

Presidential Address

Bhupen Qanungo

It is with much trepidation that I am speaking before you. In the past eight annual sessions of this Association, the Presidential Chair to which you have kindly elected me had been occupied by a succession of eminent scholars beginning with Professor Heramba Kanta Barpujari. As the length of my membership of this Association would indicate, I am no more than a three-year old enthusiast in this special field. The enlistment of students like me, who did not live and work in this region till recently, indicates how generous this Association has been in liberalizing its membership qualification and thereby broadening its influence among all willing to participate in the academic life of the North-Eastern region of India.

I

If one in the position in which I find myself today, cannot read to you a learned paper on the history and culture of North-Eastern India, one can I suppose humbly do the next best thing: say briefly how much one loves the land and the people of this region. Among the sights I shall always remember with a sense of awe are these: the spread of the plains of Bangladesh basking in the winter sun, seen from the hills of Cherrapunji; the great green paddy-bowl which is Manipur, guarded by ramparts of high hills, on all sides, to keep out all but the most intrepid hordes of predator men in the past ages; the cemetery at Kohima, and in the cemetery a scion of a historic cherry tree, which they say, marked the farthest advance of Japanese warriors into Kohima town during the Second World War; the Bramhaputra, the Mahanada (the Great Male River), exulting in its monsoon flood, seen from a top the rock boulders in the rear of the Bhubaneswari Temple in the Kamakhya Hills

in Gauhati. Speaking of the people of this region, I feel a natural kinship with those men of assam who, as Amal Dutta of Shivasagar, a former student of mine at the Banaras Hindu University, once put it: "find delight in everything they choose to do, from catching elephants to digging for potatoes" Unless I had the good luck of participating in a NEHU History Department picnic recently, I could never have the experince of listening under the Meghalaya sky from the mouth of a Khasi lady to Khasi folk-tales such as these. In the Paradise of the Khasi people, there were nine huts; in the Earth, seven huts, which housed the Khasis at first. The sun in the sky is a woman, and the Moon is a man, the sun's brother. Once the Moon, enamoured of her beauty, proposed marriage to the sun; thereupon in her rage, the sun took a handful of ash and smeared it on her brother's face. Though good-looking on the whole to this day, the Moon's face shows the evidence of his disgrace at the hands of his sister. The Peacock, a heavenly bird whose feathers are iridescent in sunlight, was once married happily to the sun, but because of something foolish he did and because of strange happenings during a vist of curiosity to the Earth, the Peacock could not, however he might try and cry, fly back high up to the sky to join his good wife, the Sun. The very intensity of the Peacock's pining for the sun, produced in the long plumage of his tail most exquisite things: glowing images of the sun by the hundreds.

Certainly "in the elder sort" travel is a part of "experience" as Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the Elizabethan men of letters and science, wrote in a classic essay. Experience, it is said, brings humility, intelligence also, to some people. Now that I have heard the delightful Khasi folk tales I have briefly mentioned to you, it is likely that I shall sometimes look at the Sun and the Peacock in a new light which is not intellectual but entirely humane. Peacock s still strutt cry

and dance when the rain clouds come over the fields of the Banaras Hindu University Campus near which I live on retirement. And the Sun, whom I as a Hindu view as a male god, a nature-deity, will now gain in meaning for me. I shall appreciate better than before the mystic truth in the *Shakta-Adwaita* saying that the Supreme Mother and the Supreme Father are inseparably one, the Supreme Being in the Supreme Void.

II

I hope you will bear with me if on this occasion on my own behalf and on behalf of others who regard history as both an art and a science, I now proceed to pay homage to Clio, the Muse of History and of Epic Poetry.

Clio, the Muse, was born of the power of creative imagination of the ancient Greeks inhabiting the Mediterranean sea-coast of Asia Minor and Greece proper about twenty-seven centuries ago. In Greek mythology, Clio was one of the nine Muses, who were the adorable daughters of Zeus, the supreme god of Justice, and of Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory. The Muses were worshipped in their seats on the slopes of Olympus, Helicon, and Parnassus. At festivities honouring gods and heroes, the Muses sang and danced led by Musagetes, who was none other than the Sun-God, Apollo, who as imagined by the ancient pagan Greeks is a young man of great physical beauty.

In the Greek tradition, the Muses were originally three in number and they were goddesses of song. They grew in number in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. Hesiod the poet who lived in this period and wrote the *Theogony* (Origin of the Gods) in verse, mentioned Clio among the Muses. Hesiod is regarded as an introducer of "the poetry of information" as opposed to

the Homeric type "poetry of imaginative fiction". It is not improper for one, even in our times of advanced scientific research, to consider all articles of historical information and analysis as well as other kinds of books and articles as creations of men who, by nature, are ever exposed to both "the truth" and "the falsehood" alike. I believe, for I have personally felt it that way, in the unreality of any truth or beauty independent of man. As Rabindranath Tagore put it to Albert Einstein, in course of a conversation on the nature of reality (on 14 July 1930, at Kaputh a suburb of Berlin): "This World is a human World -- the scientific view of it is also that of the scientific man".² To return to the ancient Greeks and Clio. The Muses, who visited Hesiod when he was a shepherd on Mount Helicon, told Hesiod that they, the Muses, "could speak both the truth and falsehoods resembling the truth".

That "both the truth and falsehoods resembling the truth" find room in historiography (the writing of history) can hardly be denied by the votaries of Clio, the modern "scientific historians" of various expertise. One may say that indeed it is part of Clio's charm that, besides being "a jealous and a grudging mistress"³ demanding entire and serious attention to her service to win fame, Clio does not impose "consensus" among historians regarding views and reflections on human affairs they study.⁴ Clio permits her adorers to seek truth in their respective ways of systematic enquiry and methodical study, analysis and exposition, in "doing history".

In our times of much scholarly contention on the nature, tools methods exposition and value, of "historical knowledge" we may do well to remember that Clio did not love noise, that she loved music. Confucius (551-479 B.C.), the great Chinese sage, observed : "Music is the expression of joy". To find joy in what they are doing votaries of Clio may well consider

whether it is not commonly essential for men to have faith in themselves, in their aspirations and work also. Men do evolve through some sort of histories of their own. A noted Natural Scientist tells us : "Evolution continues in our time no longer on the physiological or anatomical plane"⁵. In the words of an Indian Hindu mystic of this century, we find a similar note in regard to the evolution of man: " The animal is a living laboratory in which Nature has, it is said, worked out man. Man himself may well be a thinking and living laboratory in whom and with whose conscious co-operation she wills to work out the superman, the god"⁶. The historical man is an evolved type of man, and history has not stopped with the coming of the historical man.

Since the Second World War it is fashionable among professional historians in the West, to decry those who talk of faith in progress in history and some other ideas including history with capital H. They now doubt whether history continues to go their way, in favour of Western domination, in world affairs. In the nineteenth century, history enjoyed an unprecedentedly high position in popular and academic esteem in liberal studies in Europe and America. Historians in Europe and America now lament that history no longer enjoys great position as a moulding force and guiding light in Europe and America. Since in Indian universities historiography courses are largely "Western" in the content of thoughts on history and historical writing, Western fashions travel to India quickly in our discipline. In India since Independence I can hardly see any good reason why we should not find it useful for our society to continue to believe in the ideas of "progress" in history which fascinated Indians from Raja Rammohun Roy to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru. We may remember that these ideas of progress in human affairs were vindicated in action also, from the foundation of the Hindu School at Calcutta in early

nineteenth century to the adoption of the Constitution of the Republic of India in mid-twentieth century. And their manner of vindication of "progress" was of no mean historical significance for millions of our people.

It does not appear that inspiration and seed-ideas of material civilization and moral advancement drawn from the history of the world by our immediate ancestors in Indian cultural life have become irrelevant to us, to our social and intellectual situations. The "modern Indians" have drawn, and are drawing, knowingly or unknowingly, inspiration and ideas from the achievements of ancient Greece and Rome, the British Constitutional history, the Renaissance and the Reformation in Europe, the Eighteenth-Century Enlightenment in Europe, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Russian Revolution, the Japanese *Fukoku kyohei* (A rich country and a strong defense) of the Meiji era, and World History since 1914, as well as from the histories of the glorious achievements in thought and material civilization in ancient India and medieval India, and the history of Indian Awakening, also. What little I have read about the Indian Freedom struggle and what little I have seen of India and the Indian people with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, and felt myself, do not enable me to say with conviction that history had, or has, little use for the Indian people. The Indian Awakening owes much to leaders who learnt much from history, social economic political cultural, of the Indian people and the great peoples of the World. Progress is a relative truth indeed, yet progress in various fields of endeavour of the Indian people is a fact of contemporary Indian history. 'Change' and 'Progress' do not mean the same thing in life, though admittedly the use of the word 'Change' helps one in abstract thinking on human affairs over "long durations" in time. We should

not fail to see the present 'Progress' and retardation in our own lives and times. In paying homage to history in India today, one need not subscribe to the current fashion among the British and American professional historians of saying "no meaning", "no morals", "no progress", "no lessons", in history.

There is some quality of super-conductivity in the attitudes of faith and lack of faith in the hearts and minds of men in groups and societies. Students of history, of human affairs in unending processes through time everywhere need some sort of faith felt, uttered or unuttered, in their personal lives if they are to achieve some notable goal of endeavour. To quote the wise words of twentieth-century liberal British philosopher : "To accomplish anything you need an interest, a motive, a centre for your thought. You need a star to steer by, a cause, a creed, an idea, a passionate attachment. Men have followed many guiding lights. They have been inspired by love of fame and love of country. they have followed Christ, Mahomet, Napoleon. Something must beckon you or nothing is done, something about which you ask no questions. Thought needs a fulcrum for its lever, effort demands an incentive or an aim". This philosopher quotes with approval the following words of Goethe, the finest of German minds devoted to literature : "The most singular and deepest themes in the History of the Universe and Mankind, to which all the rest are subordinate, are those in which there is a conflict between belief and unbelief, and all epochs, wherein belief prevails, under what form it will, are splendid, heart-elevating and fruitful. All epochs, on the contrary, when Unbelief, in what form soever, maintains its sorry victory, should they even for a moment glitter with a sham splendour, vanish from the eyes of posterity, because no one chooses to burden himself with the study

of the unfruitful⁷".

For Indians educated in the English language and Western liberal education in the humanities and social sciences, for others also who propose to contribute constructively to the development of polity and society and economic welfare of the Indian people, acquaintance with World history should continue to be useful in a big way in promoting high endeavour. Professional historians in India should remember the needs of the general readers also, especially the readers in Indian languages. More of history inspiring Indians to nobility of thought and heroic efforts in life is likely to do the Indian people generally "more good than bad", to use Plutarch's estimate of the value of reading history. Historians and the general readers of history alike continue to do, more or less, in our time, what Confucius found people in his times (sixth and fifth centuries B.C.) commonly did : "All seek wealth and rank and detest poverty and obscurity"⁸. Our ambitious youngmen will gain by reading biographical history; our political leaders will gain in worth by reading political history of the World¹⁰; our leading soldiers must read widely in and around the subject of military history through ages and in all lands. Historians may not identify for their own special use, or for the benefit of others, the lessons of history in particular fields in particular times for particular kind of people. But by reading history, the specialists and generalists needed in our society and polity are likely to develop, in their thoughts plans and actions, their "intelligent guesses" about men and affairs. Men of affairs, men in public life, may find some wisdom in the following words of Wu Chi, the principal disciple of Sun-tzu, author of the *Art of War* (c.500 B.C.): "Words and actions can be so different from

one's thoughts; but I am able to inquire into what is hidden and by means of¹¹ the past investigate the course of future events¹¹".

In summing up this homage to clio, the Muse of History, I may say that being an Indian accustomed to respect the capacity of men to think in abstract nouns, images and symbols, as well as in words, I feel happy in imagining Clio as a deity, not in the guise of any Oriental goddess, but in the image the ancient Greeks and Romans usually adored her : a beautiful young Greek woman, dressed in flowing robes, often seated, carrying in one hand a half opened scroll, symbolizing the never-ending record of heroic deeds of men, and in the other hand carrying, sometimes a flute, sometimes a zither (a simple flat many stringed instrument of music). May our people continue to show respect to clio and to other Muses whom the Europeans, "the children of Helas", taught us to adore with the coming of European knowledge to India in the nineteenth century¹².

III

In a collection of review articles on historical writing in the 1970s in the United States of America, published under the auspices of the American Historical Association, it has been noted : "Clio is a citizen of the world, and history is increasingly an international guild¹³". And one who studied history in America in 1959-61 wonders how big is clio's "mansion" of numerous rooms (for accommodating diverse experts among her votaries), in America in the 1970s. America is the centre of Western Liberal civilization since the Second World War. It is but natural that in the United States, a Global Power, "Area Studies" comprehending all the political units in world affairs should become part of historical studies. Besides European Studies and Latin American Studies, Asian

Studies and African Studies have become important for students of history in America. In American history, researchers study the histories of Life Cycle (Childhood, Youth, Old age and death); of Family, Blacks, Ethnic Groups, Religious Cults, the Christian Churches, Beliefs and Cults, and Minorities; of women, Generational Differences, Sexuality, and sports and entertainments; of Professions, Occupations, Labour, Agriculture, Natural Sciences, and Technology; of Medicine, Crime, Law, Economics, and Business; of Architecture, Towns, Villages, and Rural Areas; of Military Science, war and Material Culture, and Thought. Oral History, Local History, Regional History, Cultural History, Political History, Diplomatic History and International Relations, continue to attract many students, as in the past decades. Experts debate on the relative merits of Psychohistory, cliometrics and Quantitative Social - Scientific history of the french fashion, theories of history old and new, interdisciplinary research in history as a social science, the worth of collaborative projects in history writing; of "meaning", "truth", "use", "methodology", "causation", "explanation", "evidence", "morality", "pattern", and "Master Keys" in historiography. They seek to study "the historian" thoroughly.¹⁴ They ask questions about the "Future of History".

In some of the kinds of history historians in the West are developing, researchers in India too, have started to train themselves and to write, thanks to the support of their educational institutions, aid programmes of foreign governments (which have cultural exchange programme agreements with the Government of India), the Indian Council of Historical Research, the Indian council of Social Science Research, and the University Grants Commission of India. The Indian Council of Historical Research has identified the following fields : studies on South India and other regions, History of science and Techno-

logy, Studies of Social and Economic Formation processes; History of Ideas, History of the Peasantry, Urban Studies, Demography and kinship studies, Collective Consciousness, Social Movement, Social Protest, Industrialisation, Historical Geography, and various phases and aspects of the Struggle for Freedom, among the significant but hitherto less explored aspects of Indian history which the Council ¹⁵ would encourage in its grants-in-aid schemes. Whoever has had the privilege of attending the past sessions of the North-East India History Association, or had looked into the Presidential addresses and the Annual Proceedings published by this association, must have been impressed by the vast scope of research, also by the considerable amount of research already done, in the history and culture of the people of the North-Eastern region of India.

III

After paying homage to the Muse of History, one more duty remains for me this morning : to join with you all in paying tributes to Dr. Ramesh Chandra Majumdar, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, whose birth centenary falls this year, 1988. All three of them valued the study of history as important for their personal lives and for thinking about human affairs generally.

In the fields of ancient Indian history and culture, and of the Hinduized states in South-east Asia in ancient times, Ramesh Chandra Majumdar's fame was firmly established by the 1940s. In the 1950s a fortunate association with Sri K.M. Munshi and his Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, enabled Ramesh Chandra to exercise fruitfully his abilities as an organizer of collective effort by Indian historians, to produce an impressive multi-volume survey of Indian history through ages. As general Editor of the

Vidya Bhavan volumes, Ramesh Chandra chose to write himself many chapters relating modern Indian history, an area of expertise he did not claim for himself earlier. His wide learning and his exemplary industry as an educationist and man of letters brought him recognition and honours from Indian and foreign universities and learned associations and academies. He was eminent as a historian, believing in "the nationalist interpretation" of Indian history¹⁶. A Bangal (East Bengali) Hindu, spirited, outspoken and upright, Ramesh Chandra did not hide his nationalist bias and his pride in being a Bengali Hindu inheriting the gains of the Bengal Renaissance. In his adolescence, Ramesh Chandra had breathed the heady air of Bengali patriotic songs and speeches following the Partition of Bengal; in his youth, he had witnessed the Bengali terrorist movement and severe repression by the British administration; in his old age, he had witnessed the Bengal Famine of 1943 the Hindu-Muslim riots at Dacca, the creation of East Pakistan and the mass-exodus of Hindus from East Pakistan. In his life, he had lived through events which could not but rouse his political feelings and excite his historical imagination strongly. He was fortunate in his years and his nationalist passion aided him in remaining productive as a writer on historical subjects in English and in Bengali till extreme old age.

In Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, India had one of the finest minds since Raja Rammohun Roy to acquire distinction for learning and writing in the field of Comparative Religion. Like Rammohun, Radhakrishnan was a modern Indian Hindu, respectful towards all religions without the teachings of Vedanta in personal *s a d h a n a*, the seeking of spiritual realizations in personal life. Students of history in India may remember Radhakrishnan for presenting in his academic philosophical writings an "idealist view" of

history. Since I myself subscribe to the teaching of Vedanta and in an "idealist view" of history, I may quote here some of Radhakrishnan's words while paying tribute to Radhakrishnan. "What is the relation of absolute being to historical becoming, of eternity to time? Is succession, history, progress, real and sufficient in its own right, or does man's deep instinct for the unchanging point to an eternal perfection which alone gives the world meaning and worth? Is the inescapable flux all, or is there anything which abides?" To such philosophical questions, Radhakrishnan could reply with force born of inner conviction in the reality of man's spiritual life. "His highest aim", wrote Radhakrishnan, "is release from the historical succession denoted by birth and death. So long as he is lost in the historical process without realization of the super-historical goal, he is only 'once born' and is liable to sorrow. God and not the world of history is the true environment of our souls".

It is a fact in the history of History that in the past ages, theologists and the Christian Church historians of the Middle Ages in Europe and the Arab Muslim historians in North Africa and else where found room for God, for some Idea of the Absolute Truth and its play, in history. The idea that there is a God in History, that without room for God also the history of man seems incomplete and unsatisfying to the Believers, may in future gain strength in academic scholarship in the West among Americans and others. One American historian, young in age and trained in England, had deplored, in a critical study of "patterns in history", that: "The canons of ordinary historical scholarship have not permitted references to God for nearly 200 years"¹⁸. These cannons may be modified to suit those historians who do believe in God.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's autobiography is an important contribution to historical literature on the Indian Freedom Movement in

the twentieth century. The child of an Arab mother and an immigrant Indian Muslim divine whose family claimed descent from immigrants to India from Herat in the days of Babur, the Great Mughal Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had a subtler sense of the Islam and of the histories of India and of the Islamic countries of West Asia in modern times than Muhammad Ali Jinnah, another great Indian Muslim who differed from Azad and the Nationalist Congress Muslims on the issue of "home land" for Indian Muslims. All students of the Indian national movement may read with profit Maulana Azad's statement of political faith put in his Presidential address at the Ramgarh session of the Indian National Congress in March 1940. Azad wrote it in his magnificent Urdu; Jawaharlal Nehru translated it into lucid English. "I am a Muslim and am proud of the fact. Islam's splendid traditions of 1300 years are my inheritance." To be a proud Muslim and yet to be a proud Indian could well be a natural development in a person, said Azad. "I am proud of being an Indian. I am part of the indivisible unity that is Indian nationality. I am indispensable to this noble edifice and without me this splendid structure of India is incomplete. I am an essential element which has gone to build India. I can never surrender this claim¹⁹".

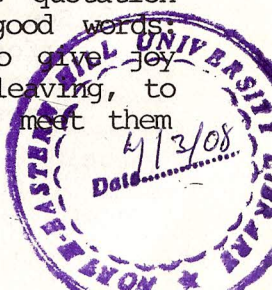
A *maulana* of *maulanas* in Islamic scriptural learning and in his contemplation of Islamic spiritual traditions, Abul Kalam Azad asserted boldly that once there is spiritual enlightenment, a high concept of Man is attained by fine minds. He said in a speech on Humanism and Education: "The concept of man which the East has framed regards him as not merely an animal superior to all earthly creatures but as essentially different in nature. Man is not first among equals but has a being which is higher than that of any other creature. He is not only a progressive animal, but reveals in his being the lineaments of God Himself.

In fact his nature is so high and elevated that nothing higher is conceivable to human reason." "God marks the highest limit of human thought" said Maulana Azad, who found no essential contradiction in the teachings of the Holy Koran and of the Sufi tradition in the Islamic spiritual mysticism²⁰

IV

To you, Mr. Vice-Chancellor, members of the History Department, other teachers and students of the University of Gauhati, we members of the North-East India History Association are thankful, for the generous hospitality and encouragement extended to the Association's Ninth Annual Session being inaugurated this morning. On this occasion, we all acknowledge with gratitude the aid and support our Association has received over the years from the University Grants Commission of India, the Indian Council of Historical Research, the Universities and Government authorities many colleges and other institutions and learned bodies of the North-Eastern region of India.

What do I say, by way of exhortation from the Presidential Chair this morning, to the many young and veteran scholars who have come to the Ninth Session suitably equipped with learned papers for submission? I can do my best, I suppose, by quoting to them the words of Tiruvalluvar, a most eloquent sage who lived about two thousand yers ago in Tamil Nadu. He said: "What have they to do with a sword who are not valiant, or they with learning who are afraid of an intelligent assembly?" And again, if one more quotation is not too many for lovers of good words. "It is the part of the learned to give joy to those whom they meet, and on leaving, to make them think (Oh! when shall we meet them again)."



Notes & References

1. "The historian, like any other scientist, is an animal who incessantly asks the question 'why ?'?" said E.H. Carr in his **What is History ?** The George Macaulay Trevelyan Lectures delivered in the University of Cambridge in 1961 (In Penguin Books ed. Reprint 1970, see p. 86).

In J.W.N. Sullivan, **The Limitations of Science** (Mentor Book, New York, 1952), p. 163, see for an exposition of the following views on science and scientists made by the author, himself a noted scientist: "To the great man of science, science is an art, and he himself is an artist. And his creation is not the less work of art because it is but a faint and imperfect copy of another -- of the supreme work of art which is nature itself".

Carl Sagan, the famed scientific student of the Cosmos, in a delightfully-written book for popular education in science, **Broca's Brain : Reflections on the Romance of Science** (Ballantine) Books, New York, 1980 edition, 11th Print, 1987), p. 96, tells us that science is a "method". "The idea of science as a method rather than as a body of knowledge is not widely appreciated outside of science, or indeed in some corridors inside of science".

- 2 See in Amiya Chakravarty (ed.), **A Tagore Reader** (Macmillan, New York, 1961), pp. 110-113.
- 3 See comments by H.A.L. Fisher on the unfortunate effects of Lord Macaulay's attention to his duties as a prominent member of Parliament for eight years

on the fate of his grand project of **History of England** : in Fisher's article, "The Whig Historians", reprinted from **Proceedings of the British Academy**, 1928, in Fisher's **Pages from the Past** Books for the Libraries Press, Freeport, New York, 1939, (reprint 1969), pp.53-54.

⁴ See in Esmond Wright (ed.), **Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution** (Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1966), p. 15, comment on "search for consensus" in discussions on the American Revolution.

⁵ Lecomte du Nouy, **Human Destiny** (Signet, New York, 1949), p.78.

⁶ Sri Aurobindo, **The Life Divine** (Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry, first published, 1914-1919; first book ed. 1939-40, fifth ed. 1970; Seventh impression (with author's corrections), 1982), pp. 3-4.

⁷ W. Macneille Dixon, **The Human Situation** (The Gifford Lectures delivered in the University of Glasgow, 1935-1937; Edward Arnold, London, 1957), p.34 and p. 10.30.

⁸ See extracts from the **Analects** of Confucius, in Alban G. Widgery, **Interpretations of History Confucius to Toynbee** (London, 1961), pp. 26-30.

⁹ Our students and researchers in Modern Indian history should note the remarkable exposition of the need for, and importance of, studying political history in G.R. Elton, **Political History Principles and Practice** (Allen Lane The Penguin Press, London, 1970).

10 See in Joseph A. Schumpeter, **History of Economic Analysis** (Allen & Unwin Ltd. London, First published 1954; Eighth Printing, 1972), p.4, the following observatrion on the importance of studying the history of a discipline : "It is certainly better to scrap outworn modes of thought than to stick to them indefintely. Nevertheless, we stand to profit from visits to the lumber room provided we do not stay there too long. The gains with which we may hope to emerge from it can be displayed under three heads : pedagogical advantages, new ideas, and insights into the human mind".

11 The words of Wu Chi were quoted by Major-General P.s. Bhagat in an article, "Mao's Heritage of Calculated Belligerence", in **The Statesman** (Calcutta), 20 Nov. 1965, pp. 6-7.

On the question of logical thinking, or the absence of it, in reaching some sort of historical "explanation", philosophers say many things in their special language which lay men can hardly follow. In the context of what I have said in regard to finding for oneself lessons of history, I find the following observations on "Explanations without Laws" worth quoting here. "There is nothing unusual to science about the use of reliable procedures of inference, even predictive inference, which cannot be stated in terms of applicable principles. The trained ear of the musician, the trained eye of the lumberman or the tracker, the professional hands of the cheese-maker -- all these embody skills which undoubtedly exist, enable accurate diagnosis and/or prediction, and cannot

be expressed in terms of statements which others can objectively apply to perform the same tasks. The great medical diagnosticians may be able to train their students to almost the same level of success, but they can formulate very few of the laws according to which they operate, and even when they can, it is not in a form which enables us to go and do likewise. "Michael Scriven, "Tautisms as the Grounds for Historical Explanations", in Patrick Gardiner (ed.), **Theories of History** (The Free Press, New York, 1959), p. 458.

12 For information used in statements on Hesiod and on Clio in this essay, see **The Universal Encyclopaedia** (new ed.), Vol.III (New York, D. Appleton & Co., 1900), p. 13; Vol.V, p. 536. In **Encyclopaedia Britannica**, 15th ed., Micropaedia (Chicago, 1981), p. 10001. In **Encyclopaedia Americana** (International edition, American Corporation, Danbury, Conn., 1980), Vol.7, p. 86; Vol.19, p. 635; (for Hesiod) Vol.14, p. 163.

See the article by E.H. Norman, "The Shrine of Clio" (written in 1955), in John W. Dower (ed.) **Origins of the Modern Japanese State: Selected Writings of E.H. Norman** (Pantheon Books, New York, 1975), p. 108, for Norman's preference for "looking to an Oriental Clio" for inspiration in historical writing : "I recall her in the form of that miracle of grace carved in wood -- the figure of Kwannon (Miroku) in the Chuguji Nunnery at Nara. Her right hand is raised lightly against her cheek; her lips are half-parted in the merest suspicion of a smile;

her expression is serene rather than melancholy. She looks out upon human striving, both its follies and its greatness, on the passions and ambitions of this world, with an expression neither indifferent nor disdainful, but rather infinitely patient and compassionate".

13 see in "Introduction" by Michael Kammen, in Michael Kammen (ed.), **The Past Before Us: Contemporary Historical Writing in the United States** (Edited for the American Historical Association, published by the Cornell University Press, Ithaca and London, 1980), p.25.

14 In his Preface, p. XI, Charles F. Delzell (ed), **The Future of History** (Vanderbilt University Press, 1977), Delzell observes : "Although it is not easy to reduce to a single statement the wisdom embedded in these scholarly reflections, one message does seem to recur through most of the essays: the historian should keep his mind open to new methodologies and revisionisms but at the same time preserve a healthy skepticism of pseudosciences, new dogmatisms, and the merely faddish. As Professor Thernstrom observed, 'The most thorough mastery of the new techniques is not sufficient to make a good historian, much less a great one'. Above and beyond the possible development of technical competence in some of the new methodologies, the historian of tomorrow must continue to nourish his aesthetic and humanistic sensibilities and work harder at refining the skills of writing lucidly and persuasively".

15 See pp.3-4, in **Indian Council of Historical Research Information Bulletin, No.1**

(New Delhi, 1986).

16

For a highly critical appraisal of Ramesh Chandra Majumdar's work on Modern Indian history, and for other observations on "Nationalist historians", see Bipan Chandra, "Nationalist Historians' Interpretations of the Indian National Movement", in Sabyasachi Bhattacharya and Romila Thapar (eds.), **Situating Indian History for Sarvepalli Gopal** (Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1986), pp. 195, 198, 203-204, 213.

In India, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University, and Aligarh University historians, the most eminent of them trained in England, lead the present trend of "revisionism" in the interpretations of India's past. In England, "Cambridge historians" probably lead in "revisionism" in studies on Modern India. In the **Times Literary Supplement**, July 22-28, 1988, No.4,451, pp. 809-810, David Arnold, "Letting the conquerors lie", in reviewing three books in the New Cambridge History of India series, writes: "In seeking to capture the limited and gradualist nature of Europe's of Europe's impact the Cambridge historians/M.N.Pearson, C.A.Bayly, P.J.Marshall/ provide a timely corrective to the eurocentric preoccupations in the past. In reclaiming India's history for India, the significance of the European encounter with the subcontinent is of necessity diminished. To use Marshall's metaphor, Western ideas and institutions are merely grafted on to a thriving Indian stock. Here is no root and branch transformation of an atrophied or anarchic society. And yet, while welcoming the decoloniza-

tion of India's history, one cannot but wonder whether the pendulum has not already swung too far the other way in denying to colonial rule an epochal character and an interventionist capability that marked it off from the long ages of India's pre-colonial past. It would be regrettable indeed if the irreconcilable conflicts and jagged discontinuities of India's colonial experience were thus subsumed within a new paradigm of compatibility and consensus". Probably anxious to respect the sensibilities of the "Natives", the Indians, the British historians as a rule, since Indian Independence, have revised the old usage: "imperial rule", "the British Indian empire", in favour of non-descript "colonial rule". Till about 1947 the British rules of India at New Delhi and London thought in terms of an "empire" not a "colony" of the British in India, and under the law, the Act of 1935, India was not even a Dominion; it was a pucca British possession. Even today in the "Commonwealth", there are more than a dozen category of members (Independent States, Dominions, Colonies and Crown Colonies, Protectorates, etc.); they were, at various stages of their development, once under "the British Empire"; and the King of the United Kingdom was once an "Emperor" in relation to his Indian subjects and Indian "Princes". I find it rather difficult to think of "the British Indian empire" as some sort of British Indian "colony".

17 See extracts from S. Radhakrishnan, **Eastern Religions and Western Thought** (Oxford, London) in K. Satchidananda Murty (ed.), **Readings in Indian History Politics and Philosophy** (Allied Publishers,

Bombay 1967), pp. 40-42.

18 David Bebbington, **Patterns in History** (Inter-Varsity Press, Leicester, England, 1979), p. 186 Some contemporary theologians accept the position of the "futurists" that "the future determines the present". In **Eschatology in the Old Testament** (T & T Clark, Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 81-82, 123-124, Donald E. Gowan observes that the Old Testament eschatology is "a worldly hope" without ignoring the redemption of individuals, and that the Biblical outlook puts "strongest emphasis on the truth that full human life is life in community". Selfishness which some futurists identify as the modern man's root problem may be reduced, says Gowan, more by appeal to the Biblical outlook than to "secular humanism" of which Marxism is a form.

Students of Contemporary History should pay close attention to current religious-ethical values in the "developing nations". The UNESCO and the U.N. University convened Paris, 17-21 Nov. 1986, an international and pluridisciplinary meeting of experts from sixteen countries to study the problem of poverty relative and absolute. The experts assembled noted that there was urgent need for approaching the problem of poverty from "the standpoint of the person as a whole, including his or her religious, spiritual and cultural values". See in **International Social Science Council Bulletin**, No.37, Paris, May 1987, p.7.

19 See in Bhupen Qanungo, "Preparations for Civil Disobedience January-September

1940", in **A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress** (1885-1985), Vol.III (AICC (I) / Vikas, New Delhi, 1985), pp.324-325, 329-329, on Maulana Azad and extracts from Azad's Ramgarh Address.

20 In Murty, **Readings in Indian History Politics and Philosophy**, pp. 331-337, see extract from Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's "Presidential Speech" published in **Humanism and Education in East and West** (UNESCO,Paris).

21 **Tirukkural**, with translations in English by the Rev. Dr. G. U. Pope, the Rev. W.H.Drew, the Rev. John Lazarus and Mr. F. W. Ellis (The South India Saiva Siddhanta Works, Madras, 1982), pp. 195,106.