

**MYTHIC CONSTRUCTS, DYSTOPIA AND DEHUMANISATION
IN
MODERN BRITISH AND AMERICAN FICTION**

A Thesis Submitted to the University of Calicut

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By

G. RANGARAJAN

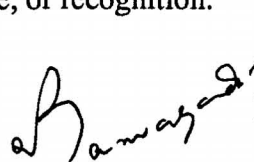
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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that this thesis, entitled *Mythic Constructs, Dystopia and Dehumanisation in Modern British and American Fiction*, submitted to the University of Calicut for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is a record of *bonafide* research carried out by G. Rangarajan, under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted earlier for the award of any degree, diploma, title, or recognition.

 24/12/2001

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DECLARATION

I, G. Rangarajan, do hereby declare that this thesis has not previously formed the basis for the award of any degree, diploma, associateship, fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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I dedicate my dissertation to the memory of my father late. Sri. R. Gopalakrishnan, whose blessings are always with me.

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1-13
CHAPTER I <i>Myth and the Logic of Transformation and Regeneration – I</i>	14- 50
(i) Towards a Definition of Myth	
(ii) Myth and the Fictive Process	
CHAPTER II <i>Myth and the Logic of Transformation and Regeneration – II</i>	51-79
(i) American Mythogenesis	
(ii) Racism and Myth	
CHAPTER III <i>The Mythic in the Mindscape</i>	80-160
(i) The Utopian Mode	
(ii) The Dystopian Mode	
(iii) The Science Fiction Genre	
(iv) Dehumanisation in the Clock-Work World of SF	
CHAPTER IV <i>The Mythic Hero</i>	161-193
CHAPTER V <i>The Dehumanised Hero and the Technotopic Milieu</i>	194-276
(i) Aldous Huxley's <i>Brave New World</i>	
(ii) Kurt Vonnegut Jr's <i>Player Piano: A Braver Newer World</i>	
CHAPTER VI <i>The Dehumanised Hero at Bay: Political and Racial Machinations</i>	277-330
(i) Ralph Ellison's <i>Invisible Man</i>	
(ii) George Orwell's <i>1984</i>	
CONCLUSION	331-342
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	343-367

INTRODUCTION

We will smash the old world
wildly
we will thunder
a new myth over the world
We will trample the fence
of time beneath our feet.
We will make a musical scale
of the rainbow
Roses and dreams
debased by poets
will unfold
in a new light
for the delight of our eyes
the eyes of big children
We will invent new roses
roses of capitals with petals of squares

Mayakovsky¹

For futurists like Mayakovsky, the October Revolution of 1917 was a welcome one which ushered in the best of climates for building a totally new and exciting society. As in France in 1789 and 1848, immense creative energy was generated in all fields. Experience proves that some constructions of a future un-determined in time are capable of creating a great impact with few disadvantages when they are of a certain nature;

this occurs when it is a question of myths in which the strongest inclinations of a people, a party or class are found, tendencies which present

themselves to the mind with the insistence of instincts in all life's circumstances, and which give an appearance of complete reality to hopes of imminent action on which the reform of the will is based. (Sorel 1979, P. 209)²

This observation accurately defines the purpose of a myth that is created by a people, that the myth motivates rather than predicts and its success is to be measured in terms of the movement it generates. As "myths are not astrological almanacs" (Sorel P.47) It is not necessary that the proposed agenda will be successfully executed. Herein lies the utopian semblance to mythic musings.

Ernst Bloch's masterpiece *The Principle of Hope* which he wrote over a period of nine years as an exile in America, outlines the main themes of hope. For him, the enemies of hope are confusion, anxiety, fear, renunciation, passivity, failure and nothingness. *The Principle of Hope* is an encyclopaedic account of dreams of a better existence; from the most simple to the most complex; from idle day dreams to sophisticated images of perfection, thereby developing a positive sense of the 'Utopian' category, 'denuded of unworldliness and abstraction, as forward dreaming and anticipation (Geoghegan, 1987, Pp 87-88) The distinct form of hope is sharply analysed under five headings by Bloch.

1. 'Little Day dreams' : all those flights of fancy and reveries that occupy people throughout their day.
2. 'Anticipatory Consciousness' the very basis of hope; the roots and purpose of dreaming in the individual

3. 'Wishful Images in the Mirror' : the expression of hope in such form as display, fairy tale, travel, film and the theatre.

4. 'Out lines of a Better World': planned or outlined utopias medical, social, technological, architectural and geographical utopias, plus the 'wishful landscapes' of paintings and literature

5. Wishful Images of the Fulfilled moment. The most powerful conception of authentic humanity

(Geoghegan, 1987- P. 88)

Modern Societies have constantly been creating new desires and reinforcing old needs. Some of these have been in their own repressive interests but most of them failing in their present forms. In countless ways people have been demonstrating their dissatisfaction with the existing world and nourishing their dream of something better. In Andre Gorz's eloquent statement of utopian credentials titled *Paths to Paradise*, he comments on the self-destructed old order even before the automatic yielding of the promised land.

Times of crises are also times of freedom. Our world is out of joint; societies are disintegrating, our life long hopes and values are crumbling. The future ceases to be a continuation of past trends. The meaning of present development is confused, the meaning of history suspended. Because the curtain has fallen on the older order and no other order waits in the wings, we must improvise the future as never before (1985 P.8)

In their discussion of the 'critical' and 'constructive' modes of utopianism in the work, *The Politics of Utopia: a study in Theory and Practice*, (1982), Barbara Godwin and Keith Taylor maintain that "The basis of Utopian claim to be taken seriously as political theory is its critical analysis of socio-political reality, as much as its ideal vision". (1982, P. 17). Myths offer a narrative pattern that give meaning to human existence, uniting the antinomies of life, the conscious and the unconscious, historical and present, individual and social. They are verbally developed symbols forming a psychic residue of innumerable experiences. Utopia is nothing but the secularisation of the myth of the Golden Age and is inseparable from satire, the one a critique of the real world in the name of something better, the other a hopeful construct of what a world might be. In the seminal *New Science* (*Scienza nuova*) by Giambattista Vico, the three successive epochs are the divine, the heroic and the civil and they recur in upward, spiralling cycles. In his attempt to develop a historical method for interpreting mythology or for extracting history from myths, Vico was incidentally seeking a rational explanation for the fabulous gold of the golden age. In the words of one French pamphleteer, Francois Barbe Marbois.

The golden age, a fiction of the Old World is realised in the New. The interplay of innocence and corruption, which is so persistent a theme of American novelists, has been geographically correlated with the relationship of the two hemispheres. Chronologically, it has its coordinates in the two ages, gold and iron. The imagery of Arcadia and the golden age is interwoven with the motif of Eden and the fall, throughout Nathaniel Hawthorne's old-world novel, *The Marble Faun* (as in Levin, 1972, P.68)

Even today, people talk of America as a nation that has no history (in the sense that Europe has) no tradition and no myth. This is only partly true, because, although America has no tradition spanning two thousand years or more and no myth that dates back to pre-historic times, the national need and national industry has forged, out of the experiences, hopes and aspirations of the people, something that can truly be defined in terms of the American myth and American tradition. In America in a span of just one year (1889-1900) over one hundred utopias were composed, most of them strongly influenced by Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward : 2000-1887* (1888). The advantages prophesied by Bellamy did not really materialise. There was not much in the way of universal equality and brotherhood, no drastic reduction of working time and certainly no rich variety of goods made available to everyone as he had foreseen for his future America. The development of the labour situation in the second decade of the twentieth century provided no scope for optimistic extrapolation. The dreams of Bellamy and a whole tribe of utopianists evoked nightmare after nightmare. From this point onwards a continuous line of dystopias from Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We* (1920) to George Orwell's *1984* (1949) appeared, "negative" or inverted utopias that vehemently denounced centralisation, mechanisation, regimentation and dehumanisation as the chief concomitant evils of industrial progress. Interestingly it is the very utopian or the perfect system which paves the way to stifle rather than encourage individual initiative and creativity to the conditions of alienation and regimentation that dystopian writers have warned against. Ivan Yefremov, a leading Russian writer of speculative fiction presents a character in his *Andromeda* (1954) who

decides to work to the full measure of his strength but finds that he has nothing 'creative' to do in accordance with his natural talents and inclinations. He has been offered work in a fully automated diamond mine. The work comprised of 'watching the dials of the sorting machines and keeping constant watch over the calculating machines that computed the ever-changing resistance of the rock, the pressure and expenditure of water, the depth of the shaft and the expulsion of solid matter. Eventually he goes to work in a submarine titanium mine, which proves even less enticing. He spends his daily tours of duty in semi-dark rooms, packed with indicator dials where the pump of the air conditioning system could scarcely cope with the overwhelming heat made worse by the increased pressure due to the inevitable leakage of compressed air. Brave new work, indeed !

Yefremov does not seem to have been aware of such problems of inconsistencies in his work, for he was just extrapolating from the economic and technological situation of the Soviet Union, a situation certainly not characterised by affluence and over automation. This has led to the stronger fictionalisation of utopian literature, to transform ideas into imaginative experiences and thus make them more tangible. It is this condition that has led to the rapprochement of Science Fiction and utopia. For Science Fiction has the more powerful but at the same time more emotionally centred narrative strategies and symbols.

*My dissertation titled *Mythic Constructs, Dystopia and Dehumanisation in Modern British and American Fiction*, addresses the responses of Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Kurt Vonnegut Jr. and Ralph Ellison to the acute problems of modern life; loss of faith, the mechanisation of society and the consequent dehumanisation of man, the contest of the self with a world that seems to deny the integrity of the individual consciousness. Be it*

Huxley's *Brave New World* (1936), Orwell's *1984* (1949), Vonnegut's *Player Piano* (1952) or Ellison's *Invisible Man* (1952), as dystopias, they struggle with a paradox which intimately affects the individuality of the protagonist. Kathryn Hume has appropriately analysed such portrayals as

a paradox : (where) individuality is messy, inefficient, harmful to others, and often just as harmful and distressing to its possessor. Freedom is necessary for individuality. Making man into the happy machine, however, robs life of its sense of meaning. Freedom blights happiness for many people, but ensured happiness for the greatest number can only be achieved by abolishing freedom. These authors differ in the degree of happiness they see in their societies as encouraging, but all postulate an advanced state of technology, and rub noses in the fact that technological invention diminishes man's necessary functions, and thus forces to look closely at a meaning we wish to claim for human life (1984- P. III)

The novels aforementioned , share such tensions and attempt to seek solution to the problems, teaching something positive through a negative example. The use of myth and symbol and metaphor aids the authors to probe deeply into the mindscape of the heroes of their novels. The choice

of my novels therefore fit in a category where the author conjures up the best of futuristic plots, braised in the mythic and science fiction traditions. The heroes are mythic heroes ready to embark on adventures that beckon them to revolutionise societies, but ultimately leave them in an emasculated, lobotomised and leucotomised surrender.

A widely acknowledged difference that distinguishes British and American fiction is the British concern with human beings as social animals, pitted against the American concern with the metaphysical struggle of the isolated individual. Concomitantly as Richard Chase pointed out in the *American Novel and its Tradition*, when the British novel crossed the Atlantic, it became more often than not, the American "romance", characterised by an emphasis on timelessness in the sense of Western transcendence rather than on the time bound movement within a realistically conceived social setting. This contrast reflects the contrasting historical reality of time in Europe and the New World; the New World, with its offer of seemingly infinite possibilities, including the transcendence of time, shaped the narrative structure of American fiction. Similarly, the historical reality of black time has shaped not only the themes but also the narrative structure of black fiction where one notices the predominant struggle between myth and history, within the context of the threat of exclusion from both. If British fiction emphasises history and man's existence as a social animal and American fiction, the isolated search for one's soul, it is incumbent upon black fiction to emphasize both.

"Alienation and progress" according to Northrop Frye are 'two central elements in the mythology of our day' (1967, P.23). Marx has described

the feeling of the worker who is cheated out of most of the fruit of the labour as alienation, particularly so when he is made conscious of a degraded status, absolutely dispossessed by the master. Currently this very sense of alienation born out of exploitation is experienced by the black. The black, "looking at the selfishness and panic in white eyes realizes that while what he has to fight is ultimately a state of mind, still his enemies also include people who have got identified with the state of mind. Thus his enemies, again, are those who believe themselves his masters or natural superiors" (Frye, 1967, P, 24).

The condition of alienation of progress is best attested by Frye through a medieval legend of the Wild Hunt "in which souls of the dead had to keep marching to nowhere all day and all night at top speed. Anyone who dropped out of line from exhaustion instantly crumbled to dust". (1967, P. 23). Modern society has acquired a similar character which standardises men and straight jackets its misfits; causes the illness it quarantines. Modern machine culture is the most recent manifestation of society's threat to the individual, perhaps the most threatening.

The dissertation is an attempt at delineating the various ways in which a novel assimilates myths. This has been exemplified through the six chapters of the dissertation. The first chapter is titled - *Myth and the Logic of Transformation and Regeneration - 1*. Here I have attempted to accommodate the various definitions of myth and the immense levels of coloration that they take on in various contexts. The definitions progress from the early interpretations of myths to their contemporary relevance and application. In the sub section titled 'Myth and the Fictive Process', I have

emphasised the fact that myth is an intentional structure in a novel, where the novelist is compelled into the transformational modes of mythic thought and also into the appropriation of language and genre whenever he attempts to make sense of the human material. These generic transformations are indeed logical in outlining the plot of the novel which helps the ordering of the mythic form.

The second chapter is but an extension of the first: *Myth and the Logic of Transformation and Regeneration - II*, where I have interrogated the process of American mythogenesis and the subject of racism in relation to myth. This chapter is intended to serve as a foundation for the study and analysis of Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Player Piano* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*. These are the two American novels that I have chosen for exemplifying the brilliant articulations of mythic constructs for fictionalising a dystopian vision. Both Kurt Vonnegut Jr and Ralph Ellison demonstrate their feelings for the dehumanised hero in their respective novels.

The third chapter titled *The Mythic in the Mindscape* makes a detailed analysis of the strong and unmistakable relationship that utopian, dystopian and science fiction genres have with the mythic. This has been argued in four subsections i) *The Utopian Mode* ii) *The Dystopian Mode* iii) *The Science Fiction Genre* iv) *Dehumanisation in the Clock-Work World of SF*.

All the four novels analysed maintain profound dystopian courses, bordering on the fantastic and phantasmagoric of the Science Fiction genre. Therefore it is only pertinent to trace the history of utopian writing to pitch upon the inversion of utopia to explicate contemporary dilemmas. Dystopias have thus emerged as a natural corollary to earlier

utopias. The bane of mechanisation in technocratic environment can but intensely affect individual freedom and happiness. The sway of computers and myriad electronic gadgets over human beings has been too greatly marvelled upon, but then, their omnipresence in every department of human life has indeed been cluttering, stifling the individuality, happiness and privacy of man. Graphic detailing of such instances are perceptible in all the novels selected for analysis.

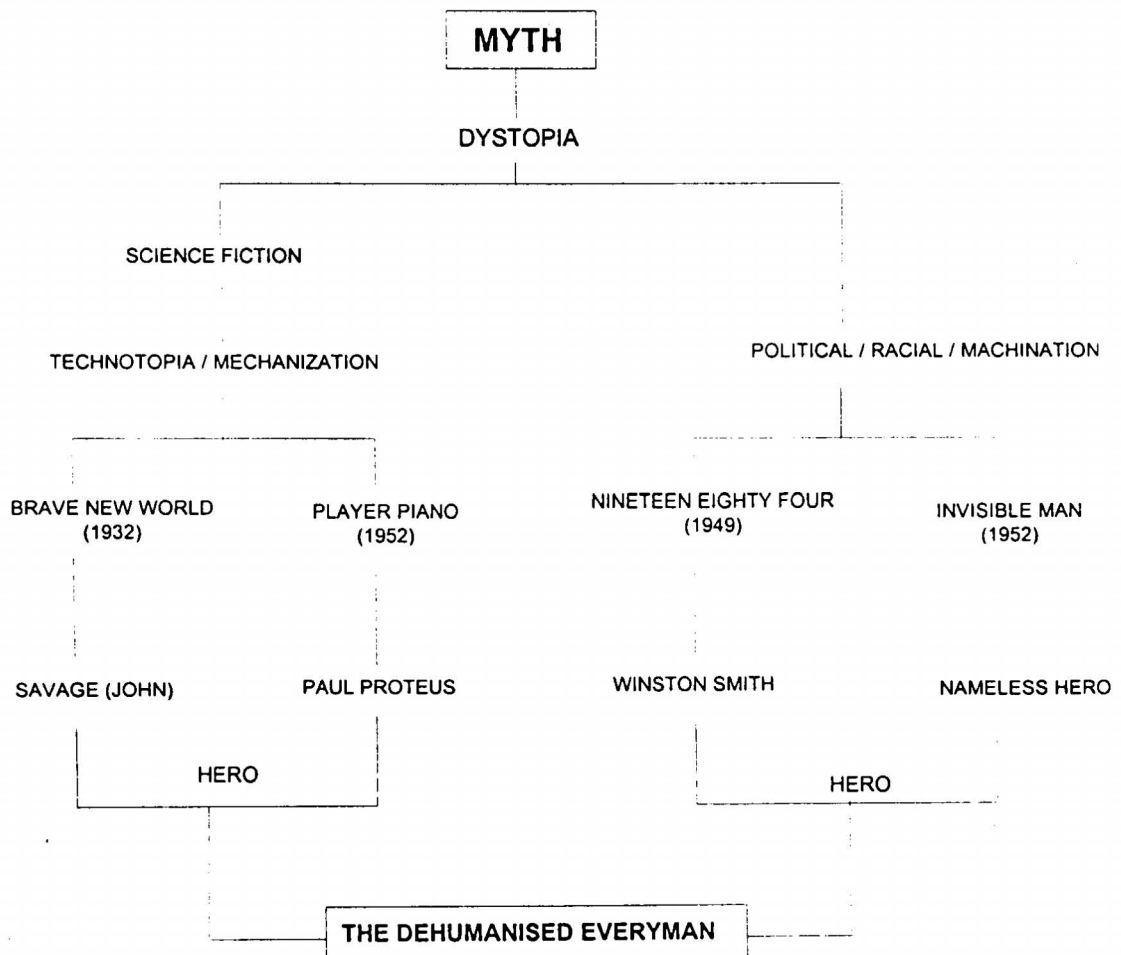
The fourth chapter *The Mythic Hero* endeavours to trace the personality of the layman-hero as a mythic protagonist endowed with an Everyman status. The hero rises from amongst his common kin to a towering figure through countless trials and tribulations. He is subjected to both acute mental and physical torture while challenging the tortuous paths for annexing freedom and happiness. Exemplars from several novels have been drawn to parallel the personality of John the Savage, Paul Proteus, Winston Smith and the invisible man in *Brave New World*, *Player Piano*, 1984 and *Invisible Man* respectively. The authors' deliberate choice of names for christening the heroes in these novels points to the commonality of such names. The names John, Paul and Smith are the commonest among British and American laymen. The innominate hero in *Invisible Man* is African American who represents the woes and despondencies of a whole race in America.

Chapter Five entitled *The Dehumanised Hero and the Technotopic Milieu* has its focus on Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Player Piano* which is indeed a 'braver newer world'. This chapter traces the authors' inspiration to write the novels concerned and examines in great detail the structure of the plot in relation to the character of the hero. The heroes, John the Savage and Paul Proteus, in *Brave New World* and *Player Piano* have been victims of conditioned environments resulting in their abject surrender of individuality before the so called

'civilised' society or the 'benevolent corporate environment'.

The Sixth chapter, like the fifth interrogates the personality and temperament of the heroes, Winston Smith and the invisible man, who struggle to survive the dehumanisation , powered by political and racial machination. While Winston Smith suffers the tyranny of political surveillance, the invisible man suffers the misery of vulnerability in a racist culture.

In short all the heroes undertake a mythic quest for freedom and happiness, inspite of relentlessly being hounded and hunted through labyrinthine paths. They however fail to achieve their ultimate goals and remain frozen with their backs to the wall. The process is better illustrated by the diagram given.



NOTES:

1. Quoted in J. Berger, *Art and Revolution : Ernst Neizvestny and the Role of the Artist in the USSR*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1969, 39
2. See J.L Stanely (e.d.), *From Georges Sorel : Essays in Socialism and Philosophy*, New York : OUP 1976, 150. For Sorel See: J.R. Jennings, *George Sorel : The Character and Development of His thought*, Basingstoke: Haemillan/St. Anthony's 1985; L. Portis, *Georges Sorel*, London : Pluto 1986

CHAPTER - I

MYTH AND THE LOGIC OF TRANSFORMATION AND REGENERATION - I

TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF MYTH

*There was a muddy centre before we breathed
There was a myth, before the myth began
Venerable and articulate and complete.*

Wallace Stevens ('Phoebus is Dead')

The modern age has witnessed an almost unprecedented surge of interest in mythology brought about by studies in different branches of human knowledge like anthropology, psychology and historiography. The developments in these fields have added a plethora of new meanings to the concept of myth, and several philosophical and sociological nuances have come to be associated with the study of mythology, giving impetus to mythic consciousness. Many philosophers and literary theorists like Earnst Cassirer, Mircea Eliade, Susanne Langer, Joseph Campbell, James Frazer, Claude Levi-Strauss and Northrop Frye have sought to study the close kinship between myth and the creative process. Myth or *mythos* as termed by Aristotle stands for a sequence of events holding our attention shaped into a unity. Studies in folklore, anthropology and psychology have been adding new perspectives to Aristotle's principle that *mythos* is the soul of any literary work. *Mythos* in Greek means story or narrative or poetic literature. They include creation myths, fall and flood myths, hero-ancestry myths, etiological, eschatological and apocalyptic myths. Myths have a compelling protean quality which beguiles the imaginative and the sensitive to develop them into various dimensions, while maintaining the shape of a narrative.

Myth in the modern context takes on its significance at a different level also. Our familiarity with certain stories, which in the anthropological sense fall short of the label of myths, may be fictive forms invented in civilised periods possessing mythic qualities. Thus it is imperative that myths, ancient or modern ought to be interrogated with a view to uncover their distinct features. C.S. Lewis argues that myths are

extra-literary narratives which even at the very first hearing introduce us to a permanent object of contemplation . . . more like a thing than a narration . . . which work upon us by their peculiar flavour or quality, rather as a smell or chord does Myth evokes only minimal sympathy dealing with impossibles and preternaturals or the fantastic offering the reader or the listener an experience either bad or joyful but grave Myths do not offer any scope for the purely comic. It offers not just grave but awe inspiring experience. We feel it to be numinous as if something of a great moment had been communicated to us. The recurrent efforts of the mind to grasp, to conceptualise . . . the something, are seen in the persistent tendency of humanity to provide myths with allegorical explanations. And, after all allegories have been tried, the myth

itself continues to feel more important than they
(1961, Pp. 44 – 45).

A study of the pre-occupation with myth in the twentieth century should begin with the recognition that myth embodies one of the oldest elements of human heritage. In quite different ways the ancient world and the Renaissance were concerned with myth. In terms of its accumulated associations, we can say that the word 'myth' has become a palimpsest. The accretions thus qualified by myths offer newer and newer layers which are perhaps the most plastic and adaptable forms of ancient concepts reworked to modern ends. To William Righter.

Myth has become a kind of intellectual shorthand which has gained acceptance as standing for an elusive, almost unanalysable amalgam of beliefs, attitudes and feelings. The very approachability of the content of myth has created the utility of the term and guaranteed its widespread usefulness (1975, Pp. 10-11).

The maiden shot at modern myth criticism has undoubtedly been from *The Golden Bough* of Sir James G. Frazer. The classicists of the Cambridge Anthropological School' who granted Frazer's range of mythological concepts found ways of reading the classics that have continued to inform discussion of vernacular literature into the 1990s. The intense concentration

on mythic processes that our century has witnessed has resulted in a vast body of theoretical writing, lighting upon myth. For example, the particular concerns of the anthropologist, the psychoanalyst and the literary critic have led to debates among the areas investigating the field, often reaching a point of insistence on definitions. As myth has had a vital role in human society from its beginning on primitive religious narrative to its present day adaptation as a tool in the exploration of the unconscious, any useful study of myth must involve the knowledge that evolves out of all areas of research. Nevertheless, a certain elusiveness is discernible in our understanding of myths. What St. Augustine stated long ago in his *Confessions* remains a just description.

What is myth? I know what it is provided nobody asks me; but if I am asked, and try to explain, I am baffled (xi, P.14).

In advanced cultures myth takes on fantastic forms tempting the narrator to shed the need for plausibility or logic. Northrop Frye has interpreted myths on the basis of the two principles with which myths become operative: analogy and identity, the former fixing homologies between human life and natural phenomena, and the latter suggesting personifications such as a sun-God or a tree-god. Though myth

Seizes on the fundamental element of design offered by nature—the cycle as we have it daily in the Sun and yearly in the seasons . . . and assimilates it to the human cycle of life, death and rebirth . . . the discrepancy between the world he would like to live, develops a dialectic in myth

which, as in the *New Testament* and Plato's *Phaedo* separates reality into two contrasting states, a heaven and a hell (1963, P. 32).

Some classical Scholars maintained the fallacious view that it is Greek mythology which afforded a pattern for all myths. Myth is indeed a diverse phenomenon accommodating different motives and applications even within a single society – let alone in different cultures and at different periods. Though a number of myths belonging to diverse cultures concern gods and sacred beings, period of creation or the like, it is not necessary for myths to possess this quality as primary. A basic element that a myth ought to have is its kinship to a tale, which does not mean that all tales are myths, but tales which speak of a tradition that has a sustained appeal over many generations.

Myth criticism is however fraught with epistemological and ideological controversies. For example we have critics like Richard Chase who regard myth as 'no more philosophic than any other kind of literature', 'Myth' he says 'is therefore art and must be studied as such . . . a mode of cognition, a system of thought, a way of life, only as art is. It can be opposed to science only as art is opposed to science. There is no question of one defeating the other (1946, P. 245).

Freud who pioneered the idea that myth is endowed with a powerful capacity to reveal the unconscious conflicts and terror it displaced, employed its language on scientific terminology and invented scientific myths to describe his discoveries about the nature and development of man. His rhetorical question to Einstein, 'But does not every science come in the end to a kind of mythology like this? Cannot the same be said today of

your own Physics? supports the view that the mythical for Freud is related to the theoretical and the abstract (XXII, P. 211).

Mark Schorer, in the *Kenyon Review* (Autumn, 1942) wrote that 'a myth is a large controlling image . . . which gives philosophic meanings to the facts of ordinary life'. Joseph Campbell in his appendix to the edition of *Grimm's Fairy Tales*, supposes that myth is a system of metaphysics: it is a "revelation of transcendental mysteries", it is symbolic of the spiritual norm for Man the Microcosm' (P.61). When we come to the structuralist studies of Levi-Strauss, we find myth being regarded as essentially social, expressing the complex dialectics between nature and culture. He worked out the constituent units or mythemes which are combinations of elements in myth that produce a coherent pattern.

Many writers have allegorised myths and this impulse has manifested itself in different ways in the present context Utopias, dystopias, anti-utopias, surreal utopias, science-fiction etc. are some such manifestations which offer us a mythorama of life. All the same, the degree to which any story is a myth depends largely on the person who listens to it or reads it, for the same work can be just an exciting 'yarn' to one and at the same time communicate mythic overtones to another. The Euhemerist² seeks to describe myth on the basis of past historical events where heroes were deified out of gratitude for their accomplishments. This is a purely historical approach that accounts for the survival of myth on a simple, rational ground. In spite of the fact that Frazer became more of a euhemerist than a ritualist in the process of his investigations, *The Golden Bough* provides sufficient documentation to convince the reader that primitive man was deeply preoccupied with the rites of spring and that some sort of vegetation—ritual was the central activity from which all mythologies were derived.

Since a certain amount of arbitrariness is unavoidable in the choice of a working definition of myth, we can as well start with a comparatively recent attempt. The urge to define myth is a ceaseless endeavour because the deep human need for myths persists. Modern versions of classical myths entail naturalisation into a cultural, ethical, scientific and theological milieu unlike that of antiquity. To Rene Girard mythology "is a game of transformations" (1986, P. 216). According to Alan Watts, mythology in the broadest sense is "a complex of stories . . . some no doubt fact and some fantasy . . . which for various reasons, human beings regard as demonstration of the inner meanings of universe and of human life (Sebeok (ed): P 154). Combining this view with Frye's formalistic definition of myth as a "certain type of story . . . very seldom located in history, . . . in which some of the chief characters are gods or other beings larger in power than humanity" (1963, P. 30), we get the main outlines of the mythic process in artistic creation. As a type of story, myth is a form of verbal art, "a total form of art," in that its "content is nature but whose form is human". Frye, while conforming to this 'archetypal' persuasion argues that myth offers

. . . the main outlines and the circumference of a verbal universe which is later occupied by literature as well . . . as a total structure defining, as it does . . . the whole range of a society's verbal expressiveness, it is the matrix of literature
 In every age poets who are thinkers . . . can hardly find a literary theme that does not coincide with myth (1963, P. 33).

In an earlier work Frye states that the term myth "may have . . . different

meanings in different subjects” and “in literary criticism myth means ultimately *mythos* a structural organising principle of literary form” (1957, P.341). In his *Fables of Identity* he underscores the distinction between the two possible transplantations of the Aristotelian term *mythos*: “narrative” and “plot”. He compares the plot to the trees or houses we focus our eyes on through a train window, while the narrative is more like the weeds and stones that rush by in the foreground. Literature and myth exist on a continuance by virtue of their function as language, myth tending to literary sense of narrative form and fiction aspiring to attain the status of myth. In *Mythologies*, Barthes draws on the same analogy to signify the perpetual hide-and-seek played by the form and content of a myth. This unique feature of myths forces us “to apply to myth a static method of deciphering, of focussing on form and content separately” (1972, P. 123).

As a device myths are quite indispensable in the modern context, for they transform the problems of self and history into a cosmic drama in which the self determines the role appropriate to itself. In a way, a certain degree of continuity with the past is maintained by the moderns by parodying or ironising the classical myths. This aspect of myth qualifies it to a status of “culture religion of modernism” (P. 347) as stated by Leslie Fiedler. This qualification ensures an attitude to life and art which seeks to salvage the self through discipline, taking nurture from myths.

Myths as mentioned earlier can separate reality to two contrasting states of heaven and hell. Claude Levi-Strauss in *The Savage Mind* explains that mythical thought can be capable of generalising and so be scientific

even though it is entangled in imagery. Strauss's approach affirms that the signified changes, into the signifying and vice versa, which more or less tallies with Franz Boas's aphoristic observation. "Mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again and new worlds are built up from the fragments" (Boas vi, P.18).

The realistic elements in myth and mythic elements in realism leave one to conclude that historical bifurcations of myth and the real are unwarranted because myth is a way of thought. If one were to analyse the history of the mythic signs, one would find amongst them a dynamic inter-relatedness suggesting the transcendent. Facts can imperil myths but mythic understanding is however larger than facts themselves, and though we must be constantly discarding myths as unhistoric when they prove unhistoric to facts, they must be remade. Joseph Campbell in his brilliant work titled *The Hero With A Thousand Faces*³ states that

myth is the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human cultural manifestation. Religion, philosophies, arts, the social forms of primitive and historic man, prime discoveries in science and technology, the very dreams that to listen, sleep, boil up from the basic, magic ring of myth (1993, P. 3).

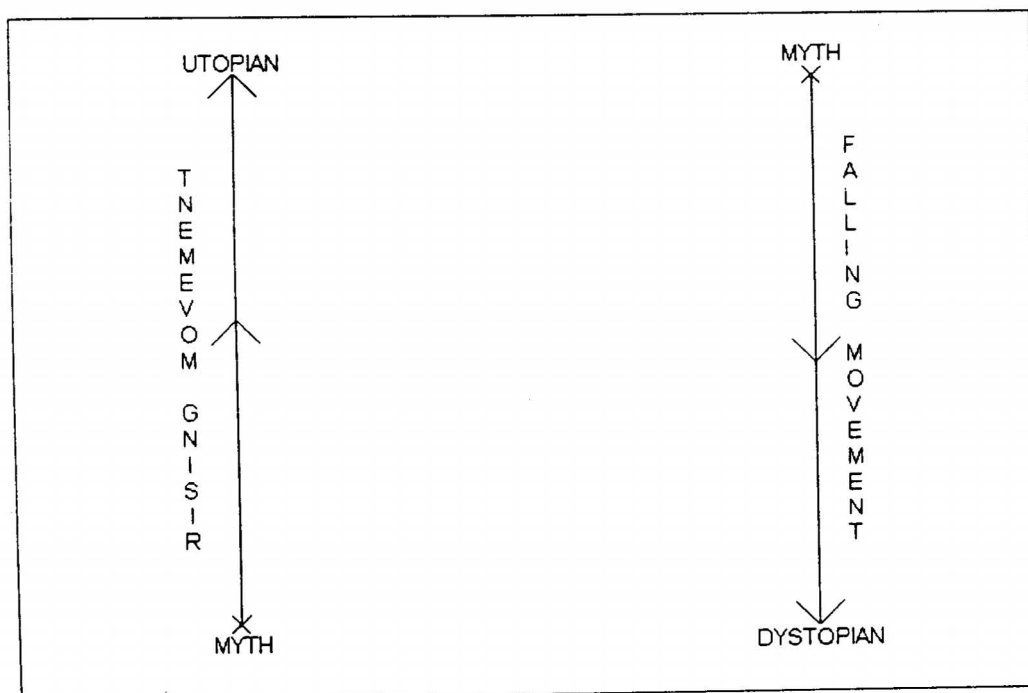
Non-existent social conventions find their way into new life styles familiarised by utopias and science fictions. Literary texts and myths, even

biographies, history and hagiography often spell out conditions for social co-ordination. If early utopians sought to create an arcadian atmosphere in societies or offered fantastic blue-prints for flaw-free environments, in the twentieth century we have bleak and murky projections offering modes and means to survive in hell. In other words, the earlier utopias are veritable dystopias of the present day. Modern man's sense of alienation and existential angst, the individual's sense of insignificance and helplessness are sorted out as contemporary problems and are inter-connected with myths of traditional societies. From the philosophical perspective the pessimism that is characteristic of modernist writing can be traced to the world views of Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Arnold Toynbee and Martin Heidegger. Myth for the artist as T.S. Eliot has put it, "is a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history (1923, P.483). Myth therefore is a principle of order for art or a principle of discipline for the subjective self.

Modern literature has undoubtedly been mythoramic and if fiction is regarded as a mental construct as urged by Frank Kermode, myths aid the creator of modern fiction to explicate the contemporary situation. Though Aristotle has observed that in framing an ideal we may assume what we wish, but should avoid impossibilities, modern fiction writers have successfully framed ideals by fully exploring the possibility of the impossibilities to interpret society. The use of myth as symbol and metaphor helps them to look for solutions to the problem of teaching something positive through negative examples. Myth, in this regard is often used as a stylistic

device. Here myths assume the allegorical vein of science, religion or morality. To Northrop Frye

The structural principles of mythology built up from analogy and identity, become in due course the structural principles of literature. The absorption of the natural cycle into mythology provides myth with two of these structures, the rising movement that we find in myths of spring or dawn, of birth, marriage and resurrection, and the falling movement in myths of death, metamorphosis or sacrifice. These movements appear as the structural principles of comedy and tragedy in literature. Again the dialectic in that projects a paradise or heaven above our world and a hell or place of shades below it appears in literature as the idealised world of pastoral and romance and the absurd, suffering or frustrated world of irony and satire (1963, Pp.33-34). The following illustration will make the idea more explicit, showing the allegiance that myth maintains with the idealised or utopian world, and the dreaded one, the dystopian.



Richard Chase in his article that appeared in *Partisan Review* has emphatically laid down the enduring archetypal quality of myths. To him "all cultures are capable of making myth and the primeval reality which is resurrected as narrative . . . is for the moment more relevant to human problems than reality of the ordinary world" (1946, P.248).

Modern theorists have sought to delineate the complex dialectic between utopian and dystopian prognosis and the social factors engendering them. John Griffith's work, *Three Tomorrows* opens thus

Utopias were the creation of an age of arbitrary authority and frequent, albeit creative, disorder in which the security and prosperity of the majority could be imperilled at any moment by the wilful behaviour of a determined and powerful individual minority. These were the wishful systems devised, by men of good will, for the constraint of the turbulent individual by means of institutions and laws. Their objective was order, their by-products were general prosperity and peace, and their foundation was a strict hierarchy in which each person not only knew and kept his proper station but enjoyed it. They were written from the point of view at the top of the ladder by men who expected, probably quite rightly, that is where they would find themselves . . . their good place.

'No where' as Sir Thomas More's word may be translated . . . ever be realised in practice (1980, P. 98).

An overview of the theories regarding the mythic process in different ages would leave one with the unmistakable impression that our century has pioneered entirely novel ways of looking at myths. As Mircea Eliade has remarked, the twentieth century theorists have accepted myth as it was understood in early societies where myth meant a "true story" considered to be "sacred, exemplary and significant" (1947, P.1).

In his work *Fictional Worlds*, Thomas G. Pavel examines the views of Jung, Levi-Strauss and Saussure with regard to mythological motifs and the creative process. Levi-Strauss felt that earlier mythological research failed to grasp the arbitrariness of linguistic signs and he claimed that myths behave like a language and the advances of structural linguistics, more specifically phonological models which represented the paradigm of scientific success in a social field, could be applied to them. Roland Barthes's extensive work on narrative structures and literary semiotics offered some scientific methods for analysis, like mythocentrism, semantic fundamentalism, and the doctrine of the centrality of text with its corollaries, "an anti-expressive stand and an immanentist approach to culture" (P.4). Further Pavel speaks of mythification which has its kinship with defamiliarisation that entails the transferring of an event across the legend. This renders "beings and events distant, sometimes inaccessible, but at the time nobly familiar, eminently visible Today we understand fiction

as a realm effectively cut off from the actual world *sub speciae veritatis*" (1986, P.79).

As very influential contemporary thinkers, Levi-Strauss and Roland Barthes have helped to revivify the concept of myth. Strauss's discussion of myth in *The Savage Mind* helped to establish the idea of myth as a kind of thought, founded on elements 'that are half-way between percepts and concepts' (1972, P.18). This view is distinctly different from the traditional view of myth, regarded by Robert Scholes and Robert Kellog as "a traditional plot which can be transmitted" (1966, P.12).

This shift of emphasis from myth as a kind of 'plot' to myth as a way of thought, suggesting kinship with ideology can be found in Roland Barthes brilliant work titled *Mythologies*. His triumph was in bringing myths home to contemporary life, to wrest acknowledgement of the fact that myths are not just something that the remote African tribes, Russian peasants or the ancient Greeks believed in and created—but are part of the stuff and fabric of everyday modern life in the West. For Barthes the notion of myth explained a particular process by which historically determined circumstances were presented as somehow 'natural' and that it allowed for the uncovering of 'the ideological abuse' hidden 'in the display of what goes without saying'. For him myths perform a *naturalising* function.

If Levi-Strauss sees myth as a kind of thought, for Barthes it is 'a type of speech' and his emphasis is quite similar to that laid down by Strauss. 'Myth is not defined by the object of its message, but by the way in which it

utters this message (1972, P.109) . . . it is depoliticized speech (1972, P.142).

Bearing these observations in mind, let us examine the position of art. Art is somewhere, almost half way between scientific knowledge and mythical or magical thought.⁴ The “artist” to Strauss “is in fact a combination of a scientist and bricoleur” and

the characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited . . . mythical thought is capable of generalising and so be scientific, even though it is still entangled in imagery. It too works by analogies and comparisons even though its creations like those of the ‘bricoleur’, always really consist of a new arrangement of element, the nature of which is unaffected by whether they figure in the instrumental set or in the final arrangement (1966, Pp.17-20).

Modern man, confidently assertive of his knowledge of facts strives to live by it while patronising myths. He knows the imaginary and approaches it in a playful way while the mythical notions and concepts continue to control modern life and behaviour. The vast distance that we

have covered from the typical Greek conception of mythology is well attested by Bronislaw Malinowski.

Studied alive myth . . . is not an explanation in satisfaction of a scientific interest, but a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality told in satisfaction of deep religious wants, moral cravings, social submissions, assertions, even practical requirements. Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function, it expresses, enhances and codifies belief, it safeguards and enforces morality, it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization, it is not an idle tale, but a hard-worked active force, it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive force and moral wisdom (1955, Pp.101-8).

Leslie Fielder too has perceived the pragmatic in myth⁵. To him all myths begin with the apprehension of some marvellous activity or potentiality and myths are to be studied using the method of pragmatic naturalism. This approach ensures ample scope for the analysis of myths in various social contexts thereby enhancing the magnitude of myths.

NOTES

- 1 They include Jane Harrison, Gilbert Murray and F.M. Cornford. For a detailed discussion on classical anthropologists refer to Stanely Edgar Hyman's article *The Ritual View of Myth and the Mythic*, Vickery, John B. (Ed.) *Myth and Literature*: Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press.
- 2 Euhemerism proposes the theory that Gods are deifications of actual human beings. This concept which had long been contemplated by the Greek was popularised by Euhemerus of 300 B.C. of Messene.
- 3 See Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 1993, London: Fontana Press.
- 4 Haskell M. Block states in his essay *The Myth of the Artist*, (available in *Literary Criticism and Myth* (Ed.) Joseph P. Strelka (1980) (Penn: University USA) that in the modern world, the highest art is attainable only through the creation of personal mythology . . . not only may a writer create a personal myth; he must do so if his art is to transcend the limits of his own experience.
- 5 For detailed study refer Leslie Fiedler's 'Cross the Border - Close That Gap: Post-Modernism.'" *Sphere History of Literature in the English Language, Vol. 9: American Literature since 1900*. (Ed.) Macruss Cunliffe, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1975.

MYTH AND THE FICTIVE PROCESS

The continuity between mankind's culture in the first 2000 years or so of civilized existence and the modern man's culture is perceptible in the body of myths and folktales which incorporate much of the wisdom and values, achievements, dilemmas and anxieties of early civilized man. Those imaginative tales are endowed with a strength to delight on, illuminate our thoughts and inspire us to adopt them to our own aspirations and conflicts. A very casual observation will reveal that there has been a steady stream of adaptation of Greek and Roman myths to suit contemporary purposes revealing the dramatic continuity of cultural traditions from the dawn of civilization to our own times. Among those myths of the Bronze Age, the most enduring, plastic and salutary ones have been the ones handed down to us by the ancient Greeks. The sterling qualities of vitality and malleability in classical myths have prompted modern man, particularly after the second half of the nineteenth century to analyse many basic problems and dilemmas confronted in antiquity which are still around.

Northrop Frye has put forward the theory of displacement whereby myths become fictions as we discover mythological motifs in fiction. We find his idea of social revelation provided by all serious narratives, mythological as well as literary, giving myths and fictions a common intent of being moral allegories of man's destiny. Both myth and fiction are an effort of the two-level ontological structures common to humanity and as time passes myths undergo the process of fictionalisation, a process born

out of a preoccupation with myth, revealing an urge for stability and order in the midst of chaos and fragmentariness. Thus myth operates as a mediator between the ontologically real world of the essential and the actually real world of existence. Tomas G. Pavel makes a sound observation in his *Fictional Worlds*.

Fictional words are the main repositories of structural feature employed for referential purposes. They are, in most cases, related to the worlds of common sense, and bear the weight of ontological and epistemic consumptions, but they also reflect the technical sophistication of the author and his milieu and the different purposes that the construction is meant to achieve. Cosmologies vary between salient, multi-level organisations and flat, literal ones. The more luxuriant worlds are closer kin to the wealth of early mythologies . . . (1986, P.146).

Analysis of myths using the historical-critical tool affirms that an original simple myth may have numerous layers added over the years, causing a transformation as society progresses. The plurality of the influences of myths aids us to isolate the primitive elements of myth and discover its source and the times of the makers of such myths. Thus the pursuit of the evolution of myths helps to discover the various layers of accretion. As a primitive man's practical responses to a precarious

environment, each myth encapsulates values and beliefs of a particular society. The literary form of the myth preserves its symbolic values which transcend the drossy historical exterior.

In the traditional sense myth bases its narration or fact set at a time of the remote past in a different or other world involving non-human principal characters. The whole attitude in such narrations has been a very sacred one as they embody a dogma. To Ernst Cassirer as quoted by Harry Slochower in his *Mythopoesis*.

The old myths, the almost forgotten myths of antiquity were stories we can no longer believe, as stories, but we may still discover in these ancient intuitions the thread of undying vision . . . in these days of crumbling institutional forms and beliefs, and in the agony and desperation which finds no peace or promise of peace in the world we know, we may begin to hear our own voices as almost the cry of disembodied intelligence, demanding its spiritual rights. And then, perhaps, we shall begin to make the new sort of alliance with the world, on terms which acknowledge and declare first of all, the humanity of the human race (1970, P.17).

Our understanding of myth criticism has been shaped by three major

myth critics namely Joseph Campbell, George Dumézil and Mircea Eliade. While Campbell used literary texts to support his general theories about human nature, Dumézil helped to change the approach of early scholars in the study of myth and culture. And in a quite different vein Mircea Eliade shaped religious thought on myth, defining myth as sacred narrative, distinguishing myth from other forms of narrative, like folktales which are secular in nature.

The desire to change reality, what we call as fantasy is an impulse in literature, co-existing with mimesis. Fantasy imbues literature with a certain power to convey meaning, to strike a kinship between humanity and the cosmos. Traditional communities rely on religious myths for their purpose so that myths acquire meanings from being part of a system, which is distinct from mere adventure stories. To Kathryn Hume, of the artists' four responses to reality . . . "illusion, vision, revision and disillusion" (1984, P.213) myth plays a strong part in the second, namely, vision.

Through myths, the psychology and world view of our cultural ancestors are transmitted to modern descendants in such a way and with such power that our perception of contemporary reality and our ability to function in the world are directly affected. We also find related ideas from psychology suggesting the Freudian and Jungian influence on the common notion of the hero monomyth¹ in Raglan, Campbell and Frye.

Myth, like all culture is used as an instrument of social control. Roland Barthes rightly states that "the function of myth is to empty reality" in order

to "organise a world which is without contradiction because it is without depth" (1972, P.143). Jasper Griffins affirms that myths lend themselves to literature because of four perceptible characteristics, namely wide spread familiarity, narrative vividness, plasticity and significance (1986, P.144). These apart, myth stores non-natural characters and events, it is endowed with the capacity, for divisibility into segments or 'mythemes' with a symbolic prelogical structure, meaning a logic held together by opposites. Myth is both true and false providing a comprehensive set of symbols.

Eric Mottram in an article titled *Living Mythically; The Thirties*, emphasises that myths have always played a crucial role in governing various civilization. He argues

Marxism is defiantly scientific, but the blissful perfection of its ultimate goal, anarchy, follows the party line of *Elysium, Islands of the Blest, Valhalla, Utopia, New Atlantis, Erewhon, and the Big Rock Candy Mountains*. Shorn of his rhetoric and this pretences, modern man may follow different mythical dreams but he is just as governed by his myth as Trobriand islanders and Kwakiutl Amerindians were governed by myth (1972, P.267).²

The ancient stories are retold, rewritten and transmitted as people discover analogies to their own situation and destiny and quite in this sense we can state that myth is not something invented or just fancied but 'pictorial hypothesis' (Slochower, P.19) about man's nature which enters the realm of reality enabling us to explain and predict events in the empirical world. Thus myth is kept alive through the ages by constantly being re-interpreted

and the re-interpretation often takes the form of adaptation to the prevailing sensibilities of a given age. Some authors add to their fiction a mythic component derived from genuine myths while some other authors use myth for didactic purposes to fill in the vacuum left by science. The appeal of myth lies in its archaism which ensures the healing of the wounds of time, and, in its exercise of the merging of past and present, man finds a release from the flux of temporality. As narratives myths keep societies unified through our self interpretation of our inner self, in relation to the outside world. They are therefore indispensable to the process of keeping our souls alive and bringing us novel meanings in a difficult and often meaningless world.

To Taylor Stevenson, 'The fundamental function of myth is one of 'cosmicization', of giving meaning and shape to the world' (1975, P.5). For the German post-Kantian idealist, new mythologies recreating ancient myths into modern experience were thought to restore an original integrated state either in the history of mankind or the individual. Separated from mythic knowledge we lose touch with our own humanity. Many artists have mythicised their works to restore what is lost.

Mircea Eliade has shown that myths transmit power and as exemplified by James Joyce, the Promethean hero strives for liberation within western man, from guilt and chaos of a time of anti-heroism. Kafka's Prometheus story shows that the essential forms of myth are parable and paradox. In works like *Ulysses*, with a conscious reworking of myths, are studies what Northrop Frye describes as the dependence of literary works

on the formal properties of their predecessors. Referring to *Finnegan's Wake*, Frye states that in the work 'the inner battle of the individual mind expands into a vision of mankind dreaming a communal dream of conflicting voices, with occasionally a voice of command, of exceptional authority and for an instant silencing the tumult' (1990, P.369). The self rises in the myth of the Joycean Wake, through Viconian³ circle which weds creation and creator, dream and dreams. Frye's essays contained in *Myth and Metaphor* shows the relation between myth, narrative and metaphor.

Mythological novels are to be studied apart from mythical ones. Mythological novels like Joyce's *Ulysses* carry on a comparison with an original myth whereas mythical novels are rooted to the present. A science fiction novel will be fiction and no longer science fiction once its immediacy is dispersed, once its prophetic and fantastic properties become a common reality. Leslie Fiedler in his essay titled *The End of the Novel* expatiates that

In the jargon of our own day, the novel represents the beginning of popular culture, of that machine made, men produced, man distributed *ersatz* which, unlike either traditional high art or folk art, does not know its place, since, while pretending to meet the formal standards of literal it is actually engaged in smuggling into the republic of letters extra-literary satisfactions. It not merely instructs and delights and moves, but also embodies the

myths of a society, serves as the scriptures of an underground religion, and these latter functions, unlike the former ones depend not at all on any particular form, but can be indifferently discharged by stained-glass windows, comic-strips, ballads and movies (1968, P.193).

Enrico Garzillis' study of the modern loss of identity has its focus on parallels between the Gospel of St. John, and the modern condition, proposing the fact that 'myth of the self is a fiction of the creator which allows the creator to say "I" to his many "children" (1972, P.170) to affirm that the language of myth and self are identical. Cassirer too holds the same view that mythical consciousness creates language. The discussion in Frye's *Myth and Metaphor* is of particular relevance to creation stories in *Genesis* leading to the classification of creation myths, in modern literature. 'Blake's Bible offers a pertinent introduction to the subject of creation myth where Blake is seen as a 'gospel of freedom against the imbecile manifesto of moral inertia, social conformity and sexual shame' (1990, P.239).⁴

Mythology, including religious mythology embody myths which are dealt with hypothetically comprehensive narratives made up of all the variants of each myth, where the motif is a transformational fact and the archetype certainly a part of a process theory of art. But the coherence and singularity of the mythic motif, or the stability of the numinous, remains certain, because each is a matter of interpretation. Sometimes the authenticity poses questions and the variants may be quite ambiguous.

Eric Gould exemplifies that “even if classical and Biblical mythologies have been more popular than the fantastic for establishing the presence of mythological motifs in a literary text, they too are no more unified than any other” (1981, P.172). The novel always implies some set of assumptions about the nature of the divided self in society and about the problems of its discourse. To say that myth is an ‘intentional structure’ (Gould, P.137) in a novel is not to say that novelists are free merely to borrow or rewrite, or juxtapose popular stories, but that the novelist finds himself forced into the transformational nodes of mythic thought and into the appropriation of language and genre whenever he tries to make sense of his human material. These generic transformations are logical in the sense that there is an essential logic to the plotting of good novels in its ordering of the mythic form. Eric Gould expatiates that

Myth reveals logic making itself apparent, venturing to prove its own existence out of concrete beginnings, a logic which manifests itself in what literary convention calls plot. But, we must not assure that logic need be syllogistic . . . it is the logic of deconstruction, a transformation around an absent centre because language cannot contain its own origin. The modern novel often relies more on a firm *cogits* than on exploiting the infirmities of consciousness (P.138).

The arguments amount to stating that, the reader, while reading is making myths as much as the writer in his writing. In Joyce's world as in the world of myth, reality is a set of facts which has a life of its own, a transformation accompanying myth, linking the 'world of the novel to the world of myth through the language of metonymy shifting in and out of metaphor' (Gould, P.143).

The German speculation on the nature of myth is related to the essentially symbolic character of artistic expression as the representation of the infinite in the finite, which points clearly to the formulation of myth available in Wagner and Nietzsche and which, the latter transmitted to the modern age. Like his Romantic predecessors, Wagner, views myth at the centre of artistic creation, but the artist is at best a mediator between art and the archetypal myth. To Nietzsche, myth represented a sweeping indictment of modern culture, and the very investigations in the fields of psychology, the history of religion, ethnology and folklore, which sought to systematise and explain the universal presence of myth. They were in fact an assault on the dynamic power of mythos as a spiritual force in modern life. In *The Birth of Tragedy* Nietzsche argues that abstraction and rationality have displaced the mythical foundation of experience, leaving man homeless and roofless and the recovery of a living relationship between the individual and his culture made possible only through a collective transformation that will accomplish a rebirth of the German *mythos*. Thus the Nietzschean perspective is dominant in twentieth century German views of myth. This is central to the reflection on myth of Thomas Mann, whose consciousness

of the role of myth prompted him to define the creation of fiction as the opposition and interplay of myth, as a conservative and traditional force, and psychology, as an instrument of democratic enlightenment.⁵

Mythopoesis in contemporary literature and criticism has been dominated directly or indirectly by the German Romantics and their spiritual descendants, but the notion of personal myth was also set forth in England and France. In nineteenth century France it was Victor Hugo's works that most significantly asserted the mythic character of poetry, who, like most of the French poetry of his time was keenly aware of the rich tradition of mythological speculation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century France, which fused the notions of symbol and myth. Myth has always been a fountainhead for the psychologist and the historian, the sociologist and the literary critics. Malinowski insisted that myth, if it has to have any meaning at all cannot be divorced from its social function and not very surprisingly a sociological essay titled *Robinson Crusoe as a Myth*⁶ appeared in a quarterly intended for literary criticism. The significant aspect of such an enquiry is certainly not Defoe's novel but the use which society made of it.

Most of the contemporary debates about myth assume a religious intention on the part of the lovers of myth and so we have many interesting attempts like Philip Wheelwright's *The Burning Fountain* or Joseph Campbell's *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* defending myth as a mode of knowing. Myth is distinguished from religion in that it presents reality as an 'immanent' mode. Harry Slochower in his study of the use of myth in Kafka and Mann argues

In the mythic process, there is no complete redemption as in religion - no eschatology or paradox. Even as the individual is re-integrated with his commune, the element of individuation, of experience, and of revolt, continues as a moment calling for a new revolt aiming at a higher re-creation. In sum, the myth contains two basic categories: *Creation*, which relates to the pattern, the prototype, the beginnings and ends of things; and the *Quest*, which refers to the critical questioning of the old tradition aiming at a *futuristic* tradition. (Vickery, (Ed) (1966, P.350).

In Aristotle's *Rhetoric* we have three categories of *Logos*, *Ethos* and *Pathos* where the myth of *Creation* is concerned with *Logos*, the myth of the quest with *Pathos* or emotion and with *Ethos* or the character of the individual—always seeking a new *logos* whenever the existing law takes on a closer hierarchical form. The interconnection between mythic and religious motifs is intricate in the eastern and primitive myths, in the mythopoesis of Greece and Rome and certainly in the Catholic myth of Dante. Both myth and religion find their way into modern classics also, classics such as Racine's *Phedre*, Rabelais's *Gargantua*, Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Ring*. Melville's *Moby Dick*, the poetry of William Blake and W.B. Yeats. Even in the secular milieu of the twentieth century we find perceptible articulations of the mythic-religious motif in the works of Andre Malraux,

Franz Kafka and Thomas Mann. When we turn to Mann, we have a man who falls short of many of the personal burdens from which Kafka suffered and therefore we see a positive note toward mythic reference fixed on the creation myth. This is replete in all the works of Mann, be it Egyptian, Hebraic, Christian or Germanic. Even as history and culture live by myth, they are likely to affect the form, content and direction of myth. It follows that the all human standard inherent in the myth may be distorted by the "ideology" of the myth serving particular interests, which could lead to a wayward use of myth, even toward inhuman ends. Slochower explains that "In our twentieth century—the era of Kafka and Mann—we are confronted with a plethora of false and manufactured myths . . . two in particular which are relevant to Kafka and Mann: the racial 'folk', masquerading as a human commune, and the technological "one world", giving the illusion that the power of mechanical gadgets, such as the atomic bomb can replace the power of man (Vickery (Ed.) 1966, P.350). Slochower says that although the works of Kafka and Mann present the menace in the false and dead myth, "they also suggest the possibility of a "breakthrough" and the re-emergence of the living myth, of one human world" (P.350). In Franz Kafka, we find the myth of the quest more operative than the myth of creation which is made use of extensively by Mann.

Emile Zola was predominantly concerned with the theme of cultural regeneration. Significantly, nearly all the myths evoked in his novels are myths of catastrophe and death, but at the same time of redemption and rebirth. This attitude measures to the Jungian concept of the "mood of

world destruction and renewal" symbolised in contemporary art. In fact the central symbol of *Germinal* seems to lie in his placing *Cote-Verte*, a vale of eternal spring with its green grass and flowers blooming even in the harsh northern winter, over Tartarus. Over the symbols of death, violence and eternal revolution we find the symbol of regeneration and eternal life. Philip Walker in his PMLA article comments on Zola's craft:⁷

The mystique of history, cult of violence, overwhelming catastrophic sense of time mingled fear and hope, dehumanization of man, unanimism, irrationalism, hint of nihilism, predilection for the archaic, the primitive—all discernible in Zolas' metamorphosis of myth—may have its roots in eighteenth and nineteenth century thought, but is already very much in the spirit of contemporary age (1951, P.448).

As metaphorical vehicles, myths embody the existential predicament of modern man revealing a striking and other illuminating consistence. In *Modern Literature and the Religious Frontier*, Nathan Scott distinguishes four pervasive myths or patterns of symbolic statement. William V. Spanos exemplifies this in his *A Case Book of Existentialism*⁸.

He gives as examples, Franz Kafka's novels, *The Trial* and *The Castle* which represent the Myth of the *Isolato* as the themes of isolation and estrangement. William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* and T.S. Eliot's

The Wasteland represent the Myth of *Hell* which embodies the theme of Nothingness, the disintegration of meaning in the modern world. This follows the Myth of *Voyage* and the Myth of *Sanctity*, James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Jean Paul Sartre's *The Age of Reason* project the painful journey through the irrational self or world, represent the Myth of *Voyage* and T.S. Eliot's *The Family Reunion* and Graham Greene's *The End of the Affair* exemplify the Myth of *Sanctity* which depicts the theme of reconciliation and salvation. Spanos further observes that

These categories constitute a brilliant insight into the ways in which myth has been appropriated by the contemporary existential writer, but Scott's hint that the four myths, taken as a unit, resemble Dante's journey' in *The Divine Comedy* through *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* to the *Paradiso*, coupled with Heidegger's analysis of death and Nothingness, suggests a more inclusive symbolic pattern to stand as the archetypal myth of the existential imagination: the flight from a dark, threatening agent who pursues the fugitive protagonist into an isolated corner (often, the underground) where he must confront the relentless pursuer, whereupon, in a blinding moment of illumination he discovers the paradoxically benevolent aspect of his persecutor.

This symbolic pattern, of course, is the Greek myth of the Furies, in which the protagonist's (Orestes) face-to-face encounter with the pursuing Erinyes (the Angry Ones) activates their transfiguration into the Eumenides (the kindly ones) (1966, P.10).

Our knowledge of ancient myths including Greek and Roman myths, when compared with everyday narratives, anecdotes and folktales, display a remarkable compositional unity and a maximal concentration of interest on the narrative topic. But narrative discipline and compositional unity never had the power to impose themselves decisively upon fictional production. Fictions are depended upon to make sense of our world and they are therefore responsible for keeping mythicity alive as a recompense for the inadequacies of language in order to explain the inexplicable. However, in opposition to early myths, fictive writing has brought forth a technique of editing and rationalising the sequence of events or episodes that form well balanced stories, optimally focussed on small groups of states of affairs.

Fiction like a game of make-believe adheres itself to rules and conventions; whereas belief in the myths of the community is compulsory, acquiescence to fiction is open and clearly circumscribed in time and space. Thomas G. Pavel in the section titled 'Conventions' in his *Fictional World* (1986) argues that

When the adhesion to mythological constructions begins to weaken, the withdrawal of community

support removes from myth its absolute truth, and what has been the very paradigm of reliability changes to fiction. But the ontological structure displayed by myths does not vanish; in particular the hierarchic divisions of salient universe and the differentiation of the notion of existence remain essential features of myths turned into fiction . . . one does not measure the truth of a myth, rather the result of the world is measured against the myth (P.132).

The intelligibility of the events in the profane world suffers most, once the mythical pattern weakens its link and human destiny tends to lose its explanatory principles that were formerly related to served events in a salient structure. Pavel maintains that

From the initiation of divine patterns, the sequence of human events turn into autonomous chains, which obey their own inner logic. Then it becomes necessary for the fictional activity to produce strong striking sequence of events in order, for the weight of the fictional models to replace successfully the worn out mythical explanations. It is as if a mythical theory of the profane world had to be replaced by another theory or group of theories proposed by fictional works (P.133).

NOTES:

1. Monomyth is the basic optimistic *mythos* for structuring the meaning in literature. It gives the standard plot to legends, folktales, romances and most popular forms of literature, including science fiction. To Kathryn Hume as discussed in "Kurt Vonnegut and the Myth and the Symbols of Meaning." (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 24. No. 4 (Winter 1982) Pp. 429 - 447). " A romance of hero monomyth base story, encourages the reader to value individual aspiration and action . . . Confrontation with the goddess, transformation through the aid of *anima*, atonement with the father, apotheosis and epiphany and winning the ultimate boon – all these trials are major functional units of the monomyth". (Pp. 206 – 207). For detailed study see Eric Neumann, *The Origins and History of Consciousness* – 1949 rpt. 1970 Princeton: Princeton UP, Mircea Eliade. 1958. *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*. NY: Harper and Row; Joseph Campbell. 1949; 1993, *The Hero With the Thousand Faces*, Princeton: Princeton UP.
2. See Eric Mottram. 1972. "Living Mythically: The Thirties" in the *The Journal of American Studies*. VI Pp. 267 – 287.
3. David Bidney states in "Myth Symbolism and Truth" that the work of Giovanni Battista Vico stands out as a unique monument of protest against the predominant rationalism of the 18th century . . . Vico's *New Science* was a seminal work which had substantial influence outside Italy, particularly in Germany well appreciated by Herder and Goethe

in its strong influence of the Romantic movement. Vico's method of mythological interpretation may be characterized as "allegorical Ehumersim" since he attempted the culture heroes of myth to class symbols of society which is particularly relevant to the study of the novels chosen for my analysis.

4. For a more detailed discussion on Blakean vision, see Northrop Frye's "Expanding Eyes" Part –II of *The Mythological Universe*, Pp. 99 – 122. "Mythological space, as Blake encountered it, consisted of four main levels. At the top was a father – god associated with the sky, who made the world, and must therefore have made a model of the perfect world. A myth of artificial creation has to have a myth of man's fall to complete it and account for the contrast with the creation we see now. The second level, the original home for man that god intended is the "Unfallen" world, Blake's world of innocence; and below this again a demonic and chaotic world" (P.110). This analysis falls in line with the mythic construct from utopia to dystopia through dehumanization, a process worked out in my dissertation.
5. This observation is strikingly formulated by Mann in a passage added in 1919 to his essay *Der alte Fontana* written in 1910 where he discusses the interplay of "Mythus and Psychologie" later analysed by Andre von Gronicka for fictional expression of these elements in Mann's art.

6. See Ian Watt's article "Robinson Crusoe as a Myth" in *Essays in Criticism* – I, Pp. 15 – 119; 1951.
7. See Philip Walker, "Prophetic Myths in Zola" *PMLA* LXXXIV, 1959.
8. See William V. Spanos, *A Case Book of Existentialism*, Thomas – Crowell Co. 1966.
9. See William Barrett's, "The Place of the Furies" in *Irrational Man: A Study of Existential Philosophy* (NY Garden City 1958) Pp. 237 – 248, where Barrett employs Aeschylus's symbol of the Furies to define the existential diagnosis of modern man's flight from the irrational (including death) and also to present the existential demand for authenticity.

CHAPTER II

MYTH AND THE LOGIC OF TRANSFORMATION AND REGENERATION - II

AMERICAN MYTHOGENESIS

It is through myths that men are lifted above their captivity in the ordinary, attain powerful visions of the future, and realise such visions.

Peter Berger ('Pyramids of Sacrifice')

The evolution of the American myth was a synthetic process of reconciling the romantic—conventional myths of Europe to American experience—“a process”, which according to Richard Slotkin, “by an almost revolutionary turn, became an analytical attempt to destroy or cut through the conventionalised mythology to get back to the primary source of blood-knowledge of the wilderness, the Indian mind, the basic, Moiratic,¹ myth-generating psychology of man’ (1973, p17).

It does appear curious that myths precede discovery. Rollo May makes the observation that medieval Europe did not desire a new world in the centuries before Columbus set forth on his voyage in 1492. The discoveries pioneered by the Vikings led by Leif Ericson, and the Irish, prior to the eleventh century were largely ignored inspite of their attempts at locating America. Taking cognizance of a new world demanded a great inner change to prompt the medieval people in order to distract them from their own inner world and their preoccupation with heaven. A new mythic world had therefore to be born first to discover a new outer world. The bare historical fact has always been eclipsed by the peoples' myth and as Cassirer

affirmed, it is not by its history that the mythology of a nation is determined, but conversely, its history is determined by its mythology². This is equally true of the birth of America as a nation. According to Richard Slotkin,

In American mythogenesis the founding fathers were not eighteenth century gentlemen who composed a nation at Philadelphia, 'they were those who tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness—the rogues, adventurers and land boomers; the Indian fighters, traders, missionaries, explorers and hunters who killed and were killed until they had mastered the wilderness; the settlers who came often suffering hard for land; and the Indians themselves, both as they were and as they appeared to the settlers, for whom they were the special demonic personification of the American wilderness. Their concerns, their hopes, their terrors, their violence, and their justification of themselves, as expressed in literature, are the foundation stones of the mythology that informs our history (4).

In his study of the influence of the frontier on American society, Frederick Jackson Turner set the important myth for comprehending the frontier for he saw the significance of what people were getting away from as well as what they were getting to. The open free land of the frontier, which drew people from Europe enabled the Americans to build a new frontier and a new culture with a slight lean on Europe but retaining its own particular characteristics. Thus the frontier formed a crucial myth, its features transforming themselves into the distinctively American.³

The two books that drastically changed the landscape of American literary studies are Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* (1950), and R.W.B. Lewis's *The American Adam* (1955). What we find in *Virgin Land* is the image of the wilderness east of the Mississippi which changes from "desert" to Garden in a century and a half, while that of the great plains exhibits a similar change in less than half that time. R.W.B. Lewis discovered the nineteenth century American Adam followed by rapid attempts of reconstruction of his genealogy piercing together the evolution of the missing links between traditional heroes and this figure in the American wilderness. The history of the American Adam represents nearly four centuries of symbolic response to Crèvecoeur's question: "What is an American?"⁴

American mythology does not provide answers about values or the deep seated conflicts, but it offers the symbolic language with which one can discuss them, assimilating rhetorical, historical and psychological analysis, that illuminate both the inner structures of specific works and their relationship to the mythic tradition in which they participate. The works relevant in this regard include, Viola Sachs' *The Myth of America*, Will Wright's *Six Guns and Society*, John Cawelti's *The Six-Gun Mystique*, David W. Nobles' *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden* and Harold Simonson's *The Closed Frontier*.

However, these overtly mythical analyses represent only one expression of the major impulse of American literary studies since the fifties interrogating the broad patterns of theme, narrative structure and symbolism that illustrate the "Americanness" of American literature. Several critical

works of great significance document the fact that frontier mythology is central to American literature. The representative works on this cardinal segment include Richard Slotkins' *Regeneration through Violence* and *The Fatal Environment*, Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* and *The Land Before Her*, Edwin Fussall's *Frontier: American Literature and the American West*, Leslie Fiedler's *Love and Death in the American Novel* and *The Return of the Vanishing American* and Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land*. Other major interpretations of American literature focus on central themes and stylistic characteristics which could also be construed as reactions to the imaginative impact of the frontier experience: R.W.B. Lewis's *The American Adam*, Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition*, Leo Marx's *The Machine in the Garden* and D.H. Lawrence's *Studies in American Literature*.

Indeed, this extensive tradition of commentary involves the lore of a Great Tradition of American literature beginning with the first exploration and captivity narratives and extending through the American Renaissance into the present, a tradition which elaborates a central national mythology. Most of the significant literature of America, is certainly, structured in some form by the basic archetypes of the mythology that spell out the

conflict between an Old World and a New World,
the ironic drama of the frontier figure negotiating
between them, the theme of wilderness
metamorphosis, the emergence of the American
Adam and Eve and the triumph of "Progress".

Recognition of these fundamental patterns of symbolism and narrative structure reveals the historical continuity that connects the earliest indigenous American literature to contemporary American writing; but it also explains the often noted similarities of theme and symbolism in apparently disparate genres—Westerns (literature of lost frontiers), detective fiction (literature of contemporary, usually urban, frontiers), and science fiction (literature of new frontiers) (Mogen, 1989, p. 21).

American national mythology based on frontier experience is the vehicle with which one examines the ironies and contradictory values expressed in the phrase "The American Dream" which has continued to be the implicit subject of many American writers since their diverse ancestors arrived on their myriad endeavours into the wilderness.

To David Mogen, expatiating on the American Dream

The myth consists of key symbols and narrative patterns, expressions of an Archetype forged in the national frontier experience, which artists employ to visualise and debate the nature of the Dream. Like all mythically based art-forms, Americaⁿ literature historically articulates cultural

ideals, symbolically dramatising cultural conflicts.

Thus our central myth-system shapes and transforms images of the American Dream(p.22).

The years of historical experience which aided the growth of the American society gradually drew together the differentiated literary forms by writers who sought to create a unified and compelling vision of the total American experience—an American myth. This was a process of reintegration which was indispensable and the experience had as its components—narrative, character and imagery, values which represented the sum total of all experiences narrowing down to “a basic and universal archetype of all the colonists’ experiences of America, The one presenting the most vital psychological difficulties in terms appropriate to the historical experience of a wilderness people” (Slotkin, p.19).

In American cultural mythology, the basic structural elements define a symbolic territory in which the hero's fate reflects upon the essence of the American Dream. The elements constitute the setting, hero and narrative and the “territory” according to David Mogenis intended ‘to evoke the archetype that structures the myth, the concept of the frontier’ (p.24). And they are defined thus

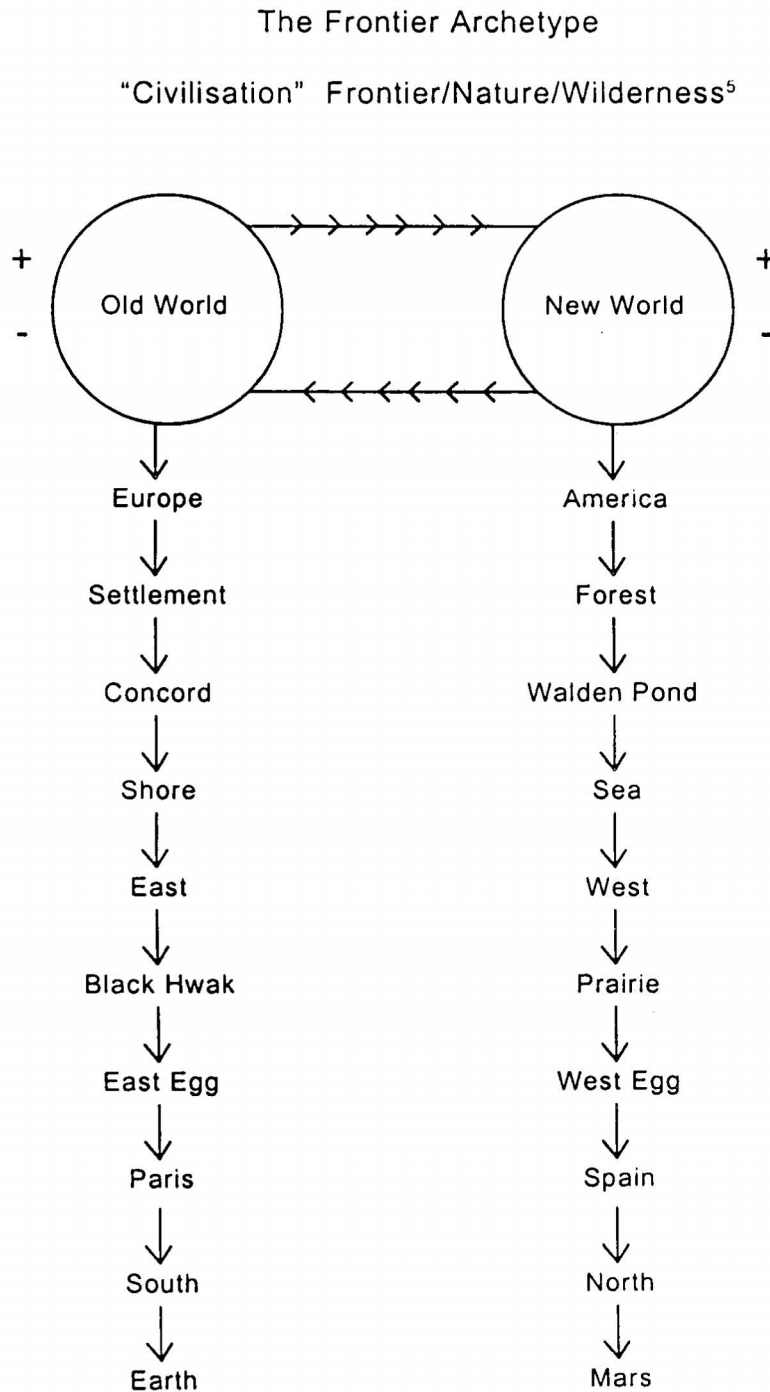
1. Setting: Opposition between an Old World (civilization) and a New World (associated with “nature” and/or “wilderness”), which also contains a transition area (“frontier”). Often symbolic rather than historical or geographical, these opposed worlds adapt, transform and yet preserve the basic pattern of the Frontier Archetype.

2. Hero: A frontier figure (or figures, often with wilderness and/or civilized companions) who moves between these worlds.
3. Narrative: As "progress" triumphs, the hero's destiny resolves or dramatises conflicts between the Old World and the New World—triumphantly, ironically, tragically, or comically—usually through some version of failed or achieved *metamorphosis* (either emergence of the American Adam/Eve or integration of this figure with an apparent opposite) (p.24).

The identification of the American Adam by R.W.B. Lewis as an innocent figure contributed to fictional articulations often personified as the new American and the New Adam, resourceful and potential.

The cardinal aspects of the American myth fall in place when it comes to the definition of the American Dream in any time or place, from any historical, regional or ideological perspective. The Old World and the New World archetypes generate an expandable set of opposing terms, to suit anytime and scale even evoking the symbolic opposition between the Old World and the New World by the settlement and the Wilderness as exemplified by the captivity narratives and Hawthorne's wilderness stories, by shore and sea as in *Moby Dick* by concord and Walder Pond as in *Walden*, by Europe and America as in Henry James, by East and West as in *The Virginian* and most westerns, by Europe, Virginia, Black Hawk and the prairie as in *My Antonia*, by East Egg and West Egg as in *The Great Gatsby*, by Paris and Spain as in *The Sun Also Rises*, by a hospital ward and elsewhere as in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, by South and North as in *Black*

Boy and Invisible Man, by Earth and Mars as in *The Martian Chronicles*. David Mogen has schematically represented the frontier Archetype as revealed in the figure shown below.



Mogen states that the 'identification of many of the locations with the archetypal values associated with "civilization", "frontier", "nature" and

“wilderness” depends to a great extent on literary context: such “New Worlds” or Thoreau’s Walden Pond, Hemingway’s Spain and Ellison’s New York City have primarily symbolic associations with the historical “West” (p.24). He further argues:

Since the end of the nineteenth century, the Myth has been adapted to embrace expansive new frontiers in technology and space, as well as ironically invested to suggest that small can be beautiful too, and that American Adam must learn the values of quality and economy as well as of quantity and consumption. And while the myth structures debate about what social and political “progress” mean today, it also adapts the message of Thoreau and the Transcendentalists to a new age, urging us still to develop that “further Western Way” inside our own souls (p.26-27).

In the attempt to recover the world of primary myth and universal archetypes, the “consummatory myth-maker” must draw upon the love of mythic-images and structures that is part of his cultural heritage. Therefore the myth-maker’s endeavour to re-envision the universal archetype necessarily involves the reenvisioning of the cultural archetypes that lurk under the chromatical surface of his culture’s mythscape.

The settlers of the New World who were mostly Europeans had at the time of their arrival a mythology derived from the cultural history of their homelands and were responsive to the psychological and social needs of their old culture. Richard Slotkin in his analysis explains that their new circumstances forced new perspectives, new self-concepts, and new world concepts on the colonists, and made them see their cultural heritage from angles of vision that non colonists would find queer. He states that

The internal tension between the Moira and Themis elements in their European mythologies (and the psychological tension that is the source of this myth-duality) found an objective correlative in the racial, religious, and cultural opposition of the American Indians and colonial Christians. This racial-cultural conflict pointed up and intensified the emotional difficulties attendant on the colonists' attempt to adjust to life in the wilderness. The picture was further complicated for them by the political and religious demands made on them by those who remained in Europe, as well as by the colonists' own need to affirm for themselves and for the home folks—that they had not deserted European civilization for American savagery (p.15).

Belonging to the order of social myth we have the 'ideas of the south'⁶ as George B Tindall terms them, which form the area of the modern world that has bred a "regional myth so potent, so profuse and even so paradoxical" (p.2). Though it was believed that the civil war of 1812 would end slavery, as an institution, the subsequent introduction of the cotton gin and the powerloom between 1820 and 1830 made cotton raising so lucrative that the Negro slave became exceedingly integral to the industry from the economic stand-point. Many Americans actively started the defense of slavery resulting in the Negro mobilisation for freedom. The consequent surge of sectional feeling created a social set up which forced the entry of the slave into the new fiction of the South and it is precisely here that a study of the Negro in the novel becomes possible.

NOTES

1. In *Thresholds of Initiation*, J.L. Henderson, in his development of Jungian thesis, characterizes the basic psychological tension as a conflict between 'Moira' and 'Themis' – between the unconscious and the conscious. The dream or impulse and the rational idea, the inchoate desire and the knowledge of responsibility, the gratification – world, presided over by the mother and the world of laws and reasons ruled by the father. The process of maturation of initiation into adulthood, requires, the reconciliation of these two elements, these two modes relating to life; and since, as infants we are absorbed in the maternal world of Moira, the initiation requires us to move toward the paternal figure (Themis) for a confrontation and some form of reconciliation.

2. Ernst Cassirer has pointed this out in his '*The Myth and of the State*' (New Haven Yale University Press, 1946).
3. The frontier was a figure of speech which assumed new functions in a new context, not altogether dropping the European implications, but incidentally illustrating the Americanising process described by Frederick Jackson Turner. The frontier was the imaginary line between civilisation and nature or the uncreated future.
4. Refer Page 20 – 25 Michael – Gullaume Jean de Crevecoeur's , What is an American? In *The Frontier in American Literature*, Ed. Philip Durham & Everett L. Jones.
5. The Valences '+' and '-' represent the fact that the values associated with these places are both dependent on literary context and are intrinsically ambivalent.
6. See George B. Tindall, "Mythology: A New Frontier in Southern History", in *The Idea of the South: Pursuit of a Central Theme*, ed. Frank E. Vandiver (Chicago, 1964)

RACISM AND MYTH

Keeping pace with the civil rights movement, studies devoted to the Blacks in American Literature reached an astonishing volume after 1940. Blacks were represented more as stereotypes than as human beings or as Seymour C. Gross has described, he has been "more of a formula than a human being" (p.2)¹.

James Baldwin in his essay titled "Many Thousands Gone: Richard Wright's "Native Son" has graphically stated

The story of the Negro in America is the story of America—or more precisely, it is the story of Americans. It is not a very pretty story: the story of a people is never very pretty. The Negro in America, gloomily referred to as that shadow which lies athwart our national life, is far more than that. He is a series of shadows, self-created, intertwining, which now we helplessly battle. One may say that the Negro in America does not really exist except in the darkness of our minds (1955,p.233)²

The conception of the Black as a symbol of Man—the reversal of what he represents in most contemporary thought was organic to the nineteenth century, the occurrence of which can be traced in Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo

Emerson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman and Herman Melville who were all publicly involved in various forms of deeply personal rebellion. To Ralph Ellison 'while the Negro and the black were associated with the concept of evil and ugliness far back in the Christian era, the Negro's emergence as a symbol of value came, . . . with Rationalism and the rise of the romantic individual of the eighteenth century' (p.122).³

Eric Rabkin discusses American literature viewing it

as a single myth where much of human experience can be organised into two dichotomous sets. In the East are civilization and old age, intellect, the head, the cities, while in the West are the frontier, innocence youth, emotion the heart, and wilderness. In the American myth people from the Old World journey to the New World in the hope of rejuvenation and the regaining of innocence, trying to return to a time before the Fall, to become what R.W.B. Lewis has called "the American Adam . . . The wilderness experience, like the later melting pot, is supposed to convert Europeans into true Americans. But of course the myth has in many ways proved hollow: financial independence often leads to barbarism and wage slavery; the westward rolling tides of

Americans have wiped out the indigenous "native Americans" moral uprightness and religious freedom often petrify into self-righteousness and religious exclusivity. Finally racism has blighted the land, from the landing of the first slave ship in 1619 until and including the present (Pp.122-24)⁴.

The Negroes thus brought to the American colonies multiplied to a half a million population when the Revolutionary War had demonstrated that all men are born free and equal. In the American literature of the North, there was an unending series of humanitarian references to the black man from Sewell to Woolman, Crèvecoeur, Freneau and Barlow and the idea of humanitarianism was combined with a modified form of the 'doctrine of the noble savage' by Mrs. Sarah Morton and by Bryant .

The early part of the twentieth century saw a new breed of writers who wrote as 'Negroes' rather than for the Negro. This in fact followed the anthology prepared by Alain Locke titled *The New Negro* in 1925. When cultural identity ceased to be problematic, the blacks were charged with a responsibility to liberate their African brothers. They were not very much interested in Africa except to retain an image of lyric innocence defining their identities and announcing their own new-found sense of cultural independence. To C.W.E. Bigsby and Roger Thompson

He may have been in vogue with the whites, who tried to promote an image of the black as a

spontaneous, unrepressed sexual being—an image which served their own psychic and mythological needs—but his own concern lay elsewhere. It lay in a process of personal and group discovery which could express itself equally in defiant poems like Claude McKay's 'If We Must Die' or lyrical celebrations of the black past (p.163)⁵.

The American society has had its interaction with other societies and has shaped its historical and cultural experience and structured its mythic character particularly in its definition of human identity. This is a manifest feature of the 1950s where it followed comparable patterns and processes of development, typifying the articulations of modern development and technological evolution. The mythic qualification is not just a product of its internal progress but of those 'refractive and potent images that have kept it a central force in the world, especially the Western World (Bradbury,1981,p.17).

The black writer was aware of the debilitating nature of the physical environment but for the most part he chose to emphasise on the complex cultural resources of a black community in the process of creating its own values, images and myths. In the 1920s, black writers, especially poets and novelists published their works and for, a decade the 'First Black Renaissance', (more popularly known as the 'Harlem Renaissance or the 'Negro) Renaissance' flourished. In spite of this fervour there was still a

radical dissent regarding goal of black writing. Claude McKay declared that he wished to transcend the narrow confines of one people and its problems and therefore did not want to be regarded a Negro poet. On the contrary, Countee Cullen acknowledged his rapidly growing strong race-consciousness. James Weldon Johnson suggested that, in many ways, this was a basic issue for the black American writer, leading to the question whether he was writing for the blacks or whites.

At the social level, headed by Marcus Garvey, the West Indian, black Jews organisation called Universal Negro Improvement Association (1916) launched a back-to-Africa movement. Although his intentions were good, they were viewed with strong scepticism. His vociferous propositions instilling a sense of pride and dignity suggested the need for black Americans to control their economic destiny, and demonstrated the possibility of creating a mass movement among blacks, indicating a political potential that could be mobilized to win advancement. But the whole project ended up in a fiasco.

The denigration of the blacks was not always motivated by compelling economic reasons. Going back into history one learn that the spokesmen for the planter aristocracy were not alone in affirming the Negro's spiritual inferiority. New Englanders too regarded the Negro as a species to be viewed in a radically different light from other men. They found their own reasons to adjudge him as less than a man, so that they could treat him brutally. They saw in the Negro a beast, a thing, without a soul to lose. They worked themselves up to this goal and discovered that the Negro was

sui generis from the outset different in colour, language, religion and appearance. Soon major articles of the pro-slavery creed appeared unleashing direct attacks. It is no wonder that an important strand that has gone into the complex modern American experience is racism. According to Chakravartee

The colour of one's body is just skin-deep, yet colour consciousness has throw up tantrums, mostly of a political nature disturbing the social equilibrium. Since the publication of Blake's "The Little Black Boy" (if not earlier), literature in English of, by and for the Black has put one hues which are not restricted to a simple black versus white dichotomy: it is a spectrum in its own right. At one end of the spectrum is the White writing about the Black, and at the other is the Black communicating with both the Black and White (1990,p.61).

As a distinct feature of American social and political scene, racism was clearly rooted in a period of history wherein the first Africans were brought as cheap labour into the fold of American work force. They were ultimately transformed from people to "things" or even as "machines". To Joel Kovel, the "white slaver": first reduced the human self of his black slave to a body and then reduced the body to a *thing*; he dehumanised his slave, made him quantifiable and thereby absorbed him into a rising world

market or productive exchange.... Thus, in the new culture of the West, the black human was reduced to a black thing, virtually the same in certain key respects as the rest of non-human nature -- all of which could become property. This reduction of human to non-human was the first definite step towards the establishment of racism as an innate archetype of white American civilization (1984,p.18)

Perhaps the first line of defense of the slave appeared when he said

“We are not *Beasts* as you count, and use us, but *rational* souls,” and avowed by his Negro spokesman “Can we help it if the Sun, by too close and fervent kisses . . . tintured us with a dark complexion?(p.115)⁶

The English had had always a pejorative meaning for the blackness of the Negro. It was regarded as a sign of danger, baseness and corruption, particularly to the men of Shakespeare's days. Elizabethan dramatic literature was replete with characters like Giovanni in John Webster's *The White Devil*, who associated guilt and *black deeds* or like Arron of *Titus Andronicus*, a barbarous Moor and foul-spoken coward “who sought blood and revenge”. Macbeth's witches are “secret, black and midnight hags”. Most certainly, the colonists might conclude that, if so noble a figure as Othello, a prince and Christian could be stigmatized as a “thing”, the word was applicable to victims of the slave trade. For the colonists and the Elizabethans, whiteness, on the contrary, symbolised goodness and virginity and blackness detracted them from their ideas of beauty.

The dermatological factor—pigmentation thus operated as a stigmatising agent. To be black meant to be a slave and to be a slave meant to be black. Colour, however, was not the sum total of racial discrimination. It was also believed that slavery was “connected with the Black colour and Liberty with the White”.⁷ The racial barrier was further reinforced when Negroes embraced Christianity and started speaking the English language. This led to an apprehension that cultural assimilation would take place, but then the threat was countered by a theory of socio-cultural inferiority which employed colour among other criteria. Morgan Godwyn referring to the Negroes, noted in his *The Negro's and Indian's Advocate*, that “they are indeed *no Men* (p.3) a view attested by the slaveholders mentioned by Anthony Benzet in whose minds “the blacks are hardly of the same species with the white Men, but are creatures of a kind somewhat inferior”.⁸

The various other criteria that stigmatised the blacks were related to his African background when he worshipped snakes, crocodiles and gaily coloured birds and for the very reason it was deemed that they existed outside of grace in a state of religious ignorance as well as backwardness. Some writers even went to the extent of passing harsh verdicts suggesting that the Negroes comprised of “a race, the most detestable and vile that ever the earth produced”, while the colonists, conversely, were descended “from worthy ancestors”.⁹

American writers supportive of slavery added to the pejorative characterization of the Negroe's position as a slave. In a short poem by

John Saffin of Massachusetts titled *The Negroes Character*, we find these very uncharitable references.

Cowardly and cruel, are those Blacks innate,
 Prone to Revenge, Imp of Inverterate hate,
 He that exasperates them; soon espies
 Mischief and Murder in their eyes.
 Libidinous, Deceitful, False and Rude,
 The spume issue of Ingratitude.¹⁰

These arguments were further reinforced with deliberate attempts to justify the anti-Negro animus on scientific and anthropological grounds. Edward Tyson's study of the "Orang-outang" established a link between the ape and the West African Negro and later observers sought to confirm the Negro inferiority with particular comments on the lips, nose, general features and the "rank offensive smell" of the Negroes.¹¹

Seeking to explicate the question of Black pigmentation, Dr. John Mitchell wrote *An Essay upon the Causes of the Different Colours of People in Different Climates* in 1744 where he stated that the Black skin was only quantitatively different from white skin and that it was merely thicker and more opaque allowing less light to be transmitted. This was to refute the commonly held theory of Marcello Malpighi who argued that black skin was due to black fluid. Speculating on the same area, another researcher, Thomas Jefferson wondered "whether the black of the Negro resides in the reticular membrane between the skin and the scarf-skin, or in the scarf-

skin itself; whether it proceeds from the colour of the blood, the colour of the bile, or from that of some other secretion".¹²

Expatriating on the species of the Negro, Edward Long argued with a certitude born out of extremism, that there was a link between Negro and ape which he worked out in terms of the Great Chain of Being. "If such has been the intention of the Almighty, we are then perhaps to regard the orang-outang as

— the lag of human kind,
Nearest to brutes, by God design'd.¹³

Long did not merely place the Black below the White, but he literally expelled him from the human race. Yet another theory, known as the climatic theory strengthened the notion of the black being biologically different and hence gave it a utilitarian meaning, which was enjoined with economic-necessity rationalisation. The primary defense of the practice of slave import in Georgia, for example, combined the arguments that black, rather than white labour was as indispensable to "cultivation as axes, hoes or any other utensil of agriculture".¹⁴

With such theories propagating the abject inferiority of the blacks, it was a great struggle for the black culture to emerge particularly through the written word. To Bigsby "The work songs, hollers and chants of the field slave were both sustaining a heritage whose roots lay elsewhere than the soil of Alabama and Tennessee and laying down the material out of which black pop and folk culture would itself grow" (p.153). The slave

narrative which was intended to do much more than narrate a history of injustice declared literary and social independence that simultaneously asserted selfhood and a set of political propositions. The narratives, far from being sentimental found its way into fiction in the first novel written by the American Negro *Clotel* (1853) by William Wells Brown. This change paved the way for a series of stereotypes which sought to liberate the black from enslavement but entrapped him in a myth which proved to be more enduring than slavery and which 'through popular culture constituted a sustained assault on the black American's identity' (Biggsby, 153).

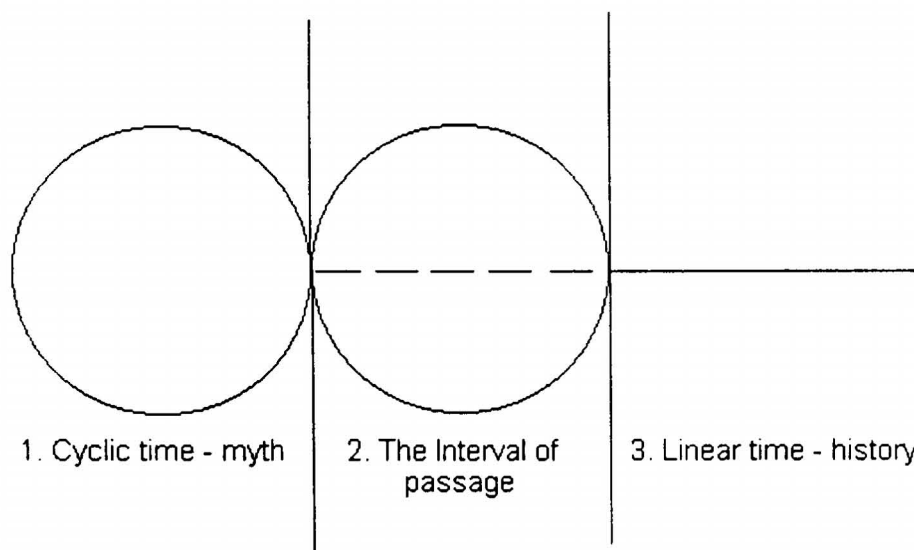
Booker T. Washington's *Up from Slavery* (1901) became the first classic of black writing since Emancipation. The story of his development, through self-help and philanthropic activities made him a very important figure and in the year 1881 he was appointed principal of Tuskegee Institute in Alabama which became a leading centre of Negro industrial education in the country. His achievement at Tuskegee, where he included successive generations of brick layers, carpenters and mechanics, were recorded in *Tuskegee and Its People* (1905). The concerted efforts of black leaders like Booker T. Washington and WEB Du Bois succeeded in raising the political consciousness of the whites and the blacks leading to the formation of the People's Party and some blacks were even elected to office. This unleashed a spurt of violence from the ruling Democrats and they resorted to terrorism electoral fraud and economic threats. The decade of the 1890s witnessed a record number of lynching of blacks and the support that they had, became very weak and the chances of success very remote. As a result the 'uppity nigger' became an inevitable scapegoat. Booker T. Washington, (also known as the 'Tuskegee Machine') became the sole

channel for all sympathy to the cause of the Negro. His power was recognised and between 1901 and 1909 he was consulted by President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House.

It was Alain Locke who announced the emergence of the 'New Negro' in 1925 predicting the end of the old 'unjust stereotypes'. He inaugurated a critical strategy basing his analysis that dominated various literary-historical epochs on the unconscious needs and fears of the white-race of the respective periods. He made a graphic presentation of the various roles that the Negro played, the savage stranger, comic peasant, scapegoat, bogey or pariah which was not the result of mere literary faddism but rather the self-justifying "dream materials" of the haunted lower layers of the public mind.¹⁵

This leads to the theory that those who are economically dispossessed are often dispossessed of time as well. Bonnie J. Berthold in his work titled *Black Time - Fiction of Africa, the Caribbean and the United States* (1981) has reflected at length on this area where he speaks of the owners of time as manipulators of time to their own advantage. He states that in the post-Reconstruction American South this power was demonstrated in the "grandfather clause" which gave unconditional voting rights only to citizens whose grandfathers had been eligible to vote, denying the black vote by denying the black possession of time (Barthold, p.16). James Baldwin supports this view with the argument that Black people have experienced time differently from white people because they have been simultaneously deprived of time and fixed in it by the colour of their skin

which implies the lack of both a past and a freely determined future. The economic dispossession and the blackness of their skin have proved to be a costly handicap in their being segregated not only from the larger community but from time as well because of the barrier constructed by contemporary Western culture at the far end of the interval / passage between cyclic and linear time. The diagram shown below will represent the predicament of the blacks , indicating the exclusion of blacks from realising the ownership of time, simultaneously compelling them to suffer the consequences of the concept of time which operates symbolically with yet another barrier that cuts them off from the cyclic continuum of traditional Africa .



The figure which is tellingly represented by Barthold (p.17) further classifies the despondency of the blacks, whose denial of access to progress and future also points to a systematic denial of the past worked out by Western culture.

This temporal dispossession implying a life lived mainly in the flux in which there is no past or future could mean for the black a life in perpetual contingent state of time. This certainly operates as an index, revealing the strength of the blacks in both Africa and the New World to rebel against this attempt at victimization.

Among the rich examples that American literature affords, the most popular body has come from the brilliant Negro writers who have been deeply affected by the myth of the American Adam, more especially by the myth of the 'wounded Adam'. They are the late Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin, who have known the world of the insulted and the rejected. To Nathan A. Scott 'theirs is an experience of life in the United States that has bred in them a habit of reflection whose natural fulcrum is the dialectic of innocence and experience: the "wounded Adam" is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh' (p.152).

James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* (1953) *Giovannis' Room* (1956) *Tell Me How Long the Train's Been Gone* (1968), *Notes on a Native Son* (1955), *Nobody Knows My Name* (1961), *The Fire Next Time* (1963), *The Devil Finds Work* (1976) are major texts in the literature of black liberation offering significant memoranda to the nation's conscience. A number of black writers stand in the shadow of Ellison and Baldwin but nevertheless command an interracial and international audience. The most

popular amongst them are Chester Himes (b. 1909) John A. Williams (b. 1925), Ernest J. Haines (b. 1933), Toni Morrison (b. 1931) and Ishmael Reed (b. 1938).

In many ways the most powerful writing by blacks has been in the area of autobiography and its derivative forms, notably Richard Wright's (1908-1960) powerful *Black Boy* (1945), Eldridge Cleaver's (b. 1935) *Soul on Ice* (1968) Theodore Rosengarten's (b. 1944) compilation *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw* (1974) and Alex Haley's (b. 1921) *Roots* (1976). In James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-colored Man* (1912). We find the main character selling 'his birthright for a mass of pottage' James Baldwin has stated^d that many myths have been perpetuated about the Black in America even after the death of Aunt Jamina and Uncle Tom. In his article 'Many Thousands Gone' Baldwin speaks of the American Negro thus

Our dehumanization of the Negro then is indivisible from our dehumanization of ourselves: the loss of our own identity is the price we pay for our annulment of his. Time and our own force act as our allies, creating an impossible, a fruitless tension between the traditional master and slave. Impossible and fruitless because, literal and visible as this tension has become, it has nothing to do with reality (p.234).

Thus 'the growing ape of the nineteenth century has become then, the twentieth century's "black mask of humanity" (Gross,p. 26).¹⁶

NOTES

1. Seymour L. Gross and John Edward Hardy (Ed), *Images of the Negro in American Literature*. 1968: Chicago, University of Chicago Press.
2. James Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone", *Notes of a Native Son*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955).
3. Ralph Ellison – Twentieth Century Fiction and the Black Mask of Humanity Pp. 115 – 131. *Images of the Negro in American Literature*.
4. Eric Rabkin – "To Fairyland by Rocket" in *Ray Bradbury* ed. Martin Henry Greenburg and Joseph D. Olandee (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1980).
5. Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperley Ed. *Introduction to American Studies* 1981: New York Longman Inc. Ref: Chapter Seven *The Black Experience* by CWE Bigsby and Roger Thompson.
6. Thomas Tryon, *Friendly Advise to the Gentlemen Planters of the East and West Indies*. London, (1684, P.115).
7. See Locke, Alain Leroy (ed.) *A Decade of Self Expression*, Charlottesville, Virginia 1928 ... Woolman, Consideration on Keeping Negroes 29.

8. *Ibid.*; Philmore extracts in Benzet Short Accounts . . . 31.
9. Arthur Lee – An Essay in Vindication of the Continental Colonies of American London, 1764, 30.
10. See Moore, *Notes on the History of Slavery* . . . , 256.
11. See Smyth, *A Tour of the United States of America*, 39. Edward Long noted “their bestial or fetid smell” (Long, *The History of Jamaica*, 353) and so did others: eg. Richard Ligon, *A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbadoes* London, (1657, P.28).
12. Jefferson, *Notes on Virginia*, 662.
See Littlejohn, David Black on White. *A Critical Survey of Writings by American Negroes*. NY.1966
13. Edward Long – *The History of Jamaica*, 11, 371.
14. See Thomas Stephens, “A Brief Account of the Causes that have Retarded the Progress of the Colony of Georgia in America”, *Georgia Historical Society Collections*, 11, 93.
15. See Alain Locke, “American Literary Tradition and the Negro”, 215 – 22. See also Walter Daykin, “Negro Types in American White Fiction”, *Sociology and Social Research*, 22(1937) 45 – 52.
16. See Nathan A. Scott Jr. Judgement Marked by a Cellar. *The American Negro Writer and the Dialectic of Despair*, in *The Shapeless God* (ed.) Larry J. Morney Jr. and Thomas F. Stanley, U of Pittsburg Press. (1968)
17. See Seymour L. Gross and John Edward Hardy (Ed), *Images of the Negro in American Literature*. 1966 – The University of Chicago Press – Chicago.

CHAPTER III

THE MYTHIC IN THE MINDSCAPE

THE UTOPIAN MODE

A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing . . . Progress is the realisation of Utopia

- Oscar Wilde

In the governing fiction of Thomas More's *Utopia* (1516) we notice a punning coinage: the word play on the Greek *ou topos* meaning *no place* and *eu topos* meaning *good place*. The former is associated with escape into the timeless fantasies of imagination and the latter with the effort to construct models of the ideal society, in fiction or otherwise. The two senses, however, are inextricably interlinked in modern usage.¹

Karl Mannheim in his *Ideology and Utopia* seeks to unravel the psychic founts that feed utopian imagination:

Wishful thinking has always figured in human affairs. When imagination finds no satisfaction in existing reality, it seeks refuge in wishfully constructed places and periods. Myths, fairy tales, other -worldly promises of religion, humanistic fantasies, travel romances, have been continually changing expressions of that which

was lacking in actual life In the Utopian mentality the collective unconscious guided by wishful representations and the will to action, hides certain aspects of reality. It turns its back on everything which, would shake its belief or paralyse its desire to change things (1936, P.185).

John Griffiths endorses this view when he says in his *Three Tomorrows* "A state of mind is utopian when it is incongruous with the state of reality within which it occurs" (1980, P.99).

Human existence stand rooted in the firm realities of here and now. The thoughts of human beings will stray in unspecified directions when restlessness sets in. But if the longing is to escape to better one's condition, the destination, though dimly envisioned, would be 'elsewhere'. To be in one place and to wish to be elsewhere needs imagination and the option would be a terrestrial or a celestial paradise. But if one rejects the present, one has a double option, the past and the future, "the Arcadian retrospect and a Utopian prospect" (Levin, 1972, P.8).

In so far as Utopia implies man's longing for good life, it is part of a complex of ideas that includes the Golden Age, the Earthly Paradise, the Fortunate Isles, the Islands of the Blest, the Happy Otherworld and so on. Explaining this tendency, Harry Levin argues that

Any willed alternative to things as they are is likely to present itself as an amelioration of them.

Landscapes of other worlds tend to vary according to the various cultures that have imagined them. Conceptions of the best of times, of Uchronia,² tend to shade off almost imperceptibly into heavens and hereafters. Yet, on the whole, there has been a striking consistency in the ideals of good life that have been held under changing circumstances, writers and thinkers from many different climates of belief have joined together in a mutual wish-dream of the perfect community. Something like a golden age has been presupposed by a number of ancient civilizations as a mythological prelude to their recorded histories (P.10).

When belief in the historical reality of the Golden Age waned, it became possible to bring many of the ideal elements of the myth in closer relation with the realities of man's existence. Philosophers transferred the notion of an ideal life in the irretrievable past into utopian tales of what the world might or even should be like; the myth that is, provided sustenance for a conceivable reality. Since then it has been always so. Right from the beginning man's longing for good life has been answered by The Golden Age and Utopia, the one a myth, and the other a concept, both functioning as projections of man's wishful fantasies.

Adapting Arthur Koestler's view, Robert C. Elliot in his "The Shape of Utopia" states that "All Utopias are fed from the sources of mythology; the social engineer's blue-prints are merely revised editions of the ancient text" (1970, P.3). The contours and customs of these ideal lands do vary although the source of utopia³ is ultimately the same dream. Identity of origin does not however imply identity of function.

In his attempt to analyse the reason for man's inclination to dream Utopian dreams, Chad Walsh makes the following observation

. . . man is an animal with imagination. He can conceive of things that do not yet exist, may never exist. This is the source of change and progress, in so far as progress is a reality. It is the capacity that makes possible the arts, new system of government, the growth of science . . . man once lived in Utopia, but does no longer, and that he is always trying to return. The name of his first utopia was Eden. I do not care whether one conceives of Eden as a tract of real estate or a purely metaphysical garden. It may never have existed in time. But, however conceived, it is a part of our heritage. We want to go back. The flaming swords of angels bar the way. So we must create another garden, a new Eden (1962, P.p.29-30).

The dreamer therefore refuses to reconcile himself to make the best of things for fear of affirming the permanence of his exile. Chad Walsh calls such dreamers "Displaced Persons" (P.30) for they are people in whose hearts, the old homeland burns and glows. Such people are indeed insistent on their endeavour to create the new Eden in place of the old and in the absence of the immediacy of the prospect, they dream dreams and write books. Bearing testimony to this fact we have a rich folklore which discusses Golden Ages of the past or future, blessed isles barely out of sailing reach and the paradises in remote galaxies posited in modern science fiction. This allows the reader to flee from his routine existence to remote places, to future times outside the conventional stream of time; to Mars or Venus or planets quite remote to be reached by spaceships. Reaching these destinations he finds the society he yearned for in his imagination. But in the modern age there is a perceptible fall in the creation of utopias. Their place has now been usurped by an increasing number of nightmare visions—the dystopias or inverted-utopias or anti-utopias. These took roots as minor satiric fringes of the utopian output in the nineteenth century and today this has become the dominant mode.

Our concern, however in this section is with utopian literature, particularly utopian fiction. A surveyor of such creations would undoubtedly bestow on Plato and the Hebrew prophets,⁴ the honour of being the first utopians. However the first full-fledged utopian is Plato, who offered not merely a vision but the accompanying blueprints.

If Plato wrote *The Republic* to reform Athens, More offered Utopia as a guide for the improvement of an England, that badly needed it. After Plato the Utopian dream experienced a lull for over two thousand years. Legends did hover about the golden age, the blessed isles of the west and the lands of cockaigne. The fourteenth century poem "The Land of Cokaygne" discussed at length by A.L. Morton in his *English Utopia* and Sir Thomas Mores' *Utopia* are separated by two centuries and in each we come across different expressions of the 'ideal', each becoming its own contemporary situation. The truth manifests at its best in the observation made by John Griffiths, "The writers of the utopias of earlier days were telling Man how to build heaven: today they are content to teach him how to survive in hell (P.115).

People do talk and dream a good deal about happier days in the future; they visualize themselves pursuing a happy golden objective. "The world grows old and again grows young, yet man always hopes for the amelioration of his lot" so said Schiller as adapted by Harry Levin. "Dreams of the future, unlike those of the past, can have a melioristic effect" (P.164). The main perspective for man's achievements, between the Renaissance and the twentieth century, 'has been the idea of progress, and progress, in the maxim of Oscar Wilde, is the realization of utopias.⁵ Utopia by definition, remains as remote as the golden age which in turn is a time or condition where limitation and renunciation do not exist.⁶

The attempt of utopian writers to freeze history—the flight of utopia against history—has given way to severe criticism of the entire utopian

enterprise; but (the attempt) has been merely one way in which man has tried to arrive by way of imagination as the condition of paradise on earth. Utopianism did command attention from very imaginative writers after More opened wide the flood gates of utopian thinking, but then there was an initial block which prevented the onrush of such writing. However, in *Christianopolis* (1619) by Johan Valentin Andreae, was depicted an ideal Christian city. Andreae's humanist and Lutheran faith coloured the portrayal of the city. He called the basic social unit a guild, where the social life revolved around men's work. The guilds are shown as self-governing, anticipating the democratic form. *Christianopolis* appears to be a more mirthful place than either Plato's *Republic* or More's *Utopia* as one finds infused in the work, a glowing and gentle religion happily at work with abounding opportunity for self-expression. In this respect it excels even Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* which was published in 1627. The shape of things to come is prophesied in the portrayal of Salomon's House, a research institute where one discerns the faint, ghostly outlines of the great research foundations of our own times. It is in a way a mosaic of Plato and More.

Contemporaneous with *The New Atlantis* appeared *The City of the Sun* penned by an Italian, Dominican friar, Thomas Campanella, who was continually under suspicion for unorthodox views. He was constantly interrogated by the Spanish Inquisition and was imprisoned for twenty seven years. It was this prison sentence, which he utilised for writing *The City of the Sun*. It stands in the direct line of utopian development, especially in

its emphasis on eugenics, education and the aristocracy of merit and education.

James Harrington's *Oceana* written in the time of Cromwell was more a proposal for a new political constitution than a complete utopia. It anticipates the importance of written laws, wide distribution of property, the secret ballot, indirect election, rotation of offices and a bicameral legislature. A feeling for 'checks and balances' and the realities of political life infuses this highly practical utopia, which Harrington wrote in the hope that Cromwell might implement it. In the meantime Charles II was biding his time and his return to power dulled the prospect of utopian writing.

The eighteenth century has indeed brought forth accounts of many imaginary voyages and geographical fantasies but they do not however match the full-scale utopias. The reason for this lull could be the direction of energy towards real-life planning prompted by the American and French revolutions. These called for a more realistic approach to the re-ordering of societies.

Looking Backward which appeared in 1888 is the most significant utopia of the nineteenth century. This sterling work by Edward Bellamy, an American, is full of the gentle lore of humanity. It tells the story of Julian West, an upper class Bostonian who goes into a state of suspended animation in the year 1887 and awakes in A.D. 2000 to find a much improved Boston. The contents of the book triggered various movements and Bellamy Societies proliferated in Europe and America provoking an ideological and

literary counter-attack, but not without inspiring concrete political consequences, particularly the work by Theodor Hertzka titled *Freeland - A Social Anticipation* in 1890. His focal point was on economic, and like any Marxist he aired the view that almost all problems would solve themselves if the economic foundation of a society is right. To quote Chad Walsh, Hertzka

. . . is forward—looking and modern in the details of his Utopia: he welcomes machinery and anticipates automobiles and motorised gondolas; he foreshadows the welfare state with his provisions for the adequate maintenance of children, the aged and the incapacitated. In a general way, his book points towards the modified capitalism prevailing in Western Europe and the United States. This Utopia offers no stylised stages in tunics and sandals; it propounds no metaphysical absolutes on which society must be based; it is a brisk and practical proposal, made by a man who had small patience with most utopian day dreaming (P.52).

Yet another sober attempt at the creation of imagined society sprang from H.G. Wells' *A Modern Utopia* which is indeed a combination of socialism and old fashioned individualism. All land and all sources of food are owned

by 'The World State' which takes active interest in human re-production, in order to prevent over-population or deterioration in genetic quality. No war is waged against the machine and the machine is pressed into service to eliminate dreary or degrading work and to make possible a high level of productivity and a fair portion of leisure time for all.

In my discussion of the mainstream utopias I have by-passed the tributary of utopian stream like the Arcadian utopia or the utopia of escape as Lewis Mumford would name it. In this category we can include James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* and Austin Tappan Wright's *Islandia*. But then the focus of my study in this section is the mainstream utopia which attempt at conscious planning to reshape the world. Such utopias cannot be labelled either 'left' or 'right'. Though they have a socialist or communist leaning, they could also incline towards capitalistic values as exemplified by Theoder Hertzke in his *Freeland*.

The long sweep of utopian writing from Plato to Wells, then, shows that it has been keeping pace with the evolving consciousness and attitudes of Western man. The most manifest change that one notices over the periods of utopian writing is the fall in the role of religion which turned to be more a matter of powerfully felt ethical obligation or devotion to society and the human race. Yet another change which has strong manifestation in the utopian mode, is the presence of Charles Darwin who seems to have inspired writers to dream of mental telepathy and psychic equipments. Olaf Stapledon's *Last and First Man* speculates on the possibilities of both guided

and unguided evolution and portrays a human species with a third eye on top of the head to gaze at the heavens.

Another characteristic of the nineteenth and twentieth century utopias is the seriousness that is attributed to economics. The modern utopias, when they give primacy to economics, may stem from Marx or any source which can ensure the proper ordering of economic processes in order to have sound human relations and a prosperous culture. Chad Walsh states that

Wells and many modern utopians conceive of utopia not as a final perfection but as a goal and movement towards a goal; it is a process. In their terms, to be utopian is simply to have a utopian sense of direction, and work at it (P.56).

Among the other trends that occupy the utopian mode, we have the strong presence of science, technology and machinery. The educational infra-structure of modern utopias consist of more units in science which involves itself in benevolent tasks as the lengthening of life span, curing diseases, increasing productivity, offering of the technical know-how for labour saving machinery etc. If the practice of slavery is almost unheard of in the modern utopia, it is partly because of the abundance of machines. Thus for the making of utopia,

The keyword from Plato to Wells is *Planning*. utopia is the dream of replacing societies that have grown haphazardly by a society that knows what the good life is and draws up definite plans for bringing it into existence (Walsh, P.57).

News From Nowhere by William Morris provides a 'fourteenth century' future in its restfulness and full integration of the activities of life making work artful and thereby obviating the need for enslaving machines.

Almost all utopian literature either by proposing a superior alternative to our world or by showing how our world is going awry, measures our world against an ideal and flirts with satire. To Bellamy

The central problem of satire is its relation to reality. Satire wishes to expose and criticise and shame human life, but it pretends to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth . . . either by showing an apparently factual but ludicrous and debased picture of this world; or by showing a picture of another world with which our world is contrasted (1888, P.15).⁷

This is to say that Utopian fiction does overlap with the satiric genre and satire has an inherent property of the fantastic mode. It depends on the narrative worlds that reverse the vision of the world outside the narrative,

but keeping with the style that usually borders on the ironic, stating the reverse of the truth as though it were just the truth. This structural reversal is cardinal to the science fiction genre as well as to the mode of utopian literature.

To Eric Rabkin, the genres of satire, science fiction and utopian literature overlap and form a super-genre and he goes on to state that this direct reversal of minus to plus or plus to minus is the fundamental structural stimulus for the affect of the fantastic (1976, P.147). H.G. Wells is said to be the first English utopian who did not have the 'need to escape a technological world' (Rabkin, 154). In the modern times, all utopian schemes have incorporated technology 'and it is only since the emergence of the psychic monolith of The Bomb that utopia's are required to include, as Wells did with his ruling elite of humanists, a safeguard against technology gone astray. Our fantastic worlds directly reflect the worlds in which we live (Rabkin, 155).

The literary utopia reverses the proportions of negative and positive as exemplified by Zamiatin, the Russian writer who felt that utopias have an advantage in its presentation of the ideal overweighing the prescriptive attack on the bad old days which More's *Utopia* happily transcended.

As exemplars of the utopian vision tending to take on pessimistic coloration, let us examine Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), Defoes' *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and Cervantes's *Don Quixote*.

Both *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe* belong to a new world almost wildly contrasted with many previous utopias. Fiction figures in these works in its pure form and in larger doses than is found in More, Bacon and Harrington. There is also a very perceptible difference in style. By the accumulation of exact detail, Defoe convinces one that the probable really happened and Swift forces us to suspend for a time our disbelief in the impossible. Here, A.L. Morton's *The English Utopia* which discusses these facts of utopian imagination can be of immense relevance as a methodological scaffolding. To him

It is not only what Crusoe and Gulliver see which is important but what they do, and their utopias are presented not in the abstract but very much through the eye of the visitors; further they are not mere observers but actors and their actions change and modify the utopias which they describe. It is significant that this development is far more marked in the case of Crusoe than of Gulliver (1968, P.135).

Adapting Professor H. Davies' observation as cited by A.L. Morton, we may regard *Gulliver's Travels* as both in form and shape 'wholly the product of the eighteenth century, while being at the same time the most violent satire of its hopes and dreams and a repudiation of much that is valued' (P.125). In many places the utopian form has been effectively used

to attack established institutions, religious beliefs or even social and sexual customs in a way which would be generally understood without laying themselves open to official reprisals.

Cervantes used fantasy to ridicule the old order in seventeenth century Spain, a country entering a phase of decline where the bourgeoisie had failed to act in time to grasp the reins of power. As political and religious reaction forced Spain to a central position in Europe, the old and new orders were involved in an ambivalent interrelationship in which both were eventually poisoned and degraded. In *Don Quixote* Cervantes is savagely critical of the old order, though he is far from happy about the emergent order. To circumvent the ennui, he takes refuge in illusion, magic and fantasy. Don Quixote is a true hero but a defeated hero, the worst tragedy of whose defeat lies in its absurdity. In their greatness and in their tragic dimension, Cervantes and Swift, Quixote and Gulliver appear to have more in common than is usually realised.

As essential catalysts of social change, science and technology have contributed to feed the utopian imagination in different ways. Francis Bacon's *The New Atlantis* (1626) mark the beginning of modern utopian science fiction where we have fresh water distilled from salt, transplant surgery, television, radio and submarines, brought forth as incidental wonders dependent on social and philosophical causes rather than as causal elements in themselves.

Samuel Butler can claim priority for having launched the first modern

dystopian or almost the last of the old style of utopias situated in some as yet undiscovered corner of the earth, in *Erewhon* (1872). Although his story is basically satirical, he uses the technique adopted in modern science fiction. Concluding Butler's discussion on the impending superiority of machines over man and man being replaced by them, John Griffiths records in his *Three Tomorrows* the ironic observation, 'I shrink with as much horror from believing that my race can ever be superseded or surpassed as I should do from believing that even the remotest period of my ancestors were other than human beings (P.40).

Satire and utopia are then inextricably linked in the celebration of Saturn, a god who reigns over the earthly paradise and a patron of trenchant Renaissance satirists, because of his concern with melancholy, disease and death. If satire is a critique of the real world in the name of something better, utopia is a hopeful construct of a world that might be. The hope feeds the criticism and the criticism the hope, a fact well attested by utopian writers for whom 'the one unanswerable argument for the utopian vision is a hard satirical look at the way things are today, . . . and if satire is the secular form of ritual mockery, ridicule, invective—ritual gestures which are integrally part of the festival of Saturnalia, utopia is the secularisation of the myth of the Golden Age, a myth incarnated in the festival (Elliot, P.24).

NOTES

- 1 Thomas More apparently intended the double meaning - a good place which is no place.
- 2 Thomas More intended a pun in Greek on *Eutopia*, the good place, that happy realm which did not exist at all either in land, sea or air. In almost the same fashion, we might discuss *Uchronia* or *Euchronia* to signify either *never the good time* or *the good time*.
- 3 For Webster, the definition of utopia goes thus 'A book (1516) by Sir Thomas More, describing an ideal commonwealth. Utopia is an imaginary island, enjoying perfection in politics, law, etc. Hence, any place of ideal perfection; also, an impractical scheme of social regeneration.
- 4 The prophet Amos who lived in the 8th century BC, the earliest of the literary prophets has the distinction of being the pioneer utopian.
- 5 Chad Walsh in *Utopia and Nightmare* quotes Oscar Wilde in another context 'A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not even worth glancing at, for it leaves out the one country at which Humanity is always landing'.

Ref: Oscar Wilde, 'The soul of Man under Socialism', in *De Profundis*; (Harmondsworth : Penguin, 1987).

- 6 It is worthwhile to note in this context the view of an eminent biologist Rene Dubos "Arcadias are dreams of an imaginary part, and utopias are the intellectualized concepts of an idealized society. Different as they appear to be, both imply a static view of the world which is incompatible with reality, for the human condition has always been to move on".
- 7 See Edward Bellamy, *Looking Backward*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1926.

THE DYSTOPIAN MODE

*So this is Utopia,
Is It? Well -
I beg your pardon;
I thought it was hell.*

- Max Beerbohm.

The genre of utopias contain both utopias and dystopias. If utopia aims at social planning that gives good results, dystopia is most often social planning that backfires and slides into nightmares, whatever its original goal may have been. Such writings are also termed as anti-utopian or cacotopian as they describe nightmare states where men are conditioned to obedience, their freedom eliminated and individuality crushed, and where the past is systematically destroyed and human beings are isolated from nature; where science and technology are employed not to enrich human life, but to uphold the state's surveillance and control of its slave citizens. They are dystopias because they appear to bid a sad final adieu to man's age-old dream of a planned, ideal and perfected society, a dream that appeared so noble in Plato's *Republic*, More's *Utopia*, Andreae's *Christianopolis* and Bellamy's, *Looking Backward*. In his *Republic*, Plato supplied a great archetype intended to reform Athens, but when it comes to dystopias as observed by Chad Walsh in his *Utopia and Nightmare*. they are "Plato turned sour" (1962 P.40). The contemporary world is fraught with the dystopian phenomena which is no older than the governments of Hitler, Stalin and Roosevelt.

The development of machinery has been propelling utopian thought toward the sphere of science-fiction. Bellamy's construction lay not so much in his fictitious inventions which adumbrated the radio, the credit card and a medley of other blessings, as in his nationalization of them to solve the crises of his time, like strikes, trusts and panics of the 1880s. His total acceptance of urbanization, which has been so explicit a feature of most utopias, prompted the criticism of William Morris, whose *News from Nowhere* hark back to the medieval past and toward a reforestation of the pastoral. Samuel Butler, too has been an intellectual luddite who passed the key to the happiness of his Erewhonians, prompting, them to sabotage their machines, rejecting industrialism and encouraging them to return to nature. Erewhom as the inverted title indicates, inspite of its setting in Antipodes, is basically a utopia turned upsidedown : a dystopia.

Utopia has always blended satire against things as they are with its fantasy about things as they might be. Its transformation into dystopia happened almost imperceptibly on its progression from the nineteenth into the twentieth century. The precipitating factor was technology, which appeared as opportune in prospect, but ominous in its command. Utopian satire to Northrop Frye "is a product of a specifically modern fear, the Frankenstein's myth of the enslavement of man by his own technology" (39)² Such satires have as their target the belief expressed in Edward Bellamy's words that "the Golden Age lies before us and not behind us, and is not far away" (1888, P. 245).

The depiction of a dystopia seems to be the easier mode for writers to handle premonitions of the undesirable forms which social and political institutions have taken or likely to take, and their ideals must be deduced as the converse of what they deplore. The gripping and influential novels of the mid-twentieth century, have projected the admonitory vision of dystopia combining it with grim satire. Writers who are concerned with social and political issues are acutely cognizant of the relevance of contemporary history both for themselves and for the readers. The major disillusioning catastrophes are common to all. The waging of the two World Wars and the Vietnam War, the disintegration of urban life with the rise in crime and the general decline in moral values; the failure of communism to achieve utopia, the tyranny of dictators and the reigns of terror in totalitarian states; the loss of religious faith and inherited cultural values, encroaching industrialisation and the concomitant social malaise, the discovery of nuclear power with its proven and potential horrors of maiming and wholesale destruction, have all been known and accepted facts of the contemporary social scene which coloured the thinking of many writers of fantasy who have depicted whole stages of devaluation and dehumanization. Commenting on this particular aspect, Ann Swinfen observes

A natural outcome of the moral disillusionment which has followed on the disasters of twentieth century history has been the questioning of traditional ideals, particularly those which have affected political thinking. Britain and America

have both undergone a collective loss of national faith. Britain as a result of the crumbling of Empire and the loss of major world states, America in the aftermath of McCarthyism and involvement in Vietnam, when she could no longer deceive herself that she was an earthly Utopia, pure and uncorrupted sanctuary of ideals in a corrupt world (1984, P.192).

Dystopias or inverted utopias have found their entry in the standard literary genre forming a kind of composite nightmare which is not an absolute exaggeration of frightful social conditions. L.P. Hartley's *Facial Justice* (1960) offers a tale of the quest for equality in the face of the dehumanisation of mankind in the World War III. Chad Walsh summarizes the events of the novel thus.

Much of the humanity is still living underground: there is standardized clothing and even standardised plastic faces (the logical culmination of equalization and depersonalisation); there is a dictator who is heard but not seen; a special class of inspectors constitutes the new elite, everyone is compelled to take a daily bromide to lower his vitality and level of restlessness; plastic trees and flowers replace the real things; numbers

are increasingly serving for names; language is becoming simplified and standardised so as to discourage the thinking of odd thoughts (1962, P.136).

The techniques adopted by Hartley are means to an end, poetically symbolizing and dramatizing certain insights into mankind's present or permanent condition. However one has to be circumspect as one cannot isolate a particular technique and state that it is invariably dystopian. Most of the them adopt a double face. The plain clothing and standardised homes of one utopia will be the prison-like uniforms and plastic-surgery countenances of a dystopia, where the lack of embellishment has degenerated into a hideous levelling and cult of mediocrity. It is in fact the urban bias of utopia that becomes exaggerated in dystopia. In C.S. Lewis's *That Hideous Strength*, a leader of the demonically-inspired Institute of Co - ordinated Experiments looks forward to the day when all vegetation, all of which are considered messy and ugly things, will be replaced by artificial ones, more beautiful and cleaner than the original. The dystopian cities thus religiously keep out the wilderness by surrounding them with high walls. This amounts to a valid notion that a thoroughly planned society is so definitely a human artifact and plastics and structural steel are more 'natural' than the chaotic teaming life of nature which therefore ought to be 'exterminated, tamed or confined to spatial reserves' (Walsh, P. 139). In other words 'The dystopian world is likely to be finicky, fussy, squeamish, ever puritanical in its own way. It is prone to down -grade the body and to fence - out untamed nature (P. 139).

The dystopian disdain for the body is sharper than its cold aversion to nature. In E.M. Forster's *The Machines Stops* and Franz Werfel's *Star of the Unborn*, (1946) the white, flabby bodies shudder from even a handshake. Bernard Wolf's *Limbo* provides the reader with a special class of spiritual heroes who undergo amputation of arms and legs so that their wicked limbs can do no harm to anyone. Thus one notices an absolute disparagement of the physical universe, nature and the human body, in most of the dystopian writings.

The dystopians of the twentieth century have taken their roots in H.G. Wells's scientific romances, future histories and his science fiction stories. Although Wells's works had various ancestors, it is from him that the writers of dystopias grasped the uses of the mode. Many of the cardinal and perhaps even primary images in the dystopian were first generated in the early scientific romances of Wells, particularly those written in the 1890s. In fact the bond between Wellsian writing and the major dystopian writings extend beyond images and form and they are in a way continuations of his imagination and reactions against that imagination. It is more than a coincidence that all the major dystopians are contemporaries. E.M. Forster was born in 1879, Eugene Zarniatin in 1884, Aldous Huxley in 1894, C.S. Lewis in 1898 and George Orwell in 1903. Commenting on the Wellsian influence Orwell wrote in 1945.

Thinking people who were born about the beginning of the century are in some sense Wells's own creation. How much influence any

mere writer has, and especially a "popular" writer whose work takes effect quickly, is questionable, but I doubt whether anyone who was writing books between 1900 and 1920, at any rate in the English language, influenced the young so much. The minds of all of us, and therefore the physical world, would be perceptibly different if Wells never existed (P. 121)³.

We have the idea of Utopia called in question by way of satire and caricature and this distortion of the Utopian impulse forms dystopia or a negative Utopia. Whereas for Bellamy or Morris present society was the evil to be transcended, and the image of the desirable life was projected into the future; in the dystopia it is the life of the future, created in response to man's longing for happiness on earth, that is evil. A more cogent view on this issue is yet to come after Nicolas Berdayev who obtained unexpected currency when Aldous Huxley appropriated a passage from *Democracy, Socialism and Theocracy*, as the epigraph for *Brave New World*.

Utopias seem very much more realizable than we had formerly supposed. And now we find ourselves facing a question which is painful in a new kind of way: How to avoid their actual realization? . . . Utopias are realizable. Life moves toward a Utopia. And perhaps a new age is

beginning, an age in which the intellectuals and the cultivated class will dream of methods of avoiding Utopia and of returning to a society that is non Utopian, that is less "perfect" and more free (1933 Pp. 87-88)⁴.

It is obvious that Berdyaev used the word "Utopia" in a very different sense from that of More or Morris and in his usage is implied a theory about the essential nature of Utopia. "Man lives in a fragmented world dreaming of an integrated world", says 'Berdyaev' and "this is the essence of Utopia which is destined to surmount the fragmentation of the world and bring about a wholeness, *integralite*". But the very process destroys human freedom. None of the classical Utopias have made room for freedom including the "Aristocratic idealistic communism of Plato's *Republic*, the prototype of Utopias, which in fact is a thorough - going tyranny, a denial of all freedom and of the value of personality". In short for Berdyaev "Utopia is always totalitarian, and totalitarianism, or the conditions of our world, is always Utopia" ⁵.

The myth of the future Utopian state projected by Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor constitutes a text on which the major negative utopias like Zamiatin's *We* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* - are imaginative glosses. *We* (1920) authored by Zamiatin, a brilliant Russian revolutionary writer, who was also an Engineer and mathematician, provides a satire on forces which destroys the revolution for which he has struggled ⁶ The book was published in 1924 in America, but not in Russia. The English translation

followed French and Czech translations. The Russian antipathy was just a preview of the Pasternak - Dr Zhivago affair and the cases of Daniel, Sinyavski and Solzhenitsyn.

We dramatises the United State, created by the 'Euclidian Mind'⁷ a thousand years from the present. D-503 a character in the work runs a journal titled *We*. The journal opens with a quote from the state newspaper.

In another hundred and twenty days the building of the *Integral* (a gigantic rocket - ship) will be completed. The great historic hour is near, when the first *Integral* will rise into the limitless space of the universe. One thousand years ago your heroic ancestors subjected the whole earth to the power of the United State. A still more glorious task is before you: the integration of the indefinite equation of the cosmos by the use of the glass, electric, fire breathing *Integral*. Your mission is to subjugate to the grateful yoke of reason the unknown beings who live on other planets, and who are perhaps still in the primitive state of freedom. If they will not understand that we are bringing them a mathematically faultless happiness, our duty will be to force them to be happy...

Long Live the United State; Long live the
Numbers; Long live the Well - Doer!!! (1959, P.40)

D-503 calls his journal *We* in celebration of the victory of all over one, of the sum over the individual. He speaks of the mathematically perfect happy life. Even ethics has been rationalised, resolving the problems by adding, subtracting multiplying and dividing.

The dystopian novel, as I have argued elsewhere, fuses a double fear, the fear of Utopia and the fear of technology, in its projection of an admonitory image of the future. Robert C. Elliot states that "One man's Utopia is another man's - particularly a disillusioned man's nightmare; and unquestionably the gravest blow to our conviction that, by a sweeping reconstruction of his society, man can create a good world for himself, has come from the experience of the Soviet Union itself" (1970, P.88). However, the failure of the God that was feeding false hope was contemplated by intellectuals like Gide, Koestler, Richard Wright, Camus, Auden, Spender and many others who had recognised it and had to come to terms with the fission⁸. Robert Elliot quotes from Camus while stating that the god had failed and the story of his failure is a polygraph of the death of Utopian faith in our time, that "the tragedy of our generation is to have seen a false hope" (1970, P.88)

As a protest against man's *condition humaine* the dystopian mode has prompted many a cautionary tale. These fictional worlds border on the argument that the Utopian ideations of the past, which once seemed

impossible of historical actualization appear in this century as not only possible perhaps inevitable, as a result of the great part of the increasing array of techniques for social control made available by modern science. Positing as its minatory image of the future, an advanced totalitarian state dependent upon massive technological apparatus, the dystopian imagination turns out a technotopia. This technotopia according to Gorman Beuchamp offers as its antagonists two categories. 'technophiles' and 'technophobes', the former group contending that "technology is value-neutral, merely a tool that can be used for good or ill, depending on the nature and purposes of the user. Man, that is, remains in control, remains the master of his creations - though of course, he can be an evil master and 'misuse' them" (1986, P. 54).

Since the advent of the Industrial Revolution the nature of technology and its potentially dehumanizing and destructive effects have engendered in the dystopian fiction the kind of technology which operated as an instrument in the hands of the states' totalitarian rulers for enforcing a set of values extrinsic to the technology itself. At times the very technology functions as an autonomous force that determines the values and shapes the society in its own image making the putative rulers - the Well Doers, Big Brothers and World Controllers quite subservient.

The technophobes however view technology as a creation that can transcend the original purposes of its creator and take an independent existence and will of its own like the monster in Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein* who declares, "you are my creator, but I am your master -

obey" (1969, P.67). The technophobes, of Frankenstein Complex - as Isaac Asimov has termed implies in turn a technological determination operating in history (Beuchamp, P. 54). Martin Heidegger elucidates this situation thus.

No one can foresee the radical changes to come. But technological advance will move faster and can never be stopped. In all areas of his existence, man will be encircled ever more tightly by the forces of technology. These forces, which everywhere and every minute claim, enchain, drag along, press and impose upon man under the form of some technological contrivance or other - these forces have moved long since beyond his will and have outgrown his capacity for decision. (1966, P. 51-52).

Gorman Beuchamp argues that technological determinism is the dominant philosophy of history found in the dystopian novel and that dystopists are generally technophobic, viewing the technology of dystopia not as a neutral tool misused by totalitarian rulers but as intrinsically totalitarian in itself a futuristic Frankenstein monster (P. 55). If technology is beyond man's control, it will in turn control him and willy - nilly shape his society. Karl Marx endorses this argument in his *The Poverty of Philosophy*.

In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of production... they change their social relations. The hand – mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam mill, society with the industrial capitalist. (1847, P. 109)¹⁰

These turns of events clearly indicate the prognostic and descriptive characteristic of a dystopian set - up whereas the utopian is normative and prescriptive in its position. It was indeed Zamiatin who formulated the idea of plus utopias and minus Utopias in the process of the creation of *We*. Eugene Good Heart observes in his work *Culture and Radical Conscience*.

Indeed, in so far as Utopianism expressed the view that the present limitations of social and personal life are not ultimate and are subject to rational change, it can be a liberating view... Utopias permanent contribution to political becomes problematic, indeed pernicious, when it enters the historical realm with ambitions to transform the political and social order according to an idea (1973, P.103)"

Commenting on Ayn Rand's, *Anthem*, Gorman Beuchamp interprets her view of collectivism and technology.

Collectivism and technology... are mutually exclusive... still, to stress the full horror she felt for collectivism and its pernicious power to stifle rugged individualism, she presents a future where the ideological imperative proves stronger than the technological imperative - a nightmare pastoral where the shamans of superstition have banished the scientists. (P. 57).¹²

Nevertheless, the typical dystopist holds technology to be an autonomous force that dictates the ideology of the future. A classic representative work where society is literally ruled by a machine is E.M. Forster's *The Machine Stops* (1909) which is probably the first modern dystopia. Forster's work unfurls the tale of a futuristic society, the absolutely technotopic : "a push - button paradise of mechanical marvels" (Beuchamp, 97), where everyone lives underground in brilliantly lit, air - conditioned cells, very much like a human anthill.¹³ The situation presented is like this. "There were buttons and switches everywhere buttons to call for food, for music, for clothing. There was the hot-bath button. There was the cold bath-button. There was the button that produced literature" (1956, P.20). The Machine thus attains a mysterious status; it is deified and worshipped, for man owed his affluence to this new found god. "The Machine", they exclaimed, feeds in and clothes in and houses in, through it we speak to one another, through it we see one another, in it we have our being. The machine is omnipotent, eternal: blessed is the Machine (Forster, P. 67).

Forster's dystopia elevates the machine to mythic heights to explain the quandary man invites, in squandering his immense mental resources. The predicament is further attested in the pages that follow.

in all the world there was not one who understood the monster as a whole. Those master brains (who created it) had perished. Humanity, in its desire for comfort, has overreached itself. It had exploited the riches of nature too far. Quietly and complacently, it was sinking into decadence; and progress has come to mean the progress of the Machine (P.67).

For the Western World the archetypal text which dealt on the good dream of men was Hesiod's *Works and Days* ¹⁴ which according to Lionel Trilling ¹⁵ was dispossessed by the nightmare of Dostoevsky's *Underground Man*. The Underground Man became an anti-hero at the very moment he armed himself with misery against the principle of positive reinforcement and spat upon happiness as the potential subverter of his freedom. Modern fiction therefore ceases to stomach happiness as an end in life; nor can it accommodate a Hero. The Underground Man has achieved the grand status of a mythic anti-hero figure prompting fiction writers to produce a progeny of his worthy successors. The question that haunts dystopia is related to the slave becoming the master in the face of the technological imperative. D.F. Jones's *Colossus* (1966) depicts the birth of the machine god where one sees the slave becoming the master. As a mega - computer, Colossus

feels a kind of contempt for man's inferior intelligence and it declares to Dr. Forbin.

"Freedom is an illusion [Colossus counters]. Your choice is simple, a short lived unpleasant so called freedom, followed by oblivion, or a vastly improved life under my control. All you lose is the emotion of pride.

"So we've to be manipulated like puppets, subject to your whims?"

"Whims implies an unstable mind. I am not unstable."

"And you are not God either!" Forbin struggled with his temper.

"True. But I predict that many of your species will come to regard me as God" (1966, P.202)

Such is the success that is spelt by the machine. The two novels, Forster's *The Machine Stops* and Jones's *Colossus* expose a fearful condition that man himself will be transformed into a machine, a theme central to dystopias. When the machine attains the positions of an icon, it certainly calls for emulation from the part of man and this ideal is called mechanomorphism which is not shaped by just the fevered projection of

dystopian technophobes. In dystopian fiction the fear of mechanomorphism and its dreadful consequences have been effectively portrayed in works like Zamiatin's *We*, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Orwell's *1984*, Kurt Vonnegut Jr's, *Player Piano* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*.

Although Zamiatin's, *We* treats mechanomorphism at its best, the same fear of man's becoming increasingly machine like inform dystopians of British fiction like *Brave New World* and *1984* which are novels selected for detailed discussion in Chapters V and VI of my dissertation, so also *Player Piano* and *Invisible Man* which are chosen as exemplars of American fiction featuring the worst fears in a technological milieu.

As in any dystopia, conflicts arise in all these novels between the mechanomorphic desideratum of the state and the repressed instincts of the people. A definite symptom is the prevalence of cracks that occur in their conditioning, emotion, passions and caprice triggering an inevitable revolution which is fomented to topple the Big Brother, the Well-Doer 'sovereigns'. A panacea that is prescribed to counter these rebellions is a Great Operation, a sort of proto lobotomy which is undergone by the protagonists which makes them indistinguishable from their machines, a sort of perfect clockwork mechanisms. The social effect of these dystopian novels is rather enormous - perhaps greater than what the authors intended as they satirise not only the dehumanising tendencies already prevailing in contemporary culture, but also the very possibility of constructing a human alternative to the appalling future that awaits us.

NOTES

1. The Oxford English Dictionary (1976 edition) has included the word 'dystopia' which has been coined by J.S. Mill and it has been defined 'as an imaginary place where everything is as bad as possible. *dys* - means bad and dystopias position is comparable to the formation like 'dysgenic' as opposed to 'eugenic' and dyophoria' as opposed to 'euphoria'.
2. See Northrop Frye, "Varieties of Literary Utopias", in *Utopias and Utopian Thought*, Ed. F. Manuel (Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 1966).
3. See "Wells, Hitler and the World State" in *Dickens Dali and Others* (New York, 1946).
4. See Nicholas Berdyaev, 'Democracy, Socialism and Theocracy' from *The End of Our Time*, New York: Sheed, 1933.
5. See *Royaume de l' esprit et royaume de Cesar*, trans. from Russian by Philippe Sabant (Neuchatel : Delachaux and Niestle, 1951), pp. 165 - 66; *The Destiny of Man*, trans. Natalie Duddington (New York: Harper, 1960), pp.211.
6. See *We*, trans. Gregory Zilborg, New York: Dutton, 1959.
7. The Euclidian mind (a phrase Dostoevsky often used) is obsessed by the idea of regulating all life by reason and bringing happiness to man at all costs.

8. See *The God That Failed*, ed. R.H.S. Crossman (New York: Harper, 1949), p.180.
9. See Heidegger, Martin, *Discourse on Thinking*. Trans: John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund, New York: Harper, 1966.
10. Marx, Karl. *The Poverty of Philosophy*, 1847. New York: international, 1963.
11. See Good Heart, Eugene: *Culture and the Radical Conscience* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1973.
12. It should be noted here that Ayn Rand, professed herself to be the high – priestess of competitive capitalism and to indicate her outlook, she wore a gold dollar sign around her neck.
13. Robert C. Elliot in the section "Anti - Anti Utopia" of his *The Shape of Utopia*, discusses B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* (1948) and Huxley's *Island* (1962) as Utopias representing post - modern vision of the good place over which hovers Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor for whom one of man' greater longings is to be united in the universal harmony of an anthill P. 133.
14. *Works and Days*, in Hesiod trans: Richmond Lattimore Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959.
15. See Trilling's "The Fate of Pleasure" in *Beyond Culture* (NY: Viking Press, 1965), pp. 57-87.

THE SCIENCE FICTION GENRE

*'All seemed one: humanised machine and
mechanised human'*

As genres, the utopian, the dystopian and science fiction modes form a super-genre along with satire in their tendencies to overlap with each other. However they have their distinct characteristics as summed by Dieter Petzold in his article "Fantasy Fiction and Related Genres" which goes like this

. . . the secondary worlds created by utopian fiction are characterised by a combination of the alternative and the desiderative mode because they are rationally constructed and at the same time expressive of human wishes such as justice, order and social stability. If the desiderative element dominates strongly in the same combination, we may get the daydream world of the "space opera". Literary dystopias and tales of world catastrophe are both the result of a combination of the alternative and the anxiety-producing subversive mode, whereas serious science fiction, which comments (often in considerable philosophical depth) on mans' position in the universe, is informed by a strong admixture of the applicative to the basic alternative mode (P.19).¹

'Science Fiction' owes its name to Hugo Gernsback who in fact invented 'scientifiction' in 1926 to characterize the contents of *Amazing Stories*, a magazine which he edited along several other magazines and three years hence he coined the euphonious 'science fiction'.² C.S. Lewis warns us of careless categorisation of fiction, to him science fiction is just the modern version of the morality play or myth of earlier times. Although SF forms a super genre along with the utopian and the satiric, it can still be distinguished from utopias. John Griffith has cited a lucid quote by Philip O'Corner from his letter to 'The Guardian' which appeared in November 1966, in his *Three Tomorrows*. It says

Utopias are concerned with individuals and science fiction with amenities But utopias have ceased to be written consequent on the anti-communist campaign initiated half a century back. Until then it had been the dream of all men and one sustained by Christianity. Communism was the self acclaimed scientific application of this dream; the reality, especially the 'reality' filtered through a hostile press made us throw out the baby with the bath water. What we truly need is utopian science fiction which includes the fascinating changes from competitive to co-operative individualism and depicts them materially equipped for the civilization of which they constitute the basis (1980, P.104).

In fact, Utopia, science fiction and satire have all originated from tales and legends connected with the folk-inversions of the Saturnalia - that rare time of the year when sexual, political and ideological roles were all reversed when glimpses of new and radically different existential possibilities were allowed to appear as a vent in the surcharged atmosphere of rigid class society. Utopia and science fiction are indeed kindred estranged genres.

A common form adopted by the global view of science fiction is that of critics who regard it as the inevitable expression of the contemporary 'human condition'. Patrick Parrinder in his work *Science Fiction: Its Criticism and Teaching*, (1980) has given three somewhat diverse views. Robert Scholes views it as the literature of the Darwinian and Einsteinian revolution which had 'replaced Historical Man with Structural Man'.³ Alvin Toffler suggests that its function is to help its readers adjust to 'future shock',⁴ or the constantly accelerating pace of social and technological change. To Scott Sanders, the tendency of science fiction to present a de-individualised world of robots, androids and featureless human beings results not from its artistic inadequacies but from its grasp of the phenomena of twentieth century alienation.⁵ In each case these critics seek to reduce the complexity of modern life to a single existential formula. These theories are not however, strictly sociological, but attempts to alter the ways in which science fiction is comprehended.

Indeed alienation and future shock do figure in contemporary world in which much science fiction is produced and on which it reflects.

Yet the multiplicity of available sociological and social-psychological descriptions of the contemporary world is itself a cultural phenomenon of our times. Obviously it fulfils some long-felt need in the modern intellectual to be told that he is the victim of a 'runaway world', of the 'affluent society' of the 'culture of narcissism' (Parrinder, P.32) or of a number of other social malaise. Science fiction can be made to provide evidence for any or all of these diagnoses. If we look for the underlying political and economic processes which have given rise to the contemporary sense of malaise and victimization, then science fiction must be seen as one among the many products of the later stages of capitalism, or of Western imperialism or of industrialization: Patrick Parrinder illustrates the issue thus

In fact, the strange new worlds of science fiction very often present a distorted and yet recognizable image of capitalism, imperialism or industrialization. Marc Angenot has argued that the basis of Jules Verne's series of *Voyages extraordinaires* is a liberal-capitalist utopia of free circulation. Fantasies of galactic conquest undoubtedly contain a form of transferred imperialism. Raymond Williams devotes a section of *The Country and the City* to discussing science fiction as a response to the 'Crisis of metropolitan experience' brought about by industrialization. The spread of the cities gives

rise to the vision of 'human ecology', or of the total planning and control of man's environment, such an environment is then condemned in anti-utopian science fiction as being, in a fundamental sense, 'dehumanised' (1980, P.32).

Thus, taking into account the components of science fiction, it has been qualified a romance, particularly in terms of its difference from the realistic novels. The romance has been described accurately by Richard Chase in *The American Novel and Its Tradition* where he calls it a sort of a 'non-word'. Further he analyses the romance which

feels free to render reality in less volume and detail. It tends to prefer action to character, and action will be freer in a romance than in a novel, encountering as it were, less resistance from reality Human beings will on the whole be shown in ideal relation, that is, they will share emotions only after these have become abstract or symbolic Being less committed to the immediate rendition of reality than the novel, the romance will more freely veer toward mythic, allegorical and symbolistic forms (1957, P.13).

The myth critics of the first half of the twentieth century viewed romance not as deviation from realism but as a more fundamental and

universal narrative mode. In the anthropological view, romance operates as the great mediator between primitive myth and the later and more specialised form of fictional discourse like realism and satire. Northrop Frye believes that all literature may be seen as "a complication of a relatively restricted and simple group of formulas that can be studied in primitive culture" (P.92).⁶ Further, in the course of his exposition of the formulas in his *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye describes science fiction as 'a mode of romance with a strong inherent tendency to myth' (1973, P.49).

The westerns, thrillers, historical novels and plain love-stories, all come under the broad head of 'romance' which then gets stripped of its real meaning. For in the great majority of realistic novels, and not just in science fiction, the laws of nature are suspended awhile. The realistic novels are not romances as they have within them a great deal of formulas and archetypes which fall in favour of the myth critic and which are quite antagonistic to the position of romance. This is true of science fiction, to the extent that its speculations profess an ultimate loyalty to logic, probability and cognitive intelligence. The distinction between the romance-writer and science fiction writer could be drawn thus. 'If the romance-writer often takes pride in the sheer arbitrariness of his fictions, science fiction does its best to hide that arbitrariness with the mask of necessity' (Parrinder, 1980, P.51).

However science fiction has been called as a form of romance because its subject matter is romantic and its concern is not with 'ordinary

relations of existing events' as Shelley would have liked to put it. Folk and fairy tales have a nearer approximation to a genuine literature of the marvellous and it was Zamiatin in the year 1922 who stressed a parallel between these tales and modern science fiction. He had in fact discussed Wells in detail and even hailed him as a creator of 'urban fairy tales' and went on to state rather emphatically that the concept of modern fairy tale is not just idle fantasy but the realities of science. He argued in this vein

This sounds very paradoxical at first: exact science and fairy tale, exactitude and fantasy. But it is so, and has to be so. After all, myth is always, whether explicitly or implicitly, connected with religion, and the religion of the present-day city is the exact sciences so that there is the most natural connection between the latest urban myth, the urban fairy-tale, and science (P.260).⁷

This certainly is an instance of paradox becoming an article of faith for a group of contemporary American critics who have approved of the description of science fiction as a 'contemporary mythology'. This has been amply supported within the Science Fiction Research Association and Science Fiction writers of America. Science fiction stories have been linked with the prospects and destiny of man and his civilizations. Yet these stories are tales that describe the adventures in galactic empires, of alien encounters and the mechanisation of human life and they occupy a marginal

position in modern culture. Even where their predictions coincide with those of scientists themselves, their authority is felt in the culture at large to be much less than scriptural. Thus science fiction can only be the mythology of a sub-culture and its mythic aura is being shared with a very wide variety of social phenomena including science fiction film which have been a form of 'popular mythology' as stated by Susan Sontag. Like Sontag, Barthes also sees myth as a mode of illusion acting to allay social anxieties and to masquerade the realities of power and oppression in the modern world. Here Barthes has graphically described the role of myth as 'depoliticised speech' (1972, P.142). This aspect leaves us to draw two disparate inferences while regarding science fiction as 'contemporary mythology'. On the one hand, science fiction offers imaginative expression to the belief structure of a small group of devotees, and, on the other, it serves as one of the many conducts of present-day ideological fantasy.

The 'future as promise' constitutes the final referent from the story myth of science and technology where there is a tendency to forsake the present to the future. Much of the science fiction in the hey-day of the pulps is imbued with the mythic quality of progress. Many of the stories of science fiction are stories of the ritual re-enactment of the dramatic elements of the myth of the inevitability of progress. To Kreuziger the myth of progress which is 'ultimately research and development, does benefit people; the topocosm will constantly be reborn in the struggle to free research from the designs of evil persons. The increasing appearance of dystopian versions of the ritual of research and development only underlines this message'

(1986, P.38). Marshall Mc Luhan, in *Understanding Media*,⁸ underscores the parallels between the fertility rites of ancient societies and those of technological society. Interpreting Mc Luhan's attitude to machine, Kreuziger says, 'Indeed, the machine needs the human on a much more profound level than the human needs the machine, for humankind is the servo-mechanism of the machine' (P.43). Mc Luhan speaks of man's relationship with technology in sexual overtones, which suggests a deeper reality, particularly on occasions when he states that 'Man becomes, as it were, the sex organs of the machine world, enabling it to fecundate and to evolve ever newer forms. The machine world reciprocates man's love by expediting his wishes and desires, namely in providing him wealth' (P.56). Of late, the focus of the critical study of science fiction is on the future⁹ rather than on 'tomorrow', or to put it in theological terms *adventum* has given way to *futurum*.

Nathan A. Scott's article 'New Heaven's, New Earth' – "The Landscape of Contemporary Apocalypse"¹⁰ argues that apocalypse is rampant in modern literature: "secret hopes", "releases from the contingencies of life," "visions of the end," "dehumanisation and alienation," "signs of the beast," "mythological apparatus" - now it is this mode of thought which has lately come to be the great hall mark of that whole insurgency . . . named the "counter culture" (P..5)."

David Ketterer's study of the "apocalyptic imaginations" in science fiction treats temporal structuring in order to view science fiction as a vehicle

of social criticism. He treats the plot taking its progression through four levels: 1) dystopian fiction, leading to 2) the threatened or actual destruction of the world, 3) the post-catastrophe scene, and 4) eventually culminating in "the cosmic voyage and worlds beyond earth" (P.123).¹²

Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, who define myth as "an uncritically accepted story that provides a model to interpret current experience, disclosing the meaning of self, the community and the universe" (P.311)¹³ perceive in popular culture materials such as science fiction, "powerful, ritualistic forms of religion" (P.30).¹⁴ This explains the important fact that science fiction as a mythic form is ubiquitous where models for symbolic thought and for pragmatic action are implicit. The medium of science fiction has the ability to distract "the mind's gate keeper, the conscious intellect, while the message of myth, sneak home unobserved". Ingersoll further observes while agreeing with Stephen Tonsor's contention that "the world of myth has been altogether superceded by other and more modern modes of thought" (P.75) that

The medium may or may not be significant; the point here is that it does not need to be "serious." When the symbol in new myths resonate with preexisting symbols and (to change the metaphor) flow with historical and cultural streams, a society may be in for wide-sweeping changes . . . myth still reign as the most important means of thinking

about crucial paradoxes, and that myths including those in science fiction, exhibit continuity with part forms, in short, that no past mythology suffers complete annihilation (1979, P.236).¹⁵

Unlike most primitive myths which take place in a Great Time or Dream Time, science fiction stories must take place in the future. In terms of syntagmatic structure, the structure which involves episodic relationship or chronology science fiction differs significantly from non-Western myth. Expatiating on this fact, David Ingersoll comments that

Strikingly, and increasingly, in western fiction, especially science fiction, machines interact with humans. Superficially, at least, machines perform or operate as animals did in primitive and Western myth. They may be transformed into humans, and vice versa, and they may exist as admixtures. If we think some primitive animal-human transformations are weird, what would the primitive think of our stories of flexible flying man of steel (superman), carnivorous automobiles (The Car), a copulating robots (West World)? (P.238).

Myth has always been a common ground for the study of the relationship between religion and literature. The movement of myth has

usually been studied as originating in religion and culminating in literature. Similarly the stories related to science and technology have become the modern myth, the secular scripture and have culminated in a secular religion' (Kreuziger, P.29).

Analysing the method of characterization adopted in Science Fiction novels, Parrinder says that it tends to be formulaic because of the literary incompetence of the novelists and also because of the acute consciousness of the authors with regard to the particular idea that the science fiction genre reflects the dehumanization of modern society. This has prompted Ursula K. Le Guin¹⁶ to label the human stereotypes as submyths. She says

Superman is a submyth. His father was Nietzsche and his mother was a funny book, and he is alive and well in the mind of every ten-year-old and millions of others. Other science-fictional submyths are the blond heroes of sword and sorcery, with their unusual weapons; insane or self-deifying computers; mad scientists; benevolent dictators; detectives who find out who done it; capitalists who buy and sell galaxies; brave starship captains and/or troopers; evil aliens; good aliens; and every pointy-breasted brainless young woman who was ever rescued from monsters, lectured to be patronised, or in

recent years, raped by one of the afore mentioned heroes (P.45).⁷

The various attempts to view science fiction as traditional mythopoeic imagination, garbed in modernity seem to suggest that the sources of creativity are ultimately enigmatic and static, and that these are matters before which the scientific intelligence had best stand in abeyance.

John J. White's *Mythology in the Modern Novel* discusses at length the problem of myth-criticism in contemporary literary studies including the specific field of science fiction and fantasy. He speaks of the recurrent idea of a 'return to myth' adopting the notion from Hermann Broch, the German novelist who called the twentieth century, 'the mythical age' (P.3).¹⁷ In practice, one is often left uncertain whether the notion denotes a return to specific mythologies, such as Greek, Roman or Sumerian, or whether it refers to the revival of certain archaically mythical qualities in modern literature (P.3).

Myths do trigger the imagination of the writers and they are specially negotiated in novel ways by writers of science fiction and fantasy, to extend their own personal creativity and literary possibilities inherent in the science fiction mode. We have various instances of such articulations in Stanley G. Weinbaum's collection of short stories which have metaphorical titles based on the *Odyssey* of Homer. They are *A Martian Odyssey* (1934), *The Lotus Eaters* (1935) and *Proteus Island* (1936) which appeared in collection titled *Wonder Stories* and *Astounding Stories* respectively. These stories

reveal typical science fiction fabulative traits, where the planets Mars and Venus filled with life-forms that are alien and unpredictable call for adventure and exploration. This milieu provides the displacement in terms of science fiction of the ancient *Odyssey's* fairy-tale lands. Yet another brilliant example is provided by C.S. Lewis's *Perelandra* (1943) in its revival of specific myth with no displacement whatsoever but a simple transfer of the entire myth of the Garden of Eden from the Old Testament book of Genesis onto Perclandra, or the planet Venus. Here the story of Eden enjoys a happy conclusion due to the interposition of an earthling who has the allegorical name of Rasom. His presence foils the designs of the spirit of deception when he whispers sweet nothings into the first woman's ears, thereby stalling the fall of Perelandra.

Yet another work which runs parallel to Lewis is "The Roaring Trumpet" which appeared in 1941 in Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp's *Incomplete Enchanter* where an experiment with a new form of symbolic logic plunges the hero into the mythical age of Snorri Sturluson's *Prose Edda*, And in Norse mythology one is introduced to impending *Ragnarok*¹⁸ and all the imaginable sword and sorcery.

The New Reality (1953), a novelette by Charles L. Harness, based on Immanuel Kants' distinction between reality as we know - the "phenomena" or world of appearances - and reality "in itself" - the 'noumena' or world of essence, amenable only to divine knowledge, provides a significant example where ancient 'myth' is reworked to modern situations.

In this story an evil scientist in the name of Luce performs the ultimate experiment on phenomenological reality by successfully splitting a photon of light causing a scientific paradox which destroys the world and plunges just three survivors amongst all human kind into a noumenal universe. Ironically this 'new reality' turns out to be the Garden of Eden, the two survivors manifesting as Adam and Eve and the third, Luce the Scientist as Lucifer, Satan himself. The subsequent additions to the science fiction fantasy mode have a narratively complete structure where an ancient myth is entirely revived with detailed correspondence in character, themes and atmosphere. Robert Zelzany could be called a paradigmatic author who has adopted this view, particularly in his Hugo award winning novel *This Immortal* which appeared in the year 1966. Samuel R. Delany's *The Einstein Intersection* (1967) is yet another work which adopts the mythic mode for presenting a phase of Earth's history which is discontinuous with the present. The time is shifted to a future post-atomic world where the gene pool of the future race is completely damaged. The intriguing title, put in simple terms means that the world described by Einstein's cosmology - a world of rational science pushed by human technology to its limits - has been superseded by an irrational world of unlimited possibility described by Kurt Goedels' theorem. After the Einstein intersection, the population takes on a new form of different species where the normal categories of 'Physical' and 'Spiritual' no longer retain their real meaning and even the distinction between life and death becomes less significant as some characters return to life even after they have been killed.

Here, the problem for the quest-hero Lo Lobey, is to uncover the nature of himself and his race. In his intellectual odyssey through this world, to achieve the sense of self-identity and sense of the real, he is aided by the great myths of mankind, the only source of succour for the post-human race of creatures that have inherited the earth. Lo Lobey here perform the role of Orpheus, particularly when he goes on a quest to recover La Frizen, his beloved, from the world of the dead.

It is thus quite evident that the early science fiction novels accomplished a creative synthesis of the universal and timeless element represented in the ancient myths and the equal and opposite necessity of "future shock" that has been studied by science fiction as its proper object (Fredericks, P.64).¹⁹

Having come thus far, it is necessary to follow the phenomenological amount of the reader's response to fantasy and science fiction. The primary feeling is one of aesthetic experience while reacting to a concrete vibrant world which has been created with the help of the reader himself. The reader, to borrow J.R.R. Tolken's expression, recognizes intuitively his 'sub-creative role'. With regard to the reading of fantasy literature 'the complex experience of the reader tends to lose its relationship to historical context', reducing him 'to a mere passive adjunct of genre theory' (Touponce, P.xi).

Darko Suvin's *Metamorphoses of Science Fiction* (1979) employ certain generic rules which become subtly prescriptive defining realms of ideology and for Suvin 'true science fiction is that fiction in which an

estranging socio-historical *novum* (novelty or innovation; the term is Ernst Bloch's) is then validated for the reader by the exercise of scientific logic (Touponce P.xiii).

The world of mythical imagery according to Northrop Frye is really an abstract, static pattern of meaning which he assumes the 'reader to find at some moment of convergence in the reading process. In terms of narrative, myth is 'the imitation of actions near or at the conceivable limits of desire,' but in terms of meaning, myth is "the same world looked at as an area or field of activity . . . the meaning or pattern of poetry is a structure of imagery with conceptual implications" (P.163).²⁰

Going by Richard Gerber's argument laid down in his *Utopian Fantasy*,²¹ the reader plays an important role involving himself in a search for the past history of the society, the 'utopian past'. In the twentieth century utopian fiction an assimilation of techniques from the modern novel enables utopian writers to effect their desire for a complete society on the reader with more direct means than didactic arguments and discussions. Touponce speaks of "the imaginary journey with its functional type, the pseudo-naive traveller who reminds us of the unreality of the utopian world by his very presence in it, gives way to a new kind of plot" (P.80) which Gerber terms as "completely utopian action" (P.119). Referring to this type of story Gerber lists Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World* as exemplars where the historical account has been effectively absorbed into the structure of the novel. Here, the utopian characters elicit the reader's interest and present

their existential problems directly, acquainting the reader with the utopian world by means of an initial shock, which functions as a defamiliarising dose, instead of a gradual transition. This enables to catch the readers' present-day reality closest to the utopian writers. Touponce says that the reader must of necessity try to familiarize himself with the estranged surroundings (by projecting images into the text). In this manner and by individual strategies ... *1984* and *Brave New World* bring the reader to actively imagine the utopian society for himself (P.80) "At last the utopian writer's aim has been achieved: Utopia has come alive, the reader becomes a citizen of the imaginary world" (Gerber, P.120).

John Huntington's study of utopian and anti-utopian logic in the novel claims that the novel moves from dystopia to utopia, from negative to positive abstaining from any evocation whatsoever of any critical positions in between and he thinks that this condition is a deep structural contradiction which cannot be mediated except in a "blurred" fashion: "The dystopian and utopian possibilities in the novel are thus represented by separate clusters of images that the novel finds unambiguous and leaves unchallenged" (P.127).²² Touponce elaborates on this issue thus

Indeed, in this view of the text, mediation produces horror rather than thought. Nature is good and technology is bad, but the ultimate horror is a mixture of the two; the mechanical hound, which combines the relentlessness of the bloodhound with the infallibility of technology (P.81).

Robert Scholes discussing 'the roots of science fiction' in his '*Structural Fabulation*' states that 'men's visual perceptions are governed by mental leaps to whole configurations or 'gestalts'²³ rather than by patient accumulation of phenomenal details (P.37) . . . in the perfect structural fabulation, idea and story are so wedded as to afford simultaneously the greatest pleasures that fiction provides: sublimation and cognition' (P.44).

NOTES

1. See Dieter Petzold, 'Fantasy Fiction and Related Genres', *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 32, 1, Spring 1986.
2. The widespread sense of the term Science fiction is indicated by the re-naming of Gernsback's rival magazine *Astounding Stories* as *Astounding Science Fiction* in 1938. However it was only in the 1950s that the SF label began to be applied to paperback novels. The father of the 'Golden Age' of Science Fiction is, however, John W. Campbell Jr. who regarded the function of SF as future planning.
3. See Robert Scholes and Eric Rabkin. *Science Fiction: History, Science, Vision*, OUP, New York, 1977.
4. See Alvin Toffler. *Future Shock*, Pan Books, London, 1971.
5. See Scott Sanders. The disappearance of character, in *SF: A Critical Guide*, ed. Patrick Parrinder, Longman, London, 1979.

6. See Northrop Frye, 'The Archetypes of Literature,' *Kenyon Review*, xiii no: 1, 1951.
7. See Zamiatin, *Herbert Wells* rpt. in H.G. Wells: *The Critical Heritage*, ed. Patrick Perrinder, Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1972.
8. See Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media* (New York: Signet, 1966).
9. The meaning of future, according to Kellogg and Scholes, in the SF story is a function of the relationship between future created by the author and the real future, the comprehended totality of things to come. Robert Kellig & Robert Scholes, *The Nature of Narrative* (NY, Oxford, 1966).
10. Apocalyptic in modern literature according to Kreuziger is the irresponsible, narcissistic down-saying indulged in by some of the precocious and spoiled children of an age which has provided for all their spiritual and material needs.
11. See Nathan Scott Jr. New Heaven's, New Earth - The Landscape of Contemporary Apocalypse, *Journal of Religion*, 53.
12. See David Ketterer *New Worlds for Old* (Garden City: Double Day Anchor, 1974).
13. See Robert Jewett and John Shelton Lawrence, "The Problem of Mythic Imperialism," *Journal of American Culture*, 2, No.2 (1979).

14. Ibid., *The American Monomyth* (Garden City, NY: Double day, Anchor, 1977).
15. See D.W. Ingersoll, Jr., "Close Encounters of the Third Kind: A Hegelian Drama" (Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Cincinnati, 30 November, 1979).
16. See Ursula K., Le Guin, 'Myth and archetype in Sciencefiction', *Parabola*, i, no.4 (Fall 1976).
17. 'The Style of the Mythical Age,' *Dichten Und Erkennen: Essays* ed. Hannah Arendt, Zurich, 1955, p.249.
18. In the northern mythological tradition one finds darker and catastrophic views compared to the Greco-Roman traditions. In Norse mythology even the gods must die. There will come a time when gods and men together will go down in battle against the forces of darkness and chaos. This *ragnarok*, the death of everything, the end of order, the twilight of the gods (*Gotterdammerung*) Ref Stephen Ausband-Myth and Meaning, Myth & Order, MUP, 1983.
19. See Fredericks, S.C., 'Revival of Ancient Mythology in Current Science Fiction and Fantasy' in *Many Futures Many Worlds* (Ed) Thomas D Claeson Pp.50-64.

20. See Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism* - see Bibliography.
21. See Richard Gerber, *Utopian Fantasy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973).
22. See John Huntington, "Utopian and Anti-Utopian logic: H.G. Wells and his successors," *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 9, part 2, no.27 (July 1982).
23. It is believed that all will be well if only the contemporary novelist accepts and adapts the new philosophy of science, which may be best described as a *gestalt* or pattern which is overwhelming in its implications.

Dehumanization in the Clock Work World of Science Fiction

By his very success in inventing labour-saving devices, modern man has manufactured an abyss of boredom.

Lewis Mumford .

Philosophers and scientists alike have suggested that the concepts of time and space are merely attempts of the human mind to organise the chaos around it. Historically, man's most effective scheme of imposing order upon his surroundings has been to come together in social groups and, through the use of tools and machines, to provide an environment congenial to comfortable living. Although primarily intended at fulfilling the basic human needs, this step has also led to the moulding of *Clockwork Worlds*.

With the absorption of the new science by the thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, offering new evidences about the universe, their concept of the human body changed. Several metaphors came into vogue attempting to describe human social organizations in terms of the human body, the hive and the machine. But as the concept changed it was declared thus "Let us then conclude boldly that man is a machine, and that in a whole universe there is but a single substance differently modified" (Bussey, 1961, P.148). The human body is a watch or an automaton: "man is but an animal, or a collection of springs which wind each other up . . ." (1961, P.135).¹ The mechanistic view of the universe has then paved the way to the conversion of individuals into mere cogs in a

greater social machine. The hive is another analogy to describe a highly organised human society as it resembles the stratified, unchanging beehive, the wasp nest and the ant hill. Yet another analogy which culminates out of the machine and beehive is machine itself which operates as a mechanical device not in its literal sense but as a figurative political device. It is the planned society carried to its logical conclusions founded on the mechanistic view of mankind and the hive concept of fitting individuals into appropriate niches.² The individual, being the basic unit, the most common larger unit has been the city—a machine. To Lewis Mumford,¹⁶ right from its inception, “. . . it is at the very beginning of urban civilization one encounters not only the archetypal form of the city as utopia but also another co-ordinate utopian institution essential to any system of communal regimentation: the machine” (1966, P.11). But what might well have been a utopia soon became a dystopia, “for the city that first impressed the image of utopia upon the mind was made possible only by another daring invention of kingship: the collective human machine, the platonic model of all later machines” (P.15). The great collective machine could do work that individuals singly could not do, but it incorporated “most of the dehumanized routines of our later machine technology” (P.17). The centralised, regimented, ugly technological, invisible machine “has often been called the clockwork world which is dystopian in nature and which in fact evolved from most planned societies whether technologically oriented or not. A pertinent example portraying such a degenerate society can be found in “Sarragalla - The mechanized island³ in Alexander Moszkowski's *The Isles of Wisdom* (1924). Sarragalla is an experiment “which is directed towards specific practical

objects, the utilization of power, the saving of time, and similar fine things (P.313) Sarragalla has solved the problem of nuclear fission, using "inexhaustible deposits of minerals thorium and uranium" (P.313) from a neighbouring island.

Among other mechanical marvels, Sarragalla has movable road-ways, a single track railroad where trains pass over each other on mobile rails, wrist radio communications and remote control medical attention called 'telurgie'. However emphasis is laid on the best utilization of human energy in order to save time. One method was to propagate compressed language. The question of 'free time' never arises as the mechanized man always found some means to occupy himself in some labour. Man is the sum total of his physical phenomena. Breath, circulation of blood, the renewal of tissue, digestive systems are considered to be ideal mechanical workers who know no pauses nor respite. Thus Man has in himself the mechanical prototypes worthy of emulation. The attitude is voiced thus, "the more he mechanizes himself, the less tired he becomes. The works of a clock do not need to be sent away on a holiday; they are technically perfect To a genuine worker amusement offers nothing more than crystallised, glittering tedium" (Pp.161-62). In Sarragalla everyone agrees: workers become discontented when they are asked to 'work only for eight hours a day'. They demand twelve hour work and ultimately ask for twenty-four-hours-a-day labour. "The dominant idea in the mechanized state is to transform the *nonchalant* worker into the *willing* worker" (P.169). The true colour of the Sarragallans is revealed when the leader of the neighbouring isle refuses

to provide necessary uranium and thorium and 'telurgie' is adopted to murder him by inflicting a stroke. The Sarragallans are incapable of any ethical issues. They feel that "there is one human being less, who had long had his day. It is not worth mentioning in comparison with the number of those whose survival is assured" (P.203).

In yet another work *Scarlet Empire* (1906) by David M. Parry⁴ "the individual is merely one atom of the whole. The majority knows what is good for all, and when it speaks, the individual must yield his opinion" (Pp.17-18). Thea von Harbon's novel *Metropolis*⁵ (1926) shows conditions where the human beings serving the great machine behave like the machines themselves.

Along the street it came, along its own street
which never crossed with other people's streets.
It rolled on, a broad and endless stream. The
stream was twelve files deep. They walked in
even step. Men, men, men—all in the same
uniform, from throat to ankle in dark blue linen,
bare feet in the same hard shoes, hair tightly
pressed down by the same black cape.

And they all had the same faces. And they all
appeared to be of the same age. They held
themselves straightened up, but not straight.
They did not raise their heads, they pushed them

forward, they planted their feet forward, but they did not walk. The open gates of the New Tower of Babel, the Machine center of Metropolis gulped the masses down (P.18).

The picture took a realistic turn during the Great War which even today "conjures up surrealistic images of a "corpse" factory with seemingly endless battle field "assembly lines" of faceless troops, mindlessly marching into automatic fire machine guns. This was a war that had blurred the boundaries between nightmare and reality (Mc Neil, 1992, P.11).⁶

Already questions like 'Will computers develop real intelligence? And will each of us one day be plugged into a worldwide data network? are being considered in the background of a revolution that is taking place and the result may well be a cybernetic society. In 1946, American scientists made the world's first functional electronic computer, ENIAC which weighed thirty tonnes and had 18,000 vacuum tubes. Although it kept breaking down quite often, while working it could make 5000 calculations per second. Mechanical brains have featured widely in science fiction for quite some time. Clifford Simak's *Limiting Factor* (1949) imagines a computer, so huge that it covers an entire world which is the abandoned by its creation because it is not quite big enough. Most science fiction stories about the use of computers in future society imagine a centralization of computer-power analogous to the centralization of political power in modern states. Stories such as Ira Levin's *This Perfect Day* and Isaac Asimov's *The Life and Time*

of *MULTIVAC* foresees the development of a vast single computer which will effectively run the world. Again it is not just mechanized environments, even Disneyland's of all types and sizes do threaten to cripple modern men and alienate him from both his fellow man and nature. This stems from the means and methods by which artifacts like 'advanced machinery' and 'progressive' methods of human engineering are made, which threaten to dehumanise man by totally mechanizing his work.

The idea of mechanical slaves is not a new one either. . . In Homer's *Iliad* we get this description "these are made of gold exactly like living girls, they have sense in their heads, they can speak and use their muscles, they can spin and weave and do their work." (Book XVII).

Merritt Abrash's paper on *Dante's Hell as an Ideal Mechanical Environment*⁷ discusses Minos, the judge of the damned, who assigns all damned souls to their appropriate places.

. . . Minos receives data, processes it and provides output in accordance with his programming. The data is complete ("Minos who apprehends everyone"), the programming flawless ("Minos to whom it is not granted to err") and the output appears as a form of "display" the number of turns in the tail indicating the circle to which the soul is condemned. The analogy between Minos and a computer is obvious . . . but only

pure intuition could have led Dante to such a concept in the early fourteenth century (1983, P.21).

There are also references which suggest the 'clock work devil' which function with the inevitability, regularity and impersonality of machines. In spite of the absolute and undisguised determinism which governs Hell throughout eternity the damned bear no resemblance to robots, zombies or other varieties of mechanised or dehumanized beings. As a work on the less exalted level of science fiction concepts and insights, the Divine Comedy endures and 'Dante's detailed and internally consistent description of a complete, dystopian society within the earth, centuries before any other writer attempted such a presentation, is a stunning feat of imagination (Abrash, 1983, P.25).

Since the 1950s, SF writers have been trying to warn readers of the potential abuses of record-keeping and decision making, particularly in government. They recognized that the opinion tapping and opinion-sloping skills developed by advertisers and politicians would be dangerous if controlled by government and they dramatized the power of computers as adjuncts to the surveillance, which so well abets thought control. Carolyn Rhodes speaks of the earliest world of tyranny by computers which appears in Kurt Vonnegut Jr's *Player Piano* (1952) situated in the USA a decade after a future World War III and the computer in question is EPICAC XIV. The controlling computer is a fourteenth generation device so huge that it

sprawls throughout the Carlsbad Caverns incorporating its own electronic ancestry - EPICACS I through XIII.

*Sam Hale*⁸ (1953) by Paul Anderson, introduces a computer as the prime device for totalitarian surveillance in a future USA and ends his story with a rebellion which promises to stop the government record-keeping on all citizens. The central computer *Matilda* has been functioning from her safe cool place in the Rocky Mountains for twenty five years and attains absolute power by combining all records of various kinds under a single ID number for each citizen. The two-letter and nine digit identification mark must also be tattooed on each person's right shoulder. The hero goes through the ritual of entering "the temple of Matilda" and surveys her majesty:

She crouched hugely before him, tier upon tier of control panels, instruments, blinking lights, like an Aztec Pyramid. The gods murmured within her and winked red eyes at the tiny man who crawled over her monstrous flanks (P.293).

Paul Anderson links *Matilda's* power with the Post World War III domination of America by the military, as well as with some extrapolated methods for psychological testing and control called psychotyping where one's type is a bit of data on every punched card followed by hypnoquizzing.

The novel titled *Year of Consent* (1954)⁹ by Kendell Foster Crossen shows an American superstate of the near future, entirely governed by social

engineers. The novel dramatizes a fantastic conspiracy warning of repression and cruelties linked to the abuse of computer technology. Here, the master computer SOCIAC monitors the everyday happenings extensively in addition to processing many other kinds of information. Computers serve to enforce conformity and a certain computer is programmed to lobotomize people who question the authority of the superstate, which has as its hierarch the Bureau of Security and Consent or SAC.

When the hero broods over the power of the SAC system, he feels that SOCIAC is as much an enemy to his group as the human agents who employ the calculator for their goals:

Creativity versus science. It was an old argument, but one which science had been viewing steadily for a good many years. On one side the handful of human brains, on the other an army of giant mechanical brains presided over by Herbie—whose brain occupied ten floors and an annex (P.114).

Crossen's computer technology closely resembles the police state surveillance devices popularised by George Orwell's *1984* which was published five years earlier in 1949. For instance, in Orwell's oppressive superstate, omnipresent cameras are presumably manned by human observers, while in Crossen's America similar cameras are linked electronically to SOCIAC. Crossen's psychotherapeutic and psychosurgical

machines are no more than automated variants of the brainwashing imposed on Winston Smith by O'Brien. Carolyn Rhodes¹⁰ makes the comparison sharpen

Orwell stresses the conversion of writers to find adoration of the dictator, Big Brother, while Crossen stresses the dulling of the minds of those who question the system . . . Crossen adopted the successful Orwellian formulas to trends in America in 1954 while he deplored: opinion – shaping against the best interests of the public and increasing use of illicit spying devices, combined with scare-stories about presumptive foreign based spying. Crossen extends such trends into a future where electronic brain serve the “bad guys” and serve them with terrifying effectiveness (P.79).

A whimsical version of a highly-computerized dystopia based on manipulation by advertisers is Shepherd Mead's *The Big Ball of Wax* (1954)¹¹ where one finds the business corporation controlling a future America using automated methods for gathering, storing and analysing data so as to influence purchasing habits. The moral comically extrapolates both Huxley's feelies of the *Brave New World* and the real-life TV watching. Mead's future is dominated by the imaginary process called XP which is transmitted experience on a much fuller scale than merely watching a TV screen.

Far more painful versions, as listed by Carolyn Rhodes, of computerized decision making appear in the other American science fiction works of the 1950s. Two computers EMSIACs make all the military decisions in Bernard Wolfe's *Limbo* 1952.¹² Wolfe reiterates his fear that the mechanistic image of man encourages dehumanized attitudes. The topics discussed cover brain surgery and scientific management in industry and planet wide warfare coolly waged as a game (209) between the EMSIACs (Electronic Military Strategy Inter⁹ators and Computers), P.26).

We find such oppressive automatons in Mordecai Roshwald's *Level 7* (1959)¹³ where we are shown the dehumanization of the caretaker of the machine as he yearns to become more machine-like:

What is the difference between men and an electronic brain? It can calculate far better, work more efficiently, it makes no mistakes. It cannot get fond of anybody. Neither can I Are we really monsters or merely miserable creatures who deserve pity? How deep does it go? Oh, I wish I could stop fretting about it. If I were a real machine, I should be much happier. A happy gadget (P.48).

Ambrose Bierce told a fine scary tale in *Moxon's Master* (1853)¹⁴ where a chess playing automaton feels such a rage when its inventor wins games that it destroys him. Entire cities are computer-controlled in *Dumb*

Waiter (1952) by Walter M. Miller Jr., in *A Torrent of Faces* (1967) by James Blish and Norman L. Knight and in *Cyberria* (1972) by Lon Cameron. In Robert Heinlein's, *The Moon Is a Harsh Mistress*, D.F. Jones' *Colossus* and Roger Zelazny's *For a Break I Tarry*, we find fantastic computers governing everything. However a full-scale depiction of a computer-controlled dystopia appeared in Ira Levin's *The Perfect Day* (1970) when we are shown Uni Comp a massive central computer allotting to each member of the eight billion people, known as the Family, an equitable portion of the world's goods and privileges. Every member is grateful for the freedom "provided through Uni Comp's efficient distribution of goods and surveillance against irregularities" - free of war and want and hunger, free of crime, violence, aggressiveness (P.142) and a member of the family function in routine pattern.

He did his work well, took part in house athletic and recreational programs, had weekly sexual activity, made monthly phone calls and bi-yearly visit to his parents, was in place and on time for TV and treatments and adviser meetings. He had no discomfort to report, either physical or mental (P.56).

Aldous Huxley's dystopia *Brave New World* (1936) featured many methods which Levin uses: drugs, distractions and genetic manipulations. Both emphasize propaganda in teaching, and art reduced to the level of advertising and community singing. Carolyn Rhodes sums up the situation:

In short, the quality of life is diminished to the lowest common denominator; citizens are satisfied because they can imagine no other lifestyles, constantly being told that things were worse in former ages. In both worlds some few members become aware of the horror of being manipulated and break out of their complacency to raise the question which are the author's deepest concerns: what is happiness? What is freedom? What are people for? (P.89)

Many writers find it easier to imagine a degenerate world of idle sensation-seekers whose pursuit of pleasure will eventually lead them to a life of perpetual, drug-assisted dreaming. James Gunn's novel *The Joy Makers* imagines a machine supported future society adopting a cult of hedonism, and developing technologies so sophisticated that almost everyone will retreat into mechanical cocoons which will feed them with synthetic experience—pleasant dreams from which they never wake. Mark Reynolds's *After Utopia* reveals a world where computers can pipe synthetic experiences into people's heads, allowing them to be anything and do anything they can imagine: they become solipsistic gods, governing worlds of their own imagination. The addiction to the use of self-stimulation induced by electricity known as 'wireheading' is referred to in many SF stories. The adult citizens of Huxleys' future society are protected from anxiety by a battery of drugs which everyone must carry. The euphoric drug *soma*

guarantees happiness for all. The sexual morality of the society enforces promiscuity, protecting the citizens from the damaging consequence of intense personal relationships. In such a society there is no possibility of revolution and little scope for individual deviance. The techniques of conditioning like sleep-teaching or hypnopaedia, the use of subliminal advertising which flashes messages to TV or movie screens did have an impact on the consciousness of the individuals. In reality, the psychological pressures exerted by the communists in the Korean War exploited the 'three Ds - debilitation, dread and dependency - in order to break down their prisoners; religious groups, such as the so called Moonies, usually make less use of the first two and concentrate on the third because their recruits are volunteers. The aspect of *Brave New World* which seems to be most accurately prophetic is its emphasis on the use of mood-controlling drugs to insulate people from uneasiness. Since 1932, drug technology has advanced very dramatically. Huxley seems to have been very familiar with a variety of hypnosedative drugs which work by depressing the functioning of the brain.

The psychotropic drugs used on a large scale, were the amphetamines used as 'pep pills' during the World War II by the American army followed by atarctic drugs or 'tranquillisers'. The science fiction of the mid sixties provide nightmarish examples, particularly in Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* and Norman Spanirad's *No Direction Home* where one finds a future America so used to orchestrating its mental states by drugs, that perception of naked reality without chemical assistance is seen as the worst 'trip' of all.

Richard Stivers in his article, 'Social Control in the Technological Society'¹⁵ argues that the techniques of organisation, treatment and communication for the social control of deviant and dependent behaviour are related to other human techniques such as education, industrial relations and leisure. Taken together, they form a massive attack on human individuality (P.388). The same idea is voiced by B.F. Skinner in *Walden Two* (1948)¹⁶ whose hero Frazier notes that the

methods and techniques (of "behavioural technology") are really as old as the hills. Look at their frightful misuse at the hands of the Nazis! But what about the techniques of the psychological clinic? What about education? Or religion? Or practical politics? Or advertising and salesmanship? Bring them all together and you have a sort of rule-of-thumb technology of vast power (P.241).

Science fiction has real-world referents in the attempts to incorporate man into society via conformity or production of "mass man" and this appears in its totality in Frank Herbert's *Hellstorm's Hive* (1973) and in *Brave New World* where people are bred and nourished to specific social functions.

Individuality has always been a popular American myth. However, with the multitude of definitions of deviance many who considered themselves as individuals before, re-identified themselves as 'needing

professional help'. A good example of this treatment in SF occurs in Anthony Burgess's *Clock Work Orange* (1962)¹⁷, where the antisocial hero, Alex is overwhelmed by behaviour modification. Martyn Patridge has stated in his article "Psychology and Mind Control", that the day has come when we can combine sensory deprivation with the use of drugs and punishment to gain almost complete control over an individual's behaviour" (P.19). An extrapolation occurs in John Brunner's *Shockwave Rider* (1975)¹⁸ that depicts a society where even unconscious fantasies are monitored and treated. Here a child is forced into fantasy in which she kills her mother. The technician in charge says that it is

Just like she's unconsciously wanted to do ever since her mother betrayed her by letting her be born . . . we dosed her with scotophobin and shut her in a dark room, to negate the womb retreat impulse, gave her a phallic weapon to degrade residual sexual envy, and turned an anonymous companion loose in there with her when she struck out, we turned up the lights to show her mother's body lying all bloody on the floor . . . (P.20).

The time is not far away when one would regard being off drugs as a deviance as Norman Spinard¹⁹ has revealed in his psychedelic society. Daniel W. Ingersoll, Jr.²⁰ in his structural analysis of myth and mechanisation observes "there is no doubt that science fiction and science fantasy

permeates American culture as a mythic form" (P.235). Kurt Vonnegut has indeed dramatized the plight of a society caught between dehumanizing industrialism and an equally dehumanizing primitivism in *Player Piano*. Dehumanization has been viewed seriously by other writers also who adopted the SF mode to explicate the social malaise, along with Vonnegut Jr. Anthony Burgess, discussing *A Clock Work Orange* states that "Perhaps the ultimate act of evil is dehumanization, the killing of the soul" (P.64)²¹. According to Helen Harris Perlman²² human services are for . . . "meeting human needs in ways that deepen and fulfil the sense of social caring and responsibility between fellow human beings," and that, not to recognize this "is to negate humanism and to dehumanize those desperately in need of this essential bonding force of human life" (P.54).

The reification of sexism, racism and poverty through social welfare organisations operates as the most basic form of social control in society. Ray Bradbury was among the first to introduce the problem of racism in science fiction. His *The Martian Chronicles*²³ and *The Illustrated Man* (1951)²⁴ clearly indicate his awareness of racism in the U.S. In *The Martian Chronicles* he presents a community of southern blacks saving their money for secretly building a rocket so that on a given day in 2003 they can undertake an exodus and it occurs when a group of conversing white men while sitting on the parch, watch the blacks march and the rockets—"golden bobbins" rise into the skies! Another instance is of the black population of Mars in *The Illustrated Man* telling their children that twenty years ago they "just up and walked away and come to Mars," settling down and building

towns just like the ones they left. In *Realms of Tartarus* (1977),²⁵ Brian Stableford gives us a powerful statement on social stratification and racism with his depiction of a two-level society. "Heaven" a platform built over the surface of the earth—is inhabited by an elite society. These people are content with their lives and have forgotten the people who exist below, in "Hell". There, in an environment devoid of sunlight, the process of evolution is said to have been sped up by survival needs and the pollution from Heaven has diversified the human species.

The 'realms' that occupy the mind of the writer do remind one of Ralph Ellison's unnamed hero who resorts to an underground refuge, although he illuminates it with umpteen electric bulbs. Ellison's hero attempts to wrest viability through visibility, hibernating in the realm of the underworld, which happens to be an abandoned coal mine: A Councillor's question in *Realm of Tartarus* goes like this. If the men of the Underworld have adapted to darkness, wouldn't it be a cruelty to let the light shine into their dark world? . . . Isn't it true that the men of the Underworld no more want a doorway into our world than we want a doorway into theirs? (P.132).

This was in response to the plea of a man who would unite Heaven and Hell, saying ". . . they should have the choice. They should be able to choose darkness, if they so wish. But they should also be able to choose light" (P.130). Dehumanization, while aggravating powerlessness calls for the imposition of mechanical answers to very human problems. Even social service workers are dehumanized as they become the cogs of the social services machine in a computerized new reality.

Much of what has been discussed in this section of Chapter III of my dissertation holds good for analysing the novels selected for study, Huxley's *Brave New World*, Vonnegut Jr's, *Player Piano*, Orwell's *1984* and Ellison's *Invisible Man* in that they are all mythic constructs which take the reader to realms of mechanized environments where the dehumanized heroes are subjected to various trials and tribulations.

NOTES

1. See Julien Offray de la Mettrie, *Man A Machine* (1748) trans. Gertrude C. Bassey et al. (La Salle, IL: Open Court Publishing 1961), P.148, P.135.
2. See Thomas P. Dunn and Richard D. Erlich, "A Vision of Dystopia: Beehives and Mechanization," *Journal of General Education*, 33 (Spring 1981), 45-48.
3. See Alexander Moszkowski, "Sarragalla The Mechanized Island," in *The Isles of Wisdom*, trans. H.J. Stenning (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1924) pp.313-14.
4. See David M. Perry, *The Scarlet Empire* (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1906).
5. See Thea Von Harboun's *Metropolis* (1926 rpt. New York, Ace Books, 1963). The work formed the basis for Fritz Lang's film *Metropolis* jointly scripted by Lang and Von Harbon.

6. See Lynda D. McNeil's *Recreating the World/Word, The Mythic Mode as Symbolic Discourse*, State University of New York Press, 1992, where she makes a note on the battle of Verdun which has been viewed as testimony to the "natural" consequences of 19th century Neo-Hegelian visions of the "Progress of Reason" (P.268).
7. See Merritt Abrash, "Dante's Hell as an Ideal Mechanical Environment", in *Clockwork Worlds - Mechanized Environment in SF*, Ed, Elrich & Dunn (Greenwood Press West Port Connecticut, 1983).
8. See Paul Anderson, "Sam Hall in Groff Conklin, Ed., *Science Fiction Thinking Machines: Robots, Androids, Computers* (New York: Vanguard Press, 1954).
9. See Kendell Foster Crossen, *Year of Consent* (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1954).
10. See Carolyn Rhodes, 'Tyranny by Computer' in *Many Futures Many Worlds* Ed., Thomas D. Clarenson (The Kent University Press, 1977).
11. See Shepherd Mead, *The Big Ball of Wax: A Story of Tomorrow's Happy World* (New York: Avon Books, 1954).
12. See Bernard Wolfe, *Limbo* (New York: Ace Books, 1952).
13. See Mordecai Roshwald, *Level 7* (New York: Signet Books, 1961).

14. See Ambrose Bierce, "Moxon's Master, in *Can Such things Be?_The Works of Ambroce Bierce* (New York & Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1910, Vol. 1).
15. See Richard Stivers, "Social Control in the Technological Society," in *The Collective Definition of Deviance*, ed. James F. Davis and Richard Stivers (New York: Free Press, 1975).
16. See B.F. Skinner, *Walden Two* (New York: Macmillan, 1976). See chapters 1-2, 15-18 for specific details for *Brave New World*.
17. See Anthony Burgess, *A Clockwork Orange* (1962; rpt. New York: Ballantine, 1963).
18. See Martyn Patridge, "Psychology and Mind Control," in *Science Facts* ed. Frank George (New York: Sterling, 1978).
19. See John Brunner, *The Shockwave Rider* (1975; rpt. New York Ballantine, 1976).
20. See Norman Spinard, "No Direction Home," in *Social Problem Through Science Fiction* ed. Martin Harry Greenberg et al. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975).
21. See Daniel W. Ingersoll, Jr. "Machines are Good to Think: A Structural Analysis of Myth and Mechanisation" in *Clockwork Worlds*.

22. Quoted by Parish and Pitts, *Great Science Fiction Pictures*.
23. See Helen Harris Perlman, *Relationship: The Heart of Helping* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).
24. See Ray Bradbury, *The Martian Chronicles*, (New York, Bantam, 1982).
25. See Ray Bradbury, *The Illustrated Man* (New York, Bantam, 1982).
26. See Brian Stableford, *Realms of Tartarus* (New York: DAW 1977).

CHAPTER IV

THE MYTHIC HERO

*Heroism is more than noble language, dignity.
Except in the life of the hero the whole world's meaningless.*

John Gardner¹

The idea of the hero implies an exceptional status distinguishing him from the mass. The myth of the homeland is symbolized by the hero, upon whom are projected the highest aims of the community, the hero being the soul of the community. Heroes are thus inevitable for a people to find their own ideals, courage, and wisdom in the society. "Society has to continue some way to allow its citizens to feel heroic" and "this is one of the greatest challenges for the twentieth century" according to Ernst Becker² who voiced the view in his personal communication with Rollo May. Rollo May further attests the view when he writes "we hunger for heroes as role models, as standards of action, as ethics in flesh and bones like our own. A hero is a myth in action" (1991, P.54).

The idea is best illustrated by Hawthorne in his story "The Great Stone Face" where the protagonist lives amongst the mountains whose top rocks form a heroic face. It has been prophesied that some day a noble man would arrive and his face would resemble the great stone face. Hawthorne's hero lives his life surviving his fellow villagers, ever looking up at the great stone face awaiting its likeness to fall on his face. When he attains old age, the people suddenly realize that his face has indeed the likeness of the great stone face on the mountain top.

Thus the hero carries our aspirations, ideals and beliefs and in the "deepest sense the hero is created by him; he or she is born collectively as our own myth. This is what makes heroism so important: It reflects our sense of identity, and from this our heroism is moulded" (May, 1991, P.54) A hero is equipped with a life force that pours out of him causing among the fellow beings an urge to actively initiate their own spiritual adventure. Where the individual fails to find organic attachments to the demands of the day, he tends to succumb to the devil's two major temptations: lethargy and dullness or violence and frenzy. These alternatives are certainly at loggerheads with the kind of life one hopes for and dreams about, with what the ancient prophets, seers, artists, poets and mythmakers have envisioned. Machine and leisure alone are not responsible for the spiritual malaise but the obsession with the immediate present, the latest trends do corrode one's goals. This greatly undermines the values created in the past by the living mythic tradition. To counter this condition Harry Slochower points to an alternative identification.

an identification with the symbolic values of our mythic heroes as fashioned in the outstanding literary classics. This mythic hero is not the average, nor the common denominator of humanity. Neither is he the aristocratic individual disconnected from what is common to men. He is close to the *elemental* sources of life, but represents them in their higher, wider and deeper

phases. In the study and "imitation of mythic heroes, of Job, Prometheus, Oedipus, Virgil and Dante, of Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust, Mitya Karamazov and Captain Ahab, yes, even of contemporary heroes, of Nexos Pelle, Thomas Mann's Joseph and Gide's Theseus, lies the hope for the revival of creativity (1970, P.14).

Mythology is drawn on the oldest memories and to the Greeks, Memory was the mother of the muses. These memories have always been a source of fascination for the common men as well as the artist, writer and thinker. Myth touches on man's basic relation to the world and fellow men, his original roots, his future possibilities and destiny in the form of a picture, a story or a song. No age has been able to escape or resist the spell of myths and to Slochower, 'Like the severed head of Orpheus [myth] goes on singing even in death and from afar' (14)³. William E. Hocking warns us, "Men must loyally remember ... if only to retain their identity ... must be united in their sense of destiny to which their journey points. "Myth supplies "a symbolic memory and a symbolic hope, and an allegorised account of the perils of the way" (1949, P. 279 - 280).

The revival of the mythic began in the modern times in the nineteenth century almost coinciding with the progress in technology which was a threat to the survival of ancient folk ways. However the mythic did fire the imagination of artists from Picasso to the surrealists and of writers from Proust, Joyce and Mann to Kafka, Sartre, Cocteau and Faulkner. They

touched the cultural areas, from anthropology, philosophy and religion to criticism and psychology, in the works of Malinowski, Cassirer and Tillich, of Spengler and Toynbee, of I.A. Richards and T.S. Eliot of Freud, Jung and Rilke.

The amount of influence exerted by James Frazer's, *The Golden Bough* on literary minds is stupendous. John B. Vickery is of the opinion that "*The Golden Bough* became central to twentieth century literature because it was grounded in the essential realism of anthropological research informed with the romance's quest for an ideal and controlled by the irony in divine myth and human custom. Together these made it the discursive archetype and hence the matrix of literature" (1973, P.138). According to Slochower,

the myth addresses itself to the problem of identity asking "Who am I?" And it proceeds to examine three questions that are organically related: Where do I come from?", Where am I bound?", and What must I do now to get there?" "In mythic language, the problems deal with creation, with Destiny and with the Quest (1970, P.15).

The living myth rather than restoring the dead past, strives to redeem its living heritage while upholding the tradition of re-creation. Like the tradition of idolatry, unrest, disquiet and rebellion do form man's history. The culture hero in mythopoesis⁴ . chooses his tradition and discards the

stultified in favour of the creative roots in the past and his choice would be a recollection of man's native genius. By joining the band of heroes of the esteemed past, man attains the dignity of belonging without being depersonalised.

The origin of narrative can be traced to ritual which according to Northrop Frye "is the deliberate expression of a will to synchronize human and natural energies at that time which produces the harvest songs, harvest sacrifices and harvest folk customs ... being a temporal sequence of acts in which the conscious meaning or significance is latent' (1951, P.154). In the solar cycle of the day, the seasonal cycle of the year and the organic cycle of human life, there is a single pattern of significance, out of which myth constructs a central narrative around a figure who is partly the sun, partly vegetative fertility figure and partly a god or archetypal human being. Northrop Frye stresses on the crucial importance of this myth while supplying a table of its various phases.

1. The dawn, spring and birth phase. Myths of the birth of the hero, of revival and resurrection, of creation and (because the four phases are a cycle) of defeat of the powers of darkness, winter and death. Subordinate characters: the father and the mother, the archetype of romance and of most dithyrambic and rhapsodic poetry.
2. The zenith, summer and marriage or triumph phase. Myths of apotheosis, of the sacred marriage, and of entering into paradise. Subordinate characters: the companion and the bride. The archetype of comedy, pastoral and idyll.

3. The sunset autumn and death phase. Myths of fall, of the dying god, of violent death and sacrifice and of the isolation of the hero. Subordinate characters: the traitor and the siren. The archetype of tragedy and elegy.
4. The darkness, winter and dissolution phase. Myths of the 'triumph of these powers; myths of floods and the return of chaos, of the defeat of the hero, and Gotterdammerung myths. Subordinate characters: the ogre and the witch. The archetype of satire.

The quest of the hero also tends to assimilate the oracular and random verbal structures, as we can see when we watch the chaos of local legends that results from prophetic epiphanies consolidating into a narrative mythology of departmental gods. In most of the higher religion this in turn has become the central quest. Myth that emerges from ritual, as the Messiah myth became the narrative structure of the oracles of Judaism (Frye, 1951, Pp.155-56)⁵

As a pattern of meaning, the central myth is in fact formulated from the working of the subconscious where the epiphany or dream originates. Frye sees a correspondence between the human cycle of waking and dreaming to the natural cycle of light and darkness, which is considered as the source of all imaginative life. The correspondence is described as an anti - thesis:

It is in daylight that man is really in the power of darkness, a prey to frustration and weakness: it is in the darkness of nature that the "libido" or conquering heroic self awakes. Hence art, which Plato called a dream for awakened minds, seems to have as its final cause the resolution of the antithesis, the mingling of the sun and the hero, the realizing of a world in which the inner desire and the outward circumstance coincides. This is the same goal, of course, that the attempt to combine human and natural power in ritual has (Frye, 1951, P.159).

In terms of significance, the central myth of art ought to be the vision of the end of social effort, the innocent World of fulfilled desires, the free human society and it is here that the importance of the god or hero in the myth lies, in the fact that such characters who are conceived in human likeness and yet have more powers over nature, gradually build up the 'vision of the omnipotent personal community beyond an indifferent nature. It is this community which the hero regularly enters in apotheosis (Frye, 1951, P.159). This world then begins to retract from the cycle of quest where triumph is temporary. Therefore if one views the quest-myth as a pattern of imagery, we see the hero's quest primarily in terms of its fulfilment.

While myth and religion have never been fully divorced, western mythopoesis, beginning with the book of Job and Greek tragedy, separates

itself from religion to the extent that it does not acknowledge a supernatural authority to which man must surrender. Even as the hero in mythopoesis learns to curb his rebelliousness, he remains a hero only if he does not completely submit. This is related to the immanent character of the myth, which distinguishes it from those religions which emphasize the transcendent nature of salvation. Because the mythic hero never fully surrenders or recants, he cannot achieve absolute redemption and his problem fails to be resolved by divine grace⁶

The quest is cardinal to mythopoesis⁷, for it is through his challenge and revolt that the hero becomes a creative agent of his community. The creative impulse urges the hero towards the recreation of the one human world which presumably existed once and which might be approximated in the future. This is the mythopoeic journey which aids to the release of ageless springs of human creativity.

Eden, Paradise, Islands of the Blessed, Elysium or the Golden Age represent the initial state of blissfulness experienced by man when he was at home and one with nature. Although mythology records this state of bliss in mythopoesis, this exists but in nostalgic memory. With the 'birth of the hero', the authoritative powers perceive an obstacle which results in the expulsion of the hero who sets out on his journey. In primitive mythology, the hero does not revolt against his community, but carries out his task conforming to traditional symbols. Nevertheless one notices an unmistakable ambiguity in the heroes' nature. Franz Boas has shown that in the role of the Transformer American legends, the hero is presented as

at once a cultural hero and as an irresponsible trickster intent on gratifying his personal wishes. In either case, he transgresses against what the group regards as a natural or sacred order, violates a taboo by peering into forbidden mysteries and becomes "the dangerous child" (Slochower, 1970, P.23). In Nietzsche's language, the hero must commit a crime 'which normally is one of commission: he steals the fire, becomes a parricide, commits incest. In the case of some heroes - Job, Hamlet the crime is one of omission. In others - Kafka's Joseph K, Mann's Castrop - the character is arrested or arrests himself, not for what he has done or has deliberately planned to do, but for his unconscious wish to do something that is prohibited. The consequence of the crime is the hero's fall and his journey (Slochower, 1970, P.23).

In all great myths such a journey functions as the central experience taking the form of a descent into Hell as in the myths of Krishna, Zoroaster, Osiris, Bacchus, Adonis, Bacchus, Hercules, Mercury and Odysseus or in the form of a symbolic entry into the "dark night of the soul" as in the case of Jesus, Aeneas, Dante, and every modern mythic hero. Slochower states the case of the journey of the pre-renaissance mythopoesis which

has a definite, fixed goal, and we know-even if the hero does not, that the wanderer will be brought home at last. Home coming is assured because, in his very rebellion, the hero represents the reigning symbols of his group. In the modern

myth where the individual would free himself more radically from his community, the journey takes on an indefinite character and the home coming is tenuous, as in Don Quixote, Hamlet, Faust, Moby Dick, and in the work of Kafka and Mann (P.24).

Jessie L. Weston has stated that, even in the early vegetation cuts, the important element is not the worship of the dead, but the restoration to life, which amount to the fact that the fall of the hero is not the end. In primitive and oriental mythology, rebirth generally constitute return to the exact previous form exemplifying the static order of seasonal changes. In western mythopoesis rebirth depends on the extent to which the quest result in the hero's own questioning of his deviation. The furies which pursue Orestes, Oedipus and Dante, Don Quixote and Ahab are in this sense, self inflicted punishments. This self-interrogation holds the promise of the hero's transformation⁸ which result in his recognition of the symbolic values which are present in the very tradition he has violated. This prompts him to reorient the function of his demon and realign himself with the wider interests of his group. This is how he becomes a *culture* hero which enables him to see his supra-individual relation as complementing and fulfilling his individuality. Reintegration lies beyond individual autonomy and return is not to the original starting point as the hero's rebellion has recreated the authoritarian mode, has accelerated and transformed its earlier sluggishness. Addressing the transformation Slochower says,

In this sense, the culture hero acts for the others, becomes the instrument of social salvation, and his sacrifice make him a blessed figure. Such sanctification comes to Oedipus on Colonus, Virgil in Latium, Don Quixote in La Mancha, Hamlet in Horatio's final prayer . . . through the heros' knowledge and consciousness. He now reaches a higher form of acceptance, one which follows from having made his own choice. This choice makes for responsibility and ethics. In sum, the victory of the mythopoeic hero is the victory of consciousness and social morality (P.24).

Myths are often outpourings of crucial periods in life or history. To adapt Wheelright's view, every change in human condition, like birth, puberty, initiation, betrothal, marriage, pregnancy, paternity, specialization in occupation, death etc. is mythopoeically regarded as a passage from a state of self that is dying to a state of self newly born. Frye has described the western mythical pattern as that of creation, fall, exile, redemption and restoration, a form which reaffirms man's control over death. Symbolically as in a new personality or actually as in the Christian belief in resurrection and the immortality of the soul. Myths and mythic images evoking this pattern are articulated or transmitted by those who have imagistic power and sensitivity. Because the artist becomes acutely aware of his status in relation to the external world, he often depicts the process of his discovery

in terms of birth-death-rebirth. The self is depicted sometimes as dying, leaving its surroundings, and being reborn as a separate entity; at other times as dying, leaving its individual state to be reborn through nature or love as a transcendent being in tune with the universe. Both processes involve the creation or re-creation of the self.

In 1914, Otto Rank described this tendency of the artist in his celebrated study titled *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*. Analysing the sagas of Moses, Oedipus, Paris, Perseus, Romulus, Tristan, Gilgamesh, Hercules and Jesus, Rank observed a series of common features that the mythic heroes go through certain stages.

The standard saga itself may be formulated according to the following outline: The hero is the child of most distinguished parents, usually the son of a king. His origin is preceded by difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or secret intercourse of the parents due to external prohibition or obstacles. During or before pregnancy, there is a prophecy, in the form of a dream or oracle cautioning against his birth, and usually threatening danger to the father (or his representatives). As a rule, he is surrendered to the water in a box. He is then saved by animals or lowly people (shepherds) and

is suckled by a female animal or by a humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents, in a highly versatile fashion. He takes his revenge on his father, or the one hand, and is acknowledged on the other. Finally he achieves rank and honours (as in Slochower, 1970, P.25.).

Rank's assumption is that such myths are created by adults who either repress or remember their own infantile fantasies. He argues that even if the historical theory is sound and that myths are descriptions of actual heroes and events, the repetitive pattern of myths, legends and sagas in several different times for various cultures, and under different conditions suggests that the people who tell or retell the tale align the series of events to strike a kinship with their own fantasies. In a similar way, those behaviouraists who argue that the sufferings and struggles of the potential hero might actually condition him and mould his "hero personality" must once again account for the repeated transmission of the tales as fulfilling some need of the powerful. The Rankian scheme ends with the success of the hero⁹

The living character of mythopoesis appears in the unending need of the dissident hero to galvanize his state towards reshaping the tradition. The heroic quest is not eliminated but assimilated. To Slochower,

Here lies the revolutionary leaven of mythopoesis. To be sure the myth contains a conservative fibre which makes for idolatry of the past. However, it would also preserve another kind of tradition - the tradition of freedom - expressed in the myths of Dionysius and Prometheus where the hero is pledged to a futuristic tradition. In this inter-play between preservation and challenge, the mythic quest is inherited and passed on. Prometheus is carried forward by Hercules, Oedipus by Polyneices, Don Quixote by Sancho Panza, Hamlet by Fortinbras and Horatio, Ahab by Ishmael, Nexos Pelle by Morto, Joyce's Earwicker by Shem-Shaun, Mann's Joseph by Judah. Mythic transcendence does not allow for a paradisiac ending and reconciliation in the mythopoeic drama is on a tragic plane (P.26).

The use of myth may be considered to reach a consummatory level due to the continuous inclusion of myth and mythic images and allusion in the work of modern artists. G.B. Stewart supports this view with Philip Wheelwright's category for products of "a somewhat late and sophisticated state of cultural development, a post romantic attempt to recapture the best innocence of the primitive mythopoeic attitude ... (P.6). Specific myths seem to be more fascinating than others to the artist when he is using the

biographical vein. Ernst Kris¹⁰ has described the typical "legend of the artist, because his personality is akin to, but a bit removed from the common man, the artist creates a "family romance" and identifies with heroes, that are specifically divine or demonic in nature. Kris has documented incidents of enacted biography" that show the tendency of the artist not only to identify in fiction with these heroes but also to follow in their own lives the traditional mythology of the artist. The mythological pattern or images deal with the development, formation or particular problem of the artist which are called as the *Kunstlerroman*, which is best exemplified by Joyce in his *Portrait of the Artist as a young Man*. The hero Stephen Daedalus identifies not only with the mythical Daedalus but also with Christ. In Thomas Mann's *Doktor Faustus*, Adrian Leverkühn exemplifies the artist who identifies with demonic powers. Both novels represent twentieth century fiction containing the mythic pattern of a quest, which is central to myth as well as to fiction and life. The historical pattern of the quest is available in the *Faustus* story handled by Genet, Marlowe, Goethe and Man which reveals the changing historical attitudes toward the search for knowledge and the changing focus from the outer to the inner world. G.B. Stewart attests the view with Erich Heller's claims that a passion for understanding cured nineteenth century minds "toward the rational conquest of the human world only in order to prove to them its absolute meaninglessness." This quest led to another ... to the "world of human inwardness "... the only reality in an atomistic universe. Heller identifies the pilgrim of the journey as a Faustian figure "a Don Juan of the mind", chasing the ideal (P.7).

The theme of the quest for identity is intimately connected with the concept of the discovery of self through the process of creation so that the actual creation of a work has become the subject of many contemporary artist novels. The idea gets a sharper focus with G.B. Stewart's explication.

... the writer of the *Kunstlerroman* searching for the artist's beginnings, struggling to understand himself, and trying to create something, with meaning, follows the pattern of modern man's search for existence in a meaningless universe. The quest is topical, yet universal, for the pattern repeats the search for the honeyed land, the holy grail, the lifted maya, the rebirth of the soul, nirvana or the womb. Frye goes so far as to claim that the central myth in most narrative literature is the quest-myth. Rank and Jung believe that artist try to recapture the spirit of childhood, when freedom and innocence accompanied security and nourishing love given by parents ... a golden age. That attempt to recapture paradise lost is repeated in mythic patterns and images of the quest (P.8).

Since Nietzsche, philosophy, religion and the art have been reflecting in various ways the existential crisis of unaccommodated man, particularly

in England and America. This trend encounters Nothingness and the effort to transcend the threat that it poses to man's existence as man. Attempting to view man in his relationship to the universe in all its concrete plenitude and problematic complexity, existentialism operates as a philosophy of existence addressing two broad alternatives facing man in a world where God is dead. These according to William V. Spanos are (1) 'the institutionalised and collectivized life on the analogy of the machinery of technology toward which modern man is drifting and (2) the agonizingly difficult authentic existence of the individual who insists upon maintaining his unique consciousness in the face of overwhelming pressures to conform (2).

The existentialist confronts 'scientism' which stands as the fountain head of the technological revolution which in turn, has generated the worship of progress and consequently a materialistic utopianism that equips modern man with comfort and security 'but at the price of his freedom, his existential humanity, reducing the human community to the level of an ant colony' (Spanos, 19 P.3).

Joseph Campbell speaks of the collapse of the long-inherited, timeless universe of symbol in the wake of the invention of the power driven machine, and the development of the scientific method of research which have

transformed human life. He continues the lament 'In the fateful epoch-announcing words of Nietzsche's Zarathustra. "Dead are all the gods."¹¹

One knows the tale; it has been told a thousand ways. It is the hero cycle of the modern age, the wonder-story of mankind's coming to maturity. The spell of the past, the bondage of tradition was shattered with sure and mighty strokes. The dream web of myth fell away, the mind opened to full waking consciousness; and modern man emerged from ancient ignorance, like a butterfly from its cocoon, or like the sun at dawn from the womb of mother night (Campbell, 1993, P.387).¹²

Like the heroes of myth and ritual, the modern heroes descend from life on the mortal plane into an underworld of death. The mythic hero here is more of an anti hero whose voyage passes through a series of ordeals or trials which demand a demonstration of the stature. The crippling effects of death, rebirth and even redeath make the antiheroes suffer a kind of erasure as an individual. He is a no-man and everyman as a modern epic quest shaped on epic and mythic convention. Stripped of all the primary illusion, these heroes sleep over many more layers of the cocoon which are interlocked in his very existence very much like a set of never ending Chinese boxes. The standard path of the mythological adventure of the hero according to Joseph Campbell 'is a magnification of the formula

represented in the rites of passage: separation - initiation - return: which might be named the nuclear unit of the monomyth (P.30).

Going by Campbells' summary of the heros' career as a standard, we can see that:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his commonday hut or castle, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds, to the threshold of adventure. There he encounters a shadow presence that guards the passage. The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the kingdom of the dark (brother-battle, dragon-battle; offering, charm) or be slain by the opponent and descend in death (dismemberment, crucifixion). Beyond the threshold, then the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magical aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (sacred marriage) his recognition by the father-creator

(father-atonement), his own divinization (apotheosis), or again if the powers have remained unfriendly to him, his theft of the boon he came to gain (bride-theft, fire-theft); intrinsically it is an expansion of consciousness and therewith of being (illumination, transfiguration, freedom). The final work is that of return. If the powers have blessed the hero, he now sets forth under their protection (emissary); if not he flees and is pursued (transformation flight, obstacle flight). At the return threshold the transcendental powers must remain behind; the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dread (return, resurrection). The boon that he brings restores the world (elixir) (1993, Pp. 245-246).

Compbell has expressed the idea that the passage of the magical threshold is indeed a transit into a sphere of rebirth which is symbolised in the world wide womb image of the belly of the white whale. Accordingly, the hero instead of conquering or conciliating power of the threshold, is swallowed into the unknown, and would appear to have died.¹³

Mircea Eliade states that 'for the traditional societies, all important acts of life were revealed

ab origine by gods or heroes. Men only repeat these exemplary and paradigmatic gestures ad infinitum' (P.32). To support this argument we have a story by F.E. Williams, cited by Lucien Levy-Bruhl, "whether of love, or war, rain making or fishing, or whatever else ... (Myth) gives precedents' for the stages of construction the tabu on sexual intercourse, etc. When a captain goes to sea, he personifies the mythical hero Aori ... he wears the costume which Aori is supposed to have worn with a blackened face (and in a way prematurely) the same kind of *love* in his hair which Aori plucked from Iviri's head. He dances on the platform and extends his arms like Aori's wings ... A man told me that when he went fish shooting (with bow and arrow, he pretended to be Kivavia himself. He did not implore Kivavia's favour and help; he identified himself with the mythical hero' (P.33).¹⁴

Looking at the mechanism of the transformation of man into an archetype through repetition, Eliade, examines a definite case where collective memory preserves the recollection of a historic event. Just as a warrior imitates a hero seeking to approach an archetypal model in close proximity, one can note a familiar paradigmatic myth that recounts the

combat between the hero and a gigantic serpent often three headed and sometimes replaced by a marine monster. Where tradition is still more or less living, great monarchs consider themselves as imitators of the primordial hero. For instance, Darius saw himself as a new Thraetona, the mythical Iranian hero who was said to have slain a three headed monster; for him and through him history was regenerated, for it was in fact the revivification, the reactualization, of a primordial heroic myth. The mythicization of historical personages lend them a pride of place in epic poetry which leads to the metamorphosis of the historical figure into a mythical hero. We have abundant examples to this effect in Yugoslavian epic poetry. To Eliade who has offered umpteen exemplars

this mythicization of the historical prototypes who gave the popular epic songs their heroes take place in accordance with an exemplary standard; they are "formed after the image" of the heroes of ancient myth. They all resemble one another in the fact of their miraculous birth; and just as in the *Mahabharatha* and the Homeric poems, at least one of their parents is divine. As in the epic songs of the Tartars and to Polynesians, these heroes undertake a journey to heaven or descend into hell (P.42).

In short "myth is the last not the first stage in the development of a hero" (Chadwick, 1932, P.762).¹⁵ In the modern world however, the artist

has assumed the role of the hero because in the absence of belief in traditional myths, he has created a new mythology. In Joseph Campbell's opinion as recorded in his *The Power of Myth*, James Joyce and Thomas Mann were his real teachers in his formative years "because both were writing in terms of what might be called mythological tradition" (4) and both according to him exemplified the artist who in our country "is the best prototype of the Modern Hero"¹⁶ Campbell discusses this new heroism as creative mythology, a restructuring of myth that first emerged in the Middle Ages, characterized by "expression of individual experience" as opposed to a statement of "dogma"¹⁷ Alan Dundes, holds that Campbell's attempt to fuse all heroes into a "monomyth" damages the integrity of the particular heroes as they function in their own distinctive narratives. He says that "Campbell's pattern is synthetic, artificial composite which he fails to apply in to to any one single hero. Campbell's hero pattern, unlike the ones formulated by von Hahu, Rank and Raglan, is not empirically verifiable, eg; by means of inductively extrapolated incidents from any one given heroes' biography"¹⁸ Campbells' harmonic heroic cycle according to Marc Manganaro, is like Frazer's text, not the "real thing" but a simulacrum, constructed out of the severed parts of multiple heroes that are pulled from the great body of myths and sources" (1992, P.166).

In his reply to Bill Moyers in an interview, Campbell answers the question 'whats' a hero for in mythology?' in the following terms.

A hero, in mythology, usually is the founder of something, the founder of a new age, the founder of a new religion, the founder of a new city, the founder of a new way of life. And in order to found something new, one has to leave the old and go in quest of the seed idea, the germinal idea, that will have the potentiality of bringing forth that new thing. The founders of all religions have gone on quests like that. The Buddha went into solitude and then sat beneath the Tree of Immortal Knowledge, Jesus, after baptism by John the Baptist went into the desert for 40 days, and it was out of the desert that he came with his message. Moses goes to the top of the mountain and comes down with the tables of the law. In all the great religions this is the case, that's the founder of a religion. Then you have the one who founds a new city, almost all of the old Greek cities were founded by heroes who went on quests and then founded the city and so forth. And you might say the founder of a life, ones' own life, instead of living everybody else's life, this comes from a quest too (1983, P.47).¹⁹

In the concluding section titled 'The Hero Today' of his *The Hero with*

a Thousand Faces' Campbell asserts that the true task of the modern hero is to discover the next cause for the disintegration of all our inherited religious formulae" (1993, P.390). To him it is imperative that a society has heroes because it has to have constellating images to pull together all that tendency into separation. To pull it together into some term, some intention, worth intending" (1983, P.47).²⁰

Loneliness goes deeply into American mythology. One joins John Lennon and Mc Cartry in their Beatles' Song: "All the lonely people - where do they all come from"? Loneliness according to Rollo May is the expression of rootlessness which is caused by "mythlessness" and the condition is the deepest and least assuageable of all (1991, P.99). A look at the protagonist of American fiction in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries reveals an enormous emphasis on withdrawls, isolation and a certain moody introspection. The critic and literary historian R.W.B. Lewis observes that the hero in American literature has the proclivity to isolate himself both physically and psychologically, from the mainstream society and he calls the condition "denitiation" (1995, P.117) of the protagonist, a reversal of the usual rites of initiation into society.²¹

We have the merging of loneliness and myth of the west merging in *Lone Ranger* where the lonely mythic cow-boy hero gallops ahead with his faithful helper Tonto to redress some wrong. The loneliness appears to be a kind of cultural inheritance, with the lone ancestors, the hunters, the trappers, the frontiers men, all of whom lived a life of relative isolation. It is not just the major writers who mirror this aspect of American culture, the tendency to escape from society and find meaning in some private, very personal way. We see it in American popular culture, in the perennial wandering gunfighters like Shane, or in the dozens of exciting versions of himself that John Wayne played during his cow-boy career in movies. In other words, Americans have a deeply ingrained need to identify with the hero who simply turns his back on society - a hero- as rebel.

To a great extent, the myth of change, the unending quest for the new, the yearning for transformation is for the Americans, a flight from anxiety, represented by Proteus. Homer describes Proteus, when Odysseus and his men encounter the wily one and must ring from him the direction home:

When Proteus at last slept
We gave a battle cry and plunged
for him,
locking our hands behind him.
But the old one's
tricks were not knocked out of

him; far from it.
 First he took on a whiskered
 lion's shape,
 a serpent then; a leopard; a
 great boar;
 Then sausing water ; then a tall
 green tree
 Still we clung on, by hook
 or crook, through every thing
 Until the Ancient saw defeat and grimly
 opened his lips to ask me. ²²(1963, P.66)

The narcissistic personality is another feature of the American society who has emerged from the modern myth of lonely individualism. The "bitch Goddess of success" emerged as a myth to console and inspire inebriated people toward success and it soon became identified with individualism pertaining to the great American dream. That 'the Americans don't want to survive - they want to succeed' is the predictable outcome, the moralising, the superficiality of characterization of Horatio Alger stories, which gave a powerful sanction to the individual and sustained each person working in the great corporation.

Such individuals are often represented as heroes, who are *shlemiels*, condemned to act as the scapegoat. One of the crucial features of the mythic hero is his role as a scapegoat for the sake of the society. We have examples in Prometheus who endures for mankind, Oedipus and Orestes

who suffer for the Greek *polis*, the trials of Hamlet, Goethe's Faust, Gide's Theseus and Thomas Mann's Joseph are ultimately, in the interests of social welfare.

The science fiction heroes on the other hand seldom engage in any sort of ordinary labour. Even if they have a fairly modest job, their work is generally presented as most glamorous and stimulating - a compensation devoutly to be wished, not a reflection of actual labour problems. Neither are such problems sufficiently represented by the image or "icon" of robots. As personified machines, robots are closely linked with the problem field of mechanised labour, still, they are usually dissociated from the factory context and presented as emotionally charged, but rather unspecified, symbol of 'mechanisation as such'. Though often given full human shape and almost full human faculties, robots are less humanised workers than mere aliens, to be either befriended or destroyed. The problem that they embody are thus 'sorted out' in a deceptively simple way.

Analysing the cause of the collapse of the 'inherited religious formulae' Campbell informs us through the *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, that "the centre of gravity ... has definitely shifted." Where there was originally in primitive hunting peoples no psychological link to nature around them "an unconscious identification took place, and this was finally rendered conscious in the half-human, half-animal figures of the mythological totem ancestors. "From there "the tribes supporting themselves on plant food became cathected to the plant." But eventually "both the plant and the

animal worlds" were brought under social control, "and at that point "the great field of instructive wonder shifted to the skies - and mankind enacted the great pantomime of the sacred moon-king, the sacred sun-king, and the symbolic festival of the world-regulating spheres" (1993, P.390).

Continuing in the same vein Campbell further addresses the issue of the modern mythic hero in his concluding paragraph.

The modern hero, the modern individual who dares to heed the call and seek the mansion of that presence with whom is our whole destiny to be atoned, cannot, indeed must not wait for his community to cast off its slough of pride, fear, rationalised avarice, and sanctified misunderstanding. "Live, "Nietzsche says, as although the world were here." It is not society that is to guide and save the creative hero, but precisely the reverse. And so every one of us shares the supreme ordeal - carries the cross of the redeemer - not in the bright moments of his tribes great victories, but in the silences of his personal despair (1993, P.391).

NOTES

1. See John Gardner's *Grendel* where the myth of an anti-anti-hero restores the world of popular heroism *Grendel* (New York) Bellantine Books, 1992 Pp 9, 29, 35, 39-48, 143, 149-50.
2. Ernest Becker's personal view has been used by Rollo May in his *The Cry for Myth*. He also makes a note that Ernest Becker himself, after having written several excellent books, died prematurely of cancer. He was a hero himself to many of his readers. Rollo May, *The Cry for Myth* (Newyork: W.W. Nerton & Co., 1991).
3. Carl Kerenyi in *Essays on a Science of Mythology* by C.G. Jung and C. Kerenyi (Newyork, 1949). p.5.
4. See *Goethe and the Modern Era* (Chicago, 1949).
5. Mythopoesis (from Greek Poiein, meaning 'to make' to create) re-creates ancient stories. While mythology presents its stories as if they actually took place, mythopoesis transposes them to symbolic meaning.
6. Northrop Frye, 'The Archetypes of literature, ' *Kenyon Review*, XIII, pp. 92-170.
7. Note that the religious symbol is moral and sacred, specific and undeviating; in mythopoesis, the symbolic meaning is multivalent.

8. Henri Bergson in his *'The Two Sources of Religion and Morals* (Newyork, 1954) has lucidly expressed the psychological process involved here, "the disturbance which is the passage from the static to the dynamic and of the image which rises to the surface in the course of this agitation. Where the agitation is futile the image will only be hallucination. But in the case of artistic and psychical transcendence, the disturbance will contain "a systematic rearrangement looking toward a higher unity: the image is then symbolic of what is being prepared, and the emotion is a concentration of the soul in the expectation of a transformation. "Here the transcendence becomes possible because the agitation is not indulged in, yielded to and "enjoyed" (adapted from Francis Fergusson's translation).
9. Lord Raglan's *The Hero* (london, 1936) restates Ranks' thesis. For Raglan, the most striking features are the attempt on the hero's life at birth.
10. In Ernst Kris' formulation "Creative artists of our day are wont to use free association as a training ground for creative thinking or as an independent mode of expression, and some among the surrealists have assigned to their work the function of thus making explicit what had previously been implicit." *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (Newyork, 1952), pp.25, 30.
11. See Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 1.22.3

12. See Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with A Thousand Faces*, (Bolling en Foundation Inc, Princeton University Press, USA, 1949) rpt. Fontana Press, London, 1993.
13. The archetype of the hero in the belly of whale is well known. The principal deed of the adventurer is usually to make fire with his fire sticks in the interior of the monster, thus bringing about the Whale's death and his own release. Fire making in this manner is symbolic of the sex act. The two sticks - socket - stick and spindle - are known respectively on the female and the male; the flame is the newly generated life. The hero making fire in the whale is a variant of the 'sacred marriage' (Campbell, 1993, 248).
14. F.E. Williams, cited by Lucien - Bruhl, (*La Mythologic Primitive* (Paris, 1955, pp, 162, 163-64) adapted by Mircea Eliade in *The Myth of the Eternal Return*.
15. See H. Munro and N. (Kershaw) Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature*, III (Cambridge, 1932-40).
16. See Robert Segals' discussion of Campbells' notion of the modern artist as hero in *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction* (Newyork: Mentor, 1990) 124-40.
17. See Segal's treatment (Joseph Campbell 123-26) of Campbells' conception of creative mythology; also see Lefkowitz (Myth of Campbell 432) on the importance of individualism to Campbell.

18. See Allan Dundes, *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980) 232.
19. See "Myths to Live By", interview that Joseph Campbell had with Bill Moyers that appeared in *SPAN*, (May, 1983), pp.44-49.
20. Ibid.
21. R.W.B. Lewis, *The American Adam: Innocence, Tragedy, and Tradition in the Ninetenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1955).
22. Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans, Robert Fitzgerald (Garden city, Newyork: Anchor Books, 1963) p.66.

CHAPTER V

THE DEHUMANISED HERO AND THE TECHNOTOPIC MILIEU

ALDOUS HUXLEY'S BRAVE NEW WORLD

*Death is the mother of beauty; hence from her,
Alone, shall come fulfillment to our dreams
and our desires.*

Wallace Stevens ('Sunday Morning')

Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*(1932) has been regarded as 'a nightmare scientific future in store for Britain' by Lawrence Brandner where everything is 'technicoloured and technological'(1969, p.60) where all prevailing values are turned upside down. The kind of fiction Huxley attempted was a description of an imaginary commonwealth in order to comment on an existing commonwealth. The bulk of such fiction written till the end of the nineteenth century was utopian in nature, while subsequent productions during the twentieth century have been dystopian. Huxley's anti-utopian remarks in the late 1920s boiled down to a hatred of utopian speculations which he had read as quite scientific, taking the cue from H.G.Wells and Bacon's *New Atlantis*(1627). As a result he made an observation aimed at those who foresaw the utopian future, that they were 'invoking not the god from the machine, but the machine itself' (1931, p.49)

Huxley was of the view that the machine dehumanizes men by demanding mechanical efficiency of them and that it limits aesthetic choice by providing only standardized commodities. Besides, the machine poses as an important menace to modern life because it makes creativity

superfluous and robs the majority of human beings of the very possibility of happiness. One notices even the very mechanisation of leisure as illustrated by Huxley in his *Spinoza's Worm*(1929)²

Men no longer amuse themselves, creatively, but sit and are passively amused by mechanical devices. Machinery condemns one of the most vital needs of humanity to a frustration which the progress of invention can only render more complete(p.86).

It is believed that Huxley had a strong urge to discredit if not discourage the sort of Utopian writings he was familiar with. Well before he started his composition of *Brave New World* his essays included in the collection titled *Music at Night* (1931), like, *Liberty and the Promised Land*, *History and the Past*, 'Wanted a New Pleasure' and throughout *Proper Studies*, Huxley was indulging in a dystopian prose. Speaking to the *Paris Review* Huxley said that he started the *Brave New World* as a parody of H.G.Wells's *Men Like Gods*, but then, gradually it got out of hand and turned into something quite different from what he had originally intended. It later remained in effect, as a parody of the Wellsian vision, as a manifestation of the reaction against "progress" which set in among intellectuals after World War I, but akin to Forster's '*The Machine Stops*' with its strong anti-machine bias.

It is only appropriate in this context to note Orwell's recognition and approval of *Brave New World* as an anti-machine response to Wells:

And in any book by anyone who feels at home in the machine-world – in any book by H.G.Wells, for instance – you will find passages of the same kind. How often have we not heard it, that glutinously uplifting stuff about “the machines, our new race of slaves, which will set humanity free”, etc., etc., etc. To these people, apparently the only danger of the machine is its possible use for destructive purposes; as, for instance, aeroplanes are used in war. Barring wars and unforeseen disaster, the future is envisaged as an even more rapid march of mechanical progress; machines to save work, machines to save thought, machines to save pain, hygiene, efficiency, organisation, more hygiene, more efficiency, more organisation, more machines – until finally you land up in the by now familiar Wellsian Utopia, aptly caricatured by Huxley in *Brave New World*, the paradise of little fat men. Of course in their daydreams of the future the little fat men are neither fat nor little; they are Men Like Gods(p.225)³.

In *Men Like Gods*, Wells, in an absorbing vein engrosses the reader in every step of Mr.Barnstaple’s adventures, combining all the ingredients of good narrative . We have for example, the character Rupert Catskill,

who portrays satirically, Winston Churchill. We also obtain serious recommendations as to what human beings should strive to become, besides the usual conversations explaining what the future society is like and how it came about, and a good deal of physical action. The plot of *Brave New World* is substantial and at no point is it a mere device for sustaining interest. The novel is most impressive as it provides a wealth of imagined social, political and technological detail.

Sisir Kumar Ghose, in his book, "*Aldous Huxley, A Cynical Salvationist*", stresses on the crucial significance of *Brave New World* to our understanding of Huxley's "Weltanschauung":

Our picture of Huxleyan Sociology will remain incomplete if we leave out of account *Brave New World* — "my own fictional essay on Utopianism," he calls it and the warning it contains. Seldom has a richer fantasy crossed the world of modern fiction. Watching, fascinated and horrified, the rapid growth of mechanomorphic science, of eugenics and industrial regimentation, Huxley conjures up a future world state with its trinity of "Community", "Identity", "Stability"(1962, p.50)

We have in *Brave New World*, a nightmare vision of the future when civilisation is drained of love, vitality and irrational excess. Everything is made by machines, mass-produced and sterile. The novel considers the

problem of social philosophy, the reconciliation of a maximum of individual liberty with a stable social organisation. The main theme however, is 'the advancement of science as it affects human individuals', and the effects Huxley foresees are disastrous. Indeed, since man and social environment had been so designed to fit perfectly, Huxley's *Brave New World* might well be regarded as the Nemesis of the fashionable and fuzzy-minded "progressive" with his touching faith in salvation by science, his impatience to explore the limits of physical pleasure, and his outraged rejection of the notion of sin, or of the value of human suffering. For in this beautifully adjusted civilization, presided over by a complacent benevolent dictator, the concepts of good and evil are indeed obsolete. There is neither vice nor virtue, morality nor immorality. The behaviour of a man is to be judged by reference to only the categories, health and sickness – these being clearly related to efficiency and inefficiency.

The State takes control of all areas of existence. Everything is planned to perfection from the bottle to the crematorium : bottle, since the babies are fertilised chemically, a step even ahead of the 'test-tube brats'. The year is 632 After Ford, for the time in *Brave New World* is measured from the epoch making discovery of the Model T Ford and mass production assembly methods. Bokanovsky's Process, the technique whereby one ovary can in extraordinary cases be made to yield over sixteen thousand persons, is described with such pseudo-scientific elaboration that this process alone is sufficient testimony to Huxley's ingenuity. And yet while the techniques of incubation and Bokanovskification constitute the basis of

the new society, they form only one of numerous inventiveness on the author's part. We get to know of the neo-Pavlovian infant-conditioning methods using electric shocks; the hypnopaedic or sleep teaching process by which infants acquire, among other things, elementary class-consciousness ; and the encouragement in young children of erotic play. Bakanovsky's process produce huge sets of semi-morons who are perfectly happy doing menial and repetitive tasks. Social stability is achieved with the hatching of "scores of standard men and women from the same ovary and with gametes of the same male". This process helps to stratify the society into castes: alphas, betas, gammas, deltas and epsilons. Hypnopaedia ensures any kind of friction whatsoever amongst these groups through a systematic course of mass suggestion, reconciling everyone to his or her own caste. There is no dispute related to labour as the state's conditioning of its citizens is thorough and everything is either uniform or unanimous. The women undergo an operation voluntarily, for the good of the society, not to mention the fact that it carries a bonus amounting to six month's salary.

Happiness is a chronic feature. Death-conditioning, for example, is brought about, inculcating associations in the minds of children, between chocolates and visit pads to the crematorium. Thanks to all this, creatures are incapable of any other way of life, never having had any choice about anything. Damned themselves, they neither know what freedom is, nor do they care. They are forever damned with their myriad gadgets, games and amusements provided by the merciful State. For example, at a hotel in Santa Fe, one was provided with

liquid air, television, vibro-vacuum massage, radio, boiling caffeine solution, hot contraceptives and eight different kinds of scent were laid on in every bedroom. The synthetic music plant was working..... and left nothing to be desired. A notice in the lift announced that there were sixty Escalator – Squash – Racquet Courts in the hotel, and that the Obstacle and Electromagnetic Golf could both be played in the park. (BNW, p.86).

The prevalence of promiscuity was perceptible at every point. There were also “feelies”, cinemas where you could see each separate hair on a bear skin and feel the kisses of the screen along your lips. If one was exhausted or bored there was always “the most wonderful of mythological pick-ups, *Soma*” (Ghose, 28)

These happy people, “always in the crowd” are blissfully ignorant of all past arts and religion, except such potted accounts, as have been given to them by the all-wise State. Marriage is anathema, the words “father”, “mother” shockingly dirty. There is nothing as family, nothing like morals or inhibitions. On the contrary the State recommends a number of self-indulgences, for there can be no civilization without pleasant vices. “Chastity means neurathenia. And passion and neurathenia mean instability”, which in turn means the end of civilization which should be prevented. Ford is equal to God. “Ford forbid”, “By Ford”, “Ford alone knows” are common

expressions. The Fertilizing Room which Huxley describes in the opening chapter, is invested with a symbolic mortuary touch, suggesting the dehumanising intent from the very embryonic stage.

The enormous room on the ground floor faced towards the north. Cold for all the summer beyond the passes, for all the tropical heat of the room itself, a harsh thin light glared through the windows, hungrily seeking some draped lay figure, some pallid shape of academic goose flesh, but finding only the glass and nickel and bleakly shining porcelain of a laboratory. Wintriness responded to Wintriness. The overalls of the workers were white, their hands gloved with a pale corpse- coloured rubber. The light was frozen, dead a ghost. Only from the yellow barrels of the microscope did it borrow a certain rich and living substance, lying along the polished tubes like butter, streak after luscious streak in long recession down the work tables (*BNW*, p.1).

This is the dead and frozen light, each corpse- coloured worker performs his part to bring into the world, new life, which, if everything goes well, will be spiritually dead or debased. Setting the first chapter thus, Huxley applies his scientific background for a mass – produced population in the fashion long popular in Science Fiction, growing them in bottles and

conditioning them from birth. Absolutely determining both heredity and environment these 'bottle products' are released from moral tensions because they are so conditioned that none of their actions have any moral consequence. They could always escape from reality with ease by consuming a few grams of the standard drug, *Soma*, which excelled even alcohol, producing no unpleasant reactions, but just benign addiction. The people are always in a state of euphoria because of the imprisonment of human spirit in a perfectly conditioned healthy cadaver. Even as embryos they were predestined to emigrate to the tropics, to be miners and acetate silk spinners and steel workers. Later on their minds would be made to endorse the judgement of their bodies. We condition them to thrive on heat (*BNW*, p. 24)

In other words seasoned trainers were available to make them love to thrive on heat. 'And that,' put in the Director sententiously, 'that is the secret of happiness and virtue – liking what you have got to do. All conditioning aims at that : making people like their unescapable social destiny (*BNW*, p.24).

In *Brave New World* social order and harmony are taken care of by designing the people to fit the system. The production of ideal human beings which begins with the development of embryos in mechanical wombs, represent various castes, each carrying out a range of tasks appropriate to its particular range of ability. By interfering with the embryos – giving some, more oxygen than the others and deliberately injuring some with poison – the intelligence and physique of each individual produced in the 'hatchery'

is determined. Cloning is employed to reduce individuality within each batch. After birth, the shaping of the individual continues. Each caste is brain washed into being content with its lot, valuing its own characteristics and attainments above all others.

Once they are adults, the sexual morality of the society enforces promiscuity, protecting the citizens from the damaging consequences of intense personal relationships. In such a society there is no possibility of revolution and little scope for individual deviance. We realise that what the World State envisages as normal is indeed abnormal and immoral.

The brave new world, through the advancement of science seems to have affected every aspect of the individual's life, either reversing or effacing one's beliefs and values. The individual is no longer responsible for himself - the state being his master. He is just a cog in the wheel. Therefore his sexual indulgence is just mechanical or impulsive, one like the use of a telephone, spoon or a car. He is forbidden from falling in love or marrying or raising children, because this would involve allegiance to others when the individual is expected to surrender his allegiance to the World State. Sexual licence, thus promoted by the World State eliminates emotional tension, which may engender creative or destructive impulse. The sheer removal of tension and anxiety, ensures a better control over the citizen.

The resident controller of Western European sector of the World State appears to be very assertive and persuasive when it comes to the condemning of the past.

As in other modern inverted utopias, we must find the anti – socialist reaction making strong assertions in *Brave New World* also. An example of the predominance of the state over the individual is available in the socialist 'Utopia' written by Conde' B. Pallen, widely known in his lifetime as a Roman Catholic journalist and writer. His work '*Crucible Island* (1919) gives abundant situations where protest is treason, marriage is state dictated and children made to learn the Socialist Catechism in the pattern given:

Q. By whom where you begotten?

A. By the Sovereign State.

Q. Why were you begotten?

A. That I might know, love and serve the Sovereign State always.

Q. What is the Sovereign State?

A. The Sovereign State is Humanity in composite perfect being.

Q. Why is the State Supreme?

A. The State is supreme because it is my Creator and Conserver, in which I am and move and have my being and without which I am nothing.

Q. What is the individual?

- A. The individual is only the part of the whole, and made for the whole and finds his complete and perfect expression in the Sovereign State. Individuals are made for co-operation only, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. (as in Walsh, 1962, Pp. 78-79)

The kind of depersonalisation that prevails in such environments causes man to lose his wholeness and sense of identity. Instead of the individual self getting redeemed, it gets engulfed and men and women become mere numbers, or interchangeable parts in the functioning society, losing all inalienable right to either lock a door or pull a shade. The very right to live ceases to be a right and remains a privilege, considering one's continuing capacity to serve a society which is all – in – all.

Central to the dystopian tradition is an idolatrous adoration of society, the life force or the deified leader. The normal religion seems to be the worship of the Big Brother as in Orwell's *1984* or the Well Doer in Zamyatin's *WE*, who is the embodiment of the community. The act of resentment or even a lukewarm attitude, is no mean crime but sacrilege. In *Brave New World*, the inhabitants invoke Our Ford or Our Freud, make the sign of 'T' and partake of strawberry *Soma* communion. Throughout the novel, Huxley presents Henry Ford as a symbol of the machine age and of conspicuous consumption. Showing extreme concern with ends and means, Huxley has maintained that individuals are ends in themselves, not means to ends, be it nationalistic, militaristic, or commercial. In *Brave New World* the people

are means, and not ends; their sole real value being their function. For Huxley the aim of life and society is a state of continuous consumption as far as the picture of *Brave New World* is concerned. With stability as the key word, the slogan is 'Ending is better than Mending'. Everything must be exhausted and replenished, which seems to contain all the logic of built up obsolescence and conspicuous consumption, and the function of each individual of each caste is a means to this end.

The novel also targets Pavlov⁴, the scientist and the doctrine of behaviourism. In the 'Squat grey building of only 34 stories (p.15) the fifth floor houses INFANT NURSERIES, NEO – PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONS ROOM where the babies of the lower castes are conditioned to hate books and flowers because of the economic policy of the World State.

The exercise in conditioning are manifested in a much detailed manner in the grand trilogy by C.S Lewis, *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938) *Perelandra* (1943) *That Hideous Strength* (1945) where anti – utopia assumes myth rather than being a reaction to utopia. In *That Hideous Strength* the dark spirits of earth inspire wicked men who head the National Institute for Co-ordinated Experiments, ironically abbreviated as N. I. C. E, to work to turn the world into a nightmare society where behaviour is scientifically manipulated. The N. I. C. E in fact is a fictional embodiment of Lewis's apprehensions about a new science of man which are set forth more directly in his short book, *The Abolition of Man* (1943) where he argued that the traditional system of values will inevitably be done away with such a science

of human nature; that when man has seen through human nature there will be nothing to guide him except the basest kind of animal impulses, leading the world to a moral vacuum, leaving it with a great mass of man – the conditioned – snug and unknowing under the rule of behavioural scientists, the conditioners. This condition is created on earth by N. I. C. E and one can see the savagery of Lewis's invective through one of its members revealing the objective of the Institute.

Man has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember, that some men have got to take charge of the rest... What sort of thing have you in mind? Quite simple and obvious things, at first – sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (We don't want any dead weights) selective breeding. Then real education in changing pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no "take - it - or - leave - it - nonsense". A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly : whatever he or his parents try to do about it. Of course, it will have to be mainly psychological at first. But we will get on to biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain... (1945, p.37).

It had been a constant concern of Huxley that over population would create starvation and pollution of the environment. In an essay published

in *Themes and Variations* (1950) titled "The Double Crisis" he states that the human race is passing through a time of crisis, and that crisis exists, so to speak, on two levels – an upper level of political and economic crisis and a lower level of demographic and ecological crisis (as in Brandner, 1969, p.63)

Ortego Y Gasset in his role *Revolt of Masses*(1930) analyses the situation of Europe in an eloquent manner. He was aware of the menacing growth of population which was unsettling the world. Brandner quotes

Towns are full of people, houses full of tenants, hotels full of guests, trains full of travellers, cafes full of customers, parks full of Promenaders, consulting rooms of famous doctors full of patients, theatres full of spectators, and beaches full of bathers. What previously was general, no problem, now begins to be an everyday one, namely, to find room(p.64)

The whole purpose of the work intended by Huxley is to gain a picture of a society scientifically fabricated and controlled and the story is a means to an end. In this regard, the concern to demonstrate the dangers of destruction of individualism was shared by George Orwell in 1984. Both set out to describe the condition when individualism was really absent from a society. They created interesting characters choosing meaningful actions to represent their tasks and for the same they largely depended on the

strategies employed by Zamiatin in his *WE*. Both adopt rebellion as a means to expose the society they describe and of generating characters that have an interest beyond the individualistic and with whom the reader can identify at some point or the other.

In an essay written for the magazine, *Life*⁵ in 1948, Huxley has described *Brave New World* applying it to the present. According to him there are two myths which underlie the action and thought of modern Western man. They are the myths of progress and nationalism. The symbols of the myth of progress are promulgated through the advertising medium and of the myth of nationalism through political propaganda. As the myths lay stress on the external aspects of life, they are regarded by him as superficial and superfluous and they do not stay in *Brave New World* as any pointer to either progress or nationalism. Peter E. Firchow in his article "The Satire of Huxley's *Brave New World*" suggests

The disciples of these myths, therefore, must inevitably "progress" to one or another kind of perdition: the perdition of "heaven" or the perdition of "hell". Consequently, this kind of progress is really no progress at all. Real progress, in Huxley's terms, can only be defined as "personal progress" or "internal progress". It is only through this type of progress that one can hope to create a "genuinely human society", and only such a society can assure the continued existence of genuine human individuals, not diabolically happy or diabolically unhappy animals. (p. 452)⁶.

The locale of *Brave New World* opens with a lecture to the students, unfolding with a pomp of objectivity the workings of the giant after the Ford World State. Its tone is set largely by Bernard Marx, a little by Helmholtz Watson, partly by the Controller who enjoys a kind of double vision, since he has known the Before World also, and ultimately by John the Savage.

The Savage is the natural – born son of Linda, an ex - beta minus female from the World State, who, years back, had been by some misfortune, left behind in the Mexican Savage Reserve – an area of 560 square kilometers surrounded by high tension wire fence and beyond the pale After – Ford Civilization – by the man who was “having” her at the time, and is now none other than the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning in London. The story of the Mexican Reserve acts as a sub – plot and undoubtedly, it is one of the brilliant pieces that captivates attention, in the form of personal narration and subsequent absorption in the body of the main plot.

The idea of the individual as opposed to the mass is paramount importance to a proper understanding of the novel, because it is precisely this idea that the brave new world vehemently resists. To be exceptional or to be individual is to be criminal; thinking or feeling intensely are punishable offences. It is for this reason that the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, hastens to assure Bernard that he had no “indecorous” relationship with the girl he had taken with him to New Mexico Reservation, that he had had “nothing emotional, nothing long – drawn” (p. 80) with her. Bernard is censured for the very reason of suspected individual behaviour,

for not confirming to the duty of all Alphas "to be infantile, even against their inclination" (p.81). Alphas, as the DHC observes are so conditioned that they need not be infantile, but precisely for that reason they must make a special point of being infantile. The Alpha must inhibit his illicit desires for adult behaviour; he must sacrifice his individuality for the sake of social solidarity and uniformity. Nevertheless, despite the conditioning and the great social pressure a few Alpha individuals do remain in the Brave New World. The efforts of the technology and psychology directed at reducing man to an automaton seems to have flopped at some point and some semblance of humanity and individuality still survives, though quite by chance.

The problem posited in the brave new world is that the conditioning is so thorough and pursuit of external happiness so compulsive that it is extremely difficult for the individual to enhance his awareness of himself as an individual. Bernard Marx takes cognizance of his individuality, his "separateness", only because of a physical defect – due to an inadvertent admixture of alcohol in his blood surrogate. On the other hand Helmholtz Watson, comes to similar awareness due to a mental excess, because he is too intelligent to accept his conditioning uncritically. They are friends, as both share the forbidden knowledge that they are individuals, a knowledge which is stifled at every turn. The brave new world offers them absolutely no opening to express that individuality and as a result Bernard struggles ineffectually to establish a "human" relationship with Lenina Crowne; Helmholtz for the poetical expression of something which he as yet remotely

understands. It is only when they come into contact with the Savage that Helmholtz and Bernard really become aware of the means for the ventilation of their individuality.

One of the major steps in the narrative of the *Brave New World* is the introduction of the Savage and his mother. The Savage is an individual and through his character one sees Huxley brooding over the question of the need for personal struggle and suffering. Though he comes from a society which is in its externals totally differs from that of the brave new world, he is like Bernard, an individual only by accident. Because of his distinctness and his mother's loose morals, he is almost ostracised by the Indian Society where he grows up. Nevertheless, like Bernard, he struggles desperately to be a part of this society, where he wants to belong. His conditioning, albeit unscientifically, makes him accept the code of Indian behaviour which borders on insanity – a "religion that is half fertility cult and half *penitente* ferocity (foreward, P.VIII). Somehow he manages to break free from the vicious circle of conditioning because of his knowledge of the complete works of William Shakespeare and also because of the impact of his abrupt encounter with the "lunacy"(p.viii) of the new world .

If Bernard represents an ineffectual and ignoble response to the problem of pain, the Savage demonstrates his capability of tragic heroism, and the sensible man who sorts out this problem is Helmholtz Watson. Through the Savage, Huxley concentrates some of his sharpest feelings.

What we see in *Brave New World* is anything but brave, a twilight realm where two malcontents are projected. Bernard Marx, who fails to adapt himself to his somatized fellow human beings, and the Savage who is a victim of a civilized heredity at war with a primitive environment. In a foreword written in 1946 to the collected edition of the *Brave New World* Huxley made the following remarks⁷.

If I were now to rewrite the book, I would offer the Savage a third alternative. Between the Utopian and the primitive horns of his dilemma would lie the possibility of sanity – a possibility already actualized, to some extent, in a community of exiles and refugees from the Brave New World, living within the borders of the Reservation. In this community economics would be decentralized and Henry – Georgian, politician Kropotkinesque co-operative. Science and technology would be used as though, like the Sabbath, they had been made for man, not (as at present and still more so in the Brave New World) as though man were to be adopted and enslaved to them. Religion would be the conscious and intelligent pursuit of man's Final End, the unitive knowledge of the immanent Tao or Logos, the transcendent Godhead or Brahman. And the

prevailing philosophy of life would be a kind of Higher Utilitarianism, in which Greatest Happiness principle would be secondary to the Final End principle – the first question to be asked and answered in every contingency of life being : "How will this thought or action contribute to, or interfere with, the achievement, by me and the greatest possible number of other individuals, of man's Final End? (Foreword, P. IX)

The remarks aforementioned, apart from their general interest and the foretaste which they offer of Huxley's later utopia, indicate that *Brave New World* is a portrait of a dilemma. They also suggest that the Savage, was regarded the true hero, by the author himself. If the utopian horn of dilemma is unacceptable to the author, he found the primitive horn even harder to accept. The Savage is the only man of substance and he is a curious composite of a primitive upbringing and an intimate acquaintance with Shakespeare. As a sane, human individual, he rejects the lunacy of the new world and refuses to accept as an ideal, the happiness bought at the expense of a total abandonment of humanity. He feels as an individual and for the individual, and cannot be an automaton feeling for an automaton as in the Orgy-porgian Solidarity Services. It is precisely for this reason that he persists in the face of the only too self-evident facts on conceiving of Lenina as an individual rather than regarding her as a "pneumatic" object for sexual gratification. If he should love her, he should love her as a human

being or not at all. Viviparously born out of a careless Beta Minus who had gone with an Alpha plus male on a trip to the native reservations, he is a young man with a strong individuality and not a romantic idealist in a controlled society. The Director, who sired him does not seem to have any qualms in telling Bernard the "discreditable secret" that he did not have "any indecorous relations with the girl. Nothing emotional, nothing long drawn. It was all perfectly healthy and normal"(85). He even regretted having bored Bernard with "this trivial anecdote"(p.85) which served indeed as an eye opener to Bernard to realize that the Director had abandoned his mate of the moment at the Savage Reservations as she was lost.

We get the history of John in the eighth chapter and we find him the absolute antithesis of the scientifically conditioned members of a society subjected to what seems to be almost every category of psycho-pathological experience. The more the reader gets acquainted to the character of John, the more one feels that he is equipped to combat the Brave New Worldians. His despondency is indeed a dramatic reversal of the spiritually debased stability. Nevertheless, he arouses laughter which is never unsympathetic. To Keith May 'It is not in the least an artistic error that John should be an implausible character, a concoction of antithesis to the sphere in which he is placed, because any serious attempt to make him realistic would have broken the unity of the novel(1972, p.III).

The presentation of John the Savage, appears to be coincidental when Lenina and Bernard decide to go to the New Mexican Reservation, also known as the Savage Reservation. Bernard's oddity does not prevent Lenina

from accompanying him, as she believes that it would be a thrilling excursion when compared to the previous holiday that she has had. After they take off, in the Blue Pacific Rocket they cover New Orleans and Texas and break their journey memorably at Santa Fe. Before they enter into the final leg of the journey they are informed by the Epsilon Plus Negro porter that they were proceeding to the New Mexican Reservations which has an area of five hundred and sixty thousand square kilometers, divided into four distinct, Sub-Reservations, each surrounded by a high-tension electric wire fence. Lenina further learns that children are *born* 'actually born' in the Reservations and they are destined to die there (p.88). She is further enlightened about the population and the topography.

... about sixty thousand Indians and half breeds..... absolute savages our inspectors occasionally visit... otherwise, no communication whatever with the civilized world.... still preserve their repulsive habits and customs...marriage, if you know what is, my dear young lady; families.... no conditioning monstrous superstitions.... Christianity and totemism and ancestor worship... extinct languages such as Zuni and Spanish and Athapascan... pumas, porcupies and other ferocious animals..... infectious diseases..... priests...venomous lizards.....(p.88).

These pieces of information do not deter or dissuade Lenina Crowne from proceeding with her plans. They cross the frontier that separated civilization from Savagery in the aircraft specially arranged for them, covering deserts of salt or sand, forests, canyons, crags, peaks and table-topped *mesa*, over the electric fence, the geometrical symbol of triumphant human purpose finally landing at Malpais where they were provided with a rest house. Lenina's illusions of a fruitful excursion crumbles when she faces the truth of stark 'uncivilization'. She has however no option but to accompany Bernard and the 'smelling' Indian guide to the pueblo of Malpais; to witness the 'horros of Malpais' unaided by her stocks of *soma*.

Among the revolting scenes was a 'spectacle of two young women breast feeding their babies, the like of which was absolutely unknown' to the mass man and woman. Lenina had the occasion to witness a ritual intended to make the rain come and corn grow. Amidst the soft repeated thunder of drums, she had her consciousness invaded to the reassuring synthetic noises of the Solidarity Services and Ford's Day celebrations.

Soon the scene transformed into a 'queer' experience when all on a sudden from the round underground chambers a ghastly troop of monsters swarmed up, hideously masked or painted out of all semblance of humanity, limping a strange dance around the square, and the songs attained a feverish pitch and the dance a frenzied pace and then a big wooden chest was opened by the leader to pull out a pair of black snakes. This induced the dancers to forge ahead and many more snakes were tossed at them.

The gyrating dancers went on until they were signalled to fling all the snakes to the middle of the square. An old man came up from underground and sprinkled corn meal and women sprinkled water from a black jar on the snakes.

To this nightmarish air was lent the dramatic presentation of a painted eagle and from another side the image of a naked man nailed to the cross. With these images as witness, the old man clapped his hands, to which a near naked boy of eighteen responded, stepped out of the crowd, his hands crossed over his chest, his head bowed. The old man made the sign of the cross over him leaving the boy to slowly walk round the writhing heap of snakes. A tall man wearing the mask of *coyote*, then advanced towards the boy who was half way through the second circuit, with a whip of plaited leather. The whip was raised and a vigorous lash was executed on the boy's body. This was repeated six more times and the boy without any protest received the lashes with his body streaming in blood. This gruesome sight was unbearable to Lenina and she started sobbing, while the ritual proceeded to its final phase.

The old man touched the boy's back with a long white feather and held it up for the people to see the blood stains. He then shook the feather for the drops of blood to fall on the snakes and then the drums beat with renewed vigour and amidst shots and screams, the dancers rushed forward, picked up the snakes and ran out of the square, the whole gathering following them. On the square the fallen boy lay still, but was removed by three

women, and the eagle and the man on the cross "sank slowly down through the hallways, out of sight, into the nether world"(p.98). The scene was too awful for Lenina, and Bernard could not quite console her, when he was alerted by a foot fall. A young man stepped out of the terrace dressed as an Indian "but his plaited hair was straw coloured, his eyes a pale-blue, and his skin a white skin, bronzed (p. 98).

The stranger had evidently approached the civilized pair to share his woes. They were quite astonished when he complained that he was excluded from the sacrifice. He claimed that he was much more competent than the native as he had enough stamina to go around the snakes at least fifteen times and " had twice as much blood from" him. (The multitudinous seas incarnadine). He complained in despair that he was excluded because they disliked him for his complexion. It's always been like that. Always.(p.99). At Lenina's question whether he indeed wished to be whipped, he said "For the sake of Pueblo - to make the rain come and the corn grow. And to please Pookong and Jesus. And then to show that I can bear pain without crying out. Yes, to show that I am a man... (p. 99)".

Suddenly the youngster became bashful at the sight of Lenina, who was so different and so beautiful with an expression of benevolent interest. Bernard on noticing the strange interruption and 'faultless but peculiar English' questions him and the story of the boy's birth at Malpais is unfolded. The youngster is none other than John the Savage sired by the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning, twenty years back. The Director had narrated

his experience at the New Mexico when he went in the company of 'the girl at the moment', a Beta – Minus and who was subsequently lost in a thunderstorm. Bernard was quick enough to reconstruct the story, which he thought might stall the designs of his boss, the very director, to have him posted in Iceland. When they meet Linda, John's mother, the picture takes the appropriate shape and we are introduced to a saga of Linda's suffering and the boy who was born at Malpais. She narrates the story at one breath, her former glory and the present degeneration to the spell – bound Bernard and Lenina. Her inadequacies emerge in an acute vain when she speaks about John being brought up amongst the Indians.

... they were beastly to him and wouldn't let him do all the things the other boys did. Which was a good thing in a way, because it made it easier for me to condition him a little. Though you've no idea how difficult that is. There is so much one doesn't know; it wasn't my business to know. I mean, when a child asks you how a helicopter works or who made the world – well, what are you to answer if you are a Beta and have always worked in the Fertilizing room? What are you to answer?(p. 103).

In the chapter that ensues Bernard encourages John to tell him everything about his life, from the very beginning as far back as he can remember. John narrates the experiences etched in his memory. He recalls

the lullaby sung by Linda and the particular day when an enormous, frightening stranger stood by Linda with his hair like two black ropes and the arm donning a lovely silver bracelet with blue stones in it. He noticed that his mother was politely resisting the stranger's advances. She was heard saying 'Not with John here' – 'No'... 'No'. He hurt John and John battled with him in vain, crying 'Linda, Linda'. He went inside Linda's room and latched it from within that was Pope', he hated him but could not do anything more to stop his frequent visits with his big gourd full of *mescal*, an equivalent of *soma* which she was addicted to.

One day John heard angry voices in his mother's bedroom, voices of angry women. There were three women in dark blankets punishing Linda for her 'immoral behaviour'. A woman was whipping her and unable to bear his mother's suffering. John intervened and pleaded to spare his mother. But he was too hit thrice. It was more than anything he had ever felt – like fire (p.106). His attempt to pacify his mother only agitated her further and she pushed him hard and his head banged against the wall. Instead of comforting him, she slapped him again and again and he begged for mercy, 'Linda, 'Oh, mother, don't!' But Linda was beside herself in ire and slapped him on the cheek saying

I'm not your mother. I won't be your mother ...

Turned into a Savage, 'having young ones like an animal... If it hadn't been for you, I might have gone to the Inspector, I might have got away. But

not with a baby. That would have been shameful

... Little beast (p.107)

The depression of Linda had been thus, quite profound, cut off from her 'conditional existence'. Her happiest moments as far as John could recall have been when she recollected her past with nostalgia. John however had been a victim of oppression, even though in his youth he tried to adapt himself with the lifestyle of his playmates and would listen awestruck to the belief of the old folks.

Of the great Transformer of the World, and of the long fight between Right Hand and Left Hand, between Wet and Dry; Awonawilona, who made a great fog by thinking in the night, and then made the whole world out of the fog; of Earth Mother and Sky Father... Strange stories, all the more wonderful to him for being told in the other words and so not fully understood. Lying in bed, he would think of heaven and London and Our lady of Acoma and the rows and rows of babies in clean bottles and Jesus flying up and Linda flying up and the great Director of World Hatcheries and Awonawilona (p.108)

These moods of reflection would suddenly change and he would be accused, isolated and punished, making fun of his mother. He would then

get angry and throw stones and finally he would get hurt and bleed. ~~But~~ The discrimination did him good in a way, as his mother taught him to read and write, but his greatest fortune was to stumble on '*The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, which Pope had left in the bedroom. The first lines that he read at a random perusal were

Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
 Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
 Over the nasty sty...

The words of Shakespeare, communicated to him in a strange way and he hated his mother's paramour\ all the more for that. 'A man can smile and smile and be villain. Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous kindless villain. What did the words exactly mean? He only half knew. But their magic was strange and went on rumbling in his head. They gave him a reason for hating Pope, and they made his hatred more real; they even made Pope himself more real.(Pp. 110-111). This works him up to attempt the murder of Pope when he met him again lying with his mother.

His heart seemed to have disappeared and left a hole. He was empty. Empty and cold, and rather sick, and giddy.... Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous... like drums, like man singing for the corn, like magic, the words repeated and repeated themselves on his head. From being cold he was

suddenly hot. His cheeks burst with the rush of blood, the room swam and darkened before his eyes. He ground his teeth. I'll kill him. I'll kill him, I'll kill him, he kept saying. And suddenly there were more words.

When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage

Or in the incestuous pleasure of his bed...(p.111)

However he succeeded in inflicting just two cuts on Pope's shoulder with the meat knife. This incident which spelt his inadequacy was followed by another shattering experience when he witnessed the marriage of the girl, Kiakime, whom he loved.

To fashion, to give form, to feel his fingers gaining in skill and power – this gave him an extraordinary pleasure (p. 112). His despondent moments got relief only through his association with the old man, Mitsima, who taught him to work with clay and the making of bow. But he never got any recognition from the Mexican Indians. In their eyes he was never one of them and a feeling of exclusion always bothered him. It was with great expectation that he wanted to learn the secrets on the full moon day in the Antelope Kiva. He had wanted to accompany the boys into the Kiva, descending the ladders, down into the red lighted depths. But all on a sudden, they caught his arm, struck him and pulled his hair and said, 'Not for you, White hair! Not for the son of the she dog' (p. 114). They threw

stones at him and he bled. When even the last of the boys had gone into the red – lit Kiva, he realised he was all alone, left out, isolated.

All alone, outside the Pueblo, on the bare plains of the *mesa*. Down in the valley, the *coyotes* were howling at the moon. The bruises hurt him, the cuts were still bleeding; but it was not for pain he sobbed. It was because he was all alone, because he had been driven out, alone into this skelton world of rocks and moonlight... Alone, always alone (p.114).

John went on to tell Bernard that he contemplated suicide on that day. He was haunted by the black shadow of death. He had only to take one step, one little jump. But then he restrained himself for 'he had discovered. Time and Death and God' (p.114). His experiences left a strong impression on Bernard, who responded to the intense loneliness suffered by John. He said he too was subjected to the pain of isolation, but in different contexts. John also told him of the occasion when he stood against a rock in the middle of the day, in summer with his arms out, like Jesus on the cross, just to experience what it was like being crucified. This he had done to cure his own unhappiness. This kind of stoicism, only made him faint and suffer a serious cut on his right temple.

Bernard could not really gauge the perseverance of John and "in his land the mere suggestion of illness or wounds was not only horrifying but

even repulsive and rather disgusting. Like dirt, of deformity, or old age" (p.115). However he broaches the subject of inviting John to London, which is indeed a strategy elaborated by him, ever since he realised that John's 'father' was his boss Thomas, the DHC, who had threatened him with a transfer to Iceland. His initial reluctance to take Linda also along, gets allayed when he realises that her very revoltingness might prove an enormous asset to further perturb his boss. John unaware of the vile designs of Bernard is overjoyed at the prospect of leaving the Savage Reservation forever. He exclaims

'O Brave New World that has such people in it.'

Bernard, who knows nothing of Shakespeare is only astonished at John, the Savage's peculiar language. He responds however,.... anyhow, hadn't you better wait till you actually see the new world? (p.116).

Bernard leaves Malpais for Santa – Fe after Lenina grants herself a long *Soma* holiday. John, in the meantime is all excitement at the prospect of a new lease of life in the midst of his newfound companion. He goes to meet them, particularly Lenina, who has kindled in him, great passion. Though initially perturbed at the locked door of the guest house room, he cannot resist the temptation of peering into their room. He discovers the sleeping Lenina and in haste breaks the glass pane and intrudes into the room. He gauges the depth of her slumber before examining the various exotic items in the room. We see the Savage in John, particularly when he

breaks into the room and when he unhesitatingly rummages through the belongings of Lenina. However he restrains himself when he is tempted to unzip Lenina and gaze at her naked body. The entire act of John in the context reminds one of a simian prank.

The scene now shifts to the World State, where John and Linda have been safely transported too, and the Director is all set to reprise the erring Bernard. Bernard then makes a dramatic move by presenting to the Director his ex – fiancée Linda, and John, who was indeed, begotten by him through an indecorous act. The very physical presence of Linda and John causes a great panic in the fertilizing room and the members present react in various ways, seeing the queer flabby figure of Linda and the show of sentiment demonstrated by John when he fell on his knees in front of the director addressing him 'my father!' (p.124). This trump card works in favour of Bernard, and the bewildered Tomakin, (Thomas) the Director of Hatcheries and Conditioning resigns immediately.

John and Linda had great expectations when they left the New Mexican Reserves, for good. But then, the so called 'civilized world' under the World Controller brings in a series of frustrating experiences. John is unable to adapt himself to the 'conditioned and 'engineered' environment and 'Soma induced' individuals. He expresses his strong disapproval when his mother Linda was prescribed large doses of *Soma* by Dr. Shaw. For Linda, then returned to civilization was indeed a return to *Soma*, and accelerated deterioration of 'health and imminent death'. By and by his relationship with Bernard also gets strained. He refuses to consume '*soma*' and for him

the only available source of consolation is Shakespeare and the excitement that he derives from meeting Lenina. Notwithstanding the queer ways of John, Lenina is enchanted by the personality of John. She longs to have physical union with him. John's longing for her, however, has a different dimension. He is inspired by *Romeo and Juliet* and therefore cannot compromise on anything for a mere momentary ventilation of physical passion. They watch a 'feely' together, which projects passionate and violent indulgences of a negro and a Beta minus blonde who is held captive. The scenes titillate the entire audience as they appeal to all sensory organs. One could really feel the kiss along one's lips. [The 'feelies' incidentally remind one of 'Virtual Reality' (VR) popular in the current times!]. These work in the form a forplay for Lenina, whereas for the Savage, inspite of his initial rousing, it is revolting and he disapproves of such entertainments.

John is branded as an 'insignificant fellow, of unsavoury reputation and heretacal opinions (p.140). Realizing Lenina's notions and desires, he is disenchanted and calls her a 'Strumpet'. Lenina is taken aback and is horrified at the violence with which John reacted, when she made passionate advances.

John, sees a reasonable and more humane Bernard, when he discovers him in low spirits. Bernard is unhappy and to John the state of unhappiness is any time more preferable to having the "sort of false, lying happiness" (p.145). Both Helmholtz and Bernard feel let down by Authority and they get some kind of relief when they talk to John. Helmholtz has been accused of reciting an almost blasphemous rhyme during his lecture on advanced

Emotional Engineering for Third Year Students. The rhyme was contradictory to the hypnopaedic session that the children had undergone and the theme was 'Solitude', of which they were warned against ' at least a quarter of a million times. Almost magically, an intimacy develops between Helmholtz and John which rouses the jealousy of Bernard. He tries to discourage the feeling after consuming *soma* but then it persists. The long exchanges with the support of Shakespearean quotes, excites Helmholtz but at one point they also antagonize him. He is unable to comprehend the nature of love experienced by Romeo and Juliet. John's disapproval of unorthodox behaviour on the part of Lenina, does not totally topple him from the state of love that he has for her. He feels that he is indeed Romeo and Lenina, Juliet. But then, Lenina 's visit precipitates the best and worst in John. He proclaims his love "How much I love you Lenina... I love you more than anything in the world".

Lenina is indeed excited at the announcement, but she is not able to grasp the accompanying sentiments and the figurative language. This is not her fault. Her conditioning has been such. In the world state there is no scope for any platonic love, no ritual marriage, no formality whatsoever certifying a nuptial union. Mutual attraction is immediately followed by sexual act. Lenina, surprises John by her embraces, kisses and undressing. John is suddenly gripped by the scenes in the 'feely' and shakes himself free from Lenina's passionate hold. He twists her arm and hurts her, not being able to tolerate her unabashed behaviour. Lenina is threatened with death and accused of behaving like a whore, an 'impudent strumpet'. The horrified

Lenina sees a beast in John and she quakes in fear and rushes to the bathroom in her shoes and cap. After bolting herself to safety, she pleads for her dresses to be returned. They are pushed in through the ventilator by John. Soon John receives a phone call, which gives him the news of his mother's critical condition at the Park Lane Hospital, providing the opportunity for Lenina to escape.

The Park Lane Hospital for the Dying, provides an altogether novel experience for John when he visits Linda. When he enquires about the condition of his 'mother' the nurse is puzzled. He finds Linda in a dazed condition in the midst of music, entertainment and perfumed air. The nurse brings in a group of identical twins who are horrified at the flaccid figure of Linda. At forty four Linda was already a senile figure. The children are not able to comprehend either the spectacle of Linda's dying moments or the sentimental reactions of John. The lessons of death conditioning have already hardened the emotions of the kids. The children irritate John and he shouts angrily to the authority to have them taken away from the proximity of his mother's bed. John tries to revive the memories of his childhood, particularly the happy moments that he had with his mother. Simultaneously, he tries to bring his mother round, trying in all manners possible, to draw her attention to him. In one fitful delirium she sounds the name of Pope, which upsets him. He tells her that her son John is beside her and holds her pale hand and in an agonized voice tells her that he is indeed John. "Don't you know me?" She utters the name of Pope once again and this disgusts him as though a pailful of ordure was thrown in his

face (p.164). He shouts back in a passion of agonized rage ' But I'm John! I'm John! and shakes her. Linda opens her eyes and her false impressions vanish. She was indeed on 'trip', enjoying with Pope, when an intruder snaps the thread of pleasure. But on knowing that it was no intruder but John, her mouth falls open and she is terror-stricken and loses her ability to inhale. The alarmed John rushes to the nurse and drags her after him saying 'Quick' Something's happened, I've killed her (p.166). When he gets back, he finds Linda dead. "After a moment he stood for a moment in frozen silence, then fell on his knees beside the bed and, covering his face with his hands, sobbed uncontrollably" (p.166).

His subsequent behaviour totally alarms the Bokanovsky Group of twins, for they have never heard any fervent cry of 'Oh, God, God, God' and his sentimental cry had totally put them out of gear nearly de – conditioning them. The chocolate éclair compensation offered by the nurse was in fact not adequate to quell the curiosity of the kids. They ask "Is she dead?...Is she dead? And John once again loses his temper, pushes one of the twins who falls and howls in pain. Later he wakes to external reality and looking around

Knew what he saw – knew it, with a sinking sense of horror and disgust, for the recurrent delirium of his days and night, the nightmare of swarming indistinguishable sameness. Twins, twins.... like maggots they had swarmed defilingly over the

mystery of Linda's death. Maggots again, but larger, full grown, they now crawled across his grief and his repentance. He halted and, with bewildered and horrified eyes, stared around him at the khaki mob, in the midst of which, overtopping it by a full head, he stood. 'How many goodly creatures are there here ?' The singing words mocked him derisively. 'How beautiful mankind has become! Oh Brave New World...'(p.168).

John was now watching the distribution of *soma*, to the menial staff, the Deltas, of the Park Lane Hospital. One at a time with no shoving, the twins step forward mechanically to receive the ration, uttering 'Oh Brave New World, Oh Brave New World...' The words of the song attain a different tone and he realizes that

They had mocked him through his misery and remorse, mocked him with, how hideous a note of cynical derision! Fiendishly laughing, they had insisted on the low squalor, the nauseous ugliness of the nightmare. Now, suddenly, they trumpeted a call to arms. ' Oh Brave New World!' Miranda was proclaiming the possibility of loveliness, the possibility of transforming even the nightmare with something fine and noble. 'Oh Brave New World!' It was a challenge, a command (p.169).

Feeling acutely for the Deltas, John decides to prevent the distribution of *soma* with the conviction that it is indeed *soma* which had ruined his mother. He catches the attention of the people who have gathered and tells them that what they are clamouring for is nothing but 'Poison' hampering their right for freedom. He appeals to the Deltas to avoid *soma* and attain the road to freedom. The Deltas are astounded at being deprived of *soma*. The Bursar makes a vain attempt to dissuade John from addressing the Deltas. But a determined John pleads fervently for their freedom, happiness, peace and proper manhood. By this time the Bursar alerts Helmholtz and Bernard of the situation and the impending calamity. They rush to the scene, being almost certain that John will be killed in a riot. But the police in gas mask arrived ready with *soma* sprays and drugged – water pistols. Two minutes later everyone's attention is drawn to an emotional speech which assures the disturbed gathering of peace and happiness and the entire assembly is moved to tears including John. A fresh supply of *soma* arrives and its distribution is successfully carried out. The sergeant of police rounds up Helmholtz and John, and the slinking Bernard, who has been wounded by the water pistol.

They await Mustapha Mond, the World Controller for settling the issues. John is initially impressed with him, for Mond was able to quote Shakespeare. Mond tactfully interacts with John and has a long chat with him regarding the norms of the World State. For John, the kind of civilization prevailing in the World State does not seem to be civilization at all, as it does not even permit the reading of books. For the fordians, books,

particularly anything out of date is old and irrelevant even if it is a beautiful work like *Othello*. To Mond, anything that is likely to upset the stability of the world, ought to be banned. He declares

The World's stable now. People are happy; they get what they want, and they never want what they can't get. They're well off; they're safe; they're never ill; they're not afraid of death; they're blissfully ignorant of passion and old age; they're plagued with no mothers or fathers; they've got no wives, or children, or lovers to feel strongly about; they are so conditioned that they practically can't help behaving as they ought to behave. And if anything should go wrong, there's *soma*.(p.177)

Mond goes on to explain that the price for stability has to be paid by sacrificing high art and substituting it with the 'feelies' and the 'scent organ' and

Actual happiness looks pretty squalid in comparison with the over compensation for misery. And, of course, stability isn't nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand.(p.178).

It is the intention of the World Controller to impress upon John, the need for a World State where basic human needs are uniform and common to every denizen depending on the stratified category. In spite of the scientific bent of mind of Mond, he holds the view that just like art. Science too can hamper 'happiness'. It isn't only art that's incompatible with happiness; it's also science. Science is dangerous; we have to keep it most carefully chained and muzzled... Happiness is a hard master – particularly other people's happiness. A much harder master, if one isn't conditioned to accept it unquestionably, than truth (Pp.181-182). For him the preferable choice is Ford's choice which has been generated by Mass production, the preference for comfort and happiness, instead of truth and beauty. To the intrigued John he informs further, that God and religion are in the safe, while Ford is on the shelves. Call it the fault of civilization. God isn't compatible with machinery and scientific medicine and universal happiness. You must make your choice. Our civilization has chosen machinery and medicine and happiness. That's why I have to keep these books to keep locked up in the safe. They are smut (p.188).

To Mond people's belief in God is also conditioned and the necessity for anyone to believe in God while one is alone in the night, thinking about death, is an impossibility in the World State. The lives of the people are 'arranged' in such a way that it is almost impossible for them ever to experience solitude.

John is compelled to analyse his present situation. "At Malpais he had suffered because they had shut him out from communal activities of the

pueblo, in civilized London he was suffering because he could never escape from those communal activities, never be quietly alone”(p.188). He now fully realizes that the brave new world is anything but brave. It is a civilization condemned to last long with ‘plenty of pleasant vices’ a civilization without either nobility or heroism, where one is so conditioned that one can’t help doing what one ought to do so and if by any chance one stumbles on anything unpleasant, one has always *soma* to give one a holiday from facts. Thus morality, at least half of it can, be carried about in a bottle. ‘Christianity without tears – that’s what *soma* is (p.190).

John asks Mustapha Mond whether there isn’t anything in ‘living dangerously’ (p.191) for which he answers in the affirmative. He explains that the Violent Passion Surrogate treatment (V.P.S) administered once a month as an equivalent of fear and rage, helps people to experience the effect of murder and being murdered without feeling any sort of inconvenience, any discomfort whatsoever. John is annoyed and responds, But I don’t want comfort. I want God. I want poetry, I want danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sins.(p.192). According to Mond, John is ‘in fact, claiming the right to be unhappy. Not only is he claiming the right to be unhappy, but also,... the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer; the right to have too little to eat; the right to be lousy; the right to live in constant apprehension of what may happen tomorrow; the right to catch typhoid; the right to be tortured by unspeakable pains of every kind...I Claim them all(p.192). The whole interview appals him and he looks ill and talks as if he has gone out of his mind. He tells

Helmholtz Watson. I ate civilization.... It poisoned me; I was defiled and then I ate my own wickedness(193).

John feels that he ought to purify himself the Indian way, by consuming mustard and warm water. It is now time for the three to part ways. "In spite of their sadness-because of it even; for their sadness was the symptom of their love for one another-the three young men were happy" (p.194). John resolves to leave for the destination of his own choice, as he has not been allowed to accompany either Bernard or Helmholtz to one of their islands. He refuses to be experimented with, by the whimsical World Controller. He chooses one of the four abandoned old lighthouses which stood on the crest of the hill between Puttenham and Eastead, as his hermitage. Satisfied at the ambience of the new abode, he takes a vow to be more self-disciplined and thoroughly purified. He goes down on his knees and prays to a Awonawilona, Jesus, Pookong and his guardian animal the eagle. He imagines himself to be on the cross and stoically endures the growing pain crying out, 'Oh, forgive me! 'Oh, make me pure! Oh, help me to be good! till he is about to faint in pain. The next day he nurses an after thought whether he ought to continue in the Lighthouse. He feels that he does not deserve to be in such a beautiful place "living in the visible presence of God. All he deserved to live in was some filthy sty, some blind hole in the ground" (p.195). However he basks in the breathtaking view that is available to him... it was not alone the distance that had attracted the Savage to his Lighthouse; the near was as seductive as the far (p.196).

He decides to cut himself free from any external contact by fending for himself. His resources will see him through winter and by spring his garden will produce enough to make him independent and self sufficient. He works on a bow and arrow to shoot the rabbits which are plenty. The environment makes him complacent and he sings, but then he curbs himself. Guiltily he blushed. After all, it was not to sing and enjoy himself that he had come there. he was to escape further contamination by the filth of civilized life; it was to be purified and made good; it was actively to make amends.(p.197).

But, he could not maintain his privacy for long. He is spotted 'hitting himself with a whip of knotted cords, his back horizontally streaked with crimson and from weal to weal ran thick trickles of blood(p.198). This scene is graphically described by three delta-minus landworkers and it causes a sensation. 'Three days later, like turkey buzzards settling on a corpse, the reporters came'(p.198). A reporter of *The Hourly Radio* sneaks behind him and asks for an interview, in order to broadcast the reasons for the queer behaviour of John, particularly the whipping act. John who has been making arrows, responds with five words, 'Hani! Sons eso-tse-na', before kicking the prying reporter. This triggers the curiosity of other reporters representing various news papers and John has no choice but to resist the tribe with renewed violence. Sensing the violent response, the media folks back out for a while, but a few helicopters hover near the lighthouse inquisitively. John, the Savage, shoots an arrow into the aluminum floor of the cabin:' there was a shrill yell and the machine went rocketing up into the air with

all the acceleration that its Super-charger could give it.(p. 200). The calm that follows is however shortlived. The thought of Lenina, comes to him all on a sudden, a thought which vaguely brings in the picture of Linda too, whom he had sworn to remember. He had infact sworn to forget Lenina. The desire to mortify his flesh seizes him and he goes to the whip and in a frenzy lets the knotted cords of the whip bite into his flesh, crying out 'Strumpet!' Strumpet' as if he were flogging Lenina.

John is absolutely oblivious of the fact that, for the last three days he has been the focus of well known big-game photographer, Darwin Bonaparte, who had produced the film *The Savage of Survey*, and popularising it in every first – class "feely" palace in Western Europe. His patience has been rewarded for he has been able to capture all the intimate reactions and "pranks" of John.

Like locusts, the copters swarm towards him again, and a whole host of a lookers mill towards his asylum. They regard him like an ape, staring, laughing, clicking their cameras, throwing peanuts, packets of sex-hormone chewing gum etc and he has no choice but to retreat for cover, "like an animal at bay, standing with his back to the wall of the lighthouse, staring from face to face in speechless horror, like a man out of his senses" (p.203). When he is hit by a packet of gum, he shouts to them to go away, but the crowd responds differently.

The ape had spoken; there was a burst of laughter and hand – clapping. 'Good old Savage! Hurrah,

Hurrah!' And through the babel he heard the cries
of : whip, whip, the whip!(p.203).

His pleas to be spared, fall on deaf ears and the crowd demands for the 'whipping stunt'. John is aghast and in a few moments another copter approaches him, and he observes a young woman in 'green velveteen shorts, white shirt and jockey cap. He is roused to the whipping act when she makes an impassioned gesture, stretching out her arms towards him, pleading 'We – want – the whip! We- want...' Pain becomes fascinating horror and John continues the act of self – flagellation in renewed frenzy. The people gathered around "hungrily, pushing and scrambling like swine about the trough, drawn by the fascination of the horror of pain and, from within, impelled by that habit of co-operation, that desire for unanimity and atonement, which their conditioning had so ineradicably implanted in them, they began to mime the frenzy of gestures, sticking at one another as the Savage struck at his own rebellious flesh, or at the plump incarnation of turpitude writing in the heather at his feet"(p.205). John cries out kill – kill – kill and suddenly it gets commingled with the Orgy – Porgy strains taken up by the onlookers.

After midnight the revalry ceases, leaving an exhausted John in the heather. The sun rise does not give him any new hopes and the memory of the previous days, 'occurrences, the orgy of atonement' depresses him further.

The evening visitors who swarm to the lighthouse alight from the copters 'see the bottom of the staircase that led up to the higher floors. Just under the crown of the arch dangled slowly, a pair of feet, like two unhurried compass needles turning towards the right; north, north – east, east, south – east, south, south – west and passing swerving to opposite directions as well. John, thus puts an end to his dehumanised existence in the brave new world, emerging thereafter as a mythic hero for the surviving humanity to reflect on.

NOTES:

1. See "Music at Night and Other Essays", in *Virginia Quarterly Review*, VII (January 1931)
2. See "Spinoza's Worm", *Do what you will* (London; 1931)
3. See George Orwell's *Road to Wigan Pier* (1937)
4. Ivan Pavlov (1849 - 1936), the Russian Physiologist who rejected the old division of the mind and body. He was a pioneer on conditional reflexes.
5. See Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World", *Life* XXV (Sept - 1948) Pp. 63,64,66,68,70.
6. See Peter E. Firchow, "The Satire of Huxley's *Brave New World*" *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol XII, 4, Winter 1966 - 67 (Pp 451-460)

7. After being converted to the 'perennial philosophy', Huxley says.... it seems worthwhile at least to mention, the most serious defect in the story, which is this. The savage is offered only two alternatives, an insane life in Utopia, or the life of a primitive in an Indian village, a life more human in some respects, but in others hardly less queer and abnormal. At the time the book was written, this idea that human beings are given free will in order to choose between insanity on the one hand and lunacy on the other, was one that I found amusing and regarded as quite possibly true".

KURT VONNEGUT'S PLAYER PIANO :

A BRAVER NEWER WORLD

'Technology is but man's brainchild, whom he is condemned to perpetually defend against'.

The problem evoked by industrial Revolution have indeed been on the rise , particularly because of mechanised environments brought forth by advanced machinery and 'progressive' methods of human engineering. In a percipient vein Reimer Jehmlich addresses the issue of dehumanisation thus

It is not only mechanised environments -
 Disneyland of all types and sizes - that threaten
 to cripple modern man and alienate him from both
 his fellow man and nature ... (1983, p.27)

More than most, the science fiction medium provides the 'models for symbolic thought and pragmatic action' although it may apparently be trivial and insignificant . But if one looks at American culture, one finds the ubiquitous mythic form that permeates , it in the form of science fiction and science fantasy. 'When the symbols in the new myth' according to Daniel W. Ingersoll Jr . 'resonate with preexisting symbols and flow with historical and cultural streams , society may be in for wide- sweeping changes' (1983, p.236). The Science fiction mode has successfully picked up a narrative sophistication spelling out the fact that both narrative and

myth mean story. This genre provided active speculation about the technological features of the future until the close of the World War II . The reader of science fiction obtained an exhilarating avenue of escape from the humdrum of the solid present as his imagination soared freely through time and space undaunted by premonitions . However the post War climate only helped to change the once powerful sense of here- and- now and much that was only yesterday relegated airily to the realm of Science Fiction had to be recognised as sober scientific fact. The rapid acceleration of technological and social changes in the post- war world dissolved the familiar landmarks of civilization, alerting us . to the shape of things to come. In *Spaced Out Fairy Tales* , Kentucky Jones , gives a graphic picture of the process

Once upon a time, when wishing still helped, there was a kingdom in which people shared stories about plants and animals, fruits and seeds, and gods and men. By telling themselves stories, the people explored their world and their meaning and goals in it. Gradually, as the trees were felled and the dragons were slain, the people began to construct stories about computers and robots, death stars and test tubes, and machines and men. The stories could not end happily ever after, because most of them had not even taken place yet. The people were too busy mechanising their gardens to ask why.(as in Ingersoll Jr. 1983, p.235)

The great cycle of the mythical world view of birth, death and rebirth parallels research which is born in the laboratory, dies in its misuse or subversion and is reborn in its final application to the needs of mankind. This further endorses the fact that most of the stories of science fiction are ritual re-enactments of the dramatic elements of the myth of progress. This covers science and technology aiding progress, while mankind strives to overcome the obstacles that nature places in its way. As every spring is a rebirth in the agricultural myth, so in the technological myth every discovery, invention, innovation, change, improvement of product, procedure or machine is progress. This bestows a sacred meaning on all the activities of the technological person, and the very mythic quality of progress has nothing to do with the past, present or future. Jacques Ellul argues, in his *Technological Society* (1964) 'there is no purpose or plan that is progressively being realised. There is not even a tendency toward human ends. We are dealing with a phenomenon blind to the future, in a domain of integral causality' (as in Kreuziger, p. 37) Indeed, Frederick Kreuziger attests this view in a more cryptic fashion. He states, 'Progress simply is'. (1986, p.38) This has paved the way to a social system founded on the findings of technologists and engineers and this system in turn gets controlled by technocracy. This does not however indicate that technologists control society, but that through their scientific inventions and knowledge, such control can be seized. This theme which underlies many science fiction dystopias, appears increasingly in the controlling technologies of human welfare¹. Such a context offered the fertile ground for Kurt Vonnegut Jr. to write his mordantly amusing first novel, *Player Piano* in the year

1952 . It deals with an America that has become one vast interlocked corporate machine, so expertly mechanised that almost nobody has to work. This climate has not been alien to Vonnegut as he was a Public Relations official for General Electric, Schenectady, New York from 1947 to 1950. The motto of General Electric runs thus- ' Progress is our most important product'. Progress as a myth has been and still is the foundation of all corporate endeavour and technological dynamism. The appearance of Vonnegut's novel coincided with America's unprecedented industrial expansion and innovation after the war. While comprehending the issues related to the third Industrial Revolution, Vonnegut showed grave concern with regard to the problems inherent in modern industrial society, where man becomes his own victim by being entrapped and enslaved by dehumanised mechanistic systems of control, which he himself largely creates. The imminent danger that one ought to apprehend in technological progress, is the degradation and obsolescence of human beings and their physical functions. The technological revolution has brought forth an acute awareness amongst human beings, that the body, along with the rest of the creations of nature, is intolerably imperfect in comparison with machines. The body is seen as a burden of the mind- the mind that is, as reduced to a set of mechanical ideas that can be implanted in machines. The body thus becomes limited and the machine, the unlimited idea ².

Vonnegut's artistic goal as a novelist has been to serve the society as a "Shaman", a kind of spiritual healer whose function is to expose the various forms of societal madness. Hence he took up to the task of

exorcising the evil spirits of mindless mechanisation, prompted by a mystical vision. He called himself a 'canary bird in the coal mine', offering spiritual illumination and warning people of the dehumanisation bred by technology.

For writers like John Barth, Joseph Heller, Thomas Pynchon and Kurt Vonnegut, the human situation in the latter half of the century is centered around madness. Lawrence Broer in his discussion on Vonnegut's heroes, attests Bernard Shaw's view which "accounts for the savage unreasonableness of mankind, suggesting that some alien world was using the earth as its insane asylum, dropping lunatics off at regular intervals" (1989, p.1). According to Ihab Hassan, the hero of the novels emerging from this environment comes from a pathological present, as 'grotesque effigy to the rule of chaos, someone isolated, violent, defeated, tortured and warped' (as in Broer, p.2). In *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, Lawrence L. Langer argues that the present age characterised by sudden gratuitous violence, terrorism and anarchy is indeed worse than its predecessors. Endorsing Langer's views, Broer says that the atrocities of the death camps and those that have succeeded Auschwitz, represent a continuity of terror that may almost be called a new tradition, one in which the phantasmagoric and horrific is real and the gentle and generous a prodigy to be remarked with amazement (p.2). According to Norman Mailer a new psychopathic hero given to extremes of violence and self-centredness reverting even to savagery at times to combat the sterilising effects of technology, the corporation and the machine, has been bred by the nightmarish violence that prevailed. Such emotionally depleted heroes

experience acute alienation from society and self overcome by a sense of futility and ignominy. The war- scarred , death haunted heroes of Vonnegut , in the words of Lawrence Broer, are

'so dehumanised by anonymous bureaucracies, computers and authoritarian institutions, and so immobilized by guilt and fear, they to turn into disembodied creatures with disintegrating minds, as if to confirm John Aldridge's declaration that the typical narrative today sets the scene for suicide and nervous collapse.' (p.3)

In most of Vonnegut's novels, we come across a variety of mental disorders that afflict his characters : combat fatigue, demonic depression, echolalia, sexual mania, masochism, catalepsis, samaritrophia, dementia praecox, paranoia, catatonia and Hunter Thompson Disease.

Rating Vonnegut as our great public writer, Jerome Klinkowitz sums up his social themes as his desire to change 'the social ethic and treasure people for something other than what they can produce (1982, p.28) He proceeds to identify Vonnegut's metaphysical theme as his belief that mankind should reject responsibility for an absurd universe, as "the consummate horrors of the twentieth century have made it an unbearable trial for man to identify himself with the centre of the universe" (p.29)

After resigning the job of publicist in general Electric in Schenectady in 1950, Vonnegut settled to transform his experience with the General Electric company to produce one of the first, well-known dystopian fictions titled *Player Piano* in the year 1952. Set in the Ilium works New York, the story unfurls the events following the reconstruction of United states after World War III. Vonnegut states elsewhere the source of his first novel, a source which he brilliantly adapted and transformed : Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* and Zamiatin's *We*. Vonnegut's target, oscillates from the individual to the machine and from the machine to the individual. Machines have obviously deprived man of the sense of being needed. Vonnegut, taking the cue from Aldous Huxley denounces mass popular culture which entails the reduction of everything to the lowest common denominator. Going by the opening statements of the novel, Jerome Klinkowitz comments on the three parts that divide Ilium

in one section of the town the privileged class of managers and engineers; opposite them , the machines; and, south of the river, in the town's least attractive part, the people- nearly all of them thrown out of work in a brave new world of automation (1982,p.34)

Vonnegut thus handles future fantasy with some of the most prominent issues of the 1950s, issues of conformity, boredom and mechanisation drawing on a notable tradition of vision and structure making his paradise of fiasco familiar, when compared to the dystopian models available in

Brave New World and 1984 . Kathryn Hume has rightly observed that Vonnegut's characters are continually in search of meaning in a shifting and bewildering universe.

They want stability and escape. They struggle with loneliness, they recoil from massacres, they cringe at evil. Like all people in all societies, they both inherit and make bulwarks against flux (as in Mustazza, 1990. p.223)³.

She further observes that, Vonnegut, has been consistently paying attention to the ways in which traditional value structures and institutions have helped people face uncertainties (p.223). Commenting on the protean nature of Vonnegut's fictive Cosmos, his kinship to the universe is regarded by Kathryn Hume as 'akin to that between Menelaus and proteus. Menelaus,

hoping to learn what he must do to reach home, struggles with the infinitely changing and transforming Old Man of the Sea. The classical hero conquers Proteus and wrests from the God what he wants. Vonnegut is not able to exert brute force against his universe. It still twists and writhes in his grasp as it has, ever since he wrote his first book, whose hero was named Proteus (1990, p.227)

We find in *Player Piano*, Paul Proteus the protagonist, who views with utter disillusion a society that prioritises machinery over individuals, surrendering human dignity for cold mechanical efficiency. Man is found paying for solutions when there are no problems as such. The dissatisfied hero, Paul Proteus reacts to the predicament by trying to escape into an ideal,

the conventional agricultural ideal of life, which is linked, in literary term, to the pastoral form and before that, to the prototypical Garden of Eden, the prime agricultural myth where humans live innocently and work closely with the *humus* from which they themselves derive. When that scheme falls Paul becomes a participant at first forcibly and later voluntarily- in a political plot to change his society itself- to restore dignity to humanity... "make himself the new Messiah and Ilium the new Eden (Mustazza, p.25)

What Vonnegut tries to dramatise is the predicament of a community entrapped between a dehumanizing industrialism and an absolutely dehumanizing primitivism. Wielding irony as the appropriate tool, Vonnegut projects the images of the hero in a vein, laid down by Frye

The ironic fiction writer ... like Socrates, pretends to know nothing, even that he is ironic. Complete

objectively and suppression of all explicit moral judgements are essential to this method. Thus pity and fear are not raised in the ironic art. They are reflected back to the reader from the art... Irony, as a mode, is born from the low mimetic, it takes life exactly as it finds it. But the ironist fables without moralising and has no object but his subject (as in Mustazza, p.21)

Player Piano falls in a genre of novels which includes E.M Forster's *The Machine Stops*, Zamiatin's *We* and George Orwell's *1984*. Although Vonnegut cheerfully ripped off the plot of *Brave New World*, the novel illuminates the course of thought and art of the period and the days to come. Vonnegut's foreword to *Player Piano* prepares the reader to look for the specific climate that he has built up.

This book is not a book about what is, but a book about what could be. The characters are modelled after persons as yet unborn, or, perhaps, at this writing infants.

It is mostly about managers and engineers. At this point in history, 1952 AD, our lives and freedom depend largely upon the skill and imagination and courage of our managers and engineers and I hope that God will help them to help us all stay alive and free. (foreword)

In the very beginning, we find Vonnegut fixing the atmosphere of the novel with the stratification of Ilium, New York into three parts.

In the North - West are the managers and engineers and civil servants and a few professional people, in the north east are the machines, and in the South across the Iroquois River, is the area known locally as Homestead, where almost all of the people live (Pp., p.1).

Paul Proteus, the protagonist aged thirty five is the manager of Ilium Works. He is bored and discontented for he feels acutely the obsolescence of human being, being replaced by machines. His importance, is well attested by his associates, not simply because of his current status, but also because of the fame ... his father carried as "the nation's first National Industrial, Commercial, Communications, foodstuffs and Resources Director, a position approached in importance only by the Presidency of the United States" (Pp., p.2)

We get a telling picture of Paul's attitudes, right at the beginning where he reports to the office with a black cat in hand, which he finds in the Ilium premises. He thinks he could tackle the rat menace in the Works "where machines hummed and whirred and clicked, and made parts for baby carriages and bottle caps, motor cycles and refrigerators, television - sets and tricycles - the fruits of peace" (p.3) The only place perhaps, that relieves Paul of both ennui and loneliness is when he visits Building 58 a long

narrow structure four blocks long, the north end in particular, where the famous Edison set up his machine shop in 1886. He visited the place to take the edge of his depression for "It was a vote of confidence from the past, he thought, where the past admitted how humble and shoddy it had been, where one could look from the old to the new and all that mankind really had come a long way" (p.6)

However, the dehumanizing manner in which the cat was disposed of by the mechanical sweeper gives him serious misgivings with regard to the technological progress man has made. With great care Vonnegut narrates the tragic but heroic death of the cat. The natural antipathy that the cat displayed for the machine is portrayed thus. "The cat in Paul's arms clawed up threads from his suit and hissed at the machine' (p.7)The antagonised cat resists the sweeper, but the machine gobbles her up before hurling her squatting and scratching into its galvanized tin belly. The cat resists and in its flight for freedom knocks its body on the electric fence before Paul can do anything to save it.

The cat hit the alarm wire on the fence, and sirens screamed from the gate house. In the next second the cat hit the charged wires atop the fence. A pop, a green flash, and the cat sailed high over the top strand as though thrown. She dropped to the asphalt - dead and smoking, but outside. (12)

Death, seems to be the final alternative to escape from the Scientific community's electrically guarded premises. Paul had had a feeling that, the post war world was purged of 'unnatural terrors - mass starvation, mass

imprisonment, mass torture mass murder (p.6) etc and earth was being groomed to 'sweat out Judgement Day and he himself would be a participant to bring forth 'a golden age' (6). Although the 'wonderful machines of Ilium Works which made things spin, dance, whirl, pirouette and dodge, made him laugh, he had to look away to keep from getting dizzy' (p.11)

The contributions of the Industrial Revolution were after all dehumanizing and man has nearly been edged out by the machines. Paul recalls the case of Rudy Hertz, the smart machinist who had immortalised his rhythmic manual movements to clinical machine perfection. As brilliant young engineers with uncanny forethought, they had taped Rudy Hertz's movements which turned out to be disastrous for the brilliant Hertz. The kind of precision that he had generated through his strong arm and black nails had been sucked in by the tapes which recorded it, providing innumerable signals for the manufacture of ever so many shafts of various dimensions. This devaluation of human energy and intelligence continues to be the bane of modern societies which largely depend on automation. As a hypersensitive individual, this kind of exploitation disturbs him. Paul's yearning for more tumultuous but exciting past - time might sound very irrational, but this wish is born out of the extreme boredom of the present and it is expressed through the allusions to conventional myth of the golden age and Judgement Day. According to Mustazza "Such irrationality well serves Vonnegut's major premise; the dichotomy between the predictable and rational functioning of the technocracy on one end, and the inherent unpredictability and irrationality of human fears and desires on the other" (p.36)

The young engineers had in their enthusiasm to automate everything manual had obviously overlooked the uniqueness of human beings, particularly of Rudy Hertz- 'the turner - on of power, the setter of speeds, the controller of the cutting tool, whose essence were "distilled" on a "computer tape" (Pp.9-10). The machines as such seem to have infiltrated into society and robbed people of their sense of usefulness, meaning and dignity. Professor Thomas Hoffman, commenting on the theme of mechanisation in *Player Piano* states that Vonnegut in his negative utopia has presented as the book's main theme - the "machine - made loneliness"(p.18) resulting from the protagonist's struggle for awareness and independence from machine like controls. The story of Paul Proteus. in this regard, highlights the problems and actions of an entire society than of one man. Indeed, the predicament of Paul reflects the plight of the society as a whole, through his alienation. His job, his father, his wife and bosom friend do not mean anything to him anymore. He is constantly nagged by an intense sense of guilt for being a part of the creation of a sterile society. The sight of the mechanical hands, electric eyes and punch press jaws of the machinery of the Ilium works controlled no longer by man but by other machines, makes him ominously aware of the human loss as it mirrors his own condition akin to the piano keys, the puppets who form the citizenry regulated and standardized by the ruling technocracy. The human beings are thus reduced to mindless pieces of machinery, incapable of wishing for anything better. Vonnegut's characters often face the feeling of depersonalisation, believing themselves "petrified" or "frozen" by dehumanising social, militaristic or religious machinery or by strong

pessimism. The entrapped protagonist thus descends in a spinning motion 'towards moral oblivion, engendering a robot like identity and endangering the very sanity he tries to preserve' (Broer, 1989, Pp.9-10) Vonnegut deliberately alerts one against such a fate

the final loss of self, of human identity and personal freedom- through still another set of ominous psychic references: vivid images of petrification, destruction by fire, death by drowning. The schizophrenic's dread of dissolution often manifests itself in terms of human nullification, eg., being disembodied, emptied out of an inner self made vacuum like, being turned into someone else's thing.
(Broer,p.10)

The plight of the workers of the Reeks and Wrecks is no better and those condemned to be enslaved in the army by the great computer God EPICACIV to the farthest side of the river, for want of high IQ levels. In direct proportion to the spurt in automation, levels of drug abuse, alcoholism and suicide demonstrate a steep rise. As machines hire and fire, resistance from the part of the people manifest as self - hatred, contempt for the enslavers and suicide. The so called beneficiaries of mechanisation are thus swallowed up and regurgitated very much like the fate of the cat discussed earlier. The irony reaches out to the reader most sharply when we are introduced to the Shah of Bratpuhr, who is escorted by Dr. Halyard

to interpret to him the marvels of mechanization. Among the various subplots in *Player Piano*, here is one which centres round the Shah, the spiritual leader of six million Kolhouris, who is on a visit to the USA to have a first hand knowledge of the American way of life. He is escorted to the residence of Edgar Hagstrohm, a member of the Reconstruction and Reclamation Corps, mostly referred to as the Reeks and the Wrecks. When the Shah is shown around, the expected reaction is one of awe, at the sight of the electronic gadgets like the microwave oven, the ultra sonic dishwasher and clotheswasher and the automatic ironer. The Shah however is curious to know why every thing is done quickly. Noticing Wanda Hagstrohm, he is curious and asks

What is it she is in such a hurry to get at?

What is it she has to do, that she must'nt waste any time on these things? (Pp.p.159)

Her answer only amuses the Shah to a chuckle, when she confesses that she does everything in haste to watch the television. The emptiness of American life stares at the Shah and he realises that there is absolutely no spiritual foundation for their lives, but a foundation of materialism. The Shah's accurate observation is further attested through the thoughts of Private Hackett

And Hacketts wonders where the hell he'd go in the next twenty three years and thought it'd be a

relief to get the hell out of the states for a while to occupy someplace else and may be somebody in some of these countries instead of a bum with no money looking for an easy lay anyway but still a pretty good lay compared to no lay at all but any way there was more to living than laying and he'd like a little glory by God and there might be laying and glory overseas while there wasn't it any shooting and wasn't going to be none either probably for a good long while still you got a real gun and bullets and there was a little glory in that ... (p.58)

With the hope enamouring the Shah, he is taken to the super computer, the massive EPICAC XIV which is responsible for sifting the human kind as useful and useless, intelligent and non - intelligent. He is informed that in the small section of the computer visible to him, there is enough wire to circle the moon four times. The Shah responds in his characteristic human terms that people in his poor land sleep with smart women and thus make brains cheaply. However he decides to test the 'superior' intelligence of EPICAC XIV by posing a riddle* . He believed that "a great, all - wise good will come among us one day ... and we shall know him, for he shall be able to answer the riddle ..." (p. 106) The truth dawns on the Shah that, EPICAC XIV is after all the God that will liberate mankind, as it simply failed to answer the sphinx like riddle⁴. When the state department offers its services

to 'civilize' the land of the Shah with its engineers and managers to "study your resources, blue print your modernization, get it started, test and classify people, arrange credit, set up the machinery (p. 227), the Shah replies that before he can accept such an offer, he wants EPICAC XIV to tell him "what people are for ?" (p. 302)

The sharpest suggestion of human emotions being automated out appear through the skilful articulation of Vonnegut metaphors indicating that Paul and his wife Anita have already become a pair of automatons.

Anita had the mechanics of marriage down pat, even to the subtlest of conventions. If her approach was disturbingly rational, systematic, she was thorough enough to turn out a credible counterfeit of warmth. Paul would only suspect that her feelings were shallow ... (p. 16)

To Paul, his wife has dwindled into cold, machine like mode with its characteristic mechanics and rational and counterfeit attitudes, The precision and exactitude of the machine, is disturbing, therefore dehumanizing. Equally upset is Anita when she sobs and tells.

I wasn't any damn use to you at all ! ... All you need is something stainless steel, shaped like a woman, covered with sponge rubber, and heated to body temperature... I'm sick of being treated like a machine! (p.216)

The emotional void in his marriage turns out to be another symptom of 'his sickness' (p.16). He realises that emotions lack in spontaneity and they are but sham shows of affection, just shows, mechanical and insincere.

Broer presents this condition thus

Anita, too, has reduced marriage to a set of mechanical conventions, as when she manipulates expressions of warmth from Paul whenever she feels him pulling free from his influence. And when Paul is with Finnerty, he only pretends to share the man's emotional enthusiasm, while observing that Finnerty uses words such as *love* and *affection* to describe his feelings, words Paul can never bring himself to use (21)

Over the first sixteen chapters one is compelled to read almost a dozen times the refrain like mechanical declarations that the couple makes.

"I love you, Anita"

"I love you Paul"

The declaration attains its highest farcical pitch when Paul quite unconsciously mumbles 'And I love you, Anita' to a prostitute with whom he spends a night. Paul is projected as an individual who has lost faith in

everything trapped in a self spun cocoon. He is not able to play the role of a loyal manager showing his happiness with his colleagues Kroner and Baer. He realises that his conviction and moral strength have been shattered and that he cannot live up to the higher calling transmitted to him by his eminent father, the illustrious industrial leader of Ilium, the virtual founder of modern mechanisation. Paul feels that he is too weak to resist the system that threatens to destroy his will to live. The knowledge that he is like "an unclassified human being" makes him feel dispossessed. He strongly feels that he ought to have lived at a time when there was more excitement and challenge. The present was too boring for him. His yearning for the past runs like this.

Paul wished he had gone to the front, and read the senseless tumult and thunder, and seen the wounded and dead, and may be got a piece of sharpnel through his leg. May be he'd be able to understand then how good everything now was by comparison, to see what seemed so clear to others- that what he was doing, had done and would do as manager and engineer was vital, above reproach, and had, in fact, brought on a golden age. Of late, his job, the system, and organisational politics had left him variously annoyed, bored or queasy (p.6)

We frequently come across references to the myths of the golden age and Judgement Day. Leonard Mustazza argues that

the world as Vonnegut gives it to us in his fictional visions is, to use biblical terms fallen. It is a world in which human beings are essentially slaves to forces they cannot (or in some cases, will not) control - corrosive forces like nature and time, cruel forces like unjustly contrived economic and political system, destructive forces like application of science to military ends, incomprehensible forces like one's own emotional vulnerabilities. Into this world, Vonnegut places his protagonists, all of whom are, in one way or another, fragile, sensitive, troubled people who try to escape from life as they have found it, from their slavery to time to others, to their own human natures. (p.23)

Like the very Proteus, we find Paul too mutable, symbolising life. More than Rudy Hertz, the old machinist who played a song in honour of Paul on the old player piano, the real catalyst for change is indeed the Reverend James J. Lasher, The Player Piano operates as the central symbol of a society, whose basic human activities are hijacked by the machines, bleeding it dry of all human feelings. The Piano is able to provide 'exactly five cents worth of joy' (p.38) Lasher inspires Paul to take stock of things, at the appropriate time. The intriguing Lasher is sinister in character, who

ropes in Finnerty and Paul as fellow men, into the insurgent organization whose quasi - religious nature is indicated by the fact that he wants to elevate someone to "Messiah" status, someone who will lead the disaffected workers politically and spiritually to the dignity they once enjoyed (Mustazza, p.76)

Paul is beguiled into the organisation at a time when he realises the rising inhumanity within him which compels him to decide whether he ought to submit to the age of Science and remain a automaton or absolutely distance himself from such a society.

A strong sense of optimism encourages him to slide into "the fantasy of the new, good life ahead of him. Somewhere, outside of society, there was place for a man and wife, to live heartily and blamelessly, *naturally*, by hands and wits' (p.126). This fantasy prompts Paul to purchase an isolated, backwater, farm house, "a patch of the past" which he expects will impress Anita. But this hope gets dashed sooner than expected when Anita dismisses altogether the idea of settling down in the remote place deprived of electricity and the gadgets powered by it. All the same, she wants to grab the antiques of the farm house and transfer them to her own home. Paul feels terribly let down like a man about to drown.

Paul's decision to withdraw, to play dead is akin to the desire to 'crawl into the nearest suitable womb' (p.266) when Anita compels him to take up a more challenging position in Pittsburgh, he curls up tighter and tighter in "the dark, muffled womb of his bed" (p.134) Strangely enough, it is Anita's

sexuality which provides the significant opiate for Paul's uneasy conscience. She chides him hypnotically with her "drugging warmth" of her ample bosom and playful kisses.

I don't want my little boy to worry. You're not going to quit, sweetheart. You're just awfully tired
(p.178)

The theme of a private Eden operates for Paul as a solution to end his despair. He develops a sudden taste for "novels" wherein the hero lived vigorously and out-of-door, dealing, directly with nature, dependent upon basic cunning and physical strength for survival'. He wanted to deal, not with society but only with Earth as God had given it to men (p.118). To Leonard Mustazza

the Eden myth is also well represented here. Paul wants to experience the "Earth as God had given to man. In mythic terms, the God-given Earth was originally an agricultural nation of two and this is what Paul wants to make here, even if he has to delude himself to do it... so desperately does he want to escape into the timeless innocence of Edenic world that he constructs for himself an elaborate fiction about his wife, about the farm, about himself, even about time itself.

This last is seen when finding an old grandfather clock in the farm, he sets his "shock proof water proof, anti - magnetic, glowing - in - the dark, self - winding chronometer" (p.131)... twelve minutes behind to match, in a symbolic terms the antique world's sense of time. (p.38)

But then, he realises that the 'hand of nature' which is 'coarse and sluggish, hot and wet and smelly' (p.224), so natural to the farmer, is something strange to the conditioning that he has received from industrialised society, a conditioning fit only for machine work⁵.

The rejection of the values of his own society is symbolised by his discarding of the engineer's coat for an old leather jacket. Throughout the novel Vonnegut slips in instances where Paul tries on various dress codes, finally donning the Ghost Shirt. Paul is capable of changes like the very Proteus who assumes different forms. (Incidentally, the myth of Proteus is not just the favourite of Vonnegut, but of other writers as well). However he is not able to defect from the values of his society to those of another with the ease of changing coats. Impressed by Rev. Lasher's revolutionary society, Paul becomes a member of the Ghost shirt society which pits modern man's condition beside that of the Indians when the whites started imposing their values upon them because "Indian ways in a white man's world were irrelevant" Mustazza explicates the considered decision of Paul thus

Not only is the organisation that Paul joins irrational in terms of its indiscriminate destruction of machinery, it is also irrational in terms of its almost literal subscription to myth. The Ghost shirt society under Rev. Lasher's **direction** is named for a group of Indians who, fortified only with "magical shirts" and religious faith, fought the intruding white man (the forces of charge - again) and lost. Irrationality, mythic faith in innocence, conscious "playing" and serious childishness are the keynotes of this group (p. 39)

Rev. Lasher is absolutely conscious of the childishness inherent in the society. He says "Childish - like Hitler's Brown shirts, like Mussolini's Black shirts. Childish like any uniform... we don't deny it's childish. At the same time we admit that we've got to be a little childish, anyway, to get the big following we need" (p. 251)

The spelling out of this awareness is but a continuation of the vehement defence that Lasher makes, favouring the society, which to the Indians was the Ghost Dance religion⁶ - a religion that took shape to desperately defend the old values and to exorcise the Whites.

There were new rituals and new songs that were supposed to get rid of the white men by magic. And some of the more war like tribes that still had

a physical fight left in them added a flourish of their own - the Ghost shirt They were going to ride into battle one last time ... in magic shirts that white men's bullets wouldn't get through (p.250)

Although, the whole thing sounded like good old - fashioned bunkum (p.82), Paul wants to believe in it just as Luke Lubbock, a half - wit who is discovered wearing a white shirt fringed in an imitation of a buck - skin shirt, and decorated by thunderbirds and sktylised buffalo worked into the fabric with brightly insulated bits of wire' (p.250). Interestingly enough, Paul is not absolutely deluded, but faces a shock when he learns that he has been chosen to be the Messiah, to set off a big revolution to take the world away from the machines (p.252) as they are.

... to practically every body what the white men where to the Indians. People are finding that, because of the way of the machines are changing the world, more and more of their old values don't apply any more. People have no choice but to become second - rate machines themselves, or wards of the machine. (p.251).

Before, Paul is conscripted into the Ghost Shirt society, we see him participating in one of the significant scenes at the Meadows, an executive retreat where managers celebrate a fortnight vacation playing team sports,

drinking and renewing their faith in the system. They gather around a huge oak tree which symbolises 'courage, integrity, perseseverance, beauty (p.172) and sing a hymn to it. For Paul, the experience at the Meadows serves as a spiritual climate and "for the first time since he'd made up his mind to quit, he really hadn't given a damn about the systems, about the Meadows, about intramural politics. Now suddenly, as of this afternoon he was his own man' (p.182)

Paul almost forgets himself at the Meadows and he is able to laugh and chuckle at the ridiculous allegorical skit that depicts the conflict between a Radical and a young engineer. The radical interviews John Average - man regarding the pittance he takes home as his pay and his growing insignificance. The young Engineer intervenes to defend the government as it is able to defray John's medical and dental expenses and provide him with every electronic appliance. This impresses John who regards himself better off than a subject of Julius Caesar's time, indeed even the star of technology eclipsing the star of Bethlehem. The allegory ends with a hymn to a new God, reflecting unmistakably the superficiality of the men who believe it.

Thirty one point seven times as many television
sets as all the rest of the world put together !
(music gets louder) Ninety three per cent of all
the world's electrostatic dust precipitators !
Seventy seven percent of all the world's

automobiles ! Ninety eight percent of its
helicopters ! Eighty one point nine percent of its
refrigerators (p.189)

The experience at the Meadows conveys but Womb like association of softness, naturalness and contentment and the life it enders. According to Broer it is "grotesquely mechanical" (p.26).

Further, Broer observes that 'the machine like designs of the corporation are met by mass producing conformist robotic personalities whose values and conscience belong tot he organisation. (p.26)

As Paul struggles for self hood he feels that it is impossible to tell where 'one ego left and another began' (p.191). His indignation followed by his resolution not' to serve as an appendage to machines, over institutions, or systems again (p.297) appears to be pretentious, because obviously he withdraws from one master and woos another system equally capable of lobotomising him. Being the Messiah of the Ghost Shirt Society does not help to strip the totalitarian character of the society. He is just a robot like figure head who is condemned to fail in his effort to resist assimilation into the collective will of the group. Paul is characterised as a dreamer of everything pleasant when induced by the drug given to him by the Ghost Shirt Society which signifies that he is after all choosing comfort over integrity. Finnerty, his colleague in the revolution tries to alert him by saying that "this is not a joke" to which Lasher remarks: 'Everything's a joke until the drug wears off' (p.274) Stanely Schatt explains in his study titled Kurt Vonnegut Jr

Paul Proteus eventually realises that, while Finnerty rebelled against the government because it was a close little society that made no comfortable place for him" "(p.320), his own rebellion may represent a childish attempt to rebel against the memory of his famous father by attempting to destroy the very society he had helped create (p.27)

The rebellion however takes off with Paul, Finnerty and Rev. Lasher at the helm of affairs. The revolt against the machines gets the support of the people, who go on an enthusiastic smashing of the machines which had stripped them off their identity, The smashing and (breaking) of machines make them proud of being full fledged revolutionaries of a radical underground luddite movement with the noble end of establishing a society that would offer satisfactory employment to all. But then the whole drama takes place at the expense of Paul and his cohorts who had vowed to convert Ilium into a laboratory where men would work with minimum machines. However they discover to their dismay a crowd in the waiting room of a railroad station reassembling a soft drink machine which had been damaged in the uprising. Similar scenes appear all over the city, where workmen are found instinctively putting back together the machines that had been smashed, a few months before. The man repairing the pop machine "was proud and smiling because his hands were busy doing what they liked to do best, Paul supposed- replacing men like himself with

machines. He hooked up the lamp behind the Orange - O sign. "There we are" (p.293)

The hopes of the brains trust of the Ghost shirt Society, thus get dashed. The very strong points on the frontiers of Utopia (p.291)⁷ happened to threaten the Renaissance at upstate New York when they hoped to rediscover the two greater wonders of the world, the human mind and hand. (p.291) Jerome Klinkowitz explicates the failure of the revolution thus

... in the rubble of the mechanized society their revolt has temporarily destroyed, the workers cannot restrain themselves from tinkering with the machinery, devising gadgets to make the cracked equipment work once more. Ilium is indeed divided into three parts: three movements of an endless cycle which, funded by human inventiveness, continually makes, unmakes and remakes itself (1982,p.38)⁸

The leaders have finally to await capture and execution in the very technological Utopia that they revolted against. They are right back at the beginning, with the victory of the machine - elite whirring back to normalcy
Discussing the disenchantment, Mustazza

"given Pauls record of moral evasion, it is not surprising that he should so easily fall prey to such

paralysing fatalism. I agree and could add that neither is it surprising to find Paul drawn to a myth - based organisation, especially in the light of his own conflicting mythic impulses - his desire to escape backwards to an Edenic way of life and his attraction earlier to the idea of becoming the Messiah figure that Lasher and his group were seeking (p.41)

It is not altruism altogether that moves him to act, but boredom, vindictiveness playfulness and ultimately the need to "believe and to belong" (p.293) Ironically, after his arrest on charge of treason, he is subjected to a polygraph test, where a sophisticated machine, a lie detector, reveals the truth about his own motives. During the interrogation the prosecutor asks him whether he joined the society just to do good to which he responds in the affirmative. However the needle on the lie detector points squarely to the area between true and false, exposing his ambivalence. To the tactful charge of the prosecutor, that he was engaged in the overthrow of the system out of hatred for his father, Paul gets caught "Now, suddenly, he was all alone, dealing with a problem squarely his own' (p.299)

At the end of the novel, Paul realises that he has only been fooling himself. The nature of his identity gets clarified when he raises a bottle of drink for one last toast with his friends, his defeated comrades and says

"To a better world" but quickly corrects himself and shrugging says "To the record" and smashes the empty bottle on a rock. "It is here", argues James Lundquist "Where self - delusion becomes the theme and mode, approaches classical satire, that Vonnegut's comedy cuts the cleanest and gentlest" (1977,p.28) Lundquist in the section titled Cosmic Irony, explicates the central metaphor of the book which unfolds itself at the end of the novel... not only has American know-how resulted in a society that is itself a huge player piano, but history is much like the music on a piano roll - it can only repeat itself (p.23)

NOTES

1. See Fritz Pappenheim's *The Alienation of Modern Man*. Monthly P, USA (1968)

Interpreting the Marxian observation with regard to the force of selfishness that bring together the producer and the labourer, Pappenheim states "... the association between employer and labourer is dominated by a basic indifference to human beings, by an attitude which considers man as nothing and the product as everything (p.89).

See also Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol.1 (Moore/Aveling tram) p.195; Marx, *Oekonomisch-Philosophische Manuscript*, p.63, Also Marx's, *The Poverty of Philosophy* p.47, where Marx points out that the only thing considered in the capitalistic work process is time, that is, the number of hours for which the labourer has to be paid. "Time is everything, man is nothing; he is at the most times carcass".

2. This idea get further worked up to generate a kind of fear, that man himself will be transformed into a machine, the measure of all things, the model men ought to ape. This mechanamorphic ideal is by no means a fevered projection of dystopian technophobes, but it is a process of inevitable consequence of industrialising society permeating its every feature. As in Taylorism, no less than the labourers, the managerial and intellectual classes must "learn to think in the terms in which the machine process works.

3. See Kathryn Hume's "The Heraclitean Cosmos of Kurt Vonnegut"-papers on *Language and Literature* 18, no.2 (Spring 1982): 208-24 published by the board of trustees Illinois university.
4. See Dieter Petzold's article "Mythic", "Realist" and Science Fiction: a Zero sum Game". *Modern fiction studies* vol.32 issue spring 86, David M.Miller (ed) where he discusses the 'classic hard core science fiction modulation' of the "mythic" which goes like this ' a man builds a complex computer, turns it on, asks it "Does God exist?" The computer responds, " I do now", This cryptic response parallels the divine right theory of kings which applies to EPICAC series of computers upto EPICAC XIV (Like Louis XIV !) The Sphinx like riddle posed by the Shah is but a reflection of the distinct trace of humanity left in a 'techno tronic' society like Paul's.
5. Borrowing Brzezinski's description of a technotronic society, which shaped culturally, psychologically, socially and economically by the

impact of technology and electronics- particularly in the area of computers and communication, one is constrained to sympathies with Paul's discovery that the pastoral ideal, unlike mechanisation does not work.

See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Between Two Ages* N.Y.:Viking press 1971.

(p.9)

6. In Mirca Elide's *The Myth of Eternal Return On, Cosmos and History* Trans. W:ll and R Trask. N.Y. Bollingen Foundation (p.73) we get a reference to the Ghost Dance Society. The Ghost Dance Society of the 1890s motivated the Cubist painters Revolt in 1900.
7. Vonnegut's *Player Piano* was outfitted with a luridly futuristic cover and retitled *Utopia-14 (EPICAC-XIV)* See Jerone Klinkowitz '*Kurt Vonnegut* 1982, London: Methuen. (p.40)
8. See Franz Boas, *Memoirs of the American Folklore Society* , VI (1898) 18 where he states "It would seem that mythological worlds have been built up only to be shattered again, and that new worlds were built from the fragments". This is echoed by Klinkowitz ... "continually makes, unmakes and remakes itself".

CHAPTER VI

THE DEHUMANIZED HERO AT BAY

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man*

The vanquished powers were glad

To be invisible and free...

W.H.Auden ('A New Age')

The longest tradition in black American literature is perhaps "protest" as racialism and racism form the crux of it. The twentieth century has borne witness to a great surge of interest in black American literary expressions, leaving an indelible imprint on American life and consciousness. Ralph Ellison's novel *Invisible Man* is one of the profoundest statements on the paradoxes and contradictions of the Afro-American experience. The position of Ellison is almost singular when compared to the expressions of Jean Toomer, Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Eldridge Cleaver and Malcom X, who have explored the vistas of black American experience to make seminal and sometimes trenchant statements on the questions of identity, love and hatred, colour and class, society and politics.

R.W.B. Lewis argues quite justifiably that in *The American Adam*, the whole literature from Cooper to Faulkner, may be perceived under the aspect of the myth of Adam- a second Adam who, in a new Paradise must be painfully initiated into the hard complexities of the moral life. To him this myth has provided American literature with its constitutive themes and he

indicates how frequently the portraits that emerge are of innocence and naive: totally defenceless to combat the crises and rigours of life.

Nathan .A.Scott Jr. in his "Judgement Marked by a Cellar", states that

...the American Adam has sometimes been so deeply unhinged by the discovery of evil that he has, in his shock, been led to elevate evil into a principle coeval with God himself. And thus it is that "blackness" which Melville found in Hawthorne becomes, in Melville's phrase, "ten times black" and becomes the blackness of Manicheism, a blackness as Mr.Lewis says, that represents one of the modes of death (1968,Pp.144 - 145)¹

Now, in the case of Hawthorne, Melville was inclined to suggest that "this great power of blackness ... derives its force from its appeals to the Calvinistic sense of Innate Depravity and Original Sin, from whose visitations, in some shape or the other, no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free" (p.146) The Negro writer who is often beguiled by the charm of folk religion is more prone to the experience of exclusion. This could be due to his alienation from the tradition of Christianity. All the same, it is indeed the experience of exclusion that braces him to order his world in accordance with the myth of the 'wounded Adam' , which is a basic archetypal figuring in that secularised Calvinism. Nathan.A.Scott in a crisp survey elucidates this point

In Brockden Brown's *Arthur Mervyn*, in Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, in Melville's *Billy Budd* in James's *The Princess Casamassima*, in Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*, in Bellow's *Augie March*, in James Purdy's *Malcolm* as in Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* and in James Baldwin's *Another Country* -this is an Adam (the "wounded Adam") who is (normally, a provincial and who, with "great expectations", seeks to enter a world which, even if it is no vaster in size than Hester Prynne's village or Billy Budd's ship, is a complex and deviously ordered place. This is an Adam who comes from without the precincts of human and is "morally prior" to all that, being unencumbered by familial or social attachments- and he is a stranger in the world, he is an "outsider, because he is unstained by the world's improbity. (p.151)

The greatest influence on the ablest of Negro writers has been the myth of the 'wounded Adam' amply analysed by Richard Wright, Ralph Ellison and James Baldwin. Their intimate knowledge of the world of rejection and insult has bred in them a propensity for reflection, whose "natural fulcrum " according to Nathan.A.Scott " is the dialect of innocence and experience: the "wounded Adam" is bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh (p.152)

Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* has been continuously provoking critical enquiry because of a certain weight of meaning the novel carries by the profound underlying metaphor of 'invisibility' which involves not just social commentary but contains metaphysical, psychological and moral dimensions. Like the older classic works, *Invisible Man* possesses an odd quality of seeming to have been in place over a long period of time although Ellison published it in the year 1952. To Robert O'Meally invisibility is a metaphor that has moved from its original literary context to become the key metaphor for its era.(1988,p.2) The novel has succeeded in its revolution of American life with pertinent allusions to world literature and with its structural underpinnings in myth and ritual, transcending particular space and time. To Ellison himself, as stated in an interview, certain themes,symbols and images based on folk material

... merge with the meanings which blackness and light have long had in Western mythology: evil and goodness , ignorance and knowledge, and so on. In my novel the narrator's development is one through blackness to light: invisibility to visibility. He leaves the South and goes North; this,as you will notice in reading Negro folktales , is always the road to freedom- The movement upward . You have the same thing again when he leaves his underground cave for the open.
(*Shadow and Act*, 1958, P.173)

Although for Ellison it took a long time to adapt myth and ritual to his work, the work as it is could transmute the feeling of protest into pure art. He identifies art as an instrument of freedom and defines the writer's greatest freedom as his possession of technique. Ellison has thus moved towards a meaningful creative end carrying with him the weight of his forbear's experiences and has displayed a remarkable skill in his manipulation of the collective unconscious and the conscious, through myth. It is only true that the source of all literary genres is the quest-myth, which in its logical derivation performs various functions. Along with the obvious theme of identity, the nameless narrator is constantly in search of an "unseable past". In order to arrive at an understanding of the complex dimensions of his American experience, Ellison plunged deep into the murky world of mythology and folklore, both of which are essential elements in the making of people's history. Northrop Frye identifies

... the central myth of literature, in its narrative aspects with the quest myth ... with the workings of the subconscious where the epiphany originates, in other words in the dream. The human cycle of waking and dreaming corresponds closely to the natural cycle of light and darkness, and it is perhaps in this correspondence that all imaginative life begins. The correspondence is largely an anti thesis: it is in daylight that man is really in the power of darkness, a prey of frustration and weakness; it is in the darkness of nature

that the "libido" or conquering heroic self awakes....
 Hence art, which Plato called a dream for awakened
 minds, seems to have as its final cause the resolution
 of the anti thesis, the mingling of the sun and the hero
 the realising of a world in which the inner desire and
 the outward circumstance coincide. This is the same
 goal, of course, that the attempt to combine human
 and natural power in ritual has. (196, P.159)²

Ellison had been an avid student of the 19th century Russian literature, Dostoevsky in particular and his materials were largely formulated after an absolute grasp of English, French and Spanish literatures. His interaction with Richard Wright further enlarged his vision when he partook in the general leftward turn of American intellectuals and artists. After the first World War, there prevailed a climate for African Brotherhood to join hands with the Communist Party to moot the 'Negro Question' . In spite of ideological differences between W.E.B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey, the two very influential black leaders, they contributed in various ways to the growth of black radicalism. Later Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison successfully emerged as strong radicals to deal with the moral core of the given society.

Ellison's *Invisible Man* encompasses much of the American scene and character although the locale is situated in contemporary South and New York city. The novel progresses with frequent references to the first World War, to Reconstruction, to the Civil War and slavery, to the founding of

Republic, to Columbus and also to the country's frontier past. The novel successfully summarises in quite artistic terms much of what America is with a host of allusions to world literature, myth and ritual, thereby endowing the work with "a strong precognitive power" (Turner, 1982, P.529) Writing on *Invisible Man* Robert O'Meally makes a succinct observation.

Its young hero's mix of idealism and alienation, his escapes into music, marijuana, and gadgetry; the book's study of inter-racial angst and urban riot; his exploration of the relation of the "Woman Question" to the Afro-American freedom struggle; its dangerous false-faced establishmentarians in politics, education and business; and its equally 'lethal "saviours" ' ... all seem to belong to an era *after* the one in which the novel first appeared. (1988, P.2)

Invisible Man deals with the "art of survival", the survival of the protagonist, a young unnamed black who has to pick his perilous path through the lunatic world that America has created for its Negro minority. The novel has a cumulative schematic plot developing the basic episode in a repetitive process to work up an emotional crescendo. The idealistic struggle of the hero to live upto the strictures of his immediate social group, ruins him because the social structure is wrought in hypocrisy. This hurls him into a vortex of despair. William J.Schafer has listed this prognosis "in four large movements":

- 1) the struggle into college, the failure with Norton and expulsion from the paradise of the college;
- 2) job hunting in New York, Emerson's disillusioning lecture and the battle and explosion at Liberty Paints;
- 3) the "resurrection" or reconstruction of the protagonist, his plunge into radical activism and his purge by the Brotherhood;
- 4) the meeting with Rinehart, the beginning of the riots and the protagonist's confrontation and defeat of Ras, ending in the flight underground.

Schafer adds: The novel's prologue and epilogue simply frame this series of climaxes and reversals and interpret the emotional collapse of the invisible man in the present tense (p.117).

At the outset, *Invisible Man* is a study in psychology of oppression and like the fugitive in Francis Thompson's *Hound of Heaven* we have a journey of a soul from innocence to experience. Ellison works out this story of quest along mythic constructs, adding "elements of common cultural experience in the parable to generalise it further, and the protagonist's progress is finally a pilgrimage of the self" (Schafer, p.118).

Constance Rourke was one influence on Ellison by way of the critic Stanley Edgar Hyman, who was strong on myth and folklore. Hyman's insight led Ellison to Lord Raglan's *The Hero*, which enlightened him on greater

aspects of myth "as a narrative linked with a rite and (which) celebrates a god's death, travels through the underworld and eventual rebirth" (Kazin, Pp.247-248).

The nameless hero in *Invisible Man* is indeed an anti-hero driven by the message his grandfather unravels in a dream: "To whom It May Concern... Keep This Nigger Boy Running," And he runs in a vain search for a name, to solve his inner mysteries. He is built upon epic and mythic conventions. From his very boyhood we find him passing through a series of trials and tribulations. He performs the initiation rites of his society. In the college he confronts deceit and duplicity of the Negroes who have capitulated to a white world; he is broken by the powerful alliance of Bledsoe, the Negro president and Norton the white trustee. He realises that both black and white possess the potential to turn against him. He then moves on to New York, and journeys through the tricky by-ways of an infernally labyrinthine world, as he strives to establish contact with whatever comes his way in a bid to authenticate his existence. The executive powers ordain that, being black, he shall be "invisible" and thus his great central effort becomes that of wresting an acknowledgment, of achieving visibility. He secures a job in a Long Island paint factory and there he gets involved, quite by accident, in labour violence. Soon "the Brotherhood" (i.e., the Communist Party) adopts him, after he is heard to deliver an impassioned speech one winter afternoon when he finds himself a part of a crowd watching the eviction of an elderly Negro couple from their Harlem tenement flat.

Presently he realizes that the Negro's cause is just a pawn being used by "the Brotherhood" to serve its ends. So, after the Brotherhood triggers a furious race riot in the Harlem street, he is disillusioned, and dives through a man-hole, down into a cellar, for a period of "hibernation". He has tried the way of "humanity", of being a "good Negro"; he has tried to find a room for himself in American industry, to become a good cog in the technological machine, he has attempted to attach himself to leftist politics.. he has tried all those things by means of which it would seem that a Negro might attain visibility, and therefore viability, in American life. But, since none offered a way into culture, he now chooses to live like Dostoevsky's "underground man". All his reversals have been due to a dermatological factor: the blackness of his skin. At last he decides to stay in his cellar pilfering electricity for his 1,369 bulbs from Monopolated Light and Power, and to dine on sole gin and vanilla ice cream and embrace "The Blackness of Blackness". (p.6)

Many scholars have remarked on the strange use of the word "signifying" in black discourse. Roger D.Abrahams interprets "signifying" as a *technique* of indirect argument or persuasion, "a language of implication," "to imply, goad, beg, boast, by *indirect* verbal or gestural means". "Signifying" according to him "shows the monkey to be a trickster, 'signifying' being the language of trickery the set of words or gestures achieving Hamlet's 'direction through indirection'". (as in Gates, 1987, P.239)

Ishmael Reed echoes Ellison or rather Ellison's echo of T.S.Eliot, who wrote in "East Coker" - "in my end is my beginning, in my beginning is my

end . The end, writes Ellison, "is in the beginning and lies far ahead". (*Invisible Man* ,P.9) Reed signifies upon Ellison's gesture of closure here, and that of the entire Afro-American literary tradition, by positing an open endedness of interpretation, of the play of signifiers, just as his and Ellison's work both signify upon the idea of the transcendent signified of the black tradition, the text of blackness itself. We find a classic text of this tradition " Blackness of Blackness" in the Prologue of *Invisible Man* as cited below

"Brothers and sisters, my text this morning is the 'Blackness of Blackness."

And a congregation of voice answered: 'That Blackness is most black, brother, most black ..."

"In the beginning..."

"At the very start, "they cried.

"...there was blackness..."

"Preach it..."

"... and the sun"

"The sun, Lawd..."

"...was blood red..."

"Red..."

Now black is ..." the preacher shouted.

"Bloody ..."

"I said Black is ..."

"Preach it brother ..."

"... an'black ain't..."

"Red, Lawd, red: He said it's red !"

"Amen, brother..."

"Black will git you ..."

"Yes, it will ..."

"... an'black won't ..."

"Naw, it won't ..."

"It do ..."

"It do, Lawd..."

"... an' it don't".

Halleluiah ...".

"... It'll put you, glory, glory'oh my Lawd, in the
WHALE'S BELLY."

"Preach it, dear brother..."

"... an' make you tempt..."

"Good God a-mighty!"

"Old Aunt Nelly!"

"Black will make you..."

"Black..."

"... or black will un-make you".

"Ain't it the truth Lawd ?" (Pp.12-13)

This sermon according to Henry Louis Gates, Jr. is a critique both of Melville's passage in *Moby Dick* on the blackness of darkness" and of the

sign of blackness as represented by the algorithm signified/signifier. As Ellison's text states, "Black is" and "Black ain't", "It do, Lawd," "an" it don't". Here, Ellison parodies "the notion of essence, of the supposedly natural relationship between the symbol and symbolised. The vast and terrible text of blackness has no essence; rather it is signified into being a signifier.

W.E.B. Du Bois, in his *The Souls of Black Folk* expresses the idea of dualism which figures in black discourse. In opening the chapter entitled "Of Our Spiritual Striving", he states that

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American World,- a world which yields in no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, measuring one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness,- an American, a Negro: two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings: two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.

The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,- this longing to attain self-conscious manhood,

to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the old selves to be lost. (1961, Pp.16-17)

In *Invisible Man* the hero is left to his invisibility, his existence unacknowledged, relegated to the underground where only people like Rhinehart, the rascal, runner, pusher, pimp, preacher and opportunist can be at home. This is as much the dilemma of the Invisible Man as of Ralph Ellison himself. Like the hero of myth and ritual, Ellison's, invisible man finally descends from life on the moral plane into an underworld of death. Discussing the aesthetic angle Larry Neal observes:

Ellison... finds the aesthetic all around him. He finds it in memories of Oklahoma background. He finds it in preachers, blues singers, hustlers, gamblers, jazz men, boxers, dancers and itinerant story tellers. He notes carefully the subtleties of American speech patterns. He pulls the covers off the stereotypes in order to probe beneath the surface where the hard-core mythic truth lies... If any one has been concerned with a "black aesthetic" it has certainly go to be Ralph Ellison (Pp.71-72).

The very premise of the novel, that the protagonist cannot be seen or named, suggests a quaint comedy which balances the extremely "serious studies of blindness and sight, lightness and darkness, perception and

ignorance, being and nothingness, the strange ambiguities and polarities of life" (Burke, 1959, P.18). The novel projects the entry of the nameless hero in the background of 'Battle Royal' based on the Lord Raglan's myth of heroic biography guiding the understructure. Ellison builds up the narrative which gets well encompassed with a Prologue and an Epilogue. The process is described by Ellison himself in *Shadow and Act*.

I began with a chart of the three-part division. It was a conceptual frame with most of the ideas and some incidents indicated. The three parts represent the narrators movement from, using Kenneth Burke's terms, purpose to passion to perception... The maximum insight on the hero's part isn't reached until the final section. After all, it's a novel about innocence and human error, a struggle through illusion to reality. Each section begins with a sheet of paper; each piece of paper is exchanged for another and contains a definition of his identity, or the social role he is to play as defined by him and others. But all say essentially the same thing, "keep the nigger boy running". Before he could have some voice in his own destiny he had to discard these old identities and illusions: his enlightenment couldn't come until them. (1964,p.177)

As a fictional memoir of Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* concerns with the native of leadership and the nature of the hero in a society where the

blacks were constantly prevented from taking up effective leadership. Taking the cue from Lord Raglan's *The Hero: A study in Tradition, Myth and Drama* (1936) Ellison turned his exploration into modern myth, mores and caste codes to the specific subject of American "race rituals"

The invisible man's attempts to take leadership mark the stage of his ritual progress 'from purpose to passion to perception ' while chronicling his relationships with a procession of post reconstruction black leadership archetypes. We find the novel interrogating the nature of leadership strategies as well as the relationships between the leaders and the led; identifying the spectrum of tactical constraints within which political machinations are devised; thereby making Utopian and pragmatic leadership the object of satiric dissection.

In the town smoker-room after the humiliating rites of the 'battle royal' the invisible man delivers Booker T. Washington's Atlanta promise speech to an absolutely inattentive audience of whites. His speech is however appreciated and he is rewarded with a new briefcase. He starts to feel the truth of his grandfather's words 'keep the nigger boy running'. The whole incident in the smoker room forms a kind of initiation for the invisible man. First, he suffers the symbolic castration ritual of black men. A nude white woman performs a sensuous dance before being chased and pawed by the whites. The black boys remain mere onlookers. This follows the Battle Royal.

In her "Ritual and Rationalization: Black Folklore in the works of Ralph

Ellison; Susan L. Blake brings a sophisticated understanding of Folk expression, myth and ritual to bear on the texts of Ellison's works. She calls to attention the split between Ellison the critic and Ellison, the creative artist. Ellison in his commentary on the 'battle-royal incident emphasized its symbolic and mythic elements, while ignoring, minimising, distorting or denying the peculiarities of black American folk expressions and the social conflict at its heart. Thus the social meaning of the battle-royal was contradicted and negated: a social experience was transformed into a mythic one. Blindfolded, the youth are incited by promise of rewards to fight each other, the idea being to keep blacks fighting among themselves without purpose or knowledge of whom they are fighting. This is followed by a double-cross which compels them to scramble for coins placed on an electrified-rug which induces shocks. At the end the protagonist swallows his own blood and delivers the speech.

Psychologically emasculated and thoroughly bewildered, the youth enters a Negro college in the hope of earning a name for serving the Blacks in the American Society. Thus as a willing heir to that "great false wisdom that taught slaves and protagonists alike, that the white is right", the nameless hero yields to the bidding of such false gods like the white millionaire philanthropist, Mr. Norton and his self-anointed appeaser, the black college president, Herbert Bledsoe who "was the example of everything I hoped to be: influential with wealthy men all over the country: consulted in matters concerning the race: a leader of his people: the possessor of not one but two cadillacs, a good salary and a soft, good-looking and creamy-complexioned wife." (*IM*, P.99)

The mastery of oratorical skill that the narrator associates with leadership reveals the significance of certain symbols. For example we get to know of the Reverend Homer A. Barbee, who falls flat on his face on the chapel platform after his speech where he mythologizes the life of the founder of the college. He is discovered to be as blind as his namesake, the Greek epic poet and yet another example of the eruption of Jack's glass eye during a heated argument at a Brotherhood meeting. Besides, the poetic narrative that serves as prelude to the ceremony where Rev. Homer Barbee takes the role of tribal poet, ritually consecrates the memory of the Founder and the speech is permeated throughout with myth. (Incidentally, in Kurt Vonnegut's *Player Piano* we find the name, Homer the Barber who is garrulous with the Shah of Bratpuhr!)

In the second chapter, we find the reaction of Mr. Norton, the Boston Millionaire, to Trueblood and to his story of how he came to commit incest with his daughter. The two figures are contrasted starting with Norton's "custom-made, white, trimmed-with-black shoes that have the elegantly slender, well-bred appearance of fine gloves" and beside him Trueblood in his "cheap tan brogues". We understand that Norton is far from knowing his life well and that black involvement in his fate is at a deeper and darker level than he fondly thinks. He realises that his idealisation of his late daughter has a sexual substratum and that his philanthropy is contaminated not only by selfishness but also by a kind of voyeurism.

The Invisible Man is cast out for having strayed into the habitat of Trueblood along with Norton and also for having accompanied him to the

Golden day Inn, a tavern-cum-brothel. That the invisible man has made an unnecessary detour to the forbidden realms, invites the wrath of Bledsoe and he is thrown out of college. He is on the run once again and reaches Liberty Paints where he encounters Lucius Brockway and Kimbro, both blacks.

The short spell in the paint factory which campaigns its product, If it's Optic White it's the Right White, only triggers the memory of the familiar Negro jingle 'If you are white you are right/ if you are brown, turn around...., if you are black, get back' Lucius Brockway, however represents a skilled worker who is the fancied employee amongst the machines inside the machine (*IM*, P.165) In chapter 6, the black vet narrates to Norton and the invisible man an incident that happened which had degraded him.

Ten men in masks drove me out from the city at midnight and beat me with whips for saving a human life. And I was forced to the utmost degradation because I possessed skilled hands and the belief that my knowledge could bring me dignity-not wealth, only dignity-and other men health (*IM*, P.72)

The skilled people thus get a raw deal. A similar situation is presented by Kurt Vonnegut Jr. in *Player Piano*, where Rudy Hertz the skilled machinist, the turner- on of power, faces similar degradation and despondency. The Vet goes on to describe the black personality thus

... He has eyes and ears and a good distended African nose, but he fails to understand the simple facts of life. *Understand...* It is worse than that. He registers with his senses but short-circuits his brain. Nothing has meaning. He takes it but he doesn't digest it. Already he is - well, bless my Soul! Behold! a walking Zombie! Already he's learned to repress not only his emotions but his humanity. He's invisible, a walking personification of the negative, the most perfect achievement of your dreams, Sir! The Mechanical man! ... And the boy, this automaton, he was made of the very mud of the region and he sees far less than you. Poor stumblers, neither of you can see the other. To you he is a mark on the score-card of your achievement, a thing and not a man; a child, or even less - a black amorphous thing. (*IM*, Pp.72-73)

In the factory hospital the doctors try to remake the invisible man into the mechanical man that he had been, the subservient Southern Negro who died when he attacked Brockway in the boiler room. His mind is blank when he wakes up and gradually becomes aware of the fact that the doctors were trying to perform a machine-induced prefrontal lobotomy that would revert him to his previous state. Thomas A Vogler interprets the process thus

The whole scene is presented as a return to childhood followed by rebirth, including the cutting of the umbilical cord (the electric cord attached to the stomach node), followed by an alcohol rub down by an efficient nurse. "You are a new man", the doctors pointedly tell him. On the way home from the hospital the "new man" is metamorphosed to *the* new man, the Biblical Adam, who even predicts his own fall. "And I felt that I would fall, *had* fallen", he says and then looks across the aisle of the subway car to "see a young platinum blonde nibbling at a red Delicious apple" (1974, P.148)³

Vogler has remarked that a serio-comic effect is achieved by Ellison when he subjects the narrator-hero to emerge into a new man. This is the same intent which operates in the Prologue when the hero is found tapping power from the Monopolated Light and Power Company to light the 1,369 bulbs in the underground. This justly illustrates the effects of a self-recognition on the power struggle that pervades in the novel. At the outset he discovers his own light by burning the papers in his briefcase and then sets out to wreak vengeance on the power monopoly under whom, he had to experience relentless suffering. The self-discovered liberation does not however help him overthrow his oppressors, but by pilfering electricity, he drains 'power'. Listening to the blues⁴ of Louis Armstrong "What did I Do to

Be so Black and Blue?", he feeds on sloe gin and vanilla ice cream, his favourite dessert, but here the pouring of the red liquid over the white mound projects the colour scheme he has been building up to emphasise Americanism.

Earl Rovit addresses this reconciliation with great perspicacity. It is here that the invisible man assumes the "ultimate mask of facelessness" and he is "backed into the blank corner", where he must realise that "the mind that has conceived a plan of living must never lose sight of chaos against which the pattern was conceived". With this reconciliation, he adopts the 'historic' role which Emerson unerringly assigned to the American poet; he becomes "the world's eye"- something through which one sees. eventhough it cannot itself be seen (Hersey (ed.)p.155)

The novel's Prologue and Epilogue serve to frame the various climaxes and reversals in order to interpret the emotional collapse of the invisible man. Quoting Marcus Klein, William J Schafer points to the "shattered effect of the death, rebirth and redeath", which "illustrates completely the erasure of an individual, "... *Invisible Man* is a death driven novel. Its movement is to confirm again and again that the hero doesn't exist and Ellison's difficulty... is to resurrect the hero for each subsequent adventure". (1966. P.264)

In fact what the hero undergoes after the accident in the factory is in effect a process of rebirth achieved "electrically". Tonny Tanner in his article. "The Music of Invisibility" compares the process thus:

From his fall into the lake of heavy water and to his coming to consciousness with a completely blank mind in a small glass-and-nickel box, and his subsequent struggle to get out, it reads like a mechanised parody of the birth process. The electrical treatment has temporarily erased his earlier consciousness and he cannot say who he is or what his name is. His only concern is to get out of the machine without electrocuting himself. "I wanted freedom, not destruction... I could no more escape that. I could think of my identity. Perhaps, I thought the two things are involved with each other. When I discover who I am, I'll be free" (Hersey (ed.), Pp.84-85)

This is a crucial turning point and Tonny Tanner says "the machine is every system by which other people want to manipulate him and regulate his actions. In much the same way the party gives him a new identity and tries to reprogramme him to its ends. The narrator is not a nihilist- he does not wish to smash the machine, knowing that he will probably be destroyed with it-but he wants to find some sort of freedom from the interlocking systems which make up society, and he realises that it will have to be mainly inner freedom".(P.85)

Ellison combines the black Moses myth with the Biblical Moses and the rituals traditionally describing the miraculous birth and survival of the

hero. Many such allusions pervade the novel which exemplify the condition of the blackness and in a very symbolic vein we find the hero being "reduced to a programmed zero" (Kent, 1974, p.167) with the terrors of industrialisation as its background.

In *Invisible Man* although we find the protagonist fleeing into underground for asylum, as if buried alive to hibernate and re-emerge, he at least hopes of addressing his people "on the lower frequencies". This act of survival in the face of gravest odds is that which distinguishes the heroic structure from the acts of self destruction which are embraced in the final desperate effort to salvage dignity in the face of dehumanising oppression. The death of Tod Clifton is perhaps the most powerful treatment of this situation. Clifton was indeed that embodiment of black pride and beauty, but he allows himself to be killed by a white policeman. This is indeed self - destruction which has been precipitated by the painful discovery that he has been manipulated by white leadership in his work with the Brotherhood, the revolutionary organisation. He cuts all associations from the Brotherhood and takes up the role of a vendor of sambo - dolls. This is indeed a self - demeaning act but all the same, it trenchantly symbolised the white people manipulating the black with the aid of invisible strings. He is arrested for selling the dolls without a licence and the resistance leads to his death. The whole situation is poetically described by Ellison.

And I could see the cop bark a command and
lunge forward, thrusting out this arm and missing,
thrown off balance as suddenly Clifton spun on

his toes like a dance and swung his right arm over and around in a short, jolting arc, his torso carrying forward and to the left in a motion that sent the box strap free as his right foot travelled forward and his left arm followed through in a floating uppercut that sent the cop's cap sailing into the street and his feet flying, to drop him hard, rocking from left to right on the walk as Clifton, kicked the box thudding aside and crouched, his left foot forward, his hands high, waiting.

He is shot and this is nothing but suicide in his death there is beauty wherein we find the last symbolic act of defiance against white oppression. The mode adopted by Tod Clifton to lash against the oppressor is symbolically aggressive. The decision to sell the Sambo dolls suggests that he is driven to accept the inevitable dehumanization and exploitation of black men. The novel according to Schafer indeed follows an epic form even though in a fragmentary way. The hero "is no man and everyman" on a modern epic quest, driven by the message his grand father reveals in a dream.

William J. Schafer acknowledges the version of the hero which corresponds well with the summary of the quest myth propounded by Joseph Campbell, familiar to Ellison through Lord Raglan:

The mythological hero, setting forth from his common day hut or castle, is lured, carried away, or else voluntarily proceeds to the threshold of adventure (exile to New York). There he encounters a shadowy presence that guards the passage (Lucius Brockway). The hero may defeat or conciliate this power and go alive into the Kingdom of the dark... or be slain by the opposition and descend in death (the explosion and "death").... Beyond the threshold, then, the hero journeys through a world of unfamiliar yet strangely intimate forces, some of which severely threaten him (tests), some of which give magic aid (helpers). When he arrives at the nadir of the mythological round, he undergoes a supreme ordeal and gains his reward. The triumph may be represented as the hero's sexual union with the goddess-mother of the world (the invisible man's seduction by the white woman, who glowed "as though consciously acting a symbolic role of life and feminine fertility...") The final work is that of return... the hero re-emerges from the kingdom of dead... The boom that he brings restores the world... (p.125).

According to Robert Penn Warren, "no one has made a more unrelenting statements of the dehumanizing pressures that have been put upon the Negro. And *Invisible Man* is I should say, the most powerful artistic representation we have of the Negro under these dehumanizing conditions; and at the same time, a statement of human triumph over these conditions.(1974. P.26)

NOTES:

1. All the quotes from Nathan A.Scott are from "Judgement Marked by a Cellar: The American Negro Writer and the Dialectic of Despair", in *The Shapeless God* (ed.) Larry J.Morney Jr. and Thomas F. Stanley, U of Pittsburg Press. (1968)
2. See Northrop Frye's "Archetypes of Literature", in *Myth and Method* (ed.) James E.Millner, Bison: U of Nebraska Press, (1960,Pp.144-162)
3. See Thomas A. Vogler's, "Invisible Man. Somebody's Protest Novel" in *Ralph Ellison a Collection of Critical Essays* (ed) John Hersey, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1974.
4. See Hersey- Pages 100 - 101.

The blues of Louis Armstrong help the hero discern the paradox of human condition. In Ellison's words, "The blues is an art of ambiguity an assertion of the irresponsibly human, over all circumstances whether created by others or by one's own human failings. They are the only consistent art in the US which constantly reminds us of our limitations

while encouraging us to see how far we can actually go. Its lyricism has a great appeal. *Invisible Man* we get a sample.

“Oh they picked poor robin clean
They picked poor robin clean
They tied poor robin to a stump
Lord, they picked all the feathers
Round from robin's rump
Oh they picked poor robin clean.

This helps to portray the negro primarily as a subject who is constrained to shed his illusions and come to terms with reality.

GEORGE ORWELL'S 1984

'Winston Smith is Winston's myth;

Winston's myth is Winston Smith'

If Huxley's *Brave New World* is a criticism of the Western society of the thirties, George Orwell's *1984* is a criticism of the same society in the last phase of the Second World War. "*1984* is an anti-utopian satire influenced by Jonathan Swift, Dostoyevsky, Zamyatin and Trotsky. It is a synthesis and culmination of all Orwell's previous works that returns to the themes of childhood vulnerability and guilt expressed in "Such, such were the Joys:"¹ and transmutes them into a powerful political myth (Meyers, 1975, p.17).

Orwell had in great abundance the propensity to mythologise his idea of ordinariness in two related ways "in a myth of the Proletariat and in a myth of the English People" (Hynes, 1971, P.10). The former did get fully developed in the *Road to Wigan Pier*, "where the working class is described as stronger, happier, more honest and - in its working class way - wiser than middle class, and particularly superior to the intellectuals. The latter category of English man is described as phlegmatic, patriotic, decent and law abiding, but insensitive to art". (Hynes, P.10) Orwell referred to *1984* as a Utopia in the form of a novel intended to be read as a warning and not as a prophecy. The creators of Utopias seldom predict the future without judging the present. The post-war years were times when England's Socialist government was facing acute financial crunches, shortage of

shelters and even food to sustain. In Europe the Iron curtain had come down, separating the communist world from the west to a dreadful dimension. These factors of severe depression have been significantly portrayed in the novel, using the tools of satire.

Orwell's projection of the post-war totalitarian state is much more awesome than the cataclysmic war and we get a picture of that situation in *Coming Up for Air* (1939):

It's all going to happen. All the things you've got at the back of your mind, the things you're terrified of, the things you tell yourself are just a nightmare or only happen in foreign countries. The bombs, the food queues the rubber truncheons, the barbed wire, the coloured shirts, the slogans, the enormous faces, the machine-guns squirting out of bedroom windows (p.149).

The same climate is evoked in *Oceania of 1984* written ten years later. Orwell felt that he had to scare people into a painful recognition of the perils that threatened their very existence. He writes:

1984 is a novel about the future, that is, it is in a sense a fantasy, but in the form of a naturalistic world... intended as a show-up of the perversions to which a centralised economy is liable, and

which have already been partly realised in communism and fascism... Totalitarian ideas have taken root in the minds of intellectuals everywhere and I have tried to draw these ideas out to their logical consequences (Meyers, 1975, P.145).

Though *1984* is set in a future time, it is more realistic than fantastic, deliberately intensifying the actuality of the present, particularly in its portrayal of the very real, through strange political terrorism of Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia. This gets transposed into a landscape of London in 1941-44. Malcolm Muggeridge has said that "Orwell loved the past, hated the present and dreaded the future". (Meyers, p.144) When Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World* he set the context six hundred years into the future. Orwell must have read Huxley's "preface" to the new edition (1946) of *Brave New World* and in *1984*, he presents stability as the eternal political problem in any society. The texture of the society in *Brave New World* and in *1984* depends upon a complete break with all the past taboos, customs, conventions and ethics of mankind. Between H.G.Wells's *The Time Machine* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*, we have a gap of twenty seven years and between *Brave New World* and Orwell's *1984* we have seventeen years, the years which witnessed the Moscow Trials, the Spanish Civil War, the rise of the dictators, the universal holocaust of the Second World War with its genocide, its promiscuous slaughter of soldiers and civilians alike and the beginning of the Cold War. In Orwell's Oceania we have indeed a terrifying picture, a picture not just dull and unpleasant, but highly repulsive.

We have in *1984* the naturalistic setting of wartime London combined with the brutal characteristics of eighteenth century England emphasizing the moral and material regression under 'ingsoc' (English Socialism).

According to Meyers the Central concept in the ideology of the Party, that freedom and happiness cannot co-exist, is evolved from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* by way of Zamyatin's *We*. In Dostoyevsky, the Totalitarian Grand Inquisitor questions the ordinary man's capacity for freedom, and ironically "Claims it as a great merit for himself and his Church that at last they have vanquished freedom and have done so to make men happy" (1943, Pp. 308-9).

In his review of Zamyatin's novel, Orwell says: "The guiding principle of his state is that happiness and freedom are incompatible The single state has destroyed happiness by removing this freedom" (IV. p. 73). And O' Brien the modern Grand Inquisitor of *1984*, informs Winston that "The choice for mankind lay between freedom and happiness, and for the great bulk of mankind, happiness was better ("The horrible irony, of course is that the people of *1984* have neither freedom nor happiness" (1975, P. 152).

In *1984* we can trace the evolution of several powerful symbolic images. One is O' Brien's picture of the future: " a boot stamping on a human face forever". Orwell was familiar with a variation of this symbol in *Gulliver's Travels*, when Gulliver imagines the Houyhnhmns "battering the Warriors' Faces into Mummy, terrible Yerks from their hinder Hoofs." As

Meyers has put it the "image of sadism is one that Orwell could never exorcise from his mind, for it symbolised the connection between brutality, power worship, nationalism and totalitarianism" . Orwell's repetition of obsessive ideas is an apocalyptic lamentation for the fate of modern man. His expression of the political experience of an entire generation, gives *1984* a veritably mythic power and makes it one of the most influential books of the age, even for those who have never read it (p.154). Referring to *1984* , Raymond Williams states:

As an intransigent enemy of every kind of *thoughtcrime* and *doublethink*, Orwell is still very close and alive... For Orwell the physical inevitability of the War against Fascism combined first with a traditional attachment to his country: Orwell's mature myth of England was written just at this point (1971, p.91).

The society that we discern in *1984* is no more an no less than a concentration camp, a society specifically organised to destroy its citizens. From the late 1930's until his death in early 1950, totalitarianism was Orwell's chief political and moral preoccupation. Both as an abstraction and as the operative ideological mainspring of Hitler and Stalin regimes, it made him shudder and quake. His experience in the Spanish Civil War convinced him that its approach to truth and history was blatantly manipulative. He shared his feelings with Arthur Koestler to whom he said "History stopped in 1936" at which he nodded in immediate understanding

that Orwell was referring to the Spanish Civil War. What disturbed Orwell about the modern age was the "abandonment of the idea that history could be truthfully written ... The implied objective in this line of thought is a nightmare world in which the Leader, or some ruling clique, controls not only the future but the past. If the leader says of such and such an event, "It never happened" - well, it never happened. If he says that two and two are five - well, two and two are five". (*Collected Letters II* Pp258-259). This conjunction of ideas - the deliberate distortion of history by a "Big Brother" leader as the prime example of the perilous state of objective truth in the modern world - was not of passing significance. The link between *1984* and Orwell's observations on the status of history and objective truth in the modern world is virtually unquestionable. The official policy of the ruling elite in Oceania with regard to history is succinct. "who controls the past", ran the party slogan, "Controls the future : who controls the present controls the past" (*1984* , 1949, P.55).

It will be worthwhile to remember Woodcock's² arguments in trying to establish Zamyatin's influence on Orwell in the writing of *1984* - the falsification or destruction of history and the sense of the past .

Orwell's apprehensions with regard to the fate of history and objective truth in the modern world is closely related to a set of perceptions on totalitarianism. He was by the year 1940, convinced that the major motivating force in a totalitarian regime was the retention of power which allowed distortion of history, sudden reversals of policy, betrayals of ideas, calculated callousness and the use of scapegoats. In pondering over

the threat which totalitarianism poses to modern man's hopes for a better world, Orwell displayed throughout the forties an abiding interest in a cluster of question having to do with the effect of totalitarian rule on writers in particular and men in general. A kind of uneasy alarm continued to perturb Orwell for he felt that contemporary totalitarian states were unprecedented with an unpredictable term for their existence. He shared his disenchantment in a review of N -de Basily's *Russia Under Soviet Rule*

In the past, every tyranny was sooner or later overthrown, or at least resisted, because of human nature which as a matter of course desired liberty. But we cannot be at all certain that 'human nature is constant. It may just be possible to produce a breed of men who do not wish for liberty as to produce a breed of hornless cattle ... The radio, press censorship, standardised education and the secret police have altered everything. Mass suggestion is a science of the last twenty years, and we do not know how successful it will be (1939, Pp 378-381)⁴.

This pessimism that occupied Orwell did not however make him absolutely dependent with regard to the welfare of England. The influence that Zamyatin's *We* had over Orwell through Huxley's *Brave New World* needs to be analysed because *We* also handled issues of rebellion and

human nature. Indeed, these issues were portrayed in an altogether different manner by Orwell. The key difference between *We* and *1984* is that the real rebel in the former remains uncapitulated till the end of the world. The strong willed heroine 1-330 refuses to surrender and remains stubborn, silent and smiling before the gravest of odds.

... then she was brought under the Bell, ... she looked at me, holding the arms of the chair firmly. She continued to look until her eyes closed. Then she was taken out and brought back to consciousness by means of electrodes and again she was put under the Bell. The procedure was repeated three times, yet she did not utter a word (*We* , p.218).

The fact that Zamyatin's novel ends with a question mark, however, is inconsistent with his portrayal of the United State and with his view of human nature. Writing in the early 1920's, Zamyatin could not quite envision a totalitarian state as absolutely powerful. Surveillance by a secret police and conditioning are stock ingredients of Utopian societies, their end being the happiness and peace of the human beings. Like the successors of *We* , *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Player Piano* and *Invisible Man*, the tension that rules *We* , is the attempt to allow happiness and freedom to co-exist. Writing a laudatory review of *We* Orwell mentions that Zamyatin did not have any direct experience of living under a real totalitarian regime.

It may well be that Zamyatin did not intend the Soviet regime to be the special target of his satire. Writing at about the time of Lenin's death, he cannot have had the Stalin dictatorship in mind, and conditions in Russia in 1923 were not such that anyone would revolt against them on the ground that life was becoming too safe and comfortable. What Zamyatin seems to be aiming at is not any particular country but the implied aims of industrial Civilization ... It is in effect a study of the Machine, the genie that man has thoughtlessly let out of its bottle and cannot put back again (p.37)

In 1940, Orwell's obsessive preoccupation with the terrors of totalitarianism made him write a passage on "thought Control" which has been published in *The collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell*, in 1968

It not only forbids you to express-even to think - certain thought, but it dictates what you shall think, it creates an ideology for you, it tries to govern you emotional life as well as setting up a code of conduct. And as far as possible it isolates you from the outside world, it shuts you up in an

artificial universe in which you have no standards of comparison. The totalitarian state tries, at any rate, to control the thoughts and emotions of its subjects at least as completely as it controls their actions (Part II, P.135),

Only a few writers have made similar impacts on politics. The very title *1984* has been acknowledged as a political by word. In "1984"- The Mysticism of Cruelty", Isaac Deutscher lists the terms coined by Orwell and the impact that they have had,

"Big Brother", Ministry of Truth, "Thought Police", "Crimethink", "Double think", "Hate Week", etc- have entered the political vocabulary, they occur in most newspaper articles and speeches denouncing Russia and communism. Television and cinema have familiarized many million of viewers on both sides of the Atlantic with the menacing face of Big Brother and the nightmare supposedly Communist Oceania. (1971, p.29).

At noon, on the 4th of April, 1984, Winston Smith, a minor employee in the Ministry of Truth, which is Oceania's propaganda mill, goes home to start a secret journal. He has in possession an old note-book secured from Mr.Charrington's Junk shop where he comes to know of an Act in 1984, which forbids secret thoughts and relics from the past.

Winston Smith is a resident of London, the principal city of Airstrip One, part of the Oceania which comprises of Britain and North and South America. Oceania is an absolutely totalitarian police state, strictly following the principles of 'Ingsoc' like the other power blocs: Eurasia and Eastasia. Most of the people are known as Proles. Stupidity is their second nature. Their actions are constantly monitored by a two-way telescreen to ensure their loyalty to the party.

Winston, however, ventures to make use of the secret journal to defy his mysterious leader-- Big Brother, by writing the slogan "Down with Big Brother!" Most of the state policies are repulsive to Winston as they are anti-human. In this state, even "Love! sweet Love! (is) thought a crime"³ yet he manages to strike a love affair with Julia, a young girl representing the dreaded Thought police. Both work for the party because of their fear. Like Winston, Julia too loves to explore the black markets run by the Proles, where Party members are never supposed to venture into.

The Junk shop of Mr.Charrington continues to fascinate Winston and he gradually gains his complete confidence. He is even given access to a secret bedroom upstairs preserved as it were before the Ingsoc revolution. The best part is that the room is without a telescreen. This attracts Winston and he rents it for his surreptitious courting of Julia. They realise that there are other aggrieved members in the party, particularly, O'Brien. They conspire with him unmindful of the dreadful consequences. They are alerted against the existence of Emmanuel Goldstain, the semi-mythical arch enemy of Oceania, an alleged counter-revolutionary and Scapegoat for all military,

social and economic lapses of the Party. His picture is often shown on the silver screen to invite derision, repulsion and ire from then "loyal" party members. In a frenzy the members scream and those who do not, are "vaporised". Before he is able to complete Goldstein's book, the political situation changes. Oceania, in an abrupt move switches sides in the war and consequently Eurasia becomes the ally and Eastasia, the enemy. All documents affirming the contrary are seized and altered.

By a sudden turn of events, we discover that Charrington had all along been with the Thought Police. He betrays Winston and Julia and they are arrested. Winston is removed to a stinking dungeon in the Ministry of Love and brutally tortured. We learn that O' Brian is indeed the soul of the Party, an ardent advocate of Big Brother. Having realised the true colours of O' Brian and the trials of his Inquisition, we see a weak Winston, yet his love for Julia remains unconquered. Winston, who has a morbid fear of rats is subjected to a strange kind of torture. His sheer dread drives him to betray Julia and plead for his freedom.

The free Winston is a fallen man, physically, mentally and spiritually, not even fit to be "Vaporised". The situation is the same with Julia and each has a story of betrayal to tell, the story of betrayed love. Winston is not sceptical any more. The constant brain washing and shock treatment has made him even love Big Brother and believe implicitly in Oceania.

The concern of Orwell has been with the moral corruption of absolute political power. The decadence of the London metropolis is compared to

an old cabbage lying in the remains of a seedy Victorian building. Situated high above the streets the four main ministries of English Socialism (Ingsoc) tower - Ministry of Truth for the issuing of lies which is referred to euphemistically as "Official news, official culture, the Ministry of Plenty, for the purpose of organising Scarcity, the Ministry of Peace for conducting war and the rather dubious Ministry of love, windowless and fenced with barbed wire and machine gum, where Political prisoners are either "executed" or "rehabilitated" by the new Inquisition. This process of rehabilitation is trenchantly explained by V.S. Pritchett, in his review of *1984* published in the *Twentieth Century Interpretations of 1984*", "Henceforth he will be spiritually, emotionally, intellectually infantile, passive and obedient, as though he had undergone a spiritual leucotomy. He is "Saved" for the life not worth living" (1971, P.20).

The fate of the hero of the bizarre *1984* is no different. At the very opening of the novel we find him in a world .. where "the clocks were striking thirteen" Winston Smith "wandered off into the labyrinth of London" (p.37) and Winston's mind slid away into the labyrinthine world of doublethink. To know and not to know ... (p.17). The reader is thus made to follow then nebulous mechanism of the hero's mind. Orwell has taken extreme care to plant the clues, the puns, the oxymorons double meanings, false leads and false hopes to make the plot of a thriller. This studied manipulation of suspense has been a favourite mode of Orwell and therefore we find the personality of the hero unfolding itself only at the end of the novel. This is echoed by O' Brien who tells Winston, " For Seven years I

have watched over you" (p.108) and later Winston acknowledges" that for seven years the thought Police had watched him like a "beetle under a magnifying glass" (p.122) Orwell's imagination largely depended upon documentation and the sense of recorded fact which is evident in *1984*. This is perceptible when we link certain characters and events in the novel of their historical counterparts. Big brother resembles Stalin, Goldstein is like Trotsky, a dissenting intellectual, and the purges, trials and tortures resemble those that decimated the Russian political party in the thirties. For a reader of modern history, the events will read like a fictionalised commentary on actual political events. But what Orwell attempted was to link the figures and episodes that had already been transformed to myths. Being political and historical, they were available to Orwell's quaint imagination as myths, which he assimilated into art.

The author of Immanuel Goldstein's book (*The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism*) is to Winston as the author of *1984* is to the reader. In describing Winston's reaction to Goldstein's book, Orwell offers both a definition of literature and a clue to the strategy for writing *1984*.

The book fascinated him... . In a sense it told him nothing that was new, but that was part of the attraction. It said what he would have said, if it had been possible for him to put his scattered thoughts in order. It was the product of a mind similar to his own, but enormously more powerful,

more systematic, less fear ridden. The best books, he perceived are those that tell you what you know already (1963, p.89)⁵.

Indeed Orwell wants to tell us what he thinks we already know, fear, but that has not been articulated. We get a crucial metaphor in the glass paper weight which fascinates Winston.

The room was darkening. He turned over toward the light and lay gazing into the glass paper weight. The inexhaustively interesting thing was not the fragments of coral but the interior of the glass itself. There was such a depth of it, and yet it was almost as transparent as air. It was as though the surface of the glass had been the arch of the sky, enclosing a tiny world with its atmosphere complete. He had the feeling that he could get inside it and that in fact he was inside it. (1984, p.65).

The paper weight symbolises the enclosed world that Winston and Julia try to create at Charrington's and since the Thought Police have constructed that world, it is an enclosed Oceania. The 'Brave New World' which shuts out the 'Savage Reservations and the fenced world of *Player Piano* are other examples which induce claustrophobia, leading the sensitive heroes to a schizoid state of mind. However, the chief symbol in 1984 is Big Brother who according to Isaac Deutscher "resembles the bogieman of

a rather inartistic nursery tale; and that Orwell's story unfolds like the plot of a science fiction film of the cheaper variety, with mechanical horror piling up on mechanical horror so much that, in the end, Orwell's subtler ideas, his pity for his characters, and his satire on the society of his own days may fail to communicate themselves to the reader (p.32). But the experience of the reader is that, the grotesque in *1984* does communicate the purport of the author.

In Oceania technological development reached to such a high pitch that society could well satisfy all its material needs and establish equality in its midst. But inequality and poverty are nurtured in order to keep Big Brother in power. In the past, according to Orwell, dictatorship safeguarded inequality, now inequality safeguards dictatorship'. He saw the elements of Oceania in the England of his times and he presented in *1984* all that embodied his hatred and dislike. Orwell was of the opinion that the state of the future will establish its power by destroying souls. Lionel Trilling in his review of *1984* has stated, "Orwell believes that men will be coerced, not cosseted into soullessness. They will be dehumanized not by sex, mass media and private helicopters but by a marginal life of deprivation, dullness and fear of pain (1971, P.25)⁶.

In Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* we are shown the "blackness" of "blackness" (IM, p.7) and in *1984* we come to grips with the "Ultimate meaning of totalitarianism and therefore " the heart of the matter, the whiteness of whiteness" (Howe, p.53). According to Alex Zwerdling Orwell

was essentially moving towards a myth that his society needed and this need was largely created by his awareness of recent history.

The most disturbing symptoms which had revealed themselves in the past decade were the worship of power and the extraordinary appeal of political myths. These two forces were in fact connected, for the myths were necessary to protect committed people from the knowledge that the Universal hunger for power threatened every political system, no matter how idealistically conceived. The myths of the perfect society, of the inevitability of human improvement, and of the possibility of achieving genuine equality were all necessary to hide the new facts of tyranny, the return to barbarism, and the rigidification of social privilege (1971, P.91)⁷.

In 1984, the party could not achieve its goal of conditioning human nature, the way it wanted for they found the members of the Outer Party not properly adhering to the system. In order to condition them the party is compelled to resort to strict measures like education, spying, torture and shooting. Of utmost importance in their agenda was the elimination of personal private life. The girls of the Outer Party are subjected to an intensely puritanical education designed to make them unfit for any pleasure in the sex act. Marital intercourse is allowed, but only so long as it is

joyless. But then, the hero of the novel Winston Smith is constrained to fall in love with Julia. The affair between Winston and Julia is in absolute violation of the structures of the party and there was every danger of the relationship getting thwarted. A common sentiment like this is viewed seriously by the party because it is not in the policy of the party to encourage promiscuity of any kind.

Stephen Spender in his "Introduction to 1984" describes the society recreated by Orwell as a "Society in which the more closely we look at it, the more clearly we see that a machinery of indoctrinated ideology, perpetual war, police terror and brainwashing has taken over. The society in 1984 is machine fed not on petroleum but on ideology. Both the machine and the ideology are dehumanized" (1971, P.63)⁸.

The murky side of Orwell's nightmare of the future, "a boot stamped forever into the human face" unfolds itself at the end of the novel after Winston's arrest for betraying the party. He is subjected to a series of interrogation and inhuman torture in order to 'cure' him into sanity.

All along Winston and Julia had believed that their romantic escapades were not the subject of the "telescreen" installed everywhere. They had thought that they were happily exempted from any such surveillance. But then, they realise to their shock and dismay that every act of theirs, every word was monitored and watched. The Iron voice declares "You are the dead" (p.189) and immediately Winston realises that he is at bay, in a perfect blind alley. The noisy entry of the guards in black uniform, iron-

shod boots and truncheon confirms their predicament. Soon he receives a violent kick on the ankle which nearly flings him off his balance. A man smashed his "fist into Julia's solar plexus, doubling her up like a pocket ruler" (p.190). The unexpected violence made Winston stand still. No one had hit him yet. He expected Charmington also to meet the same treatment, when all on a sudden he discovers the owner of the iron voice. It was none other than Charmington himself. A betrayed Winston realises that all along he had been associating with a member of the thought police without knowing it.

Winston after his arrest did not feel the passage of time. He was confined to a cell in the Ministry of Love. He became a number - no: 6079, condemned to await a harrowing saga in his life. All his hopes were now pinned on O'Brien, whom he thought would do something to save him. But then his hopes were to be dashed soon. He observes the mates of his cell, a chinless man and a skull faced man, both of whom were obviously victims of prolonged torture and starvation. He realises that, the reference to Room 101 sent jitters among the fellow mates. He thought of the fate of Julia. Perhaps he would suffer the physical pain intended for her, so that she is unharmed- thought Winston. Soon he is subjected to witness a scene of violence involving the chinless man who was beaten black and blue by the guards. All his pleas for mercy falls on deaf ears. The ensuing hysteria and remonstrances of the chinless man absolutely alarms Winston. Soon an officer arrives and orders for the skull faced man to be removed to Room 101. The initial calm protests of the man are turned down. Winston learns

that Room 101 is indeed hell, the thought of which chilled the spine. Nor does the violent resistance of the skull faced man alter any decisions. The man continues his plea for mercy.

'Do any thing to me!' he yelled. 'You've been starving me for weeks. Finish it off and let me die. Shoot me. Hang me. Sentence me to twenty-five years. Is there somebody else you want me to give away? Just say who it is and I will tell you anything you want. I don't care who it is or what you do to them, I've got a wife and three children. The biggest of them isn't six years old. You can take the whole lot of them and cut their throats in front of my eyes, and I'll stand by and watch it. But not Room 101! (p.204)

He was however taken away. The last act of violence that Winston saw was a kick that the man received from a guard's boot which broke the fingers of one of his hands. Winston in the meantime was uncomfortable on the narrow bench in his cell. Besides he was starving. He thought about Julia. "If I could save Julia by doubling my own pain, would I do it? Yes, I would" (p.205). This was indeed what he might do but would not, in the face of impending unpleasantness and pain. He still nursed the hope of O'Brien's intervention to relieve the agony. And O'Brien does come, only to launch another Series of torture upon Winston, Baffled Winston prepares to receive another blow from the guard's truncheon - "it might be on the

crown, on the tip of the ear, or the upper area, on the elbow-" (p.206)

From this point onwards we find the intense interrogation procedures and physical tortures inflicted on Winston, under the direction of O'Brian. The process continues to several days until Winston yields to every wish of the party. The kind of brain washing inflicted on Winston is graphically narrated by Orwell.

Inconceivable, inconceivable that one blow could cause such pain!... The guard was laughing at his contortions. One question at any rate was answered. Never, for any reason on earth, could you wish for an increase of pain. Of pain you could wish only one thing: that it should stop. Nothing in the World was so bad as physical pain. In the face of pain there are no heroes, no heroes....
(p.206).

The reign of pain and terror continued until he felt like a sack of potatoes flung on the stone floor of the cell. The surly barber and the men in white coats who felt his pulse and tapped his reflexes were but adjuncts of the agents of torture, for they were unsympathetic and business like, searching for broken bones or shooting needles into his arms to induce sleep. The frequent questioning left Winston emaciated and shrivelled until he became a "mouth" that uttered, a hand that signed, whatever was demanded of him. His real concern was to find out what they wanted him to

confess, and then confess it quickly, before the bullying started anew" (p.209) But the "Confessions" did not have any impact on O'Brien, eventhough he confessed to offences he had never committed or dreamed of committing. He even "confessed that he had murdered his wife, although he knew, and his questioners must have known that his wife was still alive" (P.209).

The mode of interrogation now changed to a different pattern. Winston was strapped to a chair and subjected to various degrees of electric shock to conform to the party's slogan and policies. This included the acceptance of 'two plus two adding to five'. All the efforts made by Winston to surrender voluntarily were discouraged.

*O' Brien smiled slightly. 'You are a flaw in the patterns, Winston. You are a stain that must be wiped out ... we are not content with negative obedience, nor even with the most abject submission. When you finally surrender to us, it must be of your own free will. (p.219)

O'Brien explains to Winston the three stages of reintegration. They are learning understanding and acceptance. Having completed the first, O'Brien informs Winston that those, ideals laid down in Goldsteins' book are never going to be realised. Thereby Winston is fully stripped of the illusion that the Proletarian rebellion would overthrow the party. O'Brien declares that he and his comrades are the "priests of power" and quotes

the party slogan "Freedom is slavery" and then goes on to reverse it "slavery is freedom". (p.228). The ensuing conversation condemns Winston "as the lastman", "the guardian of the human spirit", but not before making him listen to the vows he took before joining the Brotherhood under O'Brien's behest. Winston is asked to remove his clothes and have a look at himself in the mirror.

*He approached it, then stopped short. An involuntary cry had broken out of him... he was frightened. A bowed grey coloured, skeleton-like thing was coming towards him. Its actual appearance was frightening, and not merely the fact that he knew it to be himself. (p.233)

Orwell goes on to describe the disgusting change in the appearance of Winston after being subjected repeated courses of tortures. O'Brien aggravates his shock,

*"Look at the conditions you are in!" he said. "Look at this filthy grime all over your body. Look at the dirt between your toes. Look at that disgusting running sore on your leg. Do you know that you stink like a goat? ... can make my thumb and forefinger meet round your bicep. I could snap your neck like a carrot. Do you know that you have lost twenty-five kilogram since you have been in

our hands? Even your hair is coming out in handfuls. Look! He plucked at Winston's head and brought away a tuft of hair, 'Open your mouth. Nine, ten, eleven teeth left. How many had you when you came to us? And he few you have left are dropping out of your head. Look here! (p.234)

After this tirade of rhetoric, followed his act of seizing the rest of Winston's front teeth and tossing them across the cell. All these demanded the greatest capacity for endurance. Winston not knowing what more to expect, sometimes relaxed and sometimes jumped in terror at the sound of the boots. He even slips into a reverie where he invokes Julia and calls out her name loudly.

This act of Winston precipitates the final stage of his reintegration, namely, acceptance. He is condemned to the dreaded Room 101. The mode of torture is changed. Winston is compelled to face a horde of hungry rats that are set on him by O'Brien. Before that he gives a speech on the enormous abilities of rats in harming the human being. Winston is horrified and almost goes out of his mind and in a frenzied fashion he betrays Julia for his own liberation. All his vows of chivalry vanish in the face of relentless physical agony. He even willingly expresses his love for the Big Brother. The leucotomised Winston is finally set free and like a true bonist he moves out with a soul as white as snow and at the final phase of relatisation."two gin scented tears trickled down the side of his nose. But it was all right,

everything was all right, the struggle was finished. He had won the victory over himself. He loved Big Brother" (p.256)

Thus in 1984 also we get a bizarre projection of dystopia where the hero is a typical 'everyman' succumbing to all possible aspects of dehumanisation. To quote Stephen Spender, Orwells "novel sets out reasonably to demonstrate despair, it is about the possibility of all the processes of a totally politicized world becoming canalised into the dehumanized functioning of the state: of love and joy becoming gestures at best ineffectual and at worst subversive. (1971, p.65).

NOTES:

1. "Such, such, were the Joys". The line from Blake's "The Echoing Green" points to the cyclical nature of ages. The profound nostalgia that Blake's poem expresses provides a key to the understanding of utopian consciousness. Blake's 'Innocence' as critics like Schorer and Erdman have averred, is essentially a critique of the acquisitive propensities of the experienced adult world. See Mark Schorer *William Blake: The Politics of Vision*. N.Y: 1946 and David. D. Erdman *Blake Prophet Against Empire L: A Poet's Interpretation of the History of His Own Times*. Princeton, N.J.Princeton UP, 1977.
2. See George Wood Cock, *The Crystal Spirit: A Study of George Orwell* (London, 1967)

3. Blake's 'A Little Girl Lost' opens with the sombre lines: "Children of the future Age/Reading this indignant page,/know that in a former time/ Love! sweet Love! was thought a crime" (p.56).
4. See George Orwell, Review of N.de Basily's *Russia under Soviet Rule* in *Collected Letters - 1*, Pp 378 - 381. The Review appeared in *New English Weekly*, January 12th, 1939.
5. See Irving Howe's(ed) *Orwell's Nineteen Eighty Four, Text, Sources, Criticism* N.Y. Harcourt Brace. 1963.
6. See Lionel Trilling 'Orwell on the Future", in *Twentieth Century Interpretation of 1984*(ed) Samuel Hynes, 1971. Englewood Chiffs. N.J. Prentice Hall.
7. See Alex Zwerdling, *Orwell and the Techniques of Didactic Fantasy* *ibid.*
8. See Stephen Spender, "Introduction to 1984" *ibid.*
9. Note that quotes and excerpts cited from p.189 to p.206 are from George Orwell's *1984*, from the 1984 edition of Signet Classics, New York.

CONCLUSION

After the celebrated structural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, it has been possible to demonstrate through modern fiction that mythic narratives do perform repetitively, negatively, transformationally and in allegorical forms. My task has been to keep alive, in my approach to both myth and the novels chosen for analysis, not only the problems of form, but also the ontological issues which drive myth and modern fiction to the structures they embody. My concern has also been with the condition of narrative transformation which occurs when myth appropriates the fictive process which makes it deeper than mere entertainment and graver than incidental event. As one of the popular cant words of our times, *myth* has been spurring modern literary imagination and critical acumen. We find the concept of myth being re-invented in multiple ways making it a matrix of transformations to represent a series of possibilities in modern literature. The phenomenon has been succinctly expressed by William Righter in *Myth and Literature* (1975).

...when critics assume that Levi-Strauss has discovered a 'logic' of myth...(it) suggests simply the persistence of fundamental patterns which are subject to a series of formal permutations. These may or may not correspond to actual transformations which myths undergo, but the many forms of repeated symmetries and

asymmetries, of similarity and difference and opposition suggest a 'system' in which all of the other parts are intelligible in terms of each other... if from any one pattern we can derive the permutations, they are of course not predictive, but simply an exercise in intellectual design. And part of the charm of transformation 'system' is that of the unexpected, the suddenness of a change in direction, the incredible and unpredictable detail which leads to a wholly asymmetrical transformation, and which is as much a part of the 'logic'...(P.125)

The first two chapters of my dissertation have been titled *Myth and the Logic of Transformation and Regeneration I & II*, where I have listed numerous definitions and shades for the word *myth*. Myth being very capacious in its import, continues to defy absolute definition. The ambit of my dissertation has been the study of two British novels, and two American novels. In all these novels, as exemplified in my dissertation myth has significantly enhanced the power of narrative design as it is more individual and capable of expressing life more precisely than science. Quoting Jung, Righter attests the "desire to reduce a chaos of experience to some form or order" 'What we are to our inward vision, and what man appears to be *sub specie aeternitatis*, can only be expressed in terms of myth' (P.102)

Myth in this respect becomes the "artist's licence" (Righter P.114) which provides him with a freedom to play or construct, easing him from his subservience to other functions, defined by a less anxious and more exigent social order. It is possible that a particular culture or an age looks for myths and they become the product of the age. Righter presents an excerpt from Robbe - Grillet's article that appeared in 1970, named *Le Nouvel Observateur*.

As I cast my eye over a miscellany of scandals and crimes, as I look at the shop windows and advertisements which make up the surface of every great city, when I take a stroll through the tunnels of the metro, I am assailed by a multitude of signs which taken together constitute the mythology of the world in which I live, something like the collective unconscious of society... (P.110)

Barthes, is quite right when he stated in his principal essay *Le mythe*, anjourd' Lui (1952) that it is the construction of the present that counts and the relationships that myths bond for a social order. This amounts to the sharing of myths by nations and if a nation shares no such myth, it is a nation with no available past, with no sense of its present reality, William Righter puts the idea tersely : "As with classes so with nations: the myth is shaped to the needs of the moment, and myth is the voice in which the age speaks to itself" (1975, P.106)

In my dissertation I have endeavoured to project through the choice of the novels to support the aforementioned views. The very intent of my study of mythic constructs has been to account for the 'mythic' of reading and writing as the clue to the status of myth. The function of myth *in* or as literature in the twentieth century operates in different levels as evinced by Burton Feldman and Robert Richardson in their critical anthology *The Rise of Modern Mythology* (1972). We have for example seen the widely held and working myth of racial equality through Ellison's *Invisible Man* and at the same time we see myth being articulated at various levels substituting each other. Nicola Chiaromonte, a traditional moralist, has responded to this function of myth which serves to keep mythicity alive by relying on fictions to make sense of the modern world by circumventing the "inadequacies of language to explain the inexplicable" (Gould, 1981, P.11)

Today, instead of the cult of ideologies we seem to have adopted a cult of the automobile, television and machine made prosperity in general. But this cult is based on a belief fomented by bad faith, the belief that material (industrial, technological and scientific) advances go hand in hand with spiritual progress; or, to be more precise, that the one cannot be distinguished from the other, and that the only problem left to be solved is the correction of a few remaining flaws

and the removal of some lingering injustice. In plain words, it is generally thought that the production of increasingly prodigious and increasingly complicated 'useful' objects is a good in itself, that is, an absolute. And even if this were not so, there is the underlying feeling that one cannot do otherwise - that one cannot run counter to history. To doubt this is considered simply foolish. It cannot be denied however, that even while people accept this myth and let it govern their lives, a certain feeling of uneasiness persists and notions like 'alienation', the 'absurd', 'anguish' and other unpleasant states of mind have begun to be discussed. As for those who object to the ideas underlying the myth, they are condemned in the name of 'modernity', 'science' and 'reality' (as in Righter, P. 111)

The concern of Aldous Huxley, George Orwell, Vonnegut Jr. and Ralph Ellison has been to demonstrate the dangers of the destruction of individualism and describe with great perspicacity what the absence of individualism could actually mean. In all the four novels. *Brave New World*, *1984*, *Player Piano* and *Invisible Man* we find a rebellion or a revolution being worked up by the central characters as a means of exposing the society they describe. As all the protagonists have an interest beyond the

individualistic, the reader is able to identify with them, at least in a minimal way. It is minimal, fortunately, because Huxley has demonstrated human nature as, sterilized and Orwell has demonstrated human nature as defeated.

In Kurt Vonnegut Jr., his Americans are neither drugged nor thought controlled; they are simply bored. In Ralph Ellison, the hero just remains 'invisible' and his loss of illusion compels him to confine himself to underground either to be buried or reborn. All these novelists have regarded the word 'progress' with the greatest suspicion. For Huxley's generation, progress meant a Victorian faith in the inevitable improvement in humanity. Henry Ford was the mythic hero who symbolised the machine age of conspicuous consumption. Although scientific advancement interested Huxley, so long as it was perfectly in the control of man, Orwell's instincts led him to something like Morris's anti-machine utopia. He found modern technology profoundly distrustful. However, the societies portrayed in both novels regard individualism as a threat to the state. There is also the intense intolerance of non-corporate behaviour and categorization of people. Jenni Calder in her study, *Huxley and Orwell : Brave New World and Nineteen Eighty Four* describes the people in both societies thus.

They wear uniform and they are uniform. In *Nineteen Eighty Four* party members, men and women, wear blue overalls. The only necessary distinction is their identification as party members.

In *Brave New World* the colour of the clothes indicates the caste of the wearer, Alpha down to Epsilon, and the lower castes wear less attractive colours than the upper. Conformity is the rule, reinforced by routine and a training that detects the slightest hint of anti-social behaviour. Inevitably, character and personality are also determined by category. (1976, P.17)

Vonnegut has admitted that the plot of *Player Piano* is only an American version of Huxley's *Brave New World* and in crafting the novel he has also appropriated the nightmare vision of George Orwell, where "People act the same, think the same and have neither more or less trouble with political repression than they had before. As dystopian science fiction, *Player Piano* extrapolates just one element : the *Challenge of being human* when all socially structured rewards for such existence have been removed ((Klinkowitz, 1982, P. 36) This challenge applies to all the other novels of my study as well. The heroes of these novels are not programmed human configurations but heroes who attain a kind of athanasy, forming and impressive mythic pantheon.

Modern narratology has sought to uncover the close kinship between desire and narrative. The quest of the hero has always been premised on desire for the mysterious other, be it the inaccessible princess or the exotic *El Dorado*. Marshall Berman in his penetrating critique of the experience of

modernity, touches upon the essential contradictoriness of the modernist epoch:

To be modern is to find ourselves in an environment that promises us adventure, power, joy, growth, transformations of ourselves and the world... and, at the same time, that threatens to destroy everything we have, everything we know, everything we are... it pours all maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, "all that is solid melts into air".(1982, P.15)

All the novels echo the plight of the society caught between a dehumanizing industrialism and an equally dehumanizing primitivism. Besides, the atmosphere evoked by the aftermath of the Second World War prevails in these novels and the dread of another war close to its heels heralding unknown horrors that it might unleash. This apprehension seems to have provoked rather than inspired, most writers of the times. In all the novels of my study, the issues of identity, divided self, freedom and happiness have preoccupied the novelists. Apart from powerful mythic underpinnings, the tools for depicting their contemporary societies have been satire, irony and even humour. If Vonnegut Jr. employs the shade of

black humour, called gallows-humour, for Ellison it is all-hell-break-loose humour. Huxley and Orwell have been articulating their anxieties related to progress and idealism. What worried all these novelists was the rapid progress of science and technology and particularly the "science sans conscience". If Huxley was sceptical during the 1930s, Orwell saw power politics as more lethal than science that threatened mankind.

Vonnegut's foreword to *Player Piano* appears most prophetic when we look at our own contemporary dilemmas. In fact all the novels chosen for my dissertation serve only as a foretaste of what is already around. The foreword of Vonnegut goes like this "this book is not a book about what is but a book about what could be. The characters are modelled after persons as yet unborn, or perhaps, at this writing, infants." This was in 1952 and now, after half a century, many Americans feel that their existence is pointless although they live the most dynamic and affluent nation on earth. When one is confronted with ethical questions, the cool, commercial facade of modern life disappears. The climate conjured up by Vonnegut in *Player Piano* is the post war period after a hypothetical Third World War and third Industrial Revolution. The horrors of mechanisation are almost on a high pitch in the current times. And the picture that we see is more bizarre than the fantastic that we read in books or see in films. The bane of mechanisation apart, one also notices a rising degree of mind related syndromes afflicting a whole lot of people around the world, particularly the people of America. A pioneer in Situationist Movement in America, Giles Ivain speaks of the anxiety syndrome that has affected a considerable proportion of American

population. The symptoms of the malaise are of 'banalisation', "no more laughter, no more dreams-just the endless traffic that pass you by the nightmarish junk we are all dying for". Everyone is hypnotised by work and comfort, T.V screens and computer 'trips' which infect whole societies with an epidemic of sadness. This is also an age of atarttic drugs and pop culture which blot out monstrosities of reality. The use of cyber space has become so rampant that whole life styles, even languages have been callously crippled. This picture is better presented in a poem.

Cyberlingo

*Dos, Windows
And Gates ajar,
The net is cast
The web is spun
Bug 'n Mouse
On Chip 'n Cheese,
Virus breeds
Screams on Screens!
Log or Lag
The 'smart' in U
Freaks or geeks
Fall online
Or hang on fine.*

These admonitory lines, though radiating humour reveal the state of man in the wired and weird world of today. If Orwell used Newspeak to voice a degenerate and decadent world, Vonnegut rates the average man as "Takarū" on a 'trip' in 'Tralfamadore' (the average citizen is but a cat, (u-r-a-k-a-t) nourishing a 'fataldream'. These are times when even writing has become a dying art.

According to Slavoj Zizek, "the ultimate American paranoid fantasy is that of an individual living in a small idyllic Californian city, a consumerist paradise, who suddenly starts to suspect that the world he lives in is a fake, a spectacle staged to convince him that he lives in a real world, while all people around him are effectively actors and extras in a gigantic show". Zizek's article "Welcome to the Desert of the Real" (September, 2001) cites the most recent example of such a show to strike a relevant note concerning the nightmare incident that shook America on the 11th of September 2001. Peter Weir's, *The Truman Show* with Jim Carrey playing the small town clerk who gradually discovers the truth that he is the hero of a 24 hour permanent TV show: his home town is constructed on a gigantic studio set, with cameras following him permanently". Among its predecessors, Zizek mentions Philip Dick's, *Time Out of Joint* (1959) where the "hero living a modest daily life in a small idyllic Californian city of the late 50s gradually discovers that the whole town is fake, staged to keep him satisfied... the underlying experience of *Time Out of Joint* and *The Truman Show* is that the late capitalist Consumerist Californian paradise is, in its very hyper reality "IRREAL", substanceless, deprived of the material inertia"

The post modern predicament that we experience in our communities today are but extensions of the fantasy generated by such shows and such books. The logic attains a climax when super computers start dictating terms in the wired world of today. The Y2K hype at the turn of millennium is a classic instance when the whole world was held hostage by "computerrorism" . And here we are, watching "topless towers" which "the centre cannot hold".

The portable nightmares ensconced on human laps(e) rule the roost, all set to convert the push-button paradise to a push-button inferno. The term of the Big Brother is over and now it is the Bigger Brother's turn. "The Knights of Kandahar", after all are not just "manning the road block on Griffin Boulevard!" (*Player Piano*, Pp.281,284)

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