslim misrule has to be studied in the context of the Mutiny and a natural desire of the British historians to justify British imperialism by a wholesale condemnation of the previous imperial system.

This is very roughly the pattern inherited by the Bengali intellectuals, who used this legacy not only without major alterations but also with very much the same intentions—to provide a *raison d 'être* to British rule in India. It is significant that they made a somewhat selective use of this inherited material. Though the story of Aurangzeb's bigotry is swallowed wholesale, Akbar's liberalism is not so eagerly stressed. In Swadeshi times, the suggestion of an Akbar festival was quickly overshadowed by the *Birastami brata* and the Shivaji festival.[8] For a long time there is practically no pride in our Islamic heritage. The Bengal Renaissance tried to achieve a synthesis of the Hindu tradition with Western

values, but after Rammohun it excluded Persian learning almost entirely which died down very quickly among the Hindus.

How the nineteenth-century intelligentsia reflected this false consciousness will be more clearly shown if I cite some representative passages from the dominant intellectual schools. It is fairly easy to quote the early conservatives (or at a later stage, Bankimchandra) on this issue, for their pathological dislike of the Muslims is well-known. More interesting and significant would be to establish the unity of view of the reformists and radicals with the conservatives, from whom they differed on almost every other social question.

In the intense and prolonged debate on the *Suttee* question there was a remarkable polarisation of social attitudes. But in the various petitions and counter-petitions we find that abhorrence of Muslim rule and loyalty to the British never wavered on either side. An anti-*Suttee* petition by some Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta (published in the *Asiatic Journal,* July 1819) refuted the arguments of the pro-*Suttee* party which claimed that even the Muslim rulers had permitted the practice. In its arguments it recalled "the numberless insults, cruelties and oppression of Muslim rulers. . .", the destruction of the Benares temple and the allegedly intolerant spirit of the Koran. Referring to all this, it asked how a Hindu could cite any aspect of Muslim rule as a worthy precedent.[9]

Samacharchandrika (edited by Bhawanicharan Bandyopadhyay) was the organ of the conservative Dharmasabha which represented the pro-*Suttee* group in the debate. When the practice was banned it wrote (17 November 1832) in deep distress and indignation: "After the Moosoolmans had committed many outrages they had set themselves to overthrow religion and were removed. After having experienced many sufferings under the government of the Muslims we had quiet for a short time under the *Mlechas.* Now we perceive that they are about to inflict upon us still greater evils."[10]. The tone of great bitterness seems to carry a warning but we must remember that the journal had already (2 July 1831) assured the Government that "we believe that the Hindus are far more devoted to their sovereign than any other people.[11] *Samacharchandrika* found staunch support in the Tory newspaper *John Bull* (9 March 1830) which quoted it as saying "we have been subject to no distress under the Government of the Company, it is only the abolition of *Suttees* which has given us disquietude."[12] Apart from the specific question of the *Suttee* in which the concept of Muslim tyranny appeared in an indirect manner, the general attitude of the *Samacharchandrika* towards the Muslims is reflected in the way it demanded replacement of Persian in law courts outside Calcutta. It referred to "the haughtiness of these Yavanas" and expressed the hope that "Moosoolmans will be driven out of public jobs" (quoted in *India Gazette,* 25 December 1831).[13]

The attitude of Rammohun Roy is especially a matter for consideration not only because of his fruitful and creative contact with Western rationalism but also because of his rich knowledge of Persian (his first known work, the *Tuhfatul Muwahhiddin,* was in Persian) and the undeniable impact of Islam on the evolution of his religious thought. According to Hyde East, he had made himself very unpopular with orthodox Hindus because of his association with the Muslims, and they suspected him of the heinous crime of having meals with them.

In his Appeal to the King-in-Council against Press Regulations (1823) Rammohun, presents a balance-sheet of the various benefits and evils of Muslim rule against which he evaluates the achievements of British rule. After enumerating an impressive list of advantages enjoyed by the Hindus under the Muslims which are now lost, he decides to cast his vote for the new regime : "Your Majesty's faithful subjects were consoled by the more secure enjoyments of those civil and religious rights which had been so often violated by the rapacity and intolerance of the Mussalmans; and notwithstanding the loss of political rank and power they considered themselves much happier in the enjoyment of the civil and religious liberty than were their ancestors."[14] Some of these passages at times read disconcertingly like Bankimchandra's. For example, "The Natives of Bengal . . . remained faithful to the existing [Muslim] Government, although their property was often plundered, their religion insulted, and their blood wantonly shed."[15] And elsewhere, "Musulmans... introduced their own tyrannical system of government, destroying temples, universities and all other sacred and literary establishments."[16] Rammohun also makes the conventional distinction, popularised by British historians, between Akbar's and Aurangzeb's policies : "Akbar was celebrated for his clemency, for his encouragement of learning and for his granting civil and religious liberty to his subjects, and Aurangzebe, for his cruelty and intolerance."[17]

Most unexpected and disheartening are the instances of this attitude among the Derozians, those impatient and radical rebels against Hindu society. Derozio in his search for romantic heroism in the past occasionally turns to Hindu resistance to Muslim invasion—thus anticipating much of later patriotic literature:

> The Moslem is come down to spoil the land. . .
> . . . The Hindoo hath marched forward to repel
> The lawless plunderer of his holy shrines,
> The savage, rude disturber of his peace.[18]

Mahesh Chandra Deb's, *A Sketch of the Condition of the Hindu Women* (1839) is an exhortation against the degraded status of Hindu women. Its context, style and object reveal him as a very emancipated thinker, but he shares the anti-Muslim slant with his orthodox adversaries: "The cause of that state of seclusion. . . in which the females of this land are preserved may be traced to the tyranny of the Mehomedan conquerors". He goes on to quote from an English poem—

> The Musselman is raging through the land
> Prayer on his tongue and murder in his hand.[19]

Pearychand Mitra had a more revivalist stand on the whole, and in his works there is a sharp departure from Rammohun's relatively more balanced estimate. In his *State of Hindoostan under the Hindoos* (1839-41) he refers to the "ancient Hindu spirit of enterprise which the storm of Muslim oppression has entirely extinguished but which I hope will now be kindled. . . in . . . the new generation, who will . . . open sources of employment in the extensive field of commerce"[20]—a strange and ironic hope considering that all such sources that had existed under Muslim rule were already being systematically destroyed by British economic policy.

The rationalist thinking of Akshoy Kumar Dutta also reveals the related concepts of Muslim tyranny and the beneficial nature of British imperialism. He writes in *Sangbad Prabhakar* in 1840[21]:

> যবন নৃপতিগণের অধীনে বাঙ্গালিরা যদ্রূপ দুর্দশাসাগরে নিমগ্ন ছিল, তাহা স্মরণ করিতে হইলে কঠিন হৃদয় বিদীর্ণ হইয়া যায়...প্রজারা প্রায় তাঁহাদিগের অধীনে সুখি ও সুস্থিরচিত্ত থাকিতে পারিতেন না, বরং নিয়তই অনিয়ম ও অত্যাচারের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ করিতেন, যেহেতু প্রথমতঃ যবন রাজাদিগের রাজকীয় বিষয়ে বর্তমান দেশাধিপতিদিগের ন্যায় সুচারু নিয়ম ও ঐক্য ছিল না।

Here we might consider how the British rulers were exploiting such sentiments. A *Bengali Hurkaru* report of 13 February 1843 cites an incident when Dakshinaranjan Mukherji's critical paper on the East India Company's courts and police was interrupted by the Hindu College Principal, Captain Richardson: "He [Richardson] would remind the meeting of the security the natives now enjoyed, in comparison with the conditions of their ancestors under the Mahomedan Government." Dakshinaranjan Mukherji readily agreed with him.[22] Another instance is the speech given by the Duke of Cambridge in a reception to Dwarakanath Tagore (1842) where the Duke reminded him of how, out of pure humanitarian motives, the English had rescued the natives from Muslim tyranny.[23]

In 1857, a hundred years after Plassey, the very foundations of the British Indian Empire were shaken for a brief while. In a body the Bengali intelligentsia reacted to the Mutiny as the most loyal and grateful subjects of the British rulers, trying to prove that such crass disloyalty would not have occurred to the Hindus had not the Muslims been behind it all. Ishwarchandra Gupta, editor of *Sangbad Prabhakar,* wrote[24]:

> ঐ দুষ্টান্তঃকরণগণ গবর্নমেণ্টের প্রধান শত্রু, তন্মধ্যে যবনের সংখ্যাই অধিক।

In the same article, the editor laments that though the infinitely merciful British Government had bestowed great advantages on the Muslims, they had not been thankful enough—

> গবর্নমেণ্টের স্থাপিত সমুদয় বিদ্যালয়ে যবনেরা হিন্দুদের সহিত একত্রে উপবেশন পূর্বক অনুশীলন করণের ক্ষমতা...প্রাপ্ত হইয়াও বর্তমান সময়ে রাজানুকূলতা স্বভাব কিছুই প্রকাশ করিলেন না।

Sangbad Prabhakar was the most prominent forum of a whole generation of literary figures. Its editorial comments on the Mutiny are therefore significant evidence of the intelligentsia's reaction. It reminds the readers on 20 June 1857 :

> যবনাধিকারে আমরা ধর্মবিষয়ে স্বাধীনতা প্রাপ্ত হই নাই, সর্বদাই অত্যাচার ঘটনা হইত।

Then in a grovelling and disgustingly servile tone it composes this panegyric :

> এই রাজ্যই তো রামরাজ্যের ন্যায় সুখের রাজ্য হইয়াছে।...আমরা...পৃথিবীশ্বরী ইংলণ্ডেশ্বরী জননীর নিকটে পুত্রের ন্যায় প্রতিপালিত হইয়া সর্বমতে চরিতার্থ হইতেছি।

Also in the same issue[25]:

ব্রিটিশের রাজলক্ষ্মী স্থির যেন রয়।...
...স্বাধীনতা স্বর্গভোগ সকল সময়।

The very strange use of the word স্বাধীনতা in this context is an eye-opener.

In this context we find the first instances of patriotic poems, Rangalal Bandyopadhyay's *Padmini-Upakhyan* (1858). This patriotism, consisting exclusively of Hindu nationalism, was directed not against the present masters but emphatically against the Yavanas. All great figures of the Muslim period were vilified and even Akbar was not spared. Maniruzzaman has made the interesting point that after Madhusudan Dutt (whose works are refreshingly free from this anti-Muslim bias) there were two alternative types of literary ideal before the Bengali poets—one, the broad, secular humanitarianism of Madhusudan, and the other, the narrow Hindu nationalism of Rangalal. Rangalal proved to be the more powerful influence, inspiring the next generation of poets as well as later nationalists.[26] His *Padmini-Upakhyan* has been hopefully described by some as a composition in Aesopian language, a ruse against British censorship. But internal evidence proves quite clearly that however it might inspire the Hindus to return to their ancient valour, the British had nothing to fear from it. After the ringing, unforgettable passage

স্বাধীনতা হীনতায় কে বাঁচিতে চায় হে
কে বাঁচিতে চায়!
দাসত্ব শৃঙ্খল কে পরিবে পায় হে
কে পরিবে পায়—

Rangalal deplores the present degeneration of the Hindus. The only ray of hope to be discerned at present is[27]

ইংরাজের কৃপাবলে মানস উদয়াচলে
জ্ঞানভানু প্রভায় প্রচার।

By this time this sort of Anglophilia-cum-Muslimophobia has acquired new social and economic roots. The Westernised English-educated Hindu *bhadraloks* were definitely lording it over the Muslims, whose rule was by now a distant, though irritating, memory. In place of the old aggrieved, mortified tone, we find a new sneer, a contempt for a socially inferior people who had dared to hold a superior position in the past.

In Bankimchandra, we find the consummation and the most brilliant and effective formulation of the concept of Muslim tyranny. This aspect of Bankimchandra is a very complex theme and we can go on quoting endless passages to show its various uses. One very important use motivated his instructions for a new kind of history-writing. With great care and emphasis and in vitriolic language, he sets out to prove that the Muslim interlude was something alien to the true course of Indian history. He dismisses the works of Stuart, Marshman and others because[28]

> ইহা বাঙ্গালার ইতিহাস নয়।...আত্মজাতিগৌরবান্ধ, মিথ্যাবাদী, হিন্দুদ্বেষী মুসলমানের কথা যে বিচার না করিয়া ইতিহাস বলিয়া গ্রহণ করে সে বাঙ্গালী নয়।

The new historians have a sacred duty to prove that

> মোগলজয়ের পর বাঙ্গালার অধঃপতন হইয়াছিল।...বাঙ্গালার অর্থ বাঙ্গালায় না গিয়া দিল্লীর পথে গিয়াছিল।

Bankimchandra forgets to mention where, under the present regime, the wealth of Bengal (and that of the whole of India for that matter) was now going ! Following from such premises, British rule appeared not only as a historical inevitability, but as the culmination of the working of a just and benevolent Divine Will. In *Anandamath* he explains all this in rather theological terms :

> ইংরেজ রাজা না হইলে সনাতনধর্ম্মের পুনরুদ্ধারের সম্ভাবনা নাই।

The book concludes with the prophecy[29]:

> ইংরেজ রাজত্বে প্রজা সুখী হইবে—নিষ্কণ্টক ধর্ম্মাচরণ করিবে।

Bankimchandra, of course, formulated his religious and social ideas within an explicitly Hindu framework. But even in Keshabchandra Sen's most militant social reform phase, similar assumptions are seen to be at work : "When India lay sunk in the mire of idolatry and superstition, when Muhammedan oppression and misrule had almost extinguished the last spark of hope in the native Indian mind . . . the Lord in His mercy sent out the British nation to rescue India".[30]

Muslim separatism is a much-advertised fact, although many of its important causes are not far to find—their resentment over their relative backwardness in the early phase of British rule, greater scope and opportunities for the Hindus, the latter's smug assumptions of superiority. This was later fed by the class-tension in Bengal between landlords (predominantly Hindu) and peasants (predominantly Muslim) which was skilfully exploited by orthodox Muslims. That Hindu separatism had always been at least equally alive in different forms is evident from the fact that the nineteenth-century intelligentsia spoke in one voice about Muslim rule as good riddance to bad rubbish. The many grievances that provided the basis of this attitude should be more historically and critically investigated. Apart from the much-vaunted Western learning for "a microscopic minority," what other tangible benefits could the intelligentsia visualise which would have been impossible without British conquest ? Even Rammohun Roy was aware that the Hindus used to have larger shares in bureaucratic, administrative and economic opportunities now denied to them : "Your Majesty is aware that under their former Muhammadan Rulers, the natives of this country enjoyed every political privilege in common with Mussulmans, being eligible to the highest offices in the state, entrusted with the command of armies and the government of provinces and often chosen as advisers to their prince *without disqualification or degrading distinction on account of their religion . . . . Under the British rule, the natives of India have entirely lost their political consequences.*"[31] That he was not exaggerating is borne out by the fact that so many important traders, bankers, landlords and political personages under the Nawabs were Hindus. As for the charge of religious intolerance and discrimination, especially under Aurangzeb, recent research is showing that Aurangzeb's policies were primarily dictated by political, and not religious considerations. Regarding the possibilities of more progressive development along local lines, we have to explore our eighteenth-

century heritage more closely before dismissing it as a barren deadweight. Thus, much of the basis of the concept of Muslim tyranny crumbles under a critical scrutiny. A more heightened awareness of Hindu separatist limitations is therefore obviously required in a study of the Bengal Renaissance.

NOTES

1 In contrast, "historical writing before the origin of British power in India seems to have been remarkable secular." Barun De, 'A Preliminary Note on the Writing of the History of Modern India', *Quarterly Review of Historical Studies* (Cal.), 1963-64, Nos. 1 & 2, p. 40.
2 *Bharatachandra Granthabali*, edited by Bandyopadhyaya and Das (Calcutta 1950), p. 14.
3 Most of these facts are taken from J. S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India—The Assessments of British Historians* (O.U.P., 1970).
4 "Dow does not seek the germs of Bengal's decline in the disintegration of Mughal power . . . 'we may date the commencement of the decline . . . from the day on which Bengal fell under the dominion of foreigners, who were more anxious to improve the present moment to their own emolument than . . . to secure a permanent advantage to the British nation . . .' The political solution he puts forward is that the East India Company should assume full sovereign powers without further delay." Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal* (Paris, 1963), pp. 31-32.
5 Grewal, p. 35.
6 David Kopf, *British Orientalism and the Bengal Renaissance* (California, 1965), Chapter 2.
7 Grewal, p. 67.
8 Sumit Sarkar, 'Hindu-Muslim Relations in Swadeshi Bengal, 1903-1908', *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (New Delhi), June 1972, pp. 176-177. The article also gives the following quotation from the generally pro-nationalist Muslim weekly *Soltan* (8 June 1906): ". . . We know that the object of our Hindu brethren in celebrating the Shivaji festival is neither to wound Musalman feelings nor to vilify the reign of Aurangzeb . . . But . . . in order to give high praise to Shivaji, one cannot but censor Musalman rule."
9 J. K. Majumdar (ed.), *Raja Rammohun Roy and Progressive Movements in India* (Calcutta, 1941), pp. 115-117.
10 *Op. cit.*, p. 210.
11 *Op. cit.*, p. 183.
12 *Op. cit.*, p. 330.
13 A. F. Salahuddin Ahmed, *Social Ideas and Social Change in Bengal, 1818-1835* (Leiden, 1965), p. 149.
14 S. D. Collet, *Life and Letters of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Biswas and Ganguly (Calcutta, 1962), Appendix I, p. 449.
15 *Ibid.*, pp. 430-431.
16 Rammohun Roy, 'On the Ancient Rights of Females', *English Works of Raja Rammohun Roy*, ed. by Nag and Burman (Calcutta, 1945), part i, p. 1.
17 Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 445.
18 Henry Derozio, *Poems* (Calcutta, 1972), p. 15.
19 Gautam Chattopadhyay, *Awakening in Bengal* (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 94-95.
20 *Op. cit.*, pp. 350-351.
21 Benoy Ghosh, ed., *Samayikpatre Banglar Samaj Chitra*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1962), pp. 160-161.
22 Gautam Chattopadhyay, *op. cit.*, pp. 392, 396.
23 Kishorichand Mitra, *Dwarkanath Tagore* (Bengali edition, ed., by K. K. Dasgupta, Calcutta 1962), p. 108.
24 Benoy Ghosh, *op. cit.*, pp. 235-6.
25 *Op. cit.*, pp. 226-30.
26 Md. Maniruzzaman, *Adhunik Bangla Kavye Hindu-Musalman Samparka* (Dacca, 1970), Introduction.
27 *Rangalal Granthabali* (Calcutta, 1911), pp. 107, 115.
28 *Bankim-Rachanabali*, Vol. II (Calcutta, 1969), pp. 336, 339, 340.
29 *Bankim-Rachanabali*, Vol. I (Calcutta, 1965), p. 787.
30 Sen's speech in London, 12 April 1870—J. K. Majumdar (ed.) *Indian Speeches and Documents: British Rule 1821-1918* (Calcutta, 1937), pp. 88-89.
31 Collet, *op. cit.*, p. 449 (italics mine).

The Hindrance of Bureaucracy

Asok Sen

Now-a-days many criticisms are being heard about bureaucracy—its mistakes, its corruption and its inefficiency, its maintenance of vested interests and its reactionary role. Many of the hopes and desires for progress, which were cherished by Indian democracy during the twenty-five years since independence and many of the programmes undertaken for these purposes have not fructified because of bureaucratic obstacles. Numerous cases of such failure become starkly clear when one thinks of the unfinished task of land reform, the wasteful incompetence of the government industrial enterprises or the gap in many matters of public welfare between state promises and state achievements. Consequently, even if some progressive Acts have been passed in Parliament or the state Legislative Assemblies, the question is immediately mooted : despite the rectitude of the law in black and white, or in terms of speeches made in its favour would it be possible to make the law work after it has been made to cross the hurdles presented by bureaucracy ?

State-apparatus building under representative democracy has generally accepted the need for a demarcation between the legislature and the executive ; such a system prevails in our country. Popular representatives elected by universal suffrage, are sovereign with respect to legislation : the execution of this legisla-

tion and the supervision of administrative activity may also be controlled by various types of parliamentary committees and commissions. However, day-to-day responsibilities for the working of the executive extends through various levels. Many officials, senior as well as junior, are needed for the efficient and regular working of this executive. The creation of a bureaucracy becomes inevitable in the context of this need.

State power in our democratic framework is vested in the authority of elected popular representatives ; from them it devolves by the rule of the majority to responsible ministers. Under the bourgeois system it is only to be expected that the capitalist class should be the dominant force even within the democratic framework. Consequently, capitalist vested interest determines the administration of executive affairs. The bureaucracy's role is thus revealed as the organization for carrying on such administration. Thus no assiduous research is necessary to comprehend the conflicts which arise between bureaucracy and broader popular interests.

However, reasons still remain—even without denying the significance of the general conclusions presented above—for the problems of our present state to be more complex. Granted that the programmes of the Congress for resolving many social and economic problems happen to be the ideals and objectives of the ruling class. Naturally, Parliamentary and State Legislative Acts for giving shape to this programme would therefore be passed by the sanction of the ruling party, which means the ruling class. However, when such laws have to be implemented, it is often found that as a result of bureaucratic implementation and direction a tremendous gap opens up between results and original objectives. The bureaucracy, of course, argues in such a pass that *they* followed the letter of the legislative direction. This may sometimes prove that discrepancies have crept in between the objectives of the law and the letter of the law.

One explanation of this sort of experience is familiar, namely in terms of flaws in legal drafting *or* in terms of bureaucratic backsliding. Undeniably, this kind of explanation is at least partly correct. This gap between legislation and execution in a bourgeois parliamentary democracy is said to be really nothing more than a ruling class artifice. In a universal suffrage state some promises have always to be given, compatible with populist demands ; occasionally laws also have to be presented for gaining popular support. All this is meant to keep the votes rolling in. Such concessions to populist interests cannot, however, seriously undermine the mode of exploitation, since a bureaucracy which is subservient to the ruling class, can always undermine the much-publicised laws which are supposed to give effect to those populist demands. Of course, such artifices inevitably lead the bases of mass support for the ruling party to crumble. The Congress rout at the Fourth Indian General Elections of 1967 was an example.

However, this logic of artifice over-simplifies the total problem. No class can dominate the social and political structure merely by catering to its own selfish interests. Social and political hegemony of a particular class requires that its own self-interest must be in accord with some immediate and foremost needs of the entire society. In the various historical stages of class based societies, in their inevitable sequences of decay and renewal, only such classes can aspire to

hegemony, that are able to perform a leading role in the transition to a more advanced mode of production. The question of leadership is, however, not limited to satisfying economic interests. From the very base of the mode of production it pervades the various dimensions of social life and the entire complex of religion, material activity and culture. It combines them all in the validity of a total *Weltanschauung*. The existence and purpose of such hegemony determines the nature and objectives of state power.

The degree to which any class can show its capacity to control and direct state power depends on its capacity for social leadership, on its success in building up one section after another of society, and in subserving the broader interests of those sectors in line with a clear ideology. No class can fulfil its rational historical character ignoring this element of vanguard role and leadership. Central to the attainment of such leadership is the progress of the form of mode of production by which the organization and use of social labour may rise to new heights of efficiency and power. If the means of attainment of self-interest of any class have no relevance to these criteria then consciousness and creative social force of this class is to that extent undermined. Such class-consciousness can never rise to the level of any coherent social consciousness. To exercise state power, such a class has to depend more and more on the executive power of the bureaucracy. In a situation of this kind, bureaucracy turns out to be the sole and universal means of social action.

To understand the role of the bureaucracy in our present situation it is necessary to remember this complex problem of the ruling classes, incapable of hegemonic social leadership and influence. Marx analysed such a problem in his studies on the contemporary history of his times. The problem of bureaucratic predominance has been revealed in his determination of the real issues behind Germany's delayed capitalism. Marx also refers to the special role of bureaucracy in the confusion of recurring revolutions and counter-revolutions in France between 1848 and 1871. Marx emphasized one basic element in the interpretation of such situations ; that in the historical process of transition from feudalism to capitalism, the role of the bourgeoisie in such countries became warped and took on a compromising attitude. Consequently, the bourgeoisie failed to establish conclusive hegemony over the changing society. Such failures and the need for appropriate analysis of the relative course of transition (characterized by compromises with feudal interests) examples of which were seen in Germany, in Russia before 1917, in underdeveloped Italy and Japan, all this led Marx, Engels and Lenin to reckon with the alternative of 'second way capitalism'. The distinctive element of this 'second way' was to do away with the need for democratic social and political transformation, and to build the bourgeois mode of exploitation into a social and political framework which remained traditional and largely unaltered in character.

In our country, the causes of the retarded and to a large extent, non-industrial social role of the bourgeoisie are rooted in the colonial past. Thus, the experiment of democracy, a task which the Congress leadership undertook after Independence, could not merely follow from the logic of bourgeois evolution. The democratic ideal grew out of an irresistible challenge presented by the

country-wide mass forces, without which independence would not be possible. Whereas on the one hand, Congress has always been a party of the bourgeoisie, so also, on the other hand, it cannot be denied that its mass influence is the greatest among all other political parties in India. This is perhaps why two trends have equally been at work within the Congress. One is catering to the social weakness of the bourgeoisie by means of the use of state power so that bourgeois dominance may be maintained by force. It is, of course, difficult to make democracy progress along this path. Through its mandates and regulations, the introduction of the 'second way capitalism' mentioned by Marx cannot but become inevitable.

In the other trend, there is an attempt to seek a path to progress by democratic means. Of course, this approach also does not involve any straight opposition to the bourgeoisie ; its purpose is to establish the bourgeoisie in its appropriate social role by means of democratic programmes. Such a social role is, of course, not possible by means of the antiquated mode of free competition, since, in the meanwhile, despite the narrow limits of industrial production, the national economy has become dominated by big monopoly capital. Consequently, the use of state power becomes very necessary in the economic sphere and it has been possible to place such democratic practices before the country as confreres of socialism.

Congress still continues to test the path of democratic experiment. Attempts have been made to relate the arguments for state interference to broader interests of popular welfare. This is manifest in the socialist aims of planning, in the expansion of public sector enterprises, in the recurrent proposals for land reform, or in the growing friendship with the socialist world in the sphere of foreign relations. And the ideals and leadership of Nehru were assuredly significant in the acceptance of this particular action programme. One section of the bourgeoisie must have been active in its desire for establishing its social role by means of democratic methods. It is the fact of this desire which makes the character of the national bourgeoisie different from the motives and activities of big monopoly capitalism and from its conspiratorial affiliations with neo-colonialism.

However, the results that we have experienced during the last twenty-five years of this democratic attempt have not produced concrete action out of the many promises and good intentions. We are reminded again and again of the degree of futility and barrenness of Indian democracy by the severe inequality of wealth, the constant retardation of the production economy, the countrywide supremacy of black money and speculation, the extreme anarchy of the educational system, the terribly growing pressure of the unemployed and the almost universal rampage of corruption and malpractice throughout the country. Leave alone the possibility of the bourgeoisie presenting a sound social and economic role, its failure to take the lead in any independent industrial revolution has been writ large over our experience of the last twenty-five years since independence.

Many people speak of bureaucratic hindrances when they seek reasons for this vast and widespread failure. Today Indiraji's pledge of *Garibi Hatao* has

presented, once again, a new dimension of the programme for progress. Talks of bureaucratic hindrances are beginning to be heard from all directions. In our condition judgement on the problem will not be complete if we identify the hindrances with the unfitness of the bureaucrats, with their inertia or corruptibility or reactionary tendencies. Whereas many instances will be found among them of such faults, examples are not really scarce of honest, hardworking officials, who are unable to implement laws because of political pressure and opposition which may be exerted by parties or individuals. There is a continuous give and take between bureaucratic corruption and malpractices and perverted and greedy political activity. Politics is integrally connected with the state and bureaucrats are after all the servants of the state. Therefore it will not be correct to explain the reason for bureaucratic hindrances being so tough and all-pervading without recognising the catastrophic social futility of all kinds of politics in our country. Bureaucratic functioning has come to be the warped method of our entire politics, the method that divorces each and every regulation from its popular goal and social validity.

In this connexion, one remembers a major premise of the transformation of social and political thought in the post-medieval period which had given shape and content to the ideology of democracy. This premise was that society moulds the state, state does not mould society. This premise has vanished from our politics. Every few years, at the time of electioneering, lists are presented, of who will get for whom, what amount, and by these means attempts are made to gain popular support; but this is done only once in a few years at the time of electioneering. Then starts on the one hand the blind-man's-buff for political patronage, on the other hand the verbalisation at the drop of a hat of revolutionary zeal. Conscious social efforts cannot be formulated for developing alternative choices to resolve various problems at different levels. The popular movements peter out as factional demands for this or that opportunity or differential advantage. One hardly finds the presentation of the social basis of problems, or the attempts to use these challenges as the means of putting pressure on the state or of any struggle in opposition to reaction and vested interests. Because of this social inactivity of politics, many a time the popular representatives are unable to present correct ideas or arguments about the proper dimensions of a problem when they formulate laws with regard to it. The responsibility for such formulation falls on "experts" whose merely academic or administrative expertise is often insufficient for tackling the entire problem. This often happens. So it is not surprising that a gap should remain between the aims and dicta of the law.

This type of futility of democratic state organization makes it possible for ruling parties to be removed from power. Yet Congress has not yet moved away from its democratic experiment since it has not yet become immediately necessary for it to bear the risks of becoming totally autocratic. No nation-wide challenge of an alternative leadership has yet confronted the Congress against its failure in respect of social activity and authority, a failure which leads it to lose its path in the labyrinth of bureaucratic procedures. Even the apprehensions roused by the Fourth General Elections have practically vanished today.

In the course of the last five years Congress have regained mass popular support amidst a whole complex of actions and their reactions; some elements of these seem to be very significant. They may help us to comprehend the true nature of bureaucratic hindrances in our circumstances. I have spoken of two trends of policy and principles within the Congress : their conflict has now entered a decisive phase. Its sharpest proof is to be found in each step of the differences and dissension between Indiraji and the Syndicate. The Congress finally split as a result of these differences. Indiraji has today taken up the difficult task of rebuilding Indian democracy, implicit in the promise of *Garibi Hatao.* Congress has again raised vast hope and support in the minds of people by the proclamation of that goal. However, one cannot be sure about the future of progress unless democratic efforts can be made at each level of the country's life and problems ; this will not be possible unless the vast social responsibilities of this duty can be organizationally fulfilled. It is here that the problems of bureaucratic procedure and its insurmountable hindrances loom large.

We should also be aware of another aspect of the contemporary evidence. It is of course clear that jolted by the *Garibi Hatao* promise and its popularity the right-wing parties would not be able to cope with the Congress. But Indiraji's promise should not have created any very new attractions in states like West Bengal and Kerala where left-wing United Fronts had established themselves in power. But Congress prestige has greatly increased in those states too. In seeking the reasons for this we are confronted by that terrible disappointment, that fearsome experience which showed us that in the exercise of executive power, even as large a left party as the CPM was not at all free from the bureaucratic mentality or its deluded and frenzied lust for power. It is not merely that the CPM would not depart from the traditional Congress maladministration in utilising the official police and the bureaucracy in petty factionalism. The deeper truth is that in this use of executive authority, much of the action and behaviour of the CPM was not associated with any principled social aim. Many promises of progress, many vows for unity were ruined in merely filthy sectarian greed. In fields and barns, in villages and towns, there had awakened among the vast majority of the working people the aspirations of new endeavour, a firm and dignified self-confidence, yet the great possibilities inherent therein were sunk in the bottomless hell of perverse greed because of monstrous blunders and delusions, factionalist strife and chaos. So the U.F. broke up, its promise was lost and the people again sought for redemption in the hands of the Congress.

So after these experiences it must today be admitted that the hindrances of bureaucracy do not merely vest in higher, intermediary or petty government bureaucrats. It is necessary to recognise the special content of state administration for understanding the particular problem of bureaucracy. But that particular problem does not represent the whole picture, which is tied up today with a more complex and greater crisis. In our present condition, the bureaucratic mentality and procedures are more widespread and have engulfed the entire society. We have already seen how that mentality is a form of social thought and action which is cooped within self-defeating practices and procedures. As a result of such practices and procedures, there occurs a divorce of the use of

power, the application of knowledge, the mode of thought or even the course of motivation from legitimate social goal and initiative. Consequently, even working class leadership (of the CPM type) may be whipped into merely anti-social megalomania or frenzied vendettas. As a result, any resolution for working up mass force or mass movement may quite obviously begin to appear to society as a recrudescence of terror. The influence of this sort of bureaucratic mentality and procedure has become vast and widespread among those distinguished people or elite groups who at different levels of society take up the role of directing it or changing its pattern—be such people administrators or politicians.

The results of this default will inevitably be most catastrophic with regard to the central role of political activity. The strength and organization of sound politics constitute the natural and rational means of clarifying and intensifying the just demands of society. For administrators or experts or any other professional worker, the ideal of social progress and the need for responsible loyalty to it can only crystallize through action programme, mass support and will power of the political parties. So, the cure for what we have called the mentality and alienation of bureaucracy appears to be practically unavailable to the extent that it is obscured by the supreme social irresponsibility of political activity.

It is definitely necessary to delve deep into history and sociology for tracing the causes and significance of this severe crisis. And then it might become clear that causes responsible for this extreme crisis were inherent in our colonial past. That led to the inextricable linkage of a kind of capitalist growth and middle-class culture with spurious affluence having little to do for the well-being of the production economy. Following it further one will inevitably be led to think of the disastrous consequences of the abstracted concept-ridden modes of our educational system. These discussions are outside the scope of the present essay. However, the new promise of democratic fulfilment which is before the country today will not succeed if the sort of bureaucratic hindrance, whose character we have been sketching, cannot be destroyed with all the strength of the body and soul we can command. It is urgently necessary to broaden and rationalize the dimensions of activity and struggle in civil society—among workers, peasants, middle-class people and every institution available. It should be remembered that if Indiraji's promise fails, then it is highly probable that the national bourgeoisie may not retain its patience with democracy. If in the meanwhile the political leadership of the working class restricts its democratic opportunities to merely patronage-mongering or to febrile ire at defeat in elections, then there will be no one left to fight on the side of democracy in any future hour of crisis. As a result, the probability of total fascism will then become inevitable. The great and world-wide role of the socialist world will, of course, endeavour to resist this possibility. But after all the quest for a path to progress and strength within our country will have to be found out by ourselves; that cannot really be supposed to be the task of external action by the socialist world.

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'Tradition'—An Enigma ?

Arun Sankar Chowdhury

The word 'tradition' in its bareness is not the same thing as a 'tradition' or 'the tradition'. It has a much broader signification. The *Oxford English Dictionary* gives one meaning as 'artistic or literary principles based on accumulated experience and continuous usage' — a very unsatisfactory solution of the enigma. The many connotations of the word can be described as so many overlapping circles, each of which claims some ground of the others for its own. The OED definition implies such things as the sonnet tradition or the 'metaphysical' tradition, or the pastoral tradition, or even the Wordsworthian tradition in nature-poetry, stretching it a bit. T. S. Eliot, however, gives us another definition, by far the most comprehensive and imaginative one, which 'halts at the frontier of metaphysics or mysticism', as he himself puts it. An awareness of tradition is a most difficult imaginative experience. It requires a breadth of vision, a historical sense (Eliot's phrase), which I do not pretend to have. I am groping for guidelines, as will be quite obvious, and as a result I have only generalities to offer. Hence my apologies.

The opposite of tradition is individuality or novelty. Till the time of Wordsworth nature had been mainly dealt with in English literature as a source of refined pleasure, as embellishment, as decoration. In Wordsworth it becomes intensely personal, informed with a spirit which was almost the substitute of God. This was something totally new in English poetry. Other poets had had glimpses of such a mystic vision before. The correspondence between the world of man and the world of nature had been noted and made use of (as in Shakespeare). But Wordsworth first founded the artistic principle of depicting nature as imbued with a spirit of its own. He was followed by generations of poets until the revolutionary 'principle' became a tradition. Today the tradition has found its way into the hearts of almost all literate men, and we look upon nature with new eyes. We are not conscious of the tradition that continually informs and qualifies our emotional response to natural beauty. It has become very much a part of the continuum into which we are born. Be it considered a bondage or a glorious inheritance, the artist among us has to accept it, quite as much as we have. But Wordsworth had been 'anticipated', and how are we to explain that? He did not *invent* the tradition, we feel. The explanation is simple. Goethe, a true traditionalist, once said that the world is too old to admit of novelty on the part of anybody. The best thoughts have all been thought out, and nothing remains for us to do but to think them over anew.

Tagore endorsed this view in an essay. Now what is the primary duty of the literary artist who desires an audience? To give expression to the emotions, feelings, beliefs, in short, the traditions, of a group of people, *his* people. The artist cannot create only for his own pleasure, in which case the world forsakes him. And if he rejects all connections with the traditions of his country, his times, and his people, he will be rejected in his turn, for understanding springs from sympathy, and sympathy is limited by experience. Since art is inseparable from life and living, it is also inseparable from tradition.

But we shall come to that equation later. What is the creative artist to do? He cannot create new emotions and sympathies. He can only draw people's attention to emotions and sympathies in them which have not been pointed out by others before him. And this is exactly what Wordsworth does. That he had been 'anticipated' merely proves the validity and universality of the experience he has to communicate.

The artist must *entrench* himself in the tradition(s) of a particular people, if he is to approach great art. All art springs from life itself, or life as experienced by the individual. Experience consists primarily of sense-impressions and ideas. And art is the continuous interplay between impressions received by the senses and correspondences observed in the realm of ideas. Ideas in the abstract have an attraction of their own—and this opens a new vein of novelty which has been successfully exploited by many an artist. New intellectual concepts are always novel to some extent. But such concepts seldom have room for further expansion or intensification. Hence they have a tendency to 'date' and are nicely filed and docketed. The artist very rarely hits upon a revolutionizing intellectual concept. He can have his own revolutions by way of intuition or expression. But the intellectual concept of permanent importance (when it influences the pattern of living) is not to be perceived in its totality in a flash—it does not suddenly arise from a heterogeneous mixture of experiences. It has a system of logic quite its own — which must be adhered to. The true artist is usually unable to function within such narrow limits. Thus novelty by way of intellectual concepts is not to be won by him. His laurels grow elsewhere. He can only be intellectually novel at the expense of art.

But we are still to clarify the entrenchment we spoke of. John Milington Synge offers a superb example of conscious, willing entrenchment in the traditions of a people. Following Yeats's advice, he went to the Aran islands, a complete stranger. He stayed there until he had seen life on these islands in all its aspects, its joys and sorrows, its customs, beliefs, superstitions, lores, and its idiom. Thus entrenched he proceeded to embody the experience in writings. He had the further artistic advantage of a certain detachment, for he remained an outsider. His was not a blood kinship but a deeply imaginative one. And his knowledge of literature enabled him to work within the framework of other literary traditions as well, such as that of classical tragedy in *Riders to the Sea.* Synge's is a case where the artist focuses his talent on the raw-material of a tradition of his own choice. Yeats and other members of the Irish dramatic movement made a similar choice. But for most artists the choice is not so consciously made, and often there is no choice. The artist is born into a

certain tradition and has to work within that framework, since total rejection as we have seen, can only prove disastrous.

Eliot writes: "What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits, and customs, from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place." (*After Strange Gods*, 1934). Tradition can, therefore, in the final vision, be as all-embracing as life itself and yet have for one of its components such an insignificant item as 'our conventional way of greeting a stranger'. But why do we consider it 'insignificant'? Man is a creature of custom, as we all know. Ninety-nine per cent of our 'actions' are habitual — grown *natural* to us through long usage. When a fat man slips on a banana skin we laugh. Here we see tradition working at the deepest level, the innermost core of consciousness, the uniform pattern of behaviour of nearly all human beings under certain situations. When a man declares that it is cruel to laugh at a fat man slipping on a banana-skin, we laugh at him too. The human being in community has certain fundamental behavioural patterns which are his most ancient traditions until to-day we hardly know whether the child is or is not born with these pre-dispositions. Let us take another example when a loved parent dies, we cry. The tears flow from a combination of genuine grief and comforting attitudinization. But an 'outsider' can find no tears — as Camus shows — for he is outside the tradition, the way of life and death. Somewhere in the process of growing up he has alienated himself. His reactions to experience are intensely personal and egocentric. He is a misanthrope, we say. Such misanthropes have always been portrayed in literature—Moliere has one, Shakespeare many. It is important to remember that such traditions on the communal or national scale, too, spring from primal, instinctive needs. The Irish have 'keening' and the 'wake' both of which have been superbly used for the purposes of art by Synge. No tradition ever had its birth in mere affection—not even that of the professional mourners in the funeral procession, as found in Greece, for example. It is a monstrous lie, a hideous gesture towards the dead, one may feel. But perhaps it is also symbolic. All rituals are symbolic. We are to-day at a loss to understand how such a tradition could have come into existence. But since it exists, one can be sure that the prime motive had been *real*, that a deep and instinctive need had originally been answered by fake-mourning.

Tradition must not be associated with the immovable, thought of as something hostile to all change, Eliot warns us, though it necessarily has the inertia of all human institutions. Eliot favours a more dynamic view of tradition (leaves growing and undergoing the inevitable process of decay, on the tree of life) and the tree-metaphor he uses argues its organic growth from the roots of life. It is a way of life, a pattern of behaviour, which unrelentingly influences the individual. It embraces all the myriad facets of life. Life consists of a long chain of situations involving choice and decision. The right thing to do varies with time and place. But the individual living in a particular place at a particular point in time, must continuously and spontaneously know the right thing to do. He would have been incapable of facing the millions

of minor crises had it not been for the helping hand of tradition which provides him with time-tested and hence more-or-less reliable solutions to every problem. When a loved parent dies, we become aware of conflicting emotions within us which almost threaten our sanity. Tradition resolves the conflict, eases the grief, and somehow reconciles us to life again. The individual is, however, free to modify these solutions according to what I shall call his 'genius', or even to reject them altogether and strike out on his own. But, as we have said, to deny tradition in its totality is to forsake familiarity and live an exile in one's own land, to loose all identity in the eyes of the world as well as in one's own eyes.

The tradition of one country may have its exact opposite in the tradition of another. For example, the cow has been a sacred animal in India from the dawn of memory, whereas in the Western countries it has simultaneously graced the field and the dinner table. The reasons for such an opposition are—climatic, regarding the nature of the soil, the biological needs of the people, occupational, and thus finally religious. Now, the first generation of English-educated youth in Bengal rebelled against the traditional taboo on beef-eating. They were not establishing a new tradition, as some of them thought, but merely trying to do away with the older one—and even in that they failed. Most of them came from the middle-class, which had no roots in the soil. The peasant of India can readily find sympathy for the tradition to this day, for the conditions of life which originally engendered it have not changed substantially in the rural areas. The new intelligentsia, when they set out to break that tradition, failed to realize that they had never belonged to it.

Now, if that is what tradition is to the ordinary individual, it is also one of the two ways in which tradition affects the artist—as a social being. But tradition has another meaning for the literary artist as an individual in the world of art. In his essay on *Tradition and the Individual Talent* T. S. Eliot expresses the complex of emotion and idea which is tradition to him as a literary artist. I beg permission to quote him at length, even at the risk of seeming highly second-hand. I could have given a dull paraphrase of his vitally alive prose and somehow described in pedestrian terms a vision which Eliot alone was capable of having. But I find it easier to go to the master in all humbleness. Eliot first points out 'our tendency to insist, when we praise a poet upon those aspects of his work in which he least resembles anyone else. In these aspects or parts of his work we pretend to find what is individual, what is the peculiar essence of the man . . . whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice we shall often find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously . . . Yet if the only form of tradition, of handing down, consisted in following the ways of the immediate generation before us in a blind or timid adherence to its successes, "tradition" should positively be discouraged . . . Tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense, . . . and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to

write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense . . . is what makes a writer traditional'. As regards the evaluation of an artist Eliot once again advocates a traditional basis : 'No poet, no artist of any art has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone ; you must set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. . . . The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives ; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered ; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted ; and this is the conformity between the old and the new.'

A work of art can be roughly said to have two dimensions—form and content. Tradition takes on a distinctive meaning in either of these two spheres. In a successful piece of writing form and content are, of course, inseparable. In Camus's *Fall* or Hemingway's *Old Man and the Sea,* the form is a vital element of the theme. There is a story to be told in each novel. And the method of narration is not only intimately directed by the demands and intensities of the story, it has its own part of the story to tell. The liquid mass must be concretized, and given a shape. And while the shape (or form) has a subtle relationship with the nature of the matter contained, it can also put its own mark on the work of art. (This particularly happens when the experience to be communicated is so fluid that the form is *imposed* rather than evolved.)

In literature, traditions regarding the form are what aid and vex the literary artist the most. The artist is aware of the impressions he wants to communicate. The 'intuition' is there within him, urging him towards 'expression'. The artist knows that he cannot have total control over the 'expression'—there is a natural energy in the impressions he has collected which will carve its own path. The most he can do is to decide upon the form beforehand so that some sort of control and communicability is at once guaranteed. Tradition makes itself felt to him even as he tries to decide whether what he has to express will best suit the short lyric poem, or the long narrative poem, or the poetic drama, or a naturalistic prose play, or a novel. Actually there is very little deliberation. For the artist at once 'knows'. His familiarity with the art-forms, the many traditions, immediately makes the right choice on his behalf, and he finds himself thinking in terms of stanzas or cantos or chapters from the very beginning of the creative process. Form and content break surface already in a half-fused state.

It is easy to see that novelty by way of form is not easily achievable, for each of the traditions or art-forms mentioned above has great flexibility and an almost infinite capacity to suit the individual talent. The poetic drama can accommodate an Eliot, and the naturalistic prose-play has added on dimensions until to-day it has room enough for Eugene O'Neill, Tennesee Williams, Arthur Miller and the absurdists. The novel, the one form which has taken maximum

punishment, lends itself to almost all artists and leaves them with the greatest freedom. Because of its very stretchability, so to speak, literary criticism has been forced to recognize smaller traditions within its framework. Hence today we can talk with the greatest ease and understanding of such 'traditions' as the stream of consciousness novel, the picaresque novel, the historical novel, the 'epic' novel, or even just the 'dramatic' novel or the 'romantic' novel.

The individual artist can be original in the truest sense of the term and yet work within a certain tradition, thereby enriching it—almost re-shaping it, one might say. Let us go to Shakespeare for elucidation. Sonnet-sequences had become very much a matter of convention when Shakespeare took up his quill to immortalize Mr. W. H. What Shakespeare had to express was an unusually intense and pure love for a young man much above the poet in station and rank. It was an unusual theme. Shakespeare chose the sonnet-sequence without hesitation. His subject was not absolutely alien to that tradition. The sonnet-sequence is a kind of poetic game in which poets of refined sensibilities would engage for pleasure and for profit. To Shakespeare the rules of the game were not an unnecessary impediment. The discipline of the form was needed for the clear articulation of his ranging emotions. Poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity, Wordsworth said. The 'form' in Shakespeare's case was as much the consequence as the cause of 'tranquillity'; and Shakespeare knew the value of order only too well, in life as in poetry.

In literature no new art-forms have been *invented* over the last few centuries except the novel and the short story. The story of the rise of the English novel is well known. The coming of the printing press, the extension of the reading public, the new middle class with its incessant demand for more reading matter—the causes have been delved into by critics again and again, until very little mystery remains. The kind of mystical aura that surrounds the origins of drama is missing here, mainly because of the availability of documents. The fact to be noted here is that the art-form evolves when the historical need for it was felt. It was Richardson who blundered upon the form, but we feel that its advent was inevitable. The first generation of novel-readers had their own civilization, their own overall tradition and the material for the novel was ready at hand when the novel came. Here we see the relation between form and content in literature, or the two kinds of tradition that influence the artist—his civilization and the 'formal' tradition which arises to express it. The same holds true for the short story. In the breathless modern world there *had to be* such a form. A last example will clarify the point further. The literature of the post-war world is characterized by a certain formlessness. This formlessness in the world of art has its counterpart in our spiritual world—the extremely modern malady of *rootlessness*. A form implies a tradition, and tradition implies roots. It must also be added that in view of the fragmentation of society in our modern world, the possibility of a revival of the epic form has disappeared. And many a renowned critic holds that the novel is our substitute for the epic. The implications are obvious.

The eternal conflict of the artist with tradition (in life or in letters) is one of the most interesting aspects of the history of literature. No age

has ever been fully content with its civilization. The need for change has always been felt. The artist, according to his temperament, has tried to indicate the direction in which change would be most welcome. Often there has only been the need for change, in isolation, producing infinite bitterness and misery. I shall take only three examples, though examples abound, to highlight three different aspects of this conflict with tradition.

Mark Twain, in *Huckleberry Finn* has set forth his own 'boy-child' days on the Mississipi. In his *Life on the Mississipi* he describes all the changes that had come over life on the river in a period of some forty years. From the steam-boating days to the railroading days, in short. America had continually gained economic and commercial prosperity through these decades. Life had become safer, more orderly, more organized. Now, Twain was also a vicious anti-Romantic, as his *Conneciticut Yankee* or the outburst against Scott proves. He tried to be consistent in his acceptance of the machine civilization that was sweeping off the older world he knew, the traditions in which he had been brought up. There was a conflict *within* himself : he could see the good points of both the older tradition and the new. And as a result we find him rebelling in *Huckleberry Finn* against the very civilization he had so eagerly welcomed.

The second case is a parallel one, though preceding the other by a few centuries: Marlowe and the tragedy of Renaissance Humanism is a well-worn topic among literary critics. The Renaissance saw an outburst of energy, hope and ambition which has never been paralleled. The whole humanistic tradition which evolved from the revival of learning was based on an unshakable faith in the perfectability and conquering spirit of man. The world was a battlefield on which laurels were to be won in plenty. This eager buoyant spirit of adventure and conquest is reflected in *Dido* and *Tamburlaine*, Marlowe's early plays. But then the disillusionment starts—with *Doctor Faustus*. There had already been indications in *Tamburlaine*. Now Marlowe's world becomes progressively smaller and meaner. The stature of the hero diminishes. The expansive urge gradually ebbs away into a diminutive trend until, through *Jew of Malta* we arrive at *Edward II*, a narrow, petty, selfish world of men who snap at each other like a pack of hungry dogs. All the stages of the conflict in the artist's mind are faithfully reflected in his work.

The third case is that of Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, the great social novelist of Bengal of the early twentieth century. In him we see the conflict between tradition and the creative artist in the purest form. The traditional structure of Bengali society had attained a state of extreme rigidity when Sarat Babu came on the literary scene. As a man and as a creative artist he could feel within himself certain emotions and sympathies which left no doubt in his mind as to what was his theme. He took up the cause of the individual pitted against an inscrutable *Samaj*. There was no conflict, no division within himself. Hence the extreme clarity and simplicity of his narrative style. Hence the emotive unity of his work as a whole.

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Tagore in his poem *Premer Abhisek* has also given us an imaginative vision of tradition. Love has made the ordinary man a 'King'—this is the theme of the

poem, broadly speaking. But what we are actually shown is the awakening of the historical sense. A common human emotion is established in tradition. The movement is from the individual to the traditional, from time to eternity, from form to idea (Plato) from the circumference to the centre. The immediacy, the obliquity, the uniqueness, the novelty—all these sharp contours are eroded, but the halo of tradition is added. The process is one of *release,* from the bondage of the particular into the sovereign glory of the universal. The lover is conscious of the fact that, 'Love in a hut, is, Love forgive us, Cinders, ashes and dust' (Keats). There is the need for release—

হেথা আমি কেহ নহি,
সহস্রের মাঝে একজন—সদা বহি
সংসারের ক্ষুদ্র ভার, কত অনুগ্রহ
কত অবহেলা সহিতেছি অহরহ।
সেই শত সহস্রের পরিচয়হীন
প্রবাহ হইতে, এই তুচ্ছ কর্মধান
মোরে তুমি লয়েছ তুলিয়া, নাহি জানি
কি কারণে।

Eliot had seen the 'monuments' existing in a timeless order. The lover in Tagore's poem has a vision, too, of a timeless 'Kingdom' of the great lovers through the ages : Nal and Damayanti, Shakuntala, Pururaba, Mahasweta, Subhadra, Shiva and Parvati. He feels a oneness with them, his experience is enhanced and enriched by reverberation

হাত ধরে মোরে তুমি
লয়ে গেছ সৌন্দর্যের সে নন্দনভূমি
অমৃত-আলয়ে। সেথা আমি জ্যোতিষ্মান
অক্ষয়যৌবনময় দেবতা সমান,
সেথা মোর লাবণ্যের নাহি পরিসীমা,
সেথা মোরে অর্পিয়াছে আপন মহিমা
নিখিল প্রণয়ী।

Tradition thus becomes a sense of unity with the world-spirit. Wordsworth's solitary reaper, and Keats's nightingale, both undergo a similar transformation, from the individual to the universal. Najrul has shown that emplacement in tradition can glorify even such a thing as poverty—

হে দারিদ্র্য, তুমি মোরে করেছ মহান।
তুমি মোরে দানিয়াছ খৃষ্টের **সম্মান,**
কণ্টকমুকুটশোভা। [The crown again, though a crown of thorns.]

If poetry is the deepest feeling of the human heart, whatever stirs it deeply has to be enshrined in that central core of universal tradition, the one from which the many emanate.

The World of Young Aurobindo
Bengal, 1872-1905

Hiren Chakrabarti

Aurobindo Ghose was born a hundred years ago when the sun never set on the British empire. Ocean highways were bejewelled with British posts, India being the brightest jewel of them all. Imperialists shuddered to think what would happen were India free: 'We should lose its splendid market. . . ; we should lose. . . the only formidable element in our fighting strength ; . . . we should sink into a third-rate power.'[1] The motive behind the possession of India was admittedly selfish, but consolation was to be had from the thought of carrying the White Man's burden. Despotic but benevolent, British rule had brought peace and unity to a land once torn by internecine war ; English education and the Western sciences were bringing an ancient but priest-ridden people to the threshold

of modern times; and the Guardians, so some of them believed, were preparing their Indian wards in the art of self-government.

Among the rulers the pride of place went of course to the Viceroy. For the bureaucracy he was the incarnation of *izzat* or prestige and, for the Indians, long used to absolute rule, an imitation-Mughal. Chosen however for four or five years, the Viceroy was a bird of passage, who came and went with very little understanding of the Indian world. The bureaucrats—the District Magistrates, Superintendents of Police, Divisional Commissioners, etc.—had a much longer stay during which they took great pains for what they described as the 'moral and material progress' of the people. But their interests also lay at 'home'.

They were the Guardians of India. But there were Indians who thought otherwise, and risings dotted the later nineteenth century. Some of these were tribal, some agrarian, and most of them local. The rising of 1857, the swansong of the Princes, was on a much larger scale, but it was thoroughly suppressed by the Company Bahadur, and the Princes were made faithful allies of the Raj, the co-sharers in its pomp and pageantry. The masses of agricultural and labouring proletariat also stood wholly outside of political life. They were Muslims or untouchables or members of the lower castes of Hindu society. English education had not 'enlightened' them and, as ever, they were fatalistic and far too much taken up with the task of earning a livelihood. For them, the *sarkar,* as represented by the tyrannical Indian *daroghas,*[2] was *ma-bap.* On the whole, *pax Britannica,* aided by the Penal Code, ruled supreme.

Our self-styled historians of the *swadeshi* movement, who wax eloquent over Sri Aurobindo, their only stock-in-trade, seem to be blissfully ignorant of the social and economic origins of Indian nationalism in the years which saw him grow to manhood. Political consciousness in the years after 1857 was confined for the most part to the English-educated professional people and rent-receivers, most of whom came from the upper castes of Hindu society. In Bengal, where British rule had first entrenched itself, they were known as *bhadralok.* Unlike the Western 'middle classes' they were not the products of changes in the means of production. Trade and industry held little attraction for their *bhadralok* tastes. Their caste rules also prevented any great social mobility of the Western type. Their interests differed from those of the Princes. Considerable numbers of them were sustained by the Permanent Settlement (1793) of the land revenue. Aware of the material gains to be had from knowing English, they sent their sons to schools to receive English education. At the same time some of them—Aurobindo's father being one —had no doubt been impressed by the culture of the West. Thus they lay politically serene in 1857 and busied themselves with social and religious reforms, if not with westernisation.

Nevertheless, the pollination of Western ideas combined with their own economic distress politically to rouse the *bhadralok.* The study of Romantic literature and the European history of revolt germinated the sentiments of nationality and liberty among them. Besides, the Indian summer of the Bengali

bhadralok was over by the 1870s, and quite a number of zamindars and lesser rent-receivers were found to be in a decaying state. Subinfeudation of zamindari rights had created, within eighty years of the introduction of the Permanent Settlement, myriads of rent-receivers with intermediate tenure-holding interests. The inheritance laws also led to the splitting up of tenures into innumerable shares. In the hope of eking out their income the *bhadralok* began frantically to look for other avenues of employment. They filled the clerical posts or became teachers. Many crowded the bar to form what Bipinchandra Pal reminiscingly described as the *Vakil Raj*[3] and to become disgruntled lawyers with little respect for 'legitimate' means of agitation. The more ambitious among them looked higher up, at the 'heaven-born' Indian Civil Service.[4] The *bhadralok* patriotic agitation was about to begin.

But theirs was an odd kind of patriotism. They naively agreed with the Guardians that British rule was a godsend for India. Their agitation had therefore a pedestrian beginning. It began not with a demand for political rights but with petitions for employment within the framework of the Raj. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858, which had promised educated Indians free and impartial admission to 'Offices in Our Service', was the Magna Carta to the Indian proto-nationalists who had been bred on the history of England.

Competitive examinations for the I.C.S. were held in England. England was a far cry. It also held numerous fears for the domesticated *bhadralok*. Besides, the Government did not want that Indians, especially Bengalis, should be in the I.C.S. Possibly vexed by the thought that Bengalis would one day be their intellectual equals, the higher authorities began to doubt their manly virtues.[5] The English-educated *bhadralok* were undaunted. Though brown, they wanted to share the White Man's burden. The admission in 1869 of Surendranath Banerjea and two other Bengalis to the I.C.S. was, as Surendra-nath's disciple and later his opponent, Bipinchandra Pal, put it, for many of their compatriots 'really the inauguration of a new movement... to enter the Civil Service in increasing numbers and thereby gradually take charge of the administration of our country into our own hands'.[6]

The civilian-patriots were no doubt imperialists born in the wrong country. Some rude shocks were in store for them. Surendranath was dismissed in 1874 for a peccadillo. His educated countrymen considered his dismissal 'an open attack by the British officials... upon their rights as equal [sic] subjects of the Britannic Majesty... This was really the beginning of our political conflict... which was the parent of our . . . freedom movement.'[7] Two years later, the maximum age-limit for admission into the I.C.S. was lowered from 21 to 19—another 'deliberate attempt' in the eyes of the *bhadralok* to strengthen the bar against them.[8] The Viceroy Lord Lytton did not know whether Government could 'answer satisfactorily the charge of having taken every means in their power of breaking to the heart the word of promise they have uttered to the ear.'[9]

'Surrender-not' took up the challenge. Through his newly formed Indian Association he began to politicise English-educated Indians in many provinces—a thing that had never been tried before. He began to lecture Calcutta students about Mazzini and Garibaldi. Some secret societies were formed and young Bengalis—always the ready dupes of politicians—began to dream of martyrdom in the cause of would-be civilians. In his salad days (1876?) Rabindranath Tagore had been a member of one such secret society, of which he has left us an interesting account in his *Jivansmriti*. Pal admitted: 'Politics did not involve in those days any sufferings . . . The whole thing was ... a pastime'.[10]

Surendranath's aim had been twofold : raising the age-limit for I.C.S. candidates and the holding of competitive examinations simultaneously in England and India. His Indian Association was no doubt an elite group trying to excite others only in order that its own interests might be served. Nationalism—or rather a community of feeling—among English-educated Indians was a by-product of this agitation. Meanwhile the supply of subordinate appointments had also continued to fall short of the demand of the ever-growing English-educated for whom job-hunting became an exercise in wild goose-chase. Numerous political associations were formed in the districts of Bengal. There were unpleasant press criticisms of the Government's employment policy and of racial arrogance on the part of some caddish members of the ruling community. Lytton's answer was the Vernacular Press Act of 1878.

Meanwhile, in 1873, the Brahmo reformer Rajnarayan Basu, who was 'the grandfather of Indian nationalism' as well as of the year-old Aurobindo, had started sighing as an ancient Hindu ('*briddha* Hindu') for '*sekal*' (good old days) and asserted the excellence of Hinduism. Many anglicised Hindus felt further proud of their past when, in 1879, the Theosophical Society came to India to proclaim the greatness of orthodox Hinduism.[11] It was about this time that Bengal's leading publicist, Bankimchandra Chatterjee, wrote the song which was destined to provide the nationalist slogan, *Bande Mataram*. In 1882 the song founda a place in *Anandamath*, his novel about the *sannyasi* rebels of the 1770s.

Next year came the Anglo-Indian agitation against the Ilbert Bill to raise Indian nationalism from its job-hunting level. The Bill had aimed at giving Indian District Magistrates and Sessions Judges the power to try European British subjects. The *Burra Sahibs*, who formed in India a super-caste of 'white Brahmins', were upset at the thought of trial before uncivilised 'natives'. They threatened personal violence to the Viceroy, Lord Ripon, who virtually dropped the Bill like a hot potato. The moral was plain to the *bhadralok*. First, they learned from the Anglo-Indians 'the A.B.C. of seditious campaign'. The Ilbert Bill agitation 'burnt into the mind of the Indian politician the fateful lesson that if India is to protect . . . her legitimate rights, she must initiate as violent an agitation'.[12] Second, racial antagonism between rulers and ruled was exacerbated. The spell of England on many educated Bengalis began to wear off and the conviction was born that India must develop on her own lines instead of imitating

the West. Social reforms and westernisation received a jolt, and politics and religion began to mingle. Social evils like caste and untouchability began to be held up as marks of virtue rather than of vice. Even the modernist Brahmo Keshub Chandra Sen, whose admiration for Christian values had made him a loyalist, came under the influence of Ramakrishna and felt nostalgic about Hindu tradition. Neo-Vaishnavism flourished under Keshub's associate Vijaykrishna Goswami, who found patriotic disciples in Bipin Pal and Ashwini Dutt. Rabindranath had already composed his songs in praise of Radha and Krishna. Now his *guru,* Bankim, began to write on the messianic Krishna, whose virtues the degenerate Hindus were called upon to cultivate. Christ was giving way to Krishna, and the Gita was being substituted for the Bible.

The Moderates of the Indian National Congress, which was founded in 1885, refused to listen to this peccant string in Indo-British relations. They fondly imagined themselves as representing Her Majesty's Opposition in India. They tried to influence public opinion in England through 'constitutional agitation'. They prayed for simultaneous examinations, the reduction of military expenditure, the separation of the judiciary from the executive, a wider basis of Government, and so on. Their prayers met with little success. The walls of Whitehall, Calcutta, and the cloudland of Simla stood unbreached. The Viceroy Lord Dufferin, who had fathered the Congress, left it in the lurch by ignoring it as a 'microscopic minority' which represented neither the peasants nor the nobles. Moreover, the huge minority community of Muslims, led by Sir Syed Ahmed of Aligarh, were left cold by Congress agitation. The social, economic and educational disparity between Hindus and Muslims and the Muslim fear that the ballot box would mean Hindu rule ensured Muslim loyalty.

While the Moderates continued to indulge in their fatuous oratory each year during their three-day '*tamasha*', a new kind of politicians began to emerge—the Extremists. Moderate methods displeased them. But this is not to say that the failure of Moderate methods caused the rise of Extremism, though it is usual for our historians to suppose so. Moderates and Extremists are unsatisfactory terms and may be used only for the sake of convenience. The two terms presuppose that both groups had the same goal and that the dispute between them was about methods to arrive at that goal. On the contrary, the aims of the two groups were basically different. To distinguish between their methods is therefore irrelevant.

The Moderates, with their firm belief in the British sense of justice, tried to purge the British Raj of its 'un-British' or ignoble elements and to consolidate their own position under the protecting British Government or, at best, a colonial self-government. Moderation as a method—prayers and petitions—admirably suited their modest ambition. The Extremist protest, on the other hand, was not against 'un-British' rule but against British rule itself. The goal of the Extremists was freedom, though they did not frankly say this until 1906. Besides this political goal, they had a cultural programme. Revolted by the anglophile ways of the Moderates they began to look askance at anything likely to

westernise India and confirm British hold over her. They looked forward to seeing an India which was stubbornly Indian, preferably Hindu, and uncorrupted either by British rule or by Western civilisation. Much of this new spirit was dross and uncritical bombast, but it was to serve its purpose by appealing keenly to the national pride.

New forces had to be gathered against British rule till an open war could be declared against it. Bankimchandra's literary successor, Rabindranath, coined the word *atmashakti* (self-help or self-reliance) and added it to the Extremist vocabulary. Tilak of Maharashtra began to rally orthodox Hindus in support of the Extremist cause. Aurobindo of Bengal went one better. At Cambridge he had elegised on Parnell, taken a First, and refused to take the riding test for the I.C.S. Back in India, he strongly pleaded for *New Lamps for Old*—the manoeuvring of the proletariat instead of depending on the English-educated few. Two British officers were assassinated at Poona at the time of the Diamond Jubilee celebration of the reign of Queen Victoria. In the same year Swami Vivekananda, the worshipper of Kali, began to call on young Bengalis to be *abhih* or fearless. Once again they began to form associations devoted to physical culture and to Vivekananda's ideal of social service, *not* social reform. The Calcutta Anushilan Samiti, founded at the turn of the century, was one such association. Aurobindo's brother Barin was soon to join forces with it. The fiery Nivedita, on whom the Swami's mantle fell in 1902, had already seen Aurobindo, who was teaching in Baroda and toying with the idea of a revolution in cooperation with the Marathas.

Meanwhile the Viceroy Lord Curzon had come to assist the Raj to its demise.[13] An efficiency-monger, he did everything in his power to enrage the disgruntled *bhadralok*. He curtailed their power over municipal administration. His holier-than-thou homile on the Eastern standard of truth stung their self-respect. His statement on the necessity of putting the 'natives' in their place and keeping the highest offices for Englishmen was naturally regarded by the Bengalis as a reflection on their own competence. His Universities Bill, which aimed at lessening the number of 'discontended B.A.s and the army of failed candidates', offended them.[14] But above all, his Partition of Bengal (1905) arrayed many Bengalis against the Government.

The original motive behind the Partition was excellent. Bengal was an unwieldy province which included Bihar and Orissa besides Bengal proper. To be efficiently administered it had to be partitioned. But by insisting, in the face of endless protests, on partitioning Bengal proper, Curzon gave rise to the suspicion that his real motive was political and not administrative. The Partition was resented because, as Curzon himself said, it threatened to 'cut athwart the political ambitions of those . . . agitators who looked in the future to an occasion when they might bring the undivided force of the whole Bengali race to bear upon the . . . Government in their struggle for political concessions'.[15] Bengali Hindu agitators, more than the province of Bengal, had become too

unmanageable. Calcutta was their chief centre of agitation. But it was not the only centre. Dacca and Mymensingh, two eastern districts of Bengal, had become 'a hotbed of the purely Bengali movement, unfriendly if not seditious'. There was political advantage in severing these districts from Bengal proper and joining them with Assam.[16] Besides these two districts, a few other eastern and north Bengal districts were added to Assam to form a province 'where Mahommedan interests would be strongly represented if not predominant'.[17] Curzon found it 'desirable to encourage the growth of . . . local aspirations' instead of the growth of an all-Bengal feeling.[18]

The Partition had however come too late to nip Bengali nationalism in the bud. Instead it caught a Tartar. Aurobindo came over from Baroda to take up Principalship of the Bengal National College and write for the Extremist organ *Bande Mataram*. British goods were boycotted. Terrorism followed suit when the *bhadralok-chotolok* dichotomy in Bengali society prevented a universal resistance to British rule. In this struggle however Bengali literature and art received a great accession of strength, mainly in the hands of Rabindranath and his nephew Abanindranath. The Bengali *bhadralok* was found to be less lotus-eating than before and more dangerous than the *bandarlog* at whom Kipling had scoffed.[19] The Partition thus signalised the first serious clash between the Raj and the ambitious literati of Bengal—a clash which very soon lost its anti-Partition character and became anti-British. The father-figure of the Raj began to recede. The bluff of a few thousand Englishmen ruling millions in India was no longer working well. From now on the unrest became continuous. Shadows began to lengthen across the empire, though the sun was to take more than forty years to set.

NOTES

1 Curzon, *The Place of India in the Empire*, London 1909, pp. 12-13.
2 Police Commission Report, 1905, paras 23-30, 201.
3 B. C. Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Calcutta 1951, vol. ii, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv.
4 For further details regarding the socio-economic origins of terrorism in Bengal, see Hiren Chakrabarti, 'Boycott, Boma o Bhadralok', *Chaturanga*, 1969-70.
5 Viceroy Lawrence to Secretary of State for India, 17 Aug. 1867, quoted in B. B. Misra, *The Indian Middle Classes*, London 1961, pp. 371-73.
6 Pal, *op. cit.*, pp. xvii-xxiii.
7 *Ibid.*
8 *Ibid.*
9 Quoted in Anil Seal, *The Emergence of Indian Nationalism*, Cambridge 1968, p. 139.
10 Pal, *Memories of My Life and Times*, Calcutta 1932, vol. i, pp. 232-48.
11 Charuchandra Dutt, *Purano Katha* (Reminiscences, in Bengali), Calcutta 1936, pp. 87-88.
12 Pal, *Memories* etc., i, 408-11.
13 Cf. Curzon's well-known letter, 18 Nov. 1900, to the Secretary of State for India: 'My own belief is that Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise'.
14 Curzon, *Speeches*, Calcutta 1904, vol. iii, p. 262.
15 Parliamentary Debates, 4th series, vol. 191, columns 506-12.
16 Curzon Papers (India Office Library, London), vol. 247, Curzon's minute of 1 June 1903.
17 *Ibid.*, Govt of India to Bengal Govt, 13 Sept. 1904.
18 *Ibid.*, Govt of India to Secretary of State, 2 Feb. 1905.
19 Rudyard Kipling, 'Road-Song of the Bandar-Log' and 'Kaa's Hunting', *The Jungle Book*, 1st ed. 1894.

With Malice Towards None

Frank and Fair.

Surprised eyebrows may be raised at the publication of the Magazine after such a long time, not forgetting the impish one published three years ago. The issue at hand is not a white paper nor a yellow journal nor a red book. We have attempted to revive some of the traditional colours of the College Magazine in so far as they have appealed to us.

Suggestions poured in on us but genuine co-operation and help were scarce as we gingerly went about the work of producing this vulnerable printed matter. Help and co-operation came in abundance from the Professor-in-charge, Dr. Hiren Chakrabarti, who knew this issue intimately as it grew and kept a benign eye on our work though leaving room for independent thinking. We are also beholden

to Prof. Arun Kumar Das Gupta who went out of his way to help us in producing this issue. No word of thanks can express our gratefulness to Sri Satyajit Ray who found time to produce the piece of art that decorates the cover, and the lettering that embellishes our title page. These he did in spite of his numerous other enterprises of great pitch and moment and despite the fact that a lot of irrelevant lampoon had been hurled at him in our last issue. The tall man found it nobler in his mind to forgive than to look back in anger.

We can add quite a few cubits to our heights as we have traversed the not-so-primrose path to this issue more or less alone. The first thorn in the way was the budget : the authorities seemed strangely ignorant of the increase in paper and printing costs. A point that must be made here is that why don't professors contribute to the Magazine Fund ? After all, it is a College Magazine and professors are as much a part of the college as the students are.

Then came the traumatic experience regarding contributions. We know from this time's experience that contributions showing some level of cerebration are really rare. What poured into the Magazine Box was largely short-stories and poems, particularly the latter. Verily has Tagore written that poetry is a passion with Bengalis (For heaven's sake, don't write letters or pass comments on this, for if Tagore did not say such a thing then he should have.) The poems that we received were more akin to banshee wails than to poems and to Double Dutch than either.

Contributions from the Science stream were few and far between. We presume that those who did not write are too submerged in their text-books and too pre-occupied with getting first classes to stoop to the low level of a Magazine that does not help in examination success. The Post-Graduate students, as in all other activities of the College, looked on like step-brothers ; most of them are perhaps too erudite to write in a College Magazine, they would rather spend their time in intellectual verbosity or in superior silence than put pen to paper.

Contributions from girls were infrequent. The feminine members are after all too concerned with their sarees, their cosmetics, their beauty and their human relations (*sic*). This being the age of Women's Lib., we must grant them the right to blush and giggle. We write these lines with no hard feelings but in our own pessimistic and wondering mood we record rather than condemn the strangeness of the time.

* * * *

"That undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns."

Every year death takes away some of those who had held aloft the name and pride of the College, many of whose names had added lustre to our alumni rolls. But that great inevitable has been particularly severe in the immediate past.

We lost Prof. Srikumar Banerjee, the eminent scholar and the *mastarmahasay* of several generations,

Prof. Prosanto Mahalanobis, the grand old man of statistics and so many other branches of learning left us this year.

Prof. Tarak Sen passed into time eternal, leaving a great void in the tradition of Percival and Prafulla Ghosh and in the lives of so many of his students, friends and admirers.

Thanks to our firebrand revolutionaries the death of Prof. J. C. Sengupta passed unmentioned in the last issue of the College Magazine. Prof. Sengupta was not only the Principal of the College for a considerable period of time but was responsible in many ways for bringing the College to its present shape. We mourn his death, regret the fact that his death was overlooked and recall his dedication and his life-long work for the College.

Those whom the gods love, the wise tell us, die early. In the process of this divine love, we have lost somebody whom we deeply revered and sincerely loved. We refer to Prof. Amal Bhattacharji whose quiet, gentle but overwhelming presence and stupendous scholarship are memory now. Prof. Bhattacharji's mortal remains have perished, but his spirit lives in the enthusiasm, inspiration, learning and sincerity he permeated among the younger generation of English scholars. Prof. Bhattacharji will never be forgotton by all those that knew him and his students will forever murmur "More is thy due than more than all can pay."

Prof. Suren Majumdar passed away this year. Quite a major portion of his long life had been spent as a History teacher in the College.

Our condolences go out to the families of Janab Safar Ali and Sri Rakesh Deb Roy. Their deaths have deprived the Science Library and the Physiology Department of two able workers. May their souls rest in peace.

While going to press news came of the sudden death of Prof. S. S. Poddar of the English Department. In his death we have lost a valuable teacher.

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Snippets of Significance.

Abu Sayeed Chaudhuri : With the election of Abu Sayeed Chaudhuri as the President of Bangladesh, our college has the rare honour of producing two Presidents of two separate countries. The President of Bangladesh honoured the College with a visit on December 4.

Ashin Das Gupta : The Head of the Department of History, Dr. Ashin Das Gupta, has left for Heidelberg on a guest professorship. Though the students of history now miss the lectures of one of their most brilliant professors, let them not forget that Prof. Das Gupta's presence on the Continent may mean another bout of document-hunting at the Hague and new light perhaps on some aspects of Indian trade.

Bishnu Dey : All lovers of literature must have been extremely pleased at Bishnu Dey receiving the *Jnanpith* award. We were particularly elated as the poet had been for some time a professor in the English Department of the College.

JNU's gain : Dr Tapas Majumdar of the Department of Economics and Dr Sivatosh Mukherjee of the Department of Zoology have gone away to Jawaharlal Nehru University. JNU's gain has been Presidency's loss.

Soumen Bhattacharya : Rhodes Scholarships are a coveted prize for students all over the Commonwealth, Germany and U.S.A. Soumen Bhattacharya, a student of our college, received the Indian scholarship in 1971. He is presently at Exeter College, Oxford.

Sukanta Chaudhuri : Fresh laurels have been brought to the College by Sukanta Chaudhuri who has received a congratulatory first in English at the Oxford University.

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A Centre for Economic Studies.

A new development in the College is the Centre for Economic Studies set up by the U.G.C. This provides opportunity for the expansion of the Economics Department which has now a possibility of developing into a School for Economic Studies. The Centre that has been set up is a part of Presidency College and is controlled by the Principal; such a centre is absolutely novel in India at the under-graduate level. The U.G.C. is going to provide the centre with books, journals and even a building. This Centre has started functioning from April 1972 under the Chairmanship of Dr Bhabatosh Datta. As a part of the activities of the Centre two seminars have been held by Dr Amartya Sen and Dr Asoke Mitra.

* * * *

Refreshingly Yours.

As we go to press another awkward squad will be joining the College, another set of exuberant teenagers will be passing through that transition from school-boy's satchel to loose-leaf files, from home-work to class notes and tutorials. But before this issue sees the light of day that agonized transition will perhaps be over, and another set of freshers will have become tanned Presidentians. By that time many a Darby will have found his future Joan and many a David his life-time Jonathan. The Presidency way of life would have been at work on them ; the way of life which will melt into the numerous infinitesimal incidents —perhaps the details of routine life, the delightful chatter in the portico, a bit of praise from the professors or hours of empty talk with a starry-eyed co-ed— that go to make these years some of our happiest. The years will remain chiselled in the memory and will come flooding back to us to make us cheerful when all our revels are nearing their inevitable end.

RUDRANGSHU MUKHERJEE.

Our Contributors

Anup Sinha: Student of 3rd year (outgoing) Economics ; able debater who takes active interest in politics and cultural affairs ; plays the violin well ; he packs a lot of knowledge and guts beneath his apparent eccentricity in leg and arms ; a sentimentalist to the core with an excellent aptitude for soap-box oratory (a favourite of the fair sex?)

Arun Sankar Chowdhury: student of 2nd year M.A. (English) ; interested in cultural activities ; a burly jester who considers himself to be such a bright light that he hands over a pair of sunglasses when he talks to somebody.

Asok Sen: ex-alumnus ; now Reader in Economics at Burdwan University and fellow of the Indian Council of Social Science Research.

A. M. Gun: ex-student ; Head of the Department of Statistics.

Barun De: ex-alumnus ; now Professor of History at Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

Hiren Chakrabarti: ex-student ; Professor of History.

Jasodhara Bagchi: ex-alumnus ; teaches English at Jadavpur University.

Jayanta Mitra: student of 3rd year (outgoing) English ; tries to debate ; interested in drama ; a good pianist and a specialist at confronting girls with a benign, benevolent smile (to mask how many gallons of tears?)

Kalyan Chatterjee: student of 3rd year (outgoing) Physics ; an excellent debater and a strict logician whose attempts to snub everybody in sight are merely efforts to dissuade others from taking him seriously (why doesn't he leave and let live?)

Kamal Ghatak: ex-student and ex-editor ; now Assistant Professor of History.

Kuruvilla Zachariah: the finest teacher of History in the annals of Presidency College. 'Zach', as he was known at Oxford, where he took a first in Modern History, was described by his tutor, Arthur Johnson, as one of the best pupils he had had for forty-five years.

Rudrangshu Mukherjee: student of 3rd year History ; a good cricketer and a keen drama, film, reading and *adda* enthusiast, a cynic and a snob who is bent on proving that one can be an intellectual without having any intellect.

Subodh Sen Gupta: ex-student, ex-editor ; former Professor of English.

Sukanta Chaudhuri: ex-alumnus ; just back from Oxford where he was capped with a first in English ; presently lazing at home between bouts of job-hunting.

Tanika Sarkar: student of 2nd year M.A. (outgoing) History.

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1915-17	Mohit Kumar Sen Gupta	Prafulla Kumar Sircar
1917-18	Saroj Kumar Das	Ramaprasad Mukhopadhyay
1918-19	Amiya Kumar Sen	Mahmood Hasan
1919-20	Mahmood Hasan	Paran Chandra Gangooli
1920-21	Phiroze E. Dastoor	Shyama Prasad Mookerjee
1921-22	Shyama Prasad Mookerjee Brajakanta Guha	Bimal Kumar Bhattacharjyya Uma Prasad Mookerjee
1922-23	Uma Prasad Mookerjee	Akshay Kumar Sirkar
1923-24	Subodh Chandra Sen Gupta	Bimala Prasad Mukherjee
1924-25	Subodh Chandra Sen Gupta	Bijoy Lal Lahiri
1925-26	Asit K. Mukherjee	
1926-27	Humayun Kabir	Lokes Chandra Guha Roy
1927-28	Hirendranath Mukherjee	Sunit Kumar Indra
1928-29	Sunit Kumar Indra	Syed Mahbub Murshed
1929-30	Taraknath Sen	Ajit Nath Roy
1930-31	Bhabatosh Dutta	Ajit Nath Roy
1931-32	Ajit Nath Roy	Nirmal Kumar Bhattacharjee
1932-33	Sachindra Kumar Majumdar	Nirmal Kumar Bhattacharjee
1933-34	Nikhilnath Chakravarty	Girindra Nath Chakravarti

Year	Editors	Secretaries
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1935-36	Kalidas Lahiri	Prabhat Kumar Sircar
1936-37	Asok Mitra	Arun Kumar Chandra
1937-38	Bimal Chandra Sinha	Ram Chandra Mukherjee
1938-39	Pratap Chandra Sen Nirmal Chandra Sen Gupta	Abu Sayeed Chowdhury
1939-40	A. Q. M. Mahiuddin	Bimal Chandra Datta
1940-41	Manilal Banerjee	Prabhat Prasun Modak
1941-42	Arun Banerjee	Golam Karim
1942-46	No Publication	
1947-48	Sudhindranath Gupta	Nirmal Kumar Sarkar
1948-49	Subir Kumar Sen	Bangendu Gangopadhyay
1949-50	Dilip Kumar Kar	Sourindramohan Chakravarti
1950-51	Kamal Kumar Ghatak	Manas Mukutmani
1951-52	Sipra Sarkar	Kalyan Kumar Das Gupta
1952-53	Arun Kumar Das Gupta	Jyotirmoy Pal Chaudhuri
1953-54	Ashin Ranjan Das Gupta	Pradip Das
1954-55	Sukhamoy Chakravarty	Pradip Ranjan Sarbhadhikari
1955-56	Amiya Kumar Sen	Devendra Nath Banerjee
1956-57	Asoke Kumar Chatterjee	Subal Das Gupta
1957-58	Asoke Sanjay Guha	Debaki Nandan Mondal
1958-59	Ketaki Kushari	Tapan Kumar Lahiri
1959-60	Gayatri Chakravarty	Rupendu Majumdar
1960-61	Tapan Kumar Chakravarty	Ashim Chatterjee
1961-62	Gautam Chakravarty	Ajoy Kumar Banerjee
1962-63	Badal Mukherji Mihir Bhattacharya	Alok Kumar Mukherjee
1963-64	Pranab Kumar Chatterjee	Pritis Nandy
1964-65	Subhas Basu	Biswanath Maity
1965-66	No Publication	
1966-67	Sanjay Kshetry	Gautam Bhadra
1967-68	No Publication	
1968-69	Abhijit Sen	Rebanta Ghosh
1969-70	No Publication	
1970-72	No Publication	
1972-73	Anup Kumar Sinha	Rudrangshu Mukherjee