

CHAPTER III

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU : THE HISTORIAN

Jawaharlal's celebrated trilogy on history comprising *Letters From a Father to His Daughter*, *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India* aptly reveals his awareness of the past. In this chapter, an attempt has been made to explore Jawaharlal as a historian with reference to these works.

It is seen that the trilogy addresses a well-defined periphery of history designed by Jawaharlal in the 'Asia-centric' mode of narrative. Further, it is a matter of interest that although Jawaharlal was not a historian in the strict academic sense, yet his awareness of history may be understood from his opinion like, "a study of history should teach us how the world has slowly but surely progressed..."(6) in the *Glimpses of World History*. It is not difficult to apprehend in this light, why Jawaharlal has viewed that "man's growth from barbarism to civilisation" is supposed to be "the theme of history...(6), and in the trilogy, he has mainly dealt with that 'growth and civilisation' of human society as a whole. Thus, in his attempt to narrate it, he has considered history not as a mere chronological account of events, but as a challenging subject that "usually works through centuries..." (10). As he puts it in the *Glimpses of World History*, "The world grows more and more disorganized, international relations become anarchical, and the League of Nations and the other attempts made at international co-operation

have ended as dismal failures...(955) thus showing his objective of enlightening various events happening in the world, from the early period of human history to contemporary Nationalist Movement of India. Even the possible horror of the World War II has become his concern while recording the same. As a man interested in the itinerary of mankind's journey towards progress, Jawaharlal reasonably observes, "A study of history should teach us how the world has slowly but surely progressed...and how by force of his intellect [man] triumphed over the others ..." (6). V. N. Chibber has rightly stated in the following words :

... [Jawaharlal's] concept of history included a dialectical interplay of man and society, of the individual and the events. He wanted to find some meaning in this intricate pattern of spasmodic events and cataclysms called history...¹

The above observation made by Chibber shows Jawaharlal as a historian whose recognition of the inherent meaning of spasmodic events as the governing authority of human society may be viewed as a new definition of history. Further, Jawaharlal's unquenching thirst for delving deep into the evolution of the world and the development of civilization is a long deliberation that results in the trilogy. As a historian, he has purposefully established a link between the past and the present viewing history as "a one connected whole" (4). Further, Jawaharlal, as it has been observed, has selected the descriptive mode of history while the persistent note of 'objectivity' has pervaded his accounts, governed by the link between the 'present' and the 'past'. It is felt relevant to refer to

the observation made by E. H. Carr in his work, *What is History?*(1961).

To him history is :

... a kind of continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the present and the past..²

A strong link, between the historian and the events, has been noted by Carr as an essential criterion in the study of history. In this light, it may be argued that as a historian, Jawaharlal has maintained an 'unending dialogue' in his endeavour to interpret history. The following passage from *The Discovery of India* is worth quoting :

...I saw the moving drama of the Indian people in the present, and could often trace the threads which bound their lives to the past, even while their eyes were turned towards their future. I found a cultural background which has exerted a powerful influence on their lives...(67).

It has been seen that Jawaharlal has recorded the thin line of thread prevailing in the course of human development in terms of the past, the present and the future. Carr's view, "History consists of ascertained facts"³ sounds similar to Jawaharlal's, "history is one connected whole"(4) as stated in the *Glimpses of World History*. Both the comments are equally instrumental in understanding Jawaharlal's concept of history. Jawaharlal's 'objective', yet keen analysis of those 'ascertained facts', has placed his insight into them, enabling us to consider his "scientific view of history, a scientific view suffused with the

imagination of an artist”⁴ as noted by Narasimhaiah. Some remarkable state of affairs in India have been interpreted by Jawaharlal from the scientific point of view. Particularly, while he opted to look into the “relics of feudalism India still possessing”, he has thought, that it was the policy of “the British, the most advanced people in Europe at that time, ally themselves in India with the most backward and conservative classes...”(430), and as a historian he has observed that “British rule also helped religious conservatism”(431). These are some of the significant observations made by Jawaharlal in the *Glimpses of World History*.

The letters included in the *Letters From a Father to His Daughter*, and the *Glimpses of World History* are the ‘epistolary harvest’[s]⁵ of Jawaharlal in the presentation of history, mapping a new paradigm of the subject as literature also. Letters contained in the two works were addressed to his daughter, Indira Priyadarshini, with an aim at introducing her to the happenings in the world. Both the works reveal a father’s will to impart his knowledge to his child. To quote from *the Letters From a Father to His Daughter* :

The very word ‘Arya’ meant a gentleman, a superior kind of person. And they loved freedom greatly. They were not like their descendents in India today who have little courage and hardly feel the loss of their freedom...(78).

Adopting an innovative method of teaching, namely, the epistolary mode of narration, Jawaharlal has incorporated what can be called a kind of distant education. However, there is an endeavour on his part to

recreate the past in a language that is simple, personal and conversational. It is seen that the trilogy is important for containing as much history as literature positing Jawaharlal's love for literary art. It is well to remember the following passage from the book, *Interpreting Literature*, (1966) written by Knox C. Hill :

What the historian writes, then, depends not only on what the past itself was, but on what kind of man the historian is .But conversely what a man is depends very much on what he has learned from the past. When a man of great intelligence becomes interested in the past and writes a history, he is likely to produce a book of lasting value, even though later scholarship may be able to add to what he writes, or even to correct him...⁶

The observation made by Hill may be helpful in assessing Jawaharlal as a historian. In *The Discovery of India* Jawaharlal has observed thus :

The discovery of India—what have I discovered? It was presumptuous of me to imagine that I could unveil her and find out what she is today and what she is in the long past...(562).

The passage seems to be the proof of Jawaharlal's later insight stemming from his preoccupation with history which has increased day by day. However, Hill's observation, "What we find important in the past depends upon our present interests and the interests of men are constantly changing..."⁷ requires an analysis in our attempt to posit Jawaharlal as a historian. It has been observed that Jawaharlal, throughout the trilogy has tended to show that pattern of change in his

consciousness, and that may be viewed as a new manner of bringing history. It is associated with his inherent patriotic feelings. Now, in our opinion, instead of losing popularity, Jawaharlal as a historian on own has gained wide popularity for the uncommon approach he has adopted.

Jawaharlal's projection of the past, thus, has been thrown in a new perspective. His method of appreciating history arrests our attention, since he has conveyed his line of thought as newer as particular. It is to be stated that Jawaharlal, as revealed in the trilogy, takes a digression from that of the noted historians of England like Edward Gibbon(1737-94) and H. G. Wells in presenting history (1866-1946). Roy F. Nichols observes, "the historian in recreating the past has many skills to apply to his craft", and he further maintains that, "he has become aware of this diversity of talent which he may cultivate..."⁸. Considering the view of Nichols, one may look for Jawaharlal's different skills applied in the analysis of history. He is seen as a skilful narrator whose 'panorama of world history' includes various descriptions of 'Asia and Europe' illuminating 'The Quest of Man' on their way to civilisation. It is not that Jawaharlal has narrated man's glory only, but he has tried to find out also the causes of war, famine, art, culture, politics, literature, nature, and other forces that determine the course of a society. Jawaharlal's own art or technique of narrating history, hence, has offered a new perspective providing us an insight into the past making it vivid as far as possible in verbal expression. The trilogy presents Jawaharlal also as a creative writer who knows how to employ the language to express history as

literature. In *The Discovery of India* Jawaharlal has referred to nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore thus :

More than any other Indian, he has helped to bring into harmony the ideas of the east and the west, and broadened the cases of Indian Nationalism...Tagore was the great humanist of India (340).

It is seen that Jawaharlal has succeeded in enacting the panorama of human civilization objectively. As the titles suggest, *Glimpses of World History* consists of world events while *The Discovery of India* is a discovery for every reader of the glorious cultural heritage of India that truly designs the outline of history. In the words of M. K. Naik,

...what Nehru attempts here is not a scholarly history, but a vision of the past seen through the eyes of one imbued with a lively historical sense...⁹

This view of Naik helps us advance our argument that as a man with a keen curiosity for knowing the past, Jawaharlal just has not tried to record this in a scholarly way, he has maintained to put in his own analytical way. Nonetheless his unwavering confidence and enthusiasm in narrating history impress us as they have been derived by him from vast reading. His search for truth, which is instrumental in analysing history, has merged into the depth of the narratives.

As a historian Jawaharlal has an aim to put forward the events. Simple assertions like, "Alexander was only twenty when he became

king”(46); “Prithvi Raj is still a popular hero” (208), “Nicolo and Maffeo were well received by Kublai Khan” (225) are historical theses, while, they sometime may be more complex like, “the Marxist view of history as a class struggle” (36). These events recorded in the *Glimpses of World History* are by no means examples that exhaust the possibilities and are meant only to be suggested. As Knox C. Hill has maintained,

In a basic sense all histories are narrative; the mere fact that history is concerned with the past means that when we study any part of it we give it a place in the time sequence.¹⁰

As it has already been stated, Jawaharlal, being influenced by the ideologies of Oscar Wilde and Walter Pater, allowed their motto scope in his thoughts. As such, in his reorientation of history, it has been noted that his ‘aesthetic’ as well as ‘romantic’ views permeate his works to an extent while they are necessary. The all-pervading closeness between Nature and history, shown by Jawaharlal, has a strong romantic appeal to the reader:

...Nature has a way of writing her own history in her rocks and stones, and all who wish to may read it there. It is a kind of autobiography – that is, one’s own history...(18.).

The passage cited from the *Glimpses of World History* is a case in point suggesting that affinity. Few historians have noticed this link as Jawaharlal has done. To him, ‘Nature’ with her own history has many things to record them in ‘stones’, ‘rocks’ and other ‘articles’. The same sort of description, however, goes differently in H. G. Wells :

...We find preserved in shale, and state, limestone, and sandstone, bones, shells, fibres, stems, fruits, formarks, scratchings and the like, side by side with the ripple marks of the earliest tides and the pittings of the earliest rainfalls...¹¹

Though the expressions in Jawaharlal and Wells are about the same subject, yet, Wells does not seem to be interested in artistic expression, while Jawaharlal has shown the 'poetic' and the 'aesthetic' taste of a historian. This is a rarity in other historians.

In fact, the treatment of history has been newly formulated by Jawaharlal in his trilogy and he has not followed the pattern set by Gibbon and Wells. He has come away from the 'Euro-centric' mode of appreciating history, preferring to adopt the 'Asia-centric' mode, being engineered by an orientation into the study of history and culture of the countries of Asia. Truly, the novelty generated by Jawaharlal, thus, puts a newer dimension in recording the facts of the past. The reader, familiar with the descriptions provided by Gibbon and Wells, now has learnt to reconsider the method of narrating history that is specifically Jawaharlal's own. To his credit, he has ably mesmerized the lovers of history without incorporating any conflicting ideas regarding the activities of various nations. For initiating the 'Asia-centric' mode, Jawaharlal has surely carved a niche among the well acclaimed historians.

It must be put here that the trilogy was written during Jawaharlal's prison years from 1930 to 1946. There he could not consult any significant and authoritative reference books except Gibbon's *The*

Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (vol I, 1781; vol. 2, 3, 1788), and Wells's *Outline of World History* (1920) and *A Short History of the World* (1922). It is, therefore, a matter of credit for Jawaharlal that despite the non-availability of sufficient resources, he could vividly portray the world events in a charming language. In the trilogy he has tried his best to treat the past as any scholarly historian does. Meanwhile, in *The Discovery of India*, his celebrated voyage of discovery to the realm of India's ancient glory may be attributed to his pride that arises from his deep patriotic feeling. Chibber has argued that history at the hands of Jawaharlal, "lacks in continuity and coherence and it is at times repetitive"¹². This argument of Chibber may be dismissed considering the point of view maintained by F. J. Teggart, "In World History what we may speak of as the form of the sequence of events has been envisaged as a cycle, as a drama, and as a progress..."¹³. The sequence of events is so long and varied in nature that even if one makes an attempt at studying it thoroughly, the link among them tends to get lost sometimes leading to incoherence. The view of Chibber may, thus, be dismissed on the basis of the observation done by Teggart. Jawaharlal's *Glimpses of World History* records significant as well as trivial incidents which occurred in the past, and which have been collectively and chronologically put. As the panorama of world history is vast, the narrative coherence sometime may get blurred. Again Teggart has said,

National history has unity of time sequence, unity of place, and unity of personality (i.e. the nation). World history must deal with an assemblage of time sequences, of places, and of personalities...¹⁴

Thus, in delineation of national history as it is done in *The Discovery of India* that coherence in the description of the narrative has existed from the beginning to the end, while in the *Glimpses of World History* exploration of the past in the context of innumerable incidents definitely gives birth to some inevitable chaos. In fact, Jawaharlal has a tendency to jump off from one subject to another, making a habit of digression in the narrative. In *The Discovery of India*, it is seen that he has ably maintained that continuity keeping the elemental force of the 'human spirit' which has been ruling society since time immemorial in mind. In his words,

How amazing is this spirit of man! In spite of innumerable failings, man, throughout the ages has sacrificed his life and all he held dear for an ideal, for truth, for faith, for country, and honour. That ideal may change, but that capacity for self-sacrifice continues, and because of that, much may be forgiven to man, and it is impossible to lose hope for him... (33).

It is felt relevant to quote Gibbon to show how the emperors function in the political structure,

The labours of [those] monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors... The idea restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor...¹⁵.

This passage illustrates the close interdependence possible between narrative and descriptive passages of histories, while it shows how Gibbon thought the emperor was the centre of any political structure.

The cited passage from the *Glimpses of World History* is ebullient in the sense that as a historian Jawaharlal has always put faith in the spirit of man. However, the noticeable deviation in the description from the present to the past and from the past to the present is less in *The Discovery of India* than in the *Glimpses of World History*. Again, it can be argued that in covering a wider range of events in a massive work like the *Glimpses of World History* some faults cannot be totally avoided, and in the case of Jawaharlal, too, it may happen. But considering the enormous effort he has put to do the job of writing history in a particular situation, one must ignore the one or two trivial anomalies.

After writing the voluminous *Glimpses of World History*, Jawaharlal's perspective broadened and his thinking matured. Later, he took up the onerous task of rediscovering India for himself as well as for the people at large. In this context he has remarked :

... India was in my blood and there was much in her that instinctively thrilled me. And yet I approached her almost as an alien critic, full of dislike for the present as well as for many relics of the past that I saw. To some extent I came to her via the west, and looked at her as a friendly westerner might have done. I was eager and anxious to change her outlook and appearance and give her the garb of modernity (51).

The passage reveals Jawaharlal as a historian who has desired to induce a sense of modernity into India's 'appearance', but ultimately he has realized that India is an ancient land like "a lady with a past" (51). He himself gets overwhelmed by her rich tradition and culture and with an imaginative line of thought has felt the necessity for studying the myths, ideas, dreams, and visions surrounding that glorious heritage and culture of this hoary land. In this regard, Jawaharlal may be placed along with the English historian and politician, Thomas Babington Macaulay (1800-1859) who was best known for his book, *The History of England* (vol. 1-2, 1849; vol. 3-4, 1855) in which there was enough illumination of this motherland as the same is notable in *The Discovery of India*.

In the *Glimpses of World History*, Jawaharlal has shed light on various subjects like *Asia and Europe* (9-10), *Old Civilizations and Our Inheritance* (11-13), *The Hellenes*, *Nazi Triumph in Germany* (919-922) and the like. These discourses show him as a thoughtful writer. The 'vast panorama' of world history includes discussions on 'capitalism', 'nationalism', 'imperialism' which were some newly developed key concepts in social, political and economic fields. *Glimpses of World History* may be viewed as a work wherein the needs of society, too, have been relatively emphasised. The rule of history, in this context, may be recognized as suggestive of various facts in Jawaharlal's interpretation of the subject. He has presented the concrete, individualized accounts embedded in the different ages in the *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India*. The whole corpus of historical presentation in the

trilogy lays emphasis on the 'objective' analysis of the events, having social and political importance. Thus, his vision as revealed in the trilogy, is kaleidoscopic too, in nature. Further, Jawaharlal's humane outlook puts a proper perspective of the world and its problems. To quote him :

The future that took shape in my mind was one of intimate co-operation, politically, economically, and culturally, between India and the other countries of the world (50).

Jawaharlal's vision turned into the future transcends his thoughts beyond the boundaries of narrow nationalism. This is a meaningful aspect of his creative side. As Jawaharlal began narrating the varied, complex history, he appeared as a narrator with great patience concentrating on the exploration of different civilizations of the world. Thus, he has taught us to cross the idea of narrow nationalism, changing our attitude from that of hatred to tolerance of other nations. In this way, Jawaharlal may be seen as 'a world citizen' whose farsightedness was reflected in his writings.

Focusing the reader's attention on the contributions made by emperors like Babar, Akbar, Aurangzeb, and religious preachers like Buddha, Mahabir and others, Jawaharlal has reiterated the necessity of maintaining a sense of synthesis to have a better living place. To him, 'synthesis' grows from the assimilation of many cultures and religions. As a strong believer in the 'past', Jawaharlal has anticipated that the dominant aspect of nationalism in India is that 'synthesis', sustained through the foreign invasions. India's rich glory, he believes, can be

saved with the help of the 'synthesis'. Jawaharlal's concern for humanity has again come to the fore. The following passage from *The Discovery of India* is worth quoting right now :

Brahminism and Buddhism acted and reacted on each other, and in spite of their dialectical conflicts or because of them, approached nearer to each other, both in the realm of philosophy and that of popular belief...(179)

Glimpses of World History and *The Discovery of India* serve as 'social history'. The criteria of 'social history', mentioned by the British historian, G. M. Trevelyan are the follows :

... Social history does not merely provide the required link between economic and political history. It has also its positive value and peculiar concern ... this includes the human as well as the economic relation of different classes to one another, the character of family and household life, the conditions of labour and of leisure, the attitude of man to nature, the culture of each age... learning and thought.¹⁶

In the light of the above, Jawaharlal's trilogy may be assessed as 'social history' that contains the criteria as cited in the passage. 'Human relation' and 'economic relation' between different classes are recognized as the areas of study in a 'social history'. In this context, it may be safely argued that Jawaharlal also has thrown light on these issues in his trilogy, thereby exhibiting his concern for the ethos exercised by the people in various ages. From this angle, he may be acknowledged as a social historian. Jawaharlal has illuminated in the *Glimpses of World History*

on 'trade and commerce' done by "the Cholas who were long famous for their sea-trade" (127). He mentions, "Ships carrying merchandised coming from and going to distant places by the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea"(127), and also enlightens the reader about the use of ships in ancient India. Jawaharlal's apt comment, "sea-faring folk take to trade easily" (133) reveals his power to conclude a discussion when necessary, and as a historian he has established the idea that "South Indians were traders and merchants" because of their close proximity to the sea. Conclusions like these support Jawaharlal's acumen as a historian.

In *The Discovery of India*, too, a close analysis has been made by Jawaharlal on "Indian social structure" and the "Importance of the group" in a society, as well as the "transition from a pre-industrialist economy to an economy of capitalist industrialism" (300). Social realities like the above, which are obvious facets of 'social history' have been noticed in the trilogy. Emphasis has been given on the exposure of 'religion, literature, music, architecture, learning and thought' by Trevelyan, which, to him should be the sole objective of social history. Indeed, these are the inherent themes of the *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India* to a large extent. Trevelyan's observation, "The detailed study of social history that makes us feel that the pulse was as real as the present"¹⁷ makes us to examine the term 'real', which is meant to indicate 'truth', and is always a functional device of history as opposed to 'imagination' in other branches of literature. This idea of Trevelyan synchronizes with the objective of Jawaharlal while he has

nicely presented the account of that 'truth' inhabiting the past. Truly, then, it may be said that the main impulse of Jawaharlal was to enhance the reality encircling the past in his trilogy and to a great extent he has succeeded in his attempt.

The 'sense of synthesis'¹⁸, as viewed by Chaman Nahal, is another important aspect of Jawaharlal's art of narrating history. It has been seen that Jawaharlal's vision of humanity is implanted in the large canvas of life. In the interpretation of history Jawaharlal has intermingled imagination with reality. The accounts offered by Edward Gibbon and H. G. Wells invite comparison in this regard. The 'sense of synthesis' is totally absent in their works, while in Jawaharlal it is the most dominating trend. In Wells' description, Emperor Napoleon was:

... a man of severely limited understanding but of ruthless directness and great energy. He had begun life as an extremist of the school of Robespierre; he owed his first promotion to that side; but he had no real grasp of the forces that were working in Europe ...¹⁹.

To quote Jawaharlal in the *Glimpses of World History* in the same context :

... It is difficult to judge great and extraordinary men; and that Napoleon was great in his own way and extraordinary there can be no doubt. He was elemental, almost like a force of Nature. Full of ideas and imagination, he was yet blind to the value of ideals and unselfish motives... (391.)

Jawaharlal has not only recognized Napoleon's strength and other values as a warrior, but has also individualized him as "an elemental force of nature", but Wells has described Napoleon as a man with "ruthless directness of great energy". There is no humane touch in the portrait of Napoleon drawn in language by Wells as a historian, while Jawaharlal's account is replete with a compassionate feeling for the great warrior. The treatment of 'history', thus, differs at the respective narratives of Wells and Jawaharlal. Jawaharlal, as Narasimhaiah observes, "turns to poetry, fiction, painting, tombs, monuments, inscriptions, travel books, learned treatises and contemporary records..."²⁰, and to them, we may add that it was the former's peculiar way to humanize his narrative art. Thus, history slowly gets recognition as literature in his description enriched with 'emotion', 'imagination', 'tragedy', 'comedy' and the like. It is noticeable that for the assessment of luminaries like Trotsky, Lenin, Tolstoy and others Jawaharlal has always "the eye of a true artist", who, after keen observation, has enlivened them in a language that is totally his own enriched with simplicity and passion. Thus, to Jawaharlal, Babar, the Mughal King, was a distinguished man who sacrificed his life for the sake of his son, Akbar. The descriptions are overwhelming as "Words flow freely and inevitably..."²¹, emphasizing the straightforwardness of the events or individuals. This is Jawaharlal's characteristic technique of describing the past.

Thus, in Jawaharlal's trilogy, history is recognized as a living entity of the past with "the life of nations, of great men and women and great

deeds performed" (2), and in it, there is a mighty procession of living men and women and children speaking about the times they belonged to. As such, he has wanted "history to be a succession of vivid images in our mind"²², so that the reader might almost visualize the past. Further, Jawaharlal has romanticized history infusing humane 'virtues' and 'vices' into the characters. To quote from the *Glimpses of World History* :

In history, we read of great periods in the life of nations, of great men and women and great deeds performed, and sometimes in our dreams and reveries we imagine ... doing brave deeds like the heroes and the heroines ... (2).

The above passage shows Jawaharlal as a 'humanist' who puts much emphasis on 'men' and 'women' and their activities. He is less interested in the 'myths' and 'tales' surrounding the past of India or the world. So, in the trilogy, it is seen that Jawaharlal as a historian has chosen to tell the story of Jesus, Ashoka, Chengiz Khan and other like figures along with some socio-political, and socio-economic thoughts of society: socialism, democracy, and the like.

The unconventional delineation of the religious philosophy based on "The Vedas" (79-80); "The Upanishads" (89-93); "The Mahabharata" (106-108) and 'tradition' associated with 'myths', however, calls our attention. In presenting all these, the "scholarly thoroughness and economy of expression"²³ of Jawaharlal may be viewed as his forte.

Further, Jawaharlal has done an onerous task by endeavoring to put all the scriptures within limited space. He has not failed to recognize 'myths' as 'living elements' (101) in Indian lives in *The Discovery of India*. But he has not attempted to justify a social structure on the foundations of the beliefs of the people. Not doing so, Jawaharlal has indirectly helped the critic to estimate his role as a historian who puts more weight on 'truth' instead of on 'preconceived ideas'.

However, it has been observed that the joint family system in India drew the attention of both Wells and Jawaharlal. To quote Wells :

... We do get to something like a living understanding of the type of household which has prevailed in human communities since Neolithic days, which in the west is rapidly giving ground before a state and municipal organization of education and a large scale industrialization within which an amount of individual detachment and freedom is possible, such as these great households never know...²⁴

And to quote from *The Discovery of India* :

... The third was the joint family where all the members were joint sharers in the common property and inheritance went by survivorship... The fact of growing up and living in a large family minimized the ego-centric attitude of the child and tended to develop an aptitude for civilization (255).

As a Euro-centric interpreter of history, Wells dismisses the joint family system, while Jawaharlal is all praise for it. It is he, who learnt the

value of human relationships at Anand Bhawan that “sheltered a large family of cousins and near relations...”²⁵ Jawaharlal strongly defies the possibility of ‘disintegration’ in such a system as pointed out by Wells.

In Jawaharlal’s journey as a historian, a poetic conception of history, both at personal and national levels, rules him. Besides, a growing awareness of freedom occupies him in his discovery of “ancient roots as well as his western blossom as continuous phenomenon from the remote past to the distant future ...”²⁶. The historian’s foray of the past again leaps forth narrating the contemporary Indian scene with the Raj regime. To place in proper words, Jawaharlal’s depiction of history is not only to suggest his artistic skill, but also to rejuvenate the modern Indian consciousness that identifies their plight with the alien rulers. As an erudite scholar, Jawaharlal has expressed that the “discovery and enhancement of an Indian consciousness [that] was a corollary to the discovery of liberation of India in both the senses-poetic and political and they were inseparable...”²⁷ Thus, it is affirmed that Jawaharlal took to writing history with the objective of making the people aware of the glory of India and their present state of subjugation. Indeed, his writings on history are directly traceable to his wise intention to convey a message of awareness of their subjugated condition. In doing so, he has just not done the duty of a historian, but has also shown his deep love for the motherland. Writing *The Discovery of India*, he has certainly honoured, and reflected the glory of India, and directly helped the reader, in knowing her as a country which has few equals.

Sometimes, Jawaharlal's impartial attitude ceases and he deals with some subjects with great sympathy. As Teggart has stated rightly,

The historian concerns himself on the one hand, with documents, and on the other, with happenings or events which have taken place in the past. Historical work involves, first the critical examination of documentary sources of information, and second history writing...²⁸

It is true that as a historian, Jawaharlal has critically examined the recorded events only, as he could not collect the documentary evidence inside jails. Nonetheless, his scholarly analysis of history provides a fresh avenue for the reader to look for the elementary force of human society. As a rule, then, it should be remembered that there is no fine line of difference between history and literature in his narrative; both are closely related to each other. They, in fact, enlighten four aspects of Jawaharlal's outlook : universalism, rationalism, morality, and Marxism. The accounts, as systematic and close observations, give us an idea about Jawaharlal's role in attempting to do the survey of the 'past'. Further, in his attempt to probe into the 'mysticisms' encircling humanity, it may be stated that Jawaharlal has relied upon his own insight and deep perception. In doing so, he has drawn inspiration from Nature and his own surroundings which fostered him as a creative writer. Thus, the central idea of Jawaharlal's trilogy is the development of 'civilization' which has been recorded in the *Glimpses of World History* :

There is a great deal of evil in our present inheritance in India, a great deal that has kept us down in the world...(13)

Here we see him as a spokesman of 'humanity' who has been constantly monitoring the whole circle of its rise and fall. He appeals to "look at a map of the ancient world"(30) to enhance one's vision of the gradual happening in it. However, Jawaharlal feels that to fill up the "dry skeleton of history", maps are essential. For all these delineations, the trilogy is helpful in understanding him as a historian. *Glimpses of World History* affords a rare insight into the compassionate side of Jawaharlal's personality emphasizing mainly his socialistic ideologies.

The Discovery of India records Jawaharlal's agony after the untimely demise of his wife, Kamala. Thus, the beginning of the work is a probe into the personal relationship in a nostalgic vein. Later, he moves on to narrate the glory of India revealing her 'indigenouslyness' which to him is 'complex', and, at the same time, 'a large historical process'.

Although Jawaharlal has proclaimed in the *Glimpses of World History*, that "[he] is not a literary man, and [he] is not a historian; what indeed is [he]?"... (950.) certainly generates the question in the reader who dismisses him neither as a 'literary man' nor as a 'historian'. Instead, the reader strongly admires his keen sense of history that is essential in a man of letters. And not only for that but also for the reasons discussed above, Jawaharlal may be categorized as a non-academic historian who looks upon the "past history with the eye of sympathy", and hopes that, "the dry bones" of history, "will fill up with flesh and blood" (950-951).

The main traits of Jawaharlal as a historian are his contemplative vision of human predicament, and while attempting to discuss it, he keeps an eye on the preachers and the rulers. Meanwhile, illustration of reality is his concept that designs the scope of history. In this regard, we may quote the noted critic of history, R. G. Collingwood from his book, *The Idea of History* (1946) :

History, like theology or natural science is a special form of thought. If that is so, questions about the nature, object, method and value of this form of thought must be answered by persons...²⁹

This observation of Collingwood suggests that the historian should be a competent thinker who can contextualize 'nature', 'object', 'method' and 'value' of the subject treated as history. The same critic, further, argues that the writer should "not only be a historian, but a philosopher"³⁰ who brings out the past to exist on the verge of the present. By the term, 'philosopher', it is hoped, Collingwood has not certainly indicated a historian with the philosophy like that of Socrates, but a man who can aptly delineate the thoughts of the past imbued with his own interpretation. It is well known that Jawaharlal is not a propagandist of any specific doctrine, but his philosophy, emanating from his broad humanism, may be attributed to the sight of the masses. His need to "concretise his inner tensions or debates without an irritable desire to reach after fact or reason..."³¹ is a revelation of his desire to narrate history. Thus, *Letters From a Father to His Daughter*, *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India* depict that outlook. In Jawaharlal's words :

In this crisis of our own history let us look into ourselves and examine, without pity or prejudice, what we have done and what others have done to us, and seek to find out where we stand today...³²

It has been observed that an effort has been made to maintain the balance between the 'past' and the 'present' in all the works. They, in fact, continue to reflect the very texture of Jawaharlal's thoughts, and history has become for Jawaharlal 'a personal urgency' to gain some relief from his emotions.

The above discussion is a testimony to Jawaharlal's gift for analogical thinking as a historian. It may be said that even without being a professional historian like Gibbon and Wells, he draws our attention to his remarkable interest in history that has been aptly revealed in *Letters From a Father to His Daughter*, *Glimpses of World History* and *The Discovery of India*. Besides, his wide range of knowledge, and his analytical strength contribute to his achievement as a historian. The most impressive structure of the trilogy is the selection of significant, chronological data from the vast array of facts that once happened. The orderly presentation of these data has been done in a simple but elegant style. Thus, the trilogy is a marked departure from the standard universal histories. The orientation of history into the 'Asia-centric' mode, which is a novelty itself initiated by Jawaharlal, may in future, it is believed, pave more interesting ways in interpreting the same. As Michael Breecher has pertinently observed,

... The lack of balance in historical writing is redressed, Europe and Asia are placed in the perspective of 'World History' and the reader is made aware of the fact that the history of non-European people is not merely an extension of European culture overseas...³³.

In the light of the above, it can be safely argued that Jawaharlal illuminated those areas which were long time neglected by the western historians. And, thus, he may be called a newly commissioned social historian who widened the horizon of history searching for the frame of the past. Iyenger has pertinently commented :

...The assessments may not be altogether unexceptionable in every instance, but there is no doubt Jawaharlal has tried to be fair minded and just, and has succeeded in large measure in this truly difficult task of 'judging' men and affairs.³⁴

This comment aptly situates Jawaharlal as the historian whose charm would never cease in the academic area, and in future his strength as such, would be undoubtedly hailed by the reader and critic alike. The praise he continues to receive as a historian is another facet of his achievement as a man of letters.

From the discussion in this chapter, it may be recorded that as a historian Jawaharlal has undoubtedly tapped the resources hidden in the 'past'. Hence, Jawaharlal's sense of history may be viewed as one of the traits of his standing as 'a man of letters' comprising his multi-dimensional personality.

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