

Brilliant Return for Daniel Day-Lewis

by Peter Roberts

Unbearable Lightness of Being. It would have been a sad day indeed if such a chameleon of an actor had been forced to give up whilst still in his thirties because he liked the challenge of a series of varied roles that prevented him from just coasting along on his good looks.

Project Dropped

Relief that with the success of *"The Last of the Mohicans"* Daniel Day-Lewis was back in the acting fold was soon followed by the realisation that it was never going to be an easy and straightforward life for an artist who takes himself and his work so seriously. He was, for example, to be playing Shakespeare this year in a big budget movie, *"Shakespeare in Love"*, with Julia Roberts as his co-star. But when Day-Lewis decided he did not want to do it the whole project was dropped.

Instead in 1993 he is returning to work in Ireland with Jim Sheridan who wrote and directed him in *"My Left Foot"*. Their second movie together is to be called *"The Conlon Story"*.

Daniel Day-Lewis comes from a well connected background which could open many doors for him had he not been

so superbly talented to stand in no need of such help. His father, Cecil Day-Lewis, was a tall and commanding figure who became the Poet Laureate and as such Britain's official poet who was called upon to write verse to celebrate great national occasions.

His mother, Jill Balcon, had been a leading lady with the Old Vic Company in London and later appeared herself in a number of celebrated British films in the 1950's such as *"Nicholas Nickleby"* and *"Highly Dangerous"*. And her father, Sir Michael Balcon, had been a senior film executive for over 20 years before forming his own organisation, Ealing Studios.

Drama School

With that sort of background it must have seemed inevitable that Daniel Day-Lewis would become a film actor. But as he entered late adolescence was by no means certain. Having enjoyed a public school education at Bedales he found he particularly enjoyed doing woodwork and was thinking of going into cabinet making when he got an audition to enter a drama school at Bristol and did his training there.

Soon after completing his training he was catapulted into London's West End when he landed a part in Julian Mitchell's long running theatrical hit, *"Another Country"*, set in a public school not unlike those attended by British diplomats turned Soviet spies, Burgess and McLean, in the 1930s.

Exceptional Lengths

Daniel Day-Lewis' family background in the cinema and theatre may well have been the spur that forces him to go to exceptional lengths to prove himself to be quite independent of them. He hates self-promotion and takes a Garbo-esque attitude towards interviews which he rarely gives and which, when given, prove tortuous for both interviewer and interviewee.

But when it comes to his work nothing is too much trouble. When he was researching the role of the disabled Christy Brown he actually went into a clinic for patients with cerebral palsy. Such serious commitment to his art is unlikely to make the career of Daniel Day-Lewis smoothly predictable but it should ensure that it remains exciting to follow for many years to come.

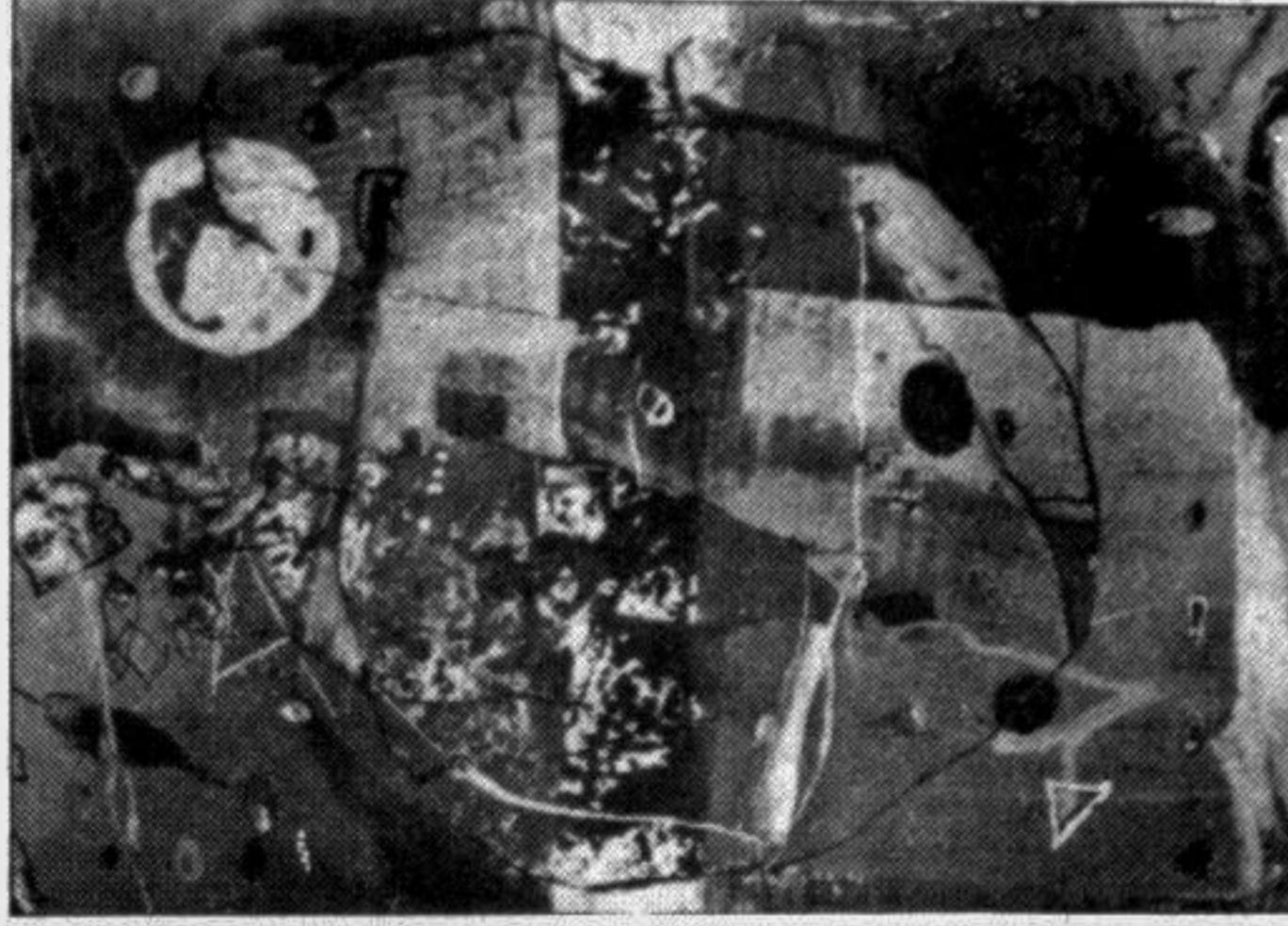
The writer is Editor, *"Plays International"*, London

Of Alienation and Anguish

by Fayza Haq

with Miro and Debuff.

In his recent exhibition "Distrust", Kabir had put together a number of striking, self-confident pieces. The life style in Japan is quite different from that in Bangladesh. As a Bengalee, I found that they did not trust me. They had, at first, a dismal concept of our country and felt that someone coming from



Distrust I

there had not much to contribute. I naturally felt alienated. It was when I got the prize in the Dhaka Asian Biennale that they began giving me some recognition. It is only slowly that I found a change in them. In all my works can be seen the impact of the sense of insecurity.

In his earlier exhibitions, Kabir had shown an admirable awareness of colour. He had used bright colours — red, violet, magenta and green. His technique had retained its earlier innovative qualities, but the images had changed. He was painting themes of reality, fantasy, dream, joy and sorrow. He had applied directly from the can, through a spray, showing remarkable control. A Japanese art critic had compared Kabir

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"Distrust I" was a conglomeration of symbolic figures — three women in grey, white and yellow. "Whenever I thought of my country, I could only remember the pain of the people. As a result, I felt I should portray the pain rather than the beauty," Kabir said. Against the background of red and black were intermingling lines because the artist felt that problems could not be sorted out in



Distrust II

He suffered from fits of depression and sadness. The circles and other forms, the motifs and symbols — the ladders, threads and geometrical designs — all suggest different human emotions. Kabir's forms were chaotic, and constantly evolving. However they were put together in a harmonic piece with the help of symbolism.

Most of the paintings were done in mixed media acrylic based or neo-pearl colours. The use of white was remarkable as it was juxtaposed with the loud colours. The artist had allowed to let his imagination and feelings flow free.

In "Distrust I" was a white circle which was a part of a Japanese doll. The symbols of triangles, circles and lines represented the limitations of

his mind. There were patches of black which denoted uncertainty.

In "Distrust II" were depicted horns that would usher

the end of the world, as myths went. Birds and human beings were shown in distorted forms. "I wish I could eradicate all the evils of the world and replace

them with something fresh. The tiny balls of red, blue and yellow are meant to show signs of a new beginning," Kabir elaborated.

"Distrust IV" showed a child playing with a red ball. The rest of the figures were abstract forms of unhappiness and confusion seen in white washes, combined with blue circles and a few blackish squares. Insecurity and destruction was in the mind of the artist.

Talking about his life in Japan, Kabir elaborated, "After two years in Japan, I have finally a number of friends and fans and now feel at home. I held an exhibition of my paintings 'Bangladesh My Love' and people paid as much as 15,000 yen for the lecture and the entry." He is holding an exhibition of his paintings at the moment

tackling one of the Shakespeare's longest and most taxing roles at the National Theatre

had taken its toll. Day-Lewis

was ordered to take a long rest

and it was even rumoured that

he had in fact decided to give

up acting altogether and revert

to his first career choice,

cabinet making.

At the time, that decision to

leave acting altogether seemed

quite tragic. Not only had

Daniel Day-Lewis been born

with remarkable good looks

which alone can be a passport

to success on stage and in the

cinema but he had proved himself an astonishingly versatile

performer.

What other performer in recent years had turned in such a series of contrasting screen-roles? After playing the Cockney racist punk who became the homosexual lover of a young Asian boy in "My Beautiful Laundrette", he switched to becoming the Edwardian dandy, Christy Brown, because of cerebral palsy, was forced to write and paint with his left foot, hence the title of his autobiography and the film based on it — "My Left Foot".

Then suddenly everything

went wrong for Daniel Day-

Lewis. He had returned from

taking the National Theatre

production of Hamlet on tour to

Yugoslavia, where his physically

energetic performance was ad-

mired even more than in

London, when one evening back

on stage at the National he

suddenly could no longer re-

member his lines as the Prince

of Denmark. An understudy was

brought on to complete the

performance.

Huge Responsibility

The stress of spending six weeks in a wheelchair whilst filming the role of the severely disabled Christy Brown followed by the huge responsibility of

choose secession over participation in the ballot.

Whatever Buthelezi's decision,

it is likely to be at De

Klerk's expense. The President's

National Party, which promotes

broadly similar policies to

Buthelezi, spent years projecting

Inkatha as a credible black

alternative to the ANC.

State subsidies and even a

slush fund were used to help

the party ultimately expected to

form an anti-ANC electoral pact with the government.

However, the soured relation-

ship — partially because

Inkatha feels excluded from

agreements between the govern-

ment and the ANC — has left the National Party caucus

divided over whether to wait for

Buthelezi to return to the nego-

tiations. If De Klerk abandons

Inkatha, he risks more of his

supporters joining the white

shift towards the previously all-

Zulu party.

If, on the other hand, he

continues wooing Buthelezi, the

Afrikaner President may not be

able to win further negotiating

concessions from the ANC.

A Dutch house with ANC sup-

porters and read a then-banned

book by former newspaper editor

Donald Woods about how

police tortured to death the

Black Consciousness leader

Steve Biko.

He said: "I didn't believe all

of it, but I realised that if some

of it were true then a lot of

other things I'd heard could

also be true."

Verwoerd wants to avoid a

high political profile in favour of

using his network of Afrikaner

contacts to ease their fears and

provide them access to informa-

tion about the ANC.

He said: "I want to say to

people that in the short run it

may look as if I'm a traitor, but

in the long run it's essential for

their survival to have good rela-

tions with the rest of the country."

ARLENE GETZ is a corre-

spondent for the "Sydney

Morning Herald". She has cov-

ered the southern African region

for 14 years.

I might seem a bit cynical,

but it's true that now-a-days

it isn't all that difficult for any aspirant young poet or

singer to publish a book of

verse or bring out a collection of

songs in audio cassette form.

Where genuine talent or genius

has become secondary to one's

financial affordability, true

worthiness of an artist becomes

little too hard to judge.

But to be frank, at a time

when modern Bengali songs in

our country have almost be-

come synonymous with the

stereotyped and often mono-

tonous nature of songs per-

formed by various musical

bands mushrooming through-

out the land, Rezaul Hasan

Matin's collection of songs ti-

tled *Helen Bhengche Troy* [Helen destroyed Troy] comes

to us as a refreshing and sooth-

ing tonic.

The cassette which is pro-

duced by Sound Track consists

of a total of 14 songs, five of

which are written, tuned and, of

course, sung by Reza himself.

The remaining nine songs are

written by Kausar Ahmed

Chowdhury, Khandaker Qam-

ruzzaman, Golam Moshar-

Manik, Jashim Rai