

LITERARY

Eliot's Ideas of Tradition and Individual Talent

Fayza Sultana

THE Romantics of nineteenth century reacted against the neoclassical age of literature. The Romantics came out from the disciplined tradition of the classical writers.

The word tradition was used in English in narrow sense, or in fact, in a negative sense, in the nineteenth century.

First, he said that to follow the tradition meant the awareness of the past. That it involved the historical sense of past and presentness of the past.

Tinker, Tiller, Technical Gammer, edited by Matthew S Ganser, Helen Appleton and Nicola Carter. Intermediate Technology, 103-105 Southampton Row, London WC1B 4HH.

This book calls on development agencies to take more account of the extent of local knowledge and skills when introducing technological changes.

The authors consider 17 cases of locally developed technologies from 14 countries around the developing world.

It considers who are the innovators, what motivates them, and what constrains their productivity are just some of the issues examined.

and the historical sense means that a poet should be aware of the history of poetical development from Homer till the present age. This awareness is not to be limited to the country's history; instead, the historical sense compels a man to write with his own generation and with all the generations of all time, of all countries.

This awareness of the past will make the present writers realize that "they are that which we know". This realization of the importance of tradition is necessary because the present age owes to the past its power of criticism of evaluation and of making contrast.

Tradition cannot or must not be separated from individual talent for another reason. This is that art never improves, rather the material changes and develops. Change is important than improvement.

New world modifies the existed erudition. As the present is judged by the past so will be the coming future judged by the present. This cycle of modification and alteration will continue age after age.

Eliot also warns the impersonal poets that they should not be partial to any particular period of past literature. The poet should be impersonal, so he cannot show his interest in anything but to make a new present with the awareness of the past.

MY WORLD

From preceding page

Swan Lake, which on my own, I could neither afford nor organise?

Secondly, I had frequent meetings with Ashfaq Ahmed (not his real name), a Pakistani communist who had fled the country during the crackdown on leftists and had ended up in Moscow to join the ranks of Asian exiles, with a job at the Soviet Institute on Asian Affairs.

Lastly, my several sessions with young Soviet writers and poets, one of whom had given me that charming message this piece started with.

To all these people, I had only one introduction, "A friend of Faiz."

JUST two days before I leaving Karachi for Moscow, I ran into Faiz Sahib at a bookshop on the ground floor of Hotel Metropole. We had not met for a year or two. We exchanged pleasantries and our news.

In fact, Faiz Sahib himself had just returned from a trip to the Soviet Union where Russian translation of some of his best poems had come out in a book form, turning the Pakistani poet, already well-known there, into a celebrity.

From the bookshop, we went to a handicraft store nearby, where the poet bought about a dozen gifts which were then wrapped in small packets. Our next stop was his apartment where, after a lunch, he wrote out the names on the gifts, the telephone numbers of his friends on a separate piece of paper and scribbled notes for Iqbal Athar and Ashfaq. Faiz Sahib did all this with meticulous care but in a quiet relaxed mood, sipping a cup of coffee and puffing a cigarette.

While watching the poet go through these motions, I recalled that a friend had once said about being in the company of Faiz Ahmed Faiz.

First, while, as a poet and a writer, he was himself an intense person, he had a way of putting the other person at ease. He spoke little, seldom asked anyone a direct personal question and offered his own views, on any subject under discussion, in carefully measured terms.

Secondly, Faiz cared for people, especially for journalists, writers and painters, often through simple gestures. Like he scribbled notes of introduction for me to friends in Moscow, he would jot down a letter to help an artist sell his painting to one of his many rich and understanding friends.

"One of my jobs," he once said to me, "is to put friends in touch with friends and see what they can do for one another."

On another occasion, he told an artist friend of mine, who had considerably benefited from the help extended by Faiz, "I love art, but I love artists more."

While Faiz finished writing his notes, I could not help wondering how he had once adjusted to journalism and, in time, become one of the outstanding newspaper editors of South Asia.

W HILE politically it was less influential than Dawn, the Pakistan Times was undoubtedly the best English-language news-

Buddhist Heritage From preceding page 13th century is mainly attributed to emergence of religious and social conservatism during the subsequent Sena Rule.

The law we have should protect everyone irrespective of gender — from murder, attempted murder and assault. Woman can go and lodge a complaint at the Nar Nirotan Cell set up at the Ministry for Women's Affairs.



THE CHANGING SKYLINE: With more and more high-rise buildings being erected, the city of Dhaka has been undergoing a fast cosmetic change over the past one and a half decade, as evident from a bird's eye view of its commercial district around Motijheel. Star Photo.

paper of the country, certainly until October 1958 when the paper and its allied publications were taken over by the martial law government of General Ayub Khan.

With full moral support from Mian Sahib — as Iftikharuddin was called by all — Faiz and Mazhar worked out a set of guidelines for the paper, which were understood and accepted by all. Had they been put into a codified form, this writer would have certainly kept a copy.

The guidelines incorporated all the rules of good journalism. There would be no slant in news presentation and editorial comments would be fair and balanced.

An interesting guideline related to the coverage of the activities of Mian Sahib who, besides being a prominent politician, was also an active independent Member of the Parliament.

It was understood by all that the coverage of the owner's activities would be judged strictly on their news value. In fact, the tendency in the newsroom was to play them down so much so that Mian Iftikharuddin seldom hit the front page.

Indeed, as the majority share holder of the Progressive Paper's Limited (PPL) which owned the Pakistan Times and its allied publications, Mian Iftikharuddin seldom hit the front page.

Iftikharuddin, a landlord-turned-a leftist politician of Pakistan, played a positive role in the evolution of the Lahore daily into a great newspaper of South Asia.

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brought Mian Sahib to Dhaka for consultation with Moulana Bhasani and other progressive leaders. One day he addressed a public rally at the Paltan Maidan, which I covered in a 800-word cable.

All that came out of the piece in the newspaper was a 200-word report, used on the bottom of an inside page. In a short note later, Faiz Sahib advised me that there was no need to cover Mian Iftikharuddin's activities extensively.

Here, one must give full credit to all three personalities — Iftikharuddin, Faiz and Mazhar — that more than three decades ago they put into effect certain professional rules and guidelines which journalists here and elsewhere in South Asia are still trying to establish, against all odds.

"It is really Faiz who made all the difference," a friend in Lahore once said when we were discussing how the Pakistan Times could be so far ahead of its time. While Faiz provided the Pakistan Times with its creative spirit, Mazhar placed it at a high professional level, another friend once said about the growth of this unique daily.

This explains why the paper, edited by one of the greatest poets of South Asia, showed such a strong bias for good writing. This meant that people who produced good signed columns, human interest profiles, discussions on art and book reviews turned out to be closest working associates of Faiz Sahib, a bit to the dismay of our colleagues at the newsdesk.

It was also very much under the guidance of Faiz that the Pakistan Times launched "Lalo Nahar", an Urdu weekly

devoted to art and literature, the first journal of its kind to be published in Pakistan.

If working with Faiz Sahib was stimulating and pleasant, it was also challenging, involving a lot of hard work. Some time in 1957, the poet came to Dhaka for the shooting of 'Jago Hua Savera', the first feature film to be produced by an international team, for which Faiz had done the script. Ajay Kardar directed the movie, while the two leading roles went to Khan Ata and Tripti.

Faiz invited me to accompany him to a village on the Meghna where the shooting had been going on. My initial reaction was one of slight resistance. Much had been going on in the political circles of Dhaka, which a reporter could not miss.

"You will cover politics for the rest of your life," I remember Faiz telling me. "but you won't get a chance of seeing the shooting of a movie, like Jago Hua Savera."

The hint that I might do a colour piece on the shooting for the paper came much later, almost like an instruction which I carried out. No two outstanding editors are the same. They are different from one another in more ways than one. But they all have one thing in common, a commitment to the profession.

So, after all these decades, we remember the message that I was asked to bring all the way from Moscow to Karachi: "Please tell Faiz that of all the poets in the world, I love him most."

BOOKS



Climate Change and World Agriculture, by Martin Parry, Earthscan, 3 Endsleigh Street, London WC1H 0DD. ISBN 1 85383 065 8. Published in October 1990 (£9.95).

Professor Martin Parry, of Birmingham University, is Chairman of the UK Climate Change Impacts Review Group and was lead author in the assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) on the potential impacts of the change on agriculture.

This book provides an authoritative assessment of the likely impacts in different agricultural regions around the world.

He considers the ways agriculture could adapt to reduce a potential disaster.

He points out that if greenhouse emissions continue at or near the current level, global warming is expected to occur. This would result not only in higher mean temperatures but also in more unpredictable and severe weather.

Moru Tirtha Hinglaj (Social Drama): Uttam, Sabitri, Bikash Ray

Banhi Shikha (Uttam, Supriya, R. Mallick, Olivia)

Top 10 English Movies

- Fist of Glory (Action) Dale Apollo Cook
Ball Buster (Action) Bonnie Payne
A killing in small town (thriller-true story) Barbara Hershey
Gun Point (Action) Frank Kanto

- Chameleons (Comedy) The Field (Drama) Richard Harris, Dhon Hart
Bronx War (thriller) W Disney's Darby Ogill and the little people (Fantasy) Seaw Connery
W Disney's White Fang (Comedy) Ethaw Hawke
Waiting for the light (Drama)

Sources: Filmfair, Dhanmond, Sicily Video, Mohammedpur.

Bengali Top 5

- Mirinal Sen's Maha Prithibi; Victor Banerjee, Aparna Sen, Sumitra
Prem Pujari (Romantic); Prasanjeet, Shatapdi
Amar Shathi (Romantic); Shatapdi, Arjun Chakraborty
Raj Nartaki (Romantic); Tapash Pal, Sudha Chandran



VIDEO SCENE

S.M. Mamoon

DHAKA'S video owners think the name 'Amritabh' sells like a hotcake. Despite release of one new Hindi movie — Qurbani Rang Layegi, the video business remains quite satisfactory.

Amritabh's stage programme: Joomma Chumma in London is now on top of the chart and is in great demand in the market. One can really enjoy this cassette with Amritabh the centre of the attraction, well supported by Amir Khan, Sri Devi, Neelam, Salman Khan, and Anupam Kher.

Mirinal Sen's Maha Prithibi (Bengali) starring Victor Banerjee, Aparna Sen will appeal the enlightened class. The children can grab the two new cartoons Mickey Mouse, and Tom & Jerry — 30.

Top 10 Hindi Movies Joomma Chumma in Lon-

WRITE TO MITA



Dear Mita, I am faced with a peculiar problem. I am a retired old man in my early sixties. Yet my wife who is in her early fifties suspects me of having an affair with a woman half my age.

Ahmed Reza, Jigatola, Dhaka.

Dear Mr. Reza, You may be right that a previous incident in the family is perhaps the reason for her behaviour. The only way is to have a frank talk with her, not in an angry or excited way but calmly and firmly.

Rita, Dhaka

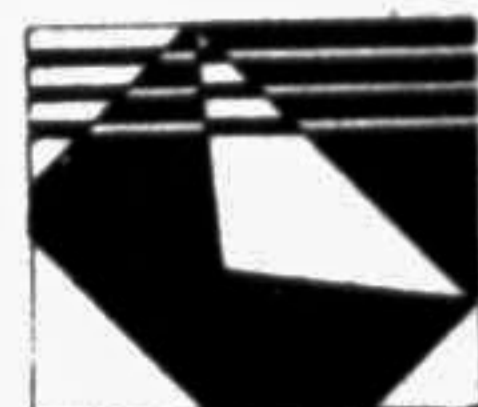
along with the recognition of the important role women play can change this social evil. This awareness will come with education aimed at changing society's attitude towards women, in every sphere.

Dear Mita, You once wrote to a woman who suspected her husband of unfaithfulness. It seemed from your answer that you did not really believe her.

Shaila, Chittagong.

Dear Shaila, I did not disbelieve the woman who accused her husband of unfaithfulness. I merely asked her to be sure of the facts, as this is a serious allegation.

WRITE TO MITA



Run by a trained and experienced Family and Marriage counsellor, assisted by a professional team of doctor, psychologist and lawyer, this column will answer questions relating to family, marriage, health, family laws, and social and interpersonal relationships.