THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

India's decision to remain a member of the Commonwealth in spite of being an independent sovereign Republic gives a new lease of life amongst us to the English language. Until recently English was apt to be regarded as the remnant of a foreign imposition, an inappropriate growth in the way of an authentic indigenous literature. Today it seems an appropriate and desirable link between us and the group of English-speaking nations with whom we have formed a voluntary association: it has become the medium of a larger existence in which we have elected to share. This is all to the good—especially as America with whom we shall have more and more to deal is English-speaking. But we shall be understimating the significance of the English language in India if we think that it is only a valuable means of promoting our political, economic and technological interests in the democratic world. English is, above all, an immense cultural asset. And it is such an asset not simply because it renders available to us magnificent countries of the mind, but also because it renders possible to us the most magnificent expression of our own soul.

The first impulse, vis-à-vis this statement, will be to cry, "Absurd paradox!" and to follow up with the question: "Can India really take to the English language as an instrument of her Indianness and make her utterance in it anything more than an exotic curiosity?" The answer, surely, cannot be given with a facile pointing out of the great increase in the number of Indians who talk and write fair English. The answer can only be given by seeing whether there is what Galsworthy termed "flower of author". The disclosure of inmost individuality through the sublest potentialities of the language: this is "flower of author". Such "flower" need not be in one particular style as opposed to others. Simplicity and complexity, plainness and richness, urbanity and intense vivacity—all these can equally allow it. Can we affirm that, in any style whatever, "flower of author" can be shown to be possible in English-writing India as something more than a rare, almost accidental, growth? Yes, we can. For two reasons.

The Indian Soul and the English Language

What is called Indianness possesses as one of its main characteristics a power of multifold assimilation arising from a many-sidedness, a possibility, in the unique penchant that is the Indian genius. The Indian genius is, of course, best described as spiritual; but it is not spiritual in a narrow way: it is an urge of synthesis of a hundred approaches to the Eternal, the Infinite, the Divine. Not only does it spiritualise everything in the long run: it also spiritualises everything without depriving any term of its own essential quality. It cannot nothing by the transformation change it induces: it induces the change by raising all things to their own inherent heights of Super- nature, as it were—heights at which they are most authentically themselves by being spiritual, by being facets of the Divine, the Infinite, the Eternal. Wonderfully syncretical and embracive, it can also be exclusive and discriminate in the quality of any race, the force of any culture; hence it can make both the mind and the movement of the English language part of its activity. This mind and this movement do not confront it as utterly foreign: they come to it striking sympathetic chords in its multi-rhythmical heart. That is the first reason why "flower of author" in English can be an Indian growth drawing not unnaturally or accidentally its nourishment from the soil of the Indian soul.

The second reason is the character of the English language itself. No other modern language is so varied in mentality, so diverse in turn. It is a fusion of many strains—the Celtic, the Roman, the Saxon, the Teuton, the French, the Italian have mingled in it, and the Greek soul and the Hebrew soul have also coloured it. As a result, it is an extremely plastic and versatile instrument capable of being expressive of multifarious types of consciousness. No wonder it does not have any marked tradition of persistent mood or manner—so, for instance French has; no wonder, too, it is notable for numberless idiosyncrasies: and no wonder, again, it has proved so adequate a medium for every innovation of outlook and in-the-making, whether it be the adventurous imaginative gusto of the Renaissance, the gorgeous oriental religiosity of Hebraism, the passion and wonder and Nature-feeling of the Romantic Movement, the vague poignancies and dim wizardries of Celtic paganism. The syncretistic and assimilative Indian genius meets in the English tongue a multiplicity and pliancy of temper and tone which give that genius all the more chance of taking hold of this tongue for living self-expression.

There is no doubt that "flower of author" is, for Indians, possible in English. This does not, of course, imply possibility for all and sundry. Such possibility is not there for Indians in even the indigenous languages: every Indian is not a literary master. And, where English is concerned, it is quite to be expected that "flower of author" should be less common than in those languages. But to maintain that Indian utterance in English can only be an exotic curiosity and never an organic unfolding of genuine Indianness is to indulge in a sweeping superficiality. What now remains to be shown is that true Indian utterance in English is more than just possible and that it can be in quality finer and greater than in any language spoken by Indians today. This is the supreme paradox we have to elucidate—and if we can elucidate it we shall have dealt the death-blow to all efforts by our educationists to minimise the importance of English in our cultural self-expression.

The Fittest Body for the Indian Genius

English is unquestionably the most highly developed of modern languages both by virtue of the large variety of racial and psychological strains in it and by virtue of the extraordinary crop of poets in English history. Poetry is the sovereign power of all language: where poets of high quality abound, there the language reaches the highest development, especially when the language itself has immense potentialities. No student of the world's literature will deny that England stands head and shoulders above other modern countries in poetry. Neither in modern Europe nor anywhere else do we find such a poetic galaxy as Shakespeare, Milton, Spenser, Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Cowper, Swinburne, Francis
WORLD INTEREST
IN SRI AUROBINDO’S WORK

Two books on the life and teachings of Sri Aurobindo will be published in England this summer. Dr. G. H. Langley, former Vice-Chancellor of Delhi University, is the author of one of these books. The other is written by Dr. Ranji Shekhi, Indian scholar and journalist of Karachi, now settled in England. It was he, who some years ago, gave a talk to the East India Association in London, in the course of which he referred to Sri Aurobindo as the builder of the greatest synthesis of all that is best in the cultures of the East and the West.

Sri Aurobindo’s philosophy is a subject of post-graduate study in the Universities of Benares, Allahabad, Calcutta and Osmania. Professor Haridas Chaudhuri received his Ph.D. from the Calcutta University for a thesis on Sri Aurobindo, called Integral Idealism, which will be published in America. It may also be mentioned that the Agra University conferred a Ph.D. on Professor J. S. Agarwol of Cormore for a thesis on Sri Aurobindo’s poetry. It is said that the Ministry of Information, the Government of India, has been receiving, about Sri Aurobindo and his Ashram of Integral Yoga in Pondicherry, inquiries from various parts of the world, particularly North and South America.

In the United States, Dr. P. A. Sorekin, Chairman of the Department of Sociology, Harvard University, and a Director of the newly-started Research Centre there in Altruistic Integration and Creativity, recently asked for a thesis on the aims and methods of Sri Aurobindo’s Integral Yoga, which Harvard wishes to publish. Not long ago Professor E. A. Burtt, Head of the Department of Philosophy, Cornell University, New York, introduced Sri Aurobindo’s magnum opus, The Life Divine, as a textbook for the post-graduate course in Philosophy. To the initiative of Professor F. Spiegelberg, teacher of Indian Philosophy at Stanford University, who went to Pondicherry for the darshan of Sri Aurobindo in February last, is due the adoption of Sri Aurobindo’s Essays on the Gita as part of the course at Stanford.

An institution called Sri Aurobindo Library has been started at 82, Wall Street, New York, whose main object will be to make known to the American public the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. As a step to this end it will bring out American editions of the works of Sri Aurobindo. It has already announced The Life Divine.

Madame Gabrielle Mistral, the Chile winner of the Nobel Prize in literature, has stated in an interview to an Indian journalist in Los Angeles that she has “derived considerable enlightenment and solace” from the writings of Sri Aurobindo. She will be proposing Sri Aurobindo’s name for the Nobel Prize and eminent personalities in India and abroad will be supporting her proposal. It will be remembered that Sir Francis Young-husband, who declared The Life Divine “the greatest book which has been produced in our time” had a similar idea before he died. Madame Mistral is planning a visit to India shortly when she hopes to stay in the Sri Aurobindo Ashram for some time.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN INDIA

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Thompson and Yeats. In consequence of the intensely inspired impact of poets like these, the versatile English language has acquired a unique capacity for strangely suggestive effects—the super-suble phrase, the packed visionary phrase, the phrase of indefinable intonation. Even in prose the unique capacity has its play and, within the less daring terms proper, English still surpasses all modern languages, including those of India herself, in the immediacies and intimacies of intuitive speech. If this is so, then English is bound to be most valuable to the genius of a country which is not only synthetical and assimilative in the extreme but also spiritual to the sith degree; for, a speech with extraordinary possibilities of strangely suggestive effects suits most the magic, the mystery, the depth, the sudden and sublime revelatory reach of the spiritual consciousness. English promises, therefore, to be the expressive body par excellence of our true soul.

What adds to our conviction about this promise is the fact that the strangely suggestive potentials of English have already been pressed into service of the spiritual consciousness by English writers themselves. Herbert’s religious simplicity, at once piquant and passionate—Crashaw’s rich sensuousness kindling into ecstatic devotion—Donne’s nervous intricate power troubling the Insensible—Vaughan’s half-obscure half-bright strain through thought into mystical vision—Wordsworth’s profound contemplative pantheistic peace—Blake’s deeply delicate radiance—Coleridge’s glimmering occultation of the weird and the haunting—Shelley’s rainbowed rapture of some universal Light and Love—Keats’s enchanted luxury, through allegory and symbol and myth, in the Sovereign Beauty that is Sovereign Truth—Patmore’s pointed polished aridity of the intellect for “the unknown Eros”—Francis Thompson’s restless and crowded and colourful heat of response to “the many-splendoured Thing”—Yeats’s bewitched echo to the Immortal Loveliness in its world-wandering—AE’s crystalline contact with superhumanly populated twilights within and divinely inhabited edens above—all these quickenings of the spiritual consciousness are already present in English and have turned it to what may be called Indian uses. Doubtless, the uses are still somewhat elementary in comparison to what the Indian genius has achieved in the ancient Sanscrit of the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Gita. But the fact stands that English lends itself as the fittest body to this genius with an actually accomplished functioning, however initial, along our own national soul-trend. Hence, if we are to fulfill that trend the most natural no less than the most desirable act on our part is to find voice in English.

The Supreme Destiny of English

Not that the indigenous languages should be neglected. They must be developed. But English at present comes to us with a face of supreme destiny. And what that destiny is can be seen even now. For, even now, before our very eyes, it is being wonderfully worked out. A band of Indian poets remarkably gifted are uttering in English the mystical experience with an intense fidelity and felicity, and at their head is one of the greatest figures of the contemporary world and he has banished all shadow of doubt regarding the destiny we have spoken of. Sri Aurobindo has given the world what is at once the finest and grandest literary achievement of modern India and the deepest and highest articulation of Indian spirituality today—the epic with which he is occupied in the spare hours of a Yogi and which has already been published under the title of some twenty-thousand lines: Savitri, a Legend and a Symbol. In Savitri, we have proof as ample as we could wish that, while our vernaculars more easily provide us with footholds for climbing beyond commonplace into the revelatory intensities of literature, English alone enables at present the soul of India to attain the absolute peak of self-expression.

And from that peak the soul of India will communicate, to the whole Commonwealth and to all America and to whatever country is in touch with them, the harmonious rhythms of its own greatness. Far and wide, by means of English, the Indian genius will spread the word born from the occult immemorial that are the luminous source and support and goal of its unique history. Embodied in this language by India, Inspiration “with her lightning feet, A sudden messenger from the all-seeing tops” will conquer the heart and mind of humanity. Not through translations from Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil or Hindi—beautiful and powerful instruments of truth though they may prove—but directly through the tongue that was Shakespeare’s and is now Sri Aurobindo’s, the peoples of the earth will most vividly know India as the creative bride of the Divine and as the mighty mother of a new age which shall justify the light on man’s upward face.
The problem of Viet-Nam is not the only one in Asia which demands, in the very interest of France and the French Union, a speedy solution. There is the problem, less spectacular, but as urgent, of the French settlements in Pondicherry.

Indeed, since the liberation of France, it could be expected that the question would come up very soon, either at the conference with the promises made—kept—by England, India would have gained her independence. In contrast to the other populations of the French Union, the people of French India do not form a separate race, but are only national minorities. Their customs, languages and religious beliefs are those of their neighbours, Hindustan, and Hindustan may rightly be considered as rubber territories.

The Failure of the French

Perhaps it would have been otherwise if France had known how to take advantage of the long English domination over the peninsula to make, of the tiny enclaves which had been Indian territory, model territories for the standard of living, of instruction and of political institutions. At a time when two hundred years of the presence of the French, the conquests of new lands, the living remain main miserable—exactly as in the neighbouring parts of India—and new religions, castes and languages are not at all absorbed by the cost of the uplands, too many for a population of 300,000, there did not remain very much for anything else.

If only the universal suffrage which they had obtained allowed the people to express their interests or aspirations! But, defeated to the great extent in the ballot-box by the care of the administration, the voting papers, until the Second World War, served only to procure a seat of deputy or senator for some friend or protégé of the minister in office or of the Government. French India was the very type of the rotten borough.

The deficiency of the Third Republic may be respected or condemned in this respect. It may be a matter for rejoicing that, since 1947, the secret of suffrage has genuinely come into force. But the course of history cannot be set back. Reality cannot be suppressed by the simple fact that one regrets it or wishes to modify it.

Lost Opportunity of Creating Cultural Centres

Now, the fact is—and this is the difference from the other French colonies—that France did not know how to profit from the long years of the Mother Country and her old settlements in insurmountable moral links. The reality—this makes it necessary to henceforth to submit—the reality is that at the door of these settlements an opportunity to create a new India had been exercise henceforth a more and more powerful attraction.

So long as all was yet lost with the old England, but now, France could remain in India on condition that she gave up the main point of her political domination, turned her settlements, specially Pondicherry, into centres of French or rather Franco-Indian culture.

Never had the circumstances been more favourable. In an India in full consciousness of itself, it is Pondicherry, that there has been living since the last twenty-five years—as a symbol congenial to French thought in its affinity with the old Hindu humanism—Sri Aurobindo, the great master of Hindu thought", according to Romain Rolland, has found among the population of the country's enclaves of everywhere artists, writers, ascendant disciples.

Nehru himself, since 1946, seems to have been aware of such a solution: "such little pockets"—he said, speaking of the old French and Portuguese settlements—"cannot maintain themselves from the political point of view, but may continue from the point of view of culture."

He considered them "windows open to the world of the East."

Such a means to be also—a shade of difference—the views of the Governor Baron who recommended, in 1916, the promotion of the enclaves into centres of Franco-Indian culture, the problem of territories "being treated by the transfer of the organization of the University or the Universities of the Union—"those to be founded."

The importance of this policy, unpleasant, has not been understood in France. Certainly some concessions were made, some liberal reforms promulgated. A representa- tion in the Assembly was organized on November 23, 1948, a sort of General Council with extended administrative power.

A Council of Government was formed in April, 1947 to help the Governor, who, moreover, himself acted during six months later for a Commissioner to the Republic. The five towns, on the other hand, were given, in December 1948, the title of "Free City", which conferred a certain financial autonomy, specially on Chandernagore whose powers were yet more extended by a decree on October 13, 1948.

Though it marked some progress in the political life, it did not bring about the change of the government, this was not taken from the very outset to two fundamental errors: first, the seeking of solutions of a strictly administrative kind; secondly, the will to maintain at all costs the principle of French sovereignty. Therefore, it could not satisfy public opinion.

Recent Changes and Complications

Pandit Nehru, who at no time had no interest in confirming or of making the question of the old settlements the pretext of a conflict with France, considered at a point of a summer solution in June, 1948. Now, at the last month of October, orga- nized to find a new solution. Municipalities entrusted with the preparation of reunion the referendum in question of socialist partitions of integration with the French Union obtained, the majority. On could then await the referendum with confidence. Judith-
IX. VALUES AND SANCTIONS

(a) THE RISE OF MATERIALISM

We have stated that the philosophies of life which have influenced modern Western civilization do not give rise to an ethic because in the last analysis they do not provide sanction for higher values. Philosophy has become the handmaid of science. Unable to give a philosophy of life which will show man his true relation with the world in which he will live, it found itself with the Divine Source, knowing its inability to throw any light on the purpose of existence, philosophers are applying themselves to the more modest task of providing a frame-work for the facts of science and this frame-work is the basis on which they attempt to create a world-view. But the facts of physics, biology and psychology are, as we have stated, partial truths which if given a wider application than they merit, tend to become exaggerations, and sometimes even become falsehoods.

It must be admitted that it is but natural and also right that a thinker when he attempts to create a system of philosophy should try to include in it the established facts of physics, biology and psychology. Such an attitude is not extravagant or even false. But the fact is that it cannot be the whole story. The whole story, as a matter of fact, is much more complex. If it is to be a whole story, a philosophy of life, it must include a complete understanding of the nature of the universe, of man's position in the universe, of the purpose of his existence, of the meaning of life. It must provide a complete framework for the facts of science and the religious truths. It must be a synthesis of the existing thoughts in the mind of man. A real synthesis can only be made by possessing a "whole-knowledge". The whole human knowledge is more than the sum of its parts—take the world in whole parts, and after knowing their truth to reconstitute them into a whole, it is not a synthesis, for the relevance of the parts and their inter-relation remains unknown. A "whole-knowledge" can only be possessed by having a "whole-vision"—an integral vision capable of seeing parts and their relations at a single view and knowing through direct contact their truth and inner significance which the ordinary analytical mind is incapable of doing. It must be a way of seeing that looks at the world from above, from above the bottom up, and views the working of the world-process from its source in the Transcendent Divine Consciousness to its nether end, the Inconscient—an infra-terrestrial region of Onwardness, the goal of which is the Big Veda says, "darkness lies wrapped within darkness". It is obvious that to possess such a vision, spiritual enlightenment is necessary, for a being imprisoned in his narrow mental-vital-physical surface-consciousness that he "I" cannot possibly possess it, he can only possess indirect or separative knowledge by division, and can examine only the surfaces of things.

Philosophy and the Common Man

Before we proceed further it will be advisable to answer an objection which may be raised against us by the mechanist-apathetics. They may declare that we are over-stressing the importance of the part philosophy plays in a man's life—that the common man is not interested in it, for it concerns only the intellectuals, the governors, and dilettantes. But such is not the case. History reveals that the world-view prevailing during a particular epoch, the philosophy of life believed in at a particular time, has always affected the life of the common man. We have before us the case of Positivism, with its stereotyping, mechanism and utilitarianism; the extent of their influence upon the moods of men and consequently on their attitude towards life cannot be overstressed. Or if we take the case of Freiduanism—which, though it cannot be called a philosophy of life, yet has pretensions to be one—we find that its influence on the race mentality of the present generation is by no means negligible. A philosophy of, for instance, the thinker, is studied and examined by other intellectuals; if the verdict is found to be pleasant or praised orsupported by them, it becomes popular amongst men of letters, novelists and playwrights, poets and painters. Through these it reaches the educated public. Freiduanism reached the public mind through D. H. Lawrence and other novelists, through Salvador Dalí and the Surrealists, through the modernist poets, and through the medium of cinema films.

Even the uneducated are affected by the current philosophy of life, for whatever a man likes it or not, whether he realises it or not, the prevailing philosophy of life becomes his philosophy of life. He may not know what "Will to Power" is, or the "Hypothesis of the Economic Interpretation of History" and "Dialectical Materialism", but it is ultimately he who will have to take the "goose-step" and march to his doom for this or that political ideal. He does not know that the order to go forward and kill or be killed is actually given by a political ideology which is inspired by a philosophy of life, which in its turn is erected upon a false generalisation which is nothing but an exaggerated application given to some partial truth of human existence. This does not imply that men always go to war only to fight for political ideologies; usually political ideologies are used only to justify wars the real motive for waging which is greed and lust for power.

Newton and Mechanism

European civilisation proceeded along the path that was ultimately to precipitate it in the three thinkers. Newton was the originator of the idea of an extra-comic Creator or Personal Divine Intelligence and embraced the mechanical philosophy. It did not realise then that by discarding a theo-centric philosophy the life itself was also destroying the real sanction behind ethical and spiritual values. This does not mean that anthropomorphism should not have been discarded; on the contrary, the crude and primitive idea of a Divine Creator who was a glorified image of man himself possessing the qualities and generally taken for a synthesis is only a re-arrangement of the existing thoughts structure in the light of some new generalisation. A real synthesis can only be made by possessing a "whole-knowledge". The whole human knowledge is more than the sum of its parts—take the world as a whole into parts, and after knowing their truth to reconstitute them into a whole, it is not a synthesis, for the relevance of the parts and their inter-relation remains unknown. A "whole-knowledge" can only be possessed by having a "whole-vision"—an integral vision capable of seeing parts and their relations at a single view and knowing through direct contact their truth and inner significance which the ordinary analytical mind is incapable of doing. It must be a way of seeing that looks at the world from above, from above the bottom up, and views the working of the world-process from its source in the Transcendent Divine Consciousness to its nether end, the Inconscient—an infra-terrestrial region of Onwardness, the goal of which is the Big Veda says, "darkness lies wrapped within darkness". It is obvious that to possess such a vision, spiritual enlightenment is necessary, for a being imprisoned in his narrow mental-vital-physical surface-consciousness that he "I" cannot possibly possess it, he can only possess indirect or separative knowledge by division, and can examine only the surfaces of things.

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The Supremo Being can reveal Himself to a devotee in the particular form in which he is worshipped—as Krishna to Chaitanya, as Christ to a Christian mystic, but He is not limited by any form He may take to manifest Himself. He may reveal Himself to man as an Impersonal "That" or as a Divine Person, but in either case it is the same God, the same Person, the same supreme Being of Personality and Individuality. Anthropomorphism does have a very great truth in it, but a partial truth; this partial truth has been given a very rigid intellectual formulation by the unenlightened mind of man. Anthropomorphism is the answer of the primitive man to the Sphinx Riddle and cannot be acceptable today. But a theo-centric philosophy based upon the truths experienced in spiritual realisations and which takes upon itself the underlying truth of anthropomorphism is also unacceptable to the theo-centric philosopher. Such a philosophy admits the truth of both the Personal and Impersonal aspects of the Divine Being, and declares that His supra-connic Transcendent nature as well as His Impersonality, that is, the all-pervasiveness of His essential Being are real; it also declares the reality of His Omnipresence—His living Presence at the very centre and heart of "All-Existence" and all "separate existences."

The term "supra-connic" has been used and not "extra-connic" to indicate that when it is stated that the Divine Being is non-localised to the Universe it does not mean that he is entirely unconnected with it—merely that He is unlocalised to the Universe. He is universal in quantity as well as in Impersonality. His universal presence is in His inner reality a "soul-being" who is a direct emanation of the Transcendent Divine. Therefore He is not utterly unconnected with God, nor is God utterly detached from the Unic. He is not only a nature organism—a knot of mental, vital and material universal energies, but is in his inner reality a "soul-being" who is a direct emanation of the Transcendent Divine. Therefore He is not utterly unconnected with God, nor is God utterly detached from the Universal personality; but a veil does exist which separates man from God—the veil of Ignorance. Man can tear this veil and become aware of the Divine Presence within by ceasing to identify his self with his outer personality and withdrawing into a deeper and more luminous realm of his being. So, true "theo-centrism" is not synonymous with anthropomorphism. The seeds of a Mechanistic philosophy of life were sown in the soil of Europe when Newton showed that the world behaved exactly like a machine, that it strictly followed physical laws, and that causal relations determined its workings. This is rather ironical, for Newton himself firmly believed in the existence of God and postulated a Creator of the world. Hence, he who took in mystic writings was well-known; he used to study the Kaballah and the writings of Jacob Boehm. But the scientists who came after Newton probably announced that God was a hypothesis they could do without—they perhaps thought that the idea of a Creator was brought in by Newton because of his theological leanings. It seems that...
they did not know that the concepts of absolute time and space were consi-
idered by Newton to be logically tenable only if an Omniscient Divine 
 Being at the heart of all creation was postulated. This point has been 
 brought out by Philipp Frank in his book “Einstein, His Life and Times,” 
 and is worth noting. He says, “... consequently, if one remains 
 within the bounds of physics, one cannot give a satisfactory definition of ‘absolute motion’. The theory becomes completely and logically unobjectionable only if, as was self-evident for Newton, God and his consciousness are added to the physical facts.

“For a long time no one had realised precisely what was the actual link 
 between Newton’s theological reflections and his scientific work . . . . 
 Gregory’s” diary for 1765 contains an entry concerning a conversation with 
 Newton on this topic. It says: ‘What the space that is empty of body is 
 filled with, the plain truth is that he (Newton) believes God to be omni-
present in the literal sense, and that we are sensible of objects when 
 their images are brought home within the brain, so God must be sensible 
of everything, being intimately present with everything; for he (Newton) 
supposes, who as God is present in space where there is nobody, he is pre-
 sent in space when a body is also present.”

“E. A. Burtt in The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical 
 Science, published in 1925, interprets correctly: ‘Certainly, at least God 
must know whether any given motion is absolute or relative. The divine 
 consciousness furnishes the ultimate centre of reference for absolute motion . . . . God is the ultimate originator of motion. Thus in the last analysis 
 all relative or absolute motion is the resultant of an expenditure of the 
 divine energy . . . .’

“By means of this anthropomorphic** conception of God, a scientific, 
 although formal definition of absolute motion is obtained. It is linked with 
 the energy expended by a being called ‘God’, but to which properties of 
 a physical system are ascribed. Otherwise the concept of energy could not 
 be applied to the system. Fundamentally the definition means that one assumes 
 the existence in the world of a real source of energy that is distinguished 
 from all others. Motion produced by the energy of mechanical systems, in 
general is described as only ‘relative’ motion, while motion produced by 
 this select being is characterised as ‘absolute’. It should never be forgotten, 
 however, that the logical admissibility of this definition of absolute position 
 is bound up with the existence of the energy-producing being. During the 
 eighteenth century, in the age of the Enlightenmen, men no longer liked 
 to ascribe to God a part in the laws of physics. But it was forgotten, that 
 Newton’s concept of ‘absolute motion’ was thereby deprived of any 
 content.***

18th Century Materialism

The scientists who came after Newton supported Mechanism but did 
not find it necessary to postulate the existence of God. Some of them said 
that even if He did exist, He was not actively concerned in the working of 
His own creation, the Universe—that He was not connected with it in any 
way after having once created it. This is the idea that gave rise to Deism— 
the novel idea of an ‘absent God’. After a time attempts were made to 
explain the whole of man’s existence on a mechanistic basis, but the results 
of these attempts were taken seriously only by a certain group of thinkers. 
It was only in the middle of the 19th Century that a definite materialistic 
conception of the Universe was formulated. Scientists like Joule and Liebig, 
Helmholtz and Schwann helped the growth of scientific materialism. Vogt 
once again brought forward the old 18th Century idea of Cabanis, that the 
brain produces thought as the liver gives out bile. Soon the tendency to 
explain the whole of life in terms of matter spread everywhere and the 
philosophies of the Idealists were rejected as imaginative phantasies. ‘No 
philosophy, no thought,” became the dictum of the materialist scientist. What-
 ever was material was declared to be real and whatever was real to be 
material—any order of reality other than that physical was condemned 
‘transcendental nonsense”, to use a phrase of Collo’s. Matter was said 

* David Gregory was a friend and student of Newton’s.
** It is doubtful whether Newton’s conception of God can be called anthropomorphic.
*** With acknowledgments to Jonathan Cape, 30, Bedford Square, the 
Publisher of “Rinstein, His Life and Times” by Philipp Frank.

Or again, if only matter is real, and if there is no Divine Reality who 
has manifested this universe and who sustains it in the expanse of His 
own being, and if there are no archetypes of the True and the Good existing in 
the Divine Gnosis or the Divine Truth, or in the Divine Ideas and Ideas 
are our ideas of them, or if there is no Divine Will in the universe which 
secretly supports the true and the good and not the false and the evil, then 
ethical and spiritual values have no ultimate sanction.

This essay will not be complete without Leconte du Nouy’s observation 
on materialist scientists. Coming from a man who is recognised as a brilliant 
scientist and who has been awarded a doctorate from the University of 
“making the most important contribution to scientific philosophy in 
the past ten years,” this observation should be considered seriously by those 
who affirm that a materialistic conception of the universe is still held as 
tenable by eminent scientific figures. Leconte du Nouy writes: “Because this 
little group of scientists, drunk with their fragmentary knowledge, proudly 
deemed that they could forego everything that was not rational, they decreed that 
all humanity should also go without. They never dreamed that the science 
in which they had put their hope would soon be completely upset.”—“Vain 
and unconscious men, surrounded by the holo of science, under pretense 
that the spiritual light which guided humanity in the past was unreal, have 
rained despicable veils covered with false symbols, in order to hide the 
Light. They did not understand that what mattered was the human orienta-
tion which resulted therefrom, and that this reality could not be denied, 
whereas the Light itself was not of their realm.”

* With acknowledgments to Messrs. Longmans, Green & Co., the 
publishers of “Human Destiny”, from which these lines are quoted.
CONCENTRATION AND DISPERSION

In the April issue of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram's highly interesting quarterly, BULLETIN OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION, there is the following editorial statement on the right type and method of proficiency in sporting activities. A profound truth is lucidly explained here, a truth helpful not only in the field of physical education but also in every other department of life—if the aim is a harmonious general development which is yet capable, at will, of exercising in any activity the intense competence of the specialist.

In sporting activities those who want to be successful choose a certain line or subject which appeals more to them and suits their nature; they concentrate on their choice and take great care not to disperse their energies in different directions. As in life a man chooses his career and concentrates all his attention upon it, so the sportsman chooses a special activity and concentrates all his efforts to achieve as much perfection as he can in this line. This perfection comes usually by a building up of spontaneous reflex which is the result of constant repetition of the same movements. But this spontaneous reflex can be, with advantage, replaced by the faculty of concentrated attention. This faculty of concentration belongs not only to the intellectual but to all activities and is obtained by the conscious control of the energies.

It is well known that the value of a man is in proportion to his capacity of concentrated attention; the greater the concentration the more exceptional is the result, to the extent that a perfect and unfailing concentrated attention sets the stamp of genius on what is produced. There can be genius in sports as in any other human activity.

Shall we then advise a limit to our action in order to achieve perfection in concentration?

The advantages of limitation are well known, but it has also its inconvenience, bringing narrowness and incapacity for any other line than the one chosen. This is contrary to the ideal of a perfectly developed and harmonized human being. How to conciliate these two contrary tendencies?

There seems to be only one solution to the problem. In the same way as an athlete develops methodically his muscles by a scientific gradual training, the faculty of concentrated attention can be developed scientifically by a methodical training—developed in such a way that concentration is obtained at will and on whatever subject or activity is chosen. Thus the work of preparation instead of being done in the subconscient by a slow and steady repetition of the same movements, is done consciously by a concentration of will and a gathered attention centred on one point or another according to plan and decision. The chief difficulty seems to be to obtain this power of concentration independent of all inner and outer circumstances—difficult perhaps but not impossible for him who is determined and persevering. Moreover, whatever method of development is chosen, determination and perseverance are indispensable to obtain success.

The aim in the training is to develop this power of concentrating the attention at will on whatever subject or activity one chooses from the most spiritual to the most material, without losing anything of the fulness of power—for instance, in the physical field, transferring the use of the power from one game to another or one activity to another so as to succeed equally in all.

This extreme attention concentrated on a game or a physical activity like lifting, vaulting, punching, running, etc., focussing all energies on any of these movements which bring about in the body the thrill of an exhilarating joy is the thing which carries with it perfection in execution and success.

Generally this happens when the sportsman is especially interested in a game or an activity and its happening escapes all control, decision or will.

Yet by a proper training of concentrated attention one can obtain the phenomenon at will, on command so to say, and the resulting perfection in the execution of any activity follows inevitably.

This is exactly what we want to try in our Department of Physical Education. By this process the will may come more slowly than by the usual method, but the lack of rapidity will surely be compensated by a fulness and richness in the expression.

Moon Mother

Not as a symbol, silent, remote and cold,
But a light in my soul—in all reality—
So have I known Thy loveliness of old

Reflecting Truth on man’s high destiny,
O when thy beauty stirs the sleeping rose,
Thy spirit-touch the quiet solitude—
Tis then my heart surrenders, and love flows
Into the light of thy seclusion.

Into thy arms my age-long spirit flies,
Rapt in the splendour of thy mystic hue—
Trance-held in thy bosom—cradled in altar skies
Of eternal bliss—clothed in a magic blue.

NORMAN DOWSETT.

Immense, Above....

Thank God for all this wretchedness of love—
The close apocalypst fires that only prove
The shutting of some golden gate in the face!
Not here beside us burning a brief space
Of life is ecstasy; immense, above,
The shining core of a divine abyss
Awaits the earth-unflamed lonely gaze,
The tense heart broken into widenesses.
All quiver and cry of time is splendoured there
By an ageless alchemy smiling everywhere.

K. D. SETHNA.

One-Pointed

O make me yearn to Thee,
Thy vasal, everlastingly!
Can the wings fulfilled find without Thy sky?
Can the bee without Thy flower her pent thirst slake?
Can the hawk find rest if the oceans she'll deny?
Even so my self's forlorn, reft of Thy ache.

For Thy sap in the rocky earth
The blade will seek rebirth,
For down alone will night forswear her sleep.
For the cloud alone the chasit pipes and sings.
For the Timeless will Time's eye lone vigil keep.
Even so be Thou alone my King of Kings!

May my river-soul but chase
Thy deep of gleaming Grace!
And give: no barriers may she brook nor fear,
Heartening but to Thy far shoreless call:
Overleaping everything may she career
For Thine one Blue of Sleep, my All-in-All!

Translated from his own Bengali Song by

DILIP KUMAR ROY,
LIGHTS ON LIFE-PROBLEMS

Seven

One of the chief aims will be to provide authentic guidance in regard to the many perplexing questions with which the common man is faced in his daily life. This cannot be better done than by considering these questions in the light of Sri Aurobindo's writings, because Sri Aurobindo is not merely a Master of Yoga in the traditional and formal sense of the term, but also a Guide to the higher mental life of mankind in the many trying situations that arise in the course of its day-to-day existence. To bring human life into contact with the divine, to make it one with the eternal spirit, a series of questions of common interest along with precise answers based on Sri Aurobindo's writings will regularly appear in these columns.

Q. 1: A section of scientists in Europe who could not deny the occurrence of supernatural phenomena have in recent times to investigate it by scientific experimentation and collected a mass of evidence in this field. How is the soul or the psychological reality organized for the purpose. Communications with the dead through spiritualistic séances have been a subject of special interest to these societies. Is there any truth in the claim made by them that it is possible to have communications with the dead persons through a "psychic" medium?

A: There is after death a period in which one passes through the other worlds and it is quite possible for the dead or rather the departed—for they are not dead—who are still in regions near the earth to have communications with the living. Sometimes it happens automatically sometimes by an effort at communication on one side of the curtain or the other. There is no impossibility of such communication by the bodies used by the spirits.

Q. 2: But are not a large number of communications received by mediums in the séances quite false?

A: Usually, genuine communications or contacts of that kind or brought about by that means can only be with those who are in a world which is a sort of idealised replica of the earth-consciousness and in which the same personality, ideas, memories persist that the person had here. But all that pretends to be such communications with departed souls is not genuine, especially when it is done through a paid professional medium.

Q. 3: Why do these mediums receive false communications?

A: It is because there is an enormous amount of mixture of a very un-desirable kind—for apart from the great mass of unconscious suggestions from the sitters or the contributions of the medium's sub-liminal consciousness, one gets into contact with a world of beings which is of a very deceptive or self-deceptive illusory nature. Many of these beings pretend to be the departed souls of relatives, acquaintances, well-known men, familiar personalities, etc. There are also beings who pick up the discarded feelings and memories of the dead and masquerade with them. There are a great number of beings who come to such séances only to play with the consciousness of men or exercise their powers through this contact with the earth and who dupe the mediums and sitters with their falsehoods, tricks and illusions. (Ref: The 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, etc. to the mediums who are not themselves tricksters). What goes on through the medium may be that a mixture of the medium's subconscious (using subconscious in the ordinary, not in the Yogic sense) and that of the sitter; there may be an intervention from something like conscious vital sheaths left by the departed or perhaps occupied or used by some spirit or some vital being. The departed himself in his vital sheath or in something else assumed for the occasion may intervene; the communication in either case is one of the vital part. Or it may be the manifestation of the lowest vital physical world near earth may intervene. Where there is such a mixture a horrible confusion can for the most be the result—a hotch-potch of all sorts of things coming in through a medium of an atmosphere of "astral" grey light and shadow.

Q. 4: Sometimes these "mediums" claim to contact the departed souls of the great men of the past like Christ, Buddha, Shakespeare, Napoleon, etc. and to receive communications from them. Are these communications authentic (Karma) instance? What is the possibility of genuine communication with dead persons then very rare?

A: Through conscientious mediums one may get sound results, but even these are very ignorant of the nature of the forces they are handling and have no discrimination which can guard them against trickery from the other side of the veil.

Q. 5: So why is there little hope of getting true knowledge of the after-life through the spiritualistic séances?

A: Very little genuine knowledge of the nature of the after-life can be gathered from these séances; a true knowledge is more often gained by the experiments, only the individuals who make serious contact or are able in one way or another to cross the border.

Q. 6: Is it quite safe to take part in these séances and psychological societies?

A: Such séances can put one in rapport with a very low world of vital beings and forces, themselves obscure, incoherent or tricky and it is dangerous to associate with such a world or to undergo any influence.

A contact with such a level of beings can be harmful and spiritually dangerous. Many mediums become nervous or morally un-balanced.

Q. 7: It is said that it is the "ghost" of the dead person who comes to these séances. The term "ghost" is also often used in other connections, e.g. in the case of haunted houses. Belief in ghosts, in fact, was universal till the advent of modern science. Is there any truth in this belief?

A: The word "ghost" as used in popular parlance covers an enormous number of distinct phenomena which have no necessary connection with each other. To name a few only:

1. An actual contact with the soul of a human being in its subtle body and transcribed to our mind by the appearance of an image or the hearing of a voice.

2. A memorization stamped by the thoughts and feelings of a departed human being on the atmosphere of a locality, wandering about there or repeating itself, till that formation either exhausts itself or is dissolved by one means or another. This is the explanation of the case of the haunted house in which the scenes attending or surrounding or preceding a murder are repeated over and over again and many other similar phenomena.

3. A being of the lower vital planes who has assumed the discarded vital sheath of a departed human being or a fragment of his vital personality and appears and acts in the form and perhaps with the surface thoughts and memories of that person.

4. A being of the lower vital plane who by the medium of a living human being, being only another means or agency is able to materialise itself sufficiently so as to appear and act in a visible form and speak with an audible voice or without so appearing, to move about in the material world, e.g., furniture or to materialise objects or to shift them from place to place. This accounts for what are called poltergeists, phenomena of stone-throwing, tree-inhabiting blues, and other well-known phenomena.

5. Appearitions which are the formations of one's own mind and take to the senses an objective appearance.

6. Temporary possession of people by vital beings who sometimes pretend to be departed relatives etc.

7. Thought-images of themselves projected often by people at the moment of death, which persist for that time or a few hours afterwards to their friends or relatives.

A: Automatic writings like communications with the dead are a mixed affair. Part comes from the subconscious mind of the medium and part from that of the sitters. But it is not true that all can be accounted for by these means. Sometimes there are things none present could know or remember; sometimes even, though that is rare, glimpses of the future.

Q. 8: What is the explanation of such phenomena as dematerialisation, re-materialisation, levitation etc. known to many Yogis in India and Tibetan Lamas? Are they merely tricks or magic as is usually supposed?

A: There are different planes of substance, gross, subtle and more subtle going back to what is called the spiritual (Kamalas) substance. What is more gross can be reduced to the subtle state and the subtle brought into the gross state; that accounts for dematerialisation and rematerialisation. These are occult processes and are vulgarly regarded as magic. Ordinarily the magician knows no better why and wherefore of what he is doing, he has simply learned the formula or process or else controls elemental beings of the subterrestrial states (planes or worlds) who do the work for him. The Tibetans indulge widely in occult processes. The brother of Madame David Neel who has lived in Tibet give an idea of their expertise in these things. But also the Tibetan Lamas know something of the laws of occult (mental and vital) energy and how they can be made to act on physical things. That is something which goes beyond mere magic. The direct power of mind-force or life-force upon matter can be extended to an almost limitless degree. It must be remembered that Energy is fundamentally one in all the things, only takes the more and more dense forms, so there is nothing a priori impossible in mind-energy or life-energy acting directly on material energy and substance; if they do they can make a material object do things or rather can do nothing with a material object which would be to that object in its ordinary place or "law" unattainable and therefore apparently impossible.
NEW TRENDS IN WESTERN THOUGHT

The Time-Spirit and the West

BY A. L. CRAMPTON CHALK

Sri Aurobindo Circle Annual 1949

"The discords of the worlds are God's discords and it is only by accept- ing and proceeding through them that the greater part of us, the spiritual beings, the peaks and the valleys of the earthly, and the absolute and the relative, will we ever fuse and become one soul." This is the hardest thing in the world for the Western mind to accept, and it must not generally make the attempt to understand it, but rejects it out of hand.

Nowadays the Westerner who has a social conscience, or consciousness, is either saturated with Christian ethics, or is an ethical-materialist. In either case whatever offends his own notions, or detracts from his mental or material comfort or idealism, he labels as "evil," and promptly denies it any validity whatever in the scheme of things.

LoSided Conception of Life

Not only the Westerner but every normal human being agrees that some things are better than others, in the scale of relative values in this existence of ours. War must give way to peace, disease to health, poverty to plenty, and pain to serenity. The whole thinking world would agree that this is the worthy object of human endeavor; it is only on the question of how to set about it that opinions differ. In particular, we seem to be splitting off on its crusade for peace, health, wealth, and serenity, under such a misapprehension of the broad facts of life as to render its efforts towards achieving good things almost completely futile.

Whether the approach in the West be from the traditional Christian, or from the increasingly popular ethical-materialist standpoint, the attitude towards the unwanted part of life is that it is evil, a mistake and unnecessary. The Devil, and that somehow or other it must be pushed—violently out of existence. The fact that it belongs to God, just as surely as the part of life to which we respond belongs to God, hardly occurs to us for a moment. The day and sunshine and happiness we see is Divine, so we think; but the night and darkness and suffering we instinctively put to the account of powers outside the Divine.

This wrong-headed and lo-sided conception of life must prevent any clear light of faith from the Divine getting through to the plane of action. In our anxiety to range ourselves on the side of God—or Marx—or Peace—or the Party—against the Devil of this, that, or the other evil, we must prevent ourselves shutting out the possibility of comprehending the centre on which the universe of God is swinging, its very raison d'etre. Thus, in our fight against war we make war, for independence we enslave ourselves, and in our passion for human equality we mislead others and ourselves. Bewildered and dismayed we stand amongst the rubble of one war, watching the next which seems about to burst upon us, and wondering how the earth has gone wrong with our world.

Exterior Symptoms and Inner Causes

Our myopia has the effect of persuading us to attack the external symptoms of our ill and diseases, while ignoring the inner causes from which they spring. The invertebrate externalisation of all our concepts and impressions makes it impossible for us to see the inner factors, but they are there, and when we understand them, we shall know in which we are mistaken, and what the health of psychology means.

It is true that we belong superficially at least—that we all want material security, for example. But what security is actually possible, we differ tragically about the means to be used to get it. One man wants to achieve it by improving himself and all other men blindly to the State, another wants it through peace at any cost, and human responsibility, another by enriching himself with goods and power, even at the expense of un- willing neighbours. The trouble is that while all these conflicting useless endeavours is that they do not go beyond the surface of the matter, much less get to the bottom of it, and for one fundamental reason. They all try to get rid of the particular "evil" they attack by exterminating and pushed out of the universe, just as one could throw something off the edge of a cliff to escape. There is an unwilling blindness to the error of the materialist, who fights against dishonesty by sheer resistance to its symptoms. For the truth, that is all tragic because he advances it as the only "practical" method of relieving humanity.

The Immanence of the Divine

If the sincere battler for the right—whatever it is for the moment—could see that "the discords of the world are God's discords and that it is only by accepting and proceeding through them" that he is coming to the inner realisation of what he is after, not only his methods but his whole life would be saved. By refusing to shut himself off from any aspect of life he would come to understand the main springs of his existence. He would begin to see himself alive everywhere. Perhaps, the very heart of the trouble which so thoroughly troubles the Western part of the world is that there is no appreciation of the immanence of the Divine.

That this whole universe and all the discords of God, and the splendor of God, never occurs to the West. It does not even occur to the Western mind that there are poets, and philosophers, with the rarest insights, prescience, and the ability to write about things, and circumstan- ces, and conditions, never about the glory that exists behind all things, all circumstances, and all conditions. The very heart of the founder of our preponderating religious systems have been put aside, or forgotten, or never believed—"But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." The modernised version of these startling and invigo- rating words might well be rendered—"But seek ye first for what you shall eat, drink, wear, enjoy; and the Kingdom of God and his righteousness shall be added unto you."

If only we Westerners could real- ise that it is God in his Kingdom that is always "destroying in order that he may now create", who is Time, who is Death, who is Ruins, the Dancer of the calm and awful dance, who is Kali with her garland of skulls trampling naked in battle and flecked with the blood of the slaughtered Titans, the Crater and the fire and the earthquake, and pain and famine and revolution and the devouring ocean.

To Wisdom Through Stark and Awful Truth

Such is our story and such a notion, to a Western mind must seem to come near to sheer blasphemery. We want, through the weakness of our spirits, to think only fair and comforting things in association with God. Our God, of course, could not yet stand the stark and awful truth, the harsh and fierce. We cannot use our own common sense and exist- ence. The feeble attempt to find a solution to the problems of life by rearranging the pieces and externalising the thing up is as useless now as ever. There is no help in political, social, or personal organisation; but every virtue is spiritual struggle. This is a hard thing for us to understand, and the darkness seems to have fastened down upon us ever more solidly than ever during these post-war years. To seek God, to pierce and struggle through the surrounding darkness of misery and our own sin, or through the blinding glitter of pomp and circumstance, so as to detect and recognise the glory shining calmly and eternally behind it all—this is the way to wisdom. One glimpse of the eternal qualities be- hind the screen of fate will give more knowledge and power over life than anything less than any amount of revolution and political action can ever do.

What, then, should be the enlightened attitude of mind, of West as well as of East, towards the cata- strophes? The only answer to these questions that is about us today is Abstention from war which is as useless as the word which ignores the fundamental fact that these conditions are of God. Seeds have been sown, harvests must be gathered. To endure, to pray, to do one's duty in the state of life to which one has been called, to try to see God; to seek first the Kingdom of God,—first, last and all the time, to strive incessantly to see the Glory of God everywhere, behind everything, at all times under all conditions; this is the noble Aryan path.

To go forward in this state of mind and to save the whole race and all the nations with one's destiny. The work for each of us is put before him; if it is God who is moulding, the task and the unfoldment will appear quite naturally as his path. If we are sure it is God's will that we seek to do, and not that of our own ego, there will be no doubt as to what is required of us. Then each of us shall "accept in its deeper sense, which the superficial mind does not see, the greatness of the struggle, the deepness of the victory—if indeed we lead men too in the enjoyment of his opulent King- dom.

"Not appalled by the face of the Destroyer, he will see that the eternal Spirit impartible in all things is not destroyed by the face of the Charioteer, the Leader of man, the Friend of all creatures."


4. The answer to this pressing and tormenting problem is set out in practical terms on pages 185 to 187 of "Essays on the Gita" (Second Series). The attention of all readers who are involved in this problem is earnestly directed to this passage.


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RICHARD CHURCH
writes in John O' London's Weekly:

It is an old coincidence that two novels are published in the same
publication should appear within a few weeks of each other, and both be
marred by a factual improbability such as common sense would have avoided;
and improbability which breaks in upon the reader's credulity,
but is the end accepted just as
coincidence in the creekings plots
of his superlative.

I refer to Elizabeth Bowen's The
House in Paris and R. C. Hutchi
son's novel, Elephant and Castle, by R. C. Hut
chinson (Cassell, £1). Both are
books which have matured in the minds of their authors over a period of
ten years, and it may be that this slow gestation has led both into such a
firm illusion, a world of their own, that they cannot help looking to
us for them to see the incidence of their fictions as a disinterested reader
would. Introspection, and too grave a deliberation in the weaving of emotional
patterns, this danger;
that it makes the improbable pro
bable, and the wilful pull of the author's authority unto itself. Dostoevsky
suffered from that wilfulness, and his genius magnified it into a
centric mania, from which the swerves of every good sense were eroded like soil from
a rocky mountainside.

The improbability in Miss Bow
en's book was that her secret ser
vice career had been in love with the heroine and wanted to possess her. I feel that the false relevance of
this is unacceptable, and that the heroine is an unloving and unloved in
mate of that: beautiful novel, just as in its plot, the heroine is an
unrelenting and unloved in
mate of the little brothers and sisters in their bedroom wars what would otherwise
be the greatest novels in European literature.

And now Mr. Hutchinson has
 taken a similar risk in Elephant
and Castle. Let me discuss this first, so
that I can get on to the remarkable
goods with which this major work is so generously stocked. The
story is about a woman who be
lieves in her own individuality, and who has a passion for
public service. She is shamming
day one day in Lambeth, with an
aunt, when she witnesses an incident that changes the whole course of her life.
as a cook, and a dancing girl she
there is a quarrel with a hire-purchase
man (a familiar cause of trouble in such quarters), in the course of which a
boy, mistakenly thinking a policeman is ill-treating his mother, kindly
comes to his assistance. The boy gets three
months in jail. He is a dumb creature, half
Italian. He reminds me of the hero of Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men, one of
the most beautiful pictures of a person who think with his huge, clumsy
but sensitive hands, rather than with his brains. His mother is spasmoped; he fumbles for words, and is incapable of formulating an abstract idea or phrase. His father is a theatre-hand, formerly a sailor, and the voyage is one of abundant
squalor behind the shop, with the
very worst twenty years pressing over it like a prolific hen.

Can one really believe, then, that
the plot and actions of the
family of wealth and refinement should
come as a daughter, electric to the same terms
as the boy whom at first she sets out to
vindicate, and finally to marry? I found it sickening, especially as I
contemplated the life to which she
condemned herself, amongst foot
primitive people, excellent in their
own way and under their own wills, to
a person who by birth, tradition and upbringing is possess
ed of a totally different range of consciousness and values. I just could not
believe that this particular girl, with her innate pride (a quality
which later was, under the torment of circumstances to grow and become a disease) could bring herself to such a wilful, maso
chistic idealisation.

But the whole argument of the book is that she could, and did; and Mr. Hutchinson expends all his
artistic and dramatic powers
in proving it and in convincing the reader.
I remain not quite convinced. But I respect, deeply respect, the author's
authority; and for the effort, and the achievement, and for the following reasons.

To begin with, the tale is on a vast
scale; and it is infinitely complicated, with dozens of characters all of
whom are living individuals whose
lives we enter as we enter those of our own folk in the amazing
imagination and blood and bone which is the book, and I have no inking of its
rich texture, its fidelity of detail, and that through it doth the
living room of The Athenaum, that august place has met alone (coffee room!), and the
smell of which it affords of the author's
work is pouring the whole of himself
into his work.

PHILIP TOYNBEE
writes in The New Statesman and Nation:

R. C. Hutchinson is an ambitious
figure on our literary horizon, gigan
tic, but blurred in outline and roublous
in substance. His admirers have
made very high claims for him, and
on at least two occasions, so the cover of this new book informs me. Mr. Dewey Livin has singled
him out for abiding fame. It is properly
in fact, that the wrath-like giant will
wade into a monolith, and that the
English novel of our time may be re
presented for posterity by these
colossal and fur-burned characters.
Since no literary prophecy is safe, let us be safely contradicted. But we have the right to back our own
fancies to the limit of our critical
imagination, and we would happily lay
odds of five hundred to one against
Mr. Hutchinson. A prerequisite of survivorship can be reasonably and confidently said, is that the hero should be involved in a
thing which nobody else has or could have done. Above all other quali
ties it is their uniqueness which day,
lights and heartens us in the great writers of the past. The very name
Dostoevsky instantly evokes for us a whole world of insight, of imagination which that one man, and he alone, has been
opening up for us. Creative art is constant
ly and joyfully provoking to us that we live in an expanding universe, and there is, so far as we know, no limit to its
expansion. For this reason Mr. Hutchinson seems to me to be evident
that the later you are born in human history, the later you will be your in
heritance. Other things being equal
and (one of Mr. Hutchinson's rather
superfluous, intentions is to prove that they are not) it is better to live
higher and deeper, not to master
Can anyone seriously say that Mr. Hutchinson has contributed to our inheritances?
My difficulty in writing about Elephant and Castle is that I feel cannot open upon to refuse. Of an
earlier novel by this writer it seems that Mr. Jilson Huxley has claimed that "it has the quality of true art of
achieving a vital reality". The
defence is vague enough to provide
a filler to a coat.

One thing must certainly be grant
ed; Mr. Hutchinson's theme and in
lication is not a sensual lightweight. Approximately, the present book deals with the mar
riage of Jo from Kensingto
n and the counties to a ferocious but gentle and much admirmed
lion. The heroine, Armenel Capetin
ier (all the book lies in that name), is a girl from mistletoe motives of self-sacrifice and with the physical and moral, conducting him to
more ambitious heights. It is to the
result of her original mistake is a gradual development of her character and of her relations with
everyone about her. She becomes a woman of his epoch, a good and much precocious with unrewarding acti
tion, and the rights of a
woman, and her husband, by contrast, turns gradually into a kind of Jo Gargery. Both achieve their
moment before death. There are, of
armour, strong and hundreds of more or less subsidiary
heroes (for example, Troyon Grist, Eliza
beth Kindeilov, Gordon Aquillard, Hilda Nickoloe, Captain Desterin
and Honourable Luke), Elephant and
Castle is seven hundred pages, and
and the word "panorama" trembles on my
n. Mr. Hutchinson is a
orous, and he leaves nothing out.
If there is a marriage, the wedding party must be
ribbed, with a list of the guests, an
atomical and a great deal of

Took in the New Statesman.

The weather was turning in,
Rustin Road was like the New,
black and uncluttered below the
clouds, was a perfect day for walking in
King's Cross. Where the soaked
flighted, signalled "Colonies-
Hill, New" and the heads of the
tulips and umbrellas tossed like corses on the
kickers, in the sun: the winnies
ning down the tube.

An equal eloquence is displayed in
the live-strung portrait is first

And here was perfection: the
Continued from page 10
The Owl’s Banquet

BY “MINERVA”

King Yaya of the West Coast of Africa was deported to the West Indies, but allowed to take with him only five wives. In the face of such an unreasonable restriction he wrote the following letter to Queen Victoria: “Dear Sister Queen Victoria: You have ordered me to be sent away from the country. Perhaps you are right, but we will not go into that; but you have ordered that I should have only five wives to go with me. I do not think it digni-
fied for a king to have only five wives. I beg you to let me have at least twelve. You would not like to have only five husbands.”

According to Admiral Mark Kerr, the Queen was so amused by the letter that the contemplated per-
mission was given.

One of the wittiest things said about love—with quite a true touch about emotional extravagance—is that stanza by Collin Ellis:

I put my hand upon my heart
And swore that we should never part
I wonder what I would have said
If I had put it on my head.

Perhaps the most amazingly poignant lines for a situation of love occurs in that generally tame poem of Coventry Patmore’s early days, “The Angel in the House.” It is a simile of the rejected lover:

He wakes renewed from all his smart;

Books In The Balance

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Ripeness and the innocence, a body moulded faultlessly to wrestle or to float in the air; eyes where the eager light held steadily as October sun, a warmth, a gentle unconscious grace in the gestures of head and hands, in the way the lips and tongue moved, and forgave instantly the smile which the grave voice was to carry.

In fact, the treatment of Elephant and Castle is quite peculiarly dis-
satisfying. Mr. Hutchinson writes with a hash flamboyance which clings and sickens.

Yet it is not inconceivable that a novelist may fail in detail, only to succeed triumphantly in his total effect. Perhaps the vital reality which Mr. Huskley detected in an earlier novel may break through the enclosing crust of words to provide for us, here too, an ultimate illumin-
ation. But I believe not. We can indeed detect the writer’s intentions without the least difficulty. He has wished to exhibit to us the calamitous progress of self-righteousness, and at the same time to suggest that the reason why the modern world is to be deplored is that we have abandonned Christianity. The book ends with two members of the younger generation reflecting on the sceptical and selfish Weird Storey’s and looking forward to a richly believing future. The girl’s father is about to be exe-
cuted for murder, and she decides to spend the night in a church: the young man will remain in the porch, and he expresses himself thus:

I know you’d let me share, if I asked you. Later on, sometime, we’ll go back to it. Then I’ll share as much as I can. I’ll know most of what it was like. The pain. Not the sacredness. I won’t try to share that. You see, I’m small, comparatively. I understand it. But it’s all your own. You see what I mean?

One does, indeed, see what he means, just as one sees clearly enough what his creator means at any and every point of his expan-
sive dissertation. But to perceive the intention is pitifully not enough. Young men who talk like this, young women, who make the impression which Armorell appears to have made on Mr. Hutchinson, might as well be dumb for all that they can communicate to us. It matters very little whether or not we are in sympathy with Mr. Hutchinson’s view of life. What we require from him is that our own apprehension of life should be somehow deepened. Mauriac’s form of Christianity is far more extravagant than any that we shall find here, but Mauriac holds our curiosity and imagination because his vision is pure and direct. In Elephant and Castle the characters, the places and the situations are grossly con-
trived, any one of them could be dug out from the particular content of this book and reworked without any loss of “vitality” in almost any pretentious popular novel of our time. Once again it is a case of life escaping despite, or perhaps because of, the superficial gusto with which the task has been approached.

Elephant and Castle has all the air of being a “great” novel. There are a lot of pages, a lot of people, a lot of events and a lot of purple. “Vital reality” is not a phrase which I would have chosen, but perhaps it may serve to describe what this novel utterly fails to exhibit.
The doctrine of communal separation is a heretic one and never to be accepted. The establishment of this doctrine. Therefore Pakistan's establishment is most pernicious and unworthy of acceptance.

This is a synod of the strongest lacquers. But who is the author of it and is it in keeping with what, the Indian Government is doing? It is advising the press and the people after the recent Inter-Dominion Agreement? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon: the author is Pandit Jeesw达尔 Nehru himself. The Head of India's Government has spoken his mind without warning an audience without earing a rap whether the Inter-Dominion Agreement is fraught with any peril. Nor is it a feature for Ripley's series, but it is perfectly true and all the evidence is that it is so. "Sall Call" plastered over all the Indian newspapers on May 29. Nehru himself so clearly syphoned his thought, yet the point of it is unmistakable there and it is a point, which goes straight to the heart of the matter and clean through the appeasement-clause in the Inter-Dominion Agreement.

Here are his very words: "India has waged a heroic battle in Kashmir against the pernicious doctrine of communal separation supported by the Moslem League and has culminated in the establishment of Pakistan. This, without question, is the most important chapter in the history of Hindustan and Muslims of India."

Pandit Nehru and the Inter-Dominion Agreement

What are we to think of these words? Has our Prime Minister completely gone? The Head of the Government should certainly know what the Inter-Dominion Agreement is all about. If his words are an index to his view of the situation, then no unconditional acceptance of the country's partition is implied and that the appeasement-clause in the Agreement is a dead letter now.

The Agreement had as its background a desire on India's part to avoid talk of reunion if Pakistan who hailed reunion could be just and straightforward in her dealings. India was inclined to think, in spite of all part signs to the contrary, that a change of heart in the Pakistan Government was possible, if not actually imminent. But the ink was scarcely dry on the Agreement when the Premier of the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan, Khan Abdul Kaysan Khan, one of the organizers of the tribal invasion of Kashmir, ran against India. Most irresponsibly he indulged in utter falsehoods by stating that the Red Shirts in the Harar District had been "continuously passing information to the Indian Union and Sheikh Abdullah to check India's action and bringing Pakistan to Kashmir within Pakistan territory. We also had also plotted to murder the Frontier Premier with the intention of creating confusion behind the Kashmir" and that the "plots were being financed by India and were in correspondence with a certain Pandit Sahib." And a strong protest by the India Government was made. Both the names had been named and there was no reason for Pandit Nehru to conclude that he was the Pandit Sahib referred to. But one can picture West two together and when in the same room the plotter are seen financed by India and corresponding with a Pandit Sahib it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the Pandit Sahib is one who is closely connected with India's Government and none other than her Prime Minister.

Close on the heels of Khan Abdul Kaysan Khan's outrageous antics came a practical truth-violation in Kashmir and the refusal to agree to the calling of the so-called Azad Kashmir Assembly. The Prime Minister's government was to make the proposed plebiscite a fact. The Prime Minister also expressed the change of heart in Pakistan's Government dissolved and Nehru seems today to see no sense in protesting that Pakistan is friendly or that the communal virus which it keeps on spreading is any exasperating. Not only has he forcefully suggested that Pakistan is a monstrosity but he alleges that a very sad day after this suggestion the proclaimed Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Khan Abdul Kaysan Khan, 29 every newspaper in India carried the following report: "Deserting the history of the Indo-Pakistani dispute, Khan Abdul Kaysan Khan pointed out that while India had been heedless of the contributions of the Indian and American moral and humanitarian considerations Pakistan's case was based on aggression and falsehood as was ultimately confirmed by her behavior in the N. W. F. Con.

Pandit Nehru drew a comparison between the positions of the States in the two Dominions underlined that while all the States had people belonging everywhere in India, according to the rule continued in the Pakistan States."

When Pakistan has not shown any genuine intention of acting in a fair and friendly manner, we disagree on the view that Pakistan is removed. As far as such talking is concerned, the "Inter-Dominion Agreement is a mere screech of paper. It was high time this was realized all over the land, and the undeniable implication that the Prime Minister's utterance has now left not a shred of doubt.

Betrayal of India's Soul

The appeasement-clause in the Agreement was an act of foolish optimism. What is more, it was a betrayal of the soul of the Indian Government. It may accept for the nonce the terrible culmination of her heroic and sacred body: we let it take place, a most ill-starred moment, thinking that somehow a worse evil might be avoided by it, and under existing circumstances, we cannot undo the horror. But to ignore, the horror, throw a veil over the wounded wounds, give a smile to those who have forced us into the outrage—this is unpardonable. The children whose are we may find it in power, to check the mind of the nation from any decisive action, the course of it upon the issue of partition or any other issue—so long as there is no movement of the great Communists to serve primarily the cause of the Indian people, the will of the people," says Nehru, "has prevailed everywhere in India."

But what if the Indominon Agreement is not a fait accompli? Can it be? Is it conceivable that a single, or any subject, no matter if the Government does not see eye to eye with the Moslem League here or there, is not people free to wish that our own freedom may be as the subject. The Government may have one opinion on what is good for the country, private individuals may have another. Why should the press and the people in a free country know to the Government's opinion? If one does not conform to it, one should have the freedom to think what he likes. The true spirit of indivisible Mother India will alone create conditions in which the public will be able to go. At least it was agreed in the Moslem League—our own as well as that of the Muslim League's—own in a bewildered despair mood, the Muslim League is in a mood of calculated cruel prostration. We must not fail for a single instant forget the danger. It must stand written in letters of fire on our conscience and in our memory. Let us never corrupt our soul by shutting our eyes to it or by bringing ourselves to imagine that there is no light. But a fait accompli can change evil into good. It may serve to manifest to the people in the interest of national consolidation rather than be fruitlessly against the barriers preventing us from undoing the wrong. But as individuals of Mother India we must search and search for the right means to restore the physical that has been lost.

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When the Government in its wisdom has decided to carry on a successful conclusion, and the Moslem League is in a mood of calculated cruel prostration. We must not fail for a single instant forget the danger. It must stand written in letters of fire on our conscience and in our memory. Let us never corrupt our soul by shutting our eyes to it or by bringing ourselves to imagine that there is no light. But a fait accompli can change evil into good. It may serve to manifest to the people in the interest of national consolidation rather than be fruitlessly against the barriers preventing us from undoing the wrong. But as individuals of Mother India we must search and search for the right means to restore the physical that has been lost.

All Governments Open To Criticism

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If it is not thus shown up, with what face can we fight for the accession of Kashmir to India? Communal separatism on a basis of religion is the evil we are now facing in Kashmir, and surely we cannot stop calling it by its name. The Prime Minister's utterance has now left not a shred of doubt.