THOSE who know Professor Dave know him as a soft-spoken, unaggressive scholar and a devoted teacher. His range is surprisingly wide. Rooted in the soil, he is a cosmopolitan connoisseur. It is a pleasure to travel with him over what he calls a revealing romantic touch – 'realms of gold'. Mostly solid gold!

The opening essay, 'Religion and Poetry', on Narsi Mehta and Meera, shows intimate discrimination and also how thin the line between poetry and religion may be. Yet, are the two the same? In religion and poetry, says Dave, man is continually reborn. But is not the process slightly different in each? Are all poets saints?

The question can only be solved by looking at the creative process. This Dave does in the second essay, 'Creative Process and the Human Consciousness'. Probably 'Road to Xanadu' is the best model, unfortunately un-repeatable. A work of art is neither a somnambulist act nor is it technique only. Referring to evidence – a Professor is a Professor – to Pound, Pasternak, Stevens and others, he finally concedes that the process is a mystery. The humility of his wisdom is contagious.

In the next essay - or lecture? – 'Have We lost the Tragic Sense?' he speaks of the value of the self on which tragedy perhaps depended. Since we are no longer persons but un-persons the question does not arise. But it is too percius to be abandoned. Many modern dramatists from Miller to Eliot have tried to resurrect it with varying success. Man's effort to rise above himself against his most vulnerable predicament in the
cosmic theatre is apparently unending. ‘Apparently’, because there could be something ‘beyond tragedy’.

‘Aesthetics of Poetic Translation: Communication across Cultures’ states a problem that never been quite solved. For whom is the translation being made and by whom? Between the Indian poem translated (“I become the lake\You become the fish”) and Pasternak’s rendering of Hamlet, the latter sounds more genuine. By the way, how good was Tagore’s Gitanjali as translation? Did it not distort the spirit of the original, deliberately or not?

‘Walt Whitman’s Spiritual Odyssey: From Brooklyn to India’ shows how his adventure of ideas, an inner urge, inevitably led him to a Vedantic shore to A Passage to India. But the affinity should not be pressed too hard. From Brooklyn to the ghats of Varanasi is a far cry and the Manhattan mystic might have difficulties adjusting to the Indian ethos. Walt Whitman was after all or above all more a troubled modern soul, wild, exhibitionistic. The serenity of the sage was the exception and not the rule. The nuances should not be missed or minimized.

‘Stray Approaches to Shakespeare’ is an unhurried rumination. Dave is fully aware that “not only one error but several errors” may crop up in the attempt to analyse the Great Unanalysable. Is “symbolic economy” the answer?

The last essay, ‘To Kill a Mocking Bird’ provides an impressive empathic study of Harper Lee’s tragic vision, the moral coming the tangled tale. A disturbing experience that is also a criticism of an aspect of unpurged American life. Who says tragedy is dead?

The collection (“bunched up at random”) is held together by a speaking voice keen to share. We almost overhear. Sensitive rather than academic, totally rather than thematically related, these civilized reflections, winking at brim, are to be sipped slowly, a lingering delight.

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE
It is a pleasure to read them because it is such a spontaneous and whole hearted surrender of his consciousness to the Muse of Poetry. I have not sat in his classroom; but his classes also must have enthused and inspired the students who attended them. They must have gone out of the portals of their university with a lit lamp and an illuminated mind.

- V.K. Gokak

'I continue to treasure my memories of it. On reading your *Religion and Poetry* I understand how much you and I have in common. Your insights are those that I value very much'.

- John Arthos

Prof. R. A. Dave has made himself welcome both by his own contribution and by his active interest in the ideas and work of others.

- Robert E. Spiller

Mr Dave made a valuable contribution to the critical discussion and total scholarly effort. I have read his papers. All of these meet high standards of research and communication.

- Sculley Bradley

"I am impressed by your facility with the English language. I am impressed in that at times the ease with which you use the language enables you to articulate suggestive insights... the steady flow of words intrudes; they take on a life of their own, and one is mesmerised in the process."

- Gresham Riley

Prof. R. A. Dave has excellent understanding of the problems and techniques of scholarly methods. He approaches a literary work with sensitivity and perception. Both in speech and writing he has shown great enthusiasm and keen powers of literary analysis.

- G. M. Laws