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BROWNING'S 'LITERARY FATHER'

By O. P. Govil

All the biographers of Browning have noted the fact that he looked upon the Reverend W. J. Fox as his 'literary father', but this they have taken to mean simply that Fox was instrumental in obtaining for him literary recognition through all kinds of social and professional contacts in London prior to his marriage to Elizabeth Barrett. None of them has made any attempt to inquire whether Browning's indebtedness to Fox was deeper than that—whether his young mind was in any way influenced by the intellectual and literary genius of Fox. Only one critic, C. R. Tracey[1] has discussed at some length the impact of Fox upon Browning's poetry, but his main concern is with its religious aspect; he has brought out in what way and how far Fox influenced Browning's religious thinking. The question that still remains to be answered is whether Fox had any share in the actual shaping of Browning's nascent poetic genius; if yes, to what extent?

W. J. Fox was a well-known Unitarian preacher and social reformer. He was also an effective 'political orator', who subsequently became Member of Parliament for Oldham, and 'his presence was eagerly sought by many who did not share his religious views.'[2] In 1824, he assisted J. S. Mill's father to found the *Westminster Review* to which he himself contributed articles. He also edited the *Monthly Repository* in the early 'thirties, and endeavoured to raise it 'from its original denominational character into a first-class literary and political journal.'[3] His perceptive reviews of the early poems of Tennyson and Browning appeared in this periodical. Macready wrote about Fox in his diary:

> I like Fox very much; he is an original and profound thinker, and most eloquent and ingenious in supporting the penetrating views he takes.[4]

Mill, too, was considerably influenced by Fox, with whom he had close personal relations. It was Fox who introduced him

to Mrs. Harriet Taylor. It was 'for Fox's sake' that during 1834 he wrote 'comments on passing events, of the nature of newspaper articles (under the title "Notes on the Newspapers")' for the *Monthly Repository*.[5] His two well-known essays on poetry, too, appeared in the same periodical, and his ideas of poetry, in many ways, echo[6] Fox's as expressed in his review of Tennyson's *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* in the *Westminster Review* for January, 1831.[7] The young Browning too, we have reasons to believe, owed not merely socially and professionally but also intellectually to one who was a source of light to many, including Mill, the 'metaphysical head', and with whom he had, of all others, the most intimate, the most cordial, and the most abiding, relations.

Browning had an opportunity to come into contact with Fox through his intimacy with Eliza and Sarah Flower whom he had known in the early 'twenties, several years before they came under Fox's guardianship on their father's death in 1829. He developed intimacy with Fox in 1833 before *Pauline* was published, though he had met him earlier. In his early teens he wrote letters and verses to Eliza Flower. Some of these juvenile poems, intended for a volume to be called *Incondita*, were shown by her to Fox. These verses, as Browning came to know 'at second hand' and reported himself, 'he praised not a little, which praise comforted me not a little.'[8] Fox was indeed struck by the promise of his genius, but he feared the snare for the young poet would be 'too great splendour of language and too little wealth of thought.'[9] It is probable that Fox's comment, though intended merely to qualify a praise, impelled Browning, extremely 'precocious' as he was,[10] to destroy every scrap of those early verses,[11] and that he thenceforward determined to put more curb on language and to seek greater depth of thought until his efforts in that direction culminated in that great puzzle of the nineteenth century—*Sordello*. In 1833 when *Pauline* was published, he 'could not but send it' to his 'old praiser',[12] naturally expecting further encouragement from 'one whose slight commendation then [in the past] was more thought of than all the gun drum and trumpet of praise would be now.'[13] When the notice was out, Browning wrote in gratitude: 'I shall never write a line without thinking of the source of my first praise be assured.'[14] That he was anxious not merely to

have Fox's praise but also to deserve it is evident from his letter of April 2, 1835 about the next poem:

> I also hope my poem will not turn out utterly unworthy of your kind interest, and more deserving of your favour than anything of mine you have as yet seen; indeed I all along proposed to myself such an endeavour, for it will never do for one so distinguished by past praise to prove nobody after all.[15]

A fortnight later, he wrote again:

> You will 'sarve me out'? two words to that; being the man you are, you must need very little telling from me, of the real feeling I have of your *criticism's* worth, and if I have had no more of it, surely I am hardly to blame, who have in more than one instance bored you sufficiently: but *not* a particle of your *article* has been rejected or neglected by your *observant* humble servant, and very proud shall I be if my new work bear in it the marks of the *influence* under which it was undertaken.[16]

That Browning was deeply impressed by Fox's intellectual activities, and was quite familiar with his earlier career as reviewer and editor is further clear from his letter to Miss Haworth:

> The 'Master' is somebody you don't know, W. J. Fox, a magnificent and poetical nature, who used to write in reviews when I was a boy, and to whom my verses, a bookful, written at the ripe age of twelve and thirteen, were shown . . . then I published *anonymously* a little poem —which he, to my inexpressible delight, praised and expounded in a gallant article in a magazine of which he was the editor.[17]

Two decades later, he again expressed his sense of indebtedness to his mentor, paying a glowing tribute to his remarkable intellectual capacity and critical acumen:

> I know, you know I would, always would, choose you out of the whole English world to *judge* and *correct* what I write myself; my wife shall read this and let it stand if I have told her so these twelve years—and certainly I have not grown *intellectually* an inch over the good and kind hand you extended over my head how many years![18]

From these evidences we can rightly infer that since his boyhood Browning had been keenly interested in, and had perused with both pleasure and profit, all that Fox had been writing, including his review of Tennyson's first poems in the *Westminster Review* for January, 1831,[19] which preceded *Pauline* by more than a year.

In that review of Tennyson's *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (1830), Fox regarded the 'little book as thoroughly and unitedly metaphysical and poetical in its spirit,' and praised it particularly because the poet had 'felt and thought, and learned to analyze thought and feeling.' He also observed that 'the most important department in which metaphysical science[20] has been a pioneer for poetry is in the analysis of particular states of mind; a work which is now performed with ease, power, and utility ... Hence the poet, more fortunate than the physican, has provision made for an inexhaustible supply of subjects. A new world is discovered for him to conquer.'[21] Tennyson, in the opinion of Fox, showed the way towards a new kind of poetry—poetry having metaphysical depth and psychological profundity. This was the suggestion which must have struck the young Browning's mind, and inspired his approach to poetry.

Fox further said that 'Tennyson has some excellent specimens of this class. He seems to obtain entrance into a mind as he would make his way into a landscape,' and cited 'Supposed Confessions of a second-rate sensitive mind not in unity with itself' as one of those, commenting:

> There is an extraordinary combination of deep reflection, metaphysical analysis, picturesque description, dramatic transition, and strong emotion. The author personates (he can personate anything he pleases from an angel to a grasshopper) a timid sceptic, but who must

> evidently always remain such, and yet be miserable in his scepticism; whose early associations, and whose sympathies, make religion a necessity to his heart, yet who has not lost his pride in the prowess of his youthful infidelity; who is tossed hither and thither on the conflicting currents of feeling and doubt, without the vigorous intellectual decision which alone could 'ride in the whirlwind and direct the storm' ... Now without intruding any irreverent comparison or critical profanity we do honestly think that *this state of mind as good a subject for poetical description* as even the shield of Achilles itself. *Such topics are* more *in* accordance with the spirit of the age than those about which poetry has been accustomed to be conversant; their adoption will effectually redeem it from the reproach of being frivolous and enervating.[22]

These words, we strongly suspect, offered the young Browning, who had already been introduced to Shelley and Voltaire, and had religious views radical enough to disturb Miss Sarah Flower's 'firm belief in the genuineness of the scriptures' a couple of years ago,[23] not merely a suggestion regarding the nature of the subject but also something about its ground-plan for his next poem, *Pauline*. Indeed, like Tennyson's poem cited above, *Pauline* is a confession of certain mental states which are likewise dramatically unfolded through a series of picturesque images drawn from nature.

Fox also testified to Tennyson's 'negative capability':

> Our author has the secret of the transmigration of the soul. He can cast his own spirit into any living thing, real or imaginary. ... And there is singular refinement, as well as solid truth, in his impersonations, whether they be of inferior creatures or of such elemental beings as Syrens (p. 148), as mermen (p. 24) and mermaidens (p. 27). He does not merely assume their external shapes, and exhibit his own mind masquerading. He takes their senses, feelings, nerves, and brain, along with their names and local habitations; still it is himself in them, modified but not absorbed by their peculiar and mode of being.[24]

These words seem to have inspired the following lines in *Pauline*:

> I have gone in thought
> Thro' all conjuncture, I have lived all life
> . . . . . .
> I can live all the life of plants, and gaze
> Drowsily on the bees that flit and play,
> . . . . . .
> . . . I can mount with the bird
> Leaping airily his pyramid of leaves
> And twisted boughs of some tall mountain tree,
> Or rise cheerfully springing to the heavens;
> Or like a fish breathe deep the morning air
> In the misty sun-warm water; or with flower
> And tree can smile in light at the sinking sun
> Just as the storm comes.[25]

and motivated Browning's criticism of Leigh Hunt's review of Tennyson's early poems:[26]

> Hunt's criticism is neither kind nor just, I take it—he don't [*sic*] understand that most of Tennyson's poems are *dramatic*—utterances coloured by an imaginary speaker's moods. Thus 'the mermaid' is not purely sea-woman enough for him—too coquettish and conscious, and like a girl of our own *fancying* 'the only blessed life, the watery': whereas, it *is* just that, a *girl*, looking characteristically at what might be viewed after many another fashion—Ariel's, for instance.[27]

Obviously enough, his line of approach and his illustrations are the same as Fox's. His own method too he explained in similar terms to Elizabeth Barrett on February 11, 1845:

> what I have printed gives *no* knowledge of me—it evidences abilities of various kinds, if you will—and a dramatic sympathy with certain modifications of passion . . . These scenes and song scraps are such mere and very escapes

> of my inner power . . . don't think I want to say I have not worked hard . . . but the work has been *inside*.[28]

With particular reference to 'The Mermaid', Fox's comment was:

> The poet has . . . created a scene out of the character, and made the feeling within generate an appropriate assemblage of external objects.[29]

This finds echo in Browning's preface to the first edition of *Paracelsus*, later discarded:

> instead of having recourse to an external machinery of incidents to create and evolve the crisis I desire to produce, I have ventured to display somewhat minutely the mood itself in its rise and progress, and have suffered the agency by which it is influenced and determined to be generally discernible in its effect alone.

and strongly recalls the preface to *Strafford*, where the poem is declared to be 'of a very different nature,' which 'unlike the represented play' is 'one of Action in Character, rather than Character in Action.'

Fox chose 'Mariana' as 'the most perfect composition in the volume,' because it 'takes us through the circuit of four-and-twenty hours of this dreary life.'[30] It is into such a dream-world that Pauline's poet-lover seeks escape along with her. The following stanza in Tennyson's poem, quoted by Fox:

> About a stone cast from the wall
> A sluice with blackened waters slept,
> And o'er it many, round and small,
> The clustered marishmosses crept.
> Hard by a poplar shook alway,
> All silvergreen with gnarled bark,
> For leagues no other tree did dark,
> The level waste, the rounding grey.

resembles this picturesque description from *Pauline*:

See, this our new retreat,
Walled in with a sloped mound of matted shrubs
Dark, tangled, old and green, still sloping down
To a small pool whose waters lie asleep
Amid the trailing boughs turned water-plants.[31]

Indeed, *Pauline's* lines addressed to God (811 ff.), the passage describing the poet-lover's capacity 'to live all life', and the natural imagery recall Tennyson's 'Supposed Confessions', the two poems—'The Mermen' and 'The Mermaidens'—and 'Mariana' respectively. It seems that Browning's poem is an amalgam—far richer though—of all those effects which Tennyson achieves in the separate poems selected by Fox for special treatment and praise.

Fox concluded his review with a significant observation which, ironically enough, applies more to Browning than to Tennyson:

> Tennyson has a dangerous quality in that faculty of impersonation ... by which he enters so thoroughly into the most strange and wayward idiosyncrasies of other men. It must not degrade into a poetical harlequin.[32]

But Browning as a 'maker-see' poet had enough justification for his choice of abnormal idiosyncratic characters.

While writing *Pauline*, Browning, presumably, had in mind Fox's ideas and strove after the effects that Tennyson's early poems had produced on Fox's mind. But he must have also remembered Fox's reaction to his juvenile poems which he had flung into the fire out of a sense of shame or 'precocity'. That his attitude to *Pauline* while going to publish it was the same as that to his earlier verses is evident from the French footnote to line 811 where he ascribes to Pauline what he had actually felt and done in relation to his boyish efforts on getting them back with Fox's comments. Pauline calls part of the poem 'dream and confusion,' and after an analysis of its 'peculiar' structure confesses that 'the reasons,' he urges ... have found grace in my eyes for this work, which otherwise I should have advised him to turn into the fire.' She echoes Fox's warning

that the snare for the young poet would be a too gorgeous scale of language and tenuity of thought:

> I believe none the less in the great principle of all composition ... that concentration of ideas is one much more to their conception than to their manner of execution. I have every reason to fear that the first of these qualities is still foreign enough to my friend and doubt very much if redoubled labour would enable him to acquire the second. It would be best to burn this ...[33]

Pauline's footnote is indeed the author's apologia written with Fox's words in mind.

Browning sent a copy of *Pauline* to his 'old praiser', who obliged him with an encouraging review of the poem in the *Monthly Repository* for April, 1833. In the review, Fox emphatically recognized the promise of the young poet's genius, and admired the poem for having 'truth and life'—'a deep stamp of reality', but also pointed out that the poet had denied himself 'the chance for popularity', which Tennyson, 'whom in some respects he resembles,' had retained by the employment of archaisms, and which he too could have, had he so chosen, with any 'of those slight but taking accompaniments, songs which sing themselves, sketches that everybody knows, light little lyrics.'[34] Fox implicitly conceded that Browning had heeded his advice on account of which he could compare favourably with Tennyson. Browning was naturally gratified: 'I shall never write a line without thinking of the first praise be assured,' but Fox's praise was not all adulation: he had both 'praised and expounded'—carefully analyzed both the thought and imagery of—the poem, as he wrote to Miss Haworth before finishing *Sordello*.[35] Fox's review also contained an element of 'truth'—a kind of veiled criticism—which, though Browning nowhere refers to as such, must have nevertheless 'stung' him more than the penetrating analysis of the poem by Mill—who has been quite unjustifiably singled out as being responsible for changing the course of Browning's poetical career[36]— and the more hostile criticism of the other reviewers. Fox had observed that the poem was 'evidently a hasty and imperfect sketch,' and, what is more significant, that 'We have

never read anything more purely confessional.'[37] Browning remembered this sting when he wrote to Eliza Flower on March 9, 1840: 'confess—nay, "confess" is vile,'[38] but he had cause to remember Mill's comments more, for Mill had elaborated Fox's statement with a penetrating analysis of the poem and in addition put forward his conclusions in a pointed manner:

> The writer seems to be possessed with a more intense and morbid self-consciousness than I ever knew in any sane human being . . . he is hardly convalescent . . .[39]

Fox's review of *Pauline*, as well as of Tennyson's *Poems* (1832) which had appeared in the *Monthly Repository* for January, 1833, also has much that must have struck Browning as pertinent to his future programme. Suggestion for the theme and even the mode of approach probably came from these words in the opening paragraph of the *Pauline* review:

> The faculty of description may be as efficiently exercised in conveying the conception of a state of mind as in imparting that of a group of figures or a landscape. *The abasement of a mighty spirit, brooding over the wreck of character produced by its own mistaken daring, may be invested with all the touching sublimity of the historical incident* of Marius sitting amid the ruins of Carthage. The soul has its seasons, which may be sung with all their contrasted, yet connected phenomena, and with as many an episode to be naturally and gracefully interwoven, as the solar year. There is an *art* . . . in that which traces the *growth of an individual mind*, the influences upon it of things external, the powers unfolding themselves within it with all their harmonies and discords . . . *the world* . . . *of mind*, the true and essential universe *alone* worthy of observation and interest.[40]

In pursuance of Fox's suggestion, Browning chose for his next poem *Paracelsus* 'a mighty spirit, brooding over the wreck' of his life's purpose. In *Sordello* likewise he undertook to study 'the growth of an individual mind', laying stress, as he claimed in the preface echoing Fox, 'on the incidents in the development of a soul', 'the historical decoration' being 'purposely'

accorded 'no more importance than a background requires'. In both poems, he endeavoured to convey his 'conception of a state of mind'. He particularly sought to project through the protagonists in these poems Fox's conception of the poet as stated in the review of Tennyson's *Poems* (1832)—of the poet as a 'mental philosopher', as 'compounded of both the philosopher and the artiste'[41]—the kind of poet Browning himself aimed at being. In *Paracelsus* he indeed envisages the birth of a poet, 'a third and better tempered spirit', warned by the failures —and combining the faculties—of both Paracelsus and Aprile, the two 'halves of one dissevered world'—the mere philosopher and the mere artiste,[42] as he was to do again fifteen years later in his *Essay on Shelley*:

> Nor is there any reason why these two modes of faculty [the 'subjective' or the philosophical and the 'objective' or the artistic] may not issue hereafter from the same poet in successive perfect works.[43]

According to Fox, the poet however has a right to be heard in society by virtue of his 'metaphysical' insight into the workings of the human soul:

> in all the facts and fictions of outer being, which is but as outer darkness to the light within, never let the world be unheedful of those who have aught to tell concerning the human soul, so that they be but duly qualified by 'metaphysical aid', and make their revelations with the ascertained authority of philosophical or poetic inspiration.[44]

In *Sordello*, Browning's main purpose is to show how 'the metaphysic poet' is shaped and how he claims to be 'earth's essential king' since 'song is the fullest effluence of the finest mind', which produces 'acts, by thoughts only' (V, 506, 562 & 575). In his emphasis on the poet's task as a 'maker-see'—to 'impart the gift of seeing to the rest' and

> *unveil* the last of mysteries
> *Man's inmost life* shall have yet freer play:
> Once more I cast external things away,[45]

Browning further recalls Fox's reference to Dr. Channing's exhortation:

> 'the great revelation which man now needs is a revelation of himself' and that 'the *mystery within ourselves*, the mystery of our spiritual, accountable, immortal nature, it behoves us to explore' ... Here and there amongst philosophers and poets we find a true hierophant, one who knows what is in man, and makes it visible, so that we gaze fixedly, as if at the *upraising* of the *veil* of Isis.[46]

Earlier in the 'Tennyson' review, Fox had contrasted modern poetry with the classic, providing Browning with a *raison d'être* for his preference for modern art over Greek art:

> The classic portrayed human character by its external demonstrations and influences on the material objects of sense; the modern delineates the whole external world from its reflected imagery in the mirror of human thought and feeling.[47]

Further, Fox's observation: 'All great intellects are progressive. The mind that only feeds upon itself will not become such "an athlete bold" as the world wants,'[48] must have appeared as a challenge to Browning's intellectual powers which were henceforward to seek fulfilment in 'progressive' and thoroughly original directions.

In the review of *Pauline*, Fox also anticipated Browning's pet theory of imperfectionism, which the latter often employed as a cloak for his alleged obscurity:

> The annals of a poet's mind are poetry. Nor has there ever been a genuine bard who was not in himself more poetical than any of his productions. They are emanations of his essence.[49]

In *Sordello*, Eglamor's songs in which 'you find alone/Completeness, judge the song and the singer one' (III, 619-20), are contrasted with 'true works' like Sordello's 'dream-performances' that will

> Never be more than dreamed escapes there still
> Some proof, the singer's proper life was 'neath
> The life his song exhibits . . .
> . . . his lay was but an episode
> In the bard's life . . .[50]

In his letter to Miss Barrett, dated February 11, 1845, Browning likewise said that 'these scenes and song-scraps are such mere and very escapes of my inner power.'[51] The same idea of the superiority of the poet over his works finds expression in 'Transcendentalism':

> You are a poem, though your poem is nought.

Fox's analogy between God and the poet in respect of their attitude to their creations:

> In relation to his creations, the poet is the omnific spirit in whom they have their being. All their vitality must exist in his life. He only, in them, displays to us fragments of himself.[52]

is well reproduced in *Paracelsus:* 'God is the perfect poet,/ Who in his person acts his own creations.' (II, 648-49).

As to the ideal poet, Fox affirmed:

> The poem in which a great poet should reveal the whole of himself to mankind would be a study, a delight, and a power, for which there is yet no parallel; and around which the noblest creations of the noblest writers would range themselves as subsidiary luminaries.[53]

It is this idea which Browning had in mind when he wrote to Miss Barrett that 'I never have begun, even, what I hope I was born to begin and end—'R. B. a poem'—adding that what she had read 'were sadly imperfect demonstrations of even mere ability.'[54] He did not mean to write a personal poem as some critics have supposed, for he had a thorough and deep-rooted faith in the norm of 'dramatic' poetry which, to him, had its perfect realization in

him
Whose insight makes all others dim:
A thousand poets pried at life,
And only one amid the strife
Rose to be Shakespeare.[55]

Fox's comments on poetry and music, made in the 'Tennyson' review, also deserve mention. He had referred to the 'music of poetry' being 'as far from having been cultivated to perfection' as the 'poetry of music.'[56] This reminds us of Browning's habit of associating poetry with music and of considering music the most perfect of all arts.[57] Fox had also regretted that 'the poetry of music' was 'yet in infancy, kept and crippled there, by the affectation of fashion.' Browning too believed that 'in music, the Beau Ideal changes every thirty years',[58] that 'in music we know how fashions end.'[59] Fox's analogy between poetry and music led him to believe that as in music so in poetry 'only the habitually laborious can efficiently extemporize,' but perfect harmony of sense and sound did not mean spontaneity or lucidity—which he would call a mere 'fuzz of words'[60] since in the case of great poets, as Fox had remarked, 'the construction of their verse grows into a study, on which the elements and principles are traced ... by these the superior workman is taught and the critic is guided.'[61] Browning did believe in such a goal, and did pursue it in a manner that his verse 'grew into a study'; he 'could efficiently extemporize'—more so in his later poetry—although he was able only at times to achieve the harmony he pinned his faith to.

Having concluded *Paracelsus* in March, 1835, Browning expressed his deep sense of intellectual indebtedness to Fox while seeking help in obtaining a publisher as well.[62] A fortnight later he also conveyed the 'real feeling' he had of his mentor's 'criticism's worth', assuring 'not a particle of your article has been rejected or neglected by your observant humble servant', and hoped he would now have an opportunity to be 'very proud' if his 'new work bear in it the marks of the influence under which it was written.'[63]

Fox reviewed *Paracelsus* in the *Monthly Repository* for November, 1835,[64] where he gave 'a final expression' to what, in the words of Mrs. Bridell-Fox, he regarded as 'the fitting intellectual

attitude towards a rising poet, whose aims and methods lay so far beyond the range of the conventional rules of poetry.'[65] Browning remembered him gratefully in a letter to Miss Haworth when 'going to begin the finishing *Sordello*,' and continued to express his gratitude to him in later life. Fox too never ceased to take interest in Browning's poetical career, but the impact that he had had on Browning's nascent mind was the most abiding. Indeed, in arriving at the seminal principle of poetry, Fox and Browning behaved as 'literary' father and son even as Coleridge and Wordsworth had been 'literary' brothers.

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14. Ibid. p. 54.
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37. Op. cit. 259.
38. *Letters*, ed. Hood, p. 4.
39. Compare the review in *Atlas*, April 14, 1833, 228: 'The author is in the confessional, and acknowledges to his distress the strange thoughts and fancies with which his past life has been crowded. This is not always done with dignity.' See also my article 'A note on Mill and 'Browning's *Pauline*,' *Victorian Poetry*, IX, No. 4, Autumn 1966, 287-91.
40. Op. cit. 252.
41. Op. cit. 33.
42. As a matter of fact, Paracelsus and Aprile represent 'two poetic attitudes to life and art'—the philosophical and the aesthetic. See my article, 'The Two Poets in Browning's *Paracelsus*,' *The Indian Journal of English Studies*, III, No. 1, 1962, 140-4.
43. *Browning's Essay on Shelley*, ed. Richard Garnett, 1903, p. 42.
44. Op. cit. 253.
45. V, 616-18; my italics.
46. Op. cit. 253, my italics.
47. Op. cit. 33. Cf. Browning's 'Old Pictures in Florence', 'Cleon', and 'Parleying with Gerard de Lairesse.'
48. Ibid. 40.

49. Op. cit. 253.
50. III, 626-30.
51. *Letters of RB & EBB*, I, 17.
52. Op. cit. 253.
53. Ibid. 254.
54. *Letters of RB & EBB*, I, 17.
55. *Christmas-Eve*, xvi, 84-88.
56. Op. cit. 31-32.
57. *Pauline*, 11, 365-67 and *Paracelsus*, II, 11. 477-79.
58. *Letters of RB & EBB*, I, 544.
59. 'The Last Ride Together,' vii, 10.
60. On Swinburne, *Dearest Isa: Robert Browning's Letters to Isa Blagden*, ed. E. C. McAleer (Austin, 1951), p. 333. G. M. Hopkins spoke of Swinburne's 'bloody broth'.
61. Op. cit. 32.
62. Mrs. Orr, pp. 64-65.
63. Ibid. p. 65.
64. N. S., IX, 716-27. Earlier than any of the reviewers mentioned by Park Honan, *Browning's Characters* (New Haven, 1961), p. 108, Fox had suggested the term 'dramatic monologue': '*Paracelsus* is not a drama, and although generally in form a dialogue, is often in spirit a monologue.' (p. 718).
65. Mrs. Orr, p. 72.

THE STYLE OF HENRY JAMES

By Darshan Singh Maini

The revival of Henry James has been one of the most spectacular and symbolic literary events of the post-Second War period. Perhaps it will be truer to say that it's not as much a revival as a reappraisal, for the formidable *Jamesiana* is directed largely towards the discovery of new meanings and nuances which appear to have escaped the notice of his contemporaries. In this search for the Jamesian quintessence, there is hardly an area of the Master's art which has not been subjected to almost the same kind of pitiless probings which characterise his own extended work. His art and architectonics, his critical concepts ('the point of view', 'the commanding centre' etc) his 'psychology' and 'conscience', his themes and *leitmotifs* (the international theme, innocence and experience, appearance and reality), his humour and irony—all these have received more than an adequate notice.[1] However, oddly enough, the style of Henry James though of the utmost importance in relation to his world-view has not been given anything like a comparable attention, though its complexity and obscurity have often been wondered at and admired grudgingly. Whilst his imagery and symbolism as constituents of his prose style are a favourite quarry for the purposes of establishing the archetypal themes, the style as a complex of semantic and verbal structures or patterns, yielding a polyphony integrally related to the music of minds, and the style as a stance of the Jamesian psyche have not, I think, been fully explored.[2] This essay, then, is an effort in that direction. It seeks to trace the fecund subtlety and progression of James's style over the years, and account for its peculiar graces and idiosyncrasies.

Obviously in a novelist so intensely and unsleepingly conscious of art *qua* art, and so deeply committed to the science of fiction as James, the question of style is the heart of the matter. If he did not exactly have the Flaubertian quest for the *mot juste*, he certainly brought his whole inventive imagination to bear upon the paradigms of words as they reverberated in his ears and expressed for him the wide spectrum of human

consciousness spanned over luminosities and intensities, darknesses and twilight zones. In fact, the *chiaroscuro* effects and the chromatic tonalities that make up the tangled web are, on the whole, a salute to the ambiguities and imponderables of life, though in James's later novels, they almost tend to cause a spiritual dislocation of the artist. My point is that in James, the style is not merely a tool or a medium, a dress or a mask, an excrescence or an extravagance. It is truly organic and poetical, having a cognitive function much in the same way that Shakespearean style has. It's in this sense that a Jamesian *nouvelle* or novel could be regarded as 'an expanded metaphor'. The style then becomes the mode of quest for reality. Its built-in complexity assumes a compulsive quality and alone could render the Jamesian meaning. Any simplification or effort at reduction would not only destroy its beauty but also its strength, in fact the whole Jamesian dialectics. Or, to put it differently, just as the bare, rugged, skeletal and gaunt, though sinewy style of Hemingway is essential to the truth of his experience, the rich, ornate, textured, formalised and teasing style of Henry James is essential to the truth of his vision.

As I have said earlier, the question of style in James is not simply a question of the choice of words and their arrangement, and their interlarding with graces and mannerisms; it is a question of the stance or disposition of the artist's being as well. It's the integrity of this inner connection between the music of words and the aroma or aura of the writer's personality which gives the Jamesian style its inevitability. Though not wholly successful in individualising the idiom of his characters and finding an 'objective correlative' in speech for their style and stance—most of the characters in James as even in D. H. Lawrence express themselves in their author's idiom rather than in their own—the disposition or placement of the character is related to the weight he or she places upon a word or phrase, and the interplay of ideas resulting from it.

And before I come to the features of the Jamesian style, I may add that the search for pivotal and reiterative, or sunken and subterranean imagery and what I may call, laminated metaphors—a major pre-occupation of American scholarship these days—is wholly relevant in this context. If I do not go chasing and cataloguing them for the purposes of a statistical

tally, it's because in a paper of this size and intent, it may cause a certain imbalance. No discussion of James's style can be complete without a reference to the functional and organic role of imagery in his work.

Another thing to take note of is the peculiar beauty and nature of the Jamesian dialogues. Normally, the dialogue is used by a novelist to express the style of a character, and to authenticate the experience of communication. But Henry James uses it in a variety of ways to reinforce the theme as also to suggest the fundamental inability and failure of communication. The style of the dialogues is at times apposite to the long passages of 'indirection' that precede or follow them; at times it's in sharp contrast to them. The dialogues then become exercises in parenthesis. They reveal as much as they conceal. Concealment is thus both a device and a necessity.

II

Most of the Jamesian critics have recognised three phases in the novelist's journey from complexity to complexity. For as it is, even the James of the earliest compositions has a degree of subtlety and sophistication that is singularly attractive. But the style here does not present any serious problems of explication. It has an assured urbanity and aplomb, a kind of elegant, well-bred air about it. It's, if I may say so, an 'ambassadorial' prose, and requires of the reader a certain knowledge of the high idiom employed. Its complexity beats only the untutored mind. There isn't much of the germinal or nuclear obscurity in it. It may, therefore, be asserted that the progression of the Jamesian style has been from the horizontal to the vertical, from the overt to the covert, from the elegant to the elliptical, from the functional to the poetic. Once again it may not be out of place to compare this development to a somewhat similar, though differently motivated development in the style of Shakespeare. The ambivalence and indirection of the poetry of *The Wings of the Dove* (1902) and *The Golden Bowl* (1940) have an obvious correspondence to the gnomic, sibylline quality of the poetry of *The Tempest*. Whether you regard the later style as unfortunate, a mere tittle-tattle and a

verbal nightmare, or as an example of visionary obscurity as in T. S. Eliot, depends largely upon the quality of the readers' mind and its response.

However in all this spinning and weaving from phase to phase—the most felicitous and aesthetically rewarding being the Henry James of the middle period in the opinion of F. R. Leavis and some other critics, the Henry James of *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881) and *The Bostonians* (1886)—there is always an authentic, residual and invariable style which remains as if on attendance till the end. Its features include poise and rotundity, amplitude and opulence, eloquence and rhetoric, aphorisms and epigrams, quips and quibbles, irony and innuendo, shades and nuances. To these are added integral imagery and emblematic embroidery during the middle phase, and hieroglyphic complexity and poetic density during the final phase. The 'essential' Henry James endures.

And there is in all this crystallization very little vernacular and slang in his style, for the aristocratic mind of James deals only with the elect and the elite in more than a merely sociological sense. The bounce and vigour of the vernacular as in Mark Twain and Walt Whitman were outside the framework of his references and his vision.

It is interesting, for example, to note the manner in which he introduces a new character or describes a new house or mansion. The tendency is always to fix a 'portrait' in the mind at the first impact and evoke a mnemonic poetic response in the reader's mind. The chaste, classical opening of *The Portrait of a Lady* which describes the amplitude and autumnal quality of Gardencourt is justly adored by the reader and critics alike. Similarly, the rich graces and vastnesses of 'The Fawns' in *The Golden Bowl* described in a matching style make the country house in Kent something of a presence and a character. Or, take the description of the splendid Venetian palace which Milly Theale of *The Wings of the Dove* occupied. It appears, the imagination of James was kindled the moment he had to convey the style and poetry of a place. A similar felicity marked often by wit can be seen in the way a character arrives on the scene. Soon after the first delightful impression of Isabel Archer, Henry James goes on to add the colours that will not wash or run till the end.

> Her nature had, in her conceit, a certain garden-like quality, a suggestion of perfume and murmuring boughs of shady bowers and lengthening vistas, which made her feel that introspection was, after all, an exercise in the open air, and that a visit to the recesses of one's spirit was harmless when one returned from it with a lapful of roses.[3]

The floral imagery is almost a clue to Isabel's essentially poetic and romantic being.

Or, take the witty introduction to Henrietta Stackpole. The peculiar American flutter and freshness of Isabel's engaging but bumptious friend are set down in memorable words:

> she rustled, she shimmered in fresh, dove-coloured draperies, and Ralph saw at a glance that she was as crisp and new and comprehensive as a first issue before the folding. From top to toe she had probably no misprint.[4]

Osmond's first description almost has the sharpness and richness of a Renaissance painting, more so, as this 'sterile dilettante' has indeed become a 'portrait' in his splendid exterior, a dehumanised, alienated person fixed and frozen in the cold abstraction of art. Osmond

> ... suggested, fine gold coin as he was, no stamp nor emblem of the common mintage that provides for general circulation; he was the elegant complicated medal struck off for a special occasion.[5]

The gold coin image and the imagery of wealth and property incidentally are common in James, the staid, conservative Victorian whose values at bottom are essentially of the class that could imagine no real existence outside its gilt-edged securities and bonds. The style gives away, so to speak, the upper-bourgeois origin of its author.

Here is Lionel Croy, a peripheral figure in *The Wings of the Dove* and two sentences pin him down neatly like a fly.

> Those who knew him a little said, 'How he does dress' —those who knew him better said, How *does* he?[6]

Ann Maud in the some novel is introduced in terms of a ridiculous lioness complete with flourishes and claws.[7]

And here is, to revert to an earlier masterpiece, our first indirect introduction to Olive Chancellor, another Saint Theresa in her conceit. Her sister. Mrs Luna, is speaking to Ransome, their distant cousin from the South.

> 'she would reform the solar system if she could get hold of it. She'll reform you if you don't look out.'[8]

As for the mildly satirical portrait of Olive's political mentor, Miss Birdseye, it's a masterpiece of comic description.

> She looked as if she had spent her life on platforms, in audiences, in conventions, in phalansteries, in *séances* . . .[9]

So much then for the way characters in James make their *debut*.

The passages quoted above do not make a difficult reading at all. There is in fact a light, nimble touch where the minor characters—part of the Jamesian 'furniture'—are concerned. There's even a hint of what James elsewhere called 'blessed economy' in the style. But in the middle phase, the complexity of the style is still viable, and is largely related to the complexity of the theme and the technique. His passionate interest in the whimsies and vagaries of the human heart and his unfailing aesthetic delight in unfolding the involved dramas of conscience make the style at times acute, packed and metaphorical, though it is not burdened with thought to the point of exasperation as in the novels and tales of the final phase. James is talking here of Isabel Archer:

> With all her love of knowledge she had a natural shrinking from raising curtains and looking into unlighted corners. The love of knowledge coexisted in her mind with the finest capacity for ignorance.[10]

And here the Narrator-Editor of *The Aspern Papers* (1888) is sorting out his reactions to the intriguing and impossible Miss Bordereau:

'It was possible she intended her omission as an impertinence, a visible irony, to show how she could overreach people who attempted to overreach her'.[11]

Actually, the style as such is not difficult here. Only a long row of sentences in the same key tended to demand the utmost attention from the reader.

Aphorisms and epigrams tossed off with visible delight and dexterity continue to enrich and define the Jamesian style throughout his long literary career. They are at times meretricious, almost Oscar Wildean, but often the neat, clinical and polished statements reveal James's love of symmetry, order, poise and polish in life. Let me quote a few picked up at random from his enormous industry.

> Money's a horrid thing to follow, but a charming thing to meet.[12]
>
> When Milly smiled it was a public event. When she didn't it was a chapter of history.[13]
>
> Where there's a great deal of pride, there's a great deal of silence.[14]

It's easy to see that in his epigrams and aphorisms as in his sustained and drawn-out dialogues. James exploits antithesis, parallelism and counterpoint to great advantage. The contrapuntal technique may well give a clue not only to the musical base of his novels and stories, but also especially in his later work, to his search for values. Words and their manipulation, as the study of semantics reveals, are, in the final analysis, questions of epistemology. It may be added that the Jamesian use of italics and play upon prepositions are also not merely verbal pyrotechnics, they signify the author's mode of comprehending and communicating the essentially tentative nature of human reality.

III

The style of James's later fiction deserves a special and close

scrutiny for, to my mind, this alone could help decipher the complex code worked out in those teasing, enigmatic books, There are indeed so many peculiarities and oddities that I could at best only touch upon a few, such as would seem to reach out to the final Jamesian equation, or to go homing to the Jamesian centre.

The 'indirection' of these novels and *nouvelles* has often intrigued and dismayed people. It's even regarded as something of a freak. In an otherwise extremely able presentation of the 'essential' James. Pelham Edgar too finds this technique or process one of the 'most questionable'[15] Jamesian innovations. However, it's not a wilful attempt at mystification. On the contrary, the Jamesian exploration of the mystery of evil—a major pre-occupation of the novelist in the final phase—involved a tangential and elliptical approach. All great artists including Shakespeare have resorted to 'indirection' when the opaque reality refuses to yield to direct assaults. If James's style becomes tortuous, tensile, and tenuous, the reasons lie in his sustained ambivalence. The marriage of thought and language, though not always happy, is certainly not a marriage of convenience. The style does not as a rule sabotage the theme from within, or undermine its spiritual potential. It no longer is the dress of thought; it *is*, in a manner of speaking, the thought become word, or the soul become flesh. In short it's by 'indirection' that James finds the direction out, though he does not come to grief like the long-winded Polonius. It will not be easy to illustrate this peculiar trick or cunning of his style—obviously, I use these expressions in no derogatory sense—, because a sentence or two, perhaps even a whole paragraph cannot show the mechanics and the dialectics of this phenomenon. Taken apart, the sentences will at best illumine themselves; they will not invade the readers' mind in an insidious or insinuating manner. It's the slow, gathering force of the passages and the pages which will work upon the imagination and enlist it as a secret ally. The style then becomes not merely a means of thematic expression, but also a mode of revelation. Epiphanies may still be rare—James's method discourages sudden illuminations and explosions—but the accumulated mass does reach in the end, what the nuclear physicists call, the point of 'criticality'.

Again it is often complained that the later Jamesian style suffers from 'overstatement'. There is of course some truth in it, and James was well aware of the problem, but once again, I think, the charge is off-centre. The relentless volley of words in most cases is wholly in keeping with the psychological pressures and confusions inherent in the situations James is attempting to explore or analyse. What's more, a kind of understatement is dexterously played off against the 'overstatement'. Or, to put it differently, the Jamesian style in the later books is a unique complex of overtures and avoidances, of overtones and undertones, of sounds and silences. It's an orchestrated style which when fully engaged has the resonance of a great symphony.

What I am trying to suggest here could perhaps best be illustrated by the strangely portentous and loaded dialogues. They are as much weighted down with words as with blanks, breaks and absences. In fact, the tentative, half-shy, bitten-off statements, the unasked questions and smothered, fractured replies create a hum of echoes and hints. At such times, James achieves a rare dramatic simplicity and inevitability which could only be described as Shakespearean. This quality is felt more acutely in the later novels, though it is present in his earlier work as well.

Here is Ralph talking to Isabel Archer:

> ... Don't question your conscience so much—it will get out of tune like a strummed piano. Keep it for great occasions. Don't try so much to form your character—it's like trying to pull open a tight, tender rose....
>
> Put back your watch, Diet your fever. Spread your wings, rise above the ground ...[16]

As will be noticed the style here has an under-current of poetry which dissolves into an endearing imperative. Nor can one ever forget those haunting words of Ralph when in a moment of great emotional stress, he tells Isabel, 'I love you, but I love without hope'.[17]

Or, take the concluding snippet of dialogue between Densher and Kate on which *The Wings of the Dove* closes,

> Then he only said: 'I'll marry you, mind you, in an hour.'
> 'As we were'?
> 'As we were'.
> But she turned to the door, and her headshake was now the end. 'We shall never be again as we were'.[18]

There is a terrible and desperate beauty about the words of Kate. One is taken over the edge of an abyss and left brooding there.

Or turn to *The Turn of the Screw* for a moment. The governess is recounting the inexplicable sequence of events:

> Then I again shifted my eyes—I faced what I had to face.[19]

The ominous sentence falls like a stone in the pools of our consciousness, and initiates a stir of ripples and reverberations.

And here is John Marcher trying to unravel the mystery of his complex fate in *The Beast in the Jungle* (1903), and speaking to his confidante, May:

> 'What then has happened?' ... Yet he waited for the answer. 'What *was* to', she said.[20]

The portentous answer has a tone of finality that's unmistakable.

There is also a peculiar effect of coiling and uncoiling in the style of the dialogues in these later stories and novels, something like T. S. Eliot's 'tedious argument of insidious intent'. By a sudden shift of emphasis, James creates tension, foreboding and expectancy. Sometimes, when the Jamesian irony is at play, the style has the sting of a sly, sharp backhandish slap.

Sometimes James repeats a single line to reinforce the theme. Milly Theale's absolute alienation is established with 'she turned her face to the wall',[21]—a line which strikes with the regularity of an hour-clock.

I must confess however that the later style has the tendency to run to stylization and preciosity. The overreaching and attenuation appear then to create obfuscation. The Jamesian art turns to artifice. At times it becomes even musty and mildewed, like stale cheese. The stuffiness suggests cobwebs

covering odd bric-à-brac. When this happens the immediacy of felt experience is lost. Then the Jamesian industry of spinning words appears only a device to make up for the paucity of incidents. The 'significant insignificances' begin to lose their *rationale*.

But such lapses are not, as is widely assumed, the order of the day in these beautifully scaffolded and finished books. On the whole there is an integral relationship between theme and style which remains intact from phase to phase. This matching is particularly effective in the *nouvelles* of the later period. The style, for instance, of *The Turn of the Screw* has the curious effect of wheels within wheels, that of *The Aspern Papers*, the effect of the winding stairs, that of *The Altar of the Dead*, the effect of solemnity and funereal sombreness.

Could these idiosyncrasies of the Jamesian style be interpreted psychologically as a kind of *ersatz* satisfaction of the sexually starved Jamesian life? Could it be that the author's own lean and lukewarm response to passional immediacy was responsible for the embroidery and prodigality of the style? It may be recalled that several readers and critics have felt an emotional vacuum, and even some frigidity at the centre of the Jamesian universe. It's a question that needs some Jamesian treatment.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. That's why Maxwell Geismar is piqued to call his book *The Cult of Henry James*.
2. Even a representative critical volume like the *20th Century Views* edited by Leon Edel carries no essay on James's style as such, though 'Symbolic Imagery' by Warren Austen in that volume is a most penetrating and valuable contribution.
3. *The Portrait of a Lady*, Modern Library Edition, 1951, Book I, p. 72.
4. Ibid. p. 117.
5. Ibid. pp. 328-9.
6. *The Wings of the Dove*. Signet Classic, 1964, p. 13.
7. Ibid. p. 60.
8. *The Bostonians*, Modern Library, 1956, p. 6.
9. Ibid. p. 27.
10. *The Portrait of a Lady*, Part I, p. 284.

11. *The Aspern Papers* from *The Turn of the Screw* and *other Short Novels*, Signet Classic, 1962, p. 180.
12. *The Portrait of a Lady*, Book II, p. 80.
13. *The Altar of the Dead*, Signet Classic, p. 275.
14. *The Golden Bowl*, p. 134.
15. Pelham Edgar: 'The Essential Novelist', *20th Century Views: Henry James*, p. 101.
16. *The Portrait of a Lady*, Book I, p. 319.
17. Ibid. Book II, p. 72.
18. *The Wings of the Dove*, p. 397.
19. *The Turn of the Screw*. p. 328.
20. *The Beast in the Jungle*, p. 437.
21. *The Wings of the Dove*, p. 403.

EXPRESSIONISM AND *THE HAIRY APE*

By Mrs P. N. Das

Of all the dramatic movements which reacted against the limitations of naturalism the most violent, forceful, effective and outstanding was Expressionism. It is the tragedy of our times that the tempo of life sweeps away literary movements before they have found their feet—before they get time to crystallise into an accepted mode so that worthwhile and optimal expression in that medium can be achieved. Expressionism as a movement has also been a victim to the process. Although not called by that name, important features of this mode were brought into existence by the later Strindberg and during its brief flowering period it has been able to draw some of the greatest talent of our times. which include Eisenstein in film and O'Neill in drama. However, while tracing the history of the movement one has to acknowledge the fact that it has not had a chance to exhaust its possibilities. Although O'Neill found its possibilities worth exploring for a few of his plays, in which the nature of theme calls for a non-naturalistic treatment, yet he did not find sufficient interest in the form itself to explore its possibilities systematically or to find in this form a sufficient organising power for the totality of his experience. Whether it is the freak of the times or whether it is some innate deficiency in the nature of the form itself is not a matter relevant to our discussion here.

Originally a movement in art, the term was used first by a French painter called Herve in 1901 and as a movement in art and painting it is comparable to or associated with others like the futurist movement in Italy and the surrealistic movement in France, England and America. It derived its philosophical inspiration from Bergson's *élan vital* and from the intuitive phenomenology of Husserl. Its literary ancestry, of course, included such giants as Dostoevsky and Strindberg who had excursed deep into man's soul and psyche. Freud's views on the nature of the human psyche and the predominance he assigned to the role of the sub-conscious and the unconscious in it profoundly disturbed the artist's conception of reality.

Expressionism thus inspired the artist to break through the surfaces, the appearances, in an attempt to explore the significance of the inner and deeper reality. In the words of Lothar Schreyer it stood as 'the spiritual movement of a time that places inner experience above external life.'

It is very easy to see that serious literary artists with a deep concern for life and experience found naturalism extremely inadequate. In a note on Strindberg written in a programme of Provincetown Playhouse, O'Neill says:

> The old 'naturalism'—or 'realism', if you prefer (I would to God some genius were gigantic enough to define clearly the separateness of these terms once and for all)—no longer applies. It represents our fathers' daring aspiration towards self-recognition by holding the family Kodak up to ill-nature . . . We have taken too many snapshots of each other in every graceless position. We have suffered too much from the banality of surfaces![1]

Some of the features of the Expressionist movement in literature had emerged as early as the closing years of the 19th century as, for example, the use of masks and of declamatory style full of monologues in the plays of Wedekind or in the excursion into the dream world in the plays of the later Strindberg. In effect these two writers seemed to inspire two different groups of writers when Expressionism became a conscious movement in literature. The activists or intellectuals like Toller, Hasenclaver and Kaiser found their inspiration in Wedekind. They were concerned with man's lot in society and were interested in its betterment. Hence their concerns were political and they assumed that political issues were important and soluble. The other group which was mystical or irrational found its inspiration in Strindberg and concerned itself with metaphysical questions of man's relationship to God. Their concern is more fundamental as they question the meaning of man's existence—maybe even social existence but at a deeper level than the amelioration of man's social lot. This group includes the poet Werfel and the novelist Kafka in Europe and the dramatist O'Neill in America. The term Expressionism, however, was used by the Austrian writer Herman Bahr in 1914

to denote the group of German dramatists writing during and after the First World War. The term perhaps fell into disrepute when it was accepted as the dominant mode for drama in Hitler's Germany and became a vehicle for very different ideas in the hands of playwrights who had embraced Nazism.

In the context of the foregoing ideas it is not surprising to find that the typical expressionistic play is not divided into acts and scenes like an ordinary naturalistic play. It is a succession of scenes arranged almost in a diagrammatic pattern. It may be a diagram of regression going deeper and deeper into the subconscious or unconscious as in *The Emperor Jones*. It may take the form of a search as in Kaiser's *From Morn to Midnight* or O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*. Sometimes it may deal with a formidable force man has to reckon with as in Kaiser's *Gas* or O'Neill's *Dynamo*. The scenes are usually short and are meant to focus our attention on one particular phase of the subject. Since a typical expressionist play centres round a character undergoing a crisis—psychological or spiritual, the scenes are intended to be milestones in the character's journey through the world of his inner experience as he draws closer to his doom.

Since the inner world of the character's soul is the real theatre where events take place and as the ego is the field for the play of the cosmos through which we have to discover the meaning of existence, objects are made to appear as they would appear to the distracted mind of the protagonist. So a typical expressionistic play may start with a realistic and almost naturalistic setting and, as the play advances, may become more and more eerie with the help of stage setting, music and lighting. This makes it clear that an expressionistic play by its very nature makes extensive use of the technical innovations in stage effects that have taken place in recent times. Music and scenery prepare the audience emotionally for the theme. The drum beat in *The Emperor Jones* intensifies the emotional effects of the play. The stoke-hole in *The Hairy Ape* would not be the dungeon, the 'hell' as it is jokingly called by Mildred, without the scenic effects. Naturalism had driven the last vestige of poetry out of the theatre. The poetry of a Shakespeare conjuring up a Forest of Arden or the Midsummer Night's confusion in broad daylight was out of the question.

The modern pragmatic audience devoid of poetic imagination is incapable of responding to poetry as the failure of verse drama after brief experimentation showed. The playwrights, therefore, did what was only natural for them to do. They made use of all the available resources placed at their disposal—lighting, scenery and music adding also to it the musical use of dialogue in the form of meaningful repetition of words and phrases. Aristotle had relegated spectacle to a subordinate place but modern dramatists have brought it to the fore and have relied heavily on it. It is not an exaggeration to say that the expressionistic experiment was called forth by the tremendous possibilities offered by the innovations in modern stage techniques. Technically, therefore, Expressionism as a dramatic movement is very much a product of our times. If there ever was poetry of the theatre as opposed to poetry in the theatre as mentioned by Cocteau it is to be found in expressionistic drama.

In this type of drama, character, of necessity, must cease to be an individual. Particulars of his daily life and relations between them so dear to the naturalistic dramatist are irrelevant here. Character is reduced to the barest essentials and has to be a type or symbol. Characters are juxtaposed to emphasize sharp and violent contrasts. Since the tormented inner self, the fragmented consciousness and the memory of the racial unconscious play such an important role in expressionistic drama it is obvious to see how heavily it rests on modern disciplines like psychology including psychoanalysis and anthropology. This fact furnishes another proof that thematically too the expressionistic experiment is typically modern in inspiration.

It is not difficult to see that conventional naturalistic dialogue would be hopelessly out of place for this drama. Its language is stylised and explosive, erratic, illogical, clipped and abounding in repetitions and monologues. Although not straightforward poetry, language is used suggestively and tends to be poetic and lyrical. This contributes to the heightening of effect making it appropriate for bringing forth the meaning of the inner reality. According to O'Neill dialogue through repetition and expansion is built up like the theme in a musical composition.

This in fact is a key to the use of language in the expres-

sionistic mode. As Expressionism tries to objectify inner states of mind, soliloquy or monologue is naturally the most useful device for its purpose. And these devices made obsolete by the vogue of naturalistic dialogue have been revived to the extent one could possibly imagine. The clipped and telegraphic style which is also copiously used is very effective in bringing to us a sense of the storm and stress that a character is undergoing.

Expressionism as a movement of course died out but it had served its purpose in demolishing the literalness of the theatre. Although realism and naturalism reasserted themselves they had, of necessity, to modify themselves. The dominant mode of drama thus became a kind of revised naturalism inevitably tempered with expressionistic elements connected with modern stage techniques, equipments or the approach to the theme and as a result possessing much more flexibility than previously. Even in the most 'absurd' plays of today one finds expressionistic elements as in the growing corpse in Ionesco's *Amédee* or *How to Get Rid of It*. Hence expressionistic techniques have become a part of the equipment of the modern dramatist which he has to reckon with and which he can utilise; and in the hands of serious dramatists these are almost always connected with the suggestion of a deeper reality in respect of character or theme.

II

O'Neill's debt to German Expressionism has been the subject of much controversy. While he has been called 'the American George Kaiser' by a German critic[2] and has been labelled as a follower of George Kaiser by Bertolt Brecht,[3] American critics have tended to accept that he is more indebted to Strindberg than to German Expressionists. Barrett H. Clark quotes O'Neill as saying that *The Emperor Jones* and *The Hairy Ape* were both written before he saw Kaiser's play *From Morn to Midnight* in New York in 1922 and the idea for *The Hairy Ape* was conceived before he read Kaiser's play.

Clara Blackburn[4] and Mardi Valgemae[5] have made elaborate studies trying to work out parallels between the plays of German Expressionists and O'Neill. The former finds a close

resemblance between the plays of Kaiser and O'Neill in matters of detail like the number of scenes or the manipulation of stage setting resulting in similar visual effects. She holds that like Kaiser's plays O'Neill's have seven or eight short scenes as opposed to many more in Strindberg's plays. She quite forgets that O'Neill was writing for the modern theatre and besides the theme of his play might not have needed so many scenes. So resemblances like these are superficial and irrelevant.

Mardi Valgemae also works out resemblances which are equally unimportant. However, she makes one important point and that is that O'Neill's plays present the action as seen through the eyes of the protagonist like Kaiser's and unlike Strindberg's, in the surreal action of whose play the consciousness of the author holds sway.

However, these are matters of detail and in these matters contemporary dramatists writing in the same period can pick up devices from each other without acknowledgement. It may be quite correct to say that O'Neill tried to use some of the devices used by the German Expressionists from a reading of their plays and before seeing any such play performed. That he did not only use these but used these so successfully and completely in *The Emperor Jones* should be a matter of credit for O'Neill. There is no reason or justification to doubt the spirit of O'Neill's assertion that these dramatists were too limited to influence him. Says he:

> As a matter of fact, I did not think much of *Morn to Midnight*, and still don't. It is too easy. It would not have influenced me.[6]

It may be correct to assert that *Dynamo* reveals the influence of Kaiser's *Gas* but as has been stated before if he could write successful plays from mere reading he has certainly no reason to feel terribly indebted to them. In the more serious plays like *The Great God Brown* where he uses masks to deal with the problem of identity and split personality, and in *The Hairy Ape* where he concerns himself with the ultimate question of the meaning of man's existence, we see that his concerns are deeper and more profound than those of the German Expressionists. Although in matters of many technical details there happens

to be a similarity between them and O'Neill, on the philosophical level he stands, as his critics claim, close to his master, Strindberg. Of the two groups of Expressionists mentioned above O'Neill belongs to the irrationalist, the intuitivists and the mystical school while Toller and Kaiser belong to the activist and intellectualist school.

The controversy has assumed these proportions because critics like Blackburn and Valgemae do not make finer distinctions and lump together all the dramatists in the Expressionist tradition and compare them only on the basis of the details of technique rather than on the basis of deeper and more profound concerns. Granted O'Neill got the idea of experimenting in the Expressionist tradition from the German Expressionists using certain stage techniques and devices, manipulating his theme in a certain way, it does not follow that the nature of that debt is a very important one. It is easy to see that the nature of his debt to them was superficial. Therefore, critics like Alan Downer, Clifford Leech and John Gassner,[7] who are more conversant with the traditions of drama, are more correct when they assert that in his profound concern with man's alienation on a deeper level, O'Neill derived his inspiration from Strindberg rather than from the German Expressionists whose concern with man's lot was on a purely social level.

III

Of the two most important plays in which O'Neill used the Expressionist technique *The Emperor Jones* is the earlier and the simpler one. It is written in a series of eight scenes. As in all romantic literature, in Expressionism also the spirit determines the form. The subject of the play is fear expressed in the radiation of the ego of Jones, a symbol of the Negro race recently released from bondage. Jones is not totally innocent. The very fears, which he thinks he has got rid of by his exposure to the cunning of white civilization, he seeks to use in his exploration of the 'wood-niggers', 'bush-niggers' or 'trash niggers.' Ironically, in the end the latter crush him by the help of the same fears that he thought he had overcome.

At first there are nameless fears. As the conscious mind is

numbed by fear in the woods, from the subconscious mind of Jones arise the haunting fears. Finally, come visions drawn out of the accumulated race memories which lie far beyond the reach of the conscious. The incessant thump of the drum, a primitive manner of expressing intense emotion, is appropriate to the expression of the primitive emotion of the fear of persecution represented in the play. As the drum grows louder, faster and more frenzied we draw nearer to doom. The rhythmic sounds make us feel the pounding of the heart of the terrified negro. The expressionist setting help us to see the wood as it would appear to the distracted mind of the negro.

The Emperor Jones is a fine play although Clark would not, rightly, rank it with the highest of O'Neill's achievements.[8] It uses the expressionistic techniques fully. In a note to the play O'Neill has described how the idea for the play came to him by a few suggestions occurring at different times. It is a conscious as well as a successful experiment. It is almost lyrical in tone. The central character whose consciousness is so effectively explored, is a symbol. Although it is a successful expressionistic play it also reveals the limitations of the form. In a very successful expressionistic play the central character effectively conveying its meaning as a symbol may stop, and usually stops, at that. Usually a playwright belonging to the activist group aiming at the social message does not intend or attempt to make his character human. The symbolic aspects are emphasised to drive home the social significance. To that extent, the typically expressionistic play cannot claim to offer the challenge to a writer to express his genius to the fullest in terms of human character. However much of grandeur and meaning mere symbols may possess, they are abstractions and are lacking in the warmth of flesh and blood. The drum-beat may bring us very close to the pounding of Jones's heart but it is only for the moment. He never becomes a human being to us. He certainly does not become an individual as he is not intended to be. Most of the symbolic plays, therefore, correspond to the Abstract in painting and come close to the effect of music where a universal emotion is suggested but no individuation is possible.

O'Neill transcends realism and naturalism again in *The Hairy Ape*. The author himself regarded this as a much greater departure in form than *The Emperor Jones*. It is obvious to any reader of the play that it is a more expressionistic venture and a much more complex play than the earlier one.

The play is about Yank, a stoker symbolising primitive man whose primary need for existence is a sense of belonging —to something outside himself, whatever it may be, and it is from this that he derives a meaning for his existence and a sense of his own importance. When the play opens we see that he has already identified himself with 'steel' which symbolises motion and speed and thus symbolises life for Yank. To the ironic question of Paddy in the first scene if he would be the 'flesh and blood wheel of the engines,' he answers with great sureness and confidence, 'Dat's me!' His repetitive and emphatic 'I'm steel—steel—steel!' has a note of exultation in it. He feels he is essential for the movement of the ship and that gives him a sense of being needed—of having a place in the scheme of things. Paddy, the Irish stoker, on the other hand, yearns for the past, for the good old days of the sailing ships:

> 'Twas them days a ship was part of the sea, and a man was part of a ship, and the sea joined all together and made it one.

Men had not been condemned to the pit below the boiler room then. They were still strong from hard work. But now their muscles seem to have become steel and with their backs bent and shoulder muscles overdeveloped as a result of shovelling coal into the furnace, they resembled Neanderthal men as O'Neill mentions in the stage direction. Ironically enough, a progress in technology has condemned some men at least to a retrogression in the scale of evolution. However, again ironically, most of those very people like Yank identify themselves completely with machines and find a sense of belonging in them until some devastating experience comes to them. While a sensitive minority like the old Irish stoker has a clearer sense of the state of affairs and on his own level has an inkling that

'things fall apart, the centre cannot hold,' to Yank that is all just 'crazy tripe' and he dismisses Paddy as out of date so that he doesn't 'belong no more.'

To Long's assertions that the stokers are all condemned as slaves to the dungeons of hell because of the 'damned Capitalist clarss!' Yank's answer is characteristic. He asserts: 'It takes a man to work in hell' and as for being slaves,

> Slaves, hell! We run de whole woiks. All de rich guys dat tink dey're somep'n, dey ain't nothin'! Dey don't belong. But us guys, we're in de move, we're at de bottom, de whole ting is us! (Sc. 1)

So neither Paddy nor the folks on the deck 'belong' and Yank does not mind being at the bottom. He interprets it as being at the root of things, at the core of reality as it were, not at the lowest point in Hell.

The devastating experience comes to Yank in the form of Mildred, a visitor from the upper world of the cabin and the deck and one of those who have so far been regarded as useless by Yank, for they are devoid of motion and speed. Yank, of course, is not antagonistic to them out of jealousy or malice for their wealth, nor is he class-conscious as Long exuding his communist jargon. Incidentally, although O'Neill makes us conscious of social injustice and is more obviously concerned with it in this play than in *The Emperor Jones*, the problem is more than a mere social problem to him and he does not offer the easy panacea of communism as leftist writers do. The foolish insistence with which Long re-iterates communist jargon and the way he ends up by making a fool of himself makes O'Neill's attitude absolutely clear.[9]

The shock comes shattering his pride, self-confidence when Mildred shrinks from him in horror. Here, too, his reaction is characteristic. He is not jealous of the upper classes. Not once in the play has he expressed his desire to enjoy the privileges they do. He is filled with anger only at being annihilated, being refused the recognition due to him as a man, and robbed of his sense of belonging. His manhood has been spurned by Mildred. He is called a 'brute' for the same physical strength on which he prided himself. This experience makes him des-

perate and he tries to 'think'—a word which along with Law, Government, Justice, Love and God, arouses the scorn of the stokers in the fourth scene.

When doubt and hate enter his soul there is a conflict which is more than mere class consciousness on the social plane as it was to nearly all the activist Expressionists like Toller, Kaiser and Hasenclaver in most of their plays. Yank tries to find out the meaning of existence at his own level—an inner conflict in a man who is trying to emerge from a brutal state of existence in which he can no longer find statisfaction. Yank here is not only a human being in a particular situation but a truly expressionistic character. He is significant not only for action in a particular environment but for what he symbolises in a universal struggle. His puzzlement is almost metaphysical:

> Who is dat skoit, huh? What is she? What's she come from? Who made her? Who give her the noive to look at me like dat? ... I don't get her. She's new to me ... She don't belong, get me? I'll get even wit her. I'll show her if she tinks she ... grinds de organ and I'm on de string... (Sc. 4)

After this devastating experience his one thought is revenge. Unable to find her, he is led by Long to look on the likes of her. In the fifth scene we see Long trying to use the dissatisfaction of Yank for his own purposes. But in the Fifth Avenue Yank is not satisfied with a mere feeling of scorn from the distance and insists on expressing his anger at not being acknowledged. He deliberately creates trouble trying to be obnoxious and forcing himself upon the attention of the marionette-like figures. Ultimately he is arrested and put in prison. Even there he is troubled at not being able to sort things out to make sense of his catastrophic experience. His impatience and bursting rage lead him to bend the bars of his cell and fire hoses are turned upon him. The seventh scene shows him trying to find an avenue for the expression of his revenge. He approaches the 'Industrial Workers of the World' about which he had heard. There too his elementary mind and emotions cannot understand the sophisticated and institutionalised modes for expression of class struggle. He is thrown out as a spy when he offers

to blow up the factory of Mildred's father who makes half the steel of the world. Yank feels he makes it all into steel bars for him to be caged for her to spit on.

After this the half-man, half-brute has nowhere to go. He has fallen out of step and finds himself incapable of fitting into the scheme of things in the once-familiar world of the stokers. He fails to bring himself to a meaningful relationship with human groups. He has no patience or sympathy for the prisoners, or the workers in the Industrial Workers of the World. He is not interested in them. He is too distressed and engrossed in his own tortured self. A new awareness disturbs him and he cannot make sense of it. Unable to go forward he tries to go backward, to the original 'hairy ape' (the name jokingly used for Yank by Paddy to denote how he must have appeared to Mildred to make her faint). Shaking hands with the gorilla means death and even with the gorilla there is no acceptance. Man has a soul and so mere animal existence can spell no salvation to him. But Yank goes back in sheer desperation rejected by a society which uses him as a machine and considers him as a beast to be condemned inside the cage when he fails to conform to the modes of conduct prescribed by that society. Yank's retrogression is an emphatic protest on the part of the playwright against a society which refuses to recognise people like Yank as human.

Yank's death in a steel cage makes the symbolism of the play complete. When early in the play he realises the difference between his world and Mildred's he is conscious of the barriers of steel. Steel no more arouses exultation because it becomes the bars of the prison and then of the cage. The firemen's forecastle, later the cells in prison, are cages and ultimately there is the real cage. In addition the stokehole is Hell, all complete with the fire in the furnace which is opened and closed for feeding the hungry mouth of the ship with coal. The procession of the gaudy and artificial marionettes in the Fifth Avenue is also another cage against the invisible bars of which Yank beats in vain.

In all these scenes, we have splendid illustrations of distortion which result from the radiation of the ego. Surface reality is distorted through stage setting and lighting to show them as they appear to Yank's troubled mind.

There are certain keywords like 'belong', 'steel' and 'think.' Exultant and proud at being steel in the beginning Yank later wishes to blow steel off from the face of the earth. Steel in all its implications is his preoccupation. Another constant allusion is to Rodin's 'Thinker' and Yank is always supposed to sit in the attitude struck by that figure. The original and Yank himself are given a special significance considering the meaning of the word 'think' in the context of the play. The underlying idea is the cult of the modern man 'Drink, don't think' chorally chanted by the stokers as the burden of their song—if what they do can be called singing. Their repetition of the sentence is operatic in effect. The early Yank was thoughtless, being untroubled by problems. Later he is shown as trying to think in the scenes which follow his encounter with Mildred. Thinking, however, destroys him. He shows an inability to think and make sense of his experience. But once having been stirred to thinking he cannot relapse into his previous thoughtless existence. His rejection of the IWW and the desire to blow off the works himself as also his reaction to the marionettes on Fifth Avenue prove his incapability to generalise from particulars or to proceed from experiences to reason them out or cope with the situation calmly in order to find a solution. Unable to find his way through his problems he stops thinking all together and decides to go back to the brute. It is O'Neill's sardonic comment on the injustice of a society which heaps indignities on an individual forcing unseemly experiences on him but does not equip him to cope with them. The result, as critics like Doris Falk point out, applying terms which do not strictly apply, is existential despair.[10] Unable to cope with the magnitude of the revelation of the meaninglessness of his life, Yank destroys himself.

An attempt at rhythmic effect is made by the use of special technique. In the noise of the stokehole in the fourth scene, there is almost a choral pattern. Every word representing a human institution is repeated chorally by the stokers in the manner indicated in the stage direction which runs as follows:

> The word has a brazen metallic quality as if their throats were phonograph horns. It is followed by a chorus of hard barking laughter.

The effect is terrible in its implication of negation. Not by verisimilitude but by arrangement of dialogue in a rhythmic pattern a certain emotional effect is brought about. In the stage direction to the first scene itself O'Neill says: 'The treatment of this scene or of any other scene in the play should by no means be naturalistic.'

O'Neill seeks to convey pure feeling not only through rhythmic effect but also through lyricism. The language of Paddy and Yank is frankly poetical though in different ways. Paddy's paean of praise to the beauties of the sea in the days of the old sailing vessels rises to the level of the ecstatically lyrical. Even Yank's glowing tribute to steel is exultant though in a more modernistic vein. Some of the best poetic passages in O'Neill are in this scene. O'Neill, it is obvious, is in keeping with the spirit of modernism in that poetry in his plays is the ability to conceive things poetically rather than in writing poetry. Gassner calls this a poetic and heightened naturalism which, he thinks, is the peculiarity of the modern American theatre.

The core of the play with its relevance, of course, is related to its frank concern with human values which brings it close to expressionistic plays and distinguishes it from naturalistic plays. But unlike the majority of expressionistic plays, its socio-political framework is introduced on a human level and not on a political level. The contrasting attitudes represented by Paddy, Long and Yank have already been referred to. The life of the upper-deck in Scene 2 and the sub-human lives of the stokers in Scenes 1 and 3 are brought into sharp relief in Scene 3 when Mildred, the daughter of the President of the Steel Trust, descends into the hell of the stokehole. Mildred inspired with a desire to see reality and the life of the other half, the inmates of the Inferno, reminds us of Indra's daughter in Strindberg's *The Dream Play*.

The scornful remarks of Yank in the seventh scene about the usual solutions to social and human problems—a few amenities and creature comforts—reveal to us that O'Neill's concern is not with the material level at all. His Yank has come to the point of realising that this is no solution. Says he:

> Dis ting's in your inside, but it ain't your belly....It's way down—at de bottom.

The word 'bottom' has undergone an ironic reversal. He had thought he was at the bottom, at the root or core of things but now he knows that there is another deeper core beneath life as we know it, of whose existence he had been quite ignorant. It is man's need to know about his meaning which justifies his existence. From this point of view Yank's brooding in the posture of Rodin's 'Thinker' becomes meaningful. At the very end of his tether in Scene 7, he looks up in desperation at the moon (again in a kind of reversal because he had scoffed at Paddy's ecstasies over the sun, the moon and the stars), turning to the Man in the Moon as wise and holding the key to the answer. He asks:

> Slip me de inside dope, de information right from de stable—where do I get off at, huh?

This is the first step in the reversal to the mythical forces; and the next step is recoiling even from the primitive world of the mythical to the brute world. To the policeman's threat Yank's reply is:

> Put me in a cage! Dat's de on'y answer yuh know!

There is a conscious superiority in the tone and to that extent it is a rejection of society and its values and a progress in the self-awareness of Yank. To the policeman's question as to what he has been doing, his answer is almost Sophoclean:

> Enuf to gimme life for! I was born, see? Sure dat's the charge.

When he mockingly repeats the question to the policeman 'Say where do I go from here?' the policeman's indifferent answer, 'Go to hell!' shows that the scorn of Yank for society and its institutions is justified. Yank's rejection by society is complete but so is Yank's rejection of it. But the level is purely philosophical and almost metaphysical. O'Neill's achievement appears to be astounding when one realises that he enacts the most metaphysical concerns of man in terms of the bafflement of a half-articulate stoker.

The Hairy Ape is one of the most completely expressionistic plays. It is a brilliant play and like a truly great play raises issues which do not lend themselves to 'pat' conclusions, to borrow a phrase from Tennessee Williams. And this impossibility to be summed up in a phrase is what leads on to rank O'Neill with writers like Kafka who are too profound to be merely expressionistic writers. For ultimately, Expressionism reduces itself to a matter of form—a way of expressing reality so that one touches the core of life. What the writer or dramatist sees and expresses is a different and much deeper issue altogether and depends upon the capacity and the vision of the individual artist. From this point of view O'Neill is not only the greatest practitioner to have explored the possibilities of Expressionism fully in the dramatic mode but by choosing it as a vehicle for his profound vision of human life, he also seems to have enriched the mode and expanded its possibilities. This he has been able to achieve mainly through the creation of the character of Yank. While the protagonists of expressionistic plays usually stop with being a symbol, Yank does not; he becomes a human being as well.

Before passing on to an analysis of the character of Yank, it would not be out of place to point out here that not only Yank but some of the minor characters in the play are also, to an extent, human. They, too, are not pure abstractions despite their symbolic value in the pattern of the play. Though Mildred is dressed in white and comes from the highest level of society even within her brief appearance in the play we find that she is no angel and, in addition, is herself a very unhappy person. Yank's rancour might have been minimised had he got the capacity—had society offered him the opportunity to equip himself with the capacity—to divine the anguish in others. The scene which reveals the complex relationship between Mildred and her aunt could have easily been fitted into a naturalistic play. It is the only scene in the play of which such a thing can be said. Even Paddy and Long have received slight touches from the generous hands of the artist which may be said to have invested them with the warmth possessed by living characters. The dialogue given to these two characters is responsible for this. The poetic language of Paddy invests him with a wistful and nostalgic personality and Long's

jargon makes him obnoxious in the way all slow-witted fanatics are.

As for Yank, even his creator was conscious that there were two aspects to his personality. He despaired of the fact that the public saw only one aspect of it. In the *New York Herald Tribune* of November 14, 1924, he says:

> The public saw just the stoker, not the symbol, and the symbol makes the play important or just another play.

As an artist who had experimented with a new form (contrary to the contemporary practice and trends) in which a character must not function merely as a character but as a symbol O'Neill was eager that the symbolic aspect of the character should be appreciated since it was not just another naturalistic play but an expressionistic one.

Barrett Clark, however, thinks that an author cannot have his human beings serve these two purposes at the same time. He thinks that although Yank has human attributes he remains a symbol. He feels there is a difference in approach to a character like Hamlet and one like Yank. He seems to suggest that the symbolic aspect of Hamlet's character is a consequence whereas in Yank it is the determinant. He says:

> He [Yank] might have been a man and still have embodied the dramatist's ideas; he might have been treated, like Ephraim in *Desire Under the Elms*, as a man from whose character we are allowed to make deductions and generalisations, but he [Yank] is not so treated. [And so] *The Hairy Ape* for all its appeal, remains a rather cold bit of dramatised philosophy.[11]

All critics, in fact the majority of them, are not likely to agree that *The Hairy Ape* is merely 'a cold bit of dramatised philosophy.' Marden J. Clark's elaborate analysis of the tragic effect in the play assigning Yank's tragedy to his 'hubris' of total identification with the power of steel, his contempt for the materially prosperous who think 'dey are somep'n', and above all, his overweening pride over being at the very root of things,

running 'de whole woiks', proves otherwise.[12] This analysis of the play in terms of tragic character assumes that Yank has very important qualities which entitle him to be human.

Doris V. Falk's analysis of Yank's problem in terms of existential despair has been referred to above. This is another instance which would lead us to regard Yank as a person. The despair to be moving and meaningful in drama cannot be abstract. It has to be conveyed in human terms. Despair in the abstract can move only philosophers and despair of characters who are abstractions, can move none.

The problem seems to arise from a confusion of terminology. A symbolic character is different from an abstraction, which is a type character and merely expresses an idea. Therefore there is no contradiction involved if a character is called upon to be both a man and a symbol. The paradox of the 'concrete universal' (represented in the fusion of the universal and particular in art) worked out in terms of dramatic characters, results in great symbolic characters which are neither just symbols, nor just certain men but a fusion of both. In fact, all great characters in literature are just that.

Yank's character, examined from this point of view, shows a vivid, alive, feeling human being with symbolic value. It proves, as all great characters in literature do, that a character need not lose it symbolic value in order to be human or vice versa. Yank's individuality and the warmth of his personality are revealed on many occasions in the play. His generosity and good nature, revealed in his readiness to settle a quarrel without coming to blows are all his own. When inspired by Yank's speech regarding the glory of life in the stokehole (in Scene 1), the stokers surround Long threateningly, he asks them to leave him as not being worth a punch. His anger, impulsiveness, sensitivity, his lack of meanness or jealousy, his genuine concern with essentials, all evident from the instances already quoted, do not appear to be abstract qualities. All these combine convincingly into a warmly human and impulsive personality intent on a search. In addition, it is his stubborn honesty and relentless quest for the meaning of man's life that give him something of a tragic grandeur. The desire for revenge without regard for consequences smacks of tragic commitment to destiny, however misdirected it may have been. Yank at

last emerges as the tragic hero who destroys himself without waiting for circumstances to destroy him. However, it is his metaphysical anguish, above everything else, which makes him so intensely human.

To the extent that he fails to find any meaning in life the play is not truly tragic but rather nihilistic. However, no one can deny the vitality of a living character to Yank. The vitality itself makes him all the more powerful as a symbol and adds a dimension to *The Hairy Ape* often denied to the usual expressionistic plays.

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THE BUSINESS OF CRITICISM IN AMERICA*

By Sujit Mukherjee

Herman Melville asserted with impunity in 1850, 'There are hardly five critics in America; and several of them are asleep.' ('Hawthorne and His Mosses') By 1950, the number must have grown at a modest estimate to five thousand. Whatever be their own states of somnolence, these critics certainly manage to keep us awake of nights. This proliferation of criticism, conventional and otherwise, has been a conspicuous feature of the recent literary culture of America. While the age of anxiety prevails in other aspects of American life, the age of literary criticism continues an uninterrupted reign which began some time ago in the nineteen twenties.

In talking of American criticism, we come up immediately against the problem of having to decide what is *American* in American criticism. It has not been very long since we learned to recognise the Americanness of American literature—especially in India where, long before we began eating certain wheat without questioning its origin, we had been reading American literary works without being conscious that they were part of a distinct and definable literature. The identity of American criticism seems much more difficult to grasp than the concept of American literature. In fact, the organic view which holds American literature to be verbal illumination of the so-called American experience—and thereby sets it apart from the experience of any other nation—cannot be applied to an individuation of American criticism. The line of evolution of thought from the Aristotelians of ancient Athens to the Neo-Aristotelians of modern Chicago has traversed too much time and space, has cut across too many communal and national frontiers to form the peculiar preserve of any one people. Nationality is surely less necessary to critical activity than adherence to some well-defined and comprehensive world-view. It should be more valid to conceive of Catholic criticism

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or Marxist criticism or Dhvani criticism than to designate critical tendencies as inalienably American or Russian or Indian. American criticism appears to me to be the critical writings of men (and women) who happen to be Americans. Such a loose and baggy definition will find it easy to accommodate such eccentric figures as Ezra Pound and James Huneker and Gertrude Stein, and also to register the fact that at particular moments of American history, certain critical notions have swayed men's minds on an appreciable scale and certain critical texts have from time to time ignited vigorous debate and discussion all over the country. But the effort to tie together the men and the notions and the texts may not arrive at a statement of that quintessence which we shall recognise as indisputably American. That armed vision which governs the act of criticism has of necessity made use of an armoury drawn from beyond the confines of time and place.

In taking such a stand, I am, of course, abdicating the responsibility of having to define what is American criticism. I should like to go a little further and spare myself the formidable task of placing all American critical writing in a historical perspective. I could expect to provide nothing new or revolutionary by way of historical order—books on the subject by J. P. Pritchard and William Van O'Connor follow more or less the same sequence, as do the introductory essays by Floyd Stovall and Morton Zaubel in the volumes edited by them. Also, as those well-known American works of history of criticism ably demonstrate—Professor Wellek's three volumes, and one of Professors Wimsatt and Brooks—a true account of the evolution of critical ideas is feasible only against the widest possible background. Within the limits of one seminar-hour, and within the limitations of my own acquaintance of the subject, it is not practicable to try and serve up an instant history of American criticism. I should like instead to offer a few general propositions, all having to do with the business of criticism in America and not entirely unrelated to one another, in the fond hope that a view from this bridge will emerge.

* * * * *

I. That much refuted statement of James Russell Lowell,

that before there can be an American literature there must be an American criticism, has turned out to be prophetic in one way. American critics came into their own only after they were able to recognize the true identity of American literature. This literature had existed long before the criticism came into being, but preoccupation with nationhood inhibited nearly all nineteenth century critics (except perhaps Poe) from fulfilling their true function. The erroneous notion that in order to create truly representative American literature, the writer must break completely with European tradition and renounce European methods as well as standards adversely affected both the creative artist as well as the critic. The mere use of native materials was often enough to earn praise from native critics; in addition, there was the passion for regarding American writing as the equal of writing anywhere else in the world, as must follow from America's being the equal of any other nation—especially Britain. Yet when Fenimore Cooper was hailed as the American Scott or William Cullen Bryant as the American Wordsworth, American criticism was still imprisoned by what Randolph Bourne was to call, in 1914, its chief obstacle—'our cultural humility'. Release came only when Bourne and his generation set about establishing a radically new valuation of America's literary past, whereby the so-called critical rediscovery of American literature by Americans came about. Neither American literature nor American criticism has had to look back again from this act of dual self-discovery. Lowell therefore was right in making a necessary conjunction between the two, wrong only in ordering the sequence.

II. Conversely, much critical energy and print were expended in nineteenth-century America to publicizing the desirability of having an American literature. But it was only when the American critic was able to place American literature in the context of world literature that American criticism became significant to the rest of the world. There never was a dearth of appreciation for world literature in nineteenth-century America. Emerson's 'representative' men were all citizens of the world; Thoreau's mind travelled with ease from Walden Pond to the banks of the Ganga; Henry James whetted

his weapons of analysis upon the French novel; Huneker hosted Ibsen and Strindberg and Maeterlinck in America; the far-flung humanism of More and Babbitt was at times more cosmopolitan than the literary taste of H. L. Mencken and Van Wyck Brooks. But it is only in a work like *Axel's Castle* (1930) that an American critic speaks with authority, because he was able to demonstrate that American writing had participated in a mode of the literary imagination which had manifested itself elsewhere too in the world. The act of discovery performed by the American critic included, therefore, not only a recognition of American literature itself but also of its place in world literature.

III. The opening number of the *Democratic Review* (October 1837) began by asserting 'The vital principle of an American national literature must be democracy. Our mind is enslaved to the past and present literature of England.' Two months before this, Emerson had said in his *The American Scholar* address, 'We have listened too long to the courtly muses of Europe.' The need to break away from European culture as well as the need to develop a culture suited to a democracy are both contained within that presiding critical concept of nineteenth-century America, the organic theory of art. Professor Harry H. Clark (in his essay in *The Development of American Literary Criticism*, ed. Floyd Stovall, 1955) discerned as many as five different varieties of organicism operating in America between 1800 and 1804. Emerson, therefore, did not invent the theory; he expounded it in memorable prose and illustrated it in some of his poems. But once we get to that exemplary organic artist, Walt Whitman, we realize that underneath all its transcendental trappings, the organic theory is really a philosophical embodiment of the persistent effort to associate literature with the democratic idea. After Whitman, William Dean Howells was to become the champion of this movement, while in the twentieth century Vernon L. Parrington would come to occupy an extreme position on the spectrum of critical thought which weighed nationalistic and environmental factors heavily in the evaluation of literature. The continuity of American organicism has thus followed devious paths unforeseen by

Emerson. It is the American critic's many-sided retort to Alexis de Tocqueville's apprehension that literature could scarcely thrive in a democracy.

IV. The general shift of the critical target in America from prose fiction to poetry (I refer to an approximate period from 1880 to 1930) is marked enough to deserve notice. The controversy over naturalism in America, which spilled over from the previous century to the present, was almost entirely devoted to the novel. The vogue of formalist criticism ushered in by the New Critics was devoted almost entirely to poetry. While literary criticism exists by virtue of the existence of literature, it would seem that critical vogues attend upon certain forms of literature and not on all forms. Furthermore, the earlier interest in evolving critical concepts relating to the novel form was a preoccupation primarily of those who were writing prose-fiction—William Dean Howells, Henry James, Frank Norris etc. Similarly, the first flowering of New Criticism was mainly the effort of practising poets themselves—T. S. Eliot, John Crowe Ransome, Allen Tate etc. Here it seems to be a return to the notion—perhaps as old as Ben Jonson—that only a poet is eligible to be a critic of poetry. By combining these two phenomena, seen more clearly in twentieth-century American literature than elsewhere, I venture to suggest that the future course of criticism is in the hands of the creative artist himself. Until recently, he was obliged merely to create a literary taste for his kind of writing; now he must, in addition, write criticism which will inform literary taste. This may explain the growing addiction of American writers to literary criticism, generally purveyed in volumes of collected critical essays.

V. Firm commitment to clearly stated critical principles is a dear possession of most American critics, and it makes them slightly contemptuous of the relatively belles-lettristic activities of fellow-practitioners elsewhere, especially on the other side of the Atlantic. This may be deemed the great achievement of twentieth-century American critics—this getting down to funadmentals, which has helped to clear the critical jungle of

so much undergrowth and enabled the planting of new ideas. This was in a way forced upon them, because part of the modern critical revolution consists of the attention being paid to contemporary writers, whose own originality has demanded the innovation of critical approaches capable of coping with contemporary writing. One occasionally wonders, of course, to what extent contemporary writers have returned the compliment by creating work which lends itself to the new criticism. But on the whole the clearing up of critical ground and the adherence to a set of critical principles have given criticism in America the lineament of a serious discipline. Not unnaturally, along with the discipline, some dogma has developed. Think of how poor Stuart Sherman has been accused of floor-crossing over the issue of naturalism. More recently, when R. S. Crane thundered about 'the bankruptcy of the critical monism of Cleanth Brooks,' literary discrimination was in danger of giving way to critical fanaticism. Should critics take up the stand of 'if-you-are-not-with-me-you-must-be-against-me'? T. S. Eliot had discouraged the prospect of criticism becoming an autotelic activity; he had not foreseen the dangers of criticism becoming an autocracy.

VI. Between the wars, literature in general in the Western world was under severe strain, having to grapple with a human condition unprecedented in the history of civilization. The distress was felt more acutely in America because the manifest destiny of this nation had seemingly been subverted by the collapse of its economic system. As a result of this ordeal, the literary critic, who was until then an amiable apologist for literature, secure in his place in the scheme of things, became an embattled defender of the palace of art. While the writer retreated for a time, American criticism jumped into the fray with a frenzy that did not always fulfil its original intention of defending literature. The defenders themselves often disagreed about what to defend in literature, and the common enemy—scientific materialism, logical positivism, economic revaluation of history, advent of new psychologies—was often forgotten in the series of internecine wars which have enlivened the critical scene through the nineteen-thirties and the 'forties.

Reporting on this condition, Allen Tate wrote, 'As for literary criticism, we here encounter a stench and murk not unlike that of a battlefield three days after the fighting is over and the armies have departed.' (*The Forlorn Demon*) This agitated defensive posture seems to persist even today, and American critics continue to be more concerned with the state of criticism than with the health of literature. The unparalleled breadth of knowledge and methodology which American criticism is able to bring to bear upon literature does not always find a readymade literary subject worthy of such study. Therefore, subjects of appropriate magnitude have to be conjured up. As Virginia Woolf might have said, 'Criticism has come down with its magnificent apparatus for catching literature just an inch or two on the wrong side. Literature escapes.'

VII. Many of the critical battles in America have been reviewed in terms of dialectical positions. An example would be Norman Foerster's introduction to the collection, *American Critical Essays* (1930), where he puts down four sets of major conflicts as having affected the American critical mind until then—modernist sceptics vs ancients; romantics vs realists; humanists vs naturalists; and, scholars vs critics. A similar four-fold pattern of contraries was seen a few years earlier by James C. Bowman in his *Contemporary American Criticism* (1926) where the terms are slightly different—nationalism vs internationalism; formalists vs expressionists; moralists vs Mencken-ites; and, aesthetes vs message-hunters. The protracted battle of books between 1920 and 1930 was waged between the self-styled literary radicals and the other-designated neo-humanists. Nearer our own times, we have seen the skirmishing between relativists and positivists, formalists and historicists, monists and syncretists, and the like. I have often wondered whether this habitual exercise of the human mind in setting up polarities has some special fascination for the American intellect. Henry Adams' the virgin and the dynamo, Henry James' innocence and experience, Perry Miller's the raven and the whale, Leo Marx's the machine and the garden, are other instances of this phenomenon. If this tendency in American intellectual history is generic, can we find its source—what

is there in the American mores that compels this perpetual lining up of contraries in peaceless coexistence?

VIII. Towards the development of literary criticism, one rich contribution of American critics has been in the innovation of critical terms which act like high-precision instruments of applied technology. They may on occasion have overdone things—William Elton's 'Glossary of New Criticism' (published in *Poetry* magazine, December 1948, January and February 1949) contained as many as 114 entries. But Eliot's 'objective correlative', Ransome's 'ontological criticism', Allen Tate's 'tension in poetry', Yvor Winters' 'pseudo-reference', Mark Schorer's 'technique as discovery', Wimsatt' and Bradley's 'intentional fallacy'—these are all sharp tools, most effective in the hands of those who can wield them well. The danger is that as with other sharp tools readily available in the market, these too often fall into the wrong hands. This in itself cannot support any plea for a ban on carrying these weapons without a licence, but it should make us wonder whether criticism can or should be reduced to a method to be readily employed by all and sundry. The formulation of demonstrable concepts and the transmission of applicable methods used to be the preserve of the physical sciences. But now similar privileges are being claimed by literary criticism in its search for equal status in a world where science predominates. In a technology-conscious country like America, the challenge is perhaps greater to the American critic than in any other country.

IX. The American critic has not been content merely with improving the minds of common readers, common and uncommon writers, and other critics. His impact is felt at a level perhaps unprecedented in the history of literature. I have in mind the astonishing currency of such textbooks as *Understanding Poetry* and *Understanding Fiction*, which have had a wider and deeper effect on everyday academic traffic with literature than any critical controversy waged in influential quarterlies. 'Catching 'em young' is a slogan not confined any more to coaching in athletic pursuits. It is possible, with

American aid, to begin coaching in literature in the lower echelons of the academic world. Enterprising publishers have facilitated this process by making available better and bigger anthologies every year whose quality is assessed not by its selection of texts alone, but by the critical commentaries which accompany the texts. Besides the straightforward anthologies dealing with periods or forms of literature, there are so many variations on the theme of providing teaching material that the general textbook revolution as far as it affects the literature courses must be considered an important contribution of American criticism to the world of letters.

X. The business of criticism in America is unmistakably big business. It produces a commodity on a very large scale, and devises way and means to sell this commodity in home markets as well as in foreign bazaars. Manufacturing plants of various sizes, some privately endowed and some state-aided, are to be found all over the country. In addition, there is a substantial cottage-industry, and even the one-man producer is given every inducement to maintain a steady rate of production. The product is marketed both as high-priced items as well as in paper-bound packages to suit the pockets of the large range of buyers. Advertising of the product is done both through professional channels as well as by unpaid agents. Competition among the manufacturers is fairly severe, and 'produce or perish' is an accepted philosophy of the trade. Periodically, the executives confer over luncheons and dinners lasting from three days to a week; the daily schedule on such occasions always provides for demonstration of new samples by those aspiring to join the trade. Such business get-togethers are known in commercial circles as 'seminars'.

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My final proposition may seem a facetious account of how literary criticism is composed and disseminated, but the time-honoured mode of dispelling one's dreads is to laugh at them. As a literature teacher, I cannot but be duly apprehensive about the adverse effects of the overproduction of literary

criticism upon the practice of teaching literature. Because the colleges and the universities are both the largest producers as well as the largest consumers of literary criticism, the remedy to the problem has to be found by the teachers themselves. Thomas Rymer wrote in 1674, 'Till of late years, England was as free from critics as it is from wolves.' America probably enjoyed this freedom until the end of the nineteenth century, and it was possible for Francis W. Halsey to write in his book, *Our Literary Deluge*, published in 1902: 'Criticism in itself is not a high form of literature, and it is proper that it shall not be. When it shines at all, it shines by a borrowed light. It must always be an ephemeral thing.' How different the situation is today needs no elaboration. Not merely does its authentic light shine unquenchably, it fairly glares out of the pages of the PMLA annual bibliography. Public law should soon require this volume to print the warning 'Enter all who dare' on the cover as a motto, inscribed over an emblem of the couchant critic and three supine associate professors.

The problem I raise here as a corollary of the business of criticism is not solely the consequence of American free enterprise, but the increasing impact that the American way of life is making upon the rest of the world includes this area of influence. As I see it, the predicament of the literature teacher today is how to learn to live encircled so oppressively by criticism whose main purpose seems to be to exhibit itself as strikingly and conspicuously as possible—instead of being the 'quiet, cooperative labour' visualised by T. S. Eliot long ago or even the business of observing 'those excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader' ordained much longer ago by John Dryden. Lest we be drowned by the flood, it is time we thought of some way to dam this flow if not turn it off altogether at some tactical place upstream. All this blame—I hasten to repeat—is not directed solely at American trade in this commodity. But as the largest manufacturer and exporter of literary criticism, it is in that country that reforms, if any, must begin.

Related to the above is a more fundamental issue. Professors Wellek and Warren, while reviewing the study of literature in American universities in the concluding chapter of *Theory of Literature*, have mentioned the need 'to make our professors

of English into professors of Literature.' The analogy offered by them—'The teacher of literature should himself be a literary man, as professors of philosophy are, still, expected to be philosophers, not merely historians of philosophy'—was probably aimed at the world-wide practice among literature teachers of teaching not literature but the history of a particular literature. The practice today, I think, has altered to the point where what we chiefly teach in our classes is not literature but literary criticism. We do aspire to be literary men ourselves but only to the extent of being literary critics manqué, and that is how the conveyor belt fetching criticism in and out of our classes is kept in perpetual motion. It may be that it has never really been possible to *teach* literature; but at least the experiencing of literature and the valuing of literature as an art is becoming more and more difficult in the classroom. If literary criticism is not to criticise literature out of existence, the business of criticism, whether in America or in any other country, must expeditiously invest its capital in some other product. When Emerson had mused 'Books are for the scholar's idle times', could his prophetic vision have included books of criticism?

W. S. LANDOR AS DRAMATIST

By O. P. Mathur

A surprisingly large part of Walter Savage Landor's work is dramatic in essence. His *Imaginary Conversations* best represents his genius. In them the author, after surveying the vast panorama of history, has selected a number of neglected but highly significant moments in the lives of characters belonging to various times and climes.[1] John Forster has beautifully summed up the contents of these conversations: 'The scene was to be shifting as life, but continuous as time. Over it were to pass successions of statesmen, lawyers and churchmen; wits and men of letters; party-men, soldiers and kings; the most tender, delicate and noble women; figures fresh from the schools of Athens and the courts of Rome; philosophers philosophising, and politicians discussing questions of state; poets talking of poetry, men of the world of matters worldly, and English, Italian, and French of their respective literatures and manners.'[2] Their very range bespeaks universal sympathy, catholicity of taste and dramatic eclecticism and objectivity. Many of these Conversations are fundamentally dramatic; e.g. Marcellus and Hannibal, Tiberius and Vipsania, Leofric and Godiva, John of Gaunt and Joanna of Kent, etc. Such Conversations show that the author could not only visualise character but also present it at a moment of crisis both in action and in emotion. In most of these Conversations Landor is able to detach himself from the action and the passions. He has rightly warned the reader, 'Avoid a mistake in attributing to the writer any opinions in this book but what are spoken under his own name.'[3]

Landor's interest in the dramatic is characteristic of the author and the period. His reveries from his earliest youth had been 'almost entirely on what this one or that one would have said or done in this or that situation.'[4] He said to Southey that he 'never could publish a poem that contained any character of a human being unless he had lived two or three years with that character'.[5] But his interest in character, passion or situation was rarely trimmed to fit the theatre or even the

formal pattern of drama. He wailed that 'in anything dramatic, such is the rapidity of passion the words escape before they can be taken down.'[6] He felt that 'intricacy, called plot, undermines the solid structure of well-ordered poetry.'[7] Thinking, like Charles Lamb,'[8] that the sublime concepts of our imagination are broken by 'the iconoclastic efforts of the actors' and that Garrick himself could not have recompensed him for 'the overthrow and ruin' of his Lear,[9] Landor 'always hated plays and playhouses,'[10] and even confessed that during the first nine years at Bath he went only once to the Bath theatre,[11] and that he did not see a play acted a dozen times in his life.[12] He shrank from acting, the more so because he felt 'the most painful and insuperable disgust' on beholding 'glorious and grand actions amidst the vulgar hard-hearted language of prostitutes and lobby-loungers.'[13] He was, therefore, almost wholly unacquainted with the practical side of drama, and was honest enough to admit that he did not know 'the difference between an act and a scene' and that he had to send to the library for a volume of Racine 'for the sole purpose of counting what number of verses was the average of a tragedy.'[14]

Landor's affiliations with the dramatic thus consisted of his objective interest in history and the revelation of character in particular situations mostly consisting of meetings with other characters.[15] He realised the limitations of this approach to drama, especially as it was accompanied by a complete ignorance of the theatre and unwillingness to tackle the problems of plot-construction. Though he formally called only two of his dramatic pieces 'Scenes for study' and 'Three Scenes not for the Stage', yet his general approach to all of them is more or less identical. They were printed under the non-committal heading of 'Acts and Scenes' (not 'dramas'), and he thought them to be 'no better than *Imaginary Conversations* in metre.'[16] He looked forward only to a select coterie of admirers in the future: 'I shall dine late; but the dining room will be well-lighted, the guests few and select.'[17] But he seems to have decided to lay a rich dramatic banquet for his future guests. In addition to a dozen dramatic scenes and playlets, viz. *Ippolito de Este, Guzman and His Son, The Coronation, Essex and Bacon, Walter Tyrrel and William Rufus, The Parents of Luther, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Three Scenes, Not for the Stage,*

Beatrice Cenci, *James II of Scotland and Assassins*, *Antony and Octavius*, and *Death of Blake*, he wrote six full length plays, *Count Julian*, *Andrea of Hungary*, *Giovanna of Naples*, *Fra Rupert*, *The Siege of Ancona and Ines de Castro*. *Count Julian*, composed in 1910-11, belongs to the first period of Landor's literary career, while the others belong to the last. The author wrote about the composition of *Count Julian*, 'It cannot be well done, written with such amazing rapidity.' 'My hours were four or five together, after long walks, in which I brought before me the various characters, the very tones of their voices, their forms, complexions and step. In the daytime I laboured, and at night unburdened my mind, shedding many tears.'[18] Probably it was more or less true of the composition of his other dramatic works also. *Andrea of Hungary* was 'conceived, planned and executed in thirteen days,' and *Giovanna of Naples* was composed in eight days.[19]

The plays have no theatrical history. Though Southey was initially prepared to submit *Count Julian* either to the Covent Garden or to the Edinburgh Theatre through Sir Walter Scott, Landor replied, 'Kemble may be tried ... If Count Julian is endured, it will be because it is different from anything of the day, and not from any excellence. If Kemble will not act it, I would not submit it to inferior actors.'[20] But he changed his mind a little later and wrote to Southey in May 1811, 'Count Julian shall never lie at the feet of Kemble. It must not be offered for representation. I will print it and immediately.'[21] As regards *Andrea of Hungary*, he wrote to Forster, 'My drama will never do for the stage.'[22] In another letter to Forster, he wrote about *Andrea of Hungary and Giovanna of Naples*, 'You are right in what you say of the theatre. I shrink from the action. We will will give up that idea, both for one and other of the dramas.'[23] Since then he never perhaps thought of stage-representation, though he continued to write his 'Acts and Scenes'.

Landor's dramatic imagination, unrestricted by the exigencies of the playhouse, had a wide range, but it liked to sail only on the charted seas of history. Generally, not event but a new or striking conception of some historical character or situation lies at the root of his plays and playlets. The main object of the composition of *Count Julian* seems to have been

the mental agony and torture of the hero, whose daughter Covilla's modesty has been outraged by the Spanish King, Roderigo. The fervent patriotism of Julian is overshadowed by his intense desire for vengeance, and he helps the invading Moors led by Muza and his son Abdalzis to conquer his own country. The defeated Roderigo is nobly let off by Julian, but this displeases the suspicious Muza, who already doubted Julian's faith, and who now punishes him by getting first his children and then his wife killed. The theme was treated earlier in verse by Southey in *Roderick*, and by Scott in *The Vision of Don Roderick*. The focus of the Neapolitan trilogy, consisting of *Andrea of Hungary*, *Giovanna of Naples* and *Fra Rupert*, is mainly on the hypocritical Rupert and his innocent victim Giovanna. In the first play, the youthful Hungarian Prince, Andrea, is murdered on the day of his marriage by the agents of Fra Rupert, Andrea's teacher and mentor. The second play chiefly presents Rupert's attribution of the murder to Giovanna, leading to her examination by Rienzi and her subsequent acquittal and enthronement. In the third, and the most dramatic, play of the trilogy, we further see Rupert's machinations first to displace Giovanna and then to dethrone her successor, Carl Durazzo, whom Rupert himself had helped to power. But this time Rupert is thoroughly exposed, and he takes his own life as the Officers come to arrest him. In *Fra Rupert* action has at last assumed an importance which it did not have in the earlier plays. *The Siege of Ancona* carries this healthy development still further. Its object is chiefly the presentation of action—the besieging of the free but tiny state of Ancona by the Archbishop of Mentz, the resultant suffering and starvation of the people, their heroic efforts at resistance, and their brave and successful attempt to get help from the Countess of Bertinoro, and in the lifting of the siege. The characters and situations in the play are happily subordinated to the over-all dramatic pattern. But in the very next play, *Ines de Castro*, we see action relegated to the background. The main character of the play is Queen Blanca, who wants Prince Pedro (her step-son) to marry her daughter, Constantia. But she fails, and Pedro marries another girl, Ines de Castro, and leaves her father's kingdom. After a few years, Blanca comes to see Pedro and Ines, and gets Ines killed. The story is obscure and can be

grasped from the play with difficulty. It is made to serve only as a peg for characterisation and portrayal of situations. The same is true of Landor's 'scenes' and playlets. In them too, the story or the background is taken for granted as common knowledge, while we are shown only characters and situation—the noble James II of Scotland facing his assassins undaunted; the loving Giulio overlooking his own safety in a vain attempt to persuade his brother Ferrante, doomed to lose his eyesight, to try to escape from the prison with the help of the people, and then bravely slipping into his brother's hands a dagger so that he might elude his torturers by taking his own life; the valiant Guzman refusing to accept ignoble terms even at the cost of his only son's life; the deeply injured Essex being visited in the prison by his erstwhile friend, the Lord Chancellor; the loyal but brave Tyrrel, who has obeyed King Rufus even to the point of demolishing his own house for the King's pleasure, being provoked at last by the tyrant's self-centred and endless thirst for pleasure to slay him on the spot to defend the honour of his house; the pious and gentle Anne Boleyn weeping at the writ of execution presented to her in the prison, thinking that it is the petition of some widow whom she can help no more. *Beatrice Cenci* presents a new type of heroine—a girl who never tells her injury, not even to defend herself from the charge of murder.[24] *Antony and Octavius* contains not only the unforgettable and innocent Caesarion but also the brave, frank and ironical Antony, the faithful Cleopatra, the subtle, suspicious and cowardly Octavius, the brave and sincere Agrippa, the smooth-tongued and hypocritical Dolabella, and the noble and loving Octavia. *Beatrice Cenci* and *Octavius and Antony* extend over many scenes, and though they treat action as a sort of background for character, the action is dynamic. These two playlets, therefore, along with *Ippolito de Este*, stand midway between the smaller 'scenes' and the longer plays.

With the exception of *Fra Rupert* and *The Siege of Ancona*, Landor seems to have given little attention to action and plot as such, and, instead of unfolding them artistically, he assumes that the reader knows them. Perhaps he is right, too, in this assumption, for his themes are generally those treated earlier in song or story. The plays, therefore, tend to become mere collections of scenes, some of which are very well conceived,

but can hardly be understood as parts of an organic whole. Sometimes, his classicism also adds to the confusion. Much of the action, especially in *Count Julian*, is made to take place off-stage, and the stage mostly becomes a place for the characters to display their lacerated hearts. In both *Julian* and *Andrea*, the action is confined to one day, for they present only the final stages of the plot. The classical influence, thus, tends to intensify the poverty of action. Count Julian would have been much more dramatic both in character and in plot, had it begun at an earlier point in time, say a little before the commission of the offence by Roderigo. As it is, it is largely a drama of a sensitive and mangled soul coming into contact with other types of souls. The first eight scenes are nothing but a succession of meetings between Julian and other characters. The object consists in the meetings themselves: how they are brought about or how they conclude is immaterial. This leads us to another defect widely prevalent in Landor's plays—the absence of any systematic development of plot. About half of *Count Julian* is just Exposition, and the probable climax, the letting off of Roderigo, comes very late, The denouement is 'modern', for it is psychological rather than physical, but though it is a fitting conclusion to this 'tragedy of the soul', it is brought about in too slick and obliging a manner. The deaths of Julian's wife and children do not affect us as the deaths of Macduff's wife and children in *Macbeth* do, for we are not shown the victims at all. The plot of *Andrea of Hungary* contains still less action and fewer 'events'. In some of its scenes it recaptures the gay and cheerful atmosphere of the marriage-day, but it does not seem to have any climax. The murder of Andrea is the only real 'event' in the play, and it comes at the very end. In *Giovanna of Naples*, the climax may be said to be marked by Giovanna's acquittal (III, iii), and the denouement by her accession to the throne of Naples. But this play, unlike *Andrea*, is obviously not tragic, and it can be called only a 'scenification' (not dramatisation) of history. *Fra Rupert* is much more dramatic. Taking the hypocritical Friar as its hero, we can discover its climax in the dethroning of Giovanna and its denouement in the death of Rupert. The three plays, taken separately, are full of weaknesses. But the author apparently conceived them together, and had he compressed them into one play with Fra

Rupert as the chief character, the resultant drama would have been sharper and less episodic, with a greater concentration of dramatic events, passion and character. The whole would have begun very well with a triumph for Rupert (Andrea's death) and through a series of ups and downs (Giovanna's trial, acquittal, enthronement, defeat and death) would have effectively led to Rupert's suicide. The only difficulty would have been the passage of time. But Landor, by that time, appears to have given up his classical emphasis on the Unities, and so he could conceivably have allowed a jump in time, say, between the third act and the fourth, *The Siege of Ancona*, which shows Landor the dramatist at his best, has a regular exposition, climax and denouement. The climax is clearly marked in II. iii, when the Consul is wounded and the old Polucci, who had been Consul three score years ago, takes his place and puts heart into the people. The denouement is natural and flows from the action and the characters. But in *Ines de Castro* there is again no regular development of the plot. It is more a collection of five dramatic scenes than a play. It characteristically illustrates a basic weakness of Landor's plays—their mental hop-step-and-jump from one dramatic situation to another. From *Ines de Castro* unnecessary material and characters have been excluded, but in other plays, especially in the Neapolitan trilogy, in which, as we have seen, Landor has tried to dilute a highly dramatic plot so as to make it serve the purpose of three plays, the intervals between one dramatic situation and another are filled with the most undramatic material. *Ines de Castro* more clearly emphasises a weakness that underlay *Count Julian*, viz. obscurity of plot. In the earlier play, the author had tried to avoid direct mention of Roderigo's offence for obvious reasons, though there was nothing to prevent him from hinting at the crime indirectly, as Shelley did in *The Cenci*. But in *Ines de Castro*, the obscurity arises directly from Landor's dramatic methods. The author is interested only in situation and character, and even the basic facts of the story, the inter-relationships of characters as well as the dramatic causation and motivation, remain obscure save for a few revealing phrases or lines here and there. The true relationship of Blanca with Constantia, for example, remains a mystery till Act V when Blanca refers to the dead girl as "my

poor Constantia" and "my dear child". Since the reader has first to grapple with the problem of understanding the basic facts of the story, there can be little dramatic tension or suspense except in a few small scenes and passages here and there. The defects on the positive side also contribute to this unhappy state of affairs. Not to talk of actability, much of what is presented is hardly readable. The poverty of action is combined with serious superfluities of character, dialogues and scenes. The author seems to be at pains to compensate for the dearth of the dramatic by providing more of the undramatic, and that too in very good measure, so that the number of verses usual in a tragedy may be spun out.

But Landor's real strength in the handling of the plot lay in the handling of the situations, the fondness for which he had already demonstrated in his playlets and 'scenes'. Even in his longer plays, the only readable, and maybe actable, parts chiefly consist of striking situations—the ignorant Sisaburt thinking Julian traitorous and Covilla faithless; Roderigo present in Julian's camp for negotiations, but discovering himself to Muza, Abdalzis and Egilona at the opportune moment; Julian allowing Roderigo to escape; Fra Rupert unsuccessfully trying to persuade Caraffa and Caraccioli to kill Andrea, and later escaping Maximin's assaults by trickery and falsehood; Rupert slyly diverting Del Belzo's suspicions towards Giovanna; the trial and acquittal of the Queen; the interception of Rupert's letter by Maximin, etc. Such scenes abound in *The Siege of Ancona*, and *Ines de Castro* is composed wholly of four such situations. Here is the concluding portion of Ines de Castro. As Ines goes out of the room, she is murdered by Blanca's man waiting outside the door. The words arise from character and have the ring of action. Stage-directions would be superfluous.

Blanca . . . (TO PEDRO) Stop me? hold me? grasp my wrist?
Audacious! and let that foul fiend escape?
Ines (just out of the door). Good soldier! I am not escaping
from you.
Push me not back! that was not the command.
Strike! you must act no otherwise . . . let fall
This halbert, or I run from under it.

The word is given . . . 'twas the queen gave it . . . strike,
Irresolute!

Pedro. What fell?

Blanca. Where is she?

Pedro. Fled.

Blanca. Hold me not; pray me not, I will pursue.

Pedro. The guard hath stopt her.

Blanca. At the door?

Pedro. With force.
More than is manly, thrusting her against it.
Ho! Ines! art thou hurt? speak? art thou speaking?
What sobbest thou, my love! is then my name
Uncalled upon in any grief of thine?
Where is she?
Ho! throw open, sentinel,
This door.

Blanca. Stand further off . . . he does his duty.
Further back yet . . . have you no decency!
To tread upon her blood! it runs thro! fast,
And will ('tis to be fear'd) leave marks behind.
Who, hearing your insensibility.
Will pity you?

Pedro. None! None!
Ines is dead!. . .

(Act V)

The root inspiration of Landor's plays and playlets, thus, is not plot, or mere theatrical incident, but situation arising from character. His works are a gallery of characters intensely dramatic in conception—the genuinely tragic Julian 'ordain'd' by heaven to serve beneath his enemies and to revisit his native land 'with vengeance and with woe' (*Count Julian*, V. v), but bringing about slavery to his country and misery to himself, and so standing like a God 'above our pity'. (V. vi); the commonplace but brave Roderigo, erring but nobly offering adequate compensation for his errors; the gentle Covilla, almost a model of innocent and sensitive virtue, who like Beatrice cannot bear that even a hint of her terrible injury be given to her lover; the proud Egilona, who would like to avenge her husband's supposed neglect of her by marrying the would-be king Abdalzis, and thus continue to queen it till

her death; the blindly happy, 'so game-some-so-light-hearted' (*Andrea of Hungary*, I. iii.) Andrea pardonably indulging in gaiety and irresponsible irony on his marriage-day; the loving Giovanna, graceful and firm, merciful and dignified; the human Rienzi, tempted and vacillating, but ultimately doing the right; Carl Durazzo and his wife Margarita, equally human and tempted, but ultimately yielding to temptation, the latter more reluctantly than the former; the brave Consul of Ancona, fighting as successfully against the enemy as against the temptation of a hereditary crown; his worthy daughter Erminia who prefers starvation and death to a dishonourable marriage; the old ex-Consul Polucci who rises to the occasion and saves Ancona at tremendous personal risk. The most memorable characters of Landor's later plays are the subtle, lying and hypocritical Rupert, and the smooth-tongued but determined and unscrupulous Blanca. They deserve a place among the most abandoned and relentless villains and villainesses of literature. But Landor has not always succeeded in fully integrating their subtle psychological facets into the plot. We feel all the time that there is much inherent drama in them.

While usually Landor approached drama *via* character, sometimes he also approached it *via* poetry. It was this quality of 'well-ordered poetry' which he tried to discover in great dramatic poets like Aeschylus and Sophocles.[25] He admired the wealth of genius displayed by Beddoes in *Death's Jest Book*,[26] and dedicated his *Beatrice Cenci* to him. But mere poetry does not give birth to dream, and Landor's plays generally contain speeches which are dull and uninspired—words which no character outside a book can speak. And there is much pointless dialogue too. In his longer plays, it is only now and then that words acquire a naturalness, force and significance characteristic of true drama. Many examples of it can be given, but let us quote two passages—one a dialogue and the other a speech—to illustrate Landor's ability to essay a dramatic style, whenever he was so minded.

Maximin . . . I will proclaim thy treason thro' the camp.
Fra Rupert. Unhappy son, forbear! By thy sweet mother!
Upon my knees! upon my knees before
A mortal man! yea, Rupert! bend thy head;

Thy own son's hand should, and shall, spill thy blood.
(*Maximin starts, then hesitates, then rushes at him.*
Maximin. Impudent hound! I'll have thy throat for that.
Fra Rupert (*guards his throat*) Parricide! make me not cry murder ... love
Forbids it ... rather die! My son! my son!
Hide but thy mother's shame; my shame, not hers.
(*Maximin relaxes his grasp.*
Maximin! stand between the world and it?
Oh! what avails it! sinner as I am!
Other worlds witness it. (*Maximin loses hold.*
My Maximin? (*Rupert embraces him.*
(*Andrea of Hungary*, IV. ii.)

This was a false villain cleverly evading death. Here is a sincere lover rebuking his mistress for supposed faithlessness:

Fear me not, now, Covilla! thou hast changed,
I am changed too. I lived but where thou livedst,
My very life was portion'd off from thine:
Upon the surface of thy happiness
Day after day, I gazed, I doted, there
Was all I had, was all I coveted;
So pure, serene, and boundless it appeard;
Yet, for we told each other every thought,
Thou knowest well, if thou rememberest,
At times I fear'd;...
Then thy fond arguing banisht all but hope ...
Till I partook thy nature, and became
Credulous and incredulous like thee ...
Confiding love. Where is thy resting-place?
Where is thy truth, Covilla? Where? ... Go, go ...
I should believe thee and adore thee still.
(*Count Julian*, II. ii).

The charm of these lines consists not only in their magical poetry, but also in the associations of the past so gently evoked by the lover.

Landor believed that his 'real' strength lay in 'the dramatic'.[27] He was both right and wrong. He could imagine highly

dramatic characters and situations, but could rarely weave them into an organic plot. And the stage put him out, for he had no idea of its requirements. He did not know what would be effective in the theatre, and what would be merely boring. He divided scenes artificially, as in the beginning of *Count Julian*, where as many as ten scenes (Acts I and II in full) are made out of what is essentially a one stage-scene. Nor, often, are entrances and exits of characters indicated. Yet when his imagination is fired by characters expressing themselves in action, he attains the supreme dramatic unity of psychology, passion, action and words. A careful and sympathetic study will convince the reader that there is much in Landor which is actable. *Count Julian* with substantial modification, the Neapolitan trilogy after being compressed into one drama, *The Siege of Ancona* with only a few curtailments, and *Ines de Castro* as a one-act play containing only a modified version of the last scene, can be represented on the stage. A few of his playlets and scenes, especially the longer ones like *Ippolito de Este*, *Walter Tyrrel and William Rufus*, *Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn*, *Beatrice Cenci* and *Antony and Octavius*, can be adapted for performance before a select audience. But the strength of Landor as a dramatist can be seen only in snatches and fragments, while his weaknesses pervade whole plays. True drama in his writings has become a will o' the wisp; sometimes it shines with bright and marked clarity, but there are long stretches of impenetrable darkness, in which we may grope, but will stumble upon nothing except dull and pointless dialogue or beautiful but undramatic poetry. On the whole, Landor remains a closet dramatist, composing that type of drama which 'would pass silently', though 'a few persons would admire it with all their hearts and all their souls and all their souls and all their strength.'[28] It can reach the stage, if at all, only in parts, and while now and then we may feel tempted to agree with Browning's praise of Landor as 'a great dramatic poet,'[29] we are more often apt to murmur impatiently, in Landor's own words,

> These rhetoric roses are supremely sweet,
> But hold! the jar is full. (*Andrea of Hungary*, I. ii).

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Sometimes Landor took imaginary characters too as the subject of his Conversations. One such Conversation is *Emma and Her Parents* (published in 'Nineteenth Century and After', Sept. 1931, pp. 353-8) which also illustrates Landor's ability of making a child talk like a child.
2. John Forster, *The Works and Life of Walter Savage Landor* (1874), Vol. I, 'The Life', p. 225.
3. Ibid. Vol. II, 'The Author to the Reader of the Imaginary Conversations!'
4. *Works and Life* (Forster), Vol. I, p. 128.
5. Ibid. p. 130.
6. Ibid. p. 388.
7. Ibid. p. 500.
8. Lamb's Essay *On the Tragedies of Shakespeare Considered with Reference to their Fitness for Stage Representation.*
9. *Works and Life* (Forster), Vol. I, p. 129.
10. Quoted in Malcolm Elwin, *Landor, A Replevin* (1958), p. 102.
11. Ibid.
12. Quoted in *Works and Life* (Forster), Vol. I, p. 137.
13. Ibid. pp. 137-8.
14. Ibid. p. 136.
15. Landor's interest in the dialogue form and in character studied in juxtaposition with one another is also apparent from the titles of many of his *Hellenics*, like *Thersymedes and Eunoe, Theron and Zoe, Aeschylus and Sophocles, Damaetas and Ida* etc. Many of the *Hellenics* are also dramatic.
16. Author's remarks prefixed to *Count Julian.*
17. Quoted from Sidney Colvin, *Landor* (1909), p. 3.
18. *Works and Life*, Vol. I, p. 136.
19. Ibid. Vol. I, pp. 388-90.
20. Ibid. Vol. I, pp. 137-8.
21. Ibid. Vol. I, p. 138.

22 & 23. Elwin, *Landor, A Replevin* (1958), p. 322. Also *Works and Life*, Vol. I, pp. 388 and 393.

24. Landor did not like Shelley's treatment of Beatrice's character. He wrote to Forster, 'Shelley has shown great delicacy in overshadowing the incest, but the violent language he gives to Beatrice somewhat lowers her. Alas, alas, poor Cenci! she never told her grief. Of this I am certain. In her heart was the same heroism as that of Prometheus: no torture could extort the dreadful secret; she would have died without disclosing it.' (Quoted in *Works and Life*, Vol. I, p. 474). He also wrote to Leigh Hunt, 'It is incredible that one so deliberate, judicious, and self-possesst, as Beatrice should hold such a discourse with a common assassin, knowing his character." (Quoted in Karl G. Pfeiffer, *Landor's Critique of the Cenci*, in 'Studies in Philology', Vol. 39, 1942, p. 672.
25. *Works and Life*, Vol. I, pp. 500, 377.

26. Ibid. p. 475.
27. *Works and Life*, Vol. I, pp. 500, 377.
28. Ibid. p. 475.
29. *Works and Life*, Vol. I, p. 500.
30. *Works and Life*, Vol. I, pp. 140-41.
31. Quoted in Sidney Colvin, *Landor*, (1909), p. 188.

THE BELLOW HERO

By N. Mukherji

Saul Bellow is undoubtedly one of the most brilliant novelists of today. His six novels* penetrate deep into the crust of 'hard-boildom' of a mechanised urban life and make us see and feel the essentials of what it is to be truly and completely human. His heroes—Levenhals and Hendersons, Wilhelms and Herzogs—are crusaders of these human values, each in his own way. They feel and they suffer and they feel. They reject all that prevents them from feelings, all that inhibits them, be it money or success or power. Life they can accept, but only on their own terms. Simon's vision of unlimited riches does not lure his brother Augie away; nor do Henderson's three million dollars provide an answer to his soul which constantly cries, 'I want, I want, I want!' The Bellow hero rejects cynicism, cold-heartedness and hardboildom of dehumanised life around him. He responds warm-heartedly to the essence of life which is to feel. He is essentially a man of feelings. At times, he is crippled; he cannot act because of his feelings. He is over-sensitive, and hence, suffers from imaginary as well as real fears. He is condemned for being a 'softie'. At certain moments he feels a strange glow, a kind of divinity (which comes out of being truly human), and in his sorrows and sufferings he becomes the exemplary son of man. Life is not frustration; life is not disaster, major or minor; and life is not knowledge. Life means open feelings; it means love for oneself and for fellow human beings; and it also means confidence and faith. This is Bellow's message which his hero conveys in these novels.

II

The Dangling Man is the portrait of a young man waiting to be drafted into the Army service. He is caught in an uncertain, strange world between peace and war. His life, as

**Dangling Man* (1944), *The Victim* (1947), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Seize the Day* (1956), *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), *and Herzog* (1964).

recorded in his journal is focused against an enormous uncertainty. Bellow reveals the raw emptiness of such a life in some very vividly realized scenes of Chicago life. The novel begins with a kind of apologetic explanation as to why a journal. The very first page defines the typical Bellow stand:

> ... to keep a journal nowadays is considered a kind of self-indulgence, a weakness, and in poor taste. For this is an era of hardboildom ... Do you have feelings? There are correct and incorrect ways of indicating them. Do you have an inner life? It is nobody's business but your own. Do you have emotions? Strangle them. To a degree, everyone obeys this code. And it does admit of a limited kind of candor, a closemouthed straight-forwardness. But on the truest candor, it has an inhibitory effect. Most serious matters are closed to the hardboiled. They are unpracticed in introspection, and therefore badly equipped to deal with opponents whom they cannot shoot like big game or outdo in daring. If you have difficulties, grapple with them silently, goes one of their commandments. To hell with that! I intend to talk about mine, and if I have as many mouths as Siva has arms and kept them going all the time, I still could not do myself justice.[1]

Joseph, a twenty-seven year old Wisconsin graduate, has resigned his job as a clerk at the Inter-American Travel Bureau. He has been a student of the history of romanticism (like Herzog). He has also been interested in the Enlightenment. 'He is not severe toward the world. He calls himself a sworn upholder of *tout comprendre c'est tout pardonner*. Theories of a wholly good or a wholly malevolent world strike him as foolish. ... For him the world is both, and therefore it is neither. ... In a sense, everything is good because it exists. Or, good or not good, it exists, it is ineffable, and, for that reason, marvelous.'[2]

Joseph feels estranged and alienated from the rest of existence. His communist ex-friend does not recognise him. His moneyed brother Amos who keeps pressing his help on him thinks that he has wasted his life. His married life with Iva has

also quite cooled off. Thinking of a painter friend he writes, 'Through those arts of imagination he is connected with the best part of mankind. ... He has a community. I have this six-sided box. And goodness is achieved not in a vacuum, but in the company of other men, attended by love. I, in this room, separate, alienated, distrustful find in my purpose not an open world, but a closed, hopeless jail."[3]

The final meaning of his struggle is made clear in his dialogue with the Spirit of Alternatives or But on the Other Hand also known as *Tu as Raison Aussi* who occasionally visits his mind. 'The human mind is too small to pit against the unsolvables. Our nature, mind's nature, is weak, and only the heart can be relied on,' says Joseph. The mocking other view reminds him of the possibilities of a choice. But for Joseph

> The world comes after you. It presents you with a gun or a mechanic's tool, it singles you out for this part or that, brings you ringing news of disasters and victories, shunts you back and forth, abridges your rights, cuts off your future, is clumsy or crafty, oppressive, treacherous, murderous, black, whorish, venal, inadvertently naive or funny. Whatever you do, you cannot dismiss it...[4]

The highest, 'Ideal Construction' according to Joseph is the one that unlocks the imprisoning self. In another dialogue, the final one, Joseph and the Spirit talk about life and anti-life. 'War is only an incident', and Joseph believes that one should follow one's destiny in spite of such incidents. But Joseph is a defeated man. On the last page of the novel we find him relieved that he will no longer be accountable for himself, 'I am grateful for that. I am in other hands, relieved of self-determination, freedom cancelled. Long live regimentation!'[5] Joseph fails to have faith in the search for a separate destiny.

III

The next novel *The Victim* is superb. It reveals the torments of a modern man, a twentieth-century Hamlet struggling

hard with his innermost self. The book is nightmarish; it is an unusual experience.

Asa Leventhal, a middle-aged middle-class American Jew, editor of a small trade magazine, is a happily married man. He had, however, a miserable childhood and an insecure youth. The picture of his insane mother who died in an asylum still haunts him. When the novel begins, he is all by himself, his wife having gone down south to help her recently widowed mother in shifting and settling. He is lonely and afraid. He knows that his nerves are unsteady. He keeps the bathroom light burning all night.[6] A former acquaintance Kirby Allbee, Anglo-Saxon Protestant, formerly well-to-do New Englander, comes to him and accuses him of ruining his career by having created a 'scene' with his boss whom he (Asa) had approached for a job. Since Allbee had got him this interview, he thinks that that 'scene' has cost him his job. He further accuses Asa of having done all this intentionally as he had once spoken against the Jews. Therefore, he insists that Asa Leventhal owes it to him to get back a job. Leventhal protests vehemently against this charge. He is angry and hurt at Allbee's accusing finger as 'you people'. He knows that Allbee is an alcoholic, and most probably this habit might have have been responsible for his dismissal at Rudigers. Because of his hyper-sensitive nature Leventhal finds it hard to rationalise the whole affair. The more he probes into his conscience, the more he feels involved that unknowingly and unconsciously he might have been guilty. His friend Harkavy declares, 'Allbee sold you a bill of goods. You must have wanted to buy.'

Leventhal's exploration of his own 'guilt' makes the book an extremely fascinating human document. It is a peculiar situation. Leventhal is the victim of Allbee who claims to be victimised by the former. Who is the victim—the Jew or the Gentile? Perhaps neither. Perhaps both. In Asa Leventhal we have a typical Bellow hero. He suffers because of his feelings, and he is overresponsive to the sufferings of others. He is excessively self-defensive against accusations which may or may not exist (for example, his interview with Williston). He is extremely touchy, and it is because of his self-critical and sensitive nature that he fights with his uneasy self that he might have been guilty for all he knows. In his heart he does feel

accountable for Allbee's ruin, and little by little he gives him all that he (Allbee) has asked—shelter, money, and help in getting a job. Allbee is very subtle. He knows Leventhal's weakness. Therefore, he goes on making appeals for fairness and sympathy. He also knows that he can reach Leventhal through such appeals. Leventhal on his part, although he hates Allbee, yet at times feels a strange affinity with him.

The climax comes when Allbee's attempt at suicide/murder (after he has at last been finally thrown out) by gas in Leventhal's kitchen is thwarted by Leventhal. Thus, Leventhal becomes the saviour of his own persecutor. Years later, when the two meet again, Allbee, wiser and humbler now, takes his hand and say, 'I owe you something.'[7] He owes him his life.

Being a Bellow hero, Leventhal is essentially a man of feelings. He loves his wife deeply and tenderly. She is also very much devoted to him. Such a happy relationship in marriage is something very rare in Bellow novels. In fact, of all Bellow heroes he is the only one who is happily married. Leventhal is very tender towards Phil, his brother's son. His relationship with his brother is also characterised by tender emotions. Tears come into his eyes when he presses his brother's hands. He has brotherly feelings even for his worst tormentor, Allbee. He has accepted the burden of being fully human which means sharing the pain and suffering of others. In his first confrontation with Allbee (whom he had not seen for years and of whom he had never even thought during all this time) he says, 'I don't know why you think I care whether you exist or not, what, are we related?' 'By blood? No, no ... heavens!' says Allbee. Yet, as Leventhal realises gradually, there is a relationship between him and Allbee, a relationship deeper than blood relationship, a relationship between man and man.

IV

Augie March, the hero of the next novel, *The Adventures of Augie March*, is different from the heroes of the earlier novels. He is not a Joseph; nor is he an Asa Leventhal. So, he is not bothered by the mocking view of the Spirit of Alternatives, nor is he crippled by any sense of self-imposed guilt. Like his

literary ancestor Tom Jones, Augie is emotional, handsome, and poor (and perhaps a bastard, too). He has the same goodness of heart and openness of feeling as Tom had. Augie has many adventures in his life (the novel is an account of these chronologically arranged), but he does not change much. He remains basically the same, true to his nature. Many people sell him their visions of life for him. His elder brother Simon, who has completely identified his life with money (by marrying money!), wants Augie to be rich. It is with that aim in his mind that he wants Augie to marry Lucy Magnus, Charlotte's rich cousin. Mrs Renling, wife of the owner of the bookshop where Augie works for a while, wants to adopt him as a son. Even the crippled Einhorn has a vision of nobility for Augie. But he cannot be lured into these various visions. He remains an Augie, true to his nature and easy-going. He wants to be just his ordinary self. He explains his philosophy of 'axial lines' by which he has been able to say 'no' to all his persuaders.

> I have a feeling about the axial lines of life, with respect to which you must be straight or else your existence is merely clownery, hiding tragedy. I must have had a feeling since I was a kid about these axial lines which made me want to have my existence on them. ... Truth, love, peace, bounty, usefulness, harmony! And all noise and grates, distortion, chatter, distraction, effort, superfluity, passed off like something unreal. And I believe that any man at any time can come back to these axial lines, even if an unfortunate bastard, if he will be quiet and wait it out. The ambition of something special and outstanding I have had is only a boast that distorts this knowledge from its origin, which is the oldest knowledge, older than the Euphrates, older than the Ganges. At any time life can come together again and man be regenerated, and doesn't have to be a god or public servant like Osiris who gets torn apart annually for the sake of the common prosperity, but the man himself, finite, and taped as is, can still come where the axial lines are. He will be brought into focus. He will live with true joy. Even his pains will be joy if they are true, even his helplessness will not take away his power, even wandering will not take him away

> from himself, even the big social jokes and hoaxes need not make him ridiculous, even disappointment after disappointment need not take away his love. Death will not be terrible to him if life is not.[8]

Augie's life is a tale of woes and troubles, but there is joy, too. The axial lines of feeling and love keep his account straight. Augie is the symbol of unqualified romanticism. He is, however, too effusive, too uncritical, and too uncrushable to serve as a test of his own ideas.

V

In *Seize the Day* Bellow has attempted something different. Wilky or Tommy Wilhelm or Wilhelm Adler has some of the characteristic traits of a typical Bellow hero, for example, emotional responsiveness, oversensitiveness, and self-defensiveness. Life is love and joy (Augie's axial lines), but life also means disappointments, disadvantages, and failures. Unlike Augie, Wilhelm cannot take it easy. He is groping for his 'axial' lines amidst confusions and complications of his mistakes. *Seize the Day* reveals the debit side of being truly human.

Wilhelm, the only son of the successful and highly respected Dr. Adler, is in his middle forties. As a Bellow hero, he has, of course, his 'feelings'—feelings which have ruined him. He lacks balance, discipline, and calculation, the qualities which his estranged wife and his old father possess in abundance. Wilhelm has lost his job with the Rojax Corporation, because his feelings were hurt. On the day of reckoning, when the novel begins, he is struggling hard to keep on living, even if without sympathy and love. The old man is tired of his unsuccessful son whose very presence is a kind of silent reminder for him that his own death is round the corner. He refuses to give Wilhelm money or any other help. He wants to be left alone. 'It isn't all a question of money—there are other things a father can give to a son,' Wilhelm implores his father. 'One word from you, just a word, would go a long way. I've never asked you for very much. But you are not a kind man, Father. You don't give the little bit I beg you for.'[9]

Wilhelm lets himself be deceived by Dr. Tamkin, a half-literate cheat, a stock 'expert' who also claims to be a psychologist. Wilhelm, it seems, cannot resist the flavour of fatality. He lets himself be drawn, half-knowingly, into wrong decisions. He quits school for Hollywood at the lure of Maurice Venice, a phoney movie scout; he makes a wrong choice in marriage; he quits the job at Rojax because of hurt feelings; and finally, he lets Ramkin play with the last seven hundred dollars of his savings at the stock exchange. 'After much thought and hesitation and debate he invariably took the course he had rejected innumerable times. Ten such decisions made up the history of his life.'[10] Wilhelm is a failure. He seeks sympathy and love. His father is cold-hearted and rather selfish: so is Margaret, his wife. He pines for his sons to whom he is almost a stranger. Something has gone wrong somewhere in his life.

Wilhelm has come to realise that 'the real business of life is to carry his peculiar burden, to feel shame and impotence, to taste these quelled tears.'[11] He suffers (like Christ) in order to be wholly human. He will pick up a cross, while his father has refused to pick up one.[12] His passionate crying at the funeral of an unknown man leads him to the 'consummation of his heart's ultimate need.' Other mourners wonder who this man could be.

> 'Is that perhaps the cousin from New Orleans they were expecting?'
>
> 'It must be somebody real close to carry on so.'
>
> 'Oh my, oh my! To be mourned like that,' said one man and looked at Wilhelm's heavy shaken shoulders, his clutched face and whitened fair hair, with wide, glinting, jealous eyes.
>
> 'The man's brother, maybe.'
>
> 'Oh, I doubt that very much,' said another bystander.
>
> 'They're not alike at all. Night and day.'[13]

VI

Henderson the Rain King is quite different from the earlier novels and also from what was to come next. Unlike Asa

Leventhal, Henderson is not a Jew. He is neither a failure nor an intellectual. He is a millionaire (his father had left him three million dollars after taxes). He is big and powerful—he is American. But his problem is that in spite of his millions he feels like a bum, because (as he says) he acts like a bum. A voice within him keeps on saying, 'I want, I want, I want'! His entire life full of fantastic adventures is a search to quieten that voice. He goes to Africa, the Dark Continent, for enlightenment and there he finds his spiritual redemption through animals.

Henderson's main problem is stated on the very first page of the novel. 'What made me take this trip to Africa?' he asks himself. The rest of the book is an answer to this question. Once he had read somewhere, 'The forgiveness of sins is perpetual and righteousness first is not required. He is so deeply impressed by this single sentence that he makes a search of the entire library of his father for it. But ironically enough, all that he gets out of his father's books are dollar notes used as book marks. Although he has money, power, strong feelings, everything in excess, he suffers violently, because his soul constantly cries, 'I want, I want, I want!' He does not know what he wants. He knows that he is not satisfied with what he has: Frances, the cold-hearted woman whom he had married in order to please his father and later whom he had diverced after twenty years of marriage; Lily, his second wife, a typical American idealist with an exaggerated tendency to moralize; lots of everything, money, power, and children. Frances, his ex-wife disgusted him when she laughed at his desire to go to school and become a doctor (like his hero Schweitzer). His second wife, however, is not shocked by his prospects of interning at sixty-three.

Henderson is fantastic, cartoon-like, absurd, comic, and yet real. So is the account of his travels to Africa where he goes in search of his soul. This search takes him to two different African tribes, the Arnewi and the Wariri. The Arnewi tribal people treat cows like brothers and sisters. They submit to fate passively and cry bitterly at the time of drought when the frogs spoil their water supply. Their water has become undrinkable, but they do nothing about it but cry. The Arnewis are ruled by a woman.

Henderson continues his journey in search of his soul. He completes his African education among the Wariri tribe, who honour lions. They have a strange ritual in which a king has to capture a lion barehanded before he can lay claim to the throne. This ritual shows that these people value life only when it is lived dangerously so close to death. Unlike the Arnewis, the warrior-like Wariris believe that man can make his own destiny. They can even manhandle their gods when the need arises. Strong and powerful Henderson begs them to let him do something great. He lifts and carries Mummah, and thus becomes their rain king. He has learnt his lesson that it is by confronting death (facing a lion barehanded in the cage) that one can really feel the nobility of life. The Wariri king Dahfu teaches Henderson how to be free from the fear of death. The Bellow hero is culturally born again. He finds his spiritual salvation through animals. His education is complete and his soul does not cry anymore, 'I want, I want, I want!' He comes home accompanied by a lion cub. He is full of joy and is planning to join a medical school. On the last page of the novel we see him running around the snow-covered airport, trying to cheer up an orphan boy in his lap. Henderson no longer fears death. He loves life and he loves his fellow human beings. This is the real meaning of his quest.

VII

There is something hypnotic, something baffling, and something brilliant about *Herzog*, the latest novel of Bellow. It is an explosion, an explosion of life. The novelist apparently seems to have no intention of controlling the chaos of life—characters, thoughts, feelings, reflections—which sweeps the novel. There is, of course, a story, but its narrative framework is mainly controlled not by what is important but by what Herzog *feels* to be important. His moment-by-moment responses give to the novel a peculiar sense of immediacy.

Herzog is the story of a middle-aged Jewish intellectual, a professor of romanticism, a brilliant writer, who is taking stock of his confusions and failures in life. He has miserably failed in two marriages, and feels sexually humiliated. He has been

amputated from his two children whom he loves tenderly. His second wife Madeleine and her lover (who happened to be Herzog's most trusted friend) want him to believe that he has become insane. The story of Herzog's confusions, failures, humiliations, losses, and errors is recorded freely in flashbacks, reflections, and more particularly in letters that he has been writing to almost everyone under the sun—endless and fantastic letters 'to the newspapers, to people in public life, to friends and relatives and at last to the dead, his own obscure dead, and finally the famous dead.'

There is a great deal of resemblance between Joseph of the *Dangling Man* and Herzog. Both of them have failed in coming to grip with life. Both are students of early romanticism. Herzog, however, is twenty years older than Joseph. The errors and losses have piled up in these twenty years. Herzog has to carry his load of failures and confusions, shame and wounds all by himself. There is no escape to regimentation (as there was in Joseph's case). Herzog is not defeated in life. He has learnt at the end of the novel, how to make his 'separate destiny' and to live by it.

Herzog has to struggle very hard in order to lift himself out of the engulfing mental and moral wilderness of his life to find a positive meaning in the chaos of his life. Madeleine's desertion and his most trusted friend Valentine's treason make him feel as if he is disintegrating fast. He knows that no psychiatrist can help him in recovering faith in himself and in love. For a moment he feels the impulse to kill his wife and her lover and thus save his little June to whom he is so tenderly attached. But, like the impulses of Asa Leventhal, something holds him back: he cannot act. He decides to withdraw to his Berkshire house, which has been a silent witness to the ruins of his second marriage. All is not lost. It is springtime and everything is permeated with freshness and brightness. Herzog begins to feel free from his earlier obsessions. He feels quite relaxed and cheerful. He thinks he can perhaps make a new start on the debris of his past. 'Herzog's present loneliness did not seem to count because it was so consciously cheerful.'[14] He is surprised to feel such content. 'His servitude was ended, and his heart released from its grisly heaviness and encrusta-

tion.' He realises for perhaps the first time what it is to be free from Madeleine—it is sheer joy.

In that beautiful, blooming, idyllic, old place he thinks of Ramona who has loved him tenderly and has brought him back his self-confidence. He writes to her, 'I hesitate to make too many assertions yet, but at least I can admit what I never stopped asserting anyway, or feeling. The light of truth is never far away, and no human being is too negligible or corrupt to come into it.'[15]

The light of truth has not been very far away from Herzog. He has made a sensational discovery: life is not just confusions, disappointments and deceptions. Life is more than that. It is promise, hope, feeling, confidence, faith and love. He wants to say to his dead mother. 'The life you gave me has been curious. And perhaps the death I must inherit will turn out to be even more profoundly curious. I have sometimes wished it would hurry up, longed for it to come soon. But I am still on the same side of eternity as ever. It's just as well, for I have certain things still to do.'[16]

Herzog finds proof of eternity in his peculiar state of happiness. It is not knowledge but an intensity, a 'holy feeling' which makes him feel the essence of life. 'There are those who say this product of heart is knowledge. I couldn't say that, for sure. My face is too blind, my mind too limited, my instincts too narrow. But this intensity, doesn't it mean anything? Is it an idiot joy that makes this animal, the most peculiar animal of all, exclaim something? And he thinks this reaction a sign, a proof, of eternity? And he has it in his breast? But I have no arguments to make about it. "Thou movest me." "But what do you want, Herzog?" "But that's just it—not a solitary thing. I am pretty well satisfied to be, just as it is willed, and for as long as I may remain in occupancy." '[17] This is the final and the finest message Herzog has to convey to himself. After that there is no message for anyone. Nothing. Not a single word.

VIII

The Bellow hero is essentially a man of affirmation. At the core of his life lies an impassioned belief in the dignity of man,

the holiness of feelings, and attachment to family. He manages to keep his flag high in his battle against the encroaching selfishness, coldheartedness and cynicism of the modern, dehumanised world. He keeps on fighting the same war from different perspectives. He asserts the need for restoring life to normalcy and ordinariness. He seeks unrestrained joy and fulfilment. He rejects the pressures that a mechanical and money-oriented way of life imposes on us. He is a romantic at heart—the affirmative kind, not the despairing one of other times and places.

The Bellow hero usually suffers from a minority status. He is mostly a Jew and invariably an intellectual. He is financially a failure (except, of course, Henderson the millionaire). Thus, he belongs to the periphery. He refuses to go in the general rut of things and to be doomed. We are impressed by his originality of approach and consistency of vision. Feelings, love, sympathy, friendship, brotherhood—these are the fundamental values for which the Bellow hero strives. These are the 'axial lines' (to use Augie's phrase) by which he lives. He believes in the 'holiness of heart's affections'. He is emotionally alive, and that is the 'ultimate need of his heart's desire'.

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DRYDEN'S HEROIC PLAYS: A STUDY OF THEIR THEORY AND PRACTICE

By P. K. Pati

Critics have tended to judge the heroic plays of Dryden as tragedies and have found them unnatural and deficient. To Dryden, however, these plays are epics in the dramatic form. Dryden tried to build up a whole system of dramatic writing on the basis of this theory, and, viewed from this perspective, these plays impress one as examples of an interesting literary experiment.

An Essay of Dramatic Poesy contains the definition of a play which is accepted by all the interlocutors:

> A play ought to be, *A just and lively image of human nature, representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind.*[1]

This definition is the nucleus of Dryden's dramatic theory and practice. Though it is based on the classical view of what a play ought to be, there are clearly some deviations. A play, being a just and lively image, not only imitates life but also exalts it; its aim is not merely delight but also instruction. The ethical intention of the play is explictly stated and emphasised.

Aristotle's well-known definition of tragedy is: 'Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action of high importance, ... by means of pity and fear effecting its purgation of these emotions.'[2] Dryden, however, works under the impression that, according to Aristotle, tragedy rouses admiration and wonder (which Aristotle actually associates with the epic). Disideius says, 'The end of tragedies or serious plays, says Aristotle, is to beget admiration.'[3] According to Eugenius also:

> Yet he of them who had a genius most proper for the stage was Ovid; he had a way of writing so fit to stir up a pleasing admiration and concernment, which are the objects of a tragedy.[4]

To Dryden, 'the *genus* of epic and tragedy is the same';[5] and in the Preface to *Troilus and Cressida* he says:

> The last quality of the action is that it ought to be probable, as well as admirable and great. ... To invent therefore a probability, and to make it wonderful, is the most difficult undertaking in the art of poetry; for that which is not wonderful is not great.[6]

The almost total identification of the tragedy or the serious play with the epic by Dryden is due to the tendency of the age as well as to his own inclination for it. D'Avenant in the Preface to *Gondibert* said, 'By that regular species [drama] I have drawn the body of an heroic poem; in which I did observe the symmetry (proportioning five books to five acts, and cantos to scenes).'[7] Hobbes in his *Reply* also said, 'The heroique poem narrative is called an epique poem. The heroique poem dramatique is tragedy. The work of an heroique poem is to raise admiration, principally for three virtues, valour, beauty and love.'[8] In his essay 'Of Heroic Plays' Dryden describes D'Avenant as 'my guide' and says, 'What I have performed after him (i.e. after *Siege of Rhodes*) is adding design and variety of character.'[9] He echoes these sentiments in the following words:

> An heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem; and, consequently, that love and valour ought to be the subject of it.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> I have modelled my heroic plays by the rules of an heroic poem.
>
> * * * * * *
>
> I opened the next book that lay by me, which was Ariosto in Italian: and the very first two lines of that poem gave me light to all I could desire:
>
> Le donne, i cavalier, l'arme, gli amori,
> Le courtesie, l'audaoi impresse i o canto.[10]

D'Avanant wrote a play called *Love and Honour*, and the

conflict between love and honour is also the theme of Dryden's heroic plays:

> If *Love* and *Honour* now are higher rais'd,
> 'Tis not the poet, but the age is prais'd.[11]

According to Dryden, the heroic play should be exalted:

> The laws of an heroic poem did not dispense with those of the other, but raised them to a greater height, and indulged him a further liberty of fancy, and of drawing all things as far above the ordinary proportion of the stage as that is beyond the common words and actions of human life.[12]

On this ground he justifies the introduction of the supernatural element in such plays:

> An heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable; but that he may let himself loose to visionary objects.[13]

The character of the hero in his plays is modelled on that of the heroes of epics:

> 'Tis said, that Almanzor is no perfect pattern of heroic virtue, that he is a contemner of kings, and that he is made to perform impossibilities. I must therefore avow, in the first place, from which I took the character. The first image I had of him, was from the *Achilles* of Homer; the next from Tasso's *Rinaldo* (who was a copy of the former), and the third from the *Artaban* of Monsieur Calprenede, who has imitated both.[14]

So he decides that he 'shall never subject his characters to the French standard, where love and honour are to be weighed by drachms and scruples.[15] In 'Dedication of Aeneis' he assigns a higher place to the epic than to tragedy, and remains firm in his conviction that 'the original of the stage was from the Epic poem.'[16]

Dryden derives the ethical purpose of his plays from their close affinity to the epic. In 'The Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*' he supports Bossu:

> The first rule which Bossu prescribed to the writer of the Heroic Poem, and which holds too by the same reason in all Dramatic Poetry, is to make the moral of the work.[17]

In 'The Preface to *The Mock Astrologer*' he says, 'Thus Tragedy fulfils one great part of its institution; which is, by example, to instruct.'[18] He also tries to give an epical range to the action of the heroic plays. The theme of love is always closely related to the affairs of the state, such as loyalty to the king, security of the state, and the dangers of civil war. In 'Rhyme and Blank Verse' he says:

> The scenes which in my opinion most commend it are those of argumentation and discourse, on the result of which the doing or not doing some considerable action should depend.[19]

Dryden puts all these theories into practice in his heroic plays. He is influenced by the French classical plays, the romances of Beaumont and Fletcher, the Italian epics of Ariosto and Tasso, by which the Jacobean romances were inspired, and the classical epics. Of course, out of these he is able to evolve a type of play which has the stamp of his genius. His heroic tragedies are not tragedies in the real sense. He is anxious to generate a sense of admiration and wonder rather than the tragic feelings of pity and terror—indeed, in most of the plays the hero does not perish at the end. He is keen on maintaining poetic justice—virtue is invariably rewarded, and vice, punished. As J. W. Tupper says, in his characters 'there is a complete absence of psychological interest.'[20] The hero is at once fascinated by the beauty of the heroine, and the heroine, by the valour of the hero—other qualities of the characters are hardly touched upon. The hero and the heroine are called upon to overcome only some external obstacles. The complexity, suffering, and mystery of life, which a tragedy

seeks to depict, are conspicuous by their absence in Dryden's plays.

Life in these plays is simplified into patterns of love, valour, and morality. All the characters are drawn in black and white on the model of the hero, who is the personification of valour and virtue, and the heroine, a paragon of beauty and purity. Everything is exaggerated, and the plays are artificial in all respects. There are only such complications as we see only in the Italian romantic epics and the romances of Beaumont and Fletcher. The scene of action is usually a remote country, and Dryden always tries to create an exotic atmosphere. Grandeur rather than depth is what he aims at and the conflict between love and honour is never real and tense. He tries to present a new and sensational plot in each of his plays and deliberately reverses the plot-pattern of the classical tragedies. Of course, some of these plays have certain serious and dramatic features, but mostly they appear to be pageants. There are naturally songs and dances in plenty in all the plays. In a word we can say that Dryden gives a complete go-by to the spirit of the tragedy in these heroic tragedies, and the superficial rather than the deeper aspects of the epic he is prone to imitate. In his critical writings Dryden appears to care for truth and nature. He says:

> Though the fancy may be great, and the words flowing, yet the soul is but half satisfied when there is no truth in the foundation. ... I have never heard of any other foundation of Dramatic Poesy than the imitation of nature.[21]

If, however, there is any truth or nature in these plays, it is not in the action or the characterisation but only in the moral questions suggested in the discussions.

We may now verify these observations with reference to the three best known plays of Dryden, namely, *The Conquest of Granada* (I & II), *Aureng-Zebe*, and *All for Love*.

The Conquest of Granada is Dryden's most typical heroic play. It is not a tragedy—the vicious characters Lyndaraxa, Abdelmelch, and the Emperor die at the end, and the hero and the heroine have the hope of being united at the end of the year.

The conflict between Almanzor's love for Alamhide and his sense of honour is happily resolved. Almanzor is sought to be delineated as a grand hero, and the approach is blatantly external:

> If from thy hands alone my death can be,
> I am immortal, and a God, to thee.
> If I would kill thee now, thy fates so low,
> That I must stoop ere I can give the blow.

It is not merely that, like Alexander, he assumes the God; others too look upon him as a superhuman being:

> *Almah.* Now, brave Almanzor, be a god again;
> Above our crimes and your own passions reign.

The hero is not merely an egoist, but a thorough individualist:

> I am as free as nature first made man,
> Ere the base laws of servitude began,
> When wild in woods the noble savage ran. (I, i)

He has strange notions of chivalry: when he enters the stage for the first time, he goes to the side of Abencerrages immediately and utters these words:

> I cannot stay to ask which cause is best,
> But this is to me, because oppressed.

In this play Dryden also makes use of the epic machinery: spirits tell Almanzor about his birth and warn him, 'Strike not thy father.'

Dryden must have realised that in Almanzor he drew a hero, distinguished only for valour; in *Aureng-Zebe*, therefore, he tried to portray a hero, who was both valorous and virtuous. Aureng-Zebe's character has been modelled on that of an epic hero described by Dryden in the 'Dedication of Aeneis'.

> The shining quality of an epic hero, his magnanimity, his constancy, his patience, his piety, or whatever charac-

> teristical virtues his poet gives him, raises first our admiration. The manners which our poet gives a hero were piety to the gods, and a dutiful affection to his father, love to his relations, care of his people, courage and conduct in the war, gratitude to those who had obliged him, and justice in general to mankind.[22]

Dryden describes the characters of *Aureng-Zebe* 'as nearest to those of an heroic poem,' and Aureng-Zebe in particular has all the virtues of an epic hero:

> But Aureng-Zebe, by no strong passion swayed,
> Except his love, more temperate is, and weighed:
> This Atlas must our sinking state uphold;
> In council cool, but in performance bold:
> He sums their virtues in himself alone,
> And adds the greatest, of a loyal son.

The Emperor says that the virtues of Aureng-Zebe 'shine too bright' and 'they flash too fierce.' Like Aeneas, he is also a man of piety:

> *Indamora*. But piety to you, unhappy prince,
> Becomes a crime, and duty an offence.

As Zayda says, 'Aureng-Zebe has somewhat of divine.' Poetic justice operates in this play in full swing. Morat, who was guilty of disloyalty to his father and his wife, and Nourmahal, who was guilty of illicit love, die; and Aureng-Zebe and Indamora are rewarded for their virtuous conduct by a happy union. The play is full of didactic lines, and the following couplet is typical of many such lines:

> *Aureng-Zebe*. When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
> Yet, fooled with hope, men favour the deceit.

Though *All for Love* is regarded as a Shakespearean play, it has all the elements of a conventional heroic play. In the 'Preface' Dryden says:

> In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine

> Shakespeare. . . . By imitating him, I have excelled myself throughout the play.

B. J. Pendlebury is also of this view:

> In 'All for Love' the only play which he [Dryden] wrote to please himself, he deliberately set himself to follow Shakespaare, and rejected at once the fetters of rhyme and the heroic conception of the drama.[23]

However, to say that Dryden gave up the heroic conception of the drama in *All for Love* is to misinterpret the play. Dryden had in his mind the Aeneas-Dido episode while dealing with this theme; he says in the Prologue that he 'brings a tale which often has been told: as sad as Dido's: and almost as old.' Antony had all the virtues of an epic hero—he had a 'a well-meaning mind" and was 'wondrous kind'. But he was 'somewhat lewd': unlike Aeneas, he chose love instead of honour, and Dryden's sense of poetic justice is roused when he says, 'The chief persons represented were famous patterns of unlawful love: and their end accordingly was unfortunate.' To Dryden, Cleopatra is 'the love-sick queen' like Dido, and she also chooses love in place of honour, so she too suffers. Of course, this play has some tragic elements, but Bonamy Dobree is clearly wrong when he says, 'Free opinion will be forced to admit that though Shakespeare's play contains finer poetry than Dryden could ever write—as he would have been the first to admit—Dryden's has a more tragic effect.'[24] Like his other plays, this play is inspired by the vision of morality rather than by the tragic vision of life and is no less a heroic play than others.

R. A. Brower in 'Dryden's Epic Manner and Virgil' has made an illuminating study of Virgil's influence upon Dryden's heroic plays. The description of the bull-fight in the opening scene of *The Conquest of Granada* is an imitation of the games of *Aeneid*. The description of the bulls with their 'high nostril snuffing up the wind' recalls that in the *Georgics*. The dream simile (I, iv, 61), the picture of Venus (II, iv, 151-52), and the curse of Trunus (II, iv, 160) are all Virgilian. The first scene of *Aureng-Zebe* is an epic narrative in dialogue, and the

description of the night-battle in this play is reminiscent of the fall of Troy. In *All for Love*, the defeat of the Egyptian army is announced in words which recall the *Aeneid*.[25]

If the heroic plays of Dryden are regarded as tragedies, they are found to be artificial and disappointing, Dryden tries to combine in these plays 'imitation of nature' and 'truth in the foundation' with epic grandeur. These plays are basically concerned with moral questions, but the superstructure in each case is heroic and exalted. It will be, therefore, appropriate to take each of these plays as an artefact symbolising Dryden's theory of the drama, which is that a tragedy is an epic in the dramatic form.

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THE MOURNERS IN SHELLEY'S *ADONAIS*

By S. R. Swaminathan

The current view that stanzas xxxi-xxxiv of *Adonais* contain a self-portrait of Shelley, and that stanza xxxv contains a portrait of Leigh Hunt rests on questionable conjecture. Among those in Shelley's circle Leigh Hunt,[1] Trelawny[2] and John Taaffe[3] seem to have thought (perhaps on no other basis than their impression of the poet) that the four stanzas xxxi-xxxiv described Shelley. Mrs. Shelley's editions, however, are silent on the question of the identity of the mourners. Richard Garnett was the first editor to comment on the subject.[4] The uncertainty of the identification of the mourner in stanza xxxv is reflected in Buxton Forman's notes in his editions of the *Works of Shelley* in 1877 and 1882. William Michael Rossetti in his notes on the stanzas offers a blend of the supposed internal evidence for the portrait of Shelley with the popular Victorian conception of the poet.[5] Today there is such unanimity among the editors and critics that it seems rash to reopen the subject. However, there is some evidence to show that probably the portrait in the four stanzas is not Shelley's but Leigh Hunt's, and that the portrait in stanza xxxv is not Hunt's but Joseph Severn's.

Shelley describes the mourners indirectly by alluding to their work. Thus in stanza xxx the 'Pilgrim of Eternity' is the author of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron. The reference to Ireland and *Irish Melodies* helps us to identify Tom Moore. In the same manner the next mourner in stanzas xxxi-xxxiv is described as one who 'Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,/*Actaeon-like*.' (Italics mine). It is probable that the Actaeon Shelley has in mind is Leigh Hunt viewed as the poet of 'The Nymphs'—a long poem which appeared in his *Foliage* in 1818. Shelley greatly admired the poem in the three years between its publication and the composition of *Adonais*. Writing to Hunt on 22 March 1818 he praises the poem:

> What a delightful poem the Nymphs is! It is truly *poetical* in the intense and emphatic sense of the word.[6]

Again in November 1819 he describes it as

> original and intense, conceived with a clearest sense of ideal beauty...[7]

In August 1821, (*Adonais* was composed in June) he writes to Hunt praising his translation of Tasso's *Aminta* (a work also dealing with nymphs) but he says that it is better for him to concentrate on original work:

> You might have written another such poem as 'The Nymphs' with no great access of effort.[8]

Hunt's poem describes the poet beholding (like Actaeon) the 'fair-limbed' naked nymphs bathing in the stream in various attitudes. We may also recall in this connection that Hunt's 'nympholepsy' was well known among his friends.[9] It was also the subject of virulent attack by the reviewers. In October 1817 *Blackwood's Magazine* had condemned the obscenities in Hunt saying that his poetry resembled that of a man who had 'kept company with kept mistresses.' *The Quarterly* attacked both Shelley and Hunt in January 1818. It ridiculed the 'Arcadian Hunt' receiving the favours of the nymphs who admit him to 'their bath and toilette.' Shelley refers to this bitter criticism in his letter to Hunt[10] who later defends his friend in *The Examiner*.[11] The reviewers are uppermost in his mind as Shelley composes the elegy on Keats. In thus describing Hunt as 'Actaeon-like,' the poet is perhaps also defending his friend from attacks like that of *The Quarterly*. The stanzas probably have some reminiscences of Hunt's favourite paintings as we shall see presently. It may be recalled here that one of them was Titian's *Diana and Actaeon* a print of which in Hunt's rooms is described in Keats's 'Sleep and Poetry.'[12] Thus stanza xxxi is probably based on Shelley's admiration for Hunt's 'Nymphs,' his 'nympholepsy,'[13] and maybe his recollection of the picture of *Diana and Actaeon* in his rooms.

Stanzas xxxii and xxxiii portray the mourner as a Bacchus-like figure. Though Bacchus is not mentioned specifically, the image is implied in the phrase 'Pardlike spirit': the mask of flowers is suggestive of Bacchus; 'the light spear topped with

a cypress-cone' in the hand is an allusion to the symbol of thyrsus associated with the pagan god. From Actaeon to Bacchus could have been an easy transition for Shelley as he thought of Hunt. Following the same allusive method Shelley could describe him as Bacchus as his poem *Bacchus and Ariadne* had appeared in 1819. Like the picture of *Diana and Actaeon*, Hunt's rooms had a print of Titian's *Bacchus and Ariadne* also described by Keats in 'Sleep and Poetry'.[14] Shelley's first draft of the line 'A Pardlike spirit beautiful and swift' was probably 'Pantherlike Spirit! beautiful and swift.'[15] This draft is perhaps an echo of Hunt's lines in the poem entitled 'Panther' published in 1819:

> By everyone there was the panther admired
> So fine was his shape and so sleekly attired,
> And such an air both princely and swift
> He had...[16]

As Shelley knew the poems in Hunt's *Foliage* well, he would also have recalled the sonnets that Keats and Hunt wrote on the occasion when they crowned each other in an extravagant pagan mood. Keats gave Hunt an ivy crown thus making him a Bacchus. The ivy-tresses 'Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew' in stanza xxxiii could be a recollection of this episode (still green in Hunt's memory) now rendered poignant by the death of Keats. The mask of flowers—'pansies overblown and faded violets' is probably also based on Hunt's well-known and somewhat fantastic love of flowers. Shelley recalls this association of Hunt with flowers in his 'Letter to Maria Gisborne' describing his rooms

> With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;
> Coronals of bay from ribbons hung,
> And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung.[17]

Wherever the Shelleys come upon flowers in Italy their thoughts turn to Hunt spontaneously.[18] Like his nympholepsy, this love of flowers was well known to Hunt's friends. We may recall Keats's allusion to him as 'he of the rose, the violet' in the sonnet beginning 'Great Spirits are now sojourning on

earth' in the 1817 volume. Attacking him in October 1817, *Blackwood's Magazine* ridiculed Hunt as wearing an artificial rose-bud in his button-hole in winter. These characteristics of Hunt later led to his caricature by Dickens as Harold Skimpole. The concluding line of the stanza, 'A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart,' is probably suggested by another picture in Hunt's room, the picture of Jacques with the wounded deer in *As You Like It*.[19] In his letter to Mrs. Shelley, Hunt himself gives a vivid account of his room with the flowers 'geraniums, myrtle, heartsease,' and 'the picture of Jacques and the stag.'[20]

The description in stanzas xxxii-xxxiv makes Hunt a fusion of Bacchus and Christ. Commenting on a sculpture of Bacchus, Shelley writes that its countenance is

> sublimely sweet and lovely . . . it has a divine and supernatural beauty, as one who walks through the world untouched by its corruptions, its corrupting cares.[21]

These were the qualities for which he admired Leigh Hunt. Dedicating his *Cenci* to him, Shelley writes in May 1819 that he has not known any one

> more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself free from evil. . .[22]

This is naturally suggestive of a Christ-like figure, and in his reply in September 1819, Hunt gratefully acknowledges this tribute, and describes in the same letter one of his favourite prints, Raphael's Christ: his observations are apparently suggested by Shelley's reference to his Christian virtues:

> Do you remember Raphael's 'Christ and the miraculous draught of fishes?', that wonderful figure containing all the negative beauty, at least, of his doctrine without any deformity of the faith which swallowed it up—*that self-sustained excess of gentleness,—that meekness meeting on the very strength of its existence with power, that passive obedience made paramount, neutralizing slavishness by disarming des-*

> *potism—making a part as it were, of the aerial element about it, a thing issuing out of the air and if it were to be carried away by it, as if it would submit and so resume itself.* I scarcely know what I am writing, but I have a meaning in the core of it all; and, having a meaning you will find it out, especially one of such a nature. I did not intend to write half so much on the subject any more than yourself; for I longed to thank you for your proposed dedication.[23] (Italics mine).

In *The Indicator* of November 22, 1820, Hunt again speaks of Raphael's Christ in the same language:

> Raphael's alone is what is understood by Christian perfection. It is *powerful from the very negation of power. A sentiment sustains it, or it looks as movable as the gentlest air on the water.* (Italics mine).

We can thus follow Shelley's association of ideas moving from the image of Bacchus to that of Christ as it idealizes the portrait of his friend. The imagery and language of Shelley's stanzas and those of the passages of Hunt on Raphael's Christ have some similarity. The images of the 'frail form', 'A phantom among men', and the 'dying cloud' of the first stanza are elaborated in stanza xxxii. The opening line alluding to Bacchus is followed by eight lines suggestive of Christ: Shelley's phrases follow the same paradoxical pattern as Hunt's description quoted above:

> A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
> Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
> The weight of the superincumbent hour.

Hunt's image of

> a thing issuing from out the air—and if it were to be carried away by it, as if it could submit and so resume itself

already implied in the 'dying cloud' of the first stanza is amplified in the lines,

It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A broken billow;—even whilst we speak
Is it not broken ?

These lines do not specifically mention Christ but suggest him—especially Raphael's Christ as interpreted by Hunt. This implication emerges to the surface only in the last line of stanza xxxiv. The intention of the last stanza seems to be that the mourner concealed his sufferings under a mask. The mask of Bacchus consisting of flowers conceals the suffering Christ with the 'branded and ensanguined brow'. This complexity of the portrait reflects the habitual manner in which Shelley speaks of Hunt's appearance as concealing the reality within him. When he receives a likeness of Hunt drawn by Wildman (a picture greatly admired by Shelley's visitors[24] and probably still in his rooms as he composes the elegy) Shelley writes to Hunt in August 1819,

> What a delightful present! It is almost yourself, and we sate talking with it, and of it, all the evening. *There wants nothing but that deepest and most earnest look with which you sometimes draw aside the inner veil of your nature when you talk with us,* and the languid lustre of your eyes.[25] (Italics mine).

The same sense of contrast between Hunt's exterior and his inner self is expressed in the lines describing Hunt in the 'Letter to Maria Gisborne:'

> And there is he with his eternal puns,
> Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns
> Thundering for money at a poet's door:
> Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!'
> Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
> Things wiser than were ever read in book,
> Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.[26]

Hunt himself says that the contrast was implied in Shelley's last lines to him comparing him to fire-flies:

> The last fragment he wrote, which was a welcome to

me on my arrival from England, began with a simile taken from their dusk look and the fire underneath it, in which he found a likeness to his friend.[27]

Among the cancelled passages of *Adonais* we have probably Shelley's first draft for the portrait for Hunt. In the letter acknowledging Wildman's drawing, he speaks of '*that deepest and earnest look*' he associates with Hunt. In another letter the phrase is '*that kind and earnest face.*'[28] The draft stanza begins with the line (obviously varying the same idea and phrase) 'And then came one of *sweet and earnest looks*,' and then proceeds to suggest the same habitual contrast between the outer and the inner man in Hunt:

> Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes
> Were as the clear and ever-living brooks
> Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise,
> Showing how pure they are.[29]

The image of a Christ within the outer Bacchus-like appearance conforms to Shelley's habitual picture of Leigh Hunt.

In the juxtaposition of Christ and Cain there is further evidence to show that the portrait is probably Leigh Hunt's. Writing to John Taaffe, Shelley denied any irreverence or sarcasm.[30] The Cain here referred to is not the Cain of orthodoxy, but a character like the gentle hero of Byron's play *Cain* on which he was at work almost at the same time as Shelley was composing his elegy. It is probable that Shelley may have known Byron's interpretation of the Christian legend in favour of a gentle Christ-like Cain submitting to his branding with resignation. Indeed Tom Moore suspected that Byron's play had been inspired by Shelley.[31] In any case Shelley admired Byron's *Cain*, comparing the work to *Paradise Regained*—a comparison implying the similarity of the heroes of the two works.[32] When Byron's play was attacked as blasphemous, Leigh Hunt defended it in *The Examiner* of February 22, 1822 interpreting the hero as the innocent victim of the questionable justice of the eternal avenger of popular belief. Thus it seems likely that Shelley's description of Hunt as Cain

is based on an interpretation of the character which the two poets shared.

The 'partial moan' of stanza xxxiv suggests Hunt's special feeling for the dead poet distinguishing him from the more detached Byron or Moore. The person referred to in the line 'Who in another's fate now wept his own' could also be Hunt. The phrase 'new sorrow' as Rossetti points out in his edition of *Adonais* occurs in the elegy of Moschus. It may be recalled that Hunt's translation of the elegy, 'Bion and Moschus' appeared in *Foliage*. It is reasonable to assume that Shelley who knew the contents of the book well would remember the translation especially in describing Hunt among the mourners while composing his own elegy modelled on Moschus. Shelley's meaning is probably that in the fate of Moschus Hunt wept his own—thus implying a certain tragic irony in the translator of Moschus soon finding himself similarly bereaved. This interpretation also explains the phrase 'the accents of an unknown land' as an allusion to the elegy of Moschus on Bion.

Thus the probable allusions to Hunt's works, beliefs, favourite prints and personality point to the conclusion that the four stanzas portray him and not Shelley. The evidence in favour of the current view is the phrase, 'of less note,' suggesting by its modesty the author himself. But compared to the better known Byron and Tom Moore, Hunt also could be described as one of 'less note'. The phrase 'beautiful and swift' might suggest Shelley to his readers, especially because of the application of the epithet 'swift' to himself in the 'West Wind'. But would Shelley have called himself beautiful too? The similarity between the Actaeonlike figure and that of the hero of 'Alastor' or of Shelley himself in 'Epipsychidion'—another possible basis for the current conjecture—is by no means conclusive; nor need 'Nature's naked loveliness' be the same as Platonic or Intellectual Beauty. There is no reason why Shelley should speak of himself in the third person in these stanzas while he used the first person in stanzas i, xviii and (more elaborately) in the last stanza of the poem following his model in Moschus. The sense of persecution implied in the passage is generally held to reflect Shelley's fate and his self-pity. But Hunt was equally the victim of persecution especially in the early months of 1821 when Shelley was at work on the

poem. He was facing a prosecution launched against *The Examiner*. In February 1821 his brother was sentenced to a year's imprisonment. The verdict also demanded a security of a thousand pounds. The last numbers of the *Indicator* show what a trying time it was for him. His health was declining; his brother's health in jail was not better; his periodicals would soon cease publication. Shelley was aware of all these circumstances. On March 21, 1821—about three months before *Adonais* was composed—Hunt writes to Shelley:

> I have indeed had a hard bout of it this time; and if the portrait you have with you sympathised with my appearance like those magic glasses in romance the patience you found in it ought to look at least twice as great, and the cheeks twice as small.

The thought that Hunt and Keats, no less than himself, had faced the same hostile world was certainly in Shelley's mind as he composed the poem. In the draft Preface he says:

> The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt...

Must we then assume that the stricken deer can be no one else but Shelley? If Shelley was prone to self-pity, let us not forget that he was not without compassion and capacity for generous friendship. Later in the same year he exerted himself to rescue Hunt and bring him to Italy with the help of Byron.

If these four stanzas are thus a portrait of Hunt, the stanza following them is probably a portrait of Joseph Severn. Though Shelley says in the Preface that he did not know the circumstances of Keats's death till the poem was ready for the press, yet he had it still with him when John Gisborne passed on to him the report of Robert Finch on the last days of Keats.[33] The mourner in stanzas xxxi-xxxiv is described as the 'last' of 'that crew'. This suggests that Shelley added the mourner in stanza xxxv later—probably before going to the press and immediately after the receipt of the report. The report mentions in particular Severn's sacrifice for the sake of the dying poet:

> He left all and sacrificed every prospect to accompany and watch over his friend . . . risked his life by unwearied attendance upon his friend.[34]

Shelley quotes these very words in his Preface:

> Mr. Severn . . . *almost risked his own life,* and *sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.* . . . Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from such stuff as dreams are made of. (Italics mine)

Shelley's appreciation of the silent depth of Severn's sacrifice and his desire not to yield to the temptation of adding his feeble tribute to the more solid recompense the virtuous man finds within himself are precisely articulated in the final lines of the stanza:

> Let me not *vex* with *inharmonious sighs*
> *The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.* (Italics mine)

There is a probable complexity about the word *silence* in the context. The other mourners are poets; the 'lightnings' of Byron's 'song' may be veiled, but they are mentioned; Moore is the 'sweetest lyrist' of Ireland; Hunt, as we have argued here, makes a 'partial moan' singing new sorrow. Only this mourner is represented as silent. Shelley has referred to the poet-mourners indirectly by alluding to their works. It is probable that as he turns to portray Severn in the same manner, his imagination appropriately represents the painter-mourner with his 'dark mantle' leaning 'o'er the white deathbed' in silence—thus visualizing the scene as in a still picture:

> What *softer voice* is *hushed* over the dead?
> Athwart that brow is that dark mantle thrown?
> *What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed*

In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart *heaving without a moan*? (Italics mine)

We may note that the past tense is used for the other mourners, but the use of the present tense for this picture confers on it an appropriate timelessness—alike that of a still picture and of an everlasting memory of the ministry—while the attitude implied in the interrogative syntax is suggestive of an onlooker seeing a picture in wonder about the identity of the covered face. The proximity of this mourner to the death-bed also suggests the friend who nursed Keats in his illness. The word *Taught* in the seventh line usually interpreted as applicable to Hunt could be no less applicable to Severn.[35] Thus the silence of the sacrifice and of the grief, and the silence of the painter's art are wrought together in the still picture before which the poet yielding to the painter-friend alike in love and in art withdraws as it were without *vexing* the *silence* with his *inharmonious sighs*. Sending a copy of *Adonais* to Severn in November 1821, Shelley writes that it was written before he could obtain any particular account of Keats's last moments:

> I have ventured to express, as I felt, the respect and admiration which your conduct towards him demands.[36]

This expression is of course in the Preface. But it does not follow that it is not there in the poem also. In saying that a poet's *sighs* would be *inharmonious*, and leaving the silence of Severn's picture of sacrifice undisturbed, Shelley is paying him the only appropriate tribute, the tribute of a poet's eloquent silence—appropriate because it is addressed at once to a painter and to *the gentlest of the wise* in his devotion to the dead poet.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. See Hunt's review of the poem in *The Examiner*, July 7, 1822. See also his *Imagination and Fancy*, 1844, p. 293. The former does not specifically mention Shelley as the subject of the portrait, and the latter confuses *Adonais* and 'West Wind'.

2. *Recollections*, 1858, p. 55.
3. See Keats-Shelley Journal, Vol. XVII, 1968, 44-45.
4. *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.
5. Edn. *Adonais*, 1891.
6. Citations from Shelley's letters are to *Letters of Shelley*, ed. F. L. Jones, Oxford, 1964, 2 vols.
7. *Letters*, II. 152.
8. Ibid. II. 345.
9. Cf. Keats's sonnet dedicating his 1817 volume to Hunt: also Rollins, *Letters of Keats*, Cambridge, Mass., 1965, I. 139. Cf. Elizabeth Kent on Hunt's fondness for nymphs quoted by Edmund Blunden, *Leigh Hunt*, 1930, p. 134.
10. Ibid. II. 66.
11. *The Examiner*, 26 Sept., 3 and 10 Oct. 1918.
12. Ll. 372-6.
13. Shelley was an admirer of 'nympholepsy' which was for him a kind of poetic enthusiasm. See *Letters*, II. 29-30.
14. Ll. 334-6.
15. Cf. Neville Rogers, *Shelley at Work*, Oxford, 1956, p. 260.
16. *Works*, London, 1832, p. 176.
17. Ll. 213-15.
18. Cf. Mary Shelley's *Letters*, I 50, 76, 135 and 157. Also *Hunt's Correspondence*, I. 146.
19. It is probably the painting of William Hodges engraved by Samuel Middiman for Boydell's *Shakespeare Gallery*. The wounded deer on one side of the stream with its companions on the other might have seemed to Shelley to symbolize the plight of Hunt in London with himself and Byron away in Italy.
20. *Correspondence*, I. 118.
21. *Works of Shelley*, Julian Edition, 1965, VI, 329 hereafter cited *Works*.
22. Ibid. II. 67.
23. *Correspondence*, I. 141.
24. In November 1819, Mrs. Shelley writes to Mrs. Hunt of the popularity of the picture among her visitors:

    > You have no notion how many admirers Hunt has got here by means of his picture among our lady acquaintances (English) I had corked up in my memory a number of soft phrases, tender expressions concerning his eyes and his hair and his forehead etc—I have forgotten unfortunately—but really from the effect his physiognomy produces on all who see him and the warmth with which people defend him after seeing it who were cool before—and their vows that indeed he cannot be the Bristol Hunt I should think his friends ought to club to have his picture painted by Owen or Lawrence and exhibited and then no one would think ill of him more. (Jones, *Letters*, 1. 85. See also Shelley's *Letters*, II. 151, and Mrs. Shelley's *Letters* I. 86).

25. *Letters*, II. p. 111.
26. Ll. 219-25.
27. *Autobiography*, London, 1903, II. 169.
28. *Letters*, II. 151.
29. *Adonais*, cancelled passages, Ll. 19-22.

30. *Letters*, II. 306.
31. Ibid. II. 412.
32. Ibid. II. 388.
33. Ibid. II. 299-300.
34. Ibid. II. 300.
35. See Hyder E. Rollins, *Keats Circle*, Camb., Mass., 1965, II. 132-3.
36. *Letters*, II. 366.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Sense of an Ending: Frank Kermode, Oxford University Press, 1967, $ 5.75.

PROFESSOR Kermode's new book is exasperating and stimulating at the same time: exasperating for the author's refusal to go the whole way with us after rousing our expectations in a particular direction, stimulating for its unusual insights that open up new vistas of exploration. Too often Professor Kermode refers to other writers as if in an aside, and just at the moment when we expect a discussion, he moves on quietly to another point. What we are left with is a veritable rosary of names, big and small, strung on to abstruse but engaging ideas. Yet Kermode at his best (there are numerous instances of his best criticism in this book) teases us into renewed thinking about the entire problem of the relationship of literature and reality.

The Sense of an Ending, an essay in the history of ideas, is about the relation of the human mind to time, or, as Wallace Stevens puts it, the 'power of the mind over the possibilities of things' (*The Necessary Angel*, p. 136). Kermode sets out to explore how this relation is expressed in terms of history, religion and literature. That fiction provides maximum material for the elaboration of the author's thesis is not to be wondered at. The novel is the art form easily adaptable to the changing conditions and also a uniquely sensitive register both for the expression of personal relationships and for the diffusion of ideas. Kermode's interest is not that of an analyst of the modes of narrative technique, but of an inquirer investigating the how and the why of the changing conceptions of reality and human culture. He believes that man imposes a pattern on time in order to grasp and make sense of it. Faking, plot-making, 'the play of consciousness over history' (p. 57)—this is how he describes these contrivances of the mind. There is nothing startlingly new about this thesis; critics and aestheticians from Aristotle to Auerbach have written extensively on this subject. Jeremy Bentham and Vaihinger have made deep studies of the theory of fictions (See Wylie Sypher, *From Rococo To Cubism*, pp. 12-23), and some contemporary poets

and novelists have been concerned with this problem ('I feel I understand/Existence/...only through my art/In terms of combinational delight'. John Francis Shade in *Pale Fire*). Kermode's theoretical position, in fact, is very near Vaihinger's and he accepts fictions as mental structures, not empirically provable, but nevertheless—'as if' in Vaihinger's phrase—useful. 'Fictions do what Bacon said poetry could: 'give show of satisfaction, wherein the nature of things doth seem to deny it' (pp. 62-63). Again, echoing Yeats Kermode says: 'Reality is the sense we have of a world irreducible to human plot and human desire for order; justice is the order we find or impose upon it' (p. 105). Although he builds on borrowed foundations, yet he manages to say much that is sound and more that is original. I think Kermode's attempt to see literature steadily and in the whole context of similar formalizations in history, religion and science presents a successful new angle on the relationship of art to other disciplines and modes of knowledge. Like literary fictions, he says, other fictions 'find out about the changing world on our behalf; they arrange our complementarities! In a telling summing-up of this argument he says, 'it is not that we are connoisseurs of chaos, but that we are surrounded by it, and equipped for co-existence with it only by our fictive process' (p. 64).' In this way history and literary narrative are both complementary activities for both formalize and imply explanations of human topics and assumptions. History and the novel have much in common (in spite of Aristotle's clear separation of the two) for both involve faking and pattern-making and placing of relevance in unsuspected places (this theme is developed further in a recent contribution by the author to a new magazine, *Novel*, pp. 231-238). Such a viewpoint enables Kermode to show a continuity between the fiction of the Apocalypse—Kermode's paradigm of all fictions and Christopher Burney's attempts in solitary confinement to impose his humanity on the world (p. 157). Kermode harnesses his mammoth scholarship to discover this continuity through five densely packed chapters of the book and reveals his critical powers as that of a synthesizer and consolidator of the first order. We move through an impressive range of works from Spenser's *Faerie Queene* to the most recent works of Robbe-Grillet and Samuel Beckett. The

study runs the entire gamut from Aristotle's theory of plot to its absence in the works of Robbe-Grillet.

After exploring the need for consonance, the study turns to the conflict between the deterministic pattern suggested by the notion of the plot and 'the freedom of persons within that plot to choose and so alter the structure, the relations of beginning, middle and end' (p. 30). This conflict is nowhere more urgent than in modern literature which is characterized by a sense of a crisis. Appropriately enough, Kermode rigorously analyses the attempts of modern writers from Yeats to Burroughs to make sense of the characteristically modern approach to reality and art. This section yields the most illuminating criticism on the discriminations of the modernist movement. Kermode's gradations derive from the attitude of modern writers to tradition. While Yeats, Joyce, Pound and Lewis were rooted in a sense of the past in spite of the subversiveness of their artistic strategies, the contemporary Avant-Garde is a mere novelty without any awareness of tradition or continuity. *The Naked Lunch* is 'a kind of Satura, without formal design, unified by the persistence in its satirical fantasies of outrage and obscenity' (p. 117). Beckett, however, is a transitional figure, for, his clumsy inflexibility of style and distrust of design notwithstanding, there is in his nihilism a hankering for a lost order. This assessment of Beckett, radical in its traditionalism, saves the author of *Watt* from the fate that Kermode prescribes for the tradition of the new and places him among the tragic writers of our age (cf. the augustinian overtones in the beginning of *Godot*, for instance). Thanks to this perspective on the modern movement, we are better able now to assess the significance of writers like William Golding and Virginia Woolf.

In his analysis of *La Nausee*, again very penetrating, Kermode naturally pinpoints a situation in which the need for order is regarded as a surrender to bad faith. In this novel Sartre is concerned with our *actual* awareness of things and people and how this awareness is tarnished by the 'solidification or closing of the texture' (the phrase is Iris Murdoch's) demanded by the fictive nature of language. In Kermode's scheme of argument this book presents a vivid and searching experience of tension between 'fictions as we use them in our existential

crises, and the fictions as we construct then in books' (p. 35). I spoke of Kermode's scheme of argument, for in this book he is concerned with schematic configuration in which art and reality assume different relationships under the changing conceptions of the world. This is not surprising in the self-confessed admirer of Wallace Stevens who looms behind every page of the book. Consequently, Kermode's mode of inquiry is vitiated by a narrow exclusiveness and, quite often, threatens to reduce works of literature to the status of an illustration. Our irritation becomes all the more pronounced when such an approach fails, as it usually does with thesis-oriented books, to provide a frame of reference for evaluating a writer's efforts to impose a pattern on his material. This doubt is provoked by the very nature of Kermode's inquiry as relevant both to the history of ideas and the technical aspects of the writer's craft, even though the latter is not the author's concern here. There is no acceptable criterion for judging the relative merits of a *La Nausee* and a *Macbeth* except the rather impractical one offered in the critic's terms of reference. In the context of the modern novelist's preoccupation with design such a criterion is urgently needed. Here, in order to be more explicit, I would illustrate from Lawrence's novels. *Women in Love* and *The Rainbow* are both concerned with paradigmatic relationships, but whereas *The Rainbow* escapes the circumscription of an allegory by the mimetic adequacy of its material, in *Women in Love* allegory determines every movement of the contrapuntal rhythm of the Gerald-Gudrun and Ursula-Birkin relationships. Kermode's book fails to provide a norm that would reconcile the visionary intensity of *Women in Love* with its closed form. Kermode's thesis applies richly and suggestively to those works only which tackle 'the ineluctable modality of the real' more or less directly; *Tom Jones*, *Tristram Shandy*, *Ulysses*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Man Without Qualities*, *Pale Fire*. It wouldn't help us with works where the borderline between reality and symbol is kept deliberately blurred. *Pincher Martin* and *Free Fall*, Andrew Sinclair's *Gog* or Flann O'Brien's *At Swim-Two-Birds* and *The Third Policeman*.

Another question arising out of the book but vaguely seized by the author is: what stirs the need for order and impels men to make sense of reality through fictive designs? Is it

wish-fulfilment or the challenge of 'the possibilities of things'? If the first, then literature becomes a dodge against reality, a notion well summed up by Nietzsche: 'We have art in order not to die of truth.' If the second, then all artistic exploration must go beyond mere adjustment to a new situation. Indeed, it must transcend that situation. Kermode's observations are so provoking that we cannot help asking for more concentration and thought in the answering of the basic questions regarding the creative impulse.

But these defects do not damage the book's solid merits. As I said earlier, there is much that evokes our gratitude and admiration, particularly the happy marriage of diverse disciplines which provides ample confirmation of the author's premises. This book has been in gestation for years (sections on Spenser and *Lear* were first discussed in faculty lectures at Manchester in early 1963); and, in spite of a ceremonial formality of style, this is one of the few seminal books of contemporary scholarly criticism whose influence will be felt for many years. Only Auerbach's *Mimesis* achieves more by virtue of its oceanic scope.

M. L. RAINA

Jets from Orange by Zulfikar Ghose, reviewed by R. K. Kaul, Macmillan, 1967.

THE TITLE of the latest collection of Mr. Ghose's poems is slightly misleading. It does not celebrate the oozing of juice from oranges in Autumn. It gives a view of our planet from a jet. (In fact it is full of Boeings, Tridents, VC 10's and Caravelles). Orange in the title is a place name which emphasizes the alien landscape of the descriptive poems in this collection (not that his native landscape is forgotten).

I believe it was C. Day Lewis who first described a journey by air in a poem, i.e. *Flight to Australia*. Mr. Ghose attempts in a number of poems to give an aerial view of man and nature from different heights:

The logic of geography—
that land and water attracted man—
was clearly delineated
when the jet reached ten thousand feet.

"Geography Lesson", p. 23

In spite of the up-to-date idiom of the poems and the topicality of their themes, the sensibility of Mr. Ghose continues to be controlled by disciplines "more ancient than aerodynamics" (p. 14). When he renders some Punjabi folklore into English he seems to be perfectly at home in the society of landlords and vassals:

Some years back I hired a groom, a peasant
with as much emotion as a tree's bark,
and yet he is an animal whose scent
attracts me like a hound. (p. 42)

It is natural to compare Mr. Ghose's poetry with that of his contemporary, Mr. Dom Moraes. The charm of Mr. Ghose's poetry lies in the complete absence of a *persona*. The man behind the poems is identical with the poet. When he addresses his mother:

you
who lie propped between illness and illness
slowly thinning to the bones of worry you chew day
after day. (p. 29)

or his grandfather or his American friend (see "Autumn Letter" pp. 38-39) the poet is indistinguishable from the man. This kind of poetry is dangerous, at least for his future biographers. They may be tempted to look for clues to real persons, for example, they may identify the American friend of "Autumn Letter" with the American poetess he talks so ecstatically about in his *Autobiography*. That of course would not be his fault. Still it is somewhat disconcerting to read a poem like "Madam" in which Mr. Ghose quite unself-consciously talks of his Freudian infatuation with a calf (pp. 34-35).

Such occasions, however, are rare. Besides they refer to incidents of his early childhood. On the whole, the reader's participation in Mr. Ghose's voyage of self-exploration is quite exciting.

There is a freshness in Mr. Ghose's observations and meditations. For example, when his plane descends on Cairo he is struck by the Cranes:

> Cranes, absurd as science fiction creatures, stand
> where slaves once tore their muscles so that kings
> might lie entombed in cool, musk-smelling darkness,
> mummified, perfect as butterfly specimens:
> the more advances a civilization
> the subtler the refinement of vanity.
>
> "Egypt". p. 25

It is this fusion of observation and meditation that marks his sensibility. His personality may appear simple and his poetry may be lacking in ambiguity but it is not lacking in richness or depth. About a beggar asleep on a pavement in Bombay he writes:

> His arms and legs could be cracks in the stone,
> routes for the ants' journeys, the flies' descents.
> Brain-washed by the sun into exhaustion,
> he lies veined into stone, a fossil man.
>
> "Decomposition". p. 24

The comparison between a sleeping beggar and a stone is a very old one but Mr. Ghose has made it for himself. His poetry is not second-hand. He complains of his lack of roots ("My music is hybrid jazz of no tradition", p. 4) but he compensates for that loss by adding a metaphorical or mythological dimension to his observation. For example, the use of the word "brain-washed" in the above quotation invests the situation of the beggar with an unexpected meaning. Similarly in "The Surf-Rider" he not only describes the movement of the rider with precision and mastery but also suggests mythological comparisons without naming any of the Greek gods:

while the wave wheels him
as on a chariot, the horses of momentum,
harnessed to wind, throwing back manes of sea-spray:
(p. 11)

The conclusion is brilliant. When the surf-rider returns to the shore:

The illusion,
that a god had risen from the ocean
and miraculously walked upon water, breaks.

The subtle allusiveness of these lines shows how Mr. Ghose avoids the effect of flatness in poetry without roots.

R. K. KAUL

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