Pramatha Chaudhuri, the first neo-classical Bengali critic, has almost an unreserved praise for Bharatchandra's craftsmanship, despite the latter's lack of 'high seriousness'. It is therefore strange that the same critic uses almost the same premises only to infer that Jayadeva's performance is a poor one. For the critic is not prepared to consider in this case the greatness of the poetic form alone. And, moreover, he commits a serious error by presuming that if the subject-matter is repulsive, the poetic diction, as a result, suffers. Thus, he not only denounces Jayadeva's greatness but also the goodness of the latter's verse. He pronounces too ordained a judgement when he comments that chiefly because Jayadeva's poetry has been taking gross delight in eroticism, its popular appeal is irresistible. The literary magazine that first published his article on Jayadeva, lodged a protest with him later on. The anonymous editorial comment went to the other extreme in its assertion that Jayadeva's verse is essentially spiritual because at the concluding portion of each canto of the Gita-govinda is a sloka justifying God's omnipotence. Both the views referred to above are one-sided and they overlook the fact that 'In India erotic and religious lyrics seem to have got mixed together.' But at the same time one may be perplexed by the oxymoron in the statement by Winternitz that
'the most famous religious erotic poem is the Gita-govinda of Jayadeva'. It would be erroneous to assume that Jayadeva aimed either at didacticism (or, say, devotionalism) or eroticism. He is anything but an extremist and his attitude is, therefore, strictly non-committal. He makes it clear that

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yadi harismaranë sarasam mano-
yadi viläsaikaläsau kutihaïam/
madhura komalakantapadaivali
śṛnu tada jayadeva sarasvatäm/
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(If thy spirit seeks to brood
On Hari glorious, Hari good;
If it feeds on solemn numbers
Dim as dreams or soft as slumbers,
Lend thine ear to Jayadev
Lord of all the spells that save.)

This reminds one of the attitude of Dante: "Poetry will say to the vulgar, which does not understand 'its argument', what a song of Dante's says at the conclusion, 'at least behold how beautiful I am', if you are not able to obtain instruction from me." But it has also been noticed that Dante in his 'Convivio' makes an attempt to aid the understanding in its effort to grasp the moral and pedagogical elements of verse. Jayadeva's poetry, on the other hand, is an illustra-
tion of a fortunate confusion of the literal and the anagogic.

Jayadeva's name crops up particularly in connection with Lilásuka (Vilvamangal). For instance, Rúpa Gosvámi, while editing Padyāvalī, and anthology of Vaiṣṇava and Vaiṣṇavised lyrics, hastens to put their poems under the same category. But no rash generalisation can do any justice here. Though both the poets have in common the main traits of Epithalamian Mysticism, yet their difference is qualitative. Lilaśuka becomes self-denial incarnate when he says

\begin{verbatim}
 bhaktistvai sthiratarā bhagavan yadisyadandaiva
 dāivenā nam phalati divyakhisoramūrtiḥ /
muktih svayam mukulā-nilājilī sevatehasmān
 dharmārtha kāmāgatayah samayaprakāśa//
\end{verbatim}

(O Lord! If we cling to You unswervingly, Your Youthful Image is bound to shine forth in all Its spontaneity. Deliverance comes，则, with folded hands and three other Vargas, i.e., virtue, wealth and cravings follow modestly).

But Jayadeva is self-conscious and emphasises that his poem should be accepted by aesthetic and subjective considerations:

\begin{verbatim}
 yadgāndharvakaḷasu kousalamudhyānaṁcha
 yad vaiṣṇavaṁ
 yachchhṛngāravivekatattvamapi yat kāvyesu
 lilajtam/
\end{verbatim}
Jayadeva's poetry, thus, is intimate and yet at the same time elusive. It would be relevant to compare a verse from Sandhyākara Nandi's Ramacharitam with one from Jayadeva's Gītā-govinda. Sandhyākara Nandi is merely depicting an object when he utters this benedictory prayer:

\[
\text{sriyamunmudritalakṣmyugalam kamalānaminah}
\]
\[
\text{sa vastanutam} / \text{krtvalokaharanam mahāksaye yam vidhurvasati} //
\]

( Let it be so that the ocean may increase your wealth — the ocean whence the Goddess Lakṣmi emerged and whereto the Lord Vāsudeva entered after devouring the whole universe).
Jayadeva, almost on a similar occasion, transforms the outer object into a cosmic image:

Jayadeva depersonalizes his deity but has a deeper poetic impact because he is unconventional and has an eye on the soul-fact. Not that he has a very keen awareness of the changes in the environment as the other whose "unique historical document enables us to give a critical account of the history of Bengal for half a century (1070-1120 A.D.) with wealth of details such as are not available in regard to any other period", but that he knows that 'an artist is known by what he rejects'. Jayadeva is least concerned with the socio-political questions of the day. The problem with which he finds himself confronted is the
conventionality of the court-poetry. That he imparts a fresh approach to the court-poetry of the day is evident if we compare his tendency with that of one more excerpt, this time from an almost contemporaneous inscription:

1 om om namah śivōya //
   Vakṣomukhaḥaranaśaddvaskṛstamoulimālyachchhataḥata
   rataleyaḍipabhasah/ devyastrapāmuklitam mukham-
   dubhābhīrvikṣayaananaḥ hastitāni jayantī śambhoḥ//
   lakṣmīvallabha -

2 sailaśadyatayaradvaitalīlaṁ pradyumnaśvaramabdalaṁ-
   chhanamadhīstanām namaskurmahe/ yatraśinganabhaṅgakātarata
   (ya) sthitvanantare kāntayordevībhyam kathamapūrṇatman-
   utaśilpentaṛāyaḥ krtah//

(Om! Om! Adoration to Siva !)

Verse 1 May the (five) faces of Sambhu triumph — faces that smile looking at the (lotus like) countenance of the Goddess in moonbeams, contracting like a bud in bashfulness, (when) through fright at the removal of her breast-cloth she pulls down the wreath from her head and with its brilliance casts into gloom the light of her 'pleasure-chamber'.

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Verse 2

We bow down to the temple called by the name Pradyumnesvara, that abode of the playful union of the beloved of Lakṣmī and the husband of Mountain's daughter, where, because of the apprehension of the cessation of embrace the two goddesses have taken stand between their lovers and thus somehow interfered with the complete union of bodies, (at least) in its representation in art.)*

These are the opening verses of Deopara inscription of Vijayasena. The first verse is set to Vasantatilaka metre while the second is in Sardulavikridita. This metrical change is not for poetry's sake but chiefly to appease the taste of the royal auditors. The composer himself admits this. We come to know from him that this work is a piece of 'eulogy, a soft stream without knots, of the serene pearls, namely the king of the Sena family', though it is 'the work of the poet Umāpatidhara whose knowledge has become accurate by a critical study of words'. Thus the inscription, despite its ornate diction, does not aim at semasiological perfection. Its sole purpose, if any, is to satisfy the immediate authorities who revel in the showman's gift in court-poetry. Its juxtaposition with the divination of the pantheon alluded to does not conceal the issue. Jayadeva's poetry, on the other hand, has no ulterior end. The poet of
the Gita-govinda is neither a dedicated mystic like St. John of the Cross nor a pseudo-mystic like Umapatidhara, whose secular interest does not combine in a coalition with the spiritual. Jayadeva's amoral and ambivalent attitude made him immensely popular and even imitable by religious schools of different cults or sects. True, there was something of the courtier, if not the time-server, about him. But aesthetically he had transgressed the docile courtly convention and reached wider audience. Besides, 'the poet in all ages, and cultures, prefers images to abstraction, the sensational to conceptual.' And this applies to Jayadeva's case. Jayadeva delights in making his poetry deal with the wide gamut of human experience that imperceptibly glides away into the sublime. The court-atmosphere may or may not be taken into consideration, but that is not allowed to impede this poetic process. Vidyapati seems to have understood this. Thus, even when commemorating his patron's achievements, he felt an urge to write a poem about him who is a poet too, and not a sham connoisseur of poetry. The following excerpt from Vidyapati's Kīrtilatā proves this:

pitarupatanaya mahynākanadyā mṛṇālam
na hi tanaya mṛṇālaḥ kintvasou sarparājaḥ/
itī rudatī ganesē smervakte cha sambhou
giripatitanayayaḥ patu kautūhaham vah//
apicha,
śrī-bhānu-vṛhadhānuṣphurāt&tayachakṣusā /
vande śambhoḥ padābhojamajñānatimiradvīṣal//
dvāh sarvārthasamāgasasya rasanārāṅgasthalīnartake
tattvālokanakajjiladvajāśikāvāldaghyaviśramabhuḥ/
śrṅgarādirasapraśdādahārasvarlokakalolīni
kalpāntasthirakirtisambhamasakhiśa bhārati pātu vah//
gehe gehe kalou kāvyam śrotā tasya pure pure /
dese dese rasajñātā datā jagati durlabhah//
śrṅtujñārturavadānyaṣa kirtimahāhīpateh /
karotu kavyatukāvayam bhavyam vidyāpatih kavih //

("Father, let me have that lotus-stalk from the celestial stream".

"O son, it is not a lotus-stalk but a big snake".

Hearing this, Ganesa began to cry and Sambhū to smile.
Let the interest evinced by Parvati in this little incident protect you.

I bow to the lotus-feet of Sambhu who dispels the darkness of ignorance by his three eyes, representing the moon, the sun and fire.

May Bhārati protect you. Bhārati who is the source of the knowledge of all things, who dances on the stage like human tongue, who is the flame of the fire of true knowledge, who is the resting place of humorous sayings, who is like the celestial
stream in which the nine *rasas* play like ripples and who is the honourable companion of fame, which lasts to the end of the world.

In the Kali era poems are to be found in every household, hearers of poetry are to be found in every hamlet, critics are to be found in every country, but patrons are difficult to have.

The king Kirti Simha is a good lover of poetry, a good critic and a good patron. Let Vidyapati write a good poem about him who is a poet too.

Here, Vidyapati implies, Sanskrit ends and the vernacular begins. This exactly is Jayadeva's major contribution to the mediaeval Indian poetry. Jayadeva realised that he stood near the end of the time-honoured epoch of Sanskrit poetry that had already exhausted its rich resources. But Jayadeva effected a break-through without deviating too markedly from the accepted norms and manners. He infused sensationalism into poetry but did it with a sense of proportion. Jayadeva in this sense is the father of Bengali poetry, lyrical and narrative alike. His expression 'mangalamuśvalagiti' signifies that he stood at the emanation of the Mangalakāvyas (narrative poetry) as well as Padavali (lyrics). That again proves how closely the Bengali lyric forms are connected with those of the narrative poetry. To cite Dr. Suniti Kumār Chatterji, "The influence of Jayadeva on the later Bengali
literature was tremendous: as the writer of a work which combined in it both the narrative (mangala) and the lyric (pada), the two main types of Middle Bengali literature, and as an inspirer of many a later Bengali (and other Indian) poet, he may be said to stand at the head of Bengali literature. He is indeed, for the whole of Aryan India, judging from his all-India influence, the Last of the Ancients, and the First of the Moderns."
NOTES

1 Pramatha Chaudhuri in 'Jayadeva' (Bhārati O Bālaka, Jñāistha, 1297 B. S., p. 103).

2 Ibid, p. 112.

3 Bhārati O Bālaka, Sravana, 1297 B. S., p. 227.


5 Ibid.


8 Benedetto Croce observes that 'the process of interpretation became fixed in the doctrine of four meanings, literal, allegorical, moral and anagogic, which Dante afterwards transferred to vernacular poetry'. (Ibid). Thus, though it is possible to draw a parallel of Dante's leanings with Jayadeva's, yet one can hardly discern in the latter any instruction with regard to moral philosophy or ethics.
9 'Jayadevavilvamaṅgalamukhaih kṛtā ye atra santi
sandarbhāṁ /
tesāṁ padyāṁ vinaṁ saṁāhrtaṁitāraṁyatra //
—- Padyavali, Sloka No. 391

10 'The first stream is that of Unitive mysticism, which aims
at a complete fusion of the soul with the divine. The second
stream may be called Epithalamian mysticism, which aims at
the marriage of soul to god, and which therefore implicitly
maintains an essential distinction between the creature and
the creator'. Denis De Rougemont in Love in the Western

11 Lilāsukā, Śrīkṛṣṇakarnāmṛtaṁ, Ed. Bhaktivinod Ṭhākur,
Navadvīpa, 1357 B. S., sloka no. 107, pp. 106-107.

12 Gīta-govinda (1/27), from Indian Song of Songs, tr. Edwin
Arnold.

13 Sandhyākara Nandī, Rāmcharitam, Ed. Ayodhyānāth Vidyā-
vinod, 1344 B. S., 1/3, p. 3.


Ibid., pp. 49, 56.

Cf. Dr. S. K. De's view: "That Jayadeva had no sectarian purpose is also known by the fact that the Sahajiya sect also regards him as its Adi-guru and one of its nine Rasikas. The Vallabhachari sect also recognises the Gita-govinda, in direct imitation of which Vallabhacharya's son Vitthalesvara wrote his Srngāra-rasamandana. History of Bengal, vol. I, p. 370, f.n. Curiously enough, secular poets like Umapati Upadhyaya and Vidyapati, thus, as regards their indebtedness to Jayadeva, have something in common with these religious poets.

Northrop Frye in Romanticism Re-considered, p. 370, f.n. Curiously enough, secular poets like Umapati Upadhyaya and Vidyapati, thus, as regards their indebtedness to Jayadeva, have something in common with these religious poets.

Ibid., p. 2.

Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterji, Languages and Literatures of Modern India, Calcutta, 1963, pp. 159-60.