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CONTENTS

PROLEGOMENA TO THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT GREEK TEACHINGS OF REINCARNATION

A study of the eschatological doctrines into which the belief in reincarnation flowered in Greece will always remain one of the most fascinating ventures into the Classical field. Even so, it is a study that can never be satisfactorily accomplished in the present state of our knowledge and must at best remain superficial and incomplete.

The reason for this is the fragmentary and cryptic nature of the evidence, the Greek teachings based on this belief being largely material of mystery religion, in which they were vouchsafed only to the initiate, and transmission was in secret or in symbol. As a result the better portion of them has passed irrevocably into oblivion, while what survives are the scraps and details of doctrine which had reached the ears of the *profanum vulgus* through a leakage of some sort, or belonged to the broad general pattern of the teachings which was public knowledge anyhow.

In the instance of Plato too, in whose case the material of the reincarnation teaching is fuller, there is reason for thinking that there underlies a certain amount of symbolic meaning that is not readily understood by the uninitiate; Socrates himself remarks in the *Phaedo* the existence of certain teachings that were even 'unutterable' (ἄρρητα), among which was the reason he advances there as to why it is wrongful for a philosopher to set himself free from life by suicide.[1]

The nature and state of the evidence has, as a result, led to two different approaches to the subject; the one, philological and setting out to discover the form which the various reincarnation eschatologies had assumed, by a process of sifting the evidence and distinguishing the early

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1. 62b. Socrates calls this particular teaching a great teaching and one which is not easy to comprehend (μέγας τέ τίς μοι φαίνεται καὶ οὐ ῥᾴδιος διιδεῖν.)

from the late, the genuine from the spurious; the other, largely interpretative and venturing to pierce the superficial meaning and discover the hidden significance of these obviously mystical doctrines. If the former has often failed to do justice to the suggestivity and rich appeal of these religious teachings from a fear of reading too much in the evidence, the latter has as often erred on the other extreme, making excessive inferences upon the evidence, even where it is obviously plain and straightforward.

Rebirth doctrines of the Classical period confine themselves to the teachings of the religious teachers and philosophers from Orpheus to Plato, with whom such a belief has been prominently associated. While making the main concern of the task the reconstruction of these teachings from a sifting and collation of the extant evidence, a certain amount of interpretation is inevitable of the various features and details of these teaching in the light of one another and the comparable teachings of other nations, if the study is to be of any worth. There existed no recent work on this subject as such that is both critical and exhaustive before I undertook my own researches in the subject.[2] H.S. Long's *A Study of the Doctrine of Metempsychosis in Greece from Pythagoras to Plato*,[3] which covered this ground, is unfortunately too brief to do justice to the subject, though he does find opportunity to throw new light on many points of interest. What is also regretable

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2. 'Ancient Greek Notions of the Reincarnation of the Soul', Ph.D. thesis presented to Queen Mary College, University of London,1963 (unpublished), of which this article is a slightly revised version of the Introduction. The study left out consideration of Orpheus and the Orphic Tablets, since I was then of the view that the early evidence of the former had no indication of reincarnation to justify drawing on the latter, while the latter was of uncertain date and reference to be used to supplement the former.

3. N. Jersey. (1948).

in his dismissal of Orphism and much that could safely be added to the teaching of Pythagoras by a stringency that exceeds the need of caution. It is true that Linforth's notable study of the evidence on Orphism before 300 B.C., in his *The Arts of Orpheus*,[4] does not turn up any direct proof for early Orphism of a teaching of reincarnation, but there do exist two or three good indications of the presence of such a thing, together with the features of an eschatology based upon it.[5] As for the expedient adopted in the case of Pythagoras of falling back upon the earliest evidence alone on the score that much of the late evidence is suspect, it certainly saves the labour but on that account also loses the fruit of it.

In general the tendency has been, in the case of Orphism and Pythagoras, one of indiscriminate use of the evidence, both early and late, with little or no regard for historical development or the existence of a large quantity of spurious material. More often than not the study of these doctrines has been confused by the assumption, without substantial proof, that those features of the belief which appear in the writings of Pindar, Empedocles and Plato derive from Orphism and Pythagoreanism, and sometimes, that the teachings of Pythagoras themselves derive from Orphism, or vice versa.

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4. Berkeley, California. (1941)

5. Notably the story of Orpheus' journey to the underworld to bring back his wife, Eudydice, in which I see a conflation of two things - a descent to Hades (κατάβασις ἐς Ἅιδου) and a return of souls (ἄνοδος τῶν ψυχῶν) i.e. rebirth. The evidence of Euripides' *Alcestis* (vs. 357-362) is that he succeeded; and this we find supported by the *Rhesus* (vs. 398-945). On the other hand Plato *Symp.* 179d thinks he failed, being deluded by a phantom. There is again the evidence of Aristophanes' *Frogs* (vs. 1030-1036) that Orpheus taught men 'to desist from killing', which, taken together with the regimen of vegetarianism which characterized the 'Orphic life' (Eur. *Hipp.* vs. 952-954; Plato *Laws* 782c) must imply that Aristophanes' Φόνων ἀπέχεσθαι went beyond killing of human beings to a general doctrine of *ahimsa*.

This notion of a succession of teachers (διαδοχή: the Hindu *guruparampara* chain) is by no means recent in the study. For instance Proclus,[6] who writes: "The whole theology of the Greeks is the child of Orphic mystagogy; Pythagoras, being the first, taught the 'orgies' of the gods ('orgies' signifying 'burstings forth' or 'emanations', from οργάω) by Aglaophamus, and next Plato, receiving the perfect science concerning such things from the Pythagorean and Orphic writings". Ficinus[7] improves upon this by deriving Orphism itself from the teachings of Hermes Trismegistus, the head of the Egyptian priesthood, and *his* teachings in turn from Zoroaster.

There can be no doubt that the reincarnation doctrines found in Pindar, Empedocles and Plato were influenced by, if not actually derived from, Orphism and Pythagoreanism, and perhaps they in turn from similar teachings outside Greece. But derivation cannot be established with any degree of certainty by the extant evidence in the case of any of these; and even of influence, it is difficult to discover the nature and extent. Writers advancing such hypotheses have had little more to go on than certain similarities of features in the respective teachings or some geographical or historical affinity which makes it probable. Even the ancients do not seem to have been in a better position than ourselves on this question, even when they put forward we 'successions' with the confidence of Proclus and Ficinus.

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6. Quoted by C.A. Lobeck *Aglaophamus, sive de Theologiae Mysticae Graecorum* Königsberg (1829) p. 723.

7. See *De Immort. Anim.* xvii.i.386: "In things pertaining to theology there were in former times six great teachers expounding similar doctrines. The first was Zoroaster, the chief of the Magi; the second Hermes Trismegistus, the head of the Egyptian priesthood; Orpheus succeeded Hermes; Aglaophamus was initiated into the sacred mysteries of Orpheus; Pythagoras was initiated into theology by Aglaophamus, and Plato by Pythagoras. Plato summed up the whole of their wisdom in his letters."

In the circumstances it appears the best course to treat the several Greek reincarnation eschatologies as independent formulations, merely adverting to comparable features in other such teachings in Greece itself and elsewhere when they might prove illuminative or significant in any way. The evidence itself needs critical examination, both the evidence of the Classical and post-Classical writers as well as the doxographical testimonia, if this study is to be of worth.

In the case of the early Pythagorean teachings, a large part of the post-Aristotelian evidence will be seen to be unacceptable. Often they have nothing new to add to what the earlier evidence has yielded. But, seeing that they continue to be used without much ado by writers in their treatment of Pythagoras, it is advisable to examine some of the more important of them, even where the examination would lead to a rejection. In the case of Orphism, where too the scantiness of the evidence from the Classical sources might lead one to consider the later evidence, one may consider the material reviewed by Linforth as going as far as it was worth going, but look at it in the light of the doctrine of reincarnation which one finds so firmly associated with the Orphics in later evidence. This may be supplemented with the evidence of the so-called 'Orphic tablets', which, in my opinion and the consensus of opinion of scholars since their discovery, are rightly so-called. But, as doubt still exists in the minds of a few as to the religion of the dead in whose possession they were found, and at the same time, since the great weight of the argument for their being Orphic is that there is nothing in them that is contrary to Orphic belief, it is too presumptuous to use them freely and unreservedly as supplementing the evidence on Orphism itself, and it is accordingly advisable to treat them separately, thus permitting a general idea of what can be known of the Orphic teaching of reincarnation with them as well as without them.

Before passing on to consider the Greek notions of reincarnation, it would be worthwhile reviewing the nature of the belief in general and its more important implications. The popular definition of reincarnation is the belief that upon death the soul passes into another body.

The soul is presumed to be immortal while the implications of mortality are those which arise from its association with body. As Plato puts it in the *Meno* (81b), "The soul of man is immortal and at one time comes to an end, which is called 'dying', at another time comes into being, but never completely perishes." What perishes at death is the body and the association of the soul with that body; what happens to the soul then is that it takes on another body.

This taking of new bodies by the soul, which is the notion of reincarnation, is expressed in a simile drawn from the perishable body itself in the *Bhagavad Gita* (iii. 13) to the effect that, "as the soul passes in this body through childhood, youth and old age, even so is the taking of another body." In more recent times it has been briefly but neatly expressed by John Masefield in his poem, *A Creed*, though perhaps with his own special conception of it, as the last two verses here show:

> "I held that when a person dies,
> His soul returns again to earth;
> Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise
> Another mother gives him birth.
> With sturdier limbs and brighter brain,
> The old soul takes the road again."

The popular definition of reincarnation entails certain things. Firstly, that which was just remarked, that while 'end' and 'coming into being', or 'death' and 'birth', are applicable to the association of soul with body which makes the individual, they are not applicable to the soul *per se*. Soul is immortal and at every incarnate existence it is 'the old soul' which takes the road again. Among the various images which have been used to describe the soul's assumption of new bodies not the least interesting is that of a man changing shirts, or, as Empedocles (fr.126)[8] would have it,

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8. *Vors.* (31.B.126). Abbreviation *Vors.* will be used throughout this essay for H. Diels and W. Kranz *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (Greek and German) 6th ed. Berlin. (1951-52), and fragments of the Presocratic philosophers will, unless otherwise qualified, follow the numbering therein. On the shirt-simile among the Nassairi see n. 40 below. Cp. also *The Institutes of Vishnu* 50: (contd.

'alien tunics', and that of a man shifting from one house to another.[9]

Secondly, between the plurality of bodies soul is the 'transmigrant entity', and with it it carries identity, and through it personality may be said to continue. Thus, to take cases from Pythagoreanism,[10] Mullias of Croton is no other than Midas, the son of Gordias, who died before he was conceived, and Pythagoras himself the same as. Euphorbus who died in the Trojan War - all because there was that which passed from the one to the other as a 'self' or 'transmigrant entity', namely, a soul.[11]

"As a man puts on new clothes in this world, throwing aside those which he formerly wore, even so the self of man puts on new bodies, which are in accordance with his acts in a former life." See also 49. For the interesting simile of a tinker and his coat, see Plato *Phaedo* 87c-d.

9. See the graphic metaphor used by the Buddha in *Dhammapada* xi.153-154, which compares the bodies of the cycle of rebirth to houses and *karma* to the builder of such houses: "Countless are the births wherein I have circled and run, striving to find but never finding the builder of the house; ill is this being born again and again! Now thou art seen, O thou builder of the house; never again shalt thou build for me! All the rafters are broken, the roof-plate shattered; my heart is freed from all constructions; the waning out of thirst has been attained." See also *Jat.* 1.76 and *Theragatha* 183-184.

10. *Vors.* I p. 99 - fr. 191 (Rose).

11. The Buddhist teaching is, however, not of reincarnation in the ordinary sense; there is no soul to reincarnate. That which gives rise to a new physical existence is the *karma* a man kindles in his lifetime; *Abhidharmakosa* iii. 24; see also *Questions of Milinda* ii.2.6 and iv.8.23. See S. Radhakrishna *Indian Philosophy.* London. (1923) vol. I.p.444. In its influence on the popular mind, however, it amounts to much the same thing.

Often there is assumed in reincarnation religions some sort of 'relinking consciousness' or memory of past existence (μνήμη)[12] which, in the case of those who are able to draw upon it, yield recollections of experiences in those existences. It was this that Plato made the basis of his epistemology, in turn using the possibility of knowledge to demonstrate the immortality of the soul.

Thirdly, reincarnation must be in and through a body biologically evolved, just as the old body from which the soul disincarnated was left to its biological disintegration. It is no reincarnation, as the word is generally used, when the soul returns to the selfsame body that it had quit, as in the instances of Christ himself or Lazarus, whom he brought back to life, or for that matter that remarkable man of whom Herodotus (iv. 13-14) narrates, Aristeias of Marmora. It is a return to the same body that we find experienced by Er, the son of Armenius, in the *Republic* myth (614b-621) and by Thespesius and Timarchus in the eschatological myths in Plutarch,[13] and in all such "descents to Hades' (the so-called καταβασεῖς ἐς Ἅδου) or temporary absenses from the body that one encounters in this study. One must also exclude that curious belief connected with shamanism that the soul of a dead shaman could invest a living shaman and thus reinforce the power of his soul.[14]

The old body can of course figure in reincarnation by being the material from which the new body is reconstituted. The soul could be thought to gather together at its new incarnation the identical particles of matter which had constituted its former body and from them rebuild, as a bird its nest, a new body. Among the primitives soul and body

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12. See my 'Pythagoras, Birth Rememberer' *Univ. of Ceylon Rev.* vol. no.2 (1963) p. 186-212.

13, *De Sera Num. Vin.* 22 (=563b.f): *De Gen. Socr.* 21.f. (=589f.f). A power of resurrecting the dead is probably what Empedocles promises his followers in fr. 111 vs. 9: ἄξεις δ' ἐξ Ἄϊδαο καταφθιμένου μένος ἀνδρος. ("You shall bring back from Hades a dead man restored to strength.")

14. See sources cited by E.R. Dodds *The Greeks and the Irrational* Berkeley, California. (1951)p.165.n.56.

would hardly have been distinguished in the reappearance, through reincarnation, of departed ancestors - though the implications then were in any case never pondered.

Where the new body assumed by the soul in reincarnation was created from the material of the old, however, this invariably took place through the biological process of birth. This precludes such concepts as the Christian 'resurrection of the dead' from being considered reincarnation in the sense in which the term is popularly used. On the other hand any doctrine which holds that that which is common to a series of bodies is not the soul but the material component or anything else not identified with the 'self', hardly warrants being called reincarnation. An interesting sample of the sort of thing is the relation of potter and pot in Fitzgerald's translation of the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* (esp. xxxv and the Kuza-Nama) or Hamlet's ruminations on the possibility of Alexander and imperious Caesar, dead and turned to clay, blocking a hole to keep the wind away. The strange interpretation of Empedocles' teaching by Irhouius, which is followed by Sturz,[15] that what transmigrated was not a soul or 'daimon' but the material which constituted the body, would *ipso facto* render it something else than a doctrine of reincarnation.

Where the new body does not originate biologically, it is usually a transformation of the old body; and when the soul is found to persist in this transformed body, the person is said to have undergone 'metamorphosis'. There is the classic case of Proteus in Greek mythology, also the transformations the god-infant Dionysius-Zagreus went through to escape dismemberment at the hands of the Titans.

Metamorphosis is an event all too familiar to the Greeks, as the numerous myths, most of which are collected by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses*, would indicate. But there is always something miraculous or magical about it, since such changes of form did not take place between one life and another, when reality standards could not be applied, but within a single life itself. It always remained the privilege of gods and magicians to undergo or inflict upon others, and for obvious reasons lost credence with the evolution of the mind from its mythopoeic infancy.

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15. *Empedocles Agrigentinus.* Lipsae. (1805) p. 471. f.

Lastly, reincarnation is viewed as largely taking place on this earth and in a body of flesh. Where places other than this earth are posited where the soul is thought able to reincarnate, these other places with their forms of existence recede to the background of concern or are treated as extensions of reincarnation upon this earth. For, after all, has not the belief originated and flourished from man's attempt to understand this very existence upon this very earth?

It is indeed a remarkable feature of reincarnation religion that Heaven and Hell themselves often appear as existences within the scheme of reincarnation. As Ninian Smart[16] writes: "The colourful descriptions of heaven sometimes given in the Christian tradition suggest to the Hindu that heaven is part, even though an elevated part, of the empirical cosmos". But Heaven and Hell have been so treated by the reincarnation religions of India as well as Greece long before the advent of Christianity. As we may see, Pindar[17] even assumes the possibility of moral conduct in Hades in the context of a doctrine of reincarnation which he adumbrates in one of his odes.

It might also be remarked here that the reincarnation religions do sometimes envisage existences of the soul other than in bodies of flesh, so that the term 'reincarnation', when applied with etymological accuracy in the context of these religions, must perforce be of limited denotation. Let alone existences such as those of 'devas' and hell-beings, Indian teaching holds that the human soul can, in-between incarnations, assume a subtle body and appear as a 'preta' or a 'gandharva' for a shorter or longer duration. The notion of subtle bodies assumed by the soul in its disincarnate state is common to other reincarnation religions

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16. 'Reincarnation and Eastern Attitudes' *The Listner* (Aug. 9th. 1962) p.203.

17. *Ol.* ii. 68-70 'But those who dared to keep their souls free from all wrongfulness three times on either side have gone the road of Zeus to the Tower of Cronos." See also vs. 57-60: ".... that straightaway the wicked souls of the dead pay penalty here, but for the sins done in this kingdom of Zeus there is one who judges beneath the earth and gives sentence in unfriendly necessity."

and teachings as well. Apart from Plato, whose soul-chariots of the *Phaedrus* may suggest astral-bodies as the material informed by soul in that 'region beyond heaven' (ὑπερουράνιος τόπος), Plotinus (*En.* iv.9) talks of aerian or igneous bodies, saying: "There are two modes of a soul entering a body, one when the soul, being already in a body, undergoes metensomatosis, that is to say, passes from an aerian or igneous into a physical body....; the other, when a soul passes from an incorporeal state into a body of a certain kind".

If we are to judge from the extant evidence, the Greeks down to an including Plato, who talked or reincarnation, seem to have managed quite well without the use of a single fixed term to express the notion. And equally strangely 'palingenesis' (παλιγγένεσις), the word at the tip of their tongues, when it did come to be used, did not fit the notion adequately.[18] On the other hand, 'palingenesis' was better expressive of spiritual regeneration or initiation into a new life, where the initiate was metaphorically, not literally, 'born again'. Similarly the English equivalent 'rebirth' is well used to denote the spiritual transformation that is claimed to take place in the life of an individual, whereat the individual himself was qualified to be called 'twice born'.[19]

The word most commonly used in English writings on the subject, that is, 'metempsychosis' (μετεμψύχωσις) is precisely the least common among the Greeks; its etymological inaccuracy was appreciated by the ancient themselves.

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18. [αἱ ψυχαὶ] πάλιν γίγνονται ἐκ τῶν τεθνεώτων ; see Plato *Phaedo* 70c. Servius (Aen. iii.68) says: "Pythagoras non μετεμψυχωσιν sed παλιγγενεσίαν esse dicit". See E. Rhode *Psyche* (transl. into English by W.B. Hillis) London (1930) p. 93 n.2.

19. Thus Angulimala, the robber, is in Buddhist scripture said to have been 'born with a spiritual birth' on being converted by the Buddha and becoming a saint. In a similar sense Jesus tells Nicodemus that unless he be born again he cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

Some Neoplatonists and Christian apologists corrected it to 'metensomatosis' (μετενσωμάτωσις), which was accurate enough but rather cumbrous.[20] For the most part reincarnation was expressed by the Greeks with suitable modifications of the verb 'to be born' (γίγνεσθαι)in combination with 'again' (πάλιν) or some other such adverb, while the cycle of births and deaths was simply described as the κύκλος τῆς γενέσεως.

In English the term 'transmigration' is as popular as the term 'metempsychosis', but both have been used with the implication that the soul could, or did, invest animal bodies. 'Reincarnation', on the other hand, is still not quite specific as to the range of bodies the soul may occupy, but rather underlines the event. As was observed before, however, its strict etymology implies that such bodies must be of flesh.

As a magical belief reincarnation is widespread among primitive peoples in many parts of the world.[21] With them it does not rest with the more sophisticated assumption of the immortality of the soul, but (which is in effect not otherwise) on the recognition of death as no more than a temporary relinquishing of corporeal existence or a transition from one corporeal habitat to another. Usually the soul, or rather the spirit, is thought to inhabit spots marked by rocks, trees or pools - the *okanikilla* of the Arunta Blackfellows - until such time as it can enter the womb of some

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20. For those who use the word μετεμψύχωσις, see Rodhe *loc.cit.* See also Olympod. *In Phaed.* p. 54.25 (Norvin). τήν μετεμψύχωσιν ἤτοι τὴν μετενσωμάτωσιν, διότι οὐ πολλαὶ ψυχαὶ ἓν σῶμα εἰδοποιοῦσιν, ἐπεί αὕτη μετεμψύχωσις ἦν, ἀλλὰ μία ψυχὴ διάφορα σώματα μεταμπίχεται.

21. See J.G. Frazer *The Belief in Immortality*. London. (1913) vol.I.p.29; p. 270. He observes that the belief in some form of reincarnation is universally present in all the simple food-gathering and fishing-hunting civilisations. See also E.B. Taylor *Primitive Culture*. London. (1929) vol.II.p.1-9 esp. and for a list of such primitive tribes, see J. Head and S.L. Cranston *Reincarnation: an East West Anthology*, New York. (1961) p. 71-73.

passing woman and be mothered back to the tribe as a new member. Such a form of primitive belief is often accompanied by the practice of attempting to discover which ancestor's spirit it was that had taken rebirth in the tribe and of naming the new-born after him.[22]

Such a primitive conception of reincarnation seems to have existed in Greece at some time in its prehistory, to judge from the practise come down to Classical times of naming new-born children after their grandparents and the association of 'Tritopatores' (τριτοπάτορες) with their birth, these Tritopatores, or 'third forefathers', being in fact the spirits of dead ancestors inhabiting the air and drawn into the new-born at birth, before they came to be considered wind-spirits granting prayers for children. The

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22. Among a Florida tribe the child was held over the face of the mother who had died in child-birth, so that it might breathe in her soul. Algonquin Indians used to bury dead children on the roadside for their souls to re-enter passing women. For the same reason Calabaris of the African slave-coast buried their dead in their houses. In Tibet the Dalai Lama was thought to reincarnate in a child born nine months after his death. The Khonds of India examined their new-born to discover which ancestors had reincarnated in them. In New Zealand the names of the ancestors were rattled off to the new-born till it acknowledged one with a cry. Among the Australian Arunta search is made in the *okanikilla* for a stone or wooden slab which the incarnating ancestor leaves behind, and from the discovery of this the ancestor is recognized and the child named after him. See Tylor *op.cit.* p.3-5 for numerous other examples. See also the fragment, sometimes given to the Orphics, sometimes to Heraclitus: οἵ δ' αὐτοὶ πατέρες τε καὶ υἱέες ἐν μεγάροισιν (πολλάκις) ἤδ' ἄλοχοὶ σεμναὶ κεδναί τε θύγατερες.... γίγνοντ' ἀλλήλων μεταμειβομένησι γενέθλαις.

See G.S. Kirk *Heraclitus: The Cosmic Fragments* p. 147 on fr. 88 and 62, where he suggests some such popular belief as underlying these. See also n. 101 below.

teaching attributed to the Orphics that the soul was inhaled with the breath,[23] and the teaching attributed to the Pythagoreans that the air was full of souls called 'daimones' and 'heroes' (δαίμονες καὶ ἥρωες)[24] may reflect this ancient belief found in the older folk religion.

The notion of the continuance of the *gens* by the recurrence of the dead appears to have been ensured to a great extent by the vegetation-cycle. Even Voltaire remarks the parallel here observed between human life and nature, when he writes: "It is not more remarkable to be born twice than once; everything in nature is resurrection". Early traces of this are to be seen in the Cretan mythology of the death and resurrection of Galucus, and in the Cretan seals and rings which depict the pithos-burial of a child and the decay and regrowth of vegetation.[25] The significance of the chthonic deities in the return of vegetation as well and the return of the dead must point to the association of the one with the other in the mystery-cults in which both these ideas were fostered and flourished.

The belief in the transmigration of the soul into animals is often viewed as an extension of the belief that it reincarnated in human bodies alone. On the contrary, however, no violent distinction seems to have been made between man and beast in the primitive form of the belief. Rather, the evidence goes to prove that inter-transmigration between men and

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23. Aristot, *De Anima* 1.5.410b27 refers to the 'so-called Orphic poems' and gives the belief that the soul "comes into us from space as we breathe, borne by the winds". The Attic *Tritopatores* found a place in an Orphic poem as 'doorkeepers and guardians of the winds' (Suid. s.v. *Tritopatores*.) The theory of wind-impregnation was accepted by Aristotle (*Hist.Animal*. 6.2.560a6) and was probably dissociated in his mind from the other sort.

24. Alex. Polyhist. ap.Diog.viii.32.

25. For a study of the Glaucus-myth in connection with the Cretan seals, see A.W. Persson *The Religion of Greece in Prehistoric Times*. Berkerley, California. (1942).

animals was the form in which even the great reincarnation religions of the world appear to have adopted reincarnation when they did. To the primitive mind in the dawn of human thought there appears to have been no generic difference between the spirits, any more than there was between the bodies, of men and animals or birds, which it tended to describe as composed of tribes or clans similar to those of men and as gifted with speech and capable of union in marriage with men. When a bear or wolf was thought of, it was thought of as a creature which scarcely differed from man, which had the same instincts and which reasoned in much the same way; and equally, the spirit of such a creature was seen as hardly different from that of a man.[26]

J.A. Stewart[27] puts forward the suggestion that the inclusion of animals within the range of bodies that the soul could invest, was the result of a 'contamination' by each other of the two originally independent beliefs of metempsychosis and metamorphosis. The former, he observes, is the belief in the reappearance, in human bodies, of departed human souls - the normal generative process by which the human race is maintained on earth; the latter, the belief in the sudden bodily transformation, by magic or some other cause, of men into beasts and beasts into men - an exceptional occurence. He adds: "Metamorphosis, which is properly the supernatural bodily transformation of a man into a beast or a beast into a man, reappears as rebirth, in due natural course, of a beast as a man, or a man as a beast: metamorphosis has insinuated itself into the place occupied by metempsychosis, and has become a sort of metempsychosis; while metempsychosis, originally a kind of re-birth of departed human beings, now includes the notion of departed human beings reappearing in new births as beasts, and beasts as human beings".

Long [28] goes further when he thinks that metamorphosis played a role similar to fetishism in preparing for the belief

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26. For further examples of the primitive beliefs in transmigration of the soul into animal bodies, see Tylor. *op.cit* p. 609.

27. *The Myths of Plato*. London.(1905) p. 302-304.

28. *op.cit* p.3.

in metampsychosis as a whole. He is of course thinking of the appearance of metempsychosis in Greece, and also restricting himself to the literary evidence.

The case of Tuan MacCairill of Irish legend, pointed to by Stewart[29] is, just like the other instances in Irish saga, a good example of metamorphosis, metempsychosis and also something between the two, a woman swallowing Tuan as a salmon and giving birth to him in a human form. But there is nothing here to suggest that metempsychosis was extended to include animals through a contamination of any kind. Nor does Stewart establish his argument that metempsychosis was in its pristine form restricted to human beings. We are not even able to prove the priority of metamorphosis to metempsychosis so as to think of it as having played a role similar to fetishism, as Long supposed. The mental condition which expresses itself in the beast-fable, in which men and beasts talk and act together; in which the transformation of men into beasts and vice-verse is taken as a matter of course; in which beasts, in short, are at once men and beasts, and which Stewart thinks gave rise to metamorphosis, is itself more primitive than that which discriminated between man and beast and could equally contemplate metempsychosis as animals as metamorphosis into animals.

If anything, then, the notion of reincarnation in which the soul only obtains rebirth in human bodies must be the modification of indiscriminate reincarnation. Such a restricted form not only presupposes the growth of a distinction between man and beast but also the growth of tribalism - though even at that a residual token of animal-incarnation sometimes manifests itself in the institution of 'totemism'.

Reappearance of the dead in the form of animals, where it is found among primitive peoples, need not always be a manifestation of a belief in reincarnation. In archaic Greece the dead hero appears as a snake and is often so depicted together with his human representation in grave-stelai. The snake in such a case is not the soul of the hero incarnate in a snake body, but the hero, body and soul; or again and more

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29. *op.cit.* p. 304. n.1.

probably, the snake is the soul itself. For, as J.G. Frazer[30] remarks on the thinking of primitive people, "If a man lives and moves, it can only be because he has a little man or animal inside who moves him. The animal inside the animal, the man inside the man, is the soul. The prevalence of the belief that the human soul has the form of an animal such as a mouse or snake is also observed by W.H. Schomerus.[31] Tylor[32] refers to the snake in primitive belief as "a creature whose change of skin has so often been associated with the thought of resurrection and immortality"; but Gardner[33] is closer to the truth in considering the Greek belief to have arisen from the fact that the snake appears from underground.

Notwithstanding that what we have here is not reincarnation, it is worth observing that the Greeks were not altogether strangers to such beliefs as the reappearance of the dead as corporeal creatures on earth, and more than that, in the form of lower creatures, long before Pythagoras recognized the rebirth of a friend of his as a dog and foresaw another destined to be reborn as a white eagle.

The religions of the civilized world which accept the tenet of the reincarnation of the soul invariably accept the possibility of the soul assuming animal bodies, this being recognized by them as the mode of degradation of souls that

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30. *Taboo and Perils of the Soul.* London. (1917) p. 26.

31. 'Der Seelènwanderungsgedanke im Glauben der Volker' *Zeitschr. fur syst. Th.* vol. VI (1928) p. 217 n. The snake is the dead man's spirit in another form, as P. Gardner puts it; see *Sculptured Tombs of Hellas.* (1886) p. 82. It is what Prof. Murray refers to as the "old superhuman snake, who appears so ubiquitously throughout Greece, the regular symbol of the underworld powers, especially the hero or dead ancestors"; see his *Four Stages of Greek Religion.* N. York. (1912) p. 33. (The most notable of these reliefs are those from Sparta discussed by Gardner. *op.cit.* p. 82-86).

32. *op.cit.* p. 8.

33. *op.cit.* p. 82.

have lived contrary to the precepts. This is the basis of the doctrine of non-violence (*ahimsa*) and compassion (*maitri*) for all living creatures that is prominently associated with such religions as Buddhism and Hinduism.

Despite the fact that his sort of belief in the kinship of living things (συγγένησις τῶν ζῴων) is in accord with the theory of evolution - a thing which modern Buddhists are all too eager to remark - there are those who contribute to the belief in reincarnation, particularly Western scholars, who find the idea of rebirth as animals impossible psychologically, disturbing ethically, or simply uncomfortable to their personal prejudices. The question of how, as he puts it, "a chance soul can occupy a chance body" was raised by Aristotle[34] with respect to the Pythagorean teaching of transmigration long before the problem faced those who received it in the Oriental religions. The difficulty has often been explained as having arisen from a misconception of what it was that these religions recognized as the transmigrant entity that passed from one body into another, and where it could be called a 'soul', from imputing psychological attributes to it which it did not possess in their conception of it.

Many and interesting are the attempts that writers on mystic religion have made to reconcile the human soul with animal nature when they encounter irrefutable testimony of transmigration in the scriptures. The 'illumination' of Anna Kingsford[35] on the matter is a good example. She writes: "Now, the metals have no soul: therefore they are not individuals. And not being individuals they cannot transmigrate. But plants and animals have souls. They are individuals, and do transmigrate and progress. And man has also a spirit; and so long as he is a man - that is, truly human - he cannot re-descend into the body of an animal, or of any creature in the sphere beneath him, since that would be an indignity to the spirit. But if he lose his spirit, and become again animal, he may descend, yea, he may become altogether gross and horrible, and a creep-

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34. *De Anima* A3. 407b20.

35. *Clothed with the Sun* London (1937) p. 31; see also Kingsford and Maitland *The Perfect Way* London (1923) p. 46-47.

ing and detestable thing, begotten of filth and corruption. This is the end of persistently evil men".

Another attempt she makes goes like this: "In the extreme case of a man returning to re-birth, who by vicious appetite or otherwise, has formed a very strong link with any type of animal, he may be linked by magnetic affinity to the astral body of the animal whose qualities she has encouraged, and be chained as a prisoner to the animal's physical body. Thus chained he cannot go onward to re-birth: he is conscious in the astral world, has his human faculties, but cannot control the brute body with which he is connected, nor express himself through that body on the physical plane. The animal organism is thus a jailor, rather than a vehicle. The animal soul is not ejected, but remains as the proper tenant and controller of its own body." She adds, "Such an imprisonment is not reincarnation, though it is easy to see that cases of this nature explain at least partially the belief often found in Oriental countries that man may under certain circumstances reincarnate in an animal body".

Popularly, however, supporters of the exclusive form of reincarnation set about the evidence of reincarnation as animals by giving it an esoteric interpretation whereby the various animals are taken to be merely symbolic of types of human beings. Thus, the rebirth as a pig simply means rebirth as a human being with the nature of a pig, that is, greedy and sottish; an ass may stand for a human being who is foolish and stubborn, a bee for one who is industrious, and so on.[36] Sometimes, and by a somewhat more superficial rendition, the animal characteristics may be considered physical, as witness the human 'monsters' who in appearance are sometimes repulsively animal-like, pig-faced, dog-faced, and so on. Such interpretations are often even resorted to where the context makes it quite clear that what is meant is just what is said and no more, i.e. that rebirth as animals is literally

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36. See for instance W.Y. Evans-Wentz in *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* 2nd ed. London (1949) intro. p. 49 f. See also the animal instances in Semonides' poem on women, which may easily evoke this sort of identification.

rebirth as animals.[37]

If the Irish legends show anything quite clearly, it is that the belief in transmigration, to whatever extent it is found in them, could and did figure in a society that was by no means primitive, without a suggestion of punishment (κόλασις) or purification (κάθαρσις). Similarly, there is no trace of moral determination about the reincarnation cycle which Herodotus[38] presents as Egyptian, in which the soul is said to incarnate in the bodies of all manner of creatures for a period of three thousand years before it can return once again to a human body. If in fact this pattern, which he describes, reflects a prevalent Greek teaching, it may perhaps be the non-ethical prototype which the earliest Greek teachers of reincarnation developed into a profound and meaningful religious doctrine of sin, suffering, and liberation from suffering.

Outside ancient Greece belief in reincarnation is a predominant feature of Indian thought at the popular as well as philosophical level. It is central to all the ancient religions of India, Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism, also to Ajivikism, and through the spread of Buddhism into most of Asia, it has dominated the thought of nearly the whole of the Oriental world. On the other hand, in the European tradition, which ultimately derives from the Greek in many respects though significantly not in respect of religion, the absense of this belief is one of the features which chiefly differentiates European civilization and culture from that of the Oriental world as a whole.

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37. For instance in Plato's *Laws* 9043 the manner in which doer is made to suffer next birth is by a reversal of roles (ἀντιπεπονθός) with absolute silence about migration in animal bodies. But see *Rep.* 602d and *Phaedrus* 249b - not only are men said to become animals but animals are said to become men, and in *Phaedrus* 249 b-e human birth is reckoned a special blessing. The same is found in *Timaeus* 42a-d, with a contrast being struck between human and animal incarnation. The whole teaching of the avoidance of killing animals and vegetarianism in other Greek teachings suggested clearly the kinship of animals and men in such teachings.

38. ii. 123.

But this must remain only a general assertion about Europe as of the Orient. Even if we except Hellenistic Greece, where the Classical Greek teachings about reincarnation received the sublimest religious expression in the writings of Plotinus and lesser Neopythagorean and Neoplatonic teachers and scholars, the belief was not unknown in pre-Christianized folk religion; indeed it is thought to have been rather widespread, particularly among peoples of Celtic origin. So also it was seen as a fundamental tenet of a number of primitive Christian sects themselves which claimed to possess the esoteric teachings of Christ. It appears to have been known in some form to the Jews[39] and, among the Islamic sects, at least held by the Druses, Nassairi and the Sufis.[40] In recent times it has been professed by a number of scholars, poets and philosophers of the West, and for a number of different reasons, and there are bound to be others in the future who will find in this ancient belief concerning the soul the most satisfactory explanation of their own individual experiences or problems or the most satisfactory answer to the predicament of human life.

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39. See the evidence referred to under 'Transmigration' in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* Edin. (1921) (vol.XIII, p. 435-440). The migration or 'rolling on' (*gilgul*) of souls was taken up by the Kabbalists in later Jewish philosophy. Souls were thought to enter bodies of wild animals and birds and vermin, for is not Jehovah 'the Lord of the spirits of all flesh'? Much else in the Bible was interpreted in terms of this belief; see also Tylor *op.cit.* p. 14.

40. Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela (12th cent.) writes of the Druses of Mount Hermon: "They say that the soul of a virtuous man is transferred to the body of a new-born child, whereas that of a vicious transmigrates into a dog, or some other animal." Among the Nassairi also transmigration is viewed as a penance and purification, unbelievers becoming camels, asses, dogs, or sheep, the disobedient Nassairi becoming Jews, Sunnis, or Christians, and the faithful returning in a new body to their own people, and after a few such changes of 'shirt', entering Paradise or becoming stars. For both Druses and Nassairi see the ref. cited by Tylor *op.cit.* p. 15 n.1 and 2.

The existence of the belief among the Celts of Gaul about the first century B.C. is evidenced by Julius Caesar,[41] who, it may be thought, should have known a great deal about them, since Divitiacus, friend and ally of the Roman people, was no less than a Druid himself. Evidence of it is again discovered for the Celts of Ireland and Britain in the primitive folk-religion of 'Fairies', these Fairies being - as is shown by their association with rocks, trees and lakes - spirits of the dead seeking rebirth.[42]

Among the Irish a tradition existed that divine personages and national heroes, who were members of the Tuatha De Danaan or Sidhe race or who were otherwise celebrated or honoured, underwent reincarnation. If a more particular examination is made of the Cuchulain or 'Red Branch' cycle of Irish saga, it will appear that practically all its principal figures were regarded as reincarnations of the earlier gods and heroes of that race and that the tales which narrate their births indicate this more or less clearly. Cuchulain, the Ulster warrior, was the incarnation of the God Lugh and in *The Wooing of Emer* narrative he is urged "that his rebirth would be of himself". Likewise the hero Finn-nac-Coul was reborn after two hundred years as Mongan, king of Ulster, and recalled the incident in that earlier birth of the killing of Fothad Airgdech, a king of Ireland, by Cailte. And in the Irish-Christian redaction of the legend of Tuan, Tuan informs Finnen that he was a stag, a bear, a vulture (or eagle) and a fish before he was born as the human being he was.[43]

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41. *Bel. Gal.* vi. 14.5. Writing on the Druids he says: *In primis hoc volunt persuadere non interire animas, sed ab aliis post mortem transire ad alios, atque hoc maxime ad virtutem excitari putat metu mortis neglecto.*

42. See Lewis Spence *British Fairy Origins*. London. (1946) p. 192.

43. The chief sources are *Leabhar na h-Uidhre*, *The Book of Leinster*, *Four Ancient Books of Wales*, *Mabinogion Silva Gadelica*, *Barddas* (a collection of Welsh manuscripts made about 1560) and the *Annals of the Four Masters*, compiled in the first half of the seventeenth century. The most notable study of the doctrine is Alfred (contd.)

Most of the instances in Irish saga are not instances of reincarntion, it is true, but amidst the other modes of shape-shifting found in the accounts of these people there occurs, and prominently, shape-shifting through reincarnation. Even then this is not reincarnation in the usual form, for, as in the example of the woman swallowing Tuan as a salmon and giving birth to him as a human being, there is no desertion of the former body by the soul nor a reincarnating of the soul in the new body. Rather, the new body is no other than the old body, and what has taken place within the woman who swallowed Tuan as a salmon, is merely a shape-shift. Thus, while we need not contribute to Stewart's view that metamorphosis gave rise to metempsychosis, we may note here an interesting form of metamorphosis i.e. through the channel of metempsychosis. As regards the Classical references to the existence of the belief among the Celts, we may review them when discussing the source of the Greek teaching.

Nutt's 'Essay upon the Irish Vision of the Happy Otherworld and the Celtic Doctrine of Re-birth' in Kuno Meyer's *The Voyage of Bran*. London. (1897): see also W.Y. Evans Wentz's chapter on 'The Celtic Doctrine of Rebirth' (p. 358-396) in his *The Fairy-Faith in Celtic Countries*. Oxford. (1911). In his *Buddhism in Pre-Christian Britain*, London and Glasgow. (1928) p. 96 and 43, Donald A. Mackenzie finds the Celtic doctrine more like the Buddhist than the Greek and suggests that it had been carried westward through Europe by Buddhist missionaries, pilgrims and local converts. Among the evidence he uses (p. 39) is the Thirteenth Edict of Asoka, in which the king claims to have sent missionaries to the land of the Seleucid monarch, Antiochus II, and to have achieved conquests, not by the sword but by the *dharma* "in the realms of the kings of Syria, Egypt, Macedonia, Epirus and Cyrene" as well as in South India and Ceylon: and (p.42) Origen's statement in his *Commentary on Ezekiel* that "The Island (Britain) has long been predisposed to it (Christianity) through the doctrines of the Druids and the Buddhists, who had already inculcated the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead".

The first centuries of Christianity found reincarnation a flourishing creed propagated by Neophythagoreanism and Neoplatonism and as attractive to mankind as the doctrine of the soul as taught by the Church. At the same time the efforts of Philo to demonstrate a substantial similarily between Greek and Jewish doctrines had already introduced the Platonic teachings concerning the soul to those upon which Christianity was fostered. Consequently many of the early Church Fathers seem to have accepted reincarnation as a ready explanation of the fall of man and the mystery of life and preached it as the only means of reconciling the existence of suffering with the idea of a merciful God.

Among the early Christian sects which acknowledged reincarnation were the Gnostics, that school of eclectics which became conspicuous amidst the chaotic vortex of religions in Alexandria during the first century. Apart from them, the belief in reincarnation was held in the past by the Manichaeans, Mandeans, Coptics, Priscillians, the Italian Cathari and many other sects, and in recent times, for instance, by the Rosicrucians, Free Masons and Theosophists. Libellus X accepts the doctrine as a teaching of the *Corpus Hermeticum*.

Attempts have been made to force a reincarnation interpretation into certain statements in the Bible, but with no success. If anything, the one undoubted reference to the doctrine, which is in the question asked of Christ on the blindness of a blind man in *John* ix.2 shows that he was acquainted with it but by his reply thereto also shows that he clearly rejected it. The sects that attributed such a teaching to him usually claimed it to be a secret teaching of his; and later, when the propagation of it was declared heretical, it was imparted in secrecy.

In the *Pistis Sophis*,[44] an ancient Gnostic-Christian work, the doctrine of reincarnation is given as a teaching of Christ which applied not only to particular personages but as an universal law to the lives of all mankind. Here

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44. Refer G.R.S. Mead's transl. (with introduction) of Schwartze's parallel Latin version, London. (1896). The ms. is in the British Mus. Add. 5114 (vellum) and in the dialect of Upper Egypt, dated about the end of the fourth century. See bk.i. 12-13.

it is said that "the Saviour answered and said unto his disciples: 'Preach ye unto the world, saying unto men, 'Strive together that ye may receive the Mysteries of Light in this time of stress, and enter into the Kingdom of Light. Put not off from day to day, and from cycle to cycle, in the belief that ye will succeed in obtaining the Mysteries when ye return to the world in another cycle'." And again,[45] "At that time, then, the Faith shall show itself more and more, and also the Mysteries in those days. And many souls shall pass through the cycles of transmigration of body and come back into the world in those days; and among them shall be some who are now alive and hear me teach concerning the consummation of the number of perfect souls; they shall find the Mysteries of Light, and shall receive them". The doctrine also figures prominently in the death-masses of the Manichaeans, as in the Parthian *Angad Rosnan* and *Huwidagman*, and in comparable books of the Coptics and other like Christian sects.

Among individual Christian philosophers and theologians a belief in reincarnation was attributed, and sometimes carelessly, to Origen of Alexandria, Nemesius, Synesius (Bishop of Ptolemais), to Hilarius, Boethius, Psellus of Andros and a few others. Often they subscribed to the belief in reincarnation as a corollary to the tenet of pre-existence, which they invariably held to account for the fall of man, but as often they only preached the latter. Exegesies of the fall from grace and the return to grace, with reincarnation providing a fall back for those still not ready to recover the lost estate, were variations played upon the Platonic theme. That such a doctrine did have a strong appeal to Christian thinkers until growing Western influences frowned upon it, is to be inferred from the out and out declaration of the teaching of pre-existence (generally linked with the doctrine of reincarnation in the Platonic tradition) as anathema by the Fifth Ecumenical Council, the Second Council of Constantinople, in 553 A.D. Five years later Justinian was to support this anathema with one of his own, declaring: "Whosoever says and thinks that human souls pre-existed - i.e. that they had previously been spirits and holy powers, but that satiated with the vision of God, had turned to evil, and in this way love in

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45. bk.ii. p. 317.

them had died out and that they had therefore become souls and had been condemned to punishment in bodies - shall be anathema".

In comparatively recent times the belief in the reincarnation of the soul has found acceptance in Europe and America, as in ancient Greece and Rome, chiefly among the intelligensia. It was particularly popular with the German scholars of the eighteenth century, not to mention Henry More and other Cambridge Platonists round the seventeenth century. E.D. Walker's *Reincarnation : a Study of Forgotten Truth*[46] and Head and Cranston[47] will be found to include a wide and varied collection of passages from a number of European and American writers of celebrity, who appear to have been partial to the belief. Among these, Hume, for instance, found reincarnation the only conception of immortality that philosophy can harken to; Swedenborg evolved the idea that man becomes after death what the deeds of his present life approximate him to; Goethe was inclined to explain sympathy between people, as between himself and his wife, as due to acquaintance in an earlier life; the feeling of having lived before is strong in Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood*; so, Lichtenburg says, "I cannot avoid the idea that I died before I was born". On the other hand Lessing defended reincarnation on the ground that perfection could not be attained in a single life, and there was no reason why there should only be one life; and Schopenhaur, while resting his belief upon vague memory or an anamnesis-feeling, accepted a palingenesis of the will alone.

Of the more recent thinkers, the Cambridge philosophers, the Professors John MacTaggart, James Ward and C.D. Broad have upheld the belief. Most noteworthy, however, is the growing interest in the reincarnation hypothesis among Western psychologists today as a result of the number of accounts of spontaneous or hypnotically induced recollections of past lives, published in recent times by investi-

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46. N. York (1965)

47. *op.cit.* p. 77-275, also 279 f. They quote from or cite over four hundred Western thinkers.

gators in the field.[48] This in itself is not anything startlingly new, since Jung[49] had entertained a notion of 'soul' or 'mind' as something with frontiers far beyond those recognized in his day and criticized Freud for "a justifiable fear of metaphysics" which, he believes, prevented him from venturing beyond intra-uterine experiences.

The belief in reincarnation has had a considerable effect on other religious beliefs and attitudes. This is evident in the case of Greek religion too, where the beliefs and attitudes of the reincarnation teachings stand in clear contrast to those of traditional Homeric religion. For instance, the idea that living beings are constantly being reborn and that they have been experiencing this in the past as well, gives one not merely a notion of the cyclical nature of human existence but of an immensity of time as well. A single cycle in the account referred to by Herodotus

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48. Some of the more interesting works are M. Bernstein's *The Search for Bridey Murphy* Pocket Bks Inc. (1956) and F.L. Marcus *A Scientific Report on the Search for Bridey Murphy*. N. York. (1956), H. Blythe, *The Three Lives of Naomi Henry*. London. (1956), D.A. Bloxham *Who was Ann Ockenden?* London. (1958), A Rochas *Les Vies Successives*. Paris. (1911), T. Flourney *Des Indes a la Planete Mars*. Geneva (1899), A Cannon *The Power Within*. London. (1950), C.J. Ducasse *A Critical Examination of the Belief in a Life after Death*, Illinois (1961), I. Stevenson *Evidence from Survival for Claimed Memories of Former Incarnations*. England. (1961) E.S. Zolik 'An Experimental Investigation of the Psychodynamic Implications of the Hypnotic 'Previous Existence' Fantasy *J. Clin. Psychol.* vol. XLV (1958) and J. Rodney *Explorations of a Hypnotist*. London. (1959).

49. In his psychological commentary to the Tibetan *Bardo Thodol* transl. from *Das Tibetanische Totenbuch* by R.F.C. Hull and included in Evans Wentz *op.cit.* p. xxxv-lii; see p. xli-xliii, esp. xlii.

takes as much as three thousand years; in Empedocles it is 'thrice ten thousand seasons', while Plato talks of successive cycles of ten thousand years each. In Indian mythological cosmology, however, this is much longer, yielding a cycle of three hundred million years; and then, after a period when Brahma and the Universe are absorbed in the Absolute, the whole business begins once more.[50]

With the belief in the possibility of the soul incarnating in animal bodies, the doctrine re-establishes the sense of community with the animal world which man lost with his evolution from primitive life. In the ancient world, which was so much nearer to primitive times than our own, the nature and relationship of man to animal exercised the minds of some of the best thinkers. A few of them established a kinship of the two by attributing a common origin to both or propounding some theory of biological evolution, doing so more than two thousand years before Charles Darwin startled a mistaught public by reviving this age-old hypothesis. Notable among these was that of the Milesian philosopher, Anaximander,[51] who taught that the first men were originally contained in certain fish-like creatures, and this, together with his observation that the evolution of living creatures as a whole began in the sea before moving on to land,[52] constitute a brilliant anticipation of the Darwinian line of thought. Soon afterwards the notion of a common origin of man and the lesser creatures was supported by Empedocles,[53] the famous teacher of reincarnation and abstinence from flesh, with a theory which, though bizaire and crude, conformed with the belief in the possibility of the soul's transmigration into animal bodies. At the same

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50. *Bhagavad Gita* viii. 17-19. By human calculation a thousand ages taken together make a day of Brahma, and a thousand a night. An age is equal to 4,300,000 years. Thirty such days make a month, and twelve such months a year. After one hundred such years Brahma dies - and then is born again in another millenium. At his death all is annihilated, to be manifested again with his rebirth.

51. Censorin. 4.7. Plut. *Symp.* viii. 8.4. = *Vors.* I. p.88-89.

52. Aet.v.19.4 = *Vors.* I. p. 88.

53. Emped. fr. 60-62 and the doxography, in *Vors.* I.p. 334-335.

time he provided through it a basis in reality for the numerous composite creatures such as satyrs, sirens, centaurs, harpies and sphinxes which fill the mythology of the Greeks as well as of other peoples and which he took to be the substance of (what Jung would call) our 'collective unconscious' acquired of a time of experimentation by the evolutionary forces in nature. In later times the Neoplatonist Porphyry,[54] while a firm believer in metempsychosis, argued for humanity towards beasts on the grounds that they are our natural brothers, that they are endowed with life as we are, that they have the same principle of life, the same feelings, the same ideas, memory and industry as we, though only lacking human speech.

Even when mankind was viewed as part of the community of living creatures and this fact recognized by the belief in transmigration, man's evident superiority to animals could not be overlooked. In the context of reincarnation religions, therefore, we find a recognition of him as a superior class of animal rather than a special creation. On the other hand, the notion of man as a fallen divinity (δαίμων) - a notion which was popular in Greek reincarnation teachings and flourished in some Christian sects in the first centuries of the religion - resulted in the gradations of lives in the scheme of incarnations which, with plants thrown in as a lowest grade, corresponded neatly to the classic Greek distinction of the parts of the soul. Thus[55]

Parts of soul		Grades of Being
Reason	Speculative	Gods
	Calculative	Men
Feeling		Animals
Vegetative		Plants

54. In his *De Abst.* esp. bk. iii

55. Following Aristotle , *Ethics* 1.1102a26-1103a2 and 6.1139a3-31. Plato's tripartition of the soul, in *Rep.* 436a-441a, had observed a roughly similar exposition of three types of motive or impulse (contd.)

The doctrine concerning these grades of existence within the scheme of incarnations in reincarnation religion is expressed in the teachings of the great Neoplatonist Plotinus[56] as well. "Humanity", he taught, "is poised mid-way between gods and beasts and inclines now to the one order, now to the other; some men grow like to the divine, others to the brute, the greatest number stand neutral..... When the life principle leaves the body, it is what it is, what it most intensely lived..... Those that have maintained the human level are men once more. Those that lived wholly to sense become animals..... Those who in their pleasures ..... have gone their way in torpid grossness become mere growing things, for only or mainly the vegetative principle was active in them; and such men have been busy be-treeing themselves." Variations of more or less subtlety in one or more details are of course found within the individual religions, but the recognition of animals as fellow-beings involved in the great predicament of existence, only worse off than man, is more or less universal to them.

In Greece too, as in the East, the thought that animals and men belonged to the same race (ὁμογενή)led to an increasing practise of compassion towards animals and an avoidance of flesh eating. In later times of course the latter appears to have become a fad with certain sophisticated people and the reasons adduced more or less independent of the belief in transmigration.[57] Avoidance of killing, which is attested for in the earliest evidence on the earliest

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in the mind: Reason, the faculty that calculates and decides; second, a type of motive covering such characteristics as pugnacity, enterprise ambition and indignation, which are often in conflict with unthinking impulse: and thirdly, desire and appetition, the sense of bare physical and instinctive craving. The subdivision of Reason itself is not made by Plato here.

56. *Enneads* iii.2.8.

57. Porphyry *op.cit.* and Plutarch *De Esu Carn.* will be found rallying most of these in their defence of vegetarianism.

reincarnationist sect of Greece, the Orphics, becomes mixed in thought with cannibalism and is treated with an almost neurotic revulsion by Empedocles.[58] Orpheus was depicted as befriended by animals[59] and Pythagoras as pitying a smitten cur.[60] But apart from these and Empedocles' strident appeals to desist from killing and flesh-eating, there is little evidence in the Classical period of anything like the positive attitude of compassion for all living things that is characteristic of Jainism and Buddhism. In Hellenistic times concern seems to have grown, more particularly with the teaching of the Neoplatonists and Neopythagoreans, at length moving Porphyry[61] to write his excellent treatise on the abstinence from flesh in defence of the practice, a treatise addressed to his friend Firmus Castricius, who had become a Christian and resumed eating animal food.

By contrast the Semitic religions have seen man as lord over beast and have lent sanction to the continuance of that belief, in which mankind had a vested interest, that all that is in this world was made for exploitation by the human species. Even when the notion of the kinship of all living creatures, implicit in the ancient mysteries as well as in the idealist philosophy of the ancient West, became explicit in nineteenth century scientific thought with the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of the Species*, the lethargy of the human mind, which hates to have to rethink its metaphysical position, has failed to be noticeably disturbed. On the other extreme the Hindu teaching that sacrificed animals and plants thereby obtained through rebirth a higher plane of existence proves, if anything, the ingenuity of religion in reconciling the irreconcilable.

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58. Refer fr. 136, 137, 138, 139.

59. Simon. fr. 40; Aesch. *Agam.* 1629-1630; Eur. *Bacch.* 560-562; *Iph.Aul.* 1211-1213 and later writers evidence. The attraction of his song was surely in what he sang than the beauty of his melody alone.

60. *Vors.* 21.8.7 = Diog. viii 36; see p.51 and n. 100.

61. *op.cit.*

Closely associated with the belief in reincarnation, where it has flowered into a religion involving moral or sometimes magical purification, is the attitude to incarnate existence as a predicament of the soul from which it cannot be too quick to escape. This is summed up in the Indian teachings in the single term *samsara*, in which worldly existence is equated with transitoriness and suffering (*dukka*). A similar attitude to the world is found in the Greek in the notion of body as a 'tomb' or 'prison' of the soul or, alternately, of the incarnate being himself in the world as in some sort of guard-house or dismal abode.[62] And with this tendency is allied the tendency towards regarding final salvation as coequal with the liberation of the soul from the round of empirical existences.

At a further remove the whole world of contingent things is recognized as 'mayik' or illusory, this being notably expressed in India in the theology associated with the name of the great Hindu philosopher, Sankara, and in Greece in the 'unreality' of the phenomenal world in the philosophy of Plato. With the conviction that rebirth is the consequence of 'ignorance', suffering itself is viewed as the outcome of action arising from such ignorance. Consequently there is the tendency towards other-worldliness and contemplative techniques in the philosophy of such religions, together with an attitude of acceptance, often misviewed as one of 'pessimism', or 'fatalism', in the face of misfortune. For what man suffers is not God-inflicted but self-sought (αὐθαίρετα); he merely reaps what he has sown.

The chief distinction of the doctrine of reincarnation and that which has elevated it from a magical belief of primitive man to the fundamental philosophy of two of the world's four great religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, is the facility which it provides for explaining a man's apparently underserved suffering, or may be, good fortune, as the result of his own unremembered actions of a past life, thus obviating the 'scandal of particularity'. This notion of action and reaction is expressed in Indian religions in terms of a 'law' of moral causation with reference throughout the whole cycle of existences. It is popularly known as the 'law of action', or *karma*.

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62. See for instance Plato *Crat.* 400b-c and *Phaedo* 62b.

In Greek reincarnation, likewise, Necessity (Ἀνάγκη), conceived in the manner of *karma*, comes as the answer to the nature of man's lot, his μοῖρα. Here God is no longer 'jealous and trouble-giving' (φθόνερος τὲ καὶ ταραχώδης) he is wholly blameless (ἀναίτιος); and the apparent injustice of Fate, which raised such anguish in the hearts of poets like Theognis[63] and Simonides[64] and a state of mind more truly fatalistic, finds, in looking beyond the natural limits set to life by birth and death, an explanation which not only makes the individual responsible for his Fate but in fact justly deserving of it. On the other hand it goes beyond rendering God blameless to a point where he is hardly significant to the scheme of things. And in this necessity of doer suffering for his deeds (δράσαντι παθεῖν) the Greek no doubt saw on an universal scale the silent working-out of a concept of *peripeteia*.[65]

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63. See vs. 133-136, also 141-142.

64. i.l.ff. Bergk.

65. The notion of sin committed in one life obtaining retribution in another life (even if not of the same person) is basic in the belief of Greek 'blood-guilt'. The rationale of this had been the recognition of the family, not the individual, as the unit. With the growth of individualism, however, people like Solon (xiii 63 f.) began to appreciate the fact that the hereditary victims of 'nemesis' were essentially 'blameless' (ἀναίτιος). Aeschylus sought to reinterpret the hereditary element of ancestral sin, not so much guilt, as a proclivity to further sinning on the part of the descendants. The closeness of the notion of the sins of the fathers being visited upon the children and the sins of past life upon a subsequent life in the same individual (see Plato *Laws* 872e-873e) is seen in the question asked of Christ (*John* ix.2) by the disciples: "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" There is undoubtedly a certain logic in the evolution of the doctrine from the ethical angle. See Nilsson 'The Immortality of the Soul in Greek Religion' *Eranos* vol. XXXIX (1941) esp. p. 12, and see Dodds *op.cit.* p. 28 f., despite p. 150. On the Buddhist notion of *karma* or 'moral necessity' (contd.)

Reincarnation has often been put forward as a palusible explanation of many curious experiences, such as the feeling of familiarity with something or someone not encountered before in this lifetime. Bulwer Lytton refers to this as "that strange kind of inner and spiritual memory which often recalls to us places and persons we have never seen before, and which Platonists would resolve to be the unquenched and struggling consciousness of a former life".

If these are memories of past lives accidently evoked or excited by something in the immediate circumstances, there are also numerous accounts, ancient and modern, of deliberate recoveries of memory of past births by indulgence in certain techniques, or, in the case of people who are thought to have attained that capacity, by simply willing. The sacred books of the Hindus contain some such reincarnation histories. Kapila is said to have written the Vedas from his recollection of them in this way. The *Vishnu Purana* furnishes some instances of memory retained through successive lives. Most notable of course is the *Jataka Book*, which narrates the approximately five hundred and fifty birth stories of the Buddha which, though palpably invented and designed to impart Buddhist virtues[66] much as the fables of Aesop conveyed advice for success in life, and the parables of Jesus, Christian values, based themselves on the belief in rebirth and the Buddha's reputation for being able to recollect his past births. In recent times the case-studies of the recovery of memory of past lives undertaken by investigators in the field like Ian Stevenson, have awakened interest in the West to the phenomenon along with the

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as a remarkable development in ethical speculation, see Tylor *op.cit.* p.12. Greek reincarnation teaching, while accepting this as a fundamental truth to account for present suffering, tends to emphasise the more immediate requitals for present sinning with elaborations upon the traditional concept of Hades.

66. Though the Jatakas number only five hundred and forty seven, they involve a far greater number of 'lives'. It seems likely that the Buddha narrated a few, and in the manner that Jesus narrated parables, to illustrate a lesson, and that the rest were a result of indiscriminate multiplication. It is noteworthy that in none of the Jatakas in the Nikayas is the Buddha identi- (contd.)

great upsurge of interest, especially among the youth, in the reincarnation religions of the East.

While in religion the reincarnation hypothesis has been used as a reasonable explanation of the problem of economic inequality, misfortune and suffering, it has, in the world of art and intellect, been extended to account for precocity or genius. The birth of geniuses in humble and commonplace circumstances is taken to furnish evidence that the talent of an individual may be a carry-over from a prior existence, while unremarkable children of great parents were shown to exhibit the inadequacy of the theory of hereditary influence. In the moral field the belief in the possibility of graduated improvement affords hope that the perfection that may not be achieved in one life may be yet striven for to be achieved in another.

With these cursory observations on the belief of reincarnation in general we may pass on to some questions that arise concerning its particular manifestation in Greece. Most discussed among these is the question of the source from which the Greeks derived the belief, assuming, as a number of scholars have done, that the Greeks *did* derive it from some other people.

The question arises with one of the earliest pieces of evidence on reincarnation in Greek literature, that is, the passage in Herodotus (ii. 123) already referred to, in which he alleges it to be in fact Egyptian and that certain Greeks, whom he will not name, adopted it as their own. Very few, however, are prepared to accept Herodotus on this on the grounds that (a) there is no evidence of a teaching of reincarnation in Egypt contemporaneous with, or

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fied in his previous births with an animal. At the end of each Jataka the Buddha identifies the participants in that story with those contemporary with his final birth as the Buddha. On the Jatakas see T.W. Rhys-Davids *Buddhist India* 6th ed Culcutta (1955) ch. ix p. 104-117 and J.G. Jones *Tales and Teachings of the Buddha*, London (1979).

prior to, the time of Pythagoras,[67] who is apparently the one Herodotus has in mind as the first of the culprits, and (b) that Herodotus was labouring under an *idée fixé* that much of the Greek teachings were derivative from the more ancient neighbouring civilizations.[68]

These considerations warrant a certain amount of caution but need not be conclusive. It is indeed presumptuous to believe that the extant evidence on Egypt is complete and exhaustive of ancient Egyptian teachings and beliefs, so much so that we may rely on it to refute, two and a half thousand years later, a man who had in fact visited the country shortly after the time of Pythagoras and obtained first-hand knowledge on matters there. Not that even so Herodotus must be believed on what he says here - he is mistaken on many other things - but to refute him on the basis of an absense of information on our part is hardly reasonable. Likewise the *idée fixé;* those who discredit his assertions of Greek borrowings may themselves be labouring under an *idée fixé* to the contrary.

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67. See the authorities cited by W. Rathmaun *Quaestiones Pythagoricae, Orphicae, Empedocleae* diss. Halle (1933) p. 48 n. 32. If Pythagoras visited Egypt, it would have been around 540 BC (Strabo xiv 638, following Timaeus) see also K. von Fritz *Pythagorean Politics in South Italy* N. York (1940) p. 53 f. Re Iamblichus *V.P.* 11 and 28, see Fritz *loc.cit.* and J.S. Morrison 'Pythagoras of Samos' *C.Q.* vol. L (1956) p. 142.

68. See for instance A. Cameron *The Pythagorean Background to the Theory of Recollection* Menasha, Wisconsin (1938) p. 16. He admits Herodotus is here speaking on his own authority (see also How and Wells *A Commentary on Herodotus* Oxford (1912) on ii.123) but adds that "his complete reliability is lessened when we remember that he is airing a very dear prejudice - an idée fixé about borrowing of the Greeks from the Egyptions." See Wilamowitz *Der Glaube der Hellenen* Berlin (1931-32) p. 189, also Long *op.cit.* p. 6, and others.

Flinders Petrie[69] points to the possibility that a reincarnation belief could have existed in Egypt shortly after the reputed visit of Pythagoras, through the Hermetic writings of the *Kore Kosmou*, and that seventy five years later it could have been taught to Herodotus as an Egyptian belief. Again, it has been suggested as a possibility that Herodotus found the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* recognizing the privilege of good souls to assume various shapes of animals and plants from day to day (on one a heron, on another a cockchafer, a lotus flower, a winged phoenix, a goose, swallow, plover, crane, viper and so on), and wicked souls too, 'the restless vagabonds between earth and heaven', as seeking a human body in which to pitch their tents in order to torment it with sickness and to harry it to bloodshed and madness - and exceeded his text in interpreting therein a doctrine of reincarnation.[70] A. Erman,[71] who is one of the few who believed Herodotus may have been right, suggested that the old Egyptian beliefs may in fact have gradually evolved a doctrine of reincarnation.

The tradition of Pythagoras' visit to Egypt is at least as old as Isocrates, who in his *Busiris* (28-29) records that he learnt "matters concerning sacrifices and the holy rites performed in temples" (τὰ περὶ τὰς θυσίας καὶ τὰς ἁγιστείας τὰς ἐν τοῖς ἱεροῖς) and was the first to introduce them to Greece. Elsewhere Herodotus, referring to certain taboos, associates them with the Egyptians and at the same time with the Pythagoreans.[72] This lends some amount of plausibility to the theory of Egypt as the source of the Pythagorean tenet of reincarnation.

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69. *Personal Rel. in Egypt before Christianity* London (1909) p. 39 f; see also his *Rel. Life in Ancient Egypt* London. p. 109-110.

70. See Gomperz *Greek Thinkers*. London. (1901-12) vol.I (transl. by L. Magnus) p. 126-127; see D. Fimmen 'Zur Entstehung der Seelenwanderungslehre des Pythagoras' *Arch. fur Rel.* vol. XVII (1914) p. 513-523.

71. *'Die agyptische Religion' Handbucher des Koniglichen Museen zu Berlin.* 2nd ed. Berlin (1909) p. 213.

72. ii.81; Burial in woolen garments or wearing wool to temple.

Unfortunately the evidence is not as conclusive as to clinch the matter. Apart from the lack of certainty that Pythagoras ever went to Egypt, Isocrates does not make mention of what would have been the most remarkable of Pythagoras' borrowings and one upon which many of the Pythagorean rites and taboos were dependent. Again, if one thing is more marked than any other in the reincarnation cycle described by Herodotus as Egyptian, it is its inflexible determinism; and this bespeaks a magical rather than religious conception. Such a notion of reincarnation could hardly have been the central doctrine of the kind of religion Pythagoras, and for that matter Orpheus before him, were teaching in Greece. Besides, would it not be at variance with those very religious rites and taboos which Isocrates says Pythagoras adopted from the Egyptians, and Herodotus himself implies? The same may be said of Empedocles' teaching of reincarnation, even though in respect of its features it does reflect pretty closely those of the Herodotan account.

Burnet[73] was for Scythia as the source of the Greek belief, basing his assumption on what he took to be traces of some such belief among the peoples of Thrace and Gaul. Caesar[74] makes definite allusion to a doctrine of reincarnation among the Druids, upon which he says was based their singular valour. But this was later associated by writers such as Diodorus Siculus (v.28) with the Pythagorean teaching of reincarnation, even with the suggestion that it was learnt from the Greeks than vice-versa. Besides, a close examination of the references in Strabo (iv. 197.4), Valerius Maximus (ii.6.10), Lucan (*Phars.* 454-457 and scholia) and Ammianus Marcellinus (xv.9.8) show that not much more can be implied of the particular belief of these peoples than one of immortality, even if the manner in which it was taught

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73. *op.cit.* p. 82 n. 2.

74. *De Bel. Gal.* vi.14.5. He observes that they did not think that at death their souls perished but that they passed from one body to another (*ab aliis..... transire ad alios.*).

sometimes gave the impression of reincarnation.[75]

There are two other passages of more importance in deciding the matter. The first of these is concerning the change of form that Hecuba was destined to undergo in Euripides' tragedy called after her, the *Hecuba*. Here, at the end of the play (*Hec.* 1265 f.) Polymestor prophesies that she was fated to fall off the ship on her way to Greece and undergo a change of form into that of a dog with fire-red eyes. The dialogue proceeds with Hecuba asking him how he knew of her impending transformation, to which he replies that he had it from the seer, Dionysius:

Εκ. πῶς δ' οἶσθα μορφῆς τῆς ἐμῆς μετάστασιν;
Πλ. ὁ θρῇξι μάντις εἶπε Διόνυσος τάδε.
Εκ. οὐκ δ' οὐκ ἔχρησεν οὐδεν ὧν ἔχεις κακῶν;
Πλ. οὐ γὰρ ποτ' ἂν σύ εἶλες ὧδε συν δόλῳ.

HEC. *How do you know of my changing form?*
POLYM. *The seer, Dionysus, told the Thracians this.*
HEC. *Did he not prophesy any of the troubles you are having?*
POLYM. *You won't ever catch me out with your guile.*

Now, Long[76] may be right that τάδε in vs. 1266 here refers to the whole tragic outcome of the play, not merely to Hecuba's change of form. But the detail about Hecuba's change of form, which could hardly have belonged to the traditional versions of the story, it may be argued, suggested itself to Euripides from the fact that the Thracians held a belief in reincarnation. The probability increases if it appears that the idea of a dog-incarnation recommended itself to Euripides on account of the fact that just such a

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75. Rohde *op.cit.* p. 264. But see Linforth 'Οι ΑΘΑΝΑΤΙΖΟΝΤΕΣ' *Cl.Phil.* vol. XIII (1918) p. 23-33.

76. *op.cit.* p. 7-8.

thing had occured in the anecdote (narrated by Xenophanes: fr. 7) involving the famed Greek champion of the belief in reincarnation.

The second passage is one that concerns the Thracian deity Salmoxis and appears in the history written by Herodotus (iv. 95). It seems there that this Salmoxis was credited with certain preachings and practices which smacked of reincarnation, and further, that he was alleged to have learnt this from no less a person than Pythagoras. The whole thing appears in the form of an anecdote and is attributed by Herodotus to the Greeks of the Hellespont and Pontus regions.

Unfortunately the same doubts and difficulties which beset the theory of Egypt as the source of the Greek teachings of reincarnation besets the Scythian hypothesis as well. The evidence generally implies only some belief in immortality. But where it goes beyond this to hint at reincarnation as the form in which this immortality was experienced, the suggestion is rather that these peoples learnt it from the Greeks, more especially Pythagoras, than vice-versa.

Nor do the two passages just referred to improve the position. The change of form (τῆς μορφῆς μετάστασις) which Polymestor predicts for Hecuba is more probably through metamorphosis or shape-shifting popular among the Celts rather than through metempsychosis. If however her impending dog-form was prompted to Euripides by the fate of Pythagoras' friend of the Xenophanes-fragment mentioned earlier, it is probable that Euripides himself misunderstood the Celtic belief for one of metempsychosis. Shakespeare does no less when he speaks of Rosalind's prior incarnation as a rat in "Pythagoras' time" - and, of all things, an Irish (Celtic) rat.[77] In the case of Salmoxis, even if it is a doctrine of reincarnation that is cryptic in the things said and done by that Thracian *daimon* Salmoxis there, the likelihood is that the Greeks who invented the story wittingly or unwittingly projected the famous Pythagorean teaching concern-

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77. *As You Like It* iii. 2. Note also the allusion to recollection. Of course the Irishness of the rat may simply have owed itself to the poet's knowledge of the popular belief among the Irish that rats could be rhymed to death and nothing more.

ing the soul upon what was no more than a simple teaching of immortality associated with him. As observed earlier, it was only a 'practise of immortality' that was evidenced of this Thracian deity elsewhere. Besides, even if that evidence can be coerced to yield something like a doctrine of reincarnation for the Thracians and the like, it would be more difficult to establish that it was the Greeks who borrowed it from them than vice-versa. It is as a teacher of these peoples rather than their pupil that Pythagoras, the prominent link in this hypothesis of a Northern origin of the Greek belief, appears when he does.

Not infrequently those who advocated a Thracian source for the Greek teachings made the derivation through the offices of Orpheus, who was in tradition closely associated with Thrace, if not actually considered a Thracian.[78] Recently however interest has shifted to Scythia and shamanism, with E.R. Dodds himself in his *The Greeks and the Irrational*[79] attempting to relate the Greek prophets of reincarnation through their powers and practices to the shamans of the North.

This has certainly served to draw attention to an aspect of Greek religion which had so far not received adequate treatment, which Dodds has somewhat unhappily called 'the irrational', and to certain remarkable Greeks such as Abaris, Aristeias and Hermotimus, not to mention Epimenides and Pherecydes. These men were alleged to have displayed such powers as of self-induced trance, levitation, bilocation, forevision and an overmastery of the will over the flesh, powers also popularly associated with the yogis and saints of the reincarnation religions of the East.

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78. But see Linforth *op.cit.* He thinks the evidence before 300 B.C. (Aristoph. *Frogs* 1031, Eur *Hipp.* 952-953 and *Laws* 782c), which refer to an avoidance of killing and a regimen of vegetarian fare, while consistent with a belief in reincarnation, is not positive enough to indicate one.

79. Berkeley, Calif. (1951) ch.v: 'The Greek Shamans and the Origins of Puritanism.' See also K. Mueli 'Scythia'. *Hermes* vol. LXX (1935) p. 121 and C.H. Kahn 'Empedocles among the Shamans' in *Essays in Ancient Greek Philosophy* ed. J.P. Anton with G.L. Kustas, New York. (1971) p.30-35.

Herodotus (iv.36) tells of Abaris that he was considered a Hyperborean, that he carried an arrow with him, that he could live without food. He seems to have known much more about this man, but for some reason he witholds this information from the reader. As for Aristeias,[80] he too had connections with the people of the North, being credited with an account of the one-eyed Arimaspians who, according to him, lived beyond the Issedones, beyond whom lived the griffins who guarded gold, and then the Hyperboreans. He is said to have fallen dead in a fuller's shop in his native city, Proconnesus, but when the fuller closed the shop and went to inform his relatives, there arrived a man who had met Aristeias walking towards Cyzicus! Aristeias returned seven years later and wrote his *Tale of the Arimaspians*, then vanished again. Two hundred and forty years later his ghost appeared to the people of Metapontum and, besides instructing them to erect an alter to Apollo, informed them that on the occasion that the god had visited them, he had accompanied him in the form of a raven. The third of these 'Greek shamans', Hermotimus, was found eminently suitable by Heracleides of Pontus[81] to be a prior incarnation of Pythagoras by virtue of his remarkable psychic powers - for tradition has it that his soul was able to leave and re-enter his body at will.[82]

There is, however, nothing in the instances of these three men to suggest that they were in any way associated with reincarnation. The raven in the Aristeias story was either the soul itself of Aristeias, or more likely, one of his earlier transformations or shape-shifts rather than a prior incarnation of his. As for Hermotimus, neither his powers nor anything else about him go to the extent of implying either a teaching or experience of reincarna-

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80. Herodot. iv. 13-15.

81. fr. 98 W = Diog. viii.5; see also Porph. *V.P.* 45 and Hippolyt. *Phil.* ii. 11.

82. See Pliny *Nat.Hist.* vii.52; Plut. *De.Gen.Soc.* 592 c-d; Apoll.Dysc. *Hist.Comm.* 3; Lucian *Musc. Encom.* 7; Tertull. *De Anima* 44.

tion for himself. Heracleides' recruitment of him into the prior incarnations of Pythagoras appears to have been altogether self-inspired.[83]

Of Epimenides, however, Diogenes Laertius[84] preserves the tradition that he claimed to have been Aeacus reborn and to have lived many times on earth. As Dodds[85] remarks, Diogenes' words clearly imply that Epimenides claimed to have been reborn; there is no question here of anything like a psychic reinforcement of the shamanistic type. Besides, there was a tradition that Epimenides possessed a knowledge of the distant past, which was of respectable antiquity and known to Aristotle.[86] Aristotle's own particular observation that Epimenides' assertions were about the vanished past and not about things to be might, if anything, support the hypothesis that such knowledge was achieved by him through retrocognition and not through any form of clairvoyance or magical power.

Pherecydes too was said to have taught of reincarnation and to have in fact been the first to do so. Perhaps this is what Cicero[87] goes on when he makes the broader assertion that it was Pherecydes who was the first to assert that the soul of man was immortal. The soul's occupation of body and its relinquishing of it thereafter

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83. Hermotimus i.e. 'honoured by Hermes', by his name itself lends himself to be linked in the chain of lives which began with Aethalides, whom Hermes honoured with the gift of memory. He is sometimes called Hermodorus (Gk. *doron* = gift).

84. i. 114. λέγεται δὲ ὡς καὶ πρῶτος αὐτον Αἰακὸν λέγοι ..... προσποιηθῆναι τὲ πόλλακις ἀναβεβιώκεναι

85. *op.cit.* p. 164 n.51.

86. *Rhet.* 1418a24.

87. *Tusc. Diss.* i .16.38, depending on Posidonius; see also Apon. *In Cant. Cant.* v. 95. f = *Vors* (7.A.5); Suidas s.v. *Pherecydes.*

Pherecydes is said to have described in allegorical language which spoke of "hollows, pits, caves, doors and gates". If this was so, these hollows, pits and the rest may have been part of the vocabulary with which he described the world of the dead.[88] A strong tradition exists that he was closely associated with the great Greek teacher of reincarnation, Pythagoras, who was himself credited with a descent into the underworld — indeed, that Pherecydes was no less than his guru.[89]

The reliability and antiquity of the tradition on the point of a belief or teaching of reincarnation in the case of both Epimenides and Pherecydes is, however, not well founded. Diogenes fails to state his authority for his statement that Epimenides claimed to have been Aeacus and that he was on earth many times before, so that Dodds[90] himself cautions against building too much on it. Similarly Pherecydes' alleged teaching of metempsychosis first appears in Suidas[91] one and a half thousand years afterwards, with no mention of who the authority for it is. In any case it is difficult to connect these two figures with the North except by grouping them together with such other personalities as Abaris and Aristeias as being birds of a like feather. Dodds[92] himself thought that Pythagoras held the doctrine of reincarnation as an universal 'law' and was indeed responsible for taking it as such, whereas people like Epimenides had claimed it as a experience peculiar to themselves.

But even the belief in reincarnation as restricted to special people - granted Dodds is right that there was

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88. See Pherecydes fr. 5 and 6.

89. Ion fr. 5; Aristot. fr. 191 Rose = *Vors.* (14.A.7).

90. *op.cit.* p. 143.

91. *loc.cit.*

92. *op.cit.* p. 144.

such a thing in Greece at any time - is not traceable beyond the Greeks to the North. As he himself notes,[93] the Northern belief was simply that the 'soul' or 'guardian spirit' of a former shaman may enter into a living shaman to reinforce his power and knowledge. Thus, however fascinating the hypothesis of a derivation of Greek reincarnation belief from the powers and practices of the shamans of the North be, it needs much more than the evidence available to us at present to give it any serious degree of probability.

Scholars who think that the Greeks learnt of reincarnation from the Indians are of course influenced by the remarkable similarity of more than the broad general features of the doctrine as developed in Greece and India. "It is not too much to assume", writes Gomperz,[94] "that the curious Greek who was the contemporary of Buddha, and it may be, of Zarathustra too, would have acquired more or less exact knowledge of the religious speculations of the East in the age of intellectual ferment through the medium of Persia". In favour of this the point may be made that, even if it was Western Greece that was to see the Greek belief of reincarnation in its fullest flower, Pythagoras himself set out to Italy from Samos in the East.

When Indians first appeared on Greek soil, they came as a contigent of the great army of Xerxes. If the circumstances prevented peaceful intercourse with the mainland Greeks, it was still certainly possible with the Ionian Greeks, who were present in large numbers alongside the Indians in the Persian army. It is possible that even some time before this some Greeks had infilterated on to the Indian side of the Hindu Kush and settled there, as the story of Nysa repeated in the accounts of Alexander's expedition indicates. These Greeks could have been worshippers of Dionysus - which accounts for the Hellenistic myth of that god's invasion of India (perhaps also the cult of the Krishna-like Oriental Dionysus which figures in the *Bacchae* of Euripides) and of these Greeks being explained as his soldiers disabled in the course of it. If there were such

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93. *op.cit.* p. 143-144.

94. *op.cit.* p. 127.

Greek there, they must have gained an intimate knowledge of the reincarnation teachings of India, though the subsequent hostility of Persia towards Greece, and in any case the immensity of the intervening distance would have left them isolated and ignorant of the development of parallel teachings in their own motherland. At best they may have known that back at home reincarnation was associated with the name of Orpheus and, may be, that it was also adopted by Pythagoras in Samos before he left for South Italy. On the other hand, the Greeks who saw India with Alexander and after him, being in a position to make the comparison, seem to have been struck by the resemblance of the Indian teachings with the Greek. They appear to have been partial to Buddhism, and reasonably so, a number of them, including the renowned Bactrian king, Menander, favouring it and even fostering its familiar teachings.

The most thorough-going case for the Indian origin of the Greek belief is given by L.von Schroeder in his essay *Pythagoras und die Inder*[95] and his contention is bound to appear somewhat plausible when Greek and Indian doctrines based on the belief are viewed more comprehensively. There is the close similarity of features which are in fact part of the secondary elaboration and accidental to the belief in its appearance in the two countries;

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95. Leipzig (1884). Schroeder drew attention to the fact that nearly all the philosophical, religious and mathematical teachings ascribed to Pythagoras were common knowledge in India as early as the sixth century B.C.. On the other hand, he points out, they arise in Pythagoras' teachings without any antecedants. Garbe agreed in the main with Schroeder. They differed only in that, while Schroeder believed that Pythagoras had been in India, Garbe assumed that he had met his Indian teachers somewhere in Persia: See also Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire *Premier Memoire sur le Sankya* p. 512 f; he thought India much more likely the source of Pythagoras' doctrine of soul-transmigration. Lucian Scherman (*Materialien zur Geschichte der indischen Visionliterature*. Leipzig (1982) p. 26. n 1) mentions in addition the following: F. von Schlegel *Ueber die Sprache und Weischeit der Inder* (1808) p. iii f; A.L. de Chezy(contd.)

for instance, the inclusion of Heaven and Hell within the scheme of reincarnation alongside the notion of reincarnation itself as a mode of punishment; the concept of the world as a place of sorrow and earthly life a condition that is fraught with suffering; the almost identical attitude to body and the physical world as in themselves hateful and to be escaped from as soon as possible; the notion of liberation through virtue, virtue being identified with knowledge, and knowledge as the recovery or recollection of forgotten truth; the emphasis on contemplative techniques; the recognition of a spiritual gradation of living things, with human beings as an aristocracy on the doorstep of liberation; unique powers of remembering past births possessed by exceptional beings - and so on.

What is disconcerting to a hypothesis of an Indian origin is that if, as it seems, reincarnation was a tenet of Orphic religion from the first, it appearance in Greece must antedate the common sway of Cyrus the Great over Ionia and India. At the same time the date of the appearance of the belief in Indian religion is itself a matter of controversy and it is upon this that A.B. Keith[96] chiefly bases his refutation; indeed, as the evidence stands, it

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in Schlegel's *Indische Biblothek*, vol.I. (1823), p.261; Abbe J.A. Dubois *Moeurs, institutions et ceremonies des peuples de l'Inde* vol. II (1825) p. 312 f; Upham *The History and Doctrine of Buddhism* (1829) p. 27 f. and C. de Plancy *Dictionaire infernal* Paris (1818) p. 86. See C.H. Kahn *op.cit.* p. 35. He thinks there was no clear trace of transmigration in Greece before Pythagoras and that therefore one must look for the origin of the teaching in a civilization that had reached a high level of development comparable to that of early Greece. He naturally finds the truest peers of Pythagoras and Empedocles in their Indian contemporaries in the age of the Buddha. Consequently Kahn thinks "the time has perhaps come to reconsider in the light of modern research and with more rigorous techniques of comparison, the hypothesis developed by von Schroeder in 1884."

96. 'Pythagoras and the Doctrine of Transmigration' *JRAS.* (Gr.Brit. and Ireland) vol. XLI (1909) p. 569-606; see also his 'Religion and Philosophy of the Veda (contd.)

may even be used to argue the reverse. Keith's own explanation of the similarity of the beliefs which obtained in the two lands is summed up when he writes that "the nature of the problem being the same everywhere, and the mind of man not being essentially different in the India of the Upanisads and the Greece of the Pythagoreans and Plato, the results of the philosophy tend to resemble each other in diverse points".[97] Long [98] in not slow to agree that "this type of explanation is the most likely", though, as E.L. Minar Jr.[99] points out, his conclusion that the mind of man in India and Greece is not essentially different "because Greeks and Indians belonged to two closely related branches of the Indo-European race" is based on a highly questionable assumption.

In view of the absence of evidence for a transportation of the doctrine from India to Greece, even granting the antiquity of the Indian necessary for such a hypothesis, some such assumption as that of Keith is all that is possible. This would direct inquiry to Greece itself - which is what should have been done in the first instance. Even so the remarkable similarities which exist between the reincarnation philosophies of Greece and India, as perhaps between these and like teachings among other peoples, compels the belief in a widespread communication, a communication which was neither direct nor definite but carried out, in the manner of the ancient world, in the passage of ideas along the network of trade routes through Asia and Europe through the medium of symbol, parable, myth or occult teachings transmitted from mouth to ear. The charges of plagiarism levelled against Pythagoras in the early evidence, Herodotus' theory of the origin of the Greek teachings of reincarnation in Egypt, the association of Pythagoras with the Getan Salmoxis and later with Zoroaster, the Magi and the Celts, all suggest that the Greeks were aware of this, though

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and Upanishads' *Harv. Orient. Series* vols. XXXI and XXXII. Cambridge, Mass. (1925) p. 570-581 and 601-613.

97. *op.cit.* p. 610.

98. *op.cit.* p. 11. See also F.M. Cleve *The Giants of Presocratic Greek Philosophy* vol. II. Hague (1969) p. 519-520.

indeed they may have gone too far in trying to make one or another of these non-Greek religions the source of the fundamental belief of reincarnation itself. Present-day occultist and holy men alike express their conviction in some such widespread migration of religious ideas and argue that a belief in the existence of a secret symbol-code, readily understood by the initiate, is inevitably from any considerable study of the mystery religions of the ancient world.

Among the ancients the search for a foreign source of origin for the Greek belief of reincarnation was the consequence of the notion, to a great extent justified, that much of Greek ideas and institutions were borrowed from the older civilizations. With scholarship of the recent past, however, it has often been the result of an understandable European bias against this belief, which has no significance in orthodox Christian teaching or Occidental civilization and therefore wishes to see it as something 'alien' to Greece too, which is the acclaimed source and fount of the civilization and culture of the West. Inevitably the influence of this 'alien' belief upon the Greek mind had been viewed as fatal.

Whatever the effects of the belief may have been - and I have yet to see a close inquiry into these effects - the extant evidence, as I have said, fails to prove a thesis of borrowing here with any degree of conviction. This inevitably referred us back to Greece itself. But here again the evidence is neither adequate nor conclusive in establishing the evolution of the concept from any form of belief concerning the soul that is discoverable in primitive Greek religion. Parallels from primitive societies elsewhere may prove everything and nothing, though they would point to the important fact that a belief of reincarnation can be and is present among peoples, which has also been originated by themselves.

Although there is no trace of anything like reincarnation in Homer and Hesiod, the belief must have appeared in Greece as far back as the beginning of the seventh century B.C. For the story of Orpheus' descent to the netherworld to recover his wife (in which I see the belief cryptic) seems to have been well known by the middle of the fifth

century B.C. At any rate there is good reason to think that reincarnation was being taught by Pythagoras in Samos itself before he left the island in 531 B.C., allegedly on account of the increasing harshness of the tyranny of Polycrates. Thus, if primitive Greek beliefs in the afterlife did evolve a belief in reincarnation, which Orpheus was to adopt as the central tenet of his teachings on the soul, this must have taken place some time before the second half of the seventh century B.C. or, at latest, the first half of the sixth century B.C.

The continuous association of the teaching of reincarnation in Greece with the old chthonic deities and its persistence as a mystical doctrine suggests this origin to have taken place within the secret teachings concerning the dead in mystery religion. This would account for why it is referred to as not merely an ancient doctrine (παλαῖος λόγος) but also as a sacred doctrine (ἱερὸς λόγος), and more than that, a mystic doctrine (μύστικος λόγος), and why, all in all, so little should have been known of Greek eschatologies developed upon it outside the circles of the initiate.

This brings up the question of the popularity of the belief in Greece. The general view that it was not held by any considerable number of people appears correct. Not only was it taught to small exclusive groups of initiates but every effort seems to have been made to keep it from the ears of the public at large. This is however not true in the case of Empedocles, though it may be said for Pindar and Plato that what they did disclose were merely the outline features of the reincarnation eschatologies they held, while apparently there was much else they knew that they preferred not to talk about.

There can be no doubt, of course, that the general nature of the beliefs which were held by these circles were well known to the public from the earliest times. We have as evidence the fame - or notoriety sometimes - of these sects and the allusions to this doctrine of theirs in literature and philosophy. In Hellenistic times it seems to have gained increasing popularity and dominated religious and philosophical thought with the teachings of the Neopythagoreans and Neoplatonists, while its popularity and influence in early Christian times does not seem to have been any the less.

The Orphics, among whom a reincarnation doctrine is first evident in Greece, do not appear to have been an organized religious body but simply included all such groups as hailed Orpheus as their master. They could not have been very many, but were still numerous enough to have been known through the length and breadth of Greece for their distinctive practices and their particular way of life. Of their practices none were more remarkable to the Greeks than their avoidance of killing and flesh-eating, both of which are meaningful in the context of a central belief in reincarnation.

The first unambiguous reference to a doctrine of reincarnation is found in Xenophanes,[100] that is, in his well known fragment on Pythagoras and the dog. Pythagoras, like Xenophanes, came from Asiatic Greece, and from the Salmoxis-anecdote in Herodotus it would appear that he was already teaching the doctrine of reincarnation in his island home, Samos, before he migrated to Croton in South Italy.

Despite opinion to the contrary, it would seem that Xenophanes himself was favourable to the belief, while he rejected outright the religion expressed in Homer and Hesiod. Heraclitus' concept of mankind as "mortal-immortals and immortal-mortals", who keep exchanging the one state for the other, may give the impression that, though he ridiculed Pythagoras for his alleged intelligence, he himself openly accepted the notion of the reincarnation of the soul.[101] Elsewhere (fr.5) he condemns animal sacri-

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100. fr.7: "And once, they say, he was passing by, when a dog was being beaten. And he pitied it and said,"Stop, do not beat it, for this is the soul of a man who was my friend; I recognized it when I heard him cry aloud."

101. fr. 62: "Immortal mortals, mortal immortals; living the death of these and dying the life of those". See Sext. Emp. *Pyrrh. Hyp.* iii. 230; "Heraclitus says that both life and death are in both our living and our dying; for when we live, our souls are dead and buried in us, but when we die, our souls revive and live". Cf. Heraclitus fr. 88 "Living and dead are the same and waking and sleeping and young and old; for (contd.)

fice as the ritual mode of purification for murder on the grounds that it was like attempting to wash away mud with mud - though perhaps he may only have meant that blood cannot wash off the guilt of blood and not that animal killing is tantamount to murder. It is, however, noteworthy that Heraclitus' concept of life and death as successive changes of soul-states was afterwards seized by Plato[102] in the concept of reciprocality (ἀνταπόδοσις) as a proof of the immortality and reincarnations of the soul.

In Samos itself Pythagoras may have talked of reincarnation to certain audiences; the news seems to have spread abroad even to the Hellespont and Pontus regions. Upon his immigration to South Italy his teaching attracted a great deal of interest there too, particularly among the intelligensia, and we may take it as quite likely when it is said that there were foreign princes also among those who joined his brotherhood. Iamblichus lists the names of a number of his pupils, which, interestingly enough, include those of some women. The admission of women into the Pythagorean circle seems to have created quite a stir in the Greek world and resulted besides in a lot of snide references and malicious jokes.

For Sicily acquaintance with the idea of reincarnation is evidenced in the odes of Pindar and the religious teachings of Empedocles, the 'immortal god' from Acragas. The proportions of the audience to which Pindar immediately addressed himself cannot have been very large; at the narrowest it included the court-circle of Theron, tyrant of Acragas, in whose honour he wrote his famous second

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these, when they have changed, are those, and those, changing once more, are these". See W.K.C. Guthrie *A Hist. of Greek Philosophy* Cambridge (1962) vol. I. p. 478-479 and G.S. Kirk *op.cit.* p. 144-148, esp. p. 147. Kirk suggests two possible explanations: the magical belief in the recurrence of the dead and the quasi-religious form in which this is found in *Phaedo* 70c.f. He thinks the latter more likely. See also Cleve *op.cit.* vol. I (1969) p. 64.f. and esp. p. 76.

102. *loc.cit.*

Olympian ode. There can be no doubt that he was also writing for a wider audience outside, but that they were as conversant with this doctrine of the rebirth of the soul as his patron and his court cannot be immediately assumed from this. Empedocles, on the other hand, quite certainly sought the widest publicity for his teachings and, if we are to believe him, got it. Unlike Orpheus and Pythagoras, he makes no secrecy of his eschatological beliefs; instead, and in spite of a fragment of his which calls for the protection of these within the 'silent bosom', (fr.5 - which must belong to his religious work, *Purifications*, rather than to his work on the nature of the universe), he seems to cry out his teachings from the house-tops. He addresses them, not to any exclusive group but to his fellow Acragantines, all and sundry; and if we are to believe him, they followed him in their thousands. Nor does it appear that there was any deeper core of esoteric meaning in them that was not easily comprehensible to any and everyone.

On the mainland Thebes must have heard the doctrine of reincarnation first associated with the Orphics and later with the Pythagoreans who took refuge there after the disaster the school suffered in Italy; in Athens it was soon to be popularised by Plato and his Academy. Echoes of it must have been frequent in the plays of Euripides, while Plato in his *Meno* (81a-b) talks of more poets than Pindar and of 'priests and priestesses' who avowed the doctrine - these hardly being identifiable with the Pythagoreans, who would not qualify to such designation. In Middle Comedy Pythagorean ascetic philosophers and their practice of vegetarianism seem to have been sufficiently widely known as to be made the butt of humour before popular audiences. At the same time, however, the doctrine of reincarnation continued to appeal to the intelligent and the scholarly and at one time even Aristotle himself seems to have subscribed to it.

Apart from the literary evidence, there is scarcely anything to indicate even the existence of the belief of reincarnation in Greece until we come to the famous Orphic tablets found in South Italy and Crete.[103] But then, the

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103. See Gilbert Murray's appendix on them in Jane Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* Cambridge, 3rd ed. (1922) p. 660-674 and W.K.C. Guthrie *Orpheus and Greek Religion* London (1935) p. 171-187.

religious form in which the belief expressed itself in Greece, as in India, with its peculiar attitude to body and earthly existence, is not the sort of thing to encourage tendence of the corpse or funerary art, except where traditional practices supervened. This is true of the timboni in which the Orphic tablets themselves were found. The stone coffins contained no funerary objects, only a partially burnt corpse covered with a white sheet, and a tiny gold leaf near the head or hand. The remnants of statuettes and vases found in the tumuli cannot be pieced together and appear to have been put there in that fragmentary condition.

Writing on these timboni Macchioro[104] remarks the fact that "we find ourselves in the presence of a strange and peculiar rite, perfectly alien to Greek customs, which must have some underlying cause". The absense of that great nostalgia for life which underlies the eschatology of traditional Greek religion is in close conformity with the attitude of the religion to which these dead belonged.

Buddhists of recent times are in the habit of claiming their religion to be based on reason and logic. Plato argued for reincarnation on the grounds that only on the assumption of pre-existence could the possibility of knowledge be explained; Buddhist and Hindu, viewing suffering in this existence as consequences, argue for reincarnation on the grounds that these consequences implied previous existences in which the actions from which they flowed were committed. The assumption of a law of action and reaction on the moral plane (*karma*), which could be thought a projection of the law of cause and effect in physics, has also led people to talk of Buddhism for instance as scientific.

So Nilsson[105] finds the idea of reincarnation the product of 'pure logic', and the Greek formulation of it quite understandable, because the Greeks were 'born logicians'. If we do not think of it as deduced from a cons-

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104. *From Orpheus to Paul*. London. (1930) p. 112; also see p. 109 f.

105. *loc.cit.*

cious exercise of logic on the part of the individual or the race as a whole, we may agree that there is indeed something of a logical deduction about it. As Dodds[106] explains this, once people accept the notion that man has a 'soul' distinct from his body, it is natural to ask from where this 'soul' came, and natural to answer that it came from the great reservoir of souls in Hades. Notions of pre-existence and survival are both prominent in ancient Greek beliefs concerning the soul.

In Homeric religion, at death the soul passes into Hades with no hope of return to this world again; in primitive Greek folk religion the souls of dead ancestors pass into the air, whence they return to the tribe once again in the bodies of the new-born. If, as is plausible, the concept of reincarnation in Greece developed from this simple folk belief in the recurrence of the souls of dead ancestors, it is interesting to observe how the eschatologies of the Greek reincarnation religions compromised with the Homeric concept of the afterdeath by simply including Hades in the experience of souls upon death.

Dodds[107] is perfectly right, however, in doubting if religious beliefs are adopted, even by philosophers, on the grounds of pure logic, since logic is at best an *ancilla fidei*. Reincarnation as a belief has been favoured by many people who are by no means 'born logicians'. And need we mention its wide prevalence among primitive societies, which can have no pretence to logical thinking on their part but hold the belief with as much conviction out of sheer superstition?

Alcmaeon, the Crotoniate doctor whose name we find Aristotle[108] coupling with the Pythagoreans of Croton, used to describe death as the result of man's inability "to join the beginning to the end".[109] If the straight line expressed the concept of mortality for the Greeks, immortality was imaged as a circle or a wheel. The wheel of

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106. *op.cit.* p. 150

107. *loc.cit.*

108. *Met.* A5. 986a27.

109. Fr. 2.

life referred to by the Pythagoreans is called in Proclus' *Timaeus* [110] 'the cycle of generation' (κύκλος τῆς γενέσεως) and by the Orphic Tablets 'the sorrowful weary wheel'. Simplicius[111] goes to the extent of saying that it was symbolized by the wheel of Ixion, adding that "he was bound by God to the wheel of fate and of generation". If the other 'great sinners' of the Hades-visions of Odysseus, i.e. Tityos, Tantalus and Sisyphus, [112] were Orphic figures depicting posthumous punishment in Hades, it is possible that Ixion, who makes a fourth with them, symbolized for the Orphics the predicament of rebirth upon this earth itself.

It is this alternation of life and death, through which the soul describes its rebirth cycle, that was expressed by Heraclitus when he called men 'immortal mortals' and 'mortal immortals', according to whether they were in the one state or the other of life and death. The rebirth cycle ends with the soul flying out of the sorrowful weary wheel, as the Orphic Tablets say, and regaining its lost estate, be that as a human being (as in the reincarnation account given as Egyptian by Herodotus) or as a god (as in the teachings of Empedocles). Thereafter, perhaps, it all begins again for the soul. Of the duration of such a cycle we have various reckonings, from three thousand years of the alleged Egyptian account to ten thousand years in Plato and 'thrice ten thousand seasons', whatever length that may be, in Empedocles.

Within the rebirth cycle each single life and corresponding death by themselves constitute a circle, comparable in cosmology to a single round of seasons in a year, while the rebirth cycle, constituted of a series of these life-death cycles, was seen as parallel to a world-cycle constituted of a series of annual cycles. At the end of a world-cycle the world was once again resolved into its primal state, and usually the whole process was thought to begin again. The parallelism of soul-cycle and world-cycle, (no matter how he reconciled them) is nowhere more clearly manifest than in the teachings of that remarkable Greek prophet-cum-philosopher, Empedocles, who treats each of them separately in his two works, *On Nature* and *Purifications*.

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110. 1.32

111. *De Caelo* ii. 91c.

112. Hom. *Od.* xi.

Despite the great deal that is written about the significance of philosophical contemplation (θεωρία) in connection with liberation from the predicament of incarnate existence in original Pythagoreanism, hardly anything is revealed of it in the evidence. In Empedocles, again, the bearing of philosophical inquiry upon the purification of the soul, if it did have a bearing of any kind, is not to be discovered. But the fact that both Pythagoras and then Empedocles combine in themselves the pursuit of philosophy and a religious teaching of the reincarnation of the soul presages the confluence of the two in Platonism, and afterwards, in the religio-philosophical systems of Plotinus and the Neopythagoreans. This tendency, arising from the metaphysical implications of the doctrine in Plato, is closely paralleled in Indian thought, while at the same time it stands in opposition to the clear distinction of religion and philosophical speculation in pre-Socratic Greek thought and the Western tradition afterwards influenced by Aristotle.

Within philosophy itself the dualism of soul and body emphasised by the reincarnation religions of Greece, as of India, emphasises in metaphysics a dualism between the world of coming-into-being and passing-away, conceived as essentially unreal, delusive and sorrowful, and a reality that is essentially transcendental. Knowledge of this reality becomes an urgent and supreme undertaking; it becomes the one technique of liberation from the wheel of rebirth (or at least an important part of it), a raft for crossing over. To the extent that this reality becomes a mystic vision, the apperception of it tends to be through a *gnosis* of some kind, and the distinction between seer and philosopher tends to disintegrate. Pythagoras reappears among the Neopythagoreans as an inspired sage, the Greek counterpart of Zoroaster or Ostanes, and numerous apocrypha are fathered upon him or his immediate disciples. So, the aim of Platonism, as a Christian observer of the second century A.D.[113] concludes, "is to see God face to face".

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113. Dodds *op.cit.* p. 137. This was maintained by Wilamowitz but he later recanted; see Dodds p. 158 n. 12.

In its religious context this same dualism of soul and body is reflected in the contrast between the predicament of incarnate existence and the blissful state of ultimate deliverence; and as the Buddhist would put it, all is either *samsara* or *nirvana*. But while the unique explanation that the doctrine of reincarnation offered for the inequalities of life, even using it to emphasise the moral responsibility of man for his present actions, must have been ethically satisfactory to those who avowed it, its great dynamism in religion must derive from the accompanying teaching of this present incarnation of ours as men as itself being the very threshold of that blissful state of liberation.

MERLIN PERIS

THE UNDIFFERENTIATED AND THE DIFFERENTIATED ASPECTS OF GODHEAD IN ADVAITA THOUGHT

Advaita thought, both Vedānta and Saiva Siddhānta,[1] conceives of godhead in two aspects, the undifferentiated and the differentiated. It is *nirviśeṣa* 'without distinction' and *saviśeṣa* 'with distinction',[2] *nirguṇa* 'without quality' and *saguṇa* 'with quality',[3] *niṣkala* 'without part' and *sakala* 'with part',[4] *amurta* 'formless' and *mūra* 'formed',[5] *akāla* 'beyond time' and *kāla* 'in time',[6] and *asabda* 'soundless' and *sabda* 'sound'.[7]

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1. The Vedānta and the Śaiva Siddhānta are both schools of Advaita thought. The former takes the word *advaita* to mean 'one', that the Brahman and the self are one. The Śaiva Siddhānta takes the word to mean 'not two', that God and the soul are inseparably united.

   The following Saiva Siddhānta texts cited are found in *Maikanda Saatiram Patinaangu*, vol. I and II, Tinnevely: The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society (1969). *Civañānapōtam* (SJB); *Civañānacittiyār* (SS); *Civappirakācam* (Siva.); *Tiruvarutpayan; Tirukkaliṟṟuppaṭiyar; Tiruvuntiyar; Neñcuvitututu.*

   In translation:

   Gordon Matthews, *Sivañānabōdham* Oxford (1948);
   J.M. Nallaswami Pillai, *Sivagnana Botham*, Madras (1895)
   Sivajnana Siddhiyar Madras (1913)
   H.R. Hoisington, *Siva Pirakasam, Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. IV (1853-4), p. 127-244.
   G.U. Pope, *'The Tiruvarutpayan'* in his: *'The Tiruvacakam;* Oxford (1900).

2. S. Radhakrishnan, *The Brahma Sutras* London (1960) p. 449; *Vedanta Sutras*, Sankara's Commentary, *Sacred Books of the East* vol. 34, p. lxi.

3. *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* vi. 11; *Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad* vi. 10; *Bhagavadgīta* xiii. 14; *Vedanta Sutras*, *op.cit.* p. lxvii; lxxi; lxxii.

Brahman in many passages of the Upanisads appears as both the material and the instrumental cause of the world.[8] It is both the *upādāna kāraṇa* and the *nimitta karaṇa*. But in Sankara's Advaita, Brahman, the sole reality, is not subject to modification. To say that the world of 'names and forms' evolves from Brahman would detract from its immutability. Yet the need to account for the material world makes Advaita thought speak of another aspect of Brahman, Īśvara or Brahman veiled by the power of *maya*. The soul in the grip of *avidya*, 'nescience', sees Brahman as Īśvara and as the creator and sustainer of the material world. Īśvara is thus both the material and the instrumental cause of the world. But Īśvara has no final reality; he has only a *vyavaharika satta* 'phenomenal reality'.[9] The Śaiva Siddhanta refers to godhead in its causal state (*karaṇa nilai*) as Civam and Civaṉ, while Mahesvaraṉ, Ṟuruttiraṉ, Viṣṇu and Brahma are forms of Civaṉ which function at the behest of Civaṉ.[10]

There is a further reason why Advaita thought feels the need for a differentiated aspect of godhead. To the Advaita matter too has only phenomenal reality; it has no ultimate reality. So Brahman in its undifferentiated form

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4. *Svetā. Up.* vi. 19; *Muṇḍaka Up.* II.ii.10; III.i.8; *Śiva.* 14; *Tiruvuntiyar* 1; *Tirukkaḷirruppatiyar* 4.

5. *Maitrā. Up.* vi. 3.

6. *Ibid.* vi. 15.

7. *Ibid.* vi. 22.

8. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Up.* I.iv. 3-5; II.i.20; *Aitareya Up.* I.i. 1-3; *Muṇḍaka Up.* I.i.7; II.i.20.

9. *Vedānta Sūtras op.cit.* vol. 34, p.xxx; Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.* p. 236-7.

10. *SS* I. 34; 35; 60; *Śiva.* 17.

does not come into contact with matter. The Śaiva Siddhānta, however, grants that matter, *maya*, exists, but calls it *asat* 'non-existent'. It is 'non-existent' in the presence of God, who is *sat*, 'existent', as darkness that is dispelled by light.[11] Hence it is the differentiated aspect of God that has to do with creation.

Śaiva Siddhānta puts forward yet another argument in favour of this distinction. To say that Civan is the instrumental cause of the world of matter would be to implicate him in *karma*, the law of action and reaction. Hence the Śaiva Siddhanta draws a distinction between two types of creatorship, 'directing creatorship' *prayojaka kartṛtvam*, and 'directed creatorship', *prayojya kartṛtvam*. God in the Śaiva Siddhanta acts by volition, not action; he is a creator of the former type.[12]

This motif of an intermediate god or demiurge is seen even in the Ṛgvedic myths of creation.[13] Virāṭ in the Vedic hymn intervenes in the act of creation. He emerges from the primeval Puruṣa, and then from him again Puruṣa emerges. And then from the body of this second Puruṣa creation emanates. In the hymn to Viśvakarman too we see the waters or primeval substance emerging from Viśvakarman, and then god as creator appears on the waters to perform the act of creation.

The crux of the matter is this. Man here attempts to conceive of God, who is beyond the reach of mortal mind, God who comprehends within himself mind and matter. A beautiful attempt to describe such an inconceivable Reality

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11. *SJB* vii.1; Gordon Matthews, *Sivanānabōdham* p. 19; 53.

12. *SJB* i.2.; Gordon Matthews *op.cit.* p. 32; *Civañānapāṭiyam*, Tinnevely; The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works Publishing Society (1936) p. 100; V.A. Devasenapathi, *Śaiva Siddhanta* Madras (1974) p. 72.

13. A.B. Keith, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanisads*, *Harvard Oriental Series*, vol. 32, p. 438; Paul Deussen, *Philosophy of the Upanisads*, New York (1966) p. 182-3.

is seen in the Creation hymn of the *Ṛgveda*.[14] *Tad ekam*, 'that One' of the Creation hymn, is beyond all polarities, beyond being and non-being, death and life, darkness and light. Only such an One, who comprehends all these polar opposites, could be the basis and source of all differentiation.

In the Upanisads, Brahman is often referred to in the neuter gender.[15] To characterize it as male or female or to posit qualities of godhead would be to limit it, to circumscribe it. We see also attempts to describe this one Reality. Brahman is described in positive terms as possessing manifold characteristics, as *saviśeṣa*, or negatively as excluding all definition, as *nirviśeṣa*. But both descriptions proving inadequate, the Upanisads often fall back upon the words *neti neti* 'not so, not so'.[16] These negative descriptions of the Transcendent One, which defies definition, pave the way for the higher Brahman, the *nirviśeṣa*, *niṣkala*, *nirguṇa* Brahman of Vedanta thought, while the positive formulations of the nature of Brahman as possessing quality, difference and form, give rise to Īśvara and the many gods of Hinduism.

The undifferentiated aspect of Brahman, or God 'as He is in Himself', his essential nature, is referred to as his *svarupa* (Tamil: *coṟupa nilai*) and the differentiated aspect as Īśvara, Mahesvaran, Visnu, etc. is termed *taṭastha* (Tamil: *taṭatta nilai*), 'not essential'.[17]

Taṭastha literally means 'stationed on a slope'.[18] A more appropriate opposite of *aṭastha* would be the term *kuṭastha* 'stationed on a peak', an epithet which often

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14. x. 129.

15. *Bṛhad. Up.* III. viii.8; *Chāndogya Up.* VI. viii.6; ix.1; *Kena Up.* 3; 10; 11 etc.

16. *Bṛhad. Up.* II. iii. 6; III.ix.26; IV.ii.4; iv.22; v.15.

17. Radhakrishnan, *op.cit.* p. 237.

18. Otto Böhtlingk and Rudolph Roth, *Sanskrit Wörterbuch*, St. Petersberg (1861).

appears in Advaita literature with reference to the undifferentiated or *svarupa* aspect of Brahman.[19] *Kutastha* would then be Brahman as it is inaccessible to or inconceivable by the mind of man and 'stationed', therefore, as if 'on a peak', while *tatastha* would be the conceivable, accessible aspect of God, 'stationed' as if within reach 'on a slope'. These forms are not *anadi mukta* 'beginningless and free' like God in his *svarupa* state and will cease to be when creation dissolves into *maya* at the time of *pralaya*, 'world destruction'. They are but the many forms in which the incomprehensible Reality becomes comprehensible to the mind of man.

This dual description of God, furthermore, is relative to man's condition of 'knowledge' or 'ignorance'.[20] Man blinded by *avidya*, 'nescience', 'sees' God objectively, as apart from himself, as endowed with form and attribute. This is to see God in his *tatastha* form. But in *jnana* 'knowledge', man 'sees' God intuitively, experientially, in union with him; it is to know God's essential nature, his *svarupa*. Man's destiny, likewise, is determined by his perception. To 'see' God as *tatastha* is to go at death to the world of the gods and thereafter to be enmeshed again in *samsara*, worldly existence'. To 'know' God's *svarupa* aspect is not to go anywhere but to experience liberation straightaway, to 'become one' with Brahman.[21]

In a different classification the Saiva Siddhanta speaks of God as *aruvam* 'formless', *aruvuruvam* 'without and with form', and *uruvam* 'with form'.[22] God in his transcen-

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19. *Vedanta Sutras op.cit.* vol. 34, p.28;186;327; *The Bhamati Catussutri* (Commentary on Sankara's commentary on the *Vedanta Sutras*) ed. S.S. Suryanarayana Sastri and C. Kunhan Raja, Madras (1933) p.38; *Bhagavadgita* vi.8; xii.3; xv.16; *Vivekacudamani* of Sankara, ed. Swami Madhavananda, Calcutta (1944) 191; 507; *Naiskramyasiddhi* of Suresvaracarya, trans. S.S. Raghavachar, Mysore (1965) ii.11; 15.

20. *Vedanta Sutras, op.cit.* vol. 34, p. 62.

21. *Ibid.* p. lxxi; 232; vol. 38, p. 392; 400-2.

22. M. Dhavamony, *Love of God according to Saiva Siddhanta*, Oxford (1971) p. 306 n. 5.

ent form is *aruvam;* in his *liṅga* form he is *aruvuruvam,* and when conceived of with form and feature, he is *uruvam.*[23] The four paths to God defined by the Śaiva Siddhanta relate to these 'forms' of God. Service and physical worship of God in his temple is *cariyai* (Skt. *carya*); physical and mental worship of the *liṅga* form is *kiriyai* (Skt. *kriya*); mental worship of the transcendent *aruvam* form is *yokam* (Skt. *yoga*); God-realization through hearing, reflection and meditation is the highest path of *ñaṇam* (Skt. *jñāna*).[24]

There is a difference, however, between the Advaita Vedanta and the Śaiva Siddhanta in their conception of God's essential nature and man's response to it. The Vedanta hesitates to make positive formulations about Brahman; it would prefer to describe Brahman in negative terms. In the Śaiva Siddhanta, on the other hand, God, even in his *svarupa* form, is not devoid of personality. He is also Civaṇ, the supreme God, to whom is ascribed omnipotence, omnipresence and other auspicious qualities. And unlike in the Advaita Vedanta, the soul here is distinct from God. So man's response to God in his *svarupa* and *taṭastha* forms is one of *jñana* mixed with *bhakti* 'devotion'. In fact, *bhakti*, as the Śaiva Siddhanta understands it, comprehends worship, ritual, *yoga* *jñana* as constituting man's total response to God. Here man as a person responds with *bhakti* to a God endowed with personality.[25] *Arul* 'grace', which is essential nature of Civaṇ in the Śaiva Siddhanta, is conceivable only of a God endowed with personality.[26] So the *svarupa* and *taṭastha* aspects of God in the

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23. *SS.* i. 38; 55; 70; *Tiruvarutpayaṇ* i.5; These three 'forms' are also referred to as *niṭkaḷam, niṭkaḷa-cakaḷam* and *cakaḷam* respectively. See *Siva.* 14 commentary p. 51-2. The commentator explains all three as *tatatta* 'forms' of Civan.

24. *Civanāṇapātiyam, op.cit.* p. 428-9.

25. Dhavamony, *op.cit.* p. 276; 340; 368-9.

26. *Tirumantiram*, Madras; The South India Saiva Siddhanta Publishing Society (1942) 1769; 1770 etc.

Saiva Siddhānta do not coincide altogether with the undifferentiated and differentiated views of Brahman in Sankara's Advaita philosophy. But they do agree in that they refer to God 'as he is in himself' and as he is accessible to the mind of man.

MAHESWARI ARULCHELVAM

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FROM COMORIN TO KASHMIR

THE SHORT STORY IN THE INDIAN REGIONAL LANGUAGE: A SEARCH FOR ITS IDENTITY

I. The origin of the Indian Short Story - dating the undated.

In most critical works on contemporary Indian liite-rature, the ancient traditional literature, particularly the great Sanskrit epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, are given their due importance as the seminal source from which the literatures in the various regional languages drew most of their materials and inspiration. Even the literary genres, poetry and drama in the regional languages, with their continuity from the past well established, enjoy much privileged status locally, if not nationally.

But the general tendency is to treat the Indian novel and the short story condescendingly as of recent origin and isolated from the main stream of Indian literature. K. Natwal Singh observes in his introduction to *An Anthology of Modern Indian Tales:* "The development (of the short story) in its present form is largely the result of the impact of Western thought and ideas." Sarala Jag Mohan in her introduction to *Gujerati Short Stories: An Anthology* says: "All through the ages, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* have remained a part of the Indian ethos. They have inspired many writers right up to our times. Thus we have the *Katha Sarit Sagara*,[1] the *Panchathanthra*[2] and the *Jataka*

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1. *Katha Sarit Sagara*, a collection of stories in Sanskrit verse adapted and composed towards the end of the eleventh century by Somadeva, a Kashmiri Brahmin. The title in Sanskrit - The Ocean of the Rivers of Stories - gives us a clue to the nature of the work. It consists of romantic tales, stories of suspense, comic tales. A section called *The Vetalapanchavimsati* (the Tales of the Vampire) is unrivalled in Indian Literature for the manner in which (contd.)

Tales[3] that have aroused the curiosity and interest of lovers of literature all over the world. However, the short story as we understand it to-day is a comparatively recent phenomenon in India. To be more precise, the Indian short story is hardly a century old."

Of course, there is a point of view held by some that the question of dating need not be taken so seriously, although for those who make much of dates, it is not a light matter. These are those who want everything to be neat and precise about the first novel, if not the first short story in English, French, Hindi, Malayalam. In English they start with Richardson, and soon find themselves searching beyond English frontiers - in France Rabelais, and in Spain Cervantes, which two writers, by the way, defy classification. At this stage, one is cautioned to have one's limits. But why? In modern literature we have been liberal enough to accept in the fictional genre Tolkien's long-drawn-out fantasies, Gabriel Marquez's tedious spawnings - realistic, fantastic

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elements of comedy, horror and intellectual probing into various aspects of the human condition are blended together.

2. *The Panchathanthra Tales*, the oldest extant collection of fables in Sanskrit using both the verse and prose medium. Supposed to have been written by a scholar Vishnu Sarma in the fifth century A.D. on the orders of an Indian emperor to make his children learned in 'the science of administration' - the art of ruling and other relevant aspects of life. There are animal-stories which enact human experiences and human predicaments. The influence of these stories on European literature during the medieval period through translations was considerable. The tradition is very much alive even to-day in the Indian literatures. One of the finest writers of fables is Zacharia, the Malayalam short story writer.

3. *Jataka Tales* (dating to 325-250 B.C.) apparently cycles of legends dealing with the Buddha's (contd.)

or epic, as you like to have them labelled - while almost the whole process we find at work in Marquez is reversed or subverted in Jorge Luis Borges' constricted, anecdotal fictional vignettes. Well, if we are accomodating enough, we will soon be disporting ourselves with the marvellous *Canterbury Tales* - not one poem, but several poems or stories, as I see it. Almost contemporary with Chaucer was Boccacio and, among the Celtic races, long before Chaucer there were the prose tales - the sagas. But we little realised we were going back to the great Indian tales - the stories from the great epics, the *Katha Sarit Sagara* and the *Panchathanthra*. Most of them antedate the works of Chaucer, Boccacio and others and often turn out to be the source of much in the European tradition. For the stories from the East travelled westwards, as the traders and travellers came and went, carrying with them the baggage of Oriental material products and at times non-material producrs in their minds.

2. Is language a clue to the identity of literature?

However, the problem we should really be concerned with is not so much the problem as to when the short story made its appearance but the problem of its identity. In this connection let us see what K.N. Daruwalla, poet and critic, has to say about the problem of identity in literature: "No literature can really be assessed without reference to its tradition. Identity and tradition go hand in hand and it is debatable whether you can have one without the other."[4]

The question of identity, therefore, appears to be whether we can find an integral traditional aspect of a work of art which may provide at the same time a clue to to its true identity. Does the language of fiction, which is undoubtedly a traditional element of fiction, provide a clue to its identity?

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former births. Although of special significance to the Buddhists, the *Jataka Tales* is an extraordinary collection of stories, humorous and at times tragic, of great artistic and human value.

4. K.H. Daruwalla, 'National Identity and Indian poetry in English' in *Indian Horizon*, vol. XXXII. no.4 (1983).

It is a well known fact that India as a country is multilingual, its peoples are multilingual and its literatures are multilingual. Does this mean that there is only linguistic isolation and linguistic separateness and not linguistic identity as far as the language of fiction is concerned? G.D. Khosla introducing an excellent anthology of Punjabi short stories says, "In a vast country like India where great regional differences in cultural outlook and behaviour obtain and the various languages retain their exclusive origins and identities, it is not possible to have continued and complete communication between different parts of the country, and there cannot be that awareness of the country's total literary output or its true worth, as is possible in a small country like England."

However, the complaint about linguistic isolation of the different parts of the country is not wholly true. For there is intercommunication by means of translation from one regional language to another and the translation from one language to another is often direct - is not only through English. I have with me a catalogue of the Sahitiya Pravarthaka Co-operative Society of Kerala (Kottayam). At least twenty percent of the books put out for sale are translations into Malayalam from several Indian regional languages. It is worth mentioning that the celebrated Bengalee novel, *Arogya Niketan*, appeared in an excellent translation in Malayalam not long after it was published in Bengalee. The National Book Trust of India is also making a valuable contribution towards making the best works in one language available in the others.

However, what we should keep in mind is that almost all the regional languages of India owe at least their *linguistic identity* to one linguistic source - Sanskrit. I daresay *that* linguistic identity binds the languages and the literatures too - at least in a formal sense. That is indeed a great bond, as are the Western Classical languages, Latin and Greek, for the languages of the European and the American continents.

In our own local linguistic experience, even the Dravidian languages of South India have maintained with

very little friction their loyalties between both Ancient Sanskrit and Ancient Dravidian. Malayalam has a uniqueness among the South Indian languages. Having originated as a dialect of Tamil, it has borrowed extensively from Sanskrit and, from a fusion of Sanskrit and Tamil, become a completely new living language of great vitality both in the spoken and written forms. The observation that is often heard that, if Sanskrit is yet preserved as a spoken language, it is in Kerala among the Keraliyans or Malayalees is to a great extent true. In this connection it is worth mentioning that Sanskrit as a language is much more alive to-day than either Latin or Greek. In *Contemporary Indian Literature and Society*[5] edited by Motilal Jotwari are listed several recent works written in Sanskrit which have won awards given by the Indian Sahitiya Academy. Many works still continue to be written in Sanskrit - *vide* a book on the life and the teachings of Christ entitled *Kristu-Bhagavatam* by P.C. Devasya.

I dare say there was never anything like the achievement of Sanskrit literature of Ancient India in the history of the human race. Northrop Frye in his *Anatomy of Criticism* speaks of the potency of the ancient myths and we in our own cultual context think of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, the latter now accepted as the longest poem in world literature and one of the greatest. 'Myth' has many roles, functions, as we shall see later. Here we need only note the fact that 'myth' has remained the indispensable sub-structure of the modern Indian languages in both the colloquial and the poetic literary forms. That is because the diction, the literary idiom; the phrasing and the verbal texture in general in the Indian languages preserve closeness to the roots of the original language, Sanskrit, buried in ancient legendary mythical lore. Incidentally, this is the principal reason for the richness, along with the suggestivity, of the modern Indian languages. For it is an opinion widely held among scholars that Sanskrit, rooted in folk lore, traditional legends and religious myths, has the most concentrated suggestivity and allusive power of all languages living or dead.

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5. Heritage Publishers (1979).

This richness of the Indian languages derived from Sanskrit is accepted by the Indian writers without reservation; it is taken for granted. In fact, the Indian writers are apt to ignore the closeness of the Indian language to the great perennial source, Sanskrit, from which most of them originated.

On the other hand, the European languages have moved so much away from their original mythical roots that the European literatures have to make a cult of plainness even in creative writing - the bare, bald style. As to why the traditional mythical heritage has ceased to be a viable living tradition in Western languages and literatures, the reason has to be sought in the development of modern society itself - the industrial, technological development and its impact on the European languages.

I am concerned only with the literatures of the Indian regional languages, whether they have an identity not only as a whole but also in respect of particular genres like poetry, drama, the novel and the short story. The question is whether the short story has a common identity to which we may relate it. If it has such an identity, how are we to explain it.

3. a) Literary tradition as distinct from linguistic tradition;
   b) Modes of fiction with particular reference to the Allegory

The linguistic identity of the Indian short story in terms of a common language from which the regional languages have originated does not, however, have a direct relevance to the *nature of the experience* that the modern Indian writers deal with in their stories. On the other hand, the question of identity is more related to the nature of the experiences that writers generally deal with and the forms and the modes of communication that they generally adopt. It is on this basis - on the basis of experience and mode of communication - that we formulate and name literary traditions like Romanticism and Classicism with regard to poetry. Our concern is whether there is any such tradition, literary or other, to which we can relate Indian fiction and in terms of which we can find its identity too.

It has to be accepted that the tendency in modern fiction is to move more and more towards realism, 'imitation of reality' - mimetic realism as it is called by the eminent Hungarian Marzist critic, George Lukacs. An admirer of the great masters of realistic fiction in the nineteenth century like Dickens and Tolstoi and a modern novelist like Thomas Mann, he would have the modern novel freed from overwrought symbolism and over-poetic language of the kind one comes across in writers like James Joyce. But according to the realists like Lukacs it is the purpose of fictional art not only to maintain a truthful fidelity to reality - to the natural world and the world of peoples and things; it could, and should, maintain a close relationship to the 'course of human experiences', 'the deeper psychology' of man.

However, there are other modes of apprehending and presenting reality. There is a mode of heightening and intensifying reality -metaphorically, symbolically. What is humdrum ordinary in life is made to stand out novel, unusual. We may call this method 'the symbolic method', and the fiction which uses such a method we may call 'symbolic fiction'. Symbolic fiction too starts on the realistic level and has much in common with realistic fiction. The symbolic writer keeps close to the realistic level. But along with realistic devices of presentation other devices are brought into play, devices like the symbolisation of the background and the characters and the evocative, metaphorical use of language. In symbolic fiction the use of both the realistic and the symbolic methods and the interaction between them enable the writer to realise the central idea or the theme.

It is easy to identify realistic fiction and it is also not difficult to distinguish it from symbolic fiction. *Middlemarch* we will classify as a realistic novel. But in *Wuthering Heights* and *Hard Times* the realistic and symbolic devices are brought together. Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* could be called more symbolic than otherwise.

According to Professor Abrams, the title of his book *The Mirror and the Lamp* "identifies two common and antithetical metaphors, one comparing the mind to a reflector

of external objects, the other to a radiator projector which makes a contribution to the objects it perceives." Professor Abrams specifically mentions two functions of art, a mimetic function in the realistic manner and an evocative function heightening reality. Corresponding to these two functions of a work of art can also be identified the two uses of language - the denotative realistic use of language and the metaphorical, symbolic use of language.

However, there are other traditions of fiction which we are apt to overlook. The writer, instead of aiming at a direct representation of reality, constructs a substitute, a surrogate story at a further remove from 'reality' and makes one suggest or represent the other. The writer frees himself in the first place from the constricting, limiting task of having to represent reality mimetically, realistically. The story that he uses for his deeper purpose is an imaginary, literary construct and can therefore be wide ranging, embracing a variety of forms; myths, legends, fantasy, folk tales and fables can all be grist to the mill for the writer. Divine order of beings, heroic figures from the past, stories in which fantasy is the dominant trait, demonic stories of possession like those of the Yiddish novelist, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and fables like those of T.F. Powys, one of the greatest fabulists of all times about dogs and lanterns, a corpse and a flea.

With this greater freedom of imagination which the writer can exercise in his 'fictions', in his literary constructs, the 'world' which can be revealed through these literary artefacts is also enlarged from the real world to the non-material world of ideas. But first about the real world itself. *Gulliver's Travels* - so fanciful, imaginative, is indissolubly linked to eighteenth century England, notorious for its political corruptions. So, incredible fantasy and the world of reality come together - modern India in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* and Hitler's Germany in *The Tin Drum* of Gunter Grass, of whom more will be said in a different context. Such a meeting between 'the imaginary' and 'the real' we may call "Art's Oblique", if we were to adapt a phrase from Andrew Marvell's poem, *The Definition of Love*.

This indirection in art, Art's oblique, which gives the greatest opportunity for the artist to be an artist, a 'maker' of tales, is rightly called allegory - which is itself rightly defined as a 'trope in which a second meaning is to be read beneath and concurrent with the surface story.'[6]

This concurrent meaning beneath 'the surface story' which concerns the real world we find in two of the greatest allegories in Western literature, Melville's *Moby Dick* and Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*.

C.L.R. James, the West Indian writer, would have us believe that the 'white whale' in *Moby Dick* is a symbol, an allegorical symbol of rapacious capitalism which lured people to their destruction. Melville was very likely thinking on those lines as his novel which followed *Moby Dick*, namely, *The Confidence Man*, dealt with an identical theme, the phoney 'disguises' we put on in a social system, which itself is hypocritical - based on chicanery and deception.

Thomas Mann's story of the sanatorium, with its 'representative' characters of the rationalist, the absolutist, and the non-conformist in the manner of a popular comedian making long speeches consisting of broken, incomplete sentences, has tremendous power and is certainly one of the greatest novels of this century. The main character, who is described as 'Life's delicate child', realises in the end that he will understand the meaning of life only if he participates in it. The last scene shows Herr Castorp stumbling through an artillery bombardment. The ambivalence of the scene is obvious. There is some meaning in life for Castorp if he participates in life *and* if he survives the war. Apparently the fable of the sanatorium represents the sickness of mind which ravaged the European intelligentsia on the eve of the first World War. But as D.J. Enright has pointed out: "It is not a fable treating of the maladies of pre-1914

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6. *Dictionary of World Literature*, ed. Joseph T. Shipley, Philosophical Library, New York, p. 21.

Europe; it is a work of art with moral implications relevant to any country and any time."[7]

With all the contemporary significance of Thomas Mann his interest for the discerning reader is as much an interest in ideas - moral and political ideas - in which the writer is involved, deeply involved as a matter of personal exigency. Nathaniel Hawthorne, T.F. Powys and Isaac Bashevis Singer may be considered three of the greatest writers who, in their shorter fiction especially, are concerned with moral ideas and moral problems. So, in place of the term 'allegory', which as a term conceals rather than reveals, we can refer to the stories of these three great writers as moral fables - the fable being the means to convey the moral underlying the fable. The moral or meaning is always concerned with ideas that have a moral human relevance. So belief in ghosts, spirits becomes for Singer a means for dealing with 'obsessions'. The haunted world of Hawthorne's imagination is for him the means of dealing with the instinctual passions of man and the sense of guilt "over the impulses secretly felt or the laws secretly broken." Hawthorne too has summed up superbly the fictional art of the allegorist: "It is with fiction as with religion: it should present another world, and yet one to which we feel the tie."

It is said that allegories thrived best in times of spiritual and moral stability. So it seems paradoxical that some of the greatest allegories have been written in our own times, generally accepted as a period of moral and spiritual conflicts. Yet the fact cannot be disputed that the greatest allegories of all times - the great religious epics of India - were written from the fifth to the third century B.C. They were imaginative artefacts or creations of the highest order, rendering moral ideas into felt experiences.

Poet Reggie Chrysostom refers to the moral, ideational nature of the great allegories in a poem of his titled *Song of Raghavan*.

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7. D.J. Enright in *Focus Two*, ed. B. Rajan and Andrew Pierce. (Dennis Dobson Ltd.) London (1946), p. 115 - 'The Forgotten Novelist: A Survey of Thomas Mann.'

The Ramayana is a profound work;
Not merely mortal lovers;
Not just of kingdoms, kings and thrones
Or Man and sacred vows.
Doubtless underneath there runs,
In its fabric richly wove,
Apart from demons, gods and men,
The ideas that then throve.

Consider the superb way in which Northrop Frye defines 'the myth'. One would, on reading Frye's comment on myths have thought he was referring to Indian myths. Probably he was not. Frye says that the myths "created an entire universe in which 'the gods' represent the whole of nature in humanised form, and at the same time show in perspective man's origin, his destiny, the limits of his power, and the extension of his hopes and desires."[8]

Perhaps certain modifications of the above statement may be necessary when we come to Indian myths. We must keep in mind that the myth deals not only with 'gods', whatever their human significance may be. The myths also present human beings. Seetha may be of divine origin. But consider her 'human destiny'. Anyway let us remember again that the purpose of a mythical tale or a coherent collection of mythical tales like the *Mahabharata* is to "show in perspective man's origin, his destiny".

Ancient myths and epics have become the happy hunting ground for pragmatic anthropologists and social historians who have ceased to imagine, ceased to feel. On the other hand, the so-called spiritualists would abstract the essence of the epics to spiritual truths. One feels that even a discerning critic like Richard Mason exaggerates the spiritual value of allegories. "The allegorist", he says, "deduces intuitively the spiritual truths from which he begins. The allegorist expresses his certainty of the greater truth by imagining the less".[9] The method of the

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8. Northrop Frye, 'Myth, Fiction and Displacement' reprinted from *Fables of Identity in Twentieth Century Criticism* Harcourt Brace Johanowich, Inc. (1961) p. 164-165.

9. Ronald Mason in *The Sirit above the Dust: A Study of Herman Melville*, p. 61-69.

allegory is perfectly stated here. But the statement ignores the moral and human relevance of the great epics, ignores the fact that they concentrate almost exclusively on the moral and human condition of man.

4. The influence of the great epics on the form and structure of the modern short story.

The influence of the great epics on the modern short story was felt on both levels, on the level of form and content, on the story and its meaning.

It is inevitable that a form or genre like the ancient epics, which dominated the literary scene and had become very much the moral and spiritual sustenance of all classes of people from the high to the low, from the intelligentsia to the poor and the down-trodden, should exert considerable influence on other genres and forms of literature. We are however concerned with the question of the nature and extent of the influence exerted on the modern Indian short story.

The allegorical epic is a literary form in which the 'surface story', the narrative element, has a distinct place. In fact, it is the main vehicle of communication. But it is also the chief means through which the epic poet held the interest of his audience. We should not forget the fact that in the ancient world the epic was the most entertaining and cogent form of mass communication, presented very often orally and catering to a variety of needs. The taste of the audience was primarily drawn towards 'the story' - the salient elements of the story, like the action in the 'story' the characters etc. The writers of succeeding generations in the regional languages nurtured in literary traditions and endowed with sensibility could not have escaped the spell of the great stories from the past apart from their meaning.[10] The epics were available in translations in

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10. M. Grysunova, "Ramayana embodies lofty moral ideals". Daily News (Sri Lanka) Feb. 27, 1985, quoting Dr. Natalia Guseva, who adapted the epic *Ramayana* for the Central Children's Theatre, "No other people have created anything like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*."

most of the important regional languages. The modern novelists and short story writers do not hesitate to use the vast mythical lore from the past. It is most natural for them to do so. In other words, the modern writer does not only draw directly from the life around him. As we shall see later, there was no dichotomy, between the past traditional literature and 'present life'. Anyway, the view of art as entirely an imitation of reality cannot easily be accepted as far as the Indian writers are concerned.

We find mythical stories and legends, characters and situations from the epics often used by modern writers to forward the story and reinforce the meaning. In the best writers such allusions and references to the past literature are an organic integral part of the stories. But the finest achievement in the creation of the modern story is when the writer creates new 'mythical' stories inspired by precedents from the past. Art as imitation of another artistic form ceases to be imitative and becomes truly creative.

The reader of modern Indian stories is generally familiar with such stories from the past which the writer alludes to and such stories figure even in the language he speaks. So when Thakazhi, the Malayalee writer, writes of a blind man cruelly treated by the members of his family, the reference to the *Kuchela Vrita* which, besides the *Ramayana*, is the great mainstay of the blind man against despair and sustains his optimism, is quite understandable. But the real purpose of the frequent references to *Kuchela Vrita*[11] and the concluding mention of the fact

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11. The story of *Kuchela* is told in *Bhagavatam*, tenth Skandha. But the work referred to here is a devotional poem in Malayalam in the *Vanchipattu* - boatman's song style, by Rama Warrier based no doubt on the story in *Bhagavatham*. Kuchela, a destitute Brahmin with many children was in his youth the classmate of Lord Krishna in a hermitage. When he visits Krishna who is now the king of Dwaraka, he is entertained lavishly by his friend. Krishna eats of the rice flakes brought by Kuchela and is prevented from eating the second handful by (contd.)

that at night "the neighbours heard him still reciting verses from the *Kuchela Vrita*" is to show the different kind of blessing that the blind man obtained, different from the material wealth with which Lord Krishna blessed Kuchela. "Pappu Nayar's heart grew boundless, illimitable. He was really not groping in the dark.....the arena of his heart was resplendent, shining with the brightness of mirrors reflecting light perpetually."

How wonderfully appropriate are the ironical references to three episodes from the *Ramayana* in the Malayalee writer, Uroob's story *Odayuthathai Odayuthathai*. A mendicant 'traveller' is entertained in a highly orthodox family household and made to read from Valmiki's *Ramayana* and "interpret" to a large audience of household folk and relatives. A young girl from the family is stimulated by this 'reading' from the great epic to meet the 'guest' in lonely places and have her 'doubts' cleared. She gives him a version of *Ramayana*, a subversion indeed which shows a young growing mind chafing against the restrictions and denial of freedom in a sequestered family. She speaks for herself and others like her when she shows up what is ignored by the *Ramayana*, the rights of women, the fact that a woman too has a mind like a man. She asks the 'guest' why Lakshmanan left his wife to follow Sri Rama into the forest. Will the mere slashing of the nose of *Sharpunaka*,[12] the sister of *Ravana*, cure her of what

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his wife; for Kuchela was being blessed involuntarily by Lord Krishna from his own wealth. Kuchela returns home rather puzzled that Krishna did not give him any material assistance. When he reaches home, he realises that Krishna has blessed him - huge mansions in place of his former dilapidated house and a contented and happy wife and children.

The word 'Kuchela' has come to stand for a person who undergoes much poverty and hardship.

12. Because she was widowed by her own brother Ravana, he gives Sharpunaka the choice of any man she likes. She was unlucky to be infatuated with Rama and presuming that it was Sita's presence that made Rama spurn her, she attacks Sita in a murderous fury. Lakshmaman metes out to her a punishment which we with our more tolerant attitudes find undeserved. Lakshmaman cuts off Shurpannaka's ears, nose and breasts.

grows within her - her love for Rama? The third question was more personal, more poignant. When Ahalya, the wife of Sage Gautama, was turned into stone, would she have still her consciousness of her past,[13] that she was a wronged woman, that she was still Ahalya. With all her immobile exterior 'petrified' outwardly like Ahalya, the young girl implies that she carries within her unfulfilled love for the roving guest.

In Uroob's story, *A Wet Evening*, the war at Kurukshetra comes to life again in the potent figure of the man with the stump of leg trotting along begging for his livelihood. Uroob sees him as a 'modern' Aswathamma, like the Aswathamma of old,[14] who killed innocent children and was in turn maimed for life, going about nursing his bitterness and contaminating others with his hatred. Here we see, as Eliot would put it, "not only the pastness of the past, but its presence". The connection between the ancient myths and the modern Indian fiction and reality is natural and inextricable, bringing contemporary reality through another 'reality', giving the present reality a new dimension.

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13. The story of *Ahalya and Gautama* is given in the *Ramayana*. Indra, the king of the gods falls in love with Ahalya, the wife of sage Gautama. He disguises himself as Gautama and sleeps with her. Gautama comes upon the scene and curses his wife, transforming her into a stone. Gautama realises his mistake and feeling sorry for his wronged wife, foretells that Ahalya will be brought to life the moment Rama passing through the forest treads on the stone.

14. Aswathamma, the son of Drona, the military guru of the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Both fought on the wide of the Kauravas in the Kurukshetra war. His name, Aswathamma (Aswa = horse), is accounted for by the fact that the sound he made at his birth resembled the neighing of a horse. In the war he killed Arjuna's son's child and thereby earned the wrath and contempt of everyone and became what may be called in contemporary parlance an 'outsider'. He was cast out of civilised society and was fabled to go from place to place begging for his livelihood. Only Vyasa, (contd.)

In the story called *Dread* of Parappurathu, the Kerala writer writing in Malayalam, the writer begins reflections on the transience of human life, compared with which Nature is permanent, eternal. Into the story is then brought the English girl, Dorothy Kellan, who is enraptured by the beauty of Nature around her and tries to give that beauty a permanence through her own art. Goddess Naini Devi, who is the goddess of the Himalayan regions and of Nature too, takes offence at her presumption to confer eternity on objects in Nature through art - which right belongs to her only - and endows her with eternity through death. The fantasy at the end, of goddess Naini Devi travelling with Dorothy over the wide ranging Himalayas, making her enjoy the beauty of Nature after her death, is by implication a poignant reminder to the reader that nothing remains for man except his short brief life and the possibility of trying to achieve some kind of immortality through art and literature, is questionable.

Naini Devi,[15] an *ad hoc* symbol from the contemporary folk lore of the hill tribes living along the Himalayan mountain range, becomes sufficient for the writer Parapurathu to enforce his moral on the 'destiny' of Man. But the goddess Naini Devi of the hill tribes is given a noble ancestry. She was born from the eye of goddess Parvathi, who in Hindu mythology is the daughter of the god Himalaya.

However, the most remarkable feature of Indian Literature is that 'myth-making' which was so natural with the

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the author of *Mahabharata*, had pity for him and took him to his ashram!

15. Naini Devi belongs to folklore. She was born from an eye of Parvati, the wife of Siva, when she burnt herself to death. The story of Parvati, her father king Dakshan and her husband Siva belongs to mythology proper. King Dakshan did not invite Siva to the great fire-sacrifice he conducted, for Siva was uncouth in his ways and went about carrying a skull in his hand. Overcome by grief Parvati jumps into the fire and kills herself.

ancients is very much a feature of the modern writers in the Indian regional languages too. The tradition is preserved unbroken.

Karoor Neelakanti Pillai is considered the most outstanding of the Malayalee writers from Kerala. In his story *Maraparavakal* (The Wooden Dolls) the writer almost wholly through dramatic narration raises the story to symbolic levels. The difference between symbolic devices and allegorical devices dissolves in the great creative moment which is *Maraparavakal*. The wooden dolls the village carpenter, a woman, turns out no doubt satisfy her deepest creative urges. But they are at the same time the projection of her frustrated feelings over her shattered marriage. One figure she compulsively turns out represents an angry enraged woman who is no doubt herself. But the figure is also modelled almost in an unconscious way on Goddess Parvathi in a mood of anger against her lord, Lord Siva. "I give that female doll the name Goddess Parvathi. But have I seen this goddess Parvathi? I have heard people say that she mortifies herself and goes into meditative trances at times, but also sports herself dancing with Siva. There are also stories how at times they quarrel. I started making dolls, having these things in mind. At times I look into my mirror and assume poses like Parvathi and transfer them to my dolls. Often I work on my dolls imagining myself to be Parvathi. At the end, I seem like Parvathi".

This story illustrates, as nothing else I have read the nature of symbolism, and the process of symbolism and myth-making itself. The old myth illuminates the personal reality of a poor woman in the contemporary world, whose heart is ravaged by bitterness.

The Punjabi writer Kujan Singh in *Love Play* writes a story which goes beyond mere allusions or references to 'myths'. The mythical parallel is sustained throughout the story.

Love Play is simple in structure, using the myth of Lord Krishna and Radha[16] to convey the sudden awakening of

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16. Radha was the gopi damsel (milk maid) most beloved of Lord Krishna. Krishna and Radha are the incarnations(contd.)

a young boy of nine to a partial awareness of the fact that he is the object of the love and adoration of a married woman. It is a story where the mythical story of the love of Krishna and Radha is used with great subtlety. What is remarkable is the way the innocent mind of the child gradually burdened with feelings of guilt is unfolded to us, on which the main emphasis of the story rests.

The bias towards indirection in fictional art and the skilful use of myth-making is also seen in the story of Gurbaksh, the Punjabi writer, *The Guard of Many Loves*. At the narrative level, on the level of the plot, this story may be mistaken for an ordinary tale of love and revenge. But the mythical symbol, or the symbol of mythical proportions, of the rocky hill at the foot of which the main events of the story take place transforms the story into a parable, a 'myth' about the permanence of true love, as enduring and lasting as the hill in the distance. Rukni spares the village chieftain who murdered her lover and forced her into marriage with him out of fear for the safety of her parents. But she renounces worldly life, although she lives in a hut in the same village, making herself available to the people and advising those who are thwarted in love. After one such attempt to help a pair of lovers, in which attempts she succeeds, she is not to be found anywhere. "In the days that followed people looked for her everywhere. Sohnu walked up and down the river bank, but there was no trace of Rukni. Then some one pointed a hill in the distance. "Look!" he cried. "It never looked like that before. There is Rukni's head and there are her shoulders." The news went around that Rukni had taken up residence on top of the hill. She had become the guardian of love. She would hence forth take care of the loves of not only their village but of the entire countryside."

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of God Vishnu and goddess Mahalakshmi respectively. *Bhagavatam* tells the stories of the ten incarnations in Vishnu to 'save mankind'. Of these the incarnations of Vishnu as Rama and Krishna are the most well known. They are accorded separate treatment in the two epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*.

In mythology and in primitive religion rock has tremendous symbolic value. It is associated and identified with divinity, god-head as seen in the worship of stone images and large edifices, mostly of stone, from which temples were made in ancient and primitive society. See how the rock-symbol figures much in Uroob's story *Odayuthathai Odayuthathai*, which has at one level much to do with the quest for the divine. Almost in a state of despair the narrator of the story suddenly comes upon a stupendous rock temple.

It may not be inappropriate to mention in this connection one of the best stories in American literature, written by that 'myth-maker' or allegorist, Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Great Stone Face*. The story is not on love in a personal sense, but 'love' representing the vital human sympathies, 'the magnetic chain' which knits mankind together. Ernst is a simple ordinary peasant and the people of his village are waiting for a redeemer with a face resembling the 'great stone face' - some huge rocks, which have a resemblance to a human counternance, on the hill overlooking the valley. Ernst too is searching among the worldly people around him for the 'redeemer' with a face resembling the 'stone face'. Gradually many are of the opinion that Ernst has the best claim to have a face resembling 'the great stone face'. For "his work had power because they accorded with his thoughts; and his thoughts had reality and depth because they harmonised with the life which he had always lived". The story of Gurbaksh is on what sanctfies love; Hawthorne's story is on what sanctfies life in general. In both these stories the symbol of the rocky hill, by its religious associations transforms ordinary human life and human experiences into a higher plane of reality.

We also find that the old myths, especially the Hindu myths, often use another nature-symbol pregnant with meaning. The major mythical symbol in the *Ramayana* is the forest in which Rama and Seetha encounter the gravest crisis in their life. Their life thereafter is totally determined by the major event in the forest, the 'abduction' of Seetha by Ravana. Seetha remains chaste, unsullied by the event and her sojourn with the formidable lover. But we find Rama becoming a victim to error and misunder-

standing after Seetha's rescue. The 'forest' symbolises that error and misunderstanding. Situated at the heart of the great epic, the 'forest' becomes a prognostic symbol antecedent to what is to follow.

There is an extraordinary artistic vision in the Kannada writer, Srikrisna Alanahally's *Kaadu* (The Woods) which sees the natural setting of the novel - the jungle - as a symbol of the human 'jungle' of a modern Indian village where, as Girish Karnad says in his introduction, "cruelty is a fact of life." "Cruelty towards children, towards women, towards the poorer sections of society. Cruelty so ingrained that victims accept it with the same calm as its perpetrators". The overpowering cruelty of the elders is experienced by a child partly in a direct manner through the grim happenings in the story - adultery, arson and brutal murder. But that world of cruelty which he at first only dimly apprehends is conveyed to him indirectly too through his response to the jungle - the jungle from where the wild elephants come to devastate the crops...the snakes came into the fields early in the evening.....the moaning night-bird near the temple, the demons said to come out of their hiding places in the dark. Those who traffick with the demons were busy in the forest "as they approached the bamboo clump behind the temple. Kitti was terrified and wanted to scream. Even when his aunt reassured him...' Don't be frightened, Kitti' and drew him close, he was trembling."

"A fearful clay image in the light of a big clay lamp - tongue hanging as if trying to vomit blood...The magic man chanting continuously signing to Lompi to hold the chicken, pressed the knife once on his eyes, severed the chicken's neck, and poured the blood on the hanging tongue of the image.....As they were preparing to leave, the sorcerer said...'Amma, I have laid a proper spell. Your man can never again approach that woman.'"

Here it may not be out of place to refer to a perceptive note on the influence of the ancient Indian epics on R.K. Narayan by the eminent critic George Woodcock. The emphasis is on the portryal of character. Woodcock says

that Narayan recreates characters from the great epics. What we should keep in mind, however, is the fact that what Woodcock says about Narayan is true of several other contemporary writers writing in the Indian languages. "The ancient Indian myths which Narayan began to read in his middle years are not merely plots for films (his eponymous hero, Mr. Sampath, tries to make films based on the great epics.); his novels recreate them in real life. Weak and inexperienced characters fall under the influence of malign men who are little more than nature forces personified...Such is the evil Dr. Pal in *The Financial Expert*...And such too is Vasu the hunter in The *Man-Eater of Malgudi*...Malgudi settles down again into the peace of mediocrity, a middle class town in which, creating an ambience for the sad, eccentric characters and their *quasi-mythical* adventures, the colours and smells of India are so powerfully evoked."[17]

5. Indian Humanism seen as providing the Identity for the Indian Short Story.

In our attempt to link the modern short story and modern fiction with the allegorical tradition of the ancient epics, we saw the extent to which traditional literature has influenced modern Indian fiction. But we found ourselves dealing with a continuity and relationship in respect of the formal aspects of the literatures in the past and the present - external aspects of plot and character - rather than the content of the two genres.

There is, in other words, a certain imbalance in the approach, that is, placing greater emphasis on the 'allegorical form', 'the fable', or 'the story' than on the experiential and moral content of the works, past and present. That imbalance is certain to distort our central query regarding the identity of the Indian short story and fiction

I believe that the Indian novel and the short story, whether they are presented as direct reflections of reality

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17. George Woodcock on R.K. Narayan in *Commonwealth Literature* ed. William Walsh Macmillan (1979) p. 175.

or modelled on or merged with traditional elements of the literature from the past, are based on a tradition, a tradition of moral and human values from which the ancient literatures too take their origin. We may call this tradition humanism or moral humanism. Moral humanism represents the collective, general, moral experiences of the past of a people. This humanism, moral humanism, remains the real tradition in terms of which we can find an identity for modern Indian fiction and the short story. For moral humanism is the most distinguishing trait of Indian fiction too - and I dare say the line of a great tradition remains unbroken.

In considering that tradition, the moral and humanistic tradition from the past, we should not be in too great a hurry to identify the literary and cultural tradition with all that went to make a great civilisation. However, we cannot separate the tradition of the great epics from their philosophical and religious foundations - the great scriptural texts, the Vedas and the Upanishads.

So, in its original context Indian humanism comprises three levels - the human, the moral and the transcendental (or spiritual). That is a matter of history and we cannot, however much we try, rewrite history. But those who are concerned with the Indian past and the Indian present are apt to lay too great an emphasis on the 'spiritual' past and that can lead them to difficulties. In Forster's *A Passage to India* the Englishman Fielding surmises that "India's a muddle". Elsewhere the well-meaning Adela reflects "Perhaps life is a mystery, not a muddle; they could not tell. Perhaps the hundred Indias which fuss and squabble so tirelessly are one, and the universe they mirror is one. They had not the apparatus for judging." This kind of philosophical speculation leads one nowhere. Without appearing to be blasphemous, let us turn from heaven to earth, from God to man.

On the level of human living and human experiences, the writer and the audience both in the past and the present are concerned more with moral and human issues than spiritual questions. It is moral, human issues that serve as a catalyst for creative activity. The artist is the 'most conscious point' of the age in which he lives. In

fact, all great literature is moral and humanist, is concerned with moral ideas and human experiences more than anything else. When we speak of the core of experience in a work of art, the experiential content of the work which we blandly describe as the theme of the work has a moral dimension to it - has moral elements blended with it.

That is what Indian humanism is. It is essentially concerned with the human condition, the fate of man in his earthly destiny. Not only the human, emotional level but the moral level of existence too - not only what the human condition is but with the question of what it ought to be. That is why Indian humanism has depth. It has its complexities too.

Yet all this while in the passage of Indian literature from the past to the present, the spiritual element is tacitly acknowledged when not openly promoted. But contrary trends are easily to be discerned in the contemporary era of the novel and the short story. Without deviating from moral goals and objectives modern writers, novelists and short story writers - Yashpal (Hindi), Guno Samtaney (Sindhi), Pudumaipittan (Tamil), Thakazhi and Ponkunnam Varkey (Malayalam) - inveigh often against not spirituality as such but the decadent forms of it. This is an important development in Indian fiction. Asceticism, even in its most genuine form, is seen for what it is - a denial of what is essentially moral and human. This is what gives stories of the above writers with this bias tremendous power in their denunciation of what is corrupt in religious practices and the regimen of rituals.

Indian Classical literature is unique in that it concentrates almost exclusively on the moral and human condition of man. No works have ever been written which are so concerned with the moral and human problems pertaining to man.

In speaking of the essential qualities of myths and epics Northrop Frye says: "A myth may be told and retold - it may be modified or elaborated.....its life is always the poetical life of a story, not the homelitic life of some illustrated wisdom". Here Frye rightly distinguishes between 'the poetical life of the story' and the 'homelitic wisdom',

which are not the same thing. The story generates poetic, emotional life which no doubt has very often a moral dimension. Abstract, moral wisdom has no emotional life in it.

It is often thought that the great epics - the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* are saturated with moral wisdom. Often the moral life of the poem is close to its poetic, emotional life - the 'moral sense' is dependent on the 'felt-experience'. But we also find that the 'poetical' emotional life of the story often runs counter to the moral wisdom, which may be consciously insisted on and consciously, that is ironically, rejected too. When moral virtues are presented as fixed quantities or definable qualities, we should be on our guard. For what is bound to emerge is a moral struggle - the claims for the human, emotional life coming into conflict with the stipulated moral truth.

So in the *Ramayana*, although Seetha preserves her chastity and virtue, she becomes the victim of calumny which the great Rama himself fails to resist. The moral ideal of public good, the ideal of the general good of the people triumphs over individual human virtue. And the individual is sacrificed on the altar of statecraft, of political expediency. Likewise in Shakespeare 'the king' must rule and so Falstaff, who represents instinctive natural living and humanity is cast aside from the prince's entourage. King Lear, first wrapped up in self-conceit and pride, comes to realise the great 'truth' that is in self-effacement and self-sacrifice, on which 'the gods themselves throw incense'. But no sooner has he achieved moral enlightenment and moral wisdom than he is overtaken by tragedy. What we have in the great epics and in Shakespeare is the human condition, and the representation of the great poets of the human condition is closer to real life than moral or abstract wisdom would have it, even when wisdom is presented as important, desirable and attainable.

We are moved by these frightful contradictions in the human condition; our sympathies are enlarged. Lord Krishna may be right from the higher point of view, his cosmic vision. But it is the inconsolable grief of Gandari that stands out at the end of the *Mahabharata*. And she speaks not only for her own children, the Kauravas, but for the innocent and the young, like Arjuna's own son brutally

killed in war. Of what avail is Krishna's 'wisdom' for her? It is the humanistic content of the great epics coming into conflict with moral wisdom and ethical principles that makes us realise how ironical, contradictory and cruel human life is. It is such moral emotional tension that gives real life to the great epics (see Bali's condemnation of Rama for slaying him for the higher good, but using craft. Our sympathies are evoked for Aswathamma, although he kills innocent children. He could not bear the death of his father, Drona, again killed by ruse.) And it is such a humanism that is closer to moral conflicts rather than moral certainty or acceptance that we come across in Thakazhi, Karoor, Bibhuti Bhusan and Tarashankar Banerji.

I should not be thought seeking formulas to deal with things pertaining to man which are complex, difficult. Anyway, I shall sum up the main attributes or qualities of humanism that we come across in the Indian writers as *kama*, *karma* and *karuna* - Passion, Fate (or Destiny) and Compassion. The varying degrees through which the humane, compassionate self of man is focussed on the passionate self of man is presented in Greek literature as the inextricable blend of *eros* and *agape* - an age-old but true distinction showing the contradictory composite elements of man's psyche. The human condition is primarily the condition of *kama* - the two main passions in man, passionate desires and the drive for power - *eros*, not to be construed as the sexual urge only.

In the epics is the fullest exploration of the subject of human impulses and appetites which bring about pain and suffering. In this connection I may hazard a surmise - that Buddhist scriptures and Buddhist literature do not give free scope for the presentation of the savagery of human passions. They are mentioned, at times described too, but seldom dramatised and brought to life. Besides, there are always rational principles of order, reason and good sense insisted on in Buddhism as capable of curbing the passions in man.

It is in respect of the treatment of *karma* or human destiny that the ancient epics come to their fullest stature. Any trite formula for *karma* as the cycle of rebirth or the cycle of births and deaths - some even consider the theory of rebirth as some kind of ancient existentialism - will hardly do adequate justice to the complexity of the problem of human destiny that the poets of the epics present . (Often a story of rebirth is itself a 'myth' to deal with the reality of human life) And then there is predestination. If predestination is an important dogma in Hinduism, it is often allowed to conflict with other ideas opposed to it. Is life predestined or is it just unpredictable through the operation of random, fortuitous circumstances?

Consider how skilfully and sensitively Kamala Das, in her beautiful story *The Scent of the Bird*, drops into the problem of human destiny and predestination, a subject which is close to the Indian mind, ancient and modern. The story holds our interest as a story through the element of the unexpected subtly introduced into it and the gradual building up of suspense. And when the suspense is gradually relaxed - the relief is shared by the reader too; there follows what is most unexpected, the crash of the escalator under repair in which the lady in the story finds herself after her weird experiences in the mortician's room. We however realise that the story has to be read at a deeper level. It would seem as though the lady is brought or led to her death, that there is no escape for her. But I think the real significance of the story emerges through the juxtaposition of the two levels of the story. How did the death come about? From the possibilities that are raised from the literal and the deeper allegorical level regarding the death, we become aware of the mystery of life, the difficulty of construing, interpreting life.

O.V. Vijayan is another of the 'new' writers in Malayalam, who in his story *The Rocks*, brings to bear on his apocalyptic vision much from the past. The desolation of the setting of the story we may compare with the desolation of the Kurukshethra battle field in the *Mahabharata* after the great war was over. The spear, which could instantly destroy, arrows that proliferate and cause havoc while in motion, could be considered supernatural, 'mythical'. But

that is only at the surface level. These details of a war that is over do not represent supernatural fiction or fantasy but the reality of the fearsome, destructive weaponry of our times.

This tragic sense in the contemplation of man's destiny or his 'karma' seems to be almost an integral part of the humanistic vision of the Indian writers, of the past and the present. That tragic sense can also be seen when certain writers deal with ordinary life - life in its mundane, humdrum movement. There is something terribly poignant the way Manik Bandopadhaya's novel, *A Puppet's Tale* deals with the tragic destiny of love. Everything must change including love, for everything is in a process of change and decay. So Kusum at the end reflects: "Even if a red-hot piece of iron is left alone it gets cold by and by. I don't dream again of joys and pleasure and I no longer yearn for my own happiness.....The love that had awakened spontaneously has passed away in the same manner, in the normal course of things."

Yet, with this tragic sense, an ever present component of human existence, becoming at times a sense of overwhelming doom, there is compassion flowing out of man, human compassion which remains the central pillar of Indian humanism, ancient and modern. If Parapurathu writes a moving litany on death in his story *Dread*, Karoor more often than not speaks of the compassion that knits together like a miserable school teacher living for the sake of the children in his charge or a poor villager drowning himself in the well he has built when his attempt to help the community has been thwarted. And there is Thakazhi's story *Settling Accounts*, the compassionate account of a derelict woman rejected by all. And in human misery and degradation sits Thakazhi's Pappu Nayar reciting verses from *Kuchela Vrita*, having his inner vision of fulfilment founded on compassion.

6. Humanism as a dynamic force again - how close it is to native, indigenous realism?

Fiction, as we understand it, is said to have made its entry into Indian literature in the main Indian languages

through the influence of Western literature. The manner in which a new form of literature is said to have come into such popularity is very often attributed to the tremendous prestige of the realistic form of fiction in Western literature. But is this really true?

This awakening of a new genre was primarily through the social awakening of the Indian writers and the Indian people. That awakening resulted in humanism, traditional humanism develop from general sympathy and compassion for man to particular concern for the poor and the oppressed. Concern not only for the poor and the downtrodden, but for groups and classes of people who were exploited - women, white colar workers, large sections of depressed classes and people labouring under the tyranny of out-moded customs and oppressive, superstitious beliefs. Besides, this human concern moved from social levels to deeper psychological levels. In other words a new revived humanism it was that took charge of the new literary form and made it really come to life.

We may say that there was a successful fusion of humanism and realism in Indian fiction. (I myself will have some reservations about the realistic literary form that got started. For the influence of the traditional literature of India's past was a living presence. Otherwise we cannot account for many of the stories like *Odayu thathai Ōdayuthathai* of Uroob, the *Dread* of Parapurathu and some of the works of Vijayan and stories like Kujan Singh's *Love Play* and Gurbakhsh's *The Guard of Many Loves*.) But what about this realism in Indian fiction?

This so-called realism in the Indian novel and the short story was not an abstract sterile literary creed imposed on Indian fiction and the short story from without. Running from the past to the present, from the traditional ways of representation to the more direct representation of reality, was the richest vein of humanism. The Indian writer with his humanist heritage finds himself preoccupied with the poor, the socially oppressed and the exploited. In other words, the humanism of the writer is modified so that it takes on new goals, new objectives. This indigenous realism we come across in the Indian writers is an

enlargement, deepening of the old moral humanism in the context of the changing Indian reality. It is moral humanism socially oriented.

I wonder how one will describe the writings of the Malayalee writer Muhamed Basheer - realistic, humanist? It makes no difference what the terms we use for passages like the following:[19]

> "Bring them here."
>
> The young man with the gold rimmed spectacles issued that order. Yes, I had met those two small children early in the morning. As they came up the staircase, they were panting hard. Their eyes were sunk, faces thoroughly worn out and the lips parched and dried up. (After bargaining with them for a long time, the young man buys a pair of wooden sandals for 2 1/4 annas.) He brought from within two one anna pieces and gave them.
>
> "The 1/4 anna Sir?"
>
> "That is all I have. If you don't want, please take away the sandals and go."
>
> The boys looked at each other. And then they went away without saying a word. The young man looked down and saw them going along the road and now they were below the street lamp. He laughed loud.
>
> "I have done a small trick. One of those two anna pieces is dud." All his friends who were with him burst out laughting.

Here is a description of prisoners defacating within the premises of a prison. The story is set against the political agitation for independence.

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19. Translated from the *Janmadinam The Birthday* a short story by Mohemed Basheer.

> Blocks of cabook stone are placed side by side in two long rows. That is our lavatory. Squatting face to face with shoulders touching. Five to six hundred people.....'
>
> (*The Portrait of a Prisoner*)

7. Humanism, Realism and Marxism

It was fortunate that the Indian writers had a great humanistic tradition of the past which is a living tradition too to base himself on. It was humanism that kept the writers close to the reality of the human condition, in an Indian context. Besides, humanism prevented the writers from straying into certain difficulties.

The difficulties that face a writer dealing with social problems and with crises in society are two-fold. Where the writer does not have sufficient freedom to express himself, he feels thwarted creatively, often making his peace with the Establishment, as has happened to many writers in Soviet Russia under Stalin and in many East European countries. This is the problem posed for a writer by social or political institutions exerting various pressures on him, making him toe the line. However, the Indian writer does not have this problem to reckon with.

The other problem is very often the artist's own creation. He fails, as Trotsky has observed, to "subjectively assimilate...the struggle for freedom.

> "The artist cannot serve the struggle for freedom unless he subjectively assimilates its social content, unless he feels in his very nerves its meaning and drama and freely seeks to give his own inner world incarnation in his art."[20]

In many writers we find this tendency towards exaggeration and propagandist stances making literature move

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20. Quoted from Trotsky's *A Manifesto-Art and Revolution* in Cliff Slaughterer's *Marxism, Ideology and Literature*, Macmillan, London (1980) ch. 3, p. 103.

within the narrow limits of the favourite creed to which they have committed themselves, without making literature serve their own deeper insights.

I am not going to discuss here whether Marxism, as some critics claim, represents the progressive humanism of our times. But we cannot deny the fact that in the forties many Indian writers - most of them novelists and short story writers - came directly under the influence of Marxism. The Progressive Writers' Union had strong Marxist affiliations. These writers thought that they could advance the cause of both art and society through such allegiance. There have been much political posturing and propaganda in many writers at that time, but in the best writers among them the commitment was not so much to an ideology, however alluring that may have appeared to them at that time. Their commitment was to humanist ideals, human values which are, let us note, in a constant struggle against cruelty, exploitation, tyranny and social corruption, wherever and in whatever forms they appear. The writings of novelists like Prem Chand and Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (professed Marxists early in their careers) represent a tremendous triumph for Indian humanism. And we have to concede that their commitment to a political ideology like Marxism made them better writers than they would have been if they were non-committed. Commitment did not become a constraint on free, imaginative expression in their cases.

So, in a writer like Thakazhi, the variety of tone in his stories is a proof of his creative individuality, which prevents his stories from becoming propagandist. In his short novel *Two Measures of Rice*, dealing with a low-caste community in Kerala, he expresses a radical, militant attitude to social oppression, whereas in the story of the fish-vendor Kochousaippu, he expresses a cynical attitude to the hypocrisy of institutionalised religion. And that cynicism is entirely appropriate to the main character as he grows from religious credulity to a full awareness of the corrupt forces he has to contend with. His celebrated story of a beggar woman - *Settling Accounts* - although full of pathos, never degenerates into sentimentality because of the concrete 'facts'

of the story, which are dismal, sordid but which make the story authentic, almost 'factual'.

However, at a time when there was a definite Marxist trend in Malayalam literature, Karoor, without being a Marxist has done more than any other Malayalee writer to unfold the frightful conditions of poverty in which large sections of the people live. Karoor writes with poise, balance and moderation without running into excesses - in the true, humanistic tradition.

8. Varieties of Comedy in Indian Literature. Comedy as an Instrument of Moral Humanism.

Since we are dealing with literary traditions and their influence on modern Indian fiction, it is worth considering another tradition from the past which has influenced modern Indian fiction. We saw how the new realism in Indian fiction is an extension and development of humanism. In whatever manner it appears, comedy is no stranger to humanism or realism in Indian literature. The relationship between these three is one of the most interesting aspects of Indian literature. Activating traditions in the creative process is also to bring "the whole soul of man into activity, with the subordination of its faculties to each other, according to their relative worth and dignity."[21] As for the comic tradition itself, is not the end of every great comic tale a moral discovery - the reaching after moral and human values? In fact, that moral humanism in terms of which we found the identity of Indian fiction, finds artistic expression not only in the great epics but in these unique fictional forms of the ancient past - the comic tales and the fables.

Comedy is a well known component or branch of ancient Indian literature. The myths and legends and the ancient epics make much use of comedy. But that is only a small part of a larger tradition. It would be worth keeping in mind the fact that in Indian classical literature we have the largest collection of comic stories of any literature, past or present.

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21. Coleridge from *Biographia Literaria*, ed. George Watson, J.M. Dent & Sons, (1965, 1979), ch. XIV, p. 173, 174.

Comedy has been very much a part of folk-lore in several regions of the country, preserved first in the oral tradition and still continuing to be preserved. The folk stories of Kerala and Tamil Nadu centering round characters like Thenoli Raman are well known. But we are dealing here chiefly with the great Northern tradition of the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, the *Panchatantra* and the *Jataka Tales*. And although it is quite possible that much of what we now know as the marvellous fables and tales of the *Panchatanthra* and *Katha Sarit Sagara* and the *Jataka Tales* may have had their origin in folk-lore, in their present form they represent a highly literary, artistic and sophisticated achievement.

Of course not all the stories are amusing, humorous, comical. The stories of the *Panchatanthra* are called 'didactic fables' and many of the stories convey the moral or the message directly, and in respect of form and style belong to the category of the fable and the allegory. A tiny mouse falls from a hawk's mouth into the hands of a seer, who tenderly looks after it changing it into a beautiful maiden. Afterwards he realises that it was time to give her away in marriage and approaches the Sun, the Clouds, the Wind and finally the Mountain. Each of these admits the greater superiority of the one mentioned after it, while the Mountain speaks of mice who bored holes in it, thereby proving their greater superiority. The seer realises what has to be done and transforms the damsel into her former shape and gives her in marriage to another mouse, with whom without any difficulty she goes into her new abode.

However, even in fables such as the above there is a good humoured, pliant manner of rendering the story through its varied phases and moods, of which the story teller has complete mastery. And between the two traditions, the tradition of the fables and the allegory and the tradition of the comic tales, the *Panchatanthra* stories have come to be associated with the latter.

Commenting on the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, Berriedale Keith says,

"The merit of the *Katha Sarit Sagara* does not rest on construction. It stands on the solid fact that Somadeva has presented in an attractive and elegant if simple and unpretentious form a very large number of stories which have for us a very varied appeal, either as amusing or gruesome or romantic or as appealing to our love of wonders..."

Yet when we think of the *Katha Sarit Sagara*, we think not so much of the romantic tales or the tales of the marvellous and the exotic but of the wonderful comic tales, amusing or amusingly grim with the elements of horror and sardonic humour perfectly blended together. The twenty five Tales of the Vampire, the *Vetalapanchavimsati* in *Katha Sarit Sagara* may be considered bizarre and grim, but there is no gratuitous indulgence in the weird and morbid for their own sake. However, there is terror and violence fully focussed throughout, showing how these can erupt at any time on the surface of life. In fact, we have here the first examples of what are called problem-comedies or dark-comedies. For murder, suicide and violence are also the proper background for those insoluble problems of human destiny which rise under normal and abnormal conditions of stress.

Are we then really satisfied with the solutions to the problems given in the stories? For instance, how will we resolve the conflicting claims of the body and the mind of the persons involved in the tangle of human relationships in the following story?

A young man accompanied by his wife and his wife's brother, were passing through a forest. Leaving these two behind, the young man goes into a deserted temple. There, overcome by a terrible sense of despair, he beheaded himself before the image of the goddess of the temple. His brother-in-law, who goes in search of him seeing what had happened, does the same. The young lady follows them into the temple and, seeing the dead bodies decides to kill herself. But the goddess appears to her and asks her to join the trunks of the two young men with their heads. She did as she is told and the two are revived through the compassion of the goddess. When they resume

their journey, however, the girl, to her horror finds out that she has put her husband's head on her brother's body and vice versa. Which of the two young men, in the new circumstances, should she accept as her husband is the question — the one with her husband's body or the one with her husband's head? The king, to whom the question is put opts for the one with the husband's head, for according to him, it is the head of a person which determines his personality.

Thomas Mann based his story *Transposed Head* on the story from the *Vetalapanchavimsati* and Girish Karnad based his celebrated play *Hayavadana* on Thomas Mann's story, if not on the Sanskrit original.

The *Jataka Tales* in Pali, apparently stories dealing with events in the previous births of the Buddha, may be looked upon as enforcing the doctrine of rebirth and transmigration. At the same time they may also be said to illustrate the moral teachings of the Buddha. Throughout there is the identification of the personages of the tales with the Buddha and his disciples. However, these stories (about 550 in all) can be enjoyed without these doctrinal supports and many of them create their particular ambience of moral values, generated in the story by the story itself. The fact that the story of the three rioters in Chaucer's masterpiece *The Pardoner's Tale*, is based on a Jataka story (Vedabbha Jataka: 48) will indicate how little we have to bother about the rebirths of the Buddha added to each story. The 'story' in each tale is the thing that will catch our conscience.

These tales, quite unlike the legendary stories about the Buddha outside the *Jataka* tales proper, are warm, human and amusing and even the slightest among them can hold our interest. The focus is on human frailty. Most of them are excellent in the way they satirise and ridicule human weaknesses, vices and follies, though, as we shall see, they have other aims as well.

It is time to consider these three collections of stories together, representing a veritable triumph of the comic spirit. Many of the stories are very daring in the way the story-tellers denounce religious hypocrisy. Several

stories in *Katha Sarit Sagara* and the *Jataka Tales* are directed against the religious who pursue their sensual ways under the mask of piety. Such stories are a far remove from the amusing tales where the fools, and at times even the knaves, are disposed of with good-humoured raillery. We laugh spontaneously at the foolish young man in *Katha Sarit Sagara* who brags about his father's chastity and cannot be shaken from his belief that he himself is a pure, mind-born son. *Salittaka Jataka* (107) is the story of a skilful marksman who reduces a talkative Brahmin to silence by flicking pellets of goat's dung down the latter's throat.

Some may conclude from the large number of tales directed against the inconstancy of women that the ancient story-tellers were incorrigible misogynists. But they very well knew the truth of the saying that you cannot clap with one hand only. Equally severe are they on masculine lust, though the treatment of the subject may not be as humorous. Barreidale Keith makes special mention of the *Katha Sarit Sagara* story of a woman who got rid of ten husbands, and apparently met her match in the man who had disposed of ten wives, but defeated him also and became so unpleasantly notorious that she turned into an ascetic. We wonder whether she was born a millenium later as the Wife of Bath in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a symbol of tyrannical womanhood. After having tormented four husbands to their death, she meets her match in a fifth, whom too she triumphs over. She continues to go on religious pilgrimages, as she used to do earlier too, ready for trysts. She boldly confesses

> Blessed be God that I have wedded five!
> Welcome the sixth, whenever he appears.

It is very likely that the source of Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale* is the *Andha Bhuta Jataka* (62) story. In both there is the lust-ridden dotard married to a young girl and 'blindness' is introduced to let the young lovers humiliate the old husband in both stories.

Perhaps I have erred in highlighting the 'comedy' in the *Jataka Tales* to the exclusion of other elements. One feature of the *Jataka Tales*, which is very close to the

'comedy', is the element of realism. About 'realism' in the *Jataka Tales*, the outstanding Sinhala novelist, Martin Wickremasinghe has said;

> "The raw materials of the Jataka stories have been drawn from the life of the common people including robbers, murderers, sexual perverts, prostitutes and sex-mad kings. The Buddha in his sermons used the language of the common people. He drew his imagery and parables from the life of the common people and from natural scenes... The original Jataka stories in Pali verse and the verses of the Buddhist elders belong to the oldest realistic literature of the world. The Jataka stories in verse gave birth to a vast collection of realistic stories depicting all aspects of Indian life."

Both these aspects - realism of the setting and the background and realism of language - are important considerations in respect of the popularity of the *Jataka Tales* and their influence on contemporary Indian and Sinhalese fiction. The dramatic potential of the *Jataka Tales* has been fully proved by the popularity of their dramatization on the Sinhala stage.

Besides, comedy in *Jataka* stories is not incompatible with a tragic sense of awareness which many tales reveal. There are several *Jataka* stories which have a tragic ending or are tragic in tone. *Culla Dhanugaha Jataka* (574), dealing with the tragic destiny of love has been made into an outstanding Sinhalese play by Professor Ediriweera Sarachchandra in his *Maname*. Two of the greatest *Jataka* tales deal with the subject of the final destiny of man and the transitoriness of life. *Assaka Jataka* (207) goes beyond the subject of rebirth and becomes a profound comment on man's ultimate fate. It is the story of how a king was cured of his love and grief for his dead wife by a 'revelation' of her present condition as a worm in a heap of cowdung rolling a gob of cowdung. *Upasalha Jataka* (166) also makes a tremendous impact. It tells of a certain man who was partial in his choice of burial grounds. Taken to the crest of a mountain, he was shown how there was no spot free of the taint from some dead body.

In the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* there are excellent scenes of comedy. The scenes in which Bhima appears over-confident of his prodigious strength or the hermit Narada carries false tales about to create discord are well known. They conform to the two forms of farce of a later generation, farcical humour of horseplay and merriment and what may be called the comedy of intrigue or situations, to which we shall soon be returning. But the poets of the great epics could go further and make a significant use of comedy in the marvellous handling of moral and physical ugliness in such a way that it arouses in the reader 'deathless and incorrigible mirth'.[22] The element of the grotesque, where moral deformity is comically exaggerated and caricatured almost in a spirit of violence and fury so that there is created in the mind of the reader feelings of horror and amusement is well known to the poets of the great epics. Grotesque creations through caricature are used not only by the ancient poets but also by the anonymous artists of the great temple sculptures. But comedy in the epics is restrained, however excellent a comedy that may be; for the comedy is subordinated to a larger conscious moral intention, whereas the 'comic tale' in the *Panchathanthra* and the *Jataka* stories, for example, has a distinct form, flavour and tone of its own.

Before we examine these distinct features - the art of the comic tales - and find out how they happen to be what they are, there is an aspect of these comic tales which may be looked into sooner than later. Comedy with these story-tellers too is a serious activity. There is a twin focus in these stories from the three collections we dealt with. When the authors mock at and ridicule the folly, the corruption and the vices of men, they are well aware of the ideal values, moral and human. When not explicitly stated, these values are implied in the story.

So, these satirical stories have their own 'positives' implied in the stories themselves. The 'positives' that

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22. Baudelaire on the element of the grotesque in *The Essence of Laughter and Other Essays*, Meridian Books (1956), p. 110.

are implied or openly affirmed too, as often in the *Jataka* stories, are the moral and human values that have been the substructure of Indian society from early times and have found eloquent expression in the great allegorical epics. In other words, the immense body of comic tales and fables has as goal and objective the very same moral and human values which have informed and sustained the great epics.

So the purpose of the comic tales, as Professor Berreidale Keith succinctly sums up was not merely "the giving of pleasure and the passing of time" nor, as in the *Panchathanthra*, providing "usual advice for political and practical life". Through the comic turn of events especially they served a higher moral human purpose, revealing the anomalies and contradictions of life, suggesting at the same time a way out of the medley and confusions of human circumstances. However, we should remember at the same time that these moral and humane ideals, which provide 'a way out' for man, are realised in the comic tales differently from the methods used in the allegorical epics. They are best realised ironically.

This progress of gentle or rakish comedy to a clearer understanding of life and the affirmation of moral and human values is often reflected in the art of the comic tale. It has been observed that the structure of the classical tale is very simple, often an 'intrigue' - that the comedy of the comic tale is a comedy of situations or a reversal of situations. In other words, the Indian comic tale may be said to belong to the genre of farce or farcical comedy. It is customary to consider the farcical form either in fiction or drama as inferior to other more reputable forms. This idea dies hard, although anyone familiar with the great works of creative literature will admit that farce is one of the greatest seminal sources in creative literature. So is melodrama, the thriller, and the crime story. I wonder what kind of dramatic literature - tragic drama - we would have had during the Elizabethan period without the melodramatic revenge plays the blood and thunder drama of the period. Likewise, what kind of comedy would we have had during the same period if its greatest playwrights - Ben Jonson and Shakespeare - had not resorted to farce?

For farce contains a great archetypal principle of life, the principle of ironical inversion. It is irony, or ironical inversion, that is the main principle or law in comic tales and the comic episodes of the great epics, whether we consider the story as a whole or the characters in the story. In comic tales characters act in such a way that they do not conform to accepted standards of behaviour. Events of normal everyday life are unexpectedly turned upside down.

Of course comedy of situations can become a mechanical contrivance, as much comedy on the modern stage and the films will show. But in the hands of writers with insight and vision, the farcical form, raised to the level of irony, becomes symbolic of the contradictions of life and the deviations from the ideal standards, moral and human. This is what the comic tales and the fables do - unfold the contradictions of life. The farcical form of the tales and the fables embody the truth about human life and the human condition - that life is ironical, contradictory, however much we strive to resolve the contradictions.

If events of everyday life are turned upside down and characters depart consciously from moral standards, such deviations or departures are ironical in the sense that they reveal the ironical contradictory nature of existence. Life turns out to be different from what you expect it to be. The hallowed memories of your beloved are negated by revelation of the worm in the dung. The old Brahminin *Sattu Bhastu Jataka* (402) goes out to find a servant for his wife and returns to find his young wife enjoying herself with a young man. That is irony, irony as a fact of life, of existence.

However irony as a mirror of life has to be distinguished from irony as an artistic device. There is the foremost use of irony as an affectation or simulation of what you are not. Corbaccio in Ben Jonson's play *Volpone* deviates from natural human concern in wanting to kill Volpone. But how does he set about his scheme? He simulates great concern and solicitude for Volpone. He brings 'an opiate' from his doctor to make Volpone 'sleep' (of course, what he brings is poison).

Such a use of irony as an artistic device involves dramatisation, the dramatisation of character. In other words, the principles of inversion and dramatisation go hand in hand. In order to enforce their ideals, moral and human values, the story-tellers of the past do not present the ideals themselves but perversions of the ideals dramatically. They support virtue by dramatising vice.

Of course we cannot expect the same kind of dissimulation and dramatic intensity in the *Jataka* tales as in the modern masters of comedy. And in the *Jataka* tales there is the inevitable moralising at the end. But it is the same ironical manner that we come across in several of the best of them.

Irony of this inverted, dramatic nature is seen in the way characters are presented in modern Indian short stories and novels, where 'character' is the pivotal element of organisation. Karoor is a master of this kind of ironical humour, the special plea for the indefensible. But we realise that this mode of ironical portrayal of character was well known to the authors of the *Panchathanthra* stories. The 'utter unselfconsciousness' of the characters is ironical in the sense that this kind of 'ignorance' is a way of revealing their deficiencies or weaknesses. A form of irony in reverse to the above is what comes through 'knowledgeableness' in an outspoken witty manner. But characters can completely conceal their 'knowledgeableness' and affect to be what they are not. It is tempting to draw on the characters from a novel like *Pride and Prejudice* to show how the 'knowledgeable' and the 'unknowledgeable' characters are presented by a great humourist. But we have enough examples in the past and present literatures of our own.

The writer may be ironical in his own attitude to the characters in the story, often deliberately feigning sympathy for persons whom he really wants to expose and ridicule. The response of the reader too can be ironical: he is held between mirth and a growing realisation of the 'significance' of the story.

Let us look at ironical writing from the standpoint of the writing as a whole. Very often we have to look for the 'truth' beyond the surface narration. The truth may lie close to the surface or deep within. This is irony in its simplest, most elemental form - 'telling the opposite of what you mean.' Two modern Indian writers, who are fine exponents of this form of irony, are the Malayalee writer Mohemed Basheer and the Anglo-Indian writer R.K. Narayan. One may make a distinction between the two writers in that Narayan approaches his 'prey' with a casual, unassuming air, preferring to use under-statement, whereas Basheer is impatient for a smash-up in spite of his taciturn air. Basheer, often relating the stories in the 'first' person, finds this kind of irony extremely useful for his purpose.

The vitality of the great comic tradition and the moral humanism reflected through this comic tradition has never been in doubt in the development of Indian fiction. The comical ironical tradition from the past has exerted considerable influence on the modern Indian short story in respect of its moral content and the ironical mode of communication.

In Prem Chand's superb story *The Shroud*, the drunken revelry of his characters from the lower classes of society itself is diverting. But that drunken merriment is played out against the grim background in the squalid poverty-stricken environment where a 'death' has taken place. The humour, however boisterous and spontaneous it may seem is bizarre because it is focussed throughout ironically - 'unconcern', 'indifference', 'unknowledgeableness' against the dark grim reality of death.

In Palagunni Varadaraju's story in Telegu *On the Boat*, the humour is somewhat different. It is a rogue's tale, almost an adaptation of what might have been a humorous folk-tale. The two main characters are differently presented, though they share in different ways the fun of their escapades. There is daring unconcern on the part of both the lovers, but there is cruelty in the nature of the man. The violence of the action mixed with merriment has to be

set off against the woman's enduring love for her care-free shifty lover. We view such action as ironically throwing light on the tender loving nature of the woman.

Something similar to Premchand's *Shroud* but with a wider range of implications we have in Chaucer's poem *The Pardoner's Tale*. The rioters in the poem live on such a level of ignorance that they come out in search of death to 'quell death'. It is Chaucer's genius that brings together the rioters and an old man, who is also in search of death because he is tired of life, of living. This encounter with the old man, which first holds out for them prospects of wealth and prosperity, leads to their own death. Chaucer's irony is many-tiered as Death quells those who are out to quell it - not in a deliberate act, but by 'mere chance'.

It is worth noting, while examining irony, how it is related to other comic devices like the use of farcical situations, caricature and the comic exaggeration of particular traits and parody. Apart from the 'relevance' of comic devices, we could often find many of these comic devices used for forwarding the irony in the story or the play. These 'other' devices create the ironical form and tone of the work through which the writer conveys his 'meaning'.

9. The Anti-mythical function of Irony

Irony has another important function, that is, when it becomes anti-mythical, directed against mythical stories and stories in which fantasy is an important ingredient. Myths, legends and other such stories strangel ly lend themselves to ironical treatment in literature and are therefore deflated deliberately. There is one episode at least in the *Ramayana*, which in its sacrilegious anti-mythical mirth cannot be equalled by anything in Western Classical literature. I refer to the Ahalya-Gautama episode, in which the sovereign God Indra in a human encounter loses his testicles and is fitted with goat's testicles by the lesser gods, who feel sorry for him. What is interesting here quite apart from the deed itself, is theironical treatment of divinity, making divine powers themselves objects of scorn and ridicule.

It looks as though comedy must necessarily originate from such stories of 'high seriousness'. Irony must erupt on the scene and invert the serious purpose so that the mythical stories may fulfil some other purpose. The outcome is entirely different from and completely opposed to what is supposed to be promoted by the venerable old myths. Implied, ironically suggested, is something else, not anything concurrent with the surface story as originally intended.

This anti-mythical irony may be said to have a freer, fuller development in Western Literature. While the story of knighthood and the ideals of chivalry and knight errantry are presented with a solemn air in Aristo's *Orlando Furioso*, Cervantes's air of mock seriousness, of ironic mockery may be said to have administered the death blow to the ideals of chivalry in the Middle Ages. So, the purpose of Cervanies is to show, not how much of the old chivalric ideals are present in the modern world, but how little of such ideals can be tolerated in the ordinary humdrum world, which life is for most people.

Euripides presents the same world as Sophocles and Aeschylus - the world of myth and legends. But how little of the old ideals of virtue and heroism is left in Euripides! "There appears a loss of confidence in the innate significance of the old stories and a readiness to give them an unnatural twist in order that they may fulfil momentarily a new purpose."[23]

Aristophanes makes Euripedes claim in the *Frogs* that he brought into tragedy the familiar every day things of life. And Aristophanes himself brings before us Socrates suspended in a basket between heaven and earth in order to ridicule sophistry, knavery in logic and disputation.

Francis Fergusson makes this function of irony quite clear in his essay *Oedipus Rex: the Tragic Rhythm of Action:*

> "Where Sophocles' celebrated irony seems to envisage the *condition humaine* itself - the plight of the psyche in a world which is ultimately mysterious to it - Euripedes' ironies are all aimed at the incre-

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23. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* S.V. Euripides by D.W. Lucas, p. 421.

dible 'gods' and at the superstitions of those who believe in them...His use of myth and ritual is like that which Cocteau or, still more exactly, Sartre makes of them - for parody or satirical exposition, but without any belief in their meaning...he wants us to feel the suffering of the individual without benefit of any objective moral or cosmic order."[24]

It is interesting to see how the mythical tradition and the inverted ironical allegorical tradition, that is the anti-mythical tradition co-exist in Malayalam poetic literature. While Thunchath Ezhuthacchan performed the astounding feat of translating the great Hindu epics into what may be termed works of great originality in the latter half of the 16th and the early part of the 17th century, making the devotion to God the primary goal of his works, Kunchen Nambiar in the eighteenth century in his Ottam Thullal plays[25] broke away from the prestigious dramatic tradition of Kathakali because he deemed Kathakali dramatic tradition was too weighed down with heaviness of thought and expression. Superb satirist that he was, his method was to apply humour and irony to the great Puranic themes which had inspired Ezhuthacchan. It was not exactly an inversion of the mythical. Through the mixture of the serious and the comic he was attempting to portray human nature in its diversity, besides seeking an opportunity to deal with the corruptions in the society of his own day. His *Pāthracharitham* and *Kalyana Souganthikam* are two among his numerous poetic plays which have mixed profit with delight for Malayalee audiences for generations.

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24. Francis Ferguson, The Idea of a Theatre, (Anchor Books) p. 46.

25. Kunchen Nambiar's *Ottam Thullal* plays. These plays come to life in solo performances. One person plays many parts with amazing virtuosity. Dance and speech go hand in hand with drumming too, all executed by one person. Kunchen Nambiar, the creator of this dramatic form, performed in his own plays, giving us the first instance of the poet, dramatist and actor, or performer, as one person.

The general drift in Nambiar's plays can be seen from the fact that, along with his Ottum Thullal plays he also wrote what are called *Parayanthullal plays* - supposed to be danced and recited by a Paraya - a person from the lowest caste in the Hindu community. The play itself becomes symbolic of the 'speech' that the oppressed and the down-trodden will eventually find.

Among the writers in Malayalam who use the comic form Mohemed Basheer is outstanding. There is no doubt that he is one of the finest ironists in modern Indian fiction. In his story *Mathilukal* (The Walls) Basheer assumes that the basic contradiction in life is the division of man or woman into the two sexes, so that fulfilment for one is dependent on the other. The greater irony is that when we seem capable of overcoming this contradiction by our ingenuity and resources, our efforts are often thwarted by chance, by fortuitous circumstances.

With Basheer's celebrated short novel we return to irony in its anti-mythical form and intent. In *My Grandpa Had an Elephant* Kunjupathumma has to live through the sudden collapse of her family's fortunes and all the misfortunes which came in its wake. But she has been nurtured on the glory of her family's past with the legend of her grandfather's elephant made to occupy an important place in her consciousness. She has gone beyond superstitious fantasies about life in general adapted from religious lore. In a brilliant evaluation of the novel Ms. Savithri Shanker observes:[26]

> "The story is rich in texture and woven in multiple layers. Its vitality springs primarily from the tension between the day-to-day world of a young Muslim girl living in twentieth century Kerala and the Old Testament-like cosmology of Islam. The phantasmagoric account of divine order is real to Kunjupathumma in the beginning."

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26. Ms. Savithri Shanker in *Malayalam Literary Survey* Jan-March, 1984 A Kerla Sahitiya Akademi Publication, p. 12.

It is on this mythical world that Basheer focusses his irony, a world of legend and superstition which he shows to be unreal, disabling human beings from facing the challenges of life. But irony is also given a concrete embodiment in the actual circumstances of life. Irony is not a device for manipulation in the hands of the writer. It is there in the unexpected decline in the fortunes of Pathumma's family, the sudden appearance of Nizaar Ahmed on the scene, and there is at the heart of the novel a character who with all her wrong upbringing is not "naive or obtuse".

It is after all this illiterate girl that Nizaar, the enlightened hero, chooses as his wife in the end. For, as Basheer slyly shows, Nizaar's mind too is filled with fantasies - that the girl he was going to marry should be an ideal woman, brilliant, so brilliant that she carried within her head all the knowledge that one can conceive of. It is a conscious ambivalent irony that Basheer enforces on the novel which makes fun of not only the old superstitious fantasies but some modern ones too.

10. Anti-fantasysing in contemporary literature

The natural habitat of fantasy as a literary form was the myth, the legend and the epic to which it provided its seminal, creative, motivating power. Fables, folk-tales and supernatural stories fall into the same category.

If myths gave rise later to the anti-myth in classical literature, it is proof enough that the myth was losing its potency. The general tendency is for fantasy too, when religious beliefs became more secularised or lost their sanction, to become alienated from the former cultural and religious supports and become independent, personal, aggressive, satirical. And they began to be cultivated independently of or antithetical to their former natural habitat.

If the first phase of the alienated anti-fantasysing in Western literature is found in Greek playwrights like Euripides and Aristophanes, Rabelais during the Renassance immediately strikes us as being one of the greatest writers

working with a fantasy that is vigorous and positive, though alienated. Isn't grossness of appetite preferable to religious hypocrisy? that is what Rebelais asks us.

Fantasy in a distorted form discredits fantasysing, no doubt. But it becomes at the same time one of the greatest instruments for social satire, as we find in Rabelais, Swift and the contemporary Gunter Grass with his masterpiece *The Tin Drum*.

As Grass owes a great deal to Swift, so does Salman Rushdie to Grass in his *Midnight's Children* "glittering with redundant stories and outrageous red herrings".[27] *Midnight's Children* contains many passages of brilliant writing, especially when Rushdie does not resort to imitating Joyce - which is only spuriously clever. But the main weakness of the novel is lack of integration of the several parts and layers. Vivisection sets in on the level of creation too.

Such fantasysing and anti-fantasysing are perhaps inevitable in creative literature at present with the divisions and conflicts in society becoming more and more prominent. More specifically, the literatures of the Indian sub-continent do not reveal such marked anti-mythical, anti-fantasising activity as Western literature. A drawback? Perhaps. But the great ironic, comic activity of the past still survives. The ethos, both moral and human, in the less developed countries has its compensations, as we shall see. The literatures of the present, coming down from the past in its two major trends, too compensate.

Marx found it difficult to explain, according to Edmund Wilson, "why the poems of Homer were so good, when the society that produced them was from his point of view, that is from the point of view of its industrial development - so primitive."

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27. Hermione Lee in *Observer* (London)

And a 'primitive society' on the Indian sub-continent had its great epics, comic tales and fables to entertain and enlighten it. These two literary traditions, however, embody one great moral tradition - the tradition of moral humanism. And they are not isolated entities in the Indian literature of the present.

We shall not go over again the difference between these two literary traditions. Some hold the view that the connection between comedy and humanism was through the critical spirit and that the other tradition - the allegorical tradition - has other links or connections with the moral and humanistic tradition. Personally I believe that all great literature is the product of both the intellect - the critical spirit - and the emotions. But what really matters is the fact that moral humanism finds artistic expression in the great epics and that other extraordinary literary form - the comic tale. More relevant is the fact that we must keep in mind the moral and humanistic traditions coming down from the past, when we try to account for the origin and the identity of the modern Indian short story and the novel.

11. Humanism and Culture in the Technological Society

Douglas Bush, writing on Humanism, says that the liberal humanists in the West, once considered 'the party of progress', became in the eyes of the scientist a party of reaction. The humanists, however, took their stand on permanent values rather than on a changing body of knowledge. Humanism was concerned with *homo sapiens*, with the good life, while science, when positively irreligious and naturalistic was concerned with *homo faber*, the technical expert and the physical world.[28]

The problem of the technological society is beginning to affect people in all societies. The local and national context of our less developed backgrounds is also being transformed into the context of the technological ethos,

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28. Douglas Bush on *Humanism* in *A Dictionary of World Literature* ed. Joseph T. Shipley, The Philosophical Library, New York, p. 304.

in which we, as elsewhere, "are kept amused by canned delights of various kinds which persuade us that technological advance is real progress."[29]

However, Dr. David Craig, the eminent Marxist critic, in a recent article speaks of a 'slump in morale' which has affected Western society; Marxist and non-Marxist, both manual and white collar, are alienated from the forces of production, "several times removed from tangible reality", are "sheltered from want and guaranteed like every civil servant". But "the shelter and guarantee are turning fragile."[30]

Indian culture and society, we claim, is yet regional, local, national. However, what kind of local life, I mean vigorous local life, is one to find, one is likely to interpose, among the impoverished peasantry of Kerala and other oppressed sections of the community like the low caste untouchable labourer, the petty trader, the minor Government employee and the Swabasha, vernacular school teacher? These are ordinary people engaged at times in a frightful struggle for survival against the intolerable pressure of poverty. I should not be thought of as making a cult or philosophy of poverty. But I believe there is not the 'slump in morale' that Dr. Craig speaks of among these people.

Leonard Woolf saw this difference between the nature of living in the West and countries like India. Although the story *Pearls and the Swine* [31] was written more than fifty years ago, most of what he says there is true even now.

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29. From a review of The Technological Society by Jaques Ellul (translated by John Wilkinson, Caps), in The Listener, 2 April, 1965, p. 569.

30. Dr. David Craig in'The Middle-class Tragedy', Critical Quarterly, vol. 26, no. 3, autumn 1984.

31. Leonard Woolf, in the story *Pearls and the Swine* included in The Reprint of Leonard Woolf's Diaries and Stories from the East 1908-1911 in the Ceylon Historical Journal, vol.4.

"Out there (in India) you live so near to life, every morning you smell damp earth, if you splash in your tin bath....you feel there is everything, even in the sunrise and sunset, everyday, the inexorableness, mystery in things happening. You feel the whole earth waking up or going to sleep in a great arch of the sky: you feel small, not very powerful. But whoever felt the sunset or sunrise in London or Torquay either. It doesn't. Therefore you just turn off the electric light."

The story however is not really about the oneness of man with Nature. It is about the oneness of man with man in an Indian setting in the midst of squalor, misery and suffering.

No attempt is made here to belittle anyone or anything. It is a universal problem - the conflict between humanistic values and technological changes. These enormous technological changes that are taking place around us have affected us in every aspect of life, in human, cultural and literary activities.

While many may talk glibly of the 'global village', the world-culture of the electronic devices and of the mass media, it seems more necessary to speak emphatically, not of world-languages and world-literatures, but of individual cultures which promote oddity and even whimsicality, of a 'babel of tongues' that are different one from the other. I fully endorse the view expressed by Gerald Moore that "the true road to universal status in literature - if such a phenomenon exists - is not through the abandonment of one's cultural and national identity, but through the most intense and searching realisation of it.[32] In other words, the most enduring and universal art is that which has the deepest national and local roots.

Dr. Criag in the article I quoted from above has this to say about the contemporary English novel: "The English

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32. Gerald Moore, Introduction to Twelve African, Writers (Hutchinson) p. 11.

speaking novel (in Britain, Canada and the United States of America) has been for some years fraught with a sense that there is nothing valid left" (to write about). James Wolcott, writing in *Granta*, says, "Triviality is what many critics feel is most cripplingly afflicting American Literature now."[33] This is a serious charge - the charge of triviality - against modern fiction in the English speaking countries. On the other hand David Lodge, in his book on modes of writing in modern fiction, would have 'futility' considered an important theme - not a trivial theme - in modern literature, and he also thinks the use of myths a legitimate way (through the examples of Joyce and Eliot) to represent the contemporary "demythologised" world. "The representation of a demythologised world, a world 'fallen into the quotidian' (Heidegger's phrase) is thus ingeniously redeemed by allusion to the lost mythical world - aesthetically redeemed by our perception of the structure, and spiritually redeemed by our perception of the structure, and spiritually redeemed by our perception of human continuity between the two worlds."[34] All the Lodge says amounts to this - that the representation of the demythologised world of ours comes to life through contrast with the more living reality of the past represented in ancient myths and legends. But futility is futility, even though you can make it come to life artistically through contrast with the past. So, between the overwrought symbolism and overpoetic language centring on futility and the drab realism of the modern writers of fiction, of whom Dr. Craig speaks, is the realism of the writers in the Indian regional languages who have not severed themselves from their humanist heritage, both in form and content, who are fully alive in their own regional, local environment.

Of course there are major writers in the West who deal with subjects beyond futility or triviality. I think particularly : Thomas Mann, Heinrich Boll, Solznenitsyn and Isaac Bashevis Singer, who deal with the living

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33. James Wolcott in Granta 9, Notes from Abroad, p. 244.

34. David Lodge, *The Modes of Modern Writing*, (Edward Arnold, 1977, 1983), p. 139.

reality of modern life. But as for writers from the countries of South Asia, they write about a reality different even from what the writers I mentioned deal with. Against the background of their humanist heritage they deal with what is their contemporary reality, that is, the Indian sub-continent, writing in their own regional languages about things regional, parachial, national. That is their strength. If there is weakness, that is not because of the parochial local background they choose their subjects from.

It is also worth mentioning that the best minds from Britain kept a door open on India. Humanism was a spent force in English literature after the great work of Dickens and George Eliot was done. Besides, these two writers were very 'English' and operated wholly within an English environment. The proclamation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of India in 1851 was symbolic of the tremendous political and military power exerted by the British Raj over its imperialist possessions, especially India. It was left to a few English humanists in the present century to redeem English humanism, or rather, to give new life to the humanist tradition which had fallen into desuetude and decay. They realised that India (the country and its civilization) represented one of the greatest humanistic forces in the world, and a powerful antidote against British Imperialism itself.

In the field of fiction, with the exception of D.H. Lawrence, the best British writers were enlivened and enriched through their contact with India. In fact they matured as major writers through their contact with India. Forster frankly confessed, "India was the great opportunity of my life." Leonard Woolf, after his short stay in Ceylon as administrative officer, returned to England and wrote his well known novel, about Ceylon *The Village in the Jungle* setting forth the burdens of a primitive village community under alien rule. Some of Conrad's best works were written through his personal contact with the eastern possessions of Imperialist powers (though not with India), and Rudyard Kipling wrote all his novels and many of his short stories against the background of India. His greatest work *Kim* is a generous, spontaneous tribute to the Indian environment, although the deeper levels of Indian life escaped him. And more recently Paul Scott, whose real

fame as a novelist rests on the *Raj Quartet*, was inspired to write about India on the eve of her becoming independent, not because he wanted a historical or exotic subject, but because India stirred within him, as nothing else had done before, his own spirit of humanism - of kindliness and sympathy for an oppressed people, and essential decency in personal and social relationship. And there is L.H. Myers who, after a period of experimentation with fiction reached his creative maturity in two novels set in India during the period of the Moghuls - *The Root and the Flower* and *The Pool of Vishnu*. The most memorable character in *the Pool of Vishnu* is the militant Guru, who is prepared to sacrifice himself for others, for his own humane ideals.

The stories from the Indian regional languages I have cited earlier and the characters in the stories (and the Indian novels I have made occasional reference to) are meaningful emblems of peoples united by a common culture and having a common identity. Underlying them is a common outlook, which I have preferred to call by what it signifies - humanism, Indian humanism. This humanism has a long history. But it has withstood the passage of Time and the circumstances incidental to such passage of Time - invasions, betrayals and arbitrary political decisions imposed on the people. But Indian humanism remains a living reality and a living force. And the best evidence of a common culture, a common civilisation and the living reality of humanism is the literatures of the Indian people in their several languages. With all the differences, the literatures embodying the spirit of humanism point to a oneness, an unity of a way of life that is enduring or should be made to endure.

Of course literature cannot presume to do things, but it helps one to see things in their correct perspective. So Indian literature has tasks to fulfil more than purely literary, tasks perhaps more than in the past, especially because there are some who come with 'gifts' like Greeks to the Trojan camp. There are others who talk glibly and disparagingly of unity and nationhood as though such things are outmoded concepts which are not in our best interests.

But the Indian writers in the regional languages have a different view of unity. From our consideration of the identity of the short story in the Indian regional languages we realise that the Indian writers have used the fictional form to express an idea of Indian unity which however goes deeper than a physical, demographic unity. There is nothing more imperative for the Indian writers than the sense of their Indianness at a deeper level of thinking and feeling.

APPENDIX I

The identity of the Indian Novel

The question may be raised - what about the identity of the Indian Novel? Has it an identity different from that of the Indian Short Story? And what about the achievement of writers in the two fields?

Although I have not generally discriminated between the two forms of Indian Fiction and have drawn from both short stories and novels to illustrate the argument on identity, there are vital differences in respect of identity, content and form. In the course of my search for the identity of the Indian Short Story in the Indian regional languages, I found that the identity of a literary form is closely related to moral and human values which are embodied in the work and which give life to a work. The same kind of moral and humanistic values form the basis of the Indian novel too. But there is definitely a diminution in the *quality* of the values communicated through the Indian novel. How do we account for this difference in quality in the Indian Novel?

The Indian Novel, prior to Independence, may fall into one of two kinds. On the one hand are the historical, romantic novels dealing with the past of the country. In spite of many stereotypes - the heroic chieftain uniting his people against foreign invaders (vide Bankim Chandra Chatterjee's *Durgesa Nandini*, the ideal mother, wife or lover - another favourite stereotype), behind the images of the past is often a substratum of ideas and the truth

of the past, the ethos and the hidden idealistic perspectives of people living in the past. So it is not quite right to dismiss such romances as so much piffle.

Most of Indian fiction belong to the second category, the political novel, dominated by the political events during the struggle for freedom. Characters are made even out of real political figures against the milieu of those times. It is not attempted here to decry the struggle for freedom. But the gains in the kind of political novel which arose from the struggle for freedom, with some exceptions, were often medioere in quality. The outcome was the same in respect of the novels which were based on the horrendous events during and after the partition. Not altogether perhaps. There were many short stories written on the terrible events of that time which have appeared in journals without a name and fame, which are now virtually lost to the readers of a later generation. Of what use are such authentic records to those who dominate the world of publishing?

It is during the post-Independence period that the novel in the Indian languages reach a measure of maturity, although the events dealt with may often belong to the pre-Independence period. The genre of the ostensibly political novel of the Gandhian era, which provided a kind of literary diet for the educated (and bilingual) middle classes was giving way to the novel of contemporary social circumstances or the novel of the mixed genre of political and social circumstances. It is this category of the contemporary social novel that we have to keep an eye on. And here we come to a new identity for the Indian novel at some remove from political events, and this identity comes close to the identity of the Indian Short Story too which we have been discussing earlier. When acquisitiveness in a growing commercial and industrial society results in the corruption of moral and human values, there is formed a common meeting ground for the Novel and the Short Story on the basis of moral human values or the denial of them.

Some of the greatest novels written in India (I wonder whether there is any point in drawing a distinction between the Anglo-Indian novel and the Indian novel) belong to this

category - for instance the Bengales novels *Pather Panchali* and *Aparajito*, the more recent novel *Arogya-niketan*, the Kannada novel *Samskara*, The short Kannada masterpiece *Kadu* (woods) and the two great novels in Malayalam, *Chemmeen* and *Aenipadi* (The Steps of the Ladder) *Half-an-Hour* by the Malayalee novelist Parppurathu has not been translated into English, although by the excellent opportunities available for translation in India the novel has been translated into most of the other Indian languages. The stories of R.K. Narayan and the early novels of Ruth Prawer Jhabvala especially are very 'Indian', although both these writers write in English. And there is no doubt that Raja Rao's *The Cat and Shakespeare* and *Comrade Kirillov* remain two of the finest novelettes ever written.

However, the greater achievement is in the genre of the Short Story. Compared with the relative abundance and excellence of the short story, in the regional languages, the achievement in the genre of the novel is limited in scope. Despite extensive backgrounds, many of the novels written in the regional languages lack individuality and depth - the true distinctions of merit. On the other hand national and local themes within the limited range of the short story have become enduring art too. Without necessaarily being political, the concentration on the human condition gives the stories their permanent significance.

And it was one of the most fortunate coincidences in the history of Indian literature - a great discovery of the creative mind of the modern story writer in the Indian languages - that the episodic unit of the long epic poem and the allegorical form of the epic were found well adaptable for the modern short story. It is worth noting that some of the finest writers of the novel in the Indian languages often resort to indirection as a mode of communication. Salmon Rushdie sums up the method of indirection in Indian Literature, allegorical or other, as one in which "the sensory world is a facade concealing but also symbolically revealing a deeper order of reality."

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BUDDHISM AND THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL STRATIFICATION[1]

(An Interpretation of the *Vāsettha Sutta*)

Social stratification is a major aspect of the basic principles of social organization. It is a particular kind of differentiation which characterizes hierarchical ranking under which members of a society or societies segregate as caste, estate and class groups, holding intercommunication and interrelations with each other and having equal status within the group. But among stratified groups there are recognized and sanctioned differences which determine the place of each in the admitted social order. This social phenomenon depends upon different factors such as wealth, power, strength, heredity, education and vocation. In this paper we will be mainly concerned with some aspects of the Indian caste system, popularly known as *Varnadharma* and the Buddhist response to it.

The term, *Varnadharma*, is a combination of the words *varna* (colour) and *dharma* (duty) and means duty based upon colour. It has acquired and established a definitive conotation with an exclusive technical meaning and significance in the Hindu social system. The English equivalent for *Varnadharma*, as sociologists have used it, is 'caste'.[2]

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1. This is not intended to be a comprehensive study of the Buddhist response to the Hindu social stratification. I confine myself mainly to the contents of the *Vāsettha Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta*. However, in some cases I have referred to other discourses where I felt a further clarification was necessary.

2. The term, 'caste' is derived from the Portugueses word *'casta'*, which means race, breed or class. According to H.A. Rose, the word 'caste' was used by the earlier Portuguese travellers in India in the sense of tribe or even race, being applied to the lowest Indian classes in contradistinction to their overlords. See *Encyclopaedia Britanica*, vol. IV. p. 976-986.

The origin of this social institution is derived from the creator, Brahman.[3] In the famous *Purusa Sūkta* of the *Rgveda* the origin of this institution is recorded thus:

> "The *Brāhmana* was his mouth (that is, sprang from his mouth). His arms created the *Rajanya* (*Ksatriya Varna*), the *Vaisya* was his thighs and the *Sudra* was born from his feet."[4]

This creation myth has been maintained in the same manner throughout the Hindu tradition. The later works like *Mahābharata*, *Rāmayana*, the *Smrtis*, *Dharmasastras* and the *Puranas*[5] have upheld the same view as to the origin of this institution. According to Hindu social philosophy not only did the Brahman create social classes but he also assigned duties to the four *Varnas*. Thus the Brahmanas, the highest *Varna* in the hierarchy, were assigned teaching the *Veda* and performing sacerdotal activities. The *Rajanya* or *Ksatriya* class was assigned warfare, governing the subject and the country; the *Vaisyas* were assigned farming and commercial activities, while the *Sudras* served the three higher *Varnas*.

The Buddha was extremely critical of this scheme of social differentiation and assignment of duties, as under this scheme no social justice was found to be observed. He envisaged that those who are said to have been born inferior are deprived of their basic human rights. The Buddha has utilized a number of arguments in criticizing the injustice of this social institution. The theistic origin of it was criticized by the Buddha in the following words in the *Agganna Sutta*.

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3. *Brahman* is the omnipotent God who created the world according to Hindu tradition. The words *Prajāpati* (the lord of beings) and *Svayambhu* (one who became oneself) are also used as synonyms for *Brahman*.

4. *Rgveda*, X.90.12.

5. *Satapatha Brāhmana*, II.1,4,12; XIV.4,2,23. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, I,4,11; *Taittiriya Brāhmana*, III,12,9,2. *Mahabharata (SantiParva)*,72,4-5; *Rāmayana*, 3,14,30. *Manusmrti*,I,31; *Bhāgavata Purana*,II,1,37.

"It is to be seen that wives of *Brāhmanas* are fertile, seen to be pregnant, delivering children and breast-feeding. And yet these *Brāhmanas*, born from the mother's womb, say that they are born from the mouth of *Brahman*."[6]

This argument exhibits that the Buddha has maintained the idea of biological genesis of human beings. As a non-theistic religio-philosophy Buddhism discards the idea of creation put forward by *Brahmana* teachers. According to Buddhism, the origin of this social institution depends on the division of labour[7] and is purely of human origin.

Caste system (*Varnadharma*) is a rigid institution under which one's caste (*varna*) is determined in terms of birth (*jatiyā*) into the social group; therefore one's caste cannot be changed[8] as the identity and the placement have already been established socially, legally and by religion. This is one of the predominent characteristics of this institution. The Buddha has criticized this rigid characteristic and affirmed mobility of identity and placement in society. It has emphatically been stated that 'one is not a *Brāhmana* or *Vasala*[9] due to birth (into the group)'.[10] 'One is not a *Brāhmana* due to his plaited hair, by his lineage or birth'.[11] On the other hand, the Buddha has advocated the psycho-physical behaviour of individuals as the determining factor with regard to identity and placement in society. The nature of this

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6. *Dīgha Nikāya*, III,81-82; *Majjhima Nikāya*, II,148.

7. See *Agganna Sutta* of the *Dīgha Nikāya*.

8. According to the *Bhagavad Gīta*, change of identity and placement is possible in the life to come, if one performs one's own duty (*svadharma*) perfectly in this life.

9. In this context the term '*Vasala*' has been used instead of Sudra due to the fact that the *Vasala* was considered more inferior.

10. *"Na jaccā vasalo hoti na jaccā hoti brāhmano."* *Sutta Nipata*, 136.

11. *"Na jatāhi gottena na jaccā hoti brāhmano."* Ibid., 650.

factor is very significant because it is flexible and no individual is born into a certain psycho-physical behaviour; it is the individual himself who mould own behaviour. This means that we can change our identity and placement in society in accordance with our behaviour. According to Buddhism, there are no immutable absolute social classes, castes (*varna*) and races. This is in perfect agreement with the doctrine of impermanence.

Although the term *'Brāhmana'* has been used in a generic sense from the Vedic period, the Buddha has attenuated its original implication and applied it for those who have a morally acceptable bahaviour[12] irrespective of birth. This is a significant revolutionary approach to this problem because of the fact that even those who are said to have been born inferior are called Brāhmanas, if their behaviour is morally acceptable. The Buddha as a socio-religious reformer has thus denounced the very basis of this social institution.

There is an important discourse called *Vāsettha Sutta* in the *Sutta Nipāta*, the fifth book of the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, which deals scientifically with the problem of caste (*varna*), social classes and race. Some arguments used therein by the Buddha remind us of biological principles and taxonomies, whilst some are based upon economics and ethical principles. The first argument is based on the characteristics of plants:

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12. *"Yo brāhmano bāhitapāpadhammo,*
nihuhunko nikkasāvo yatatto,
vedantagu vusitabrahmacariyo,
dhammena so brahmavādam vadeyya,
yass ussadā natthi kuhinci loke. *Vinaya*, I. p.3;
Udāna, p. 3.
See *Sutta Nipata*, verses 620-647;
Dhammapada, Vagga 26.

"Understand that the characteristics of grass and trees, even though they do not notice it (are not aware of it), are inborn; their species are manifold."[13]

The terms *'jātimaya'* and *'linga'* occurred in this discourse are extremely important. *Jātimaya* means inborn, inbred or innate, while *linga* stands for special characteristics or features. In its wider sense *'jāti'* is parallel to the term 'genus'. So the phrase *'lingam jātimayam'* implies the special characteristics inherited by birth or special characteristics endowed by genus. The biological use of the term 'genus' conveys the meaning of taxonomical group of animals, plants and so on, consisting of closely related species.

In the course of his argument the Buddha considers in the first place the inborn characteristics of grass (*tina*) and trees (*rukka*). The species of grass is distinct from the species of trees. This difference is due to the innate characteristics of each species. The commentary of the *Sutta Nipata* observes that grass is pithless inside and pithy outside; trees are pithy inside and pithless outside.[14] The reason for this distinction depends upon the fact that these two species, that is to say, grass and trees are procreated by different genera.

The Buddha takes up next the case of insects, animals, reptiles, fish and birds. Just as the case of plants and grass, these creatures are produced by different genera; because of this reason these species possess inborn distinctive structural characteristics.

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13. *"Tinarukkhe pi jānātha na cāpi patijānare, lingam jātimayam tesam annamanna hi jātiyo." Sutta Nipāta*, 601.

14. *"Tattha tināni nāma antopheggunī bahi sārāni; rukkhā nama bhi phegguni anto sārā." Paramattha-jotikā*, vol.II.p. 464.

The Buddha has apparently applied this universal biological principle to human beings with regard to various differentiations made by man himself. It has been emphatically stated in the *Vāsettha Sutta* that 'Among these species inborn special distinguishing characteristics are abundant, but among human beings there are no inborn special characteristics or marks that make different species.'[15] The Buddha had a clear and broad understanding of this universal fact and he was aware of the biological unity of mankind. The Buddha recapitulates that 'Like in other species there is no difference among men with regard to their eyes, ears, mouths, noses, lips, eyebrows, necks, shoulders, belly, back, hip, breast, male organ, female organ and there is no barrier for sexual union between any male and a female. Nor as regards their hands, feet, palms, nails, calves, thighs and voice. The difference among men is nominal (*vokaran ca manussesu samannaya pavuccati*) and it is conventional,[16] that is accidental.

This exposition of the *Vāsettha Sutta* emphasizes the uniqueness of mankind and, according to Buddhist social philosophy, the origin of human species is derived from one genus. The visible differences (*vokaram*), that is to say, complexion, colour of hair and so on among human beings are nominal (*samannaya*) and they are not absolute as in the case of other species. These differences are due to geneological facts and geographical reasons.

Thus the Buddha, having criticised the very basis of racial as well as caste differentiations, turns to economic and ethical grounds of social inequality. In most societies, it is to be seen that both identity and placement of individuals depend upon profession or livelihood pursued. This is not only a historical but also an empirical fact. The Buddha was well aware of this phenomenon and made use

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15. *"Yathā etesu jātīsu lingam jātimayam puthu, evam natthi manussesu lingam jātimayam puthu." Sutta Nipāta*, 607.

16. *"Paccattam ca sarīresu manusse svetam navijjati, vokaran ca manussesu samannaya pavuccati." Ibid.*, 611.

of it to criticize the rigidity and inflexibility of the *Varṇa* institution. In the *Vasettha Sutta* of the *Sutta Nipāta* we read:

> "One who pursues cattle-breeding among men is called a farmer not, a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues various crafts among men is called a craftsman, not a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues selling things among men is called a merchant, not a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues servitude among men is called a servant, not a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues stealing things among men is called a thief, not a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues archery among men is called a soldier, not a Brahmana.
>
> One who pursues counselling among men is called a counsellor, not a Brahmana."[17]

What is clear from this is that one's identity and placement in society depend on livelihood or profession followed. Nevertheless it is significant to note that both identity and placement are not immutable and absolute because, along with the change of livelihood or profession, the identity and placement are also changed accordingly. Moreover, in the days of the Buddha there were certain Brahmanas who, apart from their ecumenical and educational functions, pursued various professions such as cultivation, farming, selling things, counselling and sooth-saying. What the Buddha exactly wanted to emphasize in this respect was that those who followed these trades were not Brahmanas, even though they had been born into the Brahmana Varna.

The Buddha emphatically states that the view that one is a Brahmana by birth, maintained by those who are ignorant, is a long-standing dormant view.[18] According to the

17. *Sutta Nipāta*, verses 612-619.

18. *"Dīgharattam anusayitam diṭṭhigatam ajānatam, ajānantā nopabruvanti jātiyā hoti brahmano."* *Sutta Nipāta*, 649.

Vāsettha Sutta, Brāhmanas are not born from the mother's womb; Brahmanahood is the sublime state that could be achieved through moral and mental purification.[19] Approximately a half of the discourse is devoted to the clarification of the concept of Brahmana. The Buddhist conception of Brahmana is completely different from that of Brahmanism. According to Buddhism, the true Brahmana is the one who, having gone forth from household life into homelessness, has eliminated all defilements and realized the highest goal. This state of perfection is not a special privilege of a certain class of people and it could be achieved by anybody who strives, irrespective of birth, race, caste (*varna*) and class; in other words those who are born into the so-called four Varnas can achieve the Brahmanahood. This is the concept of social mobility advocated by the Buddha.

The ethical argument is incorporated with the theory of *karma*; and one's *karma* alone determines one's identity and placement in society.

> "One is a Brahmana due to his deeds and one is a non-Brahmana due to his deeds."[20]

In this context deeds mean one's moral and immoral behaviour. The determining factor, according to the *Sutta*, is that one who is morally good is a Brahmana; and one who is morally bad is a non-Brahmana. This classification is not rigid, as the change of behaviour is always possible. Thus the Buddha has minimized the fourfold Varna institution into two changeable ethico-classes, i.e. *Brāhmana* and *non-Brāhmana*.

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19. *"Na cā ham brāhmanam brūmi yonijam mattisambhavam, bhovādi nāma so hoti sa ve hoti akincano, akincanam anādānam tam aham brūmi brāhmanam."* *Ibid.*, 620; *Dhammapada*, XXVI,14.

20. *"Kammanā brāhmano hoti kammanā hoti abrāhmano."* *Sutta Nipāta*, 651.

The contents of the *Vāsettha Sutta* manifest the Buddha's scientific approach to the problem of social stratification based on heredity and also he has attempted to disclose that the basis of Brahmanical hierachical stratification is unjustifiable. The Buddha as a reformist religious teacher launched a mass campaign with his disciples throughout India to restore human rights. In the course of this he paid a special attention to the position of the less priviledged class of people known as the *Sudra*.

K.S. WARNASURIYA

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Editor and the Editorial Board of the Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities regret very much that Volumes ix (1983), x (1984), xi (1985), xii (1986), and now Volume xiii (1987) had to be scanned and duplicated in lieu of printing, in order to expedite publication and bring the series up to date.

The alternative would have been to skip the issues in arrears and resume with a New Series.

However, readers will appreciate that every effort has been made to keep the articles in these volumes consistent with the standard of scholarship to which the Journal is committed, while at the same time keeping the price low to compensate for the physical quality of the publication necessitated by the circumstances.

The publications of the present volume and the forthcoming one (Volume xiv (1988)) have, for their part, also been inordinately delayed due to the failure on our part to observe the sanctity of certain administrative frivola in our concern for the advancement of University research.

We thank our contributors for their tolerance and our readership for their patience throughout all this time.

PHILOSOPHICAL TECHNIQUES: WITTGENSTEIN'S EXPOSITION

(1) Introduction

One of the central issues Wittgenstein makes explicit throughout his later philosophy is that a word is not necessarily the name of a thing and that philosophical problems arise when one disengages a word from its natural context. Admittedly, the larger issue he takes to task and dismisses is the belief that a word has a 'meaning', referent, that words 'stand for' things. That is to say, he clearly shows the poor logic involved in the theory which claims that words stand for things. This paper concerns itself with the techniques Wittgenstein employs in the analysis.

Wittgenstein notes: "The best that a could write would never be more than philosophical remarks."[1] Again, "...the philosophical remarks in this book are, as it were, a number of sketches of landscapes which were made in the courses of these long and involved journeyings."[2] The ideas contained therein consist of some kind of conceptual or philosophical techniques. These techniques, or the philosophical album of sketches and remarks, could bring light into one mind or another.

As the title indicates, the aim of this paper is to make explicit these techniques or key notions in broad terms. A central technique in Wittgensteinism involves as his deep interest, not in language itself taken as a field of inquiry in its own right, but in the roots of philosophical perplexity which are located there. The concern is not with the yield (or produce), but rather with the instrument itself. The language is created or evolved like an institution. Social, religious and cultural ceremonies, soccer matches, competitive examinations, parliaments, party systems, poetry, drama etc. are forms of functions of social life. Language operates

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1. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Blackwell, Oxford (1953) p. ixe.

2. *ibid.*

against a background of human needs in the setting of a natural environment. Admittedly we must understand it in this way, as involved in a pattern that goes further, if we are to understand it at all. Our natural languages are immeasurably complex. To command a clear view of their workings is, therefore, a matter of difficulty.

Wittgenstein makes use of certain simple patterns of linguistic activity, which he calls 'language-games.' Certainly 'language-games' involve language-talk, which in turn entails language as a sort of play. The rules, however, vary according to custom, tradition etc. One cannot gain a deep understanding of the distinctive characteristics of a tribe's culture without a participant's understanding of the way of life of that culture. We are to give up looking for an essence or a structure, or both, of language, and instead we are to look at what is all the time before our eyes. That is the actual functioning of language. Then we see that linguistic activities are as diverse as all the things which we call 'games' and which are so because of family resemblances—"a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[3] Language-games help us to grasp the meaning of words, notions (or concepts), sentences, statements, expressions etc. If so, grasping a meaning is to be able to practise a technique.

Wittgenstein's point is this: that if one tries to treat inductive reasonings as if they were deductive ones, one could make nonsense of them. Analogically, if one tries to understand scientific discourse as if it were a sort of religious incantation, one could make nonsense of it. Again, if one attempts to construe moral statements as if they were empirical ones, and moral reasoning as if it were scientific reasoning, one could make nonsense out of morality. Inductive discourse, scientific discourse, moral discourse etc. have a logic of their own. The main concern of philosophy is to understand and to make explicit that logic, and not to distort it by attempting to reduce it to the logic of some other preferred type of discourse.

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3. *ibid.*, p. 66.

To command a clear view of this logic is a matter of difficulty. The simple patterns of linguistic activity called 'language-games' are made use of by Wittgenstein to overcome this difficulty. Whatever the intricacy of the working out of the Wittgensteinian philosophical techniques, the master-theme is quite simple - a reorientation of our vision. It is not incorrect to construe as if this orientation implying thoughts are at peace. It is the plateau that someone who philosophizes yearns for. Certain very important philosophical techniques sprang out of this reorientation of vision. What there are we shall seek to explain in what follows.

(2) Language-games and not a language-game: A Wittgensteinian technique

Wittgenstein constantly compares languages and parts of languages to a kind of games called language-games: "Systems of communication...we shall call 'language-games'. They are more or less akin to what in ordinary language we call 'language-games".[4] To put it more explicitly, language-games are not the fragments of a whole which is language itself (der Sprache) but we treat them as self-enclosed systems of understanding. That is, they are in language. In this way we can speak of a simple primitive language as a language-game. To keep the point of view in mind, it very often is useful to imagine such a simple language to be the entire system of communication of a tribe in a primitive state of society.

The noting of 'language-games' is nothing but a noting of primitive forms of language or primitive languages. If we want to note the problems of truth and falsehood, of the agreement and disagreement of propositions with reality, of the nature of assertion, assumption and question, we shall with great advantage look at primitive forms of language in which these forms of thinking appear without the confusing background of highly complicated processes of thought. When we look at such simple forms of language, the mental mist which seems to hide

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4. L. Wittgenstein, *Blue and Brown Books*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, (1958) p. 81.

from view our ordinary use of language, disappears. We see activities, reactions, which are clear-cut and transparent. *Ipso facto*, we recognize in these simple processes forms of language not separated by a break from our more complicated ones. In a very large measure we see that we can build up the complicated forms from the primitive ones by gradually adding new forms. These forms are parts of the praxis of life. Very appropriately Wittgenstein notes: "Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life."[5] Summing all this up, it can be noted that our language is not everywhere bound by strict rules; senses need not be definite; concepts, notions, need not have essences associated with them.

Yet again, the nature of 'language-game' is made explicit by Wittgenstein's oft-quoted question, namely, "What can I do with this word?" It is clearly related to what connexions a word belongs to, etc. An implication of this view of language is obviously connected to a rejection of the doctrine of elements—the doctrine that the clarification of an ordinary sentence is achieved when it is replaced by another, which makes explicit the complexity of the statements expressed, and reflects exactly the form of the fact described. This belief is an illusion brought about by confusions about language; it can be dispelled only by a clear view of the actual functioning of language. That is, we are to give up looking for the essence of language and instead are to look at what is all the time before our eyes; the actual functioning of language. Then we see that linguistic activities are as diverse as all the things which we call 'games,' and which are so called not because of 'a family resemblance' — "... a complicated net-work of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing; sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail."[6]

The concept of 'game' is used here to cast light on that of 'language' by means of direct comparision: games

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5. *Philosophical Investigations* p. 11.

6. *ibid.*, p. 32.

form a family, and so do the various activities which come under the general description of 'using language'. The important thing to notice here is the view that the application of the word 'game' is not limited by any precise boundary, though a boundary could be fixed for a special purpose. This can be called the Wittgensteinian method of philosophical therapy; and it involves taking a certain view of language and of meaning.

In this context, it is noted that "the speaking of language is part of an activity."[7] If we are to see the significantly different roles superficially similar expressions play, we must keep in mind the countless kinds of language-using activity or language-games in which we participate. This is not an explanation as such but a description. It not only lays before us the different parts of segments of language, but also points out the actual use of different words or terms. The language-game is a complex system of linguistic activity; and every such game must be understood individually, for each works to its own end and its own given pattern. An implication is that a category of discourse remains unexplained in terms of another. There are various categories of discourse that are distinguished. For example, there are:

(a) a discourse about material objects;
(b) a discourse about scientific objects;
(c) a discourse about other people's minds.

Primarily, therefore are three uses of language—the material, the scientific and the evaluative.

One might ask "Does mind exist?" Questions so framed now serve no purpose. If to serve good purpose, it has to be framed in such a manner so that the grammar of the central word is made explicit. That is, the use of the central word needs to be noted in the first instance. Questions about "the nature of mind" are abolished in favour of questions concerning "the nature of statements about the mind," a major shift of emphasis from ontological questions to linguistic ones.

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7. *ibid.*, p. 12.

The point noted here is the need to formulate the right kind of questions. Wittgenstein notes: "Not exactness and full brightness are to be first striven for, but perspicuity."[8] This is less an achievement of logical finesse. The notion of 'language-games' involves a philosophical therapy which entails taking a certain view of language and of meaning—the speaking of language as part of an activity. If one is to see the esstentially different roles superficially similar expressions play, we must keep in mind the countless kinds of language-game in which we participate, and not one only—the scientific one.

In conclusion, the later Wittgenstein's following comments appear apropos: "But how many kinds of sentence are there? Say, assertion and command—there are countless kinds: countless different kinds of use of what we call 'symbols', 'words,' 'sentences'. And this multiplicity is not something fixed, given once for all; but new types of language, new language-games, as we may say, come into existence and others become obsolete and get forgotten. (We can get a rough picture of this from changes in mathematics.)

Here the term 'language-game' is meant to bring into prominence the fact that the speaking of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life.

Review the multiplicity of language-games in the following examples, and in others:

Giving orders and obeying them
Describing the appearance of an object or giving its measurements
Constructing an object from a description (a drawing)-
Reporting an event-
Speculating about an event-
Forming and testing a hypothesis
Presenting the results of an experiment in tables and diagrams-
Making up a story; and reading it-
Play-acting-

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8. L. Wittengstein, *Zettel*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford (1969) section 464.

Singing catches-
Guessing riddles-
Making a joke; telling it-
Solving a problem in practical arithmetic
Translating from one language into another-
Asking, thanking, cursing, guessing, praying."[9]

Is this picture of language-game, upon which, for Wittgenstein everything turns, inadequate and vulnerable? Patrick Sherry argues that 'language-game' and 'form of life' are over-simple models that are too weak for complex phenomena like religions."[10] Sherry's point may have some relevance as regards any theistic religion but not the Dhamma (Buddhism) which is not a complex phenomenon in any sense. It is a simple doctrine with a clear soteriology. For that matter, for all purposes it remains outside the model envisaged by Sherry. The notion of language-games, therefore, is not an versimple model in respect of the Dhamma—Buddhism—one of the simple doctrines.

(3) Form of life—a Wittgensteinian technique

Human nature is reflected in human grammar—our ultimate linguistic practices. But, then, what is "form of life?" That "speaking of language is part of an activity"[11] a particular form of life. That if we are to see the fundamentally different roles superficially similar expressions play, we must keep in mind the innumerable actual kinds of form of life or language-using activity. The emphasis here is the acceptance of the meaning of a word as involving in exhibition the use of the word in the various language-games in which it occurs. So Wittgenstein notes: "... think of words as instruments characterized by their use..."[12] What it amounts to simply is "philosophical analysis." But, then, what is "philosophical analysis"? "Analysis" here involves the exhibition of the use of words in multifarous

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9. *Philosophical Investigation* p. 11-12.
10. Patrick Sherry, *Religion, Truth and Language Games*, Macmillan, London (1977), p. 46.
11. *Philosophical Investigations* p. 12.
12. *Blue and Brown Books* p. 67.

language-games in which they occur. The most important thing we are striving after is order and clarity. Philosophical reflections loose the knots thinkers have unknowingly put there. Although it is said that consequence of philosophy is simple; it does not follow necessarily that the method of arriving at it cannot be.

(4) 'Model': A Wittgensteinian technique

Wittgenstein notes: "...And the best that I can propose is that we should yield to the temptation to use this picture, but then investigate how the application of the picture goes."[13] Here Wittgenstein talks of 'models' ('pictures') to take the 'ontological sting' out of many notions, terms, concepts, words, which might otherwise be dismissed for absence of correspondence with facts, consistency, etc. The notion 'model', if taken in this sense, will admittedly contribute to eliminate irresistible problems that create an impulse to run up against the limits of language—giving rise to meaningless-talk or empty-talk. If an analysis of this sort can be called a method, it entails the following: preventing any ' ontological commitment' from slipping too easily into the argument. Wittgenstein notes: "Because in philosophy we handle many cases with many different methods, we have to go piece by piece, stretch by stretch, and cannot grasp everything at once. The many cross-sections which we have to grasp are like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle: they are all present, only all mixed up."[14] Elswhere he touches the point: "It is no use trying to apply force in fitting pieces together. All we should do is to look at them carefully and arrange them."[15] If we make use of this method, we take a step in the correct direction, and then we notice we have the possibility of going a distance towards complete clarity.

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13. *Philosophical Investigations* section 374.

14. *Zettel* section 447.

15. *Blue and Brown Books* p. 46.

(5) The technique of 'maching-idling'

A question, an expression, a statement, a proposition if it engages itself with nothing, then works nothing in the linguistic system which it claims to belong to. Forms of question, expression, statement, proposition, however fascinate and amaze us. That is, language drags us along with it. That philosophical notions are linguistic notions, say, 'causality', 'man', 'relation', 'extinction', 'emancipation', and so on. These notions have a compulsive character—the character of an illusion which leads one into complete darkness, confusion and obscurity. In turning from one region of thought to another, one carries over a whole set of pictures which govern much of one's thinking. The method of the natural sciences, explanation, generalization, simplification are pictures that could bewilder any one. These tendencies comprise the source of much meaningless-talk; it leads the philosopher (or any one) into complete darkness. Wittgenstein notes: "Uneasiness in philosophy, one could say, comes because we look upon philosophy in the wrong way, see it in the wrong way, as it were, that is tear it into (endless) longitudinal strips instead of into (limited) cross-sections."[16] Our bewilderment takes on its peculiar character from the attempt to think in inappropriate terms and inappropriate pictures. By way of inappropriate terms and inappropriate pictures we neither advance hypotheses nor offer explanation nor discover new matters of fact. "We are ignorant of nothing; rather we have lost our way amongst things we know. We need no discoveries but reminders."[17] Philosophical convictions grip us with the force of compulsion; we cannot conceive of the possibility of taking another course. This conviction binds us with things and prevents us from uttering the central question, "What can I do with this word?" We may note this aim in the following question as well—"What is the word's application?" (That is: What connections it admits and permits) The question seeks no more than to exhibit the actual functioning of the word. This is the only way we see our path through philosophical perpexities. The

16. *Zettel* section 447.

17. *Philosophical Investigations* section 126 f.

philosophical technique to which Wittgenstein drew attention here is known as "machine idling." By way of it, he attempts

(1) to make explicit the various functions of a word;
(2) to demolish the theory which affirms the working of a word in terms of its function of naming only.

A clear understanding of the various functions of a word entails a rejection of the theory noted at (2) above. The implications are three in number:

(i) Put restaint upon the sloughing off of conceptual associations, which means avoidance of isolating a word from the life to which it naturally belongs, in which it is used and in which alone it has meaning. An ignorance of this technique gives rise to confusions: that is, thought has got deranged. The point is noted in this way: "The confusions which occupy us arise when language is like an engine idling, not when it is doing work."[18]

(ii) Emphasis on "the conceptual family." That is, a family of notions or a scheme is brought into prominence. Outside the given conceptual scheme a notion cannot be properly understood. Transgressing the ambit entails empty-talk, which is referred to as 'sending language on holiday'. An example from epistemology will enlighten the point: 'knowledge,' 'perception,' 'belief', 'sensation', are the notions that comprise a possible conceptual family here. Emptiness or nonsense is produced by any attempt to give application to one of the above notions without reference to the other notions that form its logical background.

(iii) Drawing attention to different ways in which words function. The point being to avoid deformed language-games (shoes that are too tight!) Giving birth or development of building up is not its affair. But, then, what is its affair? Dispelling

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18. *ibid.*, section 132.

> particular confusions. The implication is a therapeutic one. We begin with a therapeutic purpose and our interest exhausts itself when the purpose is achieved. This reminds us of a general prescription for doing philosophy. Putting the word in its linguistic context and the whole statement (utterance) in its social context; and, then describe, without preconceptions what one finds, remembering, of course, that each word, each statement (utterance) makes appearance in many contexts. This exposition brings out a key aspect which is characteristic of Wittgenstein's philosophical techniques. That is, mastering of a technique. Wittgenstein comments: "To understand a sentence means to understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique."[19] As things stand, a training is implied as against, for instance, an explanation or, for that matter, declaration made with view to understanding. It boosts one's morale, specially with reference to knowing one's way about.

Wittgenstein repeatedly warns us against being led astray by superficial or spurious or fictitious similarities between certain forms of expression. But, then, how does the philosophical technique of 'training' help one to avoid these similarities? The 'training' provides us with means towards distinguishing between 'surface grammar' and 'depth grammar' of expressions, statements, utterances etc. Wittgenstein notes:

> "Perhaps the word 'describe' tricks us here. I say,
>
> 'I describe my state of mind'
> and
> 'I describe my room'.
>
> You need to call to mind the difference between the language-games."[20] The grammar of the former statement seems to

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19. *ibid.*, section 199.

20. *ibid.*, section 290.

differ in no essential respect from that of the latter; and the apparent similarity conceals significant conceptual difference. Language-games set everyone the same traps. They comprise an immense network of easily accessible wrong turnings. Distinguishing between 'surface grammar' and 'depth grammar' is something attained by way of analysis and training. It is a turn in a new direction. Once one has been turned round, one must stay turned round, wisdom-attained by way of analysis and training. Throwing dust in one's own eyes it now appears is done away with. Thoughts are at peace. Understanding which is unaccompanied by inner change is prevented. There is no machine-idling and therefore there is no irritating nonsense. That is what someone who philosophizes yearns for; and that man will be revolutionary who can revolutionize himself: you are the master of yourself.

A.D.P. KALANSURIYA

HINDU TEMPLES IN BIHAR AND ORISSA: SOME ASPECTS OF THE MANAGEMENT OF THEIR MONETARY ENDOWMENTS IN EARLY MEDIEVAL TIMES

The study of economic functions of the Hindu temple in early medieval and medieval times has received the attention of many scholars in recent years and a good number of articles covering diverse aspects of the temple economy have been published. However, the majority of these have, by and large, dealt with the functions of the south Indian temple while studies on the economic activities of the north Indian Hindu temple have been few. This disparity may possibly be due to the very nature of the data available from the two regions. Thousands of inscriptions found at south Indian temples yield a wealth of information useful for such studies and the information they offer is so rich in detail that sometimes even a few records found at a single establishment appear adequate for a comprehensive study.

In contrast, the north Indian temple offers little promise for studies of that nature. Apart from the number of inscriptions found at north Indian temples being markedly less, the information they give is too scanty for any detailed study. However, interestingly, even this limited amount of information seems to reveal that many a Hindu temple in north India played no less an important role in the general economy than their counterparts in the south.

This paper attempts to assemble and analyse a limited amount of information available on a little known but very important aspect of the economic functions of the Hindu temple in two adjoining areas of north India, Bihar and Orissa, in the early medieval times. Comprising a large section of eastern India, Bihar and Orissa are the only areas in the whole region where epigraphic and supportive literary data pertaining to the management of religious monetary endowments can be found.

Although India had a long-standing tradition of making religious benefactions, there is no definite evidence to ascertain the exact date of the earliest donations made in favour in Hindu temples. Some inscriptions of the Kṣaharāt-Kṣatrapas of western India, who ruled in the early centuries of the Christian era, refer to some grants made to gods and *brāhmaṇas*, but provide no other details.[1] From the time of the imperial Guptas, however, clear and more informative data is found in inscriptions about the nature and also the value of most grants.[2] These inscriptions, found again in western and central India, refer to several donations of land and money to a number of deities, and in effect, to the temples dedicated to those deities. From about the seventh century A.D. onwards a large number of inscriptions, generally found in almost every corner of the subcontinent, and in south India in particular, record the donation of various types of assets of economic value such as land, houses, building-sites, livestock and money.[3] Yet, the large majority of these records register the granting of land or the transfer of some fiscal rights over villages, and most of this type of grants belong to the period after the eighth century A.D.

In the whole of eastern India, only Bihar and Orissa have yielded records of monetary endowments to Hindu temples and no such records have been found in West Bengal or Bangladesh. It is also noteworthy that none of the Orissan grants recording money endowments is assignable to a period earlier than the twelfth century, and in Bihar, only three inscriptions belonging to the period prior to the twelfth century refer to money endowments. This is a very significant phenomenon in view of the fact that evidence of the donation of the other types of assets such as land and livestock is abundant throughout the early medieval period.

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1. *Epigraphia Indica* (herein after *E.I.*), VIII (1905-6) p. 82 ff.ll. 2ff.

2. J.F. Fleet (ed.) *Gupta Inscriptions, Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, London, (1888) p. 54, ll.17-19 and D.C. Sircar, *Select Inscriptions Bearing on Indian History and Civilization*, I, Calcutta (1942) p. 319, ll. 4 ff.

3. P. Niyogi, *Contributions to the Economic History of Northern India from the tenth century to the twelfth century A.D.*, Calcutta (1962) p. 287 ff.

The scarcity of records of money endowments may be attributed to the rapid decline in trade and monetary activity in many parts of northern India, particularly after the Gupta times. The thriving overseas trade that India had experienced during the pre-Gupta times gradually dwindled under the Guptas; after about the sixth century A.D. many parts of northern India saw very little overseas trade.[4] Consequently, coinage became rare and gold coins disappeared almost completely as a medium of exchange in northern India until they reappeared sometime after the tenth century. Even internal trade appeared to have suffered under these circumstances; cowree-shells and silver tokens, along with copper coins, became the most widely used medium of exchange.[5] A significant revival of India's trade with the outside world can be seen only from about the tenth century A.D.[6] and it is significant that all the Orissan inscriptions recording monetary endowments belong to this period. Hence, the relative popularity of the practice of making monetary grants for religious purposes could be directly related to the changes taking place in the field of trade during the latter part of the early medieval period.

Despite the fact that Orissa and Bihar together yielded not less than twenty-five inscriptions recording monetary endowments to Hindu temples, they are in no way comparable with the hundreds of south Indian inscriptions of the same type which contain a wealth of detailed information. Nevertheless, this limited number of records from Bihar and Orissa are useful in studying at least certain vital aspects concerning the founding and the maintenance of monetary endowments to Hindu temples in this part of the

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4. For discussions on this matter see, R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalims.*, p. 67-68 and L. Gopal, *Economic Life in Northern India, c. A.D. 700-1200*, New Delhi, (1965) p. 175 ff.

5. See V.K. Thakur , 'Economic Changes in Early Medieval India (c.A.D. 600-1200)' in *D.D. Kosambi Commemoration Volume* ed. L. Gopal, Varanasi, (1977) p. 189-91.

6. R.S. Sharma, *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, New Delhi (1983) p. 187 ff.

subcontinent, and also the manner in which the interest on these deposits were calculated - aspects not brought to light by any other source.

According to the inscriptions recording the earliest known monetary grants to religious institutions, the usual arrangement was to deposit the money with guilds of artisans of traders or similar institutions engaged in monetary activity. The interest accruing from these deposits was to be used for the performance of the intended religious function.[7] This type of endowment though intended for religious purposes, was actually a private arrangement between the donor and the guild concerned, and most probably the religious institution was not directly involved in the management of the benefaction. This method of creating endowments with guilds and similar institutions appear to have continued even in the period under review, for at least three inscriptions from Orissa refer to this type of grants. A Bhubaneswar inscription[8] of the time of king Anantavarman Codagaṅga (A.D.1114) of the Eastern Gaṅga dynasty records that a certain Viraṇḍi deposited a sum of five gold *maḍhas*[9] with eight persons described as residents of the brahmaṇa sector of the village Allataḍa, for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp at the Liṅgaraja temple at Bhubaneswar. Another instance of investing money with the residents of a village is referred to in an inscription (A.D. 1142) from the Kedareśvara temple at Bhubaneswar.[10] This record mentions that the inhabitants of the village Nagagarbha in the Paiṁda *viṣaya*, headed by the village chief Śaṇḍa, received a sum of five *maḍhas* of gold from *rajan* Pramaḍi, the younger brother of the ruling monarch, for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp. It is quite likely that the mention of the village inhabitants here is in fact a reference to the village council of a similar representative body of the village.

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7. *E.I.* VIII (1905-6) p. 78, 4 and p. 82 ll. 2-7.

8. *ibid.*, XXX (1953-54) p. 32, inscription no. 2, ll. 3-9.

9. A well known gold coin in circulation in the Eastern Ganga kingdom, which included a large part of present state of Orissa. See D.C. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, Delhi (1968) p. 65.

10. *E.I.* (1953) p. 94-95, ll. 3 ff; also see ll. 5-6.

However, one of the major and most important developments in the creation money endowments in this period is the direct involvement of the temples in the transactions, in other words, instead of money being deposited with guilds or village councils, the temples themselves began to accept money deposits on condition that the intended religious functions were performed using the interest earned on the capital. This arrangement, which was well known in the Buddhist monasteries of western India in the pre-Gupta times[11], seems to have gained wide popularity in the Hindu temples only in the post-Gupta period. What is significant in this development in accepting direct monetary grants by the temples is that it marks a major turning point in the whole approach and the nature of their involvement in economic affairs. Unlike in cases where money was deposited with non-religious bodies such as guilds and village councils, the depositing of money in the temple itself committed the institution concerned to engage itself in profit-earning pursuits to be able to pay interest on the deposits. Unfortunately, hardly any direct evidence is available either from Orissa or from Bihar as to the particular economic pursuits in which the money was invested. It is evident that some of the religious institutions were actively engaged in the cultivation of land under their control.[12] As agriculture was the mainstay of the economic system it is quite likely that the temples invested their money in agriculture.

In his study of the monetary endowments and the livestock redistribution of a Tanjore temple during the Cola period, G.W. Spencer[13] has shown that large sums of money deposited in the temple were used by its authorities to purchase livestock such as cows, ewes and she-buffaloes. These animals were then distributed among shepherds, who in turn had to supply specific quantities of ghee and milk

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11. P.V.B. Karunatilaka, 'Buddhist Monasteries in North India: Their Economic Functions in Early Medieval Times', *Kalyani: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Kelaniya*, Vols. III & IV (1984-85) p. 86.

12. *ibid.*, 98-99.

13. G.W. Spencer, 'Temple Money lending and Livestock Redistribution in early Tanjore' *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, V. (1968) p. 277-294.

to the temple. Thus this produce was the interest received by the temple on its investments. Milk and ghee were two major items in the daily offerings at Hindu temples, and ghee was also required in the preparation of food and for lighting lamps. It is evident that Hindu temples in Bihar and Orissa, too, had been endowed with bullocks, she-buffaloes, ewes etc.,[14] and presumably these institutions also had to distribute their livestock among shepherds of the area, like their counterparts in south India, and probably they also invested their money in livestock-breeding, which was no doubt a lucrative venture.

Some North Indian religious institutions, especially those in western and central India, were investing their trust funds in several other areas of economic activity. For instance, the Ahar stone inscription from Uttara Pradesh contains some interesting information as to how the temple of Kankeśvaridevi, in the city of Taṭṭhanandapura, invested its money in profitable pursuits. This inscription, which consists of several entries belonging to the period between 864-904 A.D., shows that the managing committee of the temple took out several apartments on 99 year lease with the money belonging to the temple, and that the rent collected from those houses was spent for regular worship of the deity.[15] Although we come across references to houses and building-sites owned by religious institutions in eastern India,[16] it is not certain whether all of them had been bought by the temples themselves or were mere donations by pious patrons.

It is also interesting to note that many contemporary Buddhist monasteries in eastern India, which carried similar economic responsibilities like the Hindu temples, were actively participating in several economic activities. In addition to getting their land cultivated through several means, they were also investing the funds at their disposal

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14. *Journal of the Bihar Research Society*, LII (1966) p. 63-65.

15. *E.I.*, XIX (1927-8) p. 57-62, documents, 2,4,8 and 10.

16. *ibid.*, p. 279-283 and *E.I.* XXIII (1935-6) p. 65-66.

in purchasing leases, entering into business contracts etc.[17] Therefore, it is very likely that the Hindu temple in Bihar and Orissa, too, like the contemporary Buddhist monasteries in the region and the Hindu temples in other parts of the subcontinent, invested their funds in different economic pursuits to earn interest.

The information available in some records from Bihar and Orissa is useful in understanding certain aspects of the procedure followed in the creation of and the maintenance of money endowments for religious purposes. The Markaṇḍeśvara temple inscription of the time of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga[18] for instance refers to seven persons who were witnesses to the founding of a monetary endowment at the temple. The names of the seven are given with their titles; these titles being *mudrāhasta*, *pasāpataka* or *pasupālaka* and *karaṇa*.[19] The titles of these persons indicate that they were actually officials in temple administration. The *mudrahastas* may have been the officials in charge of temple seals and the *karaṇa* must have been the temple scribe.[20] The *pasāpālaka* or *pasupālakas*[21] were a group of *brāhmaṇas* associated with Saiva temples, and the term *sammāvāji*[22] may be taken to mean another group of temple priests. The above mentioned Alagum inscription of the time of Codaganga also refers to an instance where money was handed over to the authorities or protectors (*pālanādhikārina*)[23] of the village temple, to create a monetary endowment for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp at the temple.

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17. Karunatilaka, *op.cit.*, p. 102-103.

18. *E.I.* XXXIII (1959-60) p. 185, ll. 7-9.

19. *ibid.*, ll. 3-4.

20. *Karaṇa* usually means a scribe, but in this instance, the word appears with the prefix 'srī' which seems to indicate a special status. Perhaps he was the chief scribe of the temple.

21. For interpretation of this term see, *E.I.*, XXXIII (1959-60) p. 183 and also K.C. Mishra, *The Cult of Jagannātha* Calcutta (1971) p. 224.

23. *E.I.* XXIX (1951-52), p. 47-48, l.4.

A twelfth century record from Bihar, the Gaya inscription dated in the 'lapsed reign' (*gata-rajya*) of king Govindapāla,[24] also speaks of a similar procedure. This inscription, which records a monetary grant to a *maṭha* of god Viṣṇu, mentions the names of seven witnesses, two of whom are described as servants of god Viṣṇu, meaning temple priests (*pujāharis*)[25]. The particular mention of these as servants of god Viṣṇu implies that the others were not priests of the temple though they, too, along with the other *brāhmaṇas*, were residents of a penance-grove (*tapo-vana*) probably belonging to the *maṭha*. This inscription has, in addition to the original grant, an endorsement at the end of the record, mentioning that a sum of sixteen *karaṣapaṇas* was paid as interest on the capital of sixty *karṣapaṇas*. The names of two persons who witnessed the handing over of the annual interest are also given.[26] This shows that the payment of interest as well as the founding of an endowment was done in the presence of witnesses.

The law-books of the early medieval times and the preceding period contain various laws pertaining to money-lending and interest payments between individuals but they pay little or no attention at all to similar transactions between individuals and institutions involved in accepting money-deposit for purpose of paying an interest on the capital. Nor is it possible to obtain any information from the law-books about the manner in which the temple money deposits were maintained. Therefore it is difficult to ascertain as to what particular methods were followed or by what sort of rules and regulations these money-deposits were governed. However, some data available in the donatary inscriptions are useful at least to a certain extent, in filling this obvious gap in the information found in the law-books.

The Puri Mārkāndesvara Temple inscription is one such record that provides valuable information concerning the

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24. *ibid.*, XXXV (1963-64) p. 238 l. 15.

25. For the meaning of the term see D.C. Sircar, *Indian Epigraphical Glossary*, p. 265.

26. *E.I.* XXXV (1963-64) p. 238.

manner in which religious monetary endowments established with individual financiers were maintained and administered. According to this record[27] three persons namely, Bhīmadeva, Ruda (Rudra?) and Hari, accepted some money from three temple priests (*pujāharis*) named Hari, Vandau and Vāsu, for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp at the temple of Mārkaṇḍeśvara. The inscription then goes on to say that Bhīmadeva's son Nāna, relieved himself of the obligation of maintaining the lamp by refunding the deposit. This implies that Nāna had become responsible for the deposit of money made with these three persons including his father, who are described in the record as *sādhu*. It is quite probable that Nāna became responsible for the deposit after his father's death. D.C. Sircar, who edited the inscription, thinks that the reason why the responsibility fell upon Bhīmadeva's son was that Ruda and Hari, the two persons along with whom Bhīmadeva accepted the original deposit, were either sons or brothers of Bhīmadeva. Yet, it is also possible that if the term *sādhu* used to describe the three persons can be taken to mean 'a merchant', as has been suggested by Sircar himself,[29] it is possible to argue that Bhīmadeva, Ruda and Hari were not necessarily relatives but only business partners. Perhaps, after the death of the other two, or their giving up from business for some unknown reason, the responsibility over the deposit may have fallen upon Bhīmadeva, and that responsibility in turn was passed on to his son Nāna.

However, the most important fact that emerges from the above statement in the record is that the descendants of a person or those who inherit the business interests of a person who accepted a deposit were liable to honour the agreements of that particular person. On the other hand, the fact that Nāna could relieve himself of the obligation of providing for the maintenance of the lamp by refunding

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27. *ibid.*, XXXIII (1959-60) p. 185, ll. 3-4.

28. *ibid.*,

29. D.C. Sircar, on the strength of the *Lekhāpaddati*, translates this term as 'a merchant'. See *E.I.*, XXXIII (1959-60) p. 183 and *Indian Epigraphical Glossary* p. 284 and 285.

the deposit indicates that, though the son was considered responsible for the father's business agreements, it was not obligatory on the son to continue the agreemtne indefinitely.

As the purpose of creating a monetary endowment was to ensure the performance of certain religious rites or functions using the income derived from the deposits, the duties and functions thus to be performed and the manner in which they were to be carried out are also stipulated in some records. For example, one of the Puri inscriptions of the time of Coḍagaṅga (A.D. 1114/15) stipulates that a financier (*śreṣṭhin*) who accepted a money endowment should provide as interest 200 measures (known as *karaṇḍi*) of oil every month for the maintenance of a perpetual lamp at the Markaṇḍeśvara temple.[30] It is also evident that the interest was sometimes paid in cash to the temple authorities, as is mentioned in the Gaya Inscription referred to earlier. According to this inscription the interest on the deposit made with the *maṭha* of Gaḍhadhara was actually calculated and paid in cowree-shells, which were known as *kapardaka-puraṇas* a well-known medium of exchange at the time.[31]

The Gaya inscription also furnishes us with some valuable information on the rate of interest paid on funds deposited with religious institutions. It states that a sum of sixteen *karṣapaṇas* were paid as annual interest on a sum of 50 *karṣapaṇas* deposited with the *maṭha*.[32] Thus the annual rate of interest in this instance was 32 per cent. The Bhubaneswar inscription of Pramaḍi (A.D. 1142) is another record that refers to interest payment on a religious money endowment. According to this, the inhabitants of the village (most probebly the village council) of the village of Nāgagarbha in the Paiṁḍa *viṣaya* (in Orissa) received five *maḍhas* of gold from prince Pramadi for the

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30. *E.I.* XXXIII (1959-60) p. 185, 11. 6-7.

31. For the use of *kapardakas* as a medium of exchange in the early medieval times, see R.S. Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, pp. 65-66.

32. *E.I.* XXXV (1963-4), p. 238,l.14-15.

maintenance of a perpetual lamp at the temple of Kedāreśvara.[33] It also reveals that the villagers had to pay a monthly interest of five *pādas*, being a *pāda* on each *mādha* so deposited. If the term *pāda* is taken in its literal meaning of 'a quarter', it would suggest that an amount of one and a quarter gold *mādhas* was to be paid every month as interest. Then the rate of interest appears to have been twenty five per cent per month, or 300 per cent per year. Yet, when compared with the 32 per cent annual rate of interest in the above mentioned Gaya inscription, the 300 per cent seems quite an excessive rate.

However, it is not quite clear from the Bhubaneswar inscription what was precisely meant by the word *pāda*. Though it could be taken literally to mean a quarter, it is also possible to argue that it need not necessarily mean a quarter of a gold *mādha* coin. As. D.C. Sircar[34] has argued, it can also mean a quarter of a standard silver coin or some other currency prevalent in Orissa. In fact there is evidence to believe that a coin known as *pāda* was actually in circulation in many parts of northern India during early medieval times.[35] Nevertheless, even if there existed a coin known as *pāda* in Orissa, we are as yet unable to determine its value against the Orissan gold *mādha*. On the other hand, if *pāda* could be taken to mean a quarter of a silver *mādha* coin which, according to M.M. Chakrawarthi[36] was one fifth of the value of the gold *mādha*, it shows that one and a quarter silver *mādhas* was the monthly interest, amounting to 60 per cent per year.

If the interest was 300 per cent, which is the rate calculated based on the first interpretation, it is certainly an exhorbitant rate for a religious money endowment, and even the 60 per cent is a substantially high rate. Yet, such exhorbitantly high rates of interest were not totally unknown to the ancient Indian law-givers. For instance, Kauṭilya prescribes a 60 per cent annual interest on loans given to

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33. *ibid.*, XXX (1953-4), p. 90, ii. 3-7.

34. *ibid.*, p. 92.

35. B.N. Puri, *The History of the Grujara-Pratīhāras*, Bombay (1957) p. 136.

36. cited in D.C. Sircar, *Studies in Indian Coins*, p. 65 and pp. 97 ff.

persons engaged in ordinary trade, and 120 per cent on loans given to traders who travel through jungles.[37] An excessively high rate of 240 per cent is recommended on loans made over to sea-faring merchants.[38] Yājñavalkya too, recommends similar rates on loans given to those engaged in similar business.[39]

Vijñāneśvara, the eleventh century commentator on Yājñavalkya, while approving the above rates, explains that on account of the risks involved in such trades the merchants could lose not only their capital but also their lives, in the event of a ship-wreck or on being attacked by robbers or wild beasts.[40] The early medieval mathematical treatise *Bījagaṇita* of Bhāskarācārya, though not belonging to the category of law books, refers while elucidating certain mathematical problems, to interest rates ranging from 21 to 162 per cent per annum.[41] The rates mentioned in the *Līlāvatī* of the same author vary from 36 to 60 per cent.[42] It is quite likely that these works refer to actual rates of interest prevailing at the time for, as L. Gopal[43] has rightly pointed out, it is difficult to believe that the author would have used unrealistic examples to explain mathematical problems.

Although the law-books recommend very high rates of interests on loans, the evidence from inscriptions does not seem to corroborate that information. For instance, as D. Sharma[44] has shown after a careful study of mainly donatory inscriptions from the Cāhamāna kingdom which flourished

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37. *Arthaśāstra of Kauṭilya*, III:11.
38. *ibid.*
39. *Yājñavalkyasmṛti*, II:38.
40. *Mitākṣarā on Yājñavalkya*, (ed. and tr. J.R. Gharpure, Bombay (1914 and 1936) II:38.
41. *Bījagaṇita of Bhāskarācārya*, pp. 232-248.
42. *Līlāvati of Bhāsakarācārya*, ed. H.C. Banerji, Calcutta (1893) pp. 31-37.
43. L. Gopal, *Economic Life in Northern India*, pp. 233 ff.
44. D. Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi (1959) p. 301.

in western India from tenth through twelfth centuries, the rates of interest paid on religious money endowments ranged between 30 and 33 per cent per annum. According to some tenth century Cola records the annual rates paid on religious money endowments in the Cola kingdom varied from 15 to 40 per cent.[45] A stone inscription in the Visnu temple at Ukkal in Tanjore dated in the twenty ninth regnal year of Rajaraja I, reveals that a village assembly paid 500 *kadis* of paddy per year on a deposit of 100 *kadis* of paddy.[46] Here the annual rate of interest was 50 per cent. This shows that at least in certain instances interests charged even on religious money endowments was relatively high. It is interesting to note that in the cases where the high rates of 40 and 50 per cent were paid on capital, the deposits had been made with local village assemblies. Perhaps the village assemblies were capable of paying higher interests on deposits made with them because of the more lucrative economic and administrative affairs carried out by them.[47] Thus, in the light of this evidence the 60 per cent rate of interest suggested in our interpretation of the evidence in the Bhubaneswar inscription of Pramadi would not seem abnormal. Here too the depositary was a village assembly, as was the case in the two Cola grants.

On the other hand, even the 32 per cent annual interest mentioned in the Gaya inscription is considerably higher than the rates we come across in some of the Cola records. But when compared with the average rates of between 30 and 33 per cent in the Cahamana records and 25 to 40 in many of the Cola inscriptions, the 32 per cent rate of the Gaya inscription has to be considered as a normal rate of interest for religious money deposits. However, it is also noteworthy that there is a surprisingly wide difference between the rates of interest recommended by the early medieval law-givers

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45. *South Indian Inscriptions*, III (1929) p. 241, ll. 5 ff;p. 270, ll. 25 ff. Also see R.S. Sharma, *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, pp. 199-200.

46. *South Indian Inscriptions*, III (1929) p. 9, ll. 1-3.

47. For the functions of village assemblies in south India during this period, see A. Appadorai, *Economic Conditions of South India*, I, Madras (1936) pp. 135 ff.

and those mantioned in the religious grants. One can always argue that the law-books speak only of hypothetical situations, while the inscriptions reflect the reality. Yet it must also be noted that most of the law-books often refer to interest rates in the context of their discussions on the lender-debtor relationship based on the system of money lending between individuals. Therefore the laws or conventions governing religious money deposits or the rates of interest paid on such deposits may not have been their prime concern.

Moreover, as far as money deposits are concerned, money lending is only the second step in the process of earning interest, as the depository has to lend that at a higher interest or invest the capital to earn an income greater than that which he is supposed to pay back to the depositor. Hence, the interest rates mentioned in the law-books may not necessarily reflect the interest paid on money deposits, and this would perhaps explain the difference between the excessively high rates of interest mentioned in the law-books and the relatively modest rates borne out by the evidence from inscriptions.

Thus it is clear that, although a general discussion on the rates of interest is possible, it is not an easy task to arrive at any definite conclusions in this regard, mainly for want of more precise evidence. It is also difficult to generalize on this point on the basis of the very limited amount of evidence available to us, for interest rates could vary depending on regional, historical, economic and many other considerations. The fact that even in the Cōḷa kingdom itself, from where we get relatively more data, the rates of interest varied between 5 and 40 per cent, highlights the futility of generalization.

Despite the regional variations and other circumstances that could have affected the rates of interest, it is clear, as R.S. Sharma[48] has pointed out, that throughout the early medieval period interest charged on loans in many parts of the sub-continent generally remained fairly high. Although

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48. R.S. Sharma, *Perspectives in Social and Economic History of Early India*, pp. 197 ff.

this is a conclusion based mainly on evidence from law-books, the epigraphic evidence we have cited above also points to a similar trend. The earliest inscriptional evidence for ascertaining rates of interest on religious endowments prior to the period under review are those from the Kṣaharata-kṣatrapa inscription, but their information is insufficient and inconclusive for an extensive study. Yet in several instances the rates of interest calculated on those money deposits appear to have been twelve per cent per year,[49] and this is certainly much lower than the 30 to 60 per cent rates we come across in many monetary endowments of the early medieval period. Though it is difficult to give a straight account for this phenomenon, it can still be related in broader terms to the major developments in the economic system of the time. The Kṣaharata inscriptions, which reveal a low rate of interest, belong to a period when the Indian subcontinent, the western sea-board in particular, was reaping the benefits of a thriving overseas trade.[50] Hence it may be assumed that this trade, which was heavily in favour of the Indians, generated conditions very much conducive to the rapid growth of a money economy in which money lending occupied a prominent place. In this situation it is possible that the interest rates remained low as a consequence of the large amount of money available for lending purposes and the possible competition prevailing in the field of monetary activity.

However, the gradual but rapid decline in trading activity from about the time of the Guptas paved the way for broad changes in the general economy. With the decline in trade money supply became scarce, which in turn affected every aspect of monetary activity. Thus the general decline in trade and the resulting near stagnation of large scale monetary activity must have contributed to create a greater demand for money, thereby making the interest rates rise and remain high throughout the early medieval period.

P.V.B. KARUNATILAKA

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49. *ibid.*, p. 199.

50. G.L. Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, Bombay (1966) pp. 177 ff.

BOOK REVIEWS

EARLY BUDDHISM AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

A review of Frank J. Hoffman's *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* (Motilal Baranasidas: 1987)

In *Rationality and Mind in Early Buddhism* Frank Hoffman attempts to examine the Buddhism of the Pali Nikaya literature which, in agreement with many recent scholars, he wishes to characterize as early Buddhism. Hoffman's interest in Buddhism is primarily from the point of view of the philosophy of religion, and he hopes to clarify in his work certain conceptual issues related to the stratum of Buddhist doctrine which he has demarcated as early Buddhism. Hoffman claims at the outset that his attempt is to do with respect to Buddhism what philosophers of religion have done with respect to Christianity. He believes that better understanding of early Buddhism can be facilitated if orientalists and philosophers are brought together.

In the initial remarks on the methodology followed in his work Hoffman states that his attempt is to describe the early Buddhist religious tradition using the language, the categories and systems of organization used by Buddhist adherents themselves (the emic perspective) as well as using the interpretive categories devised within contemporary philosophy (the etic perspective). He has undertaken his avowed task in five chapters, beginning with Chapter 2 of his work. Hoffman's examination should interest those who wish to understand and interpret Buddhism from the perspective of the philosophy of religion.

In Chapter 2, entitled 'Rationality and Logic,' he deals primarily with the role of logical principles in early Buddhism. He argues that although it is unrealistic to claim that early Buddhism consists of a kind of logic far superior to Aristotelian logic, as some scholars like K.N. Jayatilleke have proposed, it is not open to the charge of unintelligibility. It is a mistake, according

to him, to think that the Buddhist application of the four-fold method of predication (*catuskoti* makes Buddhism an unintelligible system. It is to be noted that the whole of Chapter 2 has little relevance to the purpose that the author sets out to achieve. For the four-fold logic is not central to the Buddhist doctrine. The Buddha applies the four-fold method of predication only in dealing with specific issues. It is not really necessary to solve the problems connected with four-fold logic in order to make good sense of the greater part of the early Buddhist teaching. Discussion regarding numerous attempts by recent scholars to interpret the four-fold logic in Buddhism may in itself be interesting, but it is doubtful whether it is central to determining the rationality or intelligibility of early Buddhism.

In discussing the four-fold logic Hoffman criticizes K.N. Jayatilleke for asserting that the Pali texts give a formal statement of the principle of contradiction. If what Hoffman intends to show here is that early Buddhism was not concerned with the formulation of a treatise on logic comparable to what Aristotle attempted, his position is justified. However, if what he intends to convey is that early Buddhism was not aware of the principle as a logical principle, and did not make conscious applications of it in its reasonings, he is mistaken. Rational men of different cultures have applied this principle in countless instances long before Aristotle reflectively formulated such principles in his treatises on logic.

The question that Hoffman raises here regarding the utterance/proposition distinction is irrelevant. Even in the Western tradition Aristotle formulated his logical principles long before the utterance/proposition distinction was explicitly recognized. Hoffman says that the Pali texts refer to a disagreement between utterances and not a logical disagreement between propositions. What does he mean by a disagreement between utterances? Is it a disagreement between the sounds one hears when the utterances are made or is it a disagreement between the appearance of the sentences written or printed on paper? There is no intelligible way of conceiving the disagreement that the Pali passage implies in this context other than as involving a disagreement between what the utterances mean.

In Chapter 3, entitled 'Rationality and Pessimism', Hoffman takes up for discussion the Buddhist concept of *dukkha*, especially with a view to refuting the interpretation that it implies a pessimistic doctrine. The author maintains that it is a mistake to regard early Buddhism as wholly pessimistic, and in that way irrational, since Buddhism admits many sources of consolation. Much of what Hoffman says in rejecting the thesis that the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* implies a pessimism is plausible. Hoffman's discussion of the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* needs to be closely examined, for it is in connection with his interpretation of this notion that he presents his principal thesis regarding the way in which early Buddhism should be understood. In his discussion of the concept of *dukkha* he makes a distinction between two senses of *dukkha*. *Dukkha*, according to him, is the more inclusive sense in which "profane *samsara* in contrast to the 'no arising' and 'no falling' characteristic of the sacred *Nibbana* is meant. He takes one sense of *dukkha* as purely descriptive (dukkha) where *dukkha* is seen as a consequence of change and where the term is used "in reference to a range of experience which is minimally that of deprivation, and which may be that of mental and/or physical pain of various sorts", while the other is taken as having a descriptive-cum-evaluative sense.

The point that Hoffman wishes to draw attention to by saying that the early Buddhist concept of *dukkha* is a descriptive-cum-evaluative one is that the peculiarly religious character of the concept depends on the evaluative element of its meaning. What we gather from what he has said in this chapter is that he is opposed to the view that Buddhism is making any factual claim about the world, which can be empirically confirmed or refuted, when it says 'all is dukkha'. Neither the Buddhist assertion 'all is *anicca*' nor the assertion that 'all is *dukkha*' should be interpreted as a scientific hypothesis which might be falsified if counter-evidence comes to light. He says: "It is, rather, part of the framework in which concepts and theories must fit if they are to be intelligible in the early Buddhist context."[1] Hoffman seems to be saying that Buddhism is

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1. p. 40.

recommending a particular evaluative perspective with regard to human experience. In doing so it is creating meaning and value in life. This is something that empirical science does not do. Empirical science is engaged in a mere descriptive and fact-stating activity. Hoffman appears to subscribe to the view that only empirical science can have a claim to genuine knowledge of matters of fact. Religion and morality are non-cognitive activities about which the question of truth or falsity cannot be raised. There is no evidence, according to Hoffman's interpretation, that could count as confirming or disconforming evidence for the Buddhist assertion 'all is *dukkha*'. It is, therefore, a distinctively religious utterance which is irrefutable. Hoffman is making an attempt here to apply to early Buddhism, although very obscurely, the neo-Wittgensteinian approach to the analysis of religious discourse. A more detailed discussion regarding the problems that can be raised in connection with the application of this method to religious discourse in general, and Buddhism in particular, will be attempted later. But at this point it is important to make a few comments on the Buddhist concept of *dukkha* with reference to what Hoffman says in Chapter 3 of his work.

The distinction between fact and value is a product of recent philosophical analysis. Most philosophers who stress this distinction are inclined to give non-cognitivist interpretations of evaluative discourse. In terms of this interpretation there cannot be truth or falsity in the sphere of values. Consequently, there cannot be knowledge either. Early Buddhism explicitly makes the claim that what is right and wrong, or good and bad can be known. It also shows no hesitation in considering matters relating to *sukha* and *dukkha* as knowable. According to Buddhism one can make errors of judgment regarding what is *sukha* and *dukkha*. To see some state of affairs which involves *dukkha* as one which involves *sukha* is one of the ways in which man's perception, belief and thinking can be perverted.[2] Hoffman would admit all this but contend that truth or falsity does not apply to discussions regarding *sukha* and *dukkha*, for the subject matter of such

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2. *Anguttaranikāya* (Pali Text Society, London) vol. 2. p. 52.

discussions is non-factual and evaluative. Hoffman is committed to the logical positivist and narrow empiricist theory of what can conceivably be true or false.

Dukkha in Buddhist usage is a description that applies to the experience of sentient beings and it is the Buddhist contention that all empirical phenomena involve *dukkha*, if they are approached with an attitude of attachment and clinging. The relation between the transient nature of things (*anicca*) and the consequent unsatisfactoriness is said to be contingent upon man's psychological attitude towards things which are *anicca*. Buddhism takes the stand that the seeming pleasures of the ordinary person of uncultivated mind (*abhāvita-citta*) are *dukkha* from the perspective of the enlightened person who is experientially aware of peace, inner tranquility and bliss, free from the anxieties, cravings, and thirsts involved in the life of the person yearning for the pleasures of sensuous enjoyments. From the Buddhist point of view, knowing that all compounded things are associated with *dukkha* (*sabbe saṅkhārā dukkhā*) involves the cultivation of a person's "spiritual sensibility".

According to the *Māgandhiyasutta* of the *Majjhima-nikāya*, a person who has transcended the life of sensuous enjoyment and has developed the cankerless state of mind through the course of training consisting of the eight-fold path knows what really is *sukha* or *dukkha*. Hoffman is right in pointing out that the Buddhist statement 'all is *dukkha*' is not to be looked upon as a scientific hypothesis to be confirmed or refuted by following the procedures adopted in empirical science. But the question remains as to whether he is also right in saying that no cognitive claim is made in Buddhism in saying 'one knows as it really is (*yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti*) that material form (*rūpa*) etc. is *dukkha*'.

The question whether *dukkha* is a fact or value is irrelevant to early Buddhism. However, under no circumstance would Buddhism be prepared to deny that *dukkha* and *sukha* are matters open to human knowledge and experience. Hoffman sees only one possibility here. He appears to believe that, since such inquiries are not the subject matter of empirical science, and Buddhism does not follow

the procedure laid down in the conventional methodology of empirical science, Buddhist statements about *sukha* and *dukkha* cannot convey any significant information. Hoffman is right to the extent that he denies that Buddhism subscribes to the methodological procedures laid down in the empirical sciences. But he is wrong in adopting the scientistic and narrow empiricist stand on what could conceivably be of cognitive significance.

The narrow empiricist account of the concept of knowledge suffers serious limitations. This is why it has denied cognitivity to any statement which falls outside the strictly empirical and deductive sciences. It denies cognitivity and truth in evaluative spheres such as ethics and aesthetics, and in the sphere of religion. Hoffman believes that this denial is applicable to Buddhism as well. For, according to him, the legitimate sphere of discourse to which Buddhism belongs is the sphere of the religious.

The empiricist account of knowledge suffers from the serious draw-back that, according to this account, human knowledge is a consequence of man's functioning as a passive receiver of impressions from the sensible world. Kantian epistemology has posed a serious challenge to the narrow empiricist position, emphasizing the role that man as the subject plays in the construction of human knowledge. It is possible to go even further than Kant in this matter and say that, in a sense, what man knows is dependent, partly on his needs and purposes and is not determined purely on what is 'given', or as the empiricists thought, the deliverances of the senses. Even the knowledge contained in the empirical sciences can be explained in these terms. For, the methodology adopted in the empirical sciences is also determined by certain needs and purposes on which there is agreement among the scientific community.

Such an approach to human knowledge would not set narrow limits to what can be known. It leaves open the possibility of new avenues of human knowledge by setting out new human purposes and needs, and it may well be the case that for such purposes and needs a special training of the human faculties is called for. To illustrate this

one may take the example of men who have cultivated aesthetic sensibility and are trained to talk about the aesthetic qualities of a painting and agree that they can perceive movement and life in it. They are capable of going beyond the raw given and seeing a world of greater richness and beauty as a consequence of cultivating an innate capacity that they commonly possess. The narrow empiricist might say that this does not amount to knowledge, or that people who talk about aesthetic qualities are merely using prescriptive or emotive language.

Early Buddhism speaks of a happiness (*sukha*) attainable by the eradication of certain deep-rooted psychological traits described as *āsava* (intoxicants). It prescribes a practical way to achieve this, and gives an introspectively observable and behaviourally testable characterization of the nature of the transformed personality that undergoes this discipline. It calls the knowledge that is developed by the person who effects this transformation "the knowledge of the eradication of intoxicants" (*āsavakkhayañāna*) or the knowledge and insight into emancipation from suffering (*vimuttiñāṇadassana*). The needs and purposes that such knowledge serves are very different from those that empirical science is meant to serve. Therefore concepts such as 'evidence' and 'verification' play a different role here. But it is unreasonable to argue that there is no sense in which 'evidence' and 'verification' apply to the truths that Buddhism claims to know. Such an argument only exposes one's bondage to the narrow empiricist epistemology which results in the illegitimate restriction of cognitivity to the narrowly circumscribed area of the formal and empirical sciences.

One of the central assumptions that repeatedly comes to the surface in Hoffman's work is that early Buddhism, though non-theistic in outlook, is exclusively a religion. Hoffman insists that "the creation of meaning and value is integral to the conception of seeing the world with Buddhist eyes."[3] Hoffman says: "Science explains by

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3. p. 43.

working with hypothesis and test and proceeds towards the construction of general theories. Like the Buddhist causal formulas, scientific hypotheses attempt to explain rather than simply describe. But early Buddhism, unlike science, does not modify its views by taking into account the results of hypothesis and test. Nor does it offer hypothesis as a first step toward a theory which gives a rationally more comprehensive and better grounded explanation."[4] It is not possible to dispute the fact that early Buddhism was not engaged in a strictly scientific enterprise, following the strict procedure of scientific discovery that is followed by the contemporary scientist. To this extent what Hoffman says is acceptable. The early Buddhist attempt was to solve a specific problem, which according to it, has universal relevance. The problem stated in terms of the Buddhist notion of *dukkha* is the unsatisfactoriness of man's unenlightened condition. It offers a causal explanation for this, an explanation not in terms of supernatural or unintelligible forces but in terms of the psychology of man himself, and it offers also a path to get rid of this unsatisfactoriness, which is again in terms of a certain moral and psychological transformation of man. From the standpoint of early Buddhism the causal law explaining the arising of the problem as well as the causal law explaining the resolution of the problem has been and will be repeatedly confirmed in human experience. It is this feature of early Buddhism that has tempted some interpreters of it to contrast it with theistic religion and see an affinity with the scientific approach.

In Chapter 4 Hoffman examines the early Buddhist doctrine of rebirth. According to Hoffman, the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth, if understood correctly, confirms the view that early Buddhism is exclusively a religious system, containing doctrines which are neither true nor false.

Hoffman's treatment of the doctrine of rebirth in Chapter 4 is interesting in that it raises some issues of philosophical significance. His interpretation of the

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4. p. 42.

Buddhist position regarding the concept of an *ātman* and its relation to the rebirth doctrine is plausible. He is right in saying that there is no theoretical interest in rebirth shown in the Pali canonical texts. The mechanics of rebirth are not theoretically worked out. Hoffman rightly points out that early Buddhism does not hold that the identity of a person across lives is incompatible with the absence of an enduring and indestructible soul entity. He believes that early Buddhism does not become inconsistent or unintelligible as a consequence of holding, at the same time, that there is rebirth and that there is no soul which is reborn. The early Buddhist notion of moral responsibility can hold despite its denial of a permanent *ātman*.

According to the author, two important philosophical questions can be raised in connection with the doctrine of rebirth: (1) Is rebirth an empirical hypothesis? (2) Are there any criteria in early Buddhism for reidentifying a person across lives? It is the author's belief that answering these questions could clarify the conceptual status of the Buddhist doctrine of rebirth.

With regard to the second question, Hoffman examines several solutions offered by Buddhist scholars for the problem of reidentification of persons across lives. In this connection he takes up for fairly detailed discussion the concept of a *gandhabba* and the associated issues regarding the possibility of an intermediate existence (*antarābhava*). Hoffman believes that later explanations of the rebirth link in terms of these concepts are not fully compatible with or justified by the early canonical position.

Leaving aside questions about the specifically Buddhist explanations regarding rebirth, on page 70 Hoffman makes a philosophically significant point. He points out that the issue of the conceivability of an afterlife is separate from the issue of whether it is factually the case that there is an afterlife. It is important to distinguish between these two issues, for the former is an issue which has to be examined purely at an *a priori* and conceptual level, and the latter, one to be settled at the empirical level. The relevance of the empirical question depends on the solution of the *a priori* question.

In order to test, empirically, whether a person has survived his bodily death, it is necessary to know what counts as evidence for such survival. This is connected with the question of the nature of a person. If bodily identity is a necessary condition for personal identity, then identity of a person across lives seems impossible.

Hoffman's discussion of these issues at this point appears confused. Discussing the problem of the condition for the meaningfulness of talk of 'the same person across lives', Hoffman says that memory will not work as a criterion. He says: "It is absent from all but an extremely tiny minority of cases, except in cultures where there is widespread belief in some form of reincarnation. Even there the documented evidence is scanty. As a matter of empirical fact, then, it is dubious that there are any such memories".[5] The confusion becomes quite obvious at this point. The meaningfulness of talk about 'the same person across lives' does not depend on the empirical truth of putative memory claims. The real problem here is whether the concept of memory is meaningful in this context. Nor does it require that "reincarnation occurs in everyone's case". The conceptual question is an *a priori* one of determining whether under certain circumstances in which certain specified facts obtain, it is meaningful to talk about the same person surviving his bodily death or a person having *memories* of a past life. Hoffman's point that Stevenson's cases of reincarnation can be explained by the alternative hypothesis of telepathy is irrelevant. For, the question whether it is telepathy or something else is itself an empirical question which cannot be settled *a priori*. Two rival hypothesis can even be formulated only if each hypothesis can meaningfully be stated.

Early Buddhism has not, at any point, gone into the philosophical question of the conceivability of survival after death. It has tacitly assumed this. It was not the *a priori* and conceptual question whether our concept of a person allows the possibility of talking about the same person across lives that early Buddhism has attempted to answer but the epistemological question as to how knowledge of a person's survival after death can be obtained.

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5. p. 72.

According to the Pali canon the materialists of the Buddha's time are said to have rejected the doctrine of survival on epistemological grounds. In such instances the Buddhist defence appears to have been based primarily on appeal to *abhinnā* (supercognition). What the Buddhist claimed was that in the case of one type of *abhinnā*, cultivated through mind-training one acquires the ability to retrace memories which go beyond the past experiences belonging to the present life-span of a person. Of course, the question can be raised whether these putative memories are memories at all, or are mere fantasies. On the one hand, to say that they must be fantasies because they go beyond the independently and empirically testable past experiences of the person belonging to his present existence as a person possessing the body that he now possesses, is question-begging. On the other hand, to make the immediate judgment that they are memories of a past existence, purely on the ground that they seem to be memories to a particular subject, is also implausible.

Contemporary philosophical discussions on the problem of reidentification of person recognize the possibility of two competing answers towards its solution. One answer is that the criterion of the identity of a person is the identity of the body which he has, and the other is that it is the set of memories which he has. Although early Buddhism does not go into the solution of philosophical questions such as which out of these two criteria is both necessary and sufficient for identity, or which is more fundamental, it seems to tacitly allow the possibility to identity of a person through memory in the absence of the criterion of the same spatio-temporally continuous body. The philosophical question that can be raised in this connection is whether this makes sense. In Hoffman's discussion of the issue he concludes that it does not make sense, but the reasoning by which he comes to this conclusion is confused. He has to go into the relevant conceptual issues to prove his point.

Hoffman says: "... the fact that what early Buddhism does or might consistently say about the problem of the meaning of 'the same person' across lives amounts to nought is understandable in terms of the texts treating 'there is

rebirth' as part of the conceptual background of early Buddhism".[6] He suggests that rebirth may be viewed as part of the 'background' against which other beliefs in early Buddhism are seen as true by believers. He finds fault with researchers like Ian Stevenson for considering rebirth to be an empirical theory which can be tested by gathering data. It is important to note that Stevenson is not concerned with verifying the Buddhist theory of rebirth at all, but is impelled by the nature of the parapsychological phenomena he has confronted in his own psychological researches, to provide an explanation of those phenomena in terms of what he thinks is the most reasonable hypothesis to explain them. Stevenson is not deterred by *a priori* arguments which some philosophers adduce against the meaningfulness of an identity across lives. For, their arguments reflect the linguistic prejudices based on the current materialistic ontology. Hoffman's arguments do not establish the point that rebirth should be confined to the sphere of the so-called religious concepts and should be excluded from the sphere of the factually true or false if it can be tested as a possible hypothesis on the basis of rigorous scientific procedures.

In Chapter 5, entitled 'Mind and Verification', Hoffman attempts to develop his critique of what he calls 'the Buddhist empiricism thesis', by examining the early Buddhist concepts of *saddhā* and *abhinna*. He finds fault with K.N. Jayatilleke for maintaining a distinction between rational faith (*ākāravatī saddhā*) and baseless faith (*amūlikā saddhā*) leading to a "reductionist account in terms of propositional belief. According to him, Jayatileke is searching for a basic, general meaning of *saddhā* as cognitive. However, what Jayatilleke has attempted to show is that for Buddhism *saddhā* is significant only as a starting point in the progression of the disciple. *Saddhā* alone is not sufficient. It has to be finally replaced by, or culminate in, personal knowledge. A close examination of the canonical literature shows that Jayatilleke was justified in highlighting the fact that early Buddhism disapproved of *saddhā* on a purely emotive basis, without an attempt to balance one's emotion with inquiry and under-

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6. p. 76.

standing. Jayatilleke's conclusions are based on a thorough examination of the early Buddhist attitude towards *saddhā* expressed in suttas such as *Caṅkīsutta*[7] and *Vīmaṃsakasutta*[8].

Hoffman hopes to refute Jayatilleke's position on the flimsiest of evidence, quoting out of context a line from *Majjhimanikaya* translated as "If faith is born, then he approaches". There is nothing in the passage quoted to suggest that the faith referred to here is not consequent to some initial inquiry. Even if Jayatilleke is open to the objection that he sought to explain all instances of Buddhist *saddhā* on a cognitive footing, this does not support the point that Hoffman wants to establish. For, it is undeniable that early Buddhism does not expect to base truth claims on the subjective conviction associated with *saddhā*. The *Caṅkīsutta* expresses quite explicitly the Buddhist position that the strength of one's faith or confidence (*saddhā*) is no guarantee that what is thought to be true is in fact true. For, according to this sutta, what one holds very firmly on the basis of faith may turn out to be false and empty (*susaddahitaṃ yeva hoti, taṃ ca hoti rittaṃ tucchaṃ musa*). Perhaps it is Hoffman's over-enthusiasm to conveniently classify early Buddhism with religious belief, which according to his interpretation needs no empirical confirmation, that has prompted him to overlook the implications of such canonical suttas. Hoffman himself appears to suffer from what Wittgenstein calls "craving for generality", although he accuses Jayatilleke of this.

Even if Hoffman's point that the early Buddhist concept of faith cannot be reduced to a single cognitive use is admitted, it is not clear how this is related to what he wants to prove. For, he cannot deny that early Buddhism does not approve of faith (*saddhā*) as an end in itself. According to early Buddhism, when one says: "I have faith in P" it does not imply that P is true, whereas when one says: "I know P" it implies that P is true, provided one is making a valid knowledge claim. Faith is not considered to be equivalent to knowledge. Therefore,

7. *Majjhimanikāya* (PTS, London) vol. 2, p. 164.

8. *ibid.* vol. 1. p. 317.

Buddhism insists that there must be a point at which one can assert without dependence on faith, (*aññatrava saddhaya*) "I know this, I see this" (*aham etaṃ jānāmi, aham etaṃ passami*). Jayatilleke has amply drawn attention to these aspects of the Buddhist attitude towards *saddhā*, although Hoffman has not cared to take Jayatilleke's exhaustive analysis of the early Buddhist scriptures into account. Jayatilleke's position that the kind of faith valued in Buddhism is only that which is based on inquiry and understanding and that ultimately even that faith is insufficient, and has to be replaced by personal knowledge, is justified by the early canonical texts.

In the discussion of the Buddhist concept of *abhinnā* Hoffman argues against the interpretation that *abhinnā* stands for any significant cognitive experience through which facts about reality can be known or verified. Hoffman commits a serious error in his interpretation of the Pali term *sacchikaraṇiyo*, by distorting the etymological meaning of the term to suit his own preconceptions. Hoffman erroneously breaks up the Pali term *sacchikatvā* into *sacca+katvā* saying *sacca* means 'true' or 'correct', and *katvā* means 'made' or 'established'. The actual etymological derivation of *sacchi* is from *sa* meaning 'one's own' and *aksi* meaning 'eye'. The term *sacchikatvā* means having seen or witnessed with one's own eyes, and it is used in Pali to indicate verification of a fact in the light of one's own personal experience. In this instance too, as in Chapter 2, Hoffman reverts to his irrelevant distinction between utterance and proposition. It is a strange thesis indeed that early Buddhism only made utterances, but did not state any facts or mean anything by those utterances in the propositional sense. Can one persist in holding such a position seriously?

In Chapter 5 Hoffman seems satisfied that he has "examined and rejected" the view that *abhinnā* can be interpreted as the epistemological basis of early Buddhism on both internal textual and external philosophical grounds. However, his arguments are not convincing at all. The textual evidence is unmistakeably in favour of saying that some of the *abhinnā* experiences are claimed to be cognitive experiences. *Dibbasota* and *dibbacakkhu*, for instance, are claimed to be para-normal faculties by which

one can have access to the same visual and auditory data which are common to ordinary human audition and vision as well. Everything in the Buddhist texts suggests that they have to be taken that way, and not according to the far-fetched analogies which Hoffman suggests between the "Damascus road experience" and the "Neraṅjarā river experience".[9]

It is to be noted that the content of the knowledge claimed through *abhinnā* experience does not go beyond the spheres of the six senses admitted in Buddhism. With the exception of *iddhividha*, which is described as a super-normal ability to perform certain acts, the content of the other *abhinna* fall within the sphere of the data of the ordinary senses. *Dibbacakkhu* is claimed to give visual data, *dibbasota* auditory data, *pubbenivasanussati* memory experiences, *cetopariya* access into the thought processes of others, and *asavakkhaya* awareness of the cankerless condition of one's own mind. The implication is that the difference between *abhinnā* and ordinary perceptual experience consists, not in the content of what is known, but in the way things are known.

One may, of course, contend that there is no evidence that human beings do, spontaneously or by a special mode of training, exercise such faculties of knowing. But this is an empirical question which has a bearing on the acceptability of the early Buddhist claim that it is possible to cultivate such a mode of knowing. To deny that early Buddhist texts make that claim is to misrepresent the early Buddhist position.

Hoffman expresses his disagreement with the view that early Buddhism can be described from an epistemological point of view as an empiricism. There is good reason, as we have already pointed out, to agree with Hoffman regarding this point. Classical Western empiricism involves an epistemological thesis regarding the origin of our ideas which are supposed to supply the raw material of human knowledge. Unlike the empiricists and rationalists of the Western philosophical tradition, Buddhism recognizes that there could be different levels and varieties of cognitive activity, fulfilling various human needs and

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9. p. 83 f.

purposes. Empiricism, as much as rationalism, attempts to subsume all human knowledge under a single paradigm. While admitting with Hoffman that it is a mistake to look upon early Buddhism as consisting of a set of propositions which are on the same level as those found in the empirical sciences, it should be pointed out that human knowledge need not be confined to the sphere of the empirical sciences.

Although the establishment of truths in Buddhism cannot be said to be based on the strict procedural rules of empirical science, it is erroneous to argue, as Hoffman does, that there is no propositional knowledge contained in Buddhism which could conceivably stand the test of scientific inquiry. It is possible to argue that early Buddhism contains numerous assertions which are intended to be factual assertions. It is true that in many instances the factual element is concealed in the mytho-poetic form in which it is presented, but this is not always the case. There are enough instances in which psychological assertions are made in a straightforward way without bringing in any poetical or mythical embellishment. It is relevant here to draw attention to the early Buddhist description of the four *jhānas* or states of meditative rapture. These, however, are not peculiar to the Buddhist tradition, for they were the common heritage of Indian spiritual disciplines, which accepted the efficacy of *yoga* as a method of mind culture. The distinctive feature of Buddhism is that it described these *jhāna* states purely in psychological terms without bringing in mystical or supernatural explanations for them. The *jhānas* for instance are described as follows*

> "Having got rid of sensuous desires and unskilled states of mind he attains and abides in the first rapture, consisting of the joy and happiness born of solitude and associated with initial and sustained thought.
>
> Having calmed down initial and sustained thought, he attains and abides in the second rapture, consisting of the joy and happiness born of mental composure resulting from one-pointedness of mind, free from initial and sustained thought, leading to the purity of the inner self."[10]

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10. *Dighanikāya* (PTS, London) vol. 1. p. 73-74.

The above descriptions refer mainly to psychological states, thought activity, feelings and emotions, which are said to be effectively transformed by the mental discipline undertaken by the trainee.

Early Buddhism makes an explicit claim to verifiability with regard to the gradual stages of psychological transformation effected by following a specific method of mental training. This process of psychological transformation is said to reach its culmination in the attainment of the *abhinna* described as *āsavakkhayañāna*, (the knowledge of the destruction of intoxicants). It is equivalent to the knowledge of *nibbāna* as defined in Buddhism. Early Buddhism admits that a person can cultivate his awareness through the training of mindfulness to observe introspectively the dispositions of his own mind. Accordingly, when the mind is completely free from the dispositions described as *lobha* (lust), *dosa* (hatred) and *moha* (delusion), it is possible to observe this introspectively. However, Buddhism does not leave it entirely to the conviction of the person who makes such an introspective claim. For, according to the *Vīmamsakasutta*, such a claim is open to rigorous testing by an external observer, to whom only ordinary sense perception is available to carry out such testing.

In the *Vīmaṃsakasutta* the Buddha invites anyone who wishes to test his own claim to be an enlightened person, a person who is no longer affected by *lobha*, *dosa* and *moha*, to apply a procedure of rigourous behavioural tests, observing his bodily behaviour with one's eyes and his verbal behaviour with one's ears to determine whether he satisfies the criteria for being called a man free from lust, hatred and delusion. This suggests that there is no need to mystify even the highest goal of early Buddhism, described as *sambodhi* or *nibbāna*, as a metaphysical Being transcending empirical observation.

Early Buddhism claims to adopt a course of behavioural and psychological training (*sikkha*), involving voluntary restraint and redirection of bodily, verbal and mental behaviour, which is believed to lead to the effective transformation of the dispositional traits of man. If such transformation does actually occur, it should be describable,

and such descriptions could very well be descriptions of psychological fact. There is no *a priori* reason to exclude such descriptions from the sphere of the factual. It has also been revealed to some extent in recent investigations that there are even observable physical co-relates of the psychological transformation effected through meditative training of the mind. Is it reasonable to say that all claims related to such matters belong to a peculiar category called religious claims which are neither true nor false?

Hoffman's interpretations of Buddhist doctrines have been largely determined by recent philosophical inquiries into what philosophers call the problems concerning religious language. In the present century the philosophical method followed by the most influential school of philosophy in the Western world, which came to be known as linguistic analysis, considered inquiry into the variety of ways in which language is and can be used in numerous areas of discourse as the key to the solution of philosophical puszles and the attainment of philosophical clarity. This method of philosophical inquiry, popularized largely through the influence of Wittgenstein's later philosophy, has been considered by neo-Wittgensteinian philosophers to be applicable in the area of religious discourse as well. The result of the application of this method in the inquiry into the logic of religious discourse is the theory that distinctively religious utterances are not instances of the cognitive use of language.

Hoffman appears to suggest that the fundamental teachings of early Buddhism belong to what can be described as the use of distinctively religious language. By this Hoffman overlooks numerous teachings of Buddhism, which have a psychological and/or sociological significance. A great many of the statements made in early Buddhism in its applications of the causal method of explanation can plainly be seen to be of the type that may or may not be confirmed by observable evidence. Early Buddhism, for instance, presents a theory which explains the nature of social conflict, tracing social conflict partly to psychological responses such as attachment and repulsion, envy and selfishness. It is not without reason that some researchers, who have an interest in psychology, believe

that there is something of interest to the psychologist to be found in the teachings of Buddhism. Hoffman's interpretation of Buddhism proposes to exclude such approaches to the study of Buddhism by pinning it down to an artificially or externally imposed label called religious language on the body of the Buddhist teachings.

Early Buddhism can be observed to have adopted a variety of methods of discourse in the scriptural exposition of its doctrines. There are instances in which it made use of myths, legends, stories and anecdotes in order to expound a moral principle or what it considered to be a fact about reality. There is no doubt that it did not exclusively adhere to a method of discourse which in contemporary terminology can be called descriptive or scientific. But the conclusion that it contains no more than an emotive or non-cognitive use of language or a language of moral commitment, or an autonomous language game consisting of its own internal criteria determining what is properly to be said is utterly unacceptable. Hoffman does not pay attention to the wide variety of "language games" which early Buddhism appears to have played.

The non-cognitivist analysis of religious language has been proposed primarily with reference to theistic religion and especially in relation to the Judaic-Christian faith. Even in this area of its application questions can be raised about its reasonableness. As John Hick argues, we cannot doubt that utterances about God within the Judaic-Christian faith have always been meant by those who made them operate as cognitive discourse.[11] Even the present-day believer in theistic religion has the conviction that he is not merely engaged in a particular form of life within which talk about God makes sense, but that he is making serious claims about reality. It is one thing to say that religious language does in fact have a non-cognitive logical structure and another to recommend that it should have such a structure. As Hick quite rightly points out: "...the non-cognitivist is not offering an objective analysis of the language of faith as living speech, but is instead recommending a quite new use of it. For the non-cognitivist theories are not descriptive but radically revisionary. They are not accounts of the mean-

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11. *God and the Universe of Faiths* (Macmillan 1973) p.8.

ing of religious language as the speech of actual religious communities, but proposals about the meaning that it ought to be given in the future".

What Hick says about theistic Christianity applies with greater force to non-theistic early Buddhism. There is no justification whatsoever for applying the non-cognitivist analysis to understand or explain the fundamental tenets of early Buddhism. With regard to doctrines such as rebirth and *karma*, the principle of dependent co-origination, the problem of *dukkha*, the efficacy and experiential validity of the path and the ultimate goal of freedom from cankers or *nibbāna*, the non-cognitivist has no grounds to maintain that the Buddha or the disciples of the Buddha intended these to be doctrines which have a role only within the confines of the religious form of life that they were prepared to accept. Instead the Buddha and his disciples seriously believed that these were facts about the world. The moral commitments are thought to be derived from these beliefs, but not the other way round, as the non-cognitivist suggests.

Hoffman's thesis that distinctively religious utterances are irrefutable leads to the consequence that all religious claims are fictional. Religions can and do make claims which may be empirically true or false. Suppose that there is a religion R, which agrees in all respects with Hoffman's definition of religion, and it contains as quite central to its system of religious belief that the world will come to an end 10 years hence. Is such a belief to be conceived as irrefutable? Those who genuinely subscribe to a religious ideology do so because they sincerely expect that experiential confirmation of the world view presented in the religion will sooner or later be forthcoming. No reasonable man will persist in holding beliefs about the nature of himself and the world which he knows to be obviously incoherent with human experience.

The presupposition involved in the non-cognitivist stand is the conviction that the paradigm of all genuine cognitive activity is exclusively associated with empirical science. In saying that there cannot be truth or falsity in the Buddhist or Christian teachings he is committing himself to the scientistic approach to what could conceiva-

bly be true or false. He is not willing to grant that early Buddhism, Christianity, and science could conceivably be competetors in the field of human knowledge. His conviction is that only what strictly and rigorously follows the methods of science can have a claim to genuine knowledge about matters of fact. This line of thinking, which was initially promoted with great zeal by the philosophers of the Logical Positivist school, expressed mere contempt for what they considered to fall outside science. For them religion was nonsense. The neo-Wittgensteinians, however, attempt to salvage religion by saying that religious statements have meaning. They attempt to make religious statements meaningful only by making them non-competitors in the field of truth. This is not a consequence that most people genuinely committed to a religious belief are likely to accept.

Hoffman examines in the last chapter the sense in which *amata* (immortality) applies to the ultimate attainment of Buddhism. He concludes that there is in early Buddhism a notion of eternal life, although that notion is different from the notion of an endless life. He believes that there is good reason on textual grounds to maintain a distinction between *nibbana* and *parinibbana*. Although one may doubt the validity of such a distinction as far as the use of the term *parinibbana* in the early canonical suttas is concerned, one can agree with Hoffman that Buddhism makes a distinction between *nibbana* before the dissolution of the aggregates and *nibbana* after the dissolution of the aggregates. Hoffman rejects the 'transcendentalist' interpretation of *nibbana* after the dissolution of the aggregates, while maintaining that there is a sense in which, even before the dissolution of the aggregates *nibbana* is describable as eternal life.

Hoffman shows concern here for interpreting Buddhism in terms of what it could conceivably maintain in terms of life, whereas the Buddhist use of *amata* draws attention primarily to the overcoming of death. On a careful interpretation of the early Buddhist scriptures, it is highly improbable that there is room to interpret the Buddhist notion of *amata* other than as the conquest of repeated death, by eliminating the conditions that bring about repeated becoming (*punabbhava*). Hoffman's use of the expression "eternal life" as an explanation of the term

amata seems inappropriate in the context of Buddhism, although the sense which he gives to "eternal life" is unobjectionable.

Hoffman insists that the main objective of his study is better understanding of early Buddhism. Going through the work one may seriously doubt whether he has achieved this. The thesis that early Buddhism is exclusively a religion, coupled with the non-cognitivist thesis regarding the nature and function of religious language, that religious utterances are irrefutable, gives rise to misunderstanding not only of Buddhism but also of religion in general. Hoffman does not pay attention at all to what is philosophically or psychologically significant in early Buddhism. 'Religion' is a term alien to the Buddhist tradition, as much as 'philosophy' and 'science' are. But the complex variety of subject-matter contained in the early Buddhist teachings is capable of kindling the interest of those engaged in any of the activities designated by those terms. Hoffman, however, is content with his generalization that Buddhism is religious discourse, and attempts to impose a narrow contemporary perspective upon it.

P.D. PREMASIRI

A Survey of Sinhala Christian Hymns in Sri Lanka

by Sunil Ariyaratne. Published by Supasan Educational Services (Publications) Ltd. Colombo. 1987; 224 pages; price not quoted.

This book by Dr. Sunil Ariyaratna, Lecturer in Sinhala Studies, University of Sri Jayawardhanapura, Sri Lanka, is published in Sinhala, and bears the title *Carol Pasam Kantaru*. It is the first serious and comprehensive academic study of the religious music of the Christians of Sri Lanka and satisfies a long-felt need.

Himself a Buddhist, Ariyaratna has approached his subject with the enthusiasm as well as the impartiality and detachment of an outside observer, free for the most part from sectarian or other bias that a Christian might run the risk of entertaining. His Buddhist background has also led Ariyaratna to apply with success analogies from Buddhist usage in order to obtain a deeper and clearer insight into concepts peculiar to Christianity.

Before taking up his subject Ariyaratna introduces his readers briefly to Christianity and to its propagation in Sri Lanka and also to the Bible and the song-literature of the Judeo-Christian tradition (ch.1). Two further chapters (2 and 3) are devoted to an analysis of psalmody and the Biblical songs of love and lamentation. The author has meticulously sifted the evidence for the use of psalms in Sri Lanka through the centuries, beginning with the first printed and notated Sinhala and Tamil hymn books of 1755 (pp. 35-37).

Ariyaratna has devoted special attention to problems of indigenization and inculturization. The golden age of indigenization in Sri Lanka was the period of the Oratorian fathers, Joseph Vaz and Jacome Gonsalvez. It was in their time that coconut-oil came to be used for the church lamp, and tender coconut leave (*gokkola*) for the Palm Sunday ceremony. Ariyaratna correctly points out that in this manner Sri Lanka had anticipated by several centuries the recommendations of Vatican II regarding inculturization (p. 18 f.). He arrives at a fair estimate of the

contributions made in this respect, especially in the field of Christian music, by Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez in the 18th century and by Fr. Mercellene Jayakody in the 20th. The contributions of these two giant figures cover the entire range of Sinhala Christian music, and their achievements in all three branches under consideration, viz. carol, *pasam* and *kantāru*, are duly appreciated.

The author draws our attention to the contribution that Buddhism has made towards the indigenization of Christian culture in Sri Lanka. To take one example, he points out that the Christian traditions of the people of Vahakotte (with their use of drums during church ceremonies, invocation of the Trinity at the commencement of agricultural activities, their *pasam* melodies strongly reminiscent of Sinhala folk-song etc.) have been conditioned by the Sinhala-Buddhist surroundings in which these Christians have lived for such a long time (p.138 f.).

On the other hand, Christian observances in their turn have exercised a considerable influence on popular Buddhist traditions of Sri Lanka. Like many previous scholars the author affirms the impact of *pasam* singing on the chanting of the *Vessantara Jātaka* at times of bereavement, and of Christmas carols on Vesak devotional songs.

Two appendices are devoted to the detailed treatment of these two interesting phenomena. The impact of church melodies on the music of the *nādagam* or folk opera is also highlighted.

In his account of the Christmas carol (ch.4), after discussing Portuguese and Dutch antecedents, Ariyaratna traces the origin of the Sinhala carol to the *Mangala Geetaya* (1730) of Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez. After Fr. Gonsalvez the Sinhala carol entered a period of decadence; inarticulate lyrics were forced into French, Latin, English and Hindustani melodies. It was Fr. Mercellene Jayakody who pioneered the modern revival of the Sinhala carol with his fresh lyrics and simple melodies.

Perhaps, the most valuable part of the book is the discussion (ch.5) of the *pasam*; i.e. traditional songs concerning the sufferings and death of Christ and the sorrows of his mother. Pride of place is given to the *Pasam Pota* ('Book Of Pasam') of Fr. Jacome Gonsalvez (1728), but his Portuguese predecessors and modern successors are also given due attention. Ariyaratna reveals himself an industrious and diligent student of his copious material. After discussing the use of the terms *pasam* and *latoni*, he defines the characteristics of *pasam* singing as follows: they are sung during Lent, by a group of residents, indoors or out of doors, in the evening or at night. They are sung antiphonally, from a handwritten or printed book, in free rhythm and slow tempo, without the use of musical instruments. The texts deal with the sufferings and death of Christ, and his mother is the heroine. The language, metre and melody, as well as the history and subject-matter of the genre are subjected to a thorough examination.

The author is on somewhat less firm ground when he discusses *kantaru*. (ch.6). This ancient term denotes a wide range of musical forms such as psalms, hymns, masses and liturgical chants. However, Ariyaratna's attention appears to be mainly focussed on the Sinhala hymn tradition, whose origin he traces back to the *Mangala Geetaya* and the *Ananda Kalippuva* of Fr. Gonsalvez. (pp.163 and 166). Regarding the Sinhala hymn tradition the author rightly stresses the dearth of recent compositions of high literary merit, although their authors are far from lacking in devotion and the desire to compose (p. 186). Again the pioneering work of Fr. Jayakody stands out.

The book includes thirty-three examples, with music in Oriental notation covering the three genres under consideration. There is also a useful resume in English.

At a time when sympathy and understanding among the various cultural groups of the island is a matter of prime concern, Dr. Ariyaratna's book provides insight into an important aspect of an unique heritage preserved by the Christian community of Sri Lanka. The work is a valuable addition to our knowledge of the cultural history of Sri Lanka under colonial rule and during the

subsequent period. It should be of enduring significance, not only to the serious student but also to anyone who may wish to become acquainted with the Christian musical culture of Sri Lanka.

D.P.M. WEERAKKODY

Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History: Indian History Congress Jubilee Year Publication Series, Volume II, edited by Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya. Published by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers (Pvt.) Ltd., New Delhi, 1987.

In the last three decades or so there has been a sharp increase in the interest shown by scholars in the economic history of ancient and medieval India, and as a result, a spate of monographs and articles covering diverse aspects of this important branch of Indian history have come out in publication. The significance of the publication of *Essays in Ancient Indian Economic History* edited by B.Chattopadhyaya and published as the second volume of a four volume project launched by the Indian History Congress to celeberate its Golden Jubilee, lies not just as another addition to the proliferating volume of literature on the subject, but because of the fact that it provides a neat cross-section of this literature which stretches over a period of about a half century. The essays for the present volume have been selected from amongst the Proceedings of the Indian History Congress from its inception in 1935. Thus the essays in the collection are not new publications but have been through the press at least once, if not more.

Altogether twenty eight papers are included in the collection, grouped under six themes, namely: (I) 'Early Indian Economy: General Themes' (II) The Early Pattern of Socio-Economic Transformation' (III) 'Land, Agriculture, Surplus Appropriation, Labour' (IV) 'Crafts, Production and Craftsmen' (V) 'Aspects of Exchange in Early Indian Economy: Trade, Organization of Trades, Interest, Coinage, and (VI) 'Patterns of Setbacks and Tensions in Early Indian Economy'.

Selecting essays for this type of a volume from amongst a formidable array of papers presented to the annual conferences of the Indian History Congress over a period of about half a century is not an easy task. The editor's assignment becomes more difficult when one takes into consideration the large number of distinguished scholars who have contributed to the success of the *Proceedings* over the years.

Therefore, the editor is justified in his decision, however painful and difficult that may have turned out to be, not to include more than one article from each scholar (p. xvii). He also admits the possibility of gaps both in the chronological and the spatial distribution of essays, but such lapses are understandably unavoidable in a collection of this nature. In the face of these difficulties the editor has done a commendable job by bringing together an otherwise incoherent set of independent papers, which reflect the likings and interests of individual authors, into a fairly organized volume. The editor's method of classifying them under broad but well-thought of themes has undoubtedly proved to be one of the best ways of overcoming the difficulties one would have to face in this kind of an endeavour.

Under the section on 'Early Indian Economy:General Themes', three essays are included, but one wonders whether the first article, entitled 'Role of Property, Family and Caste in the Origin of the State' by R.S.Sharma should not have been included in the next section, i.e., 'Early Indian Socio-Economic Transformation' where it fits in well. In this article, which was produced in 1951, Sharma has drawn attention to hitherto unused or barely used material useful for understanding an interesting aspect of the socio-economic factors in the origin of the state in India. Here Sharma introduces a novel approach, deviating from the traditional way of thinking at the time, to show the futility of studying the origin of the state in isolation from the socio-economic context. R.N.Nandi, in his short essay on 'Family and Inheritance in Early South India' bases his arguments on some epigraphic data to argue that, although the elite groups in early South India adopted patriliny, giving in to the Brahmanic influence, a vast majority of the non-elite families "who were less affected by the patriarchal formulations of the *brahmana* law-givers, continued with the matrilineal tradition" (p. 21). However, the epigraphic evidence cited therein does not necessarily support such a thesis. His argument that by following the *marumakkathayam* practice, or the temporary reversion to descent through daughter, shows that it was a method devised to maintain the continuity of the system of descent in an unbroken fashion, but it must also be pointed out that the ultimate aim of the persons concerned was to obtain a male issue. In such

a situation, the reversion to matriliny was adopted as an alternative method and a convenient way of overcoming the social and legal implications of the absence of a male heir in the family. As the author himself has shown, the moment a male was born in the family the tradition of patriliny was restored. This appears somewhat similar to the Brahmanic concept of raising a daughter to the position of *putrika*, as a means of protecting the lineage and family property in the absence of a son.[1]

A.S.Altekar's article on economic conditions in India during 200 B.C - A.D. 500 is a very general discussion about the economic conditions of a very long period of Indian history. This article contains several casual and also misleading statements, such as the one that refers to the existence of theRayatwari system in ancient times. Although, according to the title, the period covered is some 700 years, starting from 200 B.C., (one of the most important phases of ancient Indian history as far as the economic activity is concerned, with a thriving overseas trade and many significant changes taking place in the general economy) the author has not attempted to break any new ground, though many epigraphic and literary data were available to him at the time the paper was written.[2]

The section on 'The Early Pattern of Socio-Economic Transformation' contains three articles. The one on 'Agricultural Production during the Early Iron Age in Northern India' by M.D.N.Sahi contains some archaeological and literary evidence, but a critical analysis of the data is something that is lacking in this paper. An attempt could have been made to correlate this data with the general

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1. *Manu.*, IX, 127. Also see, *The Laws of Manu* translated by G.Buhler (Sacred Books of the East Series), Third Reprint, Delhi, 1970, p. 352.

2. G.L.Adhya and several other scholars have made use of this material which was available to Altekar, to produce excellent accounts of the economic conditions in Western India. See, G.L.Adhya, *Early Indian Economics*, Bombay, 1966 and D.N.Jha, *Studies in Early Indian Economic History*, Delhi, 1980.

socio-economic trends of the period, and problems such as urbanization and surplus production and whether the introduction of iron was responsible for it could have been examined.

'Some Aspects of Early Orissan Economy and Society' is a well-written paper making full use of the very limited source material available on early Orissa. The author, B.P.Sahu, brings forth evidence to argue, contrary to the generally held view, that the littoral as well as the hinterland Orissa experienced a similar and sometimes uniform development in the material culture from a very early stage, though the tribal elements were very strong, particularly in the regions away from the sea-board.

The third article in this section is 'Aspects of Early Iron Age Economy: Problems of Agrarian Expansion in Tamilakam'. It is based on a section of the early Tamil literature, which according to the author, depicts the socio-economic condition in the ancient Tamil country. But it is doubtful whether one can make use of this material for the entire pre-Pallava period, without first settling the controversial problem of chronology of this body of Tamil literature.

Of the five essays included in the section on Land, Agriculture, Surplus Appropriation and Distribution of Labour, two are devoted, in the main, to the topic of land classification and another two deal with two related technical terms associated with the land system and taxation The first article on land classification is 'Types of Land in North-eastern India from the Fourth Century to Seventh Century A.D.' by S.R.Das. It is an attempt to identify different categories of land in certain parts of eastern India, drawing material mainly from epigraphic sources. Here the author, while referring to different types of land in a village, treats *trnaputi* and *gocara* types as communally held land and views them as a separate category, but at the same time includes this category of land as belonging to the state. However, it must be remembered that these two types of land are mentioned in the land grants as situated outside the boundaries of agricultural and habitable

land.[3] At times the kings, while granting villages to religious and lay donees, transferred along with them their rights over *trnaputi* and *gocara* land as well.[4] This clearly shows that at least during the early medieval times the kings excercised full rights over such types of land, though the villagers could use them for such purposes as the grazing of cattle. One major defect in this paper is that some of the inscriptions cited in support of certain arguments are from outside the region under consideration, while some others do not fall strictly within the specified period. In this regard the authors liberal use of the Khalimpur Plate of Dharmapala for data (ninth century A.D.), is a case in point.

Scholars working on the land system of Tamilnadu are more fortunte than those who are studying the same aspect of the economy of any other part of the subcontinent, mainly because of the wealth of epigraphical material available to them. Yet, even the land system of Tamilnadu can sometimes pose problems because of certain technical and fiscal terms, the real meanings and implications of which still remain obscure. In his article on 'Classification of Land and Assessment of Land-tax in Early Medieval Tamilnadu' Y. Subbarayalu attempts to highlights certain problems concerning land-tax assessment by drawing attention to a few lesser known Tamil terms found in inscriptions. He pays particular attention to four such terms - namely, *taram*, *madakku*, *virivu* and *parappu* - that have received little notice from previous scholars, perhaps because of their rare occurence in land grants. The interpretations given by Subbarayalu to these terms certainly throw new light on several aspects of the land-assessment methods employed in early medieval Tamilnadu, and he raises many issues that can be useful lines of thought for future researchers.

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3. Several records from early medieval Bihar and Bengal, particularly those of the Pala dynasty, make clear reference to this type of land as situated outside the village boundaries, *cf.*, *Indian Antiquary*, XV, 1886, p. 306 11.41 ff. and *Epigraphia Indica*, XVII, 1923 - 1924, pp. 321 - 322, 11. 34 - 36.

4. *Ibid.*

In her paper on 'Plough-measure in Northern India' Pushpa Niyogi has collected many references to the term *hala* in the early medieval North Indian inscriptions. The word *hala*, which literally means ploughshare, was also used as a measurement of land, yet the author has not been able get any idea about the exact, or at least an approximate length of a *hala*. Y.B.Singh, while discussing the term *halika-kara* found in inscriptions, argues that it meant a *visti* type exaction or a compulsory service performed by agriculturists for their landlords.

The essay entitled 'Theory of Commendation and Sub-infeudation in Ancient India' is developed as an anlysis of a statement found in the Dudhpani inscription from Bihar. The author argues that concepts of commendation and subinfeudation, which were integral parts of the European feudalism, were known in eastern India as well. However, he fails to give a convincing interpretation to the term *avalaka*, which forms the basis of his main argument. Neither the theory he attempts to put forward nor the material he brings forth are anything new to students of the ancient and medieval history of India, for previous scholars, like R.S.Sharma, have cited the same epigraph in support of their arguments for the prevalence of feudalism in India.[5]

K.S.Shivanna's paper on 'Farm Labourers of Karnataka (Ancient and Medieval Period)' discusses some information from inscriptions pertaining to the practice of employing farm labourers in Karnataka, but appears to have lost the sense of historical evolution when he tries to clarify certain terms in the light of 18th century information. His exercise would have been more fruitful if he had made full use of all relevant inscriptions rather than casualy advert to them.

The section on 'Crafts Production and Craftsmen' consists of five papers, the first of which is entitled 'Artisans in Manu'. This article discusses various artisan groups as mentioned in the *Manusmrti* and attempts to place their role in the broader perspective of the general economy. The next paper, which is on 'Urban Occupations and Crafts in the *Kusana* Period' also touches upon roughly the same period, but with

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5. R.S.Sharma, *Indian Feudalism*, New Delhi, 1965, pp. 36 ff.

a different emphasis. Vivekananda Jha's inquiry on 'Leather Workers in Ancient and Early Medieval India' traces the changing social position of this important group of craftsmen, drawing data from different sources ranging from the *Rg Veda* to the records of Alberuni.

The essay on 'Some Crafts of Bengal' attempts to piece together many literary and epigraphic data on weaving and textile production in ancient and early medieval Bengal. The author highlights the contribution of several trival groups in the development of the weaving craft in the region, but it must be noted that they were not the only groups that were involved in the craft and thus contributed to its high standards. B.P.Mazumdar's paper on 'Basic Industries in Northern India on the Eve of the Turko-Afghan Conquests' is based mainly on material derived from the *Yuktikalpataru* and *Rasaratnasamuccaya*, two literary works of the early medieval period. The article appears to be just a collection of data from the two literary works rather than a critical presentation of the facts.

'Aspects of Exchange in Early Indian Economy' is the section that has by far the largest number of articles; it consists of eight papers on various aspects of exchange and monetary activity. Different aspects of trade and commerce, as depicted in the *Asthadhyayi* of Panini, are discussed in V.S.Agrawal's paper on 'Trade and Commerce in Panini's *Asthadhyayi*', but one wonders how justified the author is in the free use of the commentaries to the famous grammar, such as those of Patanjali, for the interpretation of certain terms, since these commentaries were written in much later times when the conditions depicted in them were chronologically far different from the days of Panini.[6]

Adhir Chakravarti's paper on 'India-China Maritime Trade' cites several references to Sea borne trading contacts between China and different Indian kingdoms during the period A.D. 250 to 1200, but the details of the nature of the trade have not been discussed. The paper on 'The Role of the Arab-Traders in Western India during the Early

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6. See, B.N.Puri, *India at the Time of Patanjali*, Bombay, 1957, pp. 4 ff.

Medieval Period' attempts to explain the factors behind the rise of the Arab naval power in the western Indian sea-coast, and the resultant decline of local involvement in naval activity and maritime trade. 'Trade in the Growth of Towns: a Case Study of Karnataka c. A.D. 600 - 1200' by Om Prakash Prasad deserves special mention for the fine job the author has done in producing very interesting information, mainly from inscriptions, to show how certain religious and minor administrative centres in early medieval Karnataka gradually grew into major towns and urban settlements with the growth of trading activity, especially after the tenth century A.D.

The next two articles deal with the functions of traders' guilds in the Kalyani Calukya kingdom and the Andhra country respectively. The paper on the Kalyani Calukya trader-guilds is, however, a fairly short one which contains very little new information. But Narasimha Rao, in his paper on the Andhra trade guilds, has collected valuable details about the activities of the merchant guilds in the early medieval times. From this paper it becomes clear that the merchant guilds in Andhra, like their counterparts in many other regions of contemporary South India, have played a very active role in trading and monetary transactions. They also enjoyed certain privileges bestowed on them by the rulers, and were haavily involved in religious and social activities as well.

'Rate of Interest during Early Medieval India' by O.P.Srivastava discusses several aspects of money-lending and interest rates, drawing material both from literary and epigraphic sources, but the bulk of the data is from law-books. However, it must be noted that the author has brought forth very little new material, and most of the data he has cited have already been used by previous scholars like R.S.Sharma,[7] Lallanji Gopal,[8] D.Sharma[9] and S.K.Maity[10]. R.S.Sharma's article on 'Usury in Early Medieval India',

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7. R.S.Sharma, *Light on Early Indian Economy and Society*, Bombay, 1966, pp. 116 ff.

8. L.Gopal, *Economic Life of Northern India, c. A.D., 700 - 1200*, Delhi, 1965, pp. 166 ff.

(Contd.)

though written sometime ago, still remains the most scholarly treatise in the field. Srivastava has pointed out that the rates of interest as revealed by religious grants were fairly low when compared with the rates mentioned in the law-books, but has not made a satisfactory effort to explain the reasons behind the difference. In this regard, it may be worth looking into the nature of the types of money-lending involved.

It is quite clear that most of the law-books often refer to interest rates in the context of their discussions on the lender-debtor relationship, based on the system of money-lending between individuals, and hence little or no attention is paid to the laws or regulations governing money deposited with guilds of artisans or religious bodies. In such a situation one cannot expect the law-books to reflect the rates of interest pertaining to religious endowments. As far as the religious money deposits are concerned, money lending may only be the second step of the procedure followed in earning interest, as the depository, in these instances the religious institution, has to lend that money at a still higher rate of interest or invest the capital to earn an income greater than that which the depository had to pay to the depositor. And it is this second stage of the transaction, not the first one, that can be compared with the money-lending discussed in the law-books. Therefore, the rates of interest mentioned in the religious grants naturally have to be lower than the rates mentioned in the law-books.[11]

In the final section, on 'Setbacks and Tension in Early Indian Economy', only one article, i.e., 'Socio-economic

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9. D.Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dynasties*, Delhi, 1959, pp. 301 ff.

10. S.K.Maity, *Economic Life in Northern India in the Gupta Period*, Calcutta, 1957, pp. 178 ff.

11. For a discussion on this aspect, see, P.V.B.Karunatilaka, 'Monetary Endowments to Hindu Temples; Their Management and Rates of Interest in Early Medieval Bihar and Orissa', *Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, Vol, XIII, nos. 1 & 2, 1987, pp. 147 ff.

Tension in Bhojakata Rajya of Vakataka kingdom in the Time of Pravarasena II', is found in the copy that has come to us, though the contents page lists two more articles. Even the sole article found in this section is not complete as the last portion of it is missing. If the binders and the publishers took a little more care to re-check the job they did, this grave and unpardonable mistake could have been avoided. The book is not without its share of printing errors, but they are not numerous and hence may not require a correction page.

Finally, a word about the title of the volume. Although the title requires us to expect only papers relating to ancient Indian economic history to appear in the volume, quite a large number of articles, particularly in section V, cannot be considered as dealing with the ancient period, whatever method of periodization is applied. In fact quite a good number of papers deal with conditions in the early medieval period, while a few go deep into the medieval period proper. Yet they are also among the more interesting and informative articles in the entire volume, and hence their re-publishing is very well justified. To cover them, it would have been more appropriate if the title of the volume had been made to read something like *Essays in Ancient and Early Medieval Indian Economic History*.

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