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Editor's Note:

There is no feeling the subject you love till you translate your sensibilities into words. That is why we indulge in a literary journal, where the students and the faculty can exercise in independent fresh thinking as with Vidya Prabhu's note on the 'Personal Essay', or studied work like Bharathi Sadasivam's on the 'Sonnet' or extended ventures into thinking like Mrs. Francis' article on Faulkner. We would visualise the literary journal as a workshop of minds experimenting with ideas, thoughts, words.

The Personal essay : a reading of Addison and Narayan.

The beginnings of the essay as a short literary form of personalized communication can be traced, as every student of literature knows, to eighteenth-century England. From the serialized "Spectator" of 1711-12, the use of the essays as a vehicle of both entertainment and instruction has come down through the ages until it has become an established part of twentieth-century literature not only in England and the English speaking countries, but wherever English is used as the vehicle of literary expression. A good example of the latter is R. K. Narayan's use of this form as exemplified by the collection of essays entitled the "Reluctant Guru". A comparison between Addison and Narayan, which is the purpose of this note, is interesting as a study of the development and extension of the personal essay over a period of two hundred years.

A typical figure of the neo-classical age, Addison's "Mr. Spectator" is a model "gentleman": learned, rational and highly respectable — an ideal which was itself a product of the eighteenth century. He is grave and dignified, has "an insatiable thirst for knowledge" is always correct in his behaviour, and his opinions are invariably based on the cold foundations of objectivity and reason. Thus Addison, while expressing his views on contemporary social life, presents himself as an ideal to be admired and imitated by his reading public. R. K. Narayan, on the other hand, does not hesitate to expose to the public eye his personal follies and failures. Far from treating himself "rather as a spectator of mankind than as one of the species" Narayan makes his self-portrait an amusing bundle of the follies and eccentricities typical of the ordinary man. Indeed, he takes pains to appear as a rather quaint and ludicrous member of his species, and seems pleased with this image of himself.

While Addison writes of himself as having pursued his studies with much diligence, Narayan confesses that after four decades, he still jumps off his bed from nightmares of examinations. Addison presents his views on the mischiefs of party spirits with admirable logic, with irrefutable arguments and with quotations from Plutarch and Diodorus Siculus. Narayan, in contrast, openly confesses to sympathizing with the universally condemned habit of unpunctuality. "Personally speaking", says Narayan, "I feel, under normal circumstances, most things can survive a little delay" But he does not expect anyone to agree with him, least of all the man who has been kept waiting for an engagement.

The form of the personal essay allows the writer to make sudden transitions in his subject matter and introduce illustrative anecdotes and personal comments as they occur to him—a quality which Johnson highlighted in his description of the essay as "a loose sally of the mind".

On an examination of Addison's and R. K. Narayan's essays, one is led to think that this flexibility has tended to increase since the time of the "Spectator". Addison does introduce several illustrations and anecdotes in his essays to illustrate his points. For example, he begins his essay on instinct in animals by referring to his own delight in the company of Sir Roger's hens; he relates the story of Eudoxus and Leontine to illustrate his views on the education of country squires; and he touches humorously on the sinister importance that the country people attach to Moll white's harmless broom-staff and tabby cat in his essay on witchcraft. Yet, when compared with R. K. Narayan, Addison seems to have a more formal organizational structure than can be seen in the essays of the

“Reluctant Guru”. While writing of the fantastic views that foreigners have on Indian mysticism, for example, R. K. Narayan not only describes his own experiences as Visiting Professor in America, but also volunteers his explanation of the term Distinguished Visiting Professor as a person who visits and professes and tries to maintain and flourish his distinguishing qualities. Again, Narayan satirizes the indiscriminate use of the word “Culture” in the political speeches by comparing it with a homeopathic pill that is passed on with the advice, “You may take as much of it as you like, it will do you no harm—even if it does not produce any particular benefit”.

When the protagonist of the “Spectator” essays decided, together with Richard Steele, to launch a serialized morning newspaper, it was his endeavour “to enliven morality with wit, and to temper wit with morality”. The “Spectator” essays were written with the definite social purpose of exposing the ignorance, passion, and prejudice of eighteenth century England. With his gentle humour, banter, and irony, Addison ridiculed the absurd fashions of frivolous “ladies”, condemned the blind adoption of urban manners by the rural community, and satirized the existing state of the English game laws, for the explanation of which Sir Roger de Coverley won “Universal applause”. The essays of the “Reluctant Guru”, also deal with various contemporary issues in India ranging from education to noise pollution, from the trapping of an elephant to the modern child’s belief that milk is manufactured by the milkman at his milkshop and that cows are useless creatures which sleep on the road and eat up all the flower plants if the garden gate is left open. The essays of the “Reluctant Guru”, however, differ from the “Spectator” in that they rely more on satire as a means of conveying their message to the reader than on any direct moralizing. Addison points out the benefits of a good master-servant relationship and recommends regular physical exercise as essential for

proper physical and mental health, while Narayan suggests the establishment of a model “Caste system” village for the benefit of foreign tourists, and laments the “invention” of child psychology.

Another aspect of dissimilarity between Addison and Narayan is that Addison is careful to avoid all issues even remotely connected with politics, while Narayan takes positive delight in striking out at the hypocrisy and stupidity of politicians, or against the ineffective functioning of the government bureaucracy. An obvious example is Narayan’s reaction to the newspaper report that the Government proposes to give turbans to all successful farmers in a crop competition. The news item, says Narayan, stirred up in his mind a pleasant picture of the village peasant. “He wore a loin cloth, his body was bare and was baking in the sun, his feet were unshod while he patiently walked behind his plough, but his head was resplendent with a turban that was placed there by the minister with his own hands. . . .”

Although the essays of both Joseph Addison and R. K. Narayan are written with a delicate blend of humour and instruction, it is seen that the essays in the “Reluctant Guru” are more pungent in their humour. Addison’s satire is much gentler than Narayan’s. Sir Roger de Coverley, for example, though originally conceived as a vehicle for his protagonist’s satire, has yet been so gently delineated that he becomes to the reader more an object of affection than of ridicule. In Sir Roger’s mild eccentricities at church, in his attempts to cut a good figure at the assizes, in his hypocritical censure of the gypsies, one sees more to love than to condemn. R. K. Narayan’s brand of satire, on the other hand, is much more biting than Addison’s. For instance, Narayan suggests that one of the best ways of dissuading boys from using catapults is to make it necessary for them to own a permit before they can assemble a catapult. “If the redtape traditions

are properly kept up", says the author of the "Reluctant Guru", "it should be quite easy to make a young boy wait at the treasury and licensing offices long enough for him to outgrow the catapult phase".

The Pungency of Narayan's wit does not, however, alienate the writer from his reader, chiefly because he is as merciless towards himself as he is towards others. Here is an essential point of difference between the qualities of humour in the "Spectator" and in the "Reluctant Guru". The protagonist of the "Spectator" does not possess the ability to laugh at himself. Even when he is referring to his own reputation as an unusually grave and silent man, one gets the impression that Addison is proud of being what he is, and that he is in fact laughing at the people who are so curious about the reason behind his taciturnity. The author of the "Reluctant Guru" in contrast, openly holds himself up as an object of ridicule when it comes to matters such as his extraordinary attach-

ment to his umbrella. In connection with this latter, the author even describes himself walking down the road with his umbrella; "far off on the landscape a black spot representing the umbrella and behind it, one might bet on it, was myself". Joseph Addison refused to inform his readers of his name, age, and lodgings because this would expose him in public places to "several salutes and civilities" which he would find extremely disagreeable: Addison was certain that he would be treated as a celebrity if ever his identity was disclosed to the people. But R. K. Narayan, when discussing the various "bloomers" made by students in their examination papers, sets forth an example which is typical of his own sense of humour:

Question : Who is R. K. Narayan?

Answer : R. K. Narayan was a romantic poetess who died in 1749.

VIDYA PRABHU, I B.A.,

Modernity In Frost

To embark upon a consideration of Robert Frost's modernity is to be confronted with a dual problem of identity. The term 'Modernity' has yet to become a truly defined critical label. It embraces several widely disparate schools of thought and is among the most nebulous of critical terms. The poetic identity of Frost is none the clearer. The confusion between the public figure of 'wise old woodchuck' and the literary personality has engendered a highly controversial body of critical opinion. When one proceeds on the assumption that Modernity could refer to the general temper of the twentieth century, the immediate reaction is to place Frost outside its pale. His commitment to convention in his choice of poetic form, his rejection of the city for the unfashionable Romantic surroundings of Nature, his suspicion of philosophical systems made his poetry suspect among the highbrow radical literary world dominated by ideals of complexity and; abstruse wit. Malcolm Cowley, writing in 1944 remarked: "We have lately been watching the growth in this country of a narrow nationalism, that has spread from politics into literature (although its literary adherents are usually not political isolationists). They demand however that American Literature should be affirmative, optimistic, uncritical and "truly of the nation".: They have been looking for a poet to exalt: and Frost through no fault of his own (but chiefly through the weaker qualities of his work) has been adopted as their symbol. Some of the honour heaped upon him are less poetic than political.....Frost is depicted.....as a sort of Sunday school paragon, a saint among miserable sinners. His common sense and strict Americanism are used as an excuse for berating and belittling other poets who have supposedly fallen into the sins of pessimism, obscurity, obscenity, and yielding to foreign influences.....!"

The celebrated Frost biography by his own appointee shocked his readership when it portrayed him as morose, vain, hypocritical, given to ingratiating himself with reviewers, and influential editors. But this damaging indictment could well be to the poets good if it succeeds in freeing criticism from being distracted by the man and allows it to concentrate on the poetry.

Frost's preoccupation with Nature has long led to him being associated with the Romantics. A closer scrutiny will reveal that Frost's treatment of Nature differs vastly from the Romantic school. The philosophic background of Romantic poetry was the assertion of unity between man and nature—man intuiting the common spirit infused in both, seeing both as parts of a larger reality, the result being a humanising of nature, an emotional value assigned landscape. Frost's world however is divided into zones which are demarcated, fenced in with barriers, which man learns to respect. Consider the poem 'There are roughly Zones.' Man transplanting the peach tree into a hostile climate, learns that he must accept laws which divide creation into individual units, and there laws he must also respect. Images of gaps, barriers and voids abound within his poems. There might exist vantage points to a situation as in the poem Mending Wall, where the wall both separates and brings together neighbours but the division is not denied. Nature in Robert Frost possesses little of the religiosity of Romantic poetry. Instead there is often an under current of irony which modifies the possibilities of a Romantic stance.

Frost's societies are affected by 20th century scourges such as communication's barriers and neuroses as in 'The Hill Wife,' displacement and alienation as 'The Death of a Hired Man,' and while several critics are

fond of imputing to his New England the Edenic Myth there is sickness and death, with loneliness as in 'Home Burial' and 'Desert Places'. While loneliness and alienation are not the prerogative of the 20th century poetry in an earlier era, Romanticism resulted in the creation of roles and poses of the socially unintegrated individual such as the Byronic Hero, the Poet visionary, the Bohemian, the Virtuoso, the Dandy, the Historian, in Frost there is an ironic admission of expediency as in the poem 'Provide, Provide.'

The witch that came (the withered hag)
To wash the steps with pail and rag,
Was once the beauty Abishag,

The picture pride of Hollywood
Too many fall from great and good
For you to doubt the like lihood

Die early and avoid the fate
Or if predestined to die late,
Make up your mind to die in state.

Make the whole stock exchange your
own!
If need be occupy a throne,
Where nobody can call you crone.

Some have relied on what they knew;
Other being simply true
What worked for them might work for
you

Better to go down dignified
With boughten friendship at your side
Than none at all. Provide, Provide!

Isolation and loneliness have no prestige or compensation. Opportunism must be admitted for the sake of survival.

There is often sense of tension between Frost's content and form. His commitment to convention made him pursue forms like the blank verse and the Quatrain, but sensitive reading will reveal the energy that this tension breeds, often expressive of the sense

of conflict which the poet experienced in his assessment of the human situation. Surface reading might brand Frost as an aphoristic poet who issued maxims with every poem; in depth considerations would show that his poems often contain a sense of conflict between differing points of view often verging on the dialectical. Consider 'West Running Brook' or 'Death of the Hired Man'. Frost's dialectical and dialogue poems never conclude with an affirmation one way or the other. His sense of doubt and uncertainty which was to find expression in the 'Woods' imagery show a twentieth century preoccupation with the inevitable rather than a Romantic intuitive perception of the secrets of the Universe. Poems such as 'Stopping by woods on a snowy evening' and 'Out! Out!'—epitomise this aspect of Frost.

Frost's own expression of apparent assurance 'Into My Own' is set against a disproportionate number of poems that agonise over Judeo christian theological matters especially his two masques . . . of Reason and Mercy. While this may not be peculiar to twentieth century man, it does not show Frost in the orthodox conventional light in which he normally appears. He shares modern Man's doubt over religion and unlike the earlier Romantics cannot invent his own.

Frost's own poetry was very much an escape and release from personality in the mode advocated by T. S. Eliot. Anthologies like 'A Boy's will' have together with the public figure tended to mislead the reading public over the autobiographical content of his work. On closer reading we discover that it is the experience rather than the personality that is revealed, and this, amidst a plethora of viewpoints so that a singular approach is completely unable to emerge.

Frost's own puritan temperament is also a firm disciplining force over any excesses, Romantic or otherwise, which might have surfaced.

His poetic locale has often been criticised as confining and limiting. But his geography transcends specific location. 'The Road Not Taken' or "Stopping by the woods, on a Snowy Evening" are metaphorical areas of space and time.

From the point of view of form Frost was traditional in his use of stanzaic and quatrain verses; 'What we have in English' he said 'is mostly Iambic', and Frost had never deviated far from this norm. His unreserved support of the conventional led him to view the rejection of established metre and form as playing tennis with the net down. His ordering of events is a narrative, sequential one based upon a chronological time pattern to release the idea in his poems. Objections to realism were usually that it tended to obscure the central idea by the full reporting of detail that the method demands. Frost's vision of reality however dominates his art: "it should follow lines in nature like the grain of an axe handle".

Frost triumphs in an altogether different manner from most moderns because he sees the mind as being able, through discipline,

pragmatism and commonsense to manage with indecision. One would therefore agree with Reginald Cooke who sees his choice of the New England background not as an isolated, independent world, but one juxtaposed in its simple primitiveness with a modern complex world. It is through this manner that Frost's poetry operates and one discovers his modernity. His subtlety as a poet requires careful and sensitive reading to discover that he is of our time, because he lacks extravagant gestures to modernity in the way of philosophy or technical innovation. But the core of the poet reveals his 20th century sensibility, perhaps to a greater degree as time passes and the essence of modernity begins to make itself, without being confused with topicality. Frost's 'Precaution' in his couplet will then be truly understood. "I never dared be radical when young/For fear it would make conservative when old."

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The Treatment of Love, Religion and Death in the Sonnet

The word sonnet comes from the Italian 'Sonnetto' which means a little sound or song. The first sonnets are attributed to Giacomada Lentino and/or Pierre delle Vigne, both Sicilian lawyers at the court of Frederick II. This makes the Sonnet one of the oldest literary forms, and in recent times the most versatile. Before its transplantation into England in the early sixteenth century, the sonnet had already been given a structural form and character by Italian poets of the Renaissance like Dante. However Petrarch's sonnets to Laura became the legacy of the English poets of the sixteenth century. This legitimate form of the sonnet the Petrarchan, takes the form of an octave in closed rhyme followed by a sestet, with the volta or turn just at the beginning of the sestet.

In England, two more forms of the sonnet came quickly into existence the Shakespearean and the Spenserean-Spenserean. After the Elizabethans who carried the love tradition to exhaustion there was for the first time a shift in emphasis in the theme of the sonnet. This was provided by Milton who with his political, bio-graphical, ecclesiastical and encomiastic sonnets ".....caught the sonnet from the dainty hand of Love, who cried to lose it; and he gave the notes to glory."

After this, the sonnet in England came to treat many subjects other than love. Love itself was seen with eyes not always dazzled and hearts not always broken. The sonnet moved "from satire like that of Brooke in "Sonnet Reversed" to Hood's wistful, brilliant sonnet to Vauxhall, from Shakespeare's wit and invective to Milton's sublime scorn, from the wary tenderness of Wyatt to the passion of E. B. Browning, from Auden's literary biographies to Wordsworth's ecclesia-

tical histories, from symbolism in Yeats to devotion and piety in Herbert, doubt, effusion political tributes, dedications and diary entries." ² In the 20th Century sonnets have been written on saints, lunar eclipses, a terrier dog, an army surgeon, a night nurse, going her round, factory workers, the end of the world, soldiers, the functional ward of a chest hospital, buttered pippin-pies.

Love, the parent theme of the sonnet, is its most enduring and its most explored. Innumerable facets of it have been dealt with in varying moods: of exuberance, light-heartedness, triumph, disillusionment, dejection, sorrow, cynicism. The commonest aspect of love written about in the sonnet is that of a description of love. The poet compares his love to various other beauties of Nature and always finds her superior to all. Or the poet dedicates the sonnet to a goddess, implying that his love is as beautiful as she, as in "To Aurora" by W. Alexander, or simply "To His Love" by William Shakespeare:

"Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?",
or Spencer's.

"Mark when she smiles with amiable cheer
And tell me where to can ye liken it." ³

Many poets try to define in their sonnets what they mean by love—

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds
Or bends with the remover to remove;" ⁴

"Yet love, mere love, is beautiful indeed
And worthy of acceptance.....
Love is fire...There's nothing low
In love...". ⁵

or the undemonstrative love of Herrick:

"By Love's religion, I must here confess it,
The most I love when I the least express it".

Bidding farewell to love or renouncing it is another frequent theme in love sonnets and treated in varying ways. Wyatt's "A Renouncing of love" ends on a cynical, almost bitter note :

"For hitherto though I have lost my time
Me list no longer rotten boughs to climb",
Drayton in his sonnet "Since there's no help"
is decisive about saying goodbye but there is
the tell-tale wavering in the last two lines—

"Now if thou wouldst, when all have given
him over,
From death to life thou might'st him yet
recoveri !"

But the most natural reaction to renouncing love is best expressed by Alice Meynell in her sonnet "Renouncement" in which she writes that all day she shuns "the thought of thee" but then

"...when sleep comes to close each difficult
day,
...with the first dream that comes with
the first sleep
I run, I run, I am gathered to thy heart."

There is a perfect welter of sonnets on the dejected lover's separation from his love and how there is comfort in dejection in the thought of his love. Here Shakespeare obliges with more sonnets :

"How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting
year !
What freezings have I felt, what dark
days seen !
What old December's bareness everywhere!
And yet this time remov'd was summer's
time..." 6

The Religious has a more select following. It was first written with any success in England by James I. The Metaphysical poets set the sonnets on an established path with John Donne doing the pioneering work in the religious sonnet with his 'Holy Sonnets'. The

sheer power and originality of Donne's sonnets foretell those of Hopkins. In his sonnet, 'Oh my black Soul, now art thou summoned' Donne describes his state before he is summoned into God's presence. In many of his sonnets, Donne treats of the soul and addresses it :

"Thou art like a pilgrim, which abroad
hath done
Treason and durst not turn to whence he
is fled,
Or like a thief which till death's doom be
read
Wisheth himself delivered from prison ;
But damn'd and hal'd to execution,
Wisheth that still he might be imprisoned."

Donne often uses antithetical statements to prove his point, especially in his couplet :

"That Thou Lov'st mankind well yct wilt
not chose me
And Satan hates me, Yet is loth to lose
me " 7

In his sonnet "Batter my hearts three-Personed God" Donne is at his most impassioned. This sonnet probably most inspired Hopkins. The language is bold, free, and the words almost irreverent : it is a sonnet of power and passion. God is to Donne, someone more than just a saviour.

"Take me to you, imprison me for I
Except you enthrall me never shall be free
Nor ever chaste, except you ravish me".

George Herbert the next metaphysical writer of religious sonnets ('The Sinner,' 'Redemption,' 'The Son,' 'Prayer'.) is allegorical in his approach. The sonnet "Prayer" is an unusual, interesting sonnet because it is fourteen lines of metaphor.

"Prayer, the church's banquet, Angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The Soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heaven
and Earth".

Here it can be compared to Hartley Coleridge's sonnet of the same name. Hartley is pedantic, powerless in comparison.

“Be not afraid to pray - To pray is right.
Pray if thou canst, with hope, but ever pray,
Though hope be weak, or sick with long
delay;
Pray in the darkness if there be no light”.

Milton takes the credit for the shift in emphasis in the subject-matter of the sonnet. His religious sonnets are triumphant with faith :

“All is, if I have grace to use it so
As ever in my great task Master's eye.” 8

In “On His Blindness” Milton describes his handicap, with the calm restraint that the Italian sonnet requires, and which would probably bring out an anguished outburst in any one else. He derives comfort from the fact that they serve Him best who accept His will unquestioningly and the famous last line resounding in faith :

“They also serve who only stand and wait”. If Milton sought to find comfort and solace in God, Jones Very in his sonnets constantly reaffirms his faith :

“Father I bless thy name that I do live,
And in each motion am made rich with
Thee.” 9

Arthur Hugh Clough does not take quite so passive an approach. In his sequence of sonnets “Blank Misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds not realised”, Clough describes the purposelessness of life, his casual, not-thought-of sinning; his belief in God's unshakeable love for men :

“.....Still thou art
Art surely as in Heaven, the sun at noon;
How much so ever I sin.
..... still the sky above is blue
The stars look down in beauty as before.”

Donne's “Holy Sonnets” set the pattern for all religious sonnets but until Hopkins, no one had been able to convey the same intensity, the mental tearing apart, the highly personal note of conflict. Hopkins is easily the master among religious sonneteers. Hopkins' approach is individual, unorthodox, highly personal. His sonnets owe their originality to his fresh innovations in the sonnet — the use of sprung rhythm, of poetic shorthand, his ability to conjure visual, exact pictures :

“I caught this morning morning's minion,
king —
dom of daylight's dauphin, dapple—dawn
— drawn Falcon, in his riding,
Of the rolling level underneath him steady
air, and striding
High there, how he rung upon the rein of a
wimpling wing
In his ecstasy !
.....
Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air,
pride, plume, here
Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from
thee then, a billion
Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my
chevalier !” 10

With death as a frequent theme in the sonnet it is easy to see how far the English sonnet has departed in subject matter from the Italian. This is a most interesting subject in the sonnet — it is treated morbidly, exploratively, curiously, resignedly, humorously, courageously, by different writers. Shakespeare did not have much use for it except in one instance, “No longer mourn for me when I am dead”, and even then it is addressed to his love. Donne's sonnet “Death, be not proud” is one noticeably triumphant in attitude, of life rising above death, with his characteristic couplet :

“one short sleep past, we wake eternally
And death shall be no more, death thou
shall die”

Where Donne deals with the physical aspect of death, Hartley Coleridge touches upon the philosophical side in his sonnet “Death” and feels that one really dies when one no longer lives in the minds of people one has left behind. Shelley despairs of finding any joy in death; it is a reminder of man’s mortality :

“.....Round the decay
of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.”
11

A pathetic morbidity comes through in Christina Rossetti’s Sonnet LXXI, the final tercet turning to satire :

“He did not love me living, but once dead
He pitied me and very sweet it is
To know he still is warm though I am cold.”

With the war poets preoccupation with death was natural, being fully engaged in it. The treatment is exploratory, detached :

“These had seen movement and heard
music ; known
Slumber and waking.....
Touched flowers and fires and cheeks. All
this is ended
.....
And after
Frost, with a gesture stays the waves that
dance
And wandering loneliness.” 12

With Owen and Edgell Rickword, one comes across the bitterness and futility that war brings :

“What passing-bells for these who die as
cattle ?

Only the monstrous anger of the guns
Only the stuttering rifles ’ rapid rattle
Can patter out their hasty orisons ” ; 13

“ Death. Nothing is simpler. One is dead.
The set face now will fade out.....
..... the clay is on the bed.” 14

Love, religion, and death are some of the most written about themes in the sonnet, the others being Nature and political tributes. The essential brevity and preciseness which are the sonnet’s characteristics demand more skill and subtlety from the poet than does any other form. It would not be wrong to say that some of the best poetry on love, religion and death is to be found in the sonnet.

“ It is the pure white diamond Dante
brought
To Beatrice ; the sapphire Laura wore
When Petrarch cut it sparkling out of
thought ;
The ruby Shakespeare hew’d from his
heart’s core ;
The dark, deep, emerald that Rossetti
wrought
For his own soul to wear for ever
more.” 15

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- 1 Landor “ Last fruit of an old Tree.” 1853 - Pq. 473.
 - 2 Robert Nye in his introduction to the Faber Book of Sonnets
 - 3 From Amoretti Sonnet XL
 - 4 William Shakespeare Sonnet CXVI
 - 5 Elizabeth Barrett Browning : Sonnets from the Portuguese-3
 - 6 William Shakespeare - Sonnet XCVII
 - 7 John Donne - “ As due by many titles I resign ”
 - 8 Milton - “ How soon hath time, the subtle thief of Youth ”
 - 9 Jones Very “ In him We Live ’

- 10 Hopkins "Wind hover"
- 11 Shelley - Ozymandias
- 12 Rupert Brooke "The Dead"
- 13 Wilfred Owen : Anthem for Doomed Youth"
- 14 Edgell Rickword - "The Realization"
- 15 E. Lee Hamilton- "What the Sonnet is"

- The Faber Book of Sonnets
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- The Penguin Book of Poetry
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- A Choice of Christina Rossetti's Verse
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The Critical Idiom : The Sonnet
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Rilke - Seeking after God

Even before the year 1900 a revolt had started in German Literature against realism and banality, invaded and tempered by the dream and fairy tale, by symbolism, by the classic form. The lyric, now liberated from the strictures of realism was revitalised by poets like Stefan George and Hugo von Hoffmansthal. The most inspired exponent of the form was Rainer Maria Rilke, in the depth, emotionalism and subtle speech melodies of his verse he outmastered his master Stefan George.

Rilke's development as an artist was largely determined by a series of important events in his life at the turn of the century. First came two visits to Russia - "Holy Russia" to - him during which he was deeply impressed by the piety and fatalism of the Russian temperament. This was followed by a visit

to the artists' colony at Worpswede - his first contact with the visual arts. Next he visited Paris and was struck by the cruelty and loneliness of life in the big city. The immediate product of these experiences was 'The Book of Hours'. It falls into three parts - The Book of Monkish life, The Book of Pilgrimage and The Book of Poverty and Death. They represent the meditations of a Russian monk on God and Man, the brotherhood of men and the mutual dependance of God and Man. The third part deals with existence in big cities and the meaning of death.

The God these poems celebrate is no stern and distant power, no tremendous unapproachable deity whose mercy can in itself be a barrier. The God of Rilke's poems is young and afraid and fragile. Man's relationship

with Him is seen in the light of a mother regarding a sickly but heedless child with brooding concern; of a close friend slightly exaggerated with Him :

“You, neighbour God, if sometimes in
the night
I rouse you with loud knocking, I do so
Only because I seldom hear you breathe ;
I know : you are alone
Always I hearken, give but a small sign.
I am quite near ”.

Here then is a human God who is as capable of fear as the humans of His creation, who feels the pathos of His nearness to men, who is not the creator of the universe so much as the creation of mankind-

“what will you do. God, when I die ?
I am. your garb, the trade you ply,
you lose your meaning losing me...
what will you do God ? I am afraid ”

Rilke's faith is not in the august but benign Father of Christianity, but in a figure where two qualities are curiously juxtaposed—a God who is vast and tremendous and yet has “so mild a way of being”; a God who does not know His own power and refuses to be celebrated by the believer, thus :

“I would have painted you: not on the wall,
But upon very heaven from verge to
verge,
and would have shaped you, as a giant would:
as the simoon, the wasteland's mighty surge...
...and you: ah, you, have fallen from the nest,
a fledgling, yellow-clawed and with big eyes :
I grieve for you.
(My hand for your small body is too wide).”

In the depiction of the grandeur of his deity Rilke displays all the intensity of artistic creation. God becomes the creation of mankind, and even more, the creation of that most conscious part of mankind, the artists. Men can realise this unorthodox godhead under the artists' tutoring, through a more sensitive approach to life, God

becomes synonymous with the artists' un-achieved goal : He is incomplete, He is the future ; the fulfilment of the artist is hence the knowledge of God-

“We are all workmen : prentice, journey-
man,
Or master, building you—you towering
Nave...
Only at dusk we yield you up at last :
and slow your shaping contours dawn
on us.
God, you are vast”.

The simplest quality of Rilke's God is that he cannot be confined. Rilke was hostile to orthodox Christianity, to the churches that “encircle God as though he were a fugitive, and then bewail him/as if he were a captured wounded creature”, to the “ narrow wall ” between him and God built of His images-

“For to your veils our pious hands restore
you
Whenever you are open to our hearts”

However that may be, the man with the personal religion cannot also quite hold his God. Rilke's finest poetry in the ‘The Book of Hours’, whether obliquely or overtly has to do with this elusive quality of God and this again equates to the elusiveness of artistic fulfilment-

“Do not be troubled, God, though they
say “Mine”
of all things that permit it patiently.
They are like wind that lightly strokes the
boughs and says : My tree
Even he who loves you and who knows
your face
in darkness - he cannot own you quite.
And if at night one holds you closely
pressed,
locked in his prayer so you cannot
stray,
You are the guest
who comes, but not to stay”.

In the final section of the book, Rilke's pre-occupation is with the squalor and anonymity of the Parisian masses. Here he celebrates the Franciscan ideal of poverty and the divinity of death. His theme is particularly relevant today for his concern is with the meaning of existence, the insignificance of death for the poor. It is an apostrophe to the God who will grant men their individual and personal deaths. His sensitive recoiling from the effects of a decadent culture could be that of any present-day poet-

“For, Lord, the great towns, without
 are lost and broken... doubt,
 Nothing of all that spacious, real on-
 going
 that round you, Great Becomer, is astir
 goes on in them”

‘The Book of Hours’ contains the beginnings of Rilke's poetic convictions, which culminated many years later in the complex Duino Elegies, where his lyricism supersedes his philosophy. Rilke's poetry has been well described as a “seeking after God”.

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A Consideration of Two Morality Plays Five Centuries Apart

Everyman

Bertolt Brecht - The Mother

Every work of art brings with it a complex identity chequered with religious or sociological influences, national or period sensibilities, further stamped with the individual genius or temperament. Thus any comparative study poses the dangers of over-simplification and over-statement; particularly a 15th century morality and a 20th century ‘epic’ theatre play. And yet, ‘The Mother’ shares with ‘Everyman’, a common concern for the didactic potentialities of the theatre.

It is not known whether or not Brecht was directly influenced by the morality play, though he did cite the old Asiatic theatre and the medieval mystery plays as possible antecedents to his epic theatre. However, both ‘Everyman’ and ‘The Mother’ are the works of philosopher-dramatists (the only kind that Shaw took, ‘quite seriously’) and as such belong to the ageless theatre of ideas.

‘Everyman’ the most single mindedly philosophical of the moralities preaches repentance and penitence in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice. Holy Living and Holy

Dying - Christian morality is allegorically depicted. Brecht whose 'The Mother' is the most renowned 'lehrstucke' play in the propagandist period of his career deals with Marxist-communism and emphatically with what in a way possibly surmounts Marxism, the Third cause. Vlasova 'the mother', finds that she rediscovers her son Pavel through the common cause

"For he and I were two but the third
Common cause that we followed
bound us close together".

The message in both cases is directed at the common audience since the aim is to evoke a collective response and not so much individual identification. The aim is to teach a society, and change a society. The morality play was an integral social organ, an aware and articulate expression of the writer's sense of moral responsibility. Brecht in his turn wrote for a certain section of society, seeking to establish political awareness by evoking an *en masse* recognition of a sociological truth.

Within this context of the theatre of ideas, both plays depict the human situation, the human predicament. Life is seen as a process, a journey into self-discovery for both the central figures. For Everyman it culminates in a union with Divine Grace; for Vlasova in an abnegation of self in union with the Cause. Everyman learns that worldly possessions and gifts of the mind are not permanent and that Good Deeds alone will sustain him till the very end. He has to go through the sacraments of Eucharist and Last Anointing and scourge himself in awareness of Christ's sacrifice. Vlasova learns to surrender herself to the Cause. She is troubled initially at the thought that the impetus of the Bolshevik movement might sweep her son away from her. Her ignorant mind has to be schooled; this completed she gives herself selflessly to the Cause. Human relationship ceases to be momentous to her. Pavel is home from exile. But if she is to cook breakfast for him, who is to feed the pamphlet machine? If she is to

cut bread for him, who is to remove the finished pages? Thus in 'The Mother' as in 'Everyman' the moral is enacted and embodied; not merely stated. To this extent, both plays are ritualistic in so far as ritual is a societal impulse and recognition of an accepted idea of truth.

With regard to stylistic similarities characterization is firmly set inside the framework of the theatre of ideas. Turgenev wrote, "I have never taken ideas but always characters for my starting point..... I never attempted to 'create a character' if in the first place I had in mind an idea and not a living person." For the ideas' playwrights however this process is bound to work in reverse.

The characters are in both plays clear-cut abstractions in the main. The pattern of arrangement is also similar. There is one central figure who alone moves and evolves. It is not psychological growth as much as being strait-jacketed by the dramatist into a certain experience with the end-view of producing a certain result. These central figures represent humanity and they are unselfconsciously held up as object lessons. They are surrounded by a cluster of satellite figures. In 'Everyman' they are moral types recognisable through their very names-Friendship, Kindred, Goods, Knowledge; in 'The Mother' unmistakable social types: the hot-headed young revolutionary in Pavel and his group, the capitalist factory-owner and the local gossip circle. They may seem abstractions but they represent a meaningful, forceful reality for the medieval and modern audiences respectively and for that reason alone they may not be dismissed as effete. True to type, the play as governed by such characters becomes a sequence of distinct predictable behavioral patterns and reactions to certain fairly predictable situations, and proceeds to its artistic statement in a linear movement.

The morality play and Brecht's 'learning' play address themselves directly to the audience. They are non-illusionistic, more

precisely, non-naturalistic. Brecht's alienation effect where distancing, as opposed to emotional involvement, becomes vital for the audience to recognise or understand in a new light the dramatist's ideology or doctrine.

'The Mother' opens directly with Vlasova talking to the audience, expressing her doubts and fears regarding her son, in a markedly non-attached tone— "He's quite different from what his father was. He's always reading books and the food never was good enough for him. Now the soup's got even worse. So he just gets more and more discontented." There are shades of Eliot and his neutral dramatic style. Brecht's narration (a term befitting the 'epic' theatre) of the flag demonstration also seeks this effect :

"Vlasova - But on that day it was Smilgin the worker who carried it.

Smilgin - My name is Smilgin... Should we give up the flag ?

Anton - Don't give it up, Smilgin. Bargaining won't help, we said. And Vlasova told him :...

And besides, there are innumerable exhortatory chorus songs sung to the audience in praise of the Cause, of the red flag, of the Vlasovas of all countries...

unknown soldiers of the revolution, indispensable."

What is rather sophisticated conscious artistry in Brecht is natural to the 'Everyman' playwright. Apart from the usual, unpretentious, prologue and epilogue, there is a disgruntled God presented to the audience. Everyman himself unashamedly sermonises to the audience :

"Take example all ye that this do hear
or see

How they that I loved best do forsake me "

As opposed to the naturalistic/illusionistic theatre of Ibsen or the late nineteenth century,

the morality and the epic stage becomes a direct though microcosmic presentation of life.

The nature of presentation is in both cases 'cool, stark, precise' and markedly simplistic. The morality dramatist makes his point with obvious clarity. The restoration of Good Deeds to strength is not merely represented symbolically or mimetically. Knowledge underlines it for the audience in so many words-

"Now is your Good Deeds safe and sound
Going upright upon the ground."

Brecht is consciously unambiguous. That this artistic principle, directed ostensibly towards the common man in order to make him understand better, held greater appeal for the intellectual elite in the final analysis, is quite another thing. During the flag demonstration, Vlasova declares "Give me the flag Smilgin, I said. Give it here. I will carry it. All this is going to be changed." The audience is told in no uncertain terms that she has thus signalled her acceptance of the cause. Such a simplistic technique directly subserves in both cases the singleness of aim and the determinism of the playwrights.

But the difference eventually lies in the sensibilities of the writers. The anonymous playwright of 'Everyman', we may conventionally presume, blessed with an open and straight forward mind said all that he wanted to in a straight forward manner. Brecht however plain the action of his play, gives that twist to his message to create a cryptic complexity which is typically twentieth century. The inevitable Brechtian irony and cynicism though not as marked as in 'Mother Courage' and 'The Caucasian Chalk Circle' are at play towards the end. With the outbreak of the first worldwar, revolutionary activities are on the wane, but Vlasova is determined to see the struggle out. She goes out on to the streets with a strident call to the workers,

but is told "None of that applies anymore. We went on strike against the war in several factories. Our strikes were smashed. The revolution won't come now. Go home, old girl, see the world the way it is." In the end, the tireless heroic struggle of the Bolsheviks is glorified and hailed triumphant and that ultimately is Brecht's purpose, but the note has been struck and it cannot help but evoke a rather complex response from the audience. In highlighting the futility of it all, startlingly, Brecht looks back to Marlowe and Jonson, and forward to the Absurd Theatre. The mannered facade seems to fall away to reveal just another puny mortal trying to be heroic in a shrunken

world. Thus what is in the morality play (despite its elegiac quality) an optimistic unequivocal affirmation of life seems here a complex admixture of cynicism and idealism.

In the light of such striking similarity of genre, 'The Mother' may well be described a highly stylized and intellectualized morality play. It represents along with 'Everyman' which is almost archetypal to the theatre of ideas, the ultimate in commitment, the ultimate in a rational approach to theatre.

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Macbeth — A Tragedy

I. Characteristics of Shakespearean Tragedy :

To Shakespeare's contemporaries, "tragedy" simply meant a play ending in disaster. We find that most Elizabethan tragedies therefore end with the stage cluttered with corpses, giving the audience its money's worth. When Shakespeare came to write, 'blood' was of course a primary necessity-but other qualities were also expected. In accordance with Aristotelian norm "a purging" was to be effected by the experience of a tragic drama. Despite Johnson's criticism that Shakespeare often "sacrificed virtue to convenience", Shakespearean tragedy was accompanied by what Ribner calls "a vision of profound moral sense". The great tragedies follow a similar pattern in dealing with

the tragedy of a single individual and in exploring man's relation to the forces of evil in the world. With the Catharsis came the reconciliation - the symbolic rebirth at the end of every play when a Fortibras, a Malcolm and an Edgar came forward to begin a new life. Although several of Shakespeare's tragedies are based on the histories, the sense of history is overruled by the sense of personal fate. A Shakespearean tragedy has further, "a quality" which Bradley refers to as a "special tone or atmosphere" quite perceptible. In "Macbeth" the varied aspects - the desolate heath, the design of the witches, the stricken and guilty soul of the protagonist, the darkness that hangs forebodingly over Inverness seem to emanate from the same source.

II. The Tragedy of Macbeth:

Like the Greek tragedies, 'Macbeth' traces the life of the hero through five acts or episodes. The exposition presents a picture of Macbeth as "Bellona's bridegroom", and the witches prepare to meet him. As the action rises Macbeth faces the temptation of power and succumbs to it. The "falling action" prepares for the end when Macbeth is shown the 'babe with the crown'. The **resolution** brings order and peace to Scotland under the kingship of Malcolm. Unlike Oedipus, Brutus and Othello who are ignorant of the nature of the crime they commit, Macbeth's clear-sightedness in accepting the evil makes him a very different kind of a tragic hero. Macbeth is amazingly clear-sighted when he foresees the result of his action even before he commits the deed and metaphorically blind when he fails to understand the meaning of the apparitions he sees. Our reactions to Macbeth as a tragic hero are varied. We hear of the courageous general but he does not win our admiration as soon as we see him, in the way that Hamlet does. Macbeth does not fare very well in the scene preceding Duncan's death. Yet Shakespeare wins our pity for a man torn between fear and hesitancy, flustering and blundering ludicrously wondering if the "very stones" would 'prate' of his deed. Macbeth redeems himself by his awareness at every stage of worthlessness and the futility of the cause he submits himself to. Macbeth has no worthy rival or foe, none to fear but himself. In the presentation of Macbeth we see evil born out of that very capacity to do good and the base use that a noble mettle is put to. We recognise the frailty of the human will when faced with passion, temptation and illusion.

Shakespeare moving away from the Greek concept of a tragic hero, therefore used varied methods in his presentation. John Wain points out that Macbeth acts with a full sense of the evils he is submitting himself to. He is aware of 1) The moral hideousness of the deed before him. 2) The inadequacy of the

"Spur of vaulting ambition". 3) The certainty of judgement "here."

"But in these cases

We still have judgement here, that we but
teach
Bloody instructions, which being taught,
return

To plague th' inventor"

1. 7. 7-10

Satan in Milton's "Paradise Lost" who fell because of his aspiring pride makes his conscious choice in the 4th Book - "Evil be thou my good". Macbeth's destruction seems to reflect such a fall. Macbeth's inability to say "amen" after the murder becomes a sign of his alienation from God. Despite this, Macbeth attains a tragic stature. The sublimity of his tragedy lies in the heroic fatalism with which he accepts his damnation. Rossiter says that Macbeth having embraced the "cause of disorder" and identified himself with the 'anti-nature' represented by the witches, recognizes that there is no longer any route back to order and goodness. Like Faustus who realizes Hell, and Othello, who sees himself as one

"Whose hand

Like the base Judaeen threw a pearl
Richer than all his tribe"

Macbeth is tragically clear-sighted. But he is misguided and deceived in other respects. John Wain speaks of Macbeth's confidence. Macbeth is confident that the forces of disorder he has unleashed will never boomerang. When it is prophesied that Birnam Wood must come to Dunsinane before he is overthrown and even then only by a man not born of woman, Macbeth takes it as a prophesy of protection:

"Who can impress the forest, bid the tree
Unfix his earth-bound root? Sweet bode-
ments good!

Rebellious dead, rise never, till the wood of
Birnam rise"

4. 1. 95-98

At the end when the two prophecies are fulfilled, Macbeth's vision attains a tragic grandeur :

“Tomorrow and Tomorrow and tomorrow
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
.....
All all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out out,
 brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow,
 a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the
 stage
And then is heard no more”.

5. 5. : 19 - 26

Michael Long puts forward the idea that Othello suffers a “collapse of personality”, when the personality is brought to face a situation with which it is unfit to deal. Othello succumbing to the shallow plot gives way to the language of Iago, of terror, loathing and ugliness. He takes upon himself the justice of God and murders Desdemona in what his delusion tells him is justice. In Macbeth too, the change from ‘Bellona's bridegroom,’ is complete. His personality collapses frighteningly when faced with the image of his own bloody deed. He begins to speak the language of the weird sisters and wishes wholesale destruction on the universe “till destruction sicken”; his being is now afraid “to know itself”. When the murder is done he is denounced and damned as it were, as if his three names gave him three personalities to suffer in :

“Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawder shall sleep no more. Macbeth shall sleep no more”. Macbeth looks for the reason of his sleepless torture and his glance falls on Banquo immediately. But when Banquo is killed, his ghost returns and the forces of disorder are released. When he goes to seek the witches however he is no longer in awe of them ;

“How now, you secret, black and
 midnight hags”.

He becomes a tyrant to his own country :

“.....each new morn
New widows howl, new orphans cry,
 new sorrows
Strike heaven on the face,
 that it resounds
As if it felt with Scotland and yelled out
Like syllable of dolour”.

4. 3. : 3-7

The “collapse” of his personality is paralleled outside so that he has done already what Malcolm claims he would do :

“..... I should
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,
Uproar the universal peace, confound
All unity on earth”

4.3. : 97-100

Macbeth's tragedy is also played out against the backdrop of treason against an anointed king which was considered a sin. Thus, in a way Macbeth's tragedy seems predestined for he has spilt the royal and precious blood of a king which demands a costly price. The virtues of the good kings Duncan and Edward are set against the sins of Macbeth. Malcolm has the grace of God on him and will restore peace and health to Scotland. Macbeth knows that his crime is doubly heinous for he kills a king who is further virtuous and his guest. He knows the full horror of retribution to come; he is weary as he waits for the end, yet never seeks refuge in justification of his crime :

“Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek
 that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued,
 against
The deep damnation of his taking-off ;
And pity like a naked new born babe
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin,
 horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,”

1. 7. : 16-24

The use of soliloquy is powerful in heightening the tragedy of Macbeth. In Macbeth's soliloquies inner experience and development are brought to life giving us his vision of the "life to come", divinity taking its stand against him. The tragedy enlarges its dimensions embracing the outer world carrying the inner drama to a metaphysical level by the use of precise symbol and concrete images. There are images like those of blood which emphasise the horror of the deed as when Malcolm imagines Scotland as a country bleeding and receiving new gashes. There are others like those of clothes which ill-fit Macbeth who

"now does he feel his title
Hang loose upon him, like a giant's robe
Upon a dwarfish thief".

5. 2. : 20-22

III. The Tragedy of "Macbeth"

The tragedy of Macbeth, the hero is sometimes seen as part of a larger tragedy - the disorder and chaos which sweep the hero along and whose tragedy only forms a part of it. Whilst evil rages in Scotland, all is chaos, turbulence and disorder. The play "Hamlet" opens with the observation that "something is rotten in the state of Denmark". There is a mood of evil and foreboding that envelopes everything. It is reflected in the coldness and the gloom of the castle battlements in the language and imagery ("Tis an unweeded garden.....") The tragedies of Hamlet and Lear also embrace the entire country. "Macbeth" is as Ribner says, a large universal tragedy like "Lear" but it also includes the private personal one like the tragedy of 'Othello'. The tragedy is cast simultaneously on the planes of man, family and the physical universe, and the evil works itself out on each of these corresponding planes. L. C. Knights states the theme of Macbeth to be "an unnatural reversal". The opening scene with the lines "Fair is foul and foul is fair" would seem to immediately support this theme. The associated premonitions of conflict disorder

and moral darkness speak of the world into which Macbeth will plunge himself. Even the evil is unnatural. In the Old Man's words "Tis unnatural even like the deed that is done". In this reversed world "evil" means good and there is no room here for Macduff, Malcolm, Macduff's family who must either flee or be destroyed by the evil principle. Against this is the Sunshine world of Malcolm. King Edward and England.

Once the evil is unleashed, it corrupts all creation. Lennox speaks of the physical universe thrown out of harmony of "lamentings" and 'prophesying with accents terrible,' Ross speaks of "the wild and violent sea". The order of nature is reversed and the sun is blotted out.

"..... dark night strangles the travelling
lamp :
Is't night's predominance, or the day's
shame,
That darkness does the face of earth
entomb,
When living light should kiss it ?

.....
Old Man : A falcon, tow'ring in her pride of
place
Was by a mousing owl hawked at
and killed"

Ross : "And Dumcan's horses.....
Turned wild in nature, broke their
stalls, flung out
Contending 'gainst obedience, as they
would make
War with mankind.

Old Man : Tis said they eat each other."
2. 4. : 6-18

Out of this very evil in nature, Shakespeare effects the rebirth of good. A wood that moves and child unborn of mother, heralds the downfall of the tyrant and restoration of good. This 'unnatural world' is one of illusion where "nothing is but what is not." Lady Macbeth cautions her husband to 'look like

the innocent flower. But be a serpent under it". Macbeth and Lady Macbeth become children of the tumult-the world of the witches. The beings who people this world undergo a psychological reversal so that Lady Macbeth invokes the aid of spirits to unsex her. The inverted death banquet, contrasts the banquet earlier, producing not bodily sustenance but more phantoms.

This discordant universe is almost always dark - the vision of the dagger, the murder of Banquo and Duncan and sleep walking—all take place in the dark night which Macbeth invokes as he bids the 'Stars hide their fires' Conversely these are fires both associated with the good forces and with them the images of green and growing things. Certain images become characteristic of this world - like those of 1. a babe torn smiling from the breast and dashed to death. 2. the pouring of the sweet milk of concord into hell. 3. the earth shaking with fever. 4. the mind full of scorpions etc.

There is tempest and disorder in the universe as Macbeth would have the winds untied and "fight against the churches", trees blown down, palaces and pyramids destroyed

"though the treasure
Of Nature's germens tumble all together
Even till destruction sicken".

4. 1. : 58-60

The "Witches" support both concepts - of the tragedy as personal and Macbeth's alone, of the tragedy as a chaos, all enveloping. The weird sisters can be treated as a symbol of externalised evil, who together with Lady Macbeth, bring out the potential of evil in Macbeth. An evil which the protagonist must face, which cannot like Iago (In Othello) be destroyed by him.

In the "reversed world" they are 'women with beards', associated with all destructive phenomenon. The moment Macbeth voluntarily enters this world his fate seems predestined and the would-be master of fate and controller of nature shows how, as Hamlet says, 'Our wills and fates do contrary run'.

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Henderson's Travel from Alienation to Accommodation

Millionaire, life weary Henderson takes a trip into the depths of himself - "All travel is mental"; he reaches the destination of contentment and peace with an understanding of what it is to be human. "To meet with a strong sense of self the sacrifice, of self demanded by social circumstance" ¹ from a state of alienation, Henderson in his travel through reality's dark dream comes to "grips with existence" with a strong sense of self that makes the world remove its 'wrath'

The details of the travel are told by Henderson in a flash back as a story of the grim circumstances which make him leave home—his experience with the natives of Arneui and the Wariri, his departure back to his home, alienation from home followed by revealing experiences which lead to accommodation and back again to home.

The alienated Henderson feels compelled to refuse his tenants heat in winter, "he is to try to kill their cat, to act drunkenly, to make suicide threats to Lily his second wife, to shout his guts out (that the maid succumbs to a heart attack), to try to reach his father by playing the violin, to raise pigs, to annoy the neighbourhood. In a word, be irrational. But he knows he is irrational - "What am I doing here .." "Oh ! my condition !"

"I am an Ishmael too"; he has a desire in him which goes "I want, I want, I want." What he wants he does not know. But he knows that what he has is not enough. His life of affluence breeds uselessness and makes him look into himself. "Death will annihilate you and nothing will remain and there will be nothing left but junk - while something still is, now, for the sake of all get out".

So he gets out from these alienating circumstances with his "I want", away from civilisation into the interiors of Africa where

he thinks he can view reality in a new perspective and change himself for the better.

In Arneui, his first destination., he meets the "Woman of Bittahners"; her wisdom must unburden the oppression of his "I want". And the old queen whispers to him the words "grun-tu-Molani" (Man-want to - live) and this is a fascinating revelation to him that his 'want' is actually the 'want-to-live.'. From a state of alienation, now he finds himself in the path of living-finds a basic purpose in life.

In overwhelming happiness he wants to further rid the village of the contaminating frogs in the water which were causing a water scarcity-his first attempt "to do something". He uses a self-made improvised bomb and the result is a fiasco for the water is sucked in by earth.

Once again uselessness descends on him and he says - "why for once, just once couldn't I get my heart's desire? I have to be doomed always to bungle"

In attempting to blast the cistern he has obviously given himself a god-like air and therefore remains unable to face his human situation.

He now leaves Arneui for Wariri, his second destination. Dahfu, the prince, his mentor, takes him to the rain ritual - an ominous dance and revelry, fun and games, in which it is required to move an idol for the rain to pour. Henderson is filled with the desire to move this Mummah, puts in all his effort, moves it and becomes 'Sungu' the Rain king. Moreover he has already come-down from his godlike air and agreed that that Dahfu can be 'better' than him in the customary wrestle, between the king and a visitor.

With this and his new achievement he has now done something of value. He realises that through his own strength and humility he has 'done something' in contrast to the previous cistern blowup when he relied on an unnatural bomb. The consciousness and reality of his own strength and determination thrill him and he says to the king "thanks to you for giving me such a wonderful chance. .. to get into my depth - that real depth". The 'grun-tu-molani' in him acquires a new tone.

But prince Dahfu tells him that 'Grun-tu-molani' alone is not sufficient - "Mr. Henderson more is required." And now begins another descent to the depths. He becomes bound to Dahfu "by a truth-telling agreement" in which the king makes another revelation: man is in constant fear of reality; "It's always salvation, salvation, what shall I do, what must I do?".

To get rid of this fear Dahfu forces the Sungo to imitate his lion Atti (which incidentally is according to the custom his fore-father in a lion-form). For he thinks that if he acts like a lion he can live with the attributes of a lion, "for the noble self-conception is so the fellow is". Dahfu even makes Henderson roar to purge him of all his fears to change and be noble - to like the lion in reality.

But try as he may, Henderson cannot overcome this fear and in fact it mounts increasingly - "how did I know that it might not be judgement hour for me." The lesson goes on and soon Atti is considered an impostor and Dahfu has to catch the right fore-father. In Dahfu's confrontation with the lion Henderson reaches the height of his fear, for it is sure death for the king. The snarling of this lion was indeed "the voice of reality". With the death of the king he is purged of his fears and confronts reality in all its nakedness. He confronts death, horrible death, and realises his mortality, his humanness - the ultimate of the 'I want' in him.

But ironically the lioness which according to Dahfu is a symbol of 'life without fear' is actually the symbol of death. Even Dahfu, the man of wisdom cannot fully realise this vision. Imitation of the less-than human, Henderson understands, leads to death. Something more is needed.

And now comes his real analysis of himself when he realises the 'Something more'. He longs for Lily and wants to go home and not be Dahfu's successor. "I've gotten to that age where I need human voices and intelligence that's all that's left - Kindness and Love". The need is to go back home; it has been 'Unreality, Unreality' all the while. The death of Dahfu makes him face his mortality. In watching death he learns to contain his humiliation - to overcome fear. And now "its love that makes reality reality. The opposite makes the opposite".

Thus Henderson faces the truth ultimately in blows, as he says, and not without suffering. In this first 'blow' with a cistern he realises his illusions of grandeur and superior power. He remembers Shelley's "I do remember well the hour that burst my spirits sleep". It recalls him to reality to awaken to his humanness. The next blow is in the actual wrestle with king Dahfu when he accepts "you are the better man" and this time the blow is a really hard one. The next 'blow' of course is the actual burst of his spirits sleep in moving the idol, for this is immediately followed by gross indignities, when a howling mob in a ritual strips him and throws him into the slush. "What had I got myself into - what were the consequences? Oh the ground floor of the palace, filthy, naked and bruised". The first realisation is painful. The final 'blow' strikes him when he actually sees death, with the lion killing the King. With this reality of death he looks into himself and comprehends his bonds with life-love and kindness. "You know why I am impatient to see my wife? I am eager to know how it will be now that the sleep is burst. And the children too. I love them very much".

So, from his long trek from alienation, he experiences the dark dream of reality and comes back home again. He can now face this home of alienation with reality and a 'strong sense of self'. He can look into the depths of himself and come to "grips with existence". The dignity of his self and integrity brings back reason to his erstwhile irrational life. He is no more an Ishmael, an outcast; he is in full harmony with the law of nature. The 'I want' in him is no longer oppressive, for he has found his need and purpose to live in the "rhythm of time" with love and kindness and understanding of the common bond of the human spirit. Now he has overcome fear with his confrontation with death's reality and his own mortality. He is neither more than human (as is revealed in the cistern blow-up) nor is he less than human (as revealed by the lion as a symbol of life) but in the middle of things, full of the dignity and joyous consciousness of life. With this new spirit he steps into Newfoundland (where the plane lands significantly for refuelling and watches his new found life. With the orphan boy whom he meets in the plane clutched close to his chest he "went running, leaping bounding and tingling over the pure white lining of the gray Arctic Silence". Henderson "was going about, the business of living despite the death-dealing chaotic real".²

It is for this attitude that Schlosberg advises the victim - As a Leventhal - "Have dignity - you understand me - choose dignity, nobody knows enough to turn it down". In much the same way does Tonny Withelm overcome ignominy by understanding his position and the basic relationship between himself and all men - the bond of mortality. The feeling of

not wanting to die but to live - past failures and present lamentations have no time - "only the present is real, the here and now seize the day",³ and he seizes the day, the moment, the life from alienation.

And Joseph too in his 'Dangling' position cut away from social obligations and unable to live with an identity in his freedom gives into 'the leash'—"Hurray for regular hours ! And for the supervisions of the spirit ! Long live regimentation !"⁵ He realises his dignity in his failure to live in his self-created world of non-involvement."

All these men move from alienation to accomodation. With Henderson it is an actual travel into the self from his original state of isolation to actual, real life. They start from alienation, go through a self-analysis and come to a conclusion about the human condition—its dignity, mortality and its need for extending and taking love and kindness from humanity, and thus effect an accomodation with living. In a world "But to think is to be full of sorrow"⁶ and where "But mostly we are left to our own devices. And we are content if we are left alone". This concept of life seems the only redeeming element.

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Why is Vardaman's Mother A Fish? Another Approach To Faulkner's "As I Lay Dying"

The validity of logical reasoning is a questionable point. Logical arguments have been seen to lead to non-truths: ancient Greeks, by methodical reasoning, arrived at the non-truth that the earth is the center of the universe; the Church, by sustained reasoning, justified the Crusades and the Inquisition; and democracies, by acceptable arguments, arrive at the conclusion that inequality is justified when ratified by popular majority. The relative validity of logical reasoning needs to be kept in mind when we analyze the thought processes of young Vardaman. For he reverses the pattern established above; by non-logical arguments he arrives at profound psychological truths.

Vardaman and Darl are alike in intuitively arriving at apparently non-logical truths. Darl argues that he has no mother and therefore he does not exist. These statements, themselves, are inferred from his preceding declaration that Jewel's mother is a horse.

"Jewel's mother is a horse," Darl said.
"Then mine can be a fish, can't it, Darl?"
I said
Jewel is my brother.

x x x x x

"Then what is your ma, Darl?" I said.
"I haven't got ere one," Darl said.
"Because if I had one it is was. And if it is was, it can't be is. Can it?"
"No," I said.
I am. Darl is my brother.
"But you are, Darl," I said.
"I know it," Darl said. "That's why I am not is. Are is too many for one woman to foal."

Darl's reasoning, here, is not meant to lead to factual truth. He knows that Addie has borne both Jewel and him. But to Addie he does not exist as a son, and his love for her, thus, holds no emotional relevance, and therefore he cannot love his mother.

Vardaman's thinking resembles Darl's in that it leads to conclusions characterized by psychological truth rather than literal veracity. In order to understand this we need to trace the emotional phases by which Vardaman arrives at his belief that his mother is a fish.

On the day of his mother's death and immediately preceding it, Vardaman has a vivid experience of what death is. He brings home a fish almost his size. "Yap-mouthed" and "goggle-eyed" and covered with dust, it looks utterly dead. Cleaning the fish is a traumatic experience for the little boy-death becomes flesh-livid, blood-vivid. Chopping it to pieces spurts blood on Vardaman's hands and overalls and he becomes very conscious that this state is one of not-being for the fish. The flesh and blood which once made it a fish are 'not-fish now' and 'not blood.' Such impressions, sharply etched on his mind, return with a powerful impact when Vardaman runs out of the house after his mother's death, to the edge of the porch, where the fish once lay dead, in the dust.

Vardaman cannot accept Addie's body as his mother. He, thus, can see her as utterly dead as the fish is.

It was not her. I was there looking.
I saw.
I thought it was her, but it was not. It was not my mother. She went away when the other one laid down in her bed and drew the quilt up.
She went away.

He also rejects the notion that his mother would smell so bad as the body does. "My mother doesn't smell like that.....My mother is a fish."

Although he is sure that his mother has gone away, Vardaman believes that she has not gone too far. She has become the fish, so that she'd be cooked and eaten to be absorbed by the family that centered around her. Vardaman is intuitively aware that the fish as an entity is 'detached and secret and familiar, an *is* different from my *is*.' He can visualize such a separate essence disintegrating through cooking and eating. The fish, in the process, dissolves into a floating, dark, fading solution so that it is absorbed by all those who eat it. In order that she be drawn back as sustenance to the family she loves, Addie becomes the fish.

Vardaman arrives at this conclusion by a sliding transposition of meaning among key words.

Then it wasn't and she was and now it is and she wasn't. And tomorrow it will be.....
cooked and et.....

When his mother was alive, the fish wasn't, it was dead. Now-she-wasn't, it-was-dead. Now she wasn't, she is gone, but the fish *is*, it still remains there as bleeding pieces. The fish which *wasn't* now, *is* because his mother who *wasn't* will *be*. This is the art of bringing the dead to life, circumventing the penalty of death.

Vardaman's argument, here, closely resembles that of Darl, cited at the beginning of this paper. Both perceive that being and not-being are to be defined relatively. Both employ puns so that one word goes through a rapid semantic cell-division. Neither could care less about the obvious fallacy of the undistributed middle in their syllogism. Yet both, by their indirection, arrive at profound

psychological insights. Vardaman's use 'wasn't' to mean 'dead' and 'not present' is very similar to Darl's "Are is too many for one woman to foal." 'Are' refers to Vardaman's assertion 'You *are*' about Darl affirming his existence for his kid-brother. 'Are' is also indicative of the plural, and Darl combines the two meanings when he implies that his mother finds *him* one too many to share her affection.

Vardaman's belief that his mother is a fish is also the outcome of an inner compulsion. This is his child's way of transforming an irreparable loss into a life-supporting faith. We notice a similar process at work when the coffin floats in the river and Vardaman insists that Darl would catch it. "He's got to have her got to so I can bear it." He's got-to-have-her. His wards scream of his need to have his mother, his imagination rapidly adapts all his reasoning to satisfy this prime need for emotional survival. It is the same need that he serves by concluding that his mother is a fish. She's got to be so that he can bear her death. She's got to be because that is the only way he can have her back with him and with the family.

Vardaman's claim that his mother is a fish introduces the central image of the book, the fish. The fish, cut and bleeding, resembles a sacrificial victim; cooked and eaten, it becomes a sacrificial meal; absorbed by each one and present in each one, it resembles the sacrament of the Eucharist. By early association fish is also a symbol of Christ so that by a fusion all connotations Addie acquires the aspect of a saving victim.

Vardaman's account of Addie, thus counterpoints Cora's assessment of her, and complements other impressions of her created in the novel. It also serves to effect a new perspective of Anse and Addie. As Vardaman imagines Addie in the aspect of dissolving in order to become nourishment to her family, Anse by contrast, acquires the

opposite cast, as of one who sucks at all that the family has in order to keep himself in tact. While Anse, like a fungus, draws on the sap of the family, Addie, like a sacrament, becomes the sap of the family.

Like a painter who'd arrange that different shafts of light should bring out the significant aspects of his subject, so Faulkner presents in **As I lay Dying** a multiple point-of-view. The effect is not unlike the experience of having Claude Monet's series of impressions of Rouen cathedral in a circarama presentation.

It allows a complex picture of Addie and Anse to be formed, by delicate indirection, and through the responsive sympathy of the reader. Vardaman's child's-eye-view of his mother, thus, is pivotal to our appreciation of Addie and Anse. His thoughts about his mother hint rather than state the Yin-Yang relationship in which the author places them in the novel.

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