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Richard Ellmann

JOYCE'S RELIGION AND POLITICS

What were Joyce's attitudes to church and state? To what extent was he shaped by the Catholicism he forswore? How committed was he to the liberation of Ireland? These questions haunt his hundredth birthday.

In later life, asked when he had left the Church, Joyce remarked, 'That's for the Church to say.' By this time he recognized the complexities. In his youth he was not so guarded or ambiguous. He wrote to Nora Barnacle on 29 August 1904, 'Six years ago (at sixteen) I left the Catholic Church, hating it most fervently. I found it impossible for me to remain in it on account of the impulses of my nature.' The Church's attitude to sexuality was particularly repugnant to him. His letter went on, 'I made secret war upon it when I was a student and declined to accept the positions it offered me.' These positions, according to his brother Stanislaus, included that of priest. 'By doing this I made myself a beggar but I retained my pride,' Joyce wrote to Nora. 'Now I make open war upon it by what I write and say and do.'

His actions accorded with this policy. He neither confessed nor took communion. When his children were born he forbade their being baptized. His grandson was baptized against his wishes and without his knowledge. He preferred to live with Nora Barnacle for twenty-seven years without marrying her. When at last a wedding became necessary for purposes of inheritance, he had it performed in a registry office. At his death, when the possibility of a religious service was mentioned, his wife said, 'I couldn't do that to him.'

So far all is straightforward. Joyce's rejection of the Church was compatible, however, with considerable interest in it and in its procedures. He was often derogatory. Priests, he said, were 'barbarians armed with crucifixes.' Or he would remark, as on 13 March 1908, 'None of the gratifications of the senses are half so odious as their mortifications which the saints practised; also the Church, whilst providing rewards for the senses of the glorified body, has promised none for the sense of taste or of touch.' Some of his devout friends took comfort in the way that Joyce regularly attended the services of Holy Week, and had particular pleasure in *Tenebrae*. He did so, however, like a tourist of another persuasion, standing at the back of the church. Another remnant of his early piety survived as a superstitious fear of thunderstorms, which he would do anything to avoid. Once, when thunder crashed and Joyce quailed, Thomas Mc-Greevy admonished him, 'Look at your children. They aren't frightened at all.' 'They have no religion,' said Joyce with contempt. The marrow in his bones was at variance with his brain.

Critics have sometimes contended that his books should not be taken as opposed to the Church. Of course no frontal attack is made in them. Joyce spoke in an early autobiographical essay of having adopted 'urbanity in warfare' as his strategy. He was anxious that his books should not commit propaganda, even against institutions of which he disapproved. In his brother's diary for April 1908 it is recorded that Joyce said of the novel—*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—on which he was then working, 'it would not be aimed at Catholicism in Ireland; he didn't care a rap if Ireland continued in Catholicism for the next two thousand years. Some Hottentot religion would be too good for the people. At any rate, with the Catholic doctrine of grace—which . . . he considers the main doctrine of the Church—the priests could well defend these lenten banalities if they kept the faithful with the Church, the accumulator of grace. Their hell, too, they could defend in a similar manner and it was a logical belief if

one admitted their theory of sin and punishment.'

Stephen's apostasy is accordingly presented as a choice for himself, and not necessarily one for others. On the other hand, he is an exemplum, not only in his capacity as artist, but in his character of emancipated man. His initial submission, in fear and remorse, to the terrifying sermons about death, judgment, and punishment, changes to revulsion at their cruelty. Yet Joyce is careful not to overstate his case. If Father Dolan, who in Chapter I pandies Stephen unjustly, is sadistic, the priest who hears the boy's confession after the retreat in Chapter III is kind and gentle.

Apart from such sporadic concessions, the Church is regularly presented in terms of darkness, constriction, and thwart. Stephen finds that its emphasis on the soul is as lopsided as the prostitute's emphasis on the body. His most adroit manoeuver is taking over its vocabulary for his own secular purposes. He receives a *call*, hears 'a voice from beyond the world,' but what it summons him to is not the priesthood but life, including sexual love, and an art that would content body and soul alike. The word *sin* is modified to error, to *fall* is only to experience : Stephen ecstatically contemplates 'To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life.' He himself achieves *resurrection* : 'His soul had risen from the grave of boyhood, spurning her graveclothes'. He is ordained into a new priestcraft of his own devising : he imagines himself 'a priest of eternal imagination, transmuting the daily bread of experience into the radiant body of everliving life.' At the book's end he even takes over from the Church the care of *conscience*; it is he and not the Church who will forge a conscience for his race.

Just what this new conscience was to be Joyce would clarify in *Ulysses*. Neither Bloom nor Stephen could be described as pagan though neither acknowledges any institutional belief. Bloom, in offering his conception of love as against the Citizen's hatred and violence, is voicing a humanist ethic. He also fulfils the role of the good Samaritan

when Stephen is knocked down. So far as Catholicism is concerned, he ruminates humorously about confession, communion, resurrection, marvelling at the hold these strange conceptions have. Stephen, reared among them, but unwilling to accept Catholic limitations of his independence, is in active rebellion. His climactic moment comes as his mother's ghost, like that of the Commendatore in *Don Giovanni*, thrice summons him to repent. His anguished retort is 'Shite !', when the true pagan would neither see the ghost nor recognize any inclination to repent. Stephen is never insouciant. When he points to his head and quotes William Blake, who in his turn was alluding to Dante, 'But in here it is I must kill the priest and the king,' Joyce at once sanctions his 'mental fight' and acknowledges the responsibility of this rebellion.

In *Finnegans Wake* Joyce seems more relaxed about the Church and about rebellion. Shaun, as a hypocritical do-gooder, with a claim to piety, is steadily mocked, but so is his errant and agnostic brother. Catholicism has its place in the book, a pervasive one that involves Saint Patrick, countless popes, church history and theological squabbles. In terms of universal history, which the *Wake* presents, the Church's punctilio about forgotten issues adds to the joyful polyphony. In the night world shot through with dreams, religion appears no better and no worse than other human obsessions.

To be opposed to the Church as an institution is one thing; to be opposed to all religious feeling is another. At moments Joyce surprises his atheistical brother Stanislaus by unexpected concessions Stanislaus noted in his diary on 7 August 1908 that James said 'he believed that in his heart every man was religious. He spoke from his knowledge of himself. I asked him did he mean that everyone had in his heart some faith in a Deity, by which he could be influenced. He said, 'Yes.' That this was not just a passing fancy appears to be borne out in *Ulysses*, less in Stephen and Bloom, who disclaim faith, than in Molly. She, while contemptuous of

piety, is also contemptuous of impiety, and approves a vague theism : 'as for them saying theres no God I wouldn't give a snap of my two fingers for all their learning why dont they go and create something I often asked him atheists or whatever they call themselves . . .' Although Joyce in May 1905 pronounced himself to be incapable of belief of any kind, he evidently had more than a few grains left. But any approach to orthodoxy repelled him. When a priest in Zurich pointed out on a starry night the order of the stars and used it to prove the existence of God, Joyce replied acidly, 'What a pity that it is all based on mutual interdestruction !'

He had much the same feelings of intransigence towards the British state, as the occupying power in Ireland, that he had towards the Catholic Church. 'Political awareness' was a quality he valued in writers. Joyce was politically aware without being political. That is, day to day politics did not interest him, but he thought of his writing as subsuming politics within it His earliest recorded work was his lost poem about the man who had tried to lead Ireland to independence, Parnell. Flagwaving nationalism was not to his taste, but he regarded political independence as an aspect of the larger independence he was seeking. His brother records a conversation they had in April 1907. Stanislaus urged that an independent Ireland would be intolerable. 'What the devil are your politics ?' asked James. 'Do you not think Ireland has a right to govern itself and is capable of doing so ?' During his ten years in Trieste Joyce wrote nine articles setting forth the Irish 'problem' for a local newspaper, and in 1914 he offered them as a book to an Italian publisher. They were not accepted : a pity, bacause they would have demonstrated that Joyce was altogether aware of and concerned about the political situation of his country.

Joyce is sometimes said to have been a lifelong Parnellite, but he was opposed to turning great dead men into stone effigies. In *Ulysses* he mocks the idea that Parnell is still alive and will return. The one post-Parnellite politician whom Joyce

felt he could endorse was Arthur Griffith, who pleased him by being 'unassuming' and 'not indulging in flights.' He liked Griffith's policy for two reasons especially, its non-violence and its economic boycott of Britain. About the boycott he remarked on 16 May 1907, 'The Sinn Fin policy comes to fighting England with knife and fork, 'and said it was 'the highest form of political warfare I have heard of'. In 1912 he asked Griffith's advice in connection with his troubles over publishing *Dubliners*, and was pleased to be treated as a man having a common cause though working in a less obviously political medium. For he had remained faithful to his goal of creating new Irishmen and Irishwomen through the honesty and scorching candor of his writing. In *Ulysses* he acknowledged Griffith's political importance by making many references to him alone among politicians of the day. And he called attention to the ultimately political direction of his own work by having Irish Stephen, at the end of the brothel scene, beaten up by a *British* soldier, whom he defies as 'the uninvited.' Joyce was gratified when, just before *Ulysses* was published in 1922, Arthur Griffith was elected the first president of Ireland. The cultural emancipation of the country, with which Joyce had charged himself, seemed to be succeeding at the same time as the more limited but almost equally necessary political emancipation, which he associated with Griffith.

But Griffith died within a few months, and the Civil War broke out. When Nora Joyce with their two children was fired on while visiting Galway during that war, Joyce grew more sceptical. He had called himself a socialist in his early twenties, then said he was an anarchist, though not a 'practical anarchist in the modern sense'. During the First World War, when he was committed to neutrality he began to describe himself as apolitical, though he considered his litigation against a British consular official named Henry Carr to be a nationalistic action. The creation of the Free State had satisfied his political ambitions, always secondary to his

cultural ones, but subsequent events made him feel that his immediate reaction could not be sustained. In 1932 he was invited to a St Patrick's Day party in Paris; he declined to attend it because the Irish Ambassador to France, Count O'Kelly, was also to be present, and Joyce did not wish to imply that he in any way endorsed the present Irish state. 'I do not mind 'larking' with (High Commissioner) Dulanty in London but I care nothing about politics,' he wrote. 'Ireland, with Ulster in, will probably be a separate republic in ten or fifty years and I do not suppose anyone in England will really care two hoots whether it is or not. They are doing many things more efficiently, I am told, than was possible under the old regime but any semblance of liberty they had when under England seems to have gone—and goodness knows that was not much.'

Yet indifference was not a characteristic of a man who made a point of reading Irish newspapers every day, and who took a passionate interest in every detail of his native land. However sceptical he became of political progress, he endeavored in all his books to achieve something superpolitical, by disclosing sharply what life in Ireland was, and dimly what it might be. This was his higher politics.

New College
Oxford

G. Singh

POUND AS A CRITIC OF JOYCE

Of the five major writers of this century Pound helped—or helped publish—, influenced or was influenced by, authors he either collaborated with or wrote about—Yeats, Tagore, Joyce, Wyndham Lewis and Eliot – it is Joyce with whom he corresponded most, from whom he received the greatest number of letters, and for the establishment of whose fortune and reputation he worked so assiduously, devoting much of his critical and propagandist energy in early years. Joyce himself was the first to realize this: 'It is nearly twenty years since he (Pound) first began his vigorous campaign on my behalf and it is probable that but for him I should still be the unknown drudge that he discovered'. But, while what Pound did for Eliot has been amply analysed and documented, it is not so with what he did for Joyce—except in that admirable edition of *The Letters* of *Ezra Pound to James Joyce*[1] by the late Professor Forrest Read. The edition is a model of how letters from one writer to another should be edited, and how one section of the letters is linked with another with the help of a commentator—at once so judicious, so intelligent and so discreet.

Although it was Pound rather than Yeats who 'discovered' Joyce, he nevertheless gave credit to Yeats. In fact, Yeats may have discovered Joyce as a writer; but it was Pound who discovered and defined that quality in him which was to be the very core of modernity. Himself a pillar and prophet of modernism, Pound saluted Joyce's modernism with fervour, and gave it the maximum publicity duly backed by criticism which mattered and matters. As soon as Pound came to know about Joyce, he wrote to him, offering practical advice

and help, with a view to furthering his career and reputation. He commented on whatever he read by Joyce; and at the same time gave Joyce the possibility of writing in *The Egoist* and *The New Freeman* with which Pound had connections. The latter, Pound told Joyce, 'can pay a little, the former cannot pay at all, we do it for larks and to have a place for markedly modern stuff'. That Joyce was capable of writing such stuff Pound was instinctively convinced, even though he hadn't yet read anything by Joyce. In characterizing what he meant by modernity (whether in prose or in poetry)—'no cliches, set phrases, stereotyped journelese . . . Objectivity and again objectivity, and expression . . . . nothing that one couldn't, in some circumstance, in the stress of some emotion, actually say'—Pound was pinpointing, as it were, certain fundamental traits of Joyce's own style. I don't know, he wrote to him, 'what your present stuff is like', and added : 'I am bonae voluntatis—don't in the least know that I can be of any use to you—or you to me. From what W. B. Y. says I imagine we have a hate or two in common—but that a very problematical bond on introduction'. Ten days later, Pound was already telling Joyce that he and Yeats, with whom he was staying in Sussex as his secretary in 1913, had read his poem 'I Hear an Army' and were much impressed by it, and that he (Pound) would like to use it in his anthology of imagist poetry.

Thus began Pound's correspondence with Joyce in which practical advice was offered together with criticism that was both shrewd and apt – Pound's aim being not only to help Joyce, but also to get the sort of writing published which he regarded as both modern and realistic. While playing the triple role of friend, critic and interpreter, Pound raised—and answered—questions as to what of Joyce was to be published, where and with what advantage, both in terms of fame and—'since glory is damned inedible substance'—in terms of money, and he did so with what he used to call 'the high and final Ezthority'. 'The whole question re/the Egoist', he wrote in an

early letter to Joyce 'is how much the publicity and the 'keeping in touch' is worth'. In another letter he told him with uncharacteristic modesty : 'I'm not supposed to know much about prose, but I think your novel *(Dubliners)* is a damn fine stuff—I dare say you know it quite as well as I do—clear and direct like Merimee. I am sending it off at once to *The Egoist*, it seems a crime not to get you paid for it but you recognize the difficulties and the rows any publisher would make . . . confound it, can't usually read prose at all not anybody's in English except James and Hudson and a little Conrad'.

When *Dubliners* came out, Pound reviewed it in *The Egoist* (July 15 1914). The review (entitled 'Dubliners and Mr. Joyce') started with that forthright and confident tone which was to characterize much of Pound's literary campaign and criticism :

> Freedom from sloppiness is so rare in contemporary English prose that one might well say simply, 'Mr. Joyce's book of short stories is prose free from sloppiness', and leave the intelligent reader ready to run from his study immediately to spend three and six pence on the volume.

And, while analysing what 'prose free from sloppiness' meant, Pound observed :

> Mr. Joyce writes a clear hard prose. He deals with subjective things, but he presents them with such clarity of outline that he might be dealing with locomotives or with 'builders' specifications'.

As to Joyce's background Pound found it surprising that he should be Irish.

> One is so tired of the Irish or 'Celtic' imagination (or 'phantasy' as I think they now call it) flopping about. Mr. Joyce does not flop about. He defines. He is not an institution for the promotion of Irish peasant industries. He accepts an international standard of prose writing and lives up to it.

The two writers Pound considered constituting 'international standard of prose writing' were Stendhal and Flaubert—writers whom Joyce had emulated so successfully that Pound

said he was ready to 'lay down a good piece of French writing and pick up a piece of writing by Mr. Joyce without feeling as if my head were being stuffed through a cushion'. In another review 'The Non-Existence of Ireland ('*The New Age*, XVI, 17 February 1915), Pound observed: 'Mr. Joyce writes the sort of prose I should like to write were I a prose writer...He writes as a European, not as a provincial'.

Pound's evaluation of the kind of writing Joyce initiated—something he himself and Eliot were trying to achieve in their own poetry—went hand in hand with his concern for Joyce's financial position (which was after all not appreciably worse than that of Pounds himself), and for what he could do to help. In August 1975, he wrote to the secretary of the Royal Literary Fund, pleading for a financial grant to Joyce in recognition of his services to modern letters :

> I do not imagine that my opinion of Mr. Joyce's writing can have any weight with your committee, still it gives me a certain satisfaction to state that I consider Joyce a good poet and *without exception* the best of the younger writers. This is not an opinion influenced by personal friendship, for I was drawn to the man through his work . . ., I do not know how these things are arranged, and I am, I believe, *persona non grata* to most of my elders but that fact might be overlooked for the moment in a matter so intimately concerning the welfare of English letters as I belive Mr. Joyce's welfare to be.

When the Royal Literary Fund granted Joyce £75, Joyce wrote to thank Yeats.'You need not thank me', Yeats replied, 'for it was really Ezra Pound who thought of your need. I acted at his suggestion...What trouble there was fell on Ezra'.

As to help in the form of constructive criticism: even though *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* had not yet appeared in book form, Pound read it and described it as ,a work of indubitable value, and permanence'. And in a letter to Joyce (between 6 and 12 September 1915) Pound remarked :

> I think the book is permanent like Flaubert and Stendhal. Not so squarish as Stendhal, certainly not so varnished as Flaubert. In English I think you join on to Hardy and Henry James...Hang it all. we don't get

prose books that a man can *reread*. We don't get prose that gives us pleasure paragraph by paragraph. I know one man who occasionally buries a charming short chapter in a long ineffective novel. . .but that's another story.

However, Pound was not so convinced by *Exiles*. With his own attitude to—and certain preconceptions regarding the nature and function of the stage, he wrote: 'My whole habit of thinking of the stage is: that it is a gross, coarse form of art. That a play speaks to a thousand fools huddled together, whereas a novel or a poem can lie about in a book and find the stray persons worth finding, one by one seriatim'. In an article 'Mr James Joyce and the Modern Stage '(*The Drama*, Chicago, VI,2, 1916) Pound applied the full force of these arguments to Joyce's way, and observed:

> It is not so good as a novel; nevertheless it is quite good enough to form a very solid basis for my arraignment of the contemporary theatre. It lays before me certain facts, certain questions: for instance, are the excellences of this play purely novelist's excellences ? Perhaps most of them are; yet this play could not have been as a novel. It is distinctly a play . . . And yet it is absolutely unfit for the stage as we know it. It is dramatic. Strong well-wrought sentences flash from the speech and give it 'dramatic edge such as we have in Ibsen, when some character comes out with. 'There is no mediator between God and man'; I mean sentences dealing with fundamentals . . . All this comes to saying : can the drama hold its own against the novel ? Can contemporary drama be permanent? It is not to be doubted that the permanent art of any period is precisely that form of art into which the best artists of the period put their best solidest work.

For Pound, so far as Joyce was concerned, his 'best and solidest work' was of course, *Portrait* rather than *Exiles*, so that when the former appeared in book form, he reviewed it in *The Egoist* (IV, 2, February 1917) where, among other things, he castigated 'the hatred of ordinary English publishers for good prose'. But that was his way of upholding Joyce as 'an excellent and important writer of prose', and as the author of 'the nearest thing to Flaubertian prose that we have now in English'. That by praising what was anything but generally recognized

to be praiseworthy, and by invoking critical standards not commonly achieved Pound was risking his reputation as a critic was something he had given no thought to although he was perfectly conscious of it. 'It will cost me', he said, 'no more than a few violent attacks from several sheltered, and therefore courageous, anonymities'. Even the Irish attitude to Joyce, Pound thought, left much to be desired. When you tell them that they are slow in recognizing their own men of genius, 'they reply with street riots and politics'.

Thus, inspired and stimulated by Joyce's achievement in the field of 'clear, unexaggerated, realistic literature', Pound set out to negotiate the terms of his editorship and laid down the following conditions:

> The *Little Review* is temperamentally closer to what I want done ???? DEFINITELY then :
> I want an 'official organ' (vile phrase). I mean I want a place where I and T.S. Eliot can appear once a month (or once an issue') and where Joyce can appear when he likes, and where Wyndham Lewis can appear if he comes back from the war.

To some extent, then, Pound's critical conviction regarding the worth of other poets and writers, especially vindicated by fame or success, gave a moral filip to his literary principles, making him bold enough to dismiss or poke fun at other critics' views of Joyce. As an example of this he compiled in *The Egoist* some classified comments on Joyce, without making any comment on them—the patent absurdity of what was said being a sufficient comment in itself. Moreover, Pound's critical certitude helped him deal with Joyce on a perfectly independent basis without letting his friendship affect or be affected by his criticism. Hence when Joyce solicited Pound's opinion of *Exiles* Pound had no qualms about telling him what he thought : 'I wish I believed more in *Exiles*, but damn it all, I dont think it up to the rest of your stuff'. (17 July 1917). In other words it seems that at times Pound was more concerned about maintaining and cultivating the right kind of literary reputation for Joyce than Joyce himself.

Pound's independence was to stand Joyce in good stead when it came to dealing with the text of *Ulysses* of which Pound was for more than three years editor. This text reached him in instalments, and here is his comment on the first instalment, Section 4 :

> Section 4 has excellent things in it; but you overdo the matter. Leave the stool to Geo. Robey. He has been doing 'down where the aspa-ragas grows; for some time. I think certain things simply bad writing, in this section. Bad because you waste the violence. You use a stronger word than you need, and this is bad art, just as any needless super-lative is bad art.

And with his characteristic tact and humour Pound suggested: 'Perhaps, an unexpurgated text can be printed in a greek or bulgarian translation later.' Being fully conscious of the practical level of what was involved Pound had to take into account the threat of censorship for the editor of the magazine and he cautioned Joyce accordingly:

> If we are suppressed too often we'll be suppressed finally and for all, to the damn'd stoppage of all our stipends. AND I cant have our august editress jailed, NOT at any rate for a passage which I do not think written with utter maestria.

A typical example this of how Pound's wordly shrewdness went to enrich his critical insight, and how the literary critic in him never compromised in the interest of friendship or in any other interest to the detriment of utter *maestria'*.

Pound's criticism of Joyce was of course, not communicated only through the letters; he wrote timely reviews and articles as well. For instance he published an article in *The Future* (London, II, 6 May 1918) in which he referred to 'the lovers of good writing' having banded themselves together to get a few good books into print, and even into circulation.' In this select output Pound included Eliot's *Prufrock*, Joyce's A Portrait and Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr*. As to A Portrait he described it as having 'become almost the prose bible of a few people.' And comparing H.G. Wells'

style in *New Machiavelli*, with Joyce's in *A Portrait* (and elsewhere) he observed : 'His (Wells') *New Machiavelli* could be read with alternate admiration and disgust, but his style was always a bit greasy in comparison with the metallic cleanness of Joyce's phrasing'. And after quoting a few lines to illustrate Joyce's power and scope—Joyce's writing is not merely a depiction of the sordid'—Pound observed :

> On almost every page of Joyce you will find just such swift alternation of beauty subjective and external shabbiness, squalor, and sordidness. It is the bass and treble of his method. And he has his scope beyond that of the novelists his contemporaries, in just so far as whole stretches of his keyboard are utterly out of their compass.

Pound was no less enthusiastic about Joyce's collection of poems *Chamber Music*. 'We have here', he wrote, 'the lyric in some of its best traditions, and one pardons certain trifling inversions, much against the taste of the moment, for the sake of the clean-cut ivory finish, and for the interest of the rhythms, the cross run of the beat and word, as of a stiff wind cutting the ripple-tops of bright waters'.

Another poem by Joyce Pound quoted in this article is 'I Hear an Army', a poem both he and Yeats had liked because of its *'robustezza* of expression' and on which he goes on to expatiate in what may be regarded as an exercise in practical criticism :

> In both these poems [another poem referred to being. 'All day I hear the noise of waters'] we have a strength and a fibrousness of sound which almost prohibits the thought of their being 'set to music' or to any music but that which is in them when spoken; but we notice a similarity of the technique with the earlier poems, in so for as the beauty of movement is produced by a very skilful, or perhaps we should say a deeply intuitive, interruption of metric mechanical regularity. It is the irregularity which has shown always in the periods.

Coming to *Ulysses*, though it was still incomplete, Pound had no hesitation in considering it as Joyce's 'profoundest work, most significant'. In comparison with it, *Exiles* is 'a side-step, necessary katharsis, clearance of mind from conti-

nental thought', whereas Ulysses is 'obscure, even obscene, as life itself is obscene in places, but an impassioned meditation on life'. This is the style and manner of one who held strong convictions regarding literature as well as regarding the health of literature, who had written *Propertius* and was busy writing *The Cantos*, and who, a couple of years later, was going to perform operations of critical editing of *The Waste Land* as he was doing of *Ulysses*.

At the same time a comparison between what Joyce was writing and what he was writing led him formulate distinctions and discriminations which were crucial to Pound's own critical awareness and development. Thus in sending his *Propertius* to Joyce Pound included the following comment :

> Hope you like my *Propertius*. I have as much Trouble as you do in getting printed—tho' I am much milder & far less indecent—an mouns je suis peut etre un peu plus phallique, mais mi interessant moins les excremens et les feces humains et des bestiaux; et les puces paraissent peu etc—even so the publisher's—reading public seem to be horrified by the most unforeseeable turns of language—any reference to any racial habit—even to the habits most necessary for the preservation of the *species* . . .

The comparison between his art and that of Joyce, with characteristic differences of emphasis and approach as well as of temperament, strengthened all the more the bond Pound saw existing between himself and a few other contemporaries, Joyce included, who formed the creative nucleus of the age. 'I don't want to hurry you', he wrote to Joyce (12 Dec. 1918), 'and the slowness of making permanent literature is incomprehensible to all save the few of us who have tried'.

When, after seven years' correspondence, Pound eventually met Joyce personally at Sirmione he recorded his first impressions in a letter to Quinn (19 June 1920) :

> Joyce—pleasing; after the first shell of cantankerous Irishman, I got the impression that the real man is the author *Chamber Music*, the sensitive. The rest is the genius; the registration of realities on the temperament, the delicate temperament of the early poems. A concen-

tration and absorption passing Yeats'—Yeats has never taken on anything requiring the condensation of *Ulysses*.

Such an evaluation was of a piece with what Pound thought of *Ulysses*. And when Joyce personally handed over to Pound the 'Circe' Chapter, he was handing something that was to influence Pound's own *Cantos*. *A* 'great stuff', Pound wrote in a letter to his parents (April 21), 'Magnificient, a new inferno in full sail' 'enormous-megaloscrumptious-mastodonic'.

In 1920 Joyce arrived in Paris, and met other enthusiasts and champions of *Ulysses* such as Larbaud Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier, the last two being proprietors of the Shakespeare Company and da Maison des Amis des Divers bookshops in Paris. Joyce turned more and more to these friends, and started minding Pound's criticisms. As Forrest Read observes, 'Joyce proportioned his esteem to the interest in, enthusiasm for, and support of what he was doing; his willingness to confide depended upon the number of these attitudes another person held and the intensity with which he held one or more at a particular moment'. What amounts to a complete *volte face* on Joyce's part resulted in his once asking Robert Mc Amon : 'Do you think Eliot or Pound has any real importance?' Mc Almon replied: 'Now Joyce, is that a question for you to ask, who can doubt anythjng, even yourself?'

Indeed, one not very edifying trait of Joyce's personality was his inability to be grateful once the cause for gratitude had ceased to exist. Moreover he couldn't always accept honest criticism and evaluation of his work without misconstruing it as personal slight or injury. It is Joyce's egocentric nature that has something to do with this—Joyce who seemed to have no real interest in the work of any of his contemporaries, as Pound recalled in 1955.

> . . . to the best of my recollection he never alluded to any of his eng & am/contemporaries as writers. Discrete silence re/everything save Mauberley and one discrete sentence re/that. W. L. 'a draughtsman'

'I am going to write it. You are going to paint it'. (an indirect ref/to colour, but unique).

However, for his own part, Pound's attitude to what Joyce had achieved, especially in *Ulysses*, remained fundamentally unaltered. So that when it came out in book form he reviewed it in *The Dial* (LXXII, 6 June 1922), displaying the same disinterestedness and generosity as before, the same independence of analytical thought and judgment as he had always done. 'All men', Pound started by saying, 'should "unite to give praise to Ulysses"; those who will not, may content themselves with a place in the lower intellectual orders : I do not mean that they should all praise it from the same viewpoint; but all serious men of letters, whether they wrote out a critique or not, will certainly have to make one for their use'. Pound recapitulated what he had been saying all along, and added something new to his detailed and masterly *conte rendu* of what distinguishes and characterizes *Ulysses.* Here are some of his comments—both general and specific.

> Joyce has taken up the art of writing where Flaubert left it...*Ulysses* has more form than any novel of Flaubert's. Cervantes had parodied his predecessors and might be taken as basis of comparison for another of Joyce's modes of concision, but where Cervantes satirized one manner of folly and one sort of highfalutin expression, Joyce satirizes at least seventy, and includes a whole history of English prose, by implication. . . . Joyce's characters not only speak their own language, but they think their own thoughts. This variegation of dialects allows Joyce to present his matter, his tones of mind, very rapidly . . . *Ulysses* is, presumably, as unrepeatable as *Tristram Shandy*, I mean you cannot duplicate it; you can't take it as a 'model', as you could Bovary; but it does complete something begun in Bouvard; and it does add definitely to the international store of literary technique. . .

In commenting on the form of what he called 'this supernovel' Pound was, indirectly, commenting on certain aspects of the form and organization of his own *Cantos* :

> . . . our author has also poached on the epic, and has, for the first time since 1321, resurrected the infernal figures; he has, by simple reversal, caught back the furies, his flagellant Castle ladies. Telemachus, Circe,

> the rest of the Odyssean company, the noisy cave of Aeolus gradually place themselves in the mind of the reader, rapidly or less rapidly according as he is familiar or unfamiliar with Homer. These correspondences are part of Joyce's medievalism and are chiefly his own affair, a scaffold, a means of construction justified by the result and justifiable by it only. The result is a triumph in form, in balance, a main schema, with continuous inweaving and arabesque.

Through his praise and encouragement Pound assisted the very genesis of Ulysses, and his criticism may be considered for this reason alone unique—criticism of one contemporary author by another of Pound's calibre and influence. 'The best criticism of any work', Pound would say, 'to my mind the only criticism of any work of art that is of any permanent value or even moderately durable value, comes from the creative writer or artist who does the next job; and *not*, not ever from the young gentlemen who make generalities about the creator'.

In fact Pound's conviction regarding his own competence as critic of Joyce was based on his authority as a poet no less than on his knowledge of Joyce's work and of other comparable works. In 1933 he summed up the history of his association with Joyce, and his early and late judgments about Joyce'work, in *the English Journal* (Chicago, XXXII, 5 May 1933) where, in an article entitled 'Past History', he observed :

> The facts about Joyce's writing are no different from what I have, at various times during the past 20 years, stated them to be. In many ways Joyce has not gone further than Henry James, at any rate H. J. was the first man to extend the art of the novel beyond the territory already occupied by the french . . . . Joyce does not proceed from James, but directly from Flaubert and Ibsen . . . In *A Portrait*, Joyce is at the level of Flaubert's Education but does not go beyond the Flaubertion field. *Exiles* is a bad play with a serious content; the effect of Ibsen is everywhere apparent; the play's many excellences are those of a novelist, not of a dramatist . . . *Ulysses* is a masterwork. in the line of great unweildy books, *Gargantua*, and *Don Quixote*. It boils over the general form accepted as the form of the novel. Its immediate forerunner was *Bouvard et Pecuchet*.

Critical-cum-comparative formulations such as these never

turn out to be the empty irrelevant generalities they so often are with the so-called comparatists. Instead they serve to pinpoint the specific aspects of a given problem and throw light on them :

> The valid parallels for *Ulysses* are with *Cervantes* chewing up the Spanish Romances, and with Rabelais chewing up scholastic bunk, and the idolatory of written words in his own day. The parallels with *Odyssey* are mere mechanics, any blockhead can go and trace them. Joyce had to have a shape on which to order his chaos . . . I think anybody is a fool who does not read *Dubliners, A Portrait* and *Ulysses* for his own pleasure . . . anyone who has not read these three books is unfit to teach literature in any high school or college. I don't mean simply English or American literature but any literature, for literature is not split up by political frontiers.

As to Joyce's influence, Pound' analysis was again forthright, consistent and perceptive, and he described it to be, 'in so far as I consider it *sanitary*, . . . almost exclusively Flaubert's influence, extended'. But one can't say the same of Joyce's later influence. This, says Pound, 'is no FAULT of Joyce's'—which was Pound's way of defending Joyce, while at the same time criticising his later writings and blaming what he didn't like in them or Joyce's imitators and followers. Nevertheless, Pound's difficulty with Joyce's later writings continued, and he became, to quote Forrest Read, 'a focus for Pound's impatience with passeism and the stream of consciouness' to which Pound gave free vent whenever the occasion arose. In 1934, for instance, when E. E. Cummings's book *Eimi* came out, he compared it with Joyce's later work, with 'the snobbism that has steamed up about Joyce's writings in regress'. He even doubted that Joyce or Gertrude Stein had said anything 'that will be of any interest in itself, apart from their varieties of galimatias', and, so far as Joyce was concerned, he added :

> . . . Joyce's mind has been deprived of Joyce's eyesight for too long. You cannot say it is closed altogether, but Joyce knows very little about life as it has been in the large—since he finished *Ulysses*.
>
> He has sat within the groove of his thought, he has mumbled

things to himself, he has heard his voice on the pornograph and thought of sound, sound, mumble, murmer.

Three decades of life have been lived since he began writing, of the last two he has learned almost nothing. Of the dominant and cleaving ideas of the last decade he is nearly unconscious.

Hence, Pound characterized Joyce's later writings as 'that diarrohea of consciousness', while continuing to applaud the great revolutionary masterpiece that had been *Ulysses*. *Ulysses*, Pound reiterated, 'is the end, the summary, of a period . . . The katharsis of *Ulysses*, the joyous satisfaction as the first chapters rolled into Holland place, was to feel that here was the JOB DONE and finished, the diagnosis and cure was here. The sticky, molasses-covered filth of current print, all the fugs, all the foetors, the whole boil of the European mind, had been lanced'.

Joyce's reaction to Pound's adverse criticism was characteristic. He started treating him as his antagonist, and depicting him as such under various guises in *Finnegans Wake*. After Joyce's death Pound discussed Joyce in three of the talks he gave on the Rome Radio—talks that were to get him into trouble with the United States on the charge of treason. While recalling what he had done to bring out both the publication and the recognition of *Ulysses*, Pound reassessed the grounds for regarding that work not only as Joyce's masterpiece, but also as a masterwork of twentieth century fiction, a super-novel. 'And I went out with a big brass drum, because a masterwork is a masterwork, and damn all and damn whom wont back it, without hedgin'. And in the face of Wyndham Lewis's criticism of *Ulysses*—'Don't seem [meaning Mr. Joyce doesn't seem] to have a very NEW pt. of view about anything'—Pound had this to say :

> in the old style of painting say Rembrandt or Durer or Carpaccio, or Mantegna when a painter starts painting a picture he damms well better NOT git a new point of view till he has finished it.
>
> Same way for a masterpiece of lit. New pt. of view shd BE either before a man starts his painting, his recording contemporary Ans-

chauung contemporary disposition to life, or AFTER he is thru his portrayin.

That was Ulysses LIMIT, it painted a dying world, whereof some parts are eternal.

The point of comparison between Wyndham Lewis and Joyce —and for Pound *Ulysses*, Wyndham Lewis's *Apes of God* and Cummings's *Eimi*, formed 'a trio or triad', that encompassed 'Hist. morale contemporaine, History of contemporary morals; manner and customs, the REAL history of the ERA'—was precisely this, that whereas Lewis had 'philosophic view', however 'wrongheaded', Joyce 'had not philosophy, not so you would notice it. Nothing much alive and bustin the old partitions'. Instead, what Pound found in Joyce was 'some ruck end of theology and a VERY conventional outlook'. But it is by reading all the three volumes by Joyce, Lewis and Cummings, that Pound points out, 'one can see that the novel did not die with Ulysses'.

However, Pound reserved his severest strictures for *Finnegans Wake*[1]—Joyce's fictional 'go on', as he called it, in which Joyce is 'hunting/he is experimenting with a technique/ bourgeois version' and Pound added: 'I havnt patience to wade through it/thank god I am not employed to estimate the amount of real metal in low grade ores/(no pun intended)'. And when, after Joyce's death, Pound recalled his first contacts with Joyce and his involvement in Joyce's literary career and in the genesis, publication and critical recognition of *Ulysses*, he did so both as a friend and as a critic, as a chronicler of an era that was as much his own as Joyce's, and an arbiter of taste as well as a moulder of sensibility. In 'James Joyce: To His Memory', Pound summed up what Joyce's career amounted to in terms of his creative achievement—as distinct from his technical and linguistic experimentations—and from the canon of that achievement Pound, once again, excluded *Exiles* on the one hand, and *Finnegans Wake* on the other. In its frankness of tone, its discriminating acumen and analytical grasp and in its sense of the historical

situation, of which both Joyce and Pound were more protagonists than products, the summing up is typical of Pound as a critic and as a prose writer at his most inspired—a summing up that clinches and emphasises the grounds on which Pound regarded Joyce as a great creative writer, and on which, we ourselves can regard Pound as the first and foremost critic as well as champion of Joyce just as F. R. Leavis is of D. H. Lawrence :

> I don't think this last work a safe model for infant writer nor did he himself so consider it. In fact that technique, for someone lacking Joyce's own particular contents, is not greatly to be recommended. A man who has made three masterworks has a right to experiment. There is no reason for obstructing the traffic. With *Dubliners, A Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Joyce's position is sure. And *Ulysses* stands in the light of 'big books' of fiction. From the *Golden Ass* on through *Gargantua, Don Quixote, Bouvard* and *Pecuchet*. But that line did not end with ULYSSES; e. e. cummings wrote EIMI, where the technique is necessary to the subject, and the critics of fiction, of the 'over-size' novel, can compute the weight and size of *Ulysses*, better by comparing it not only with its precursors, but with Cummings' work and with Wyndham Lewis' *Apes of God* (bis). Criticism gains nothing, understanding of literature as such gains nothing by supposing that only one book has been written, or that one author exhausts the whole range and scope of an era. *Ulysses* stands properly in relation both to forerunners and to successors. It was in its author's own mind a mine of rich COMEDY, not a crucifix set in a chapel or a bag of saint's bones to be worshipped. If we were diverted by Mr Wells' suggestion that Joyce had cloacal obsession, and that such books should be kept in locked cupboards it may as well go on record that in the storm of abuse in the 1920's Joyce emitted only one mild complaint, thus verbatim: If only some one had said among all those critics that the book is really damn funny!

Department of Italian
Language and Literature
The Queen's University
BELFAST

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] All the quotations in this article—except when indicated otherwise—are from the book which New Directions of New York brought out in 1966.

[2] Pound's critical assessment of *Finnegans Wake* fully accords with Leavis's own assessment of it. In 'Joyce and the Revolution of the Word' (in F. R. Leavis, *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher*, edited by G. Singh, Chatto and Windus, 1982), Leavis points out that in the *Work in Progress*, 'even in the best parts, we can never be unaware that the organization is external and mechanical. Each line is a series of jerks, as the focus jumps from point to point . . . To justify a medium much less obtrusive in pretentions than that of the *Work in Progress* Joyce would have had to have a commanding theme, animated by some impulsion from the inner life capable of maintaining a high pressure. Actually the development of the medium appears to be correlated with the absence of such a theme—to be its consequence'. p. 123.

Harish Raizada

TWO VOICES IN *A PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST AS A YOUNG MAN*

Flaubert's observation; 'The artist must be in his work as God is in creation, invisible yet all powerful; we must sense him everywhere but never see him',[1] lays stress on the need for detachment on the author's part in his writings. Keats insists on this kind of objectivity against the Wordsworthian, or 'egotistical sublime'. 'The poetical character, according to him, 'is not itself—it has no self...It is everything and nothing—it has no character...'[2]. Some of the luminaries in modern literature like Proust, Celine, Joyce, Faulkner, Lawrence, Navokov, Hemingway, Malcolm Lawry and Saul Bellow do not measure up to this ideal but take pride in the kind of self-insisting and self-exploring creative adventure that Keats deprecates.

Prose fiction which had earlier been sustained by the organic life of society now becomes centred on the psyche of the author. With the emergence of the self as the central object in modern art and literature Shakespeare's norm of personal effacement recedes to the background and the egotistical sublime emerges into significance as the means of assimilating the chaos of the contemporary world and is used as a creative strategy by the artist. In such modern classics as *A Portrait of The Artist As a young man, Remembrance of Things past, Journey to the End of the Night, Sons and Lovers,* the writer seems to be at the centre and reflects the triumph of the creative consciousness in the hero. The novelist now tries to recapture the growth of his own adolescent mind and relishes the exercise of his gift as an artist. In these autobio-

graphical novels the writer as the hero speaks in his own voice and occasionally tries to objectify his own aspirations and strivings as an artist.

A Portrait of The Artist As a Young Man which mediates a sensitive and talented youth's quest for 'unsubstantial image' of beauty in the face of the odd and sordid surroundings, is the story of the developing artistic consciousness of young James Joyce himself. The young man Stephen Dedalus who emerges as 'an ascetic aesthete'[3] in the novel represents Joyce's own image as a young man. Joyce signed his early letters and stories 'Stephen Dedalus,' and Stephen's home and parents are like Joyce's own. Even Stephen's lofty ideal of beauty and the supernal purity of his aesthetic concepts are similar to those Joyce had formulated very early in his literary career.[4] The novel, however, reflects only one aspect of Joyce and not the whole of him. Joyce remarked to Frank Budgen that the important words in the full title are the last four ones : 'As A Young Man'.[5]

What differentiates the *Portrait* from other autobiographical novels and in some respects renders it superior to them, is the double point of view technique employed by Joyce. Even though the story is told from the subjective viewpoint of the hero, Stephen Dedalus, the author exposing the weaknesses of the hero is there all along. Though he refrains from direct comment yet he betrays his own attitude in the very exposition of Stephen's. While other autobiographical novelists try to relive their early past by identifying themselves with their *persona* in the novel, Joyce both identifies himself with Stephen and also keeps himself at a safe distance. The *Portriat* accommodates in its narrative pattern both an objective rendering of reality and a subjective indulgence. Whereas the young Joyce focusses Stephen's quest for ideal beauty the mature Joyce ridicules his inflated self. The author is thus both inside the story and outside it. It is the invention of this double vision which makes the *Portrait* an original experiment[6] in the autobiographical narrative. The presence of the

two voices, the self-centred artist as a young man and the grown-up artist as a neutral observer, also helps reconcile the paradox of Wordsworthian 'egotistical sublime' and Shakespearean self-effacing creator. While the one voice exalts the hero, the other deflates him. Stephen the aesthetic *alazon* is juxtaposed with a corresponding deft *eiron* for purposes of balancing the reader's responses. Hugh Kenner refers to this aspect of the *Portrait* when he remarks :

> The fit reader will be able to see that Stepen's introspective visions are constantly judged, and ironically, by the terms in which they are raised . . . The dashing of youthful hopes is constantly hovering like an ironic disembodied grin, over their genesis.[7]

This helps the author project the dialectics of art and life, the ideal and the real, the ascetic and the sensual and from the synthesis of these emerges Joyce's own mature view of art and its relation to life

II

The two dates, 'Dublin, 1904; and Trieste, 1914', given at the end of the *Portrait*, signify the duration of the various stages of its progress before it was given its final form. Completing the first draft around 1904 when Joyce was about twenty-one he extended it by 1907 under the title *Stephen Hero* to over a thousand pages. He devoted seven more years to condense and recast and concentrate it into a third of its length, with its present title. The qualitative difference between the *Portrait* and *Stephen Hero*, resulted from minimizing the author's overt judgments and dropping the adjectives which hinted at his latent presence in the earlier version. Purged of the authorial intrusions, the *Portrait* in its finished form appeared as an 'authorless' work exhibiting through the technique of a sustained 'interior monologue' the growth of a sensitive boy-hero into young manhood. The ironic voice of the latent author was not audible until the fragment of *Stephen Hero* was published in 1944[8]. The effacement of the author meant such a change in the two versions that the reader failed to observe the 'joco-seriousness' of the *Portrait*. The undercurrent of

ridicule in the authorial commentary of the earlier version is now used as a means for deciphering the ironies of the later work.

Joyce's intended jibe at the protagonist of the *Portrait* is visible in his choice of the name for him and in his significant remark to his friend Frank Budgen, 'I have been rather hard on that young man'.[9] The queerness of the name is emphasized early in the novel when one of Stephen's playmates, Nasty Roche, asks him, '...What is your name ?' and on learning it to be 'Stephen Dedalus', remarks, '...What kind of name is that ?'[10] On another occasion, Athy, 'the fellow out of third of grammar', tells Stephen, '...You have a queer name, Dedalus ... Your name is like Latin' (p. 109).

While the symbolic significance of the name of the hero is obvious the different dimensions attributed to it by the author make it sound ironic. Stephen is the name of the first Christian martyr who protested that God's message to the people had been misinterpreted and who was charged of blasphemy by the synagogue, cast out of the city and stoned. That Joyce meant to identify his hero with St Stephen becomes evident when Stephen crossing St Stephen's Green in Dublin calls it 'my green' (p. 364).

The force of the analogy is borne out by the ostracism the young Joyce had to suffer at the hands of his countrymen on the publication of *Dubliners*. There is also a subtle and ironic suggestion that Stephen, the pretentious hero, equates his own alienation from society with the martyrdom of the saint. The surname Dedalus symbolizes Stephen's situation both as a rebel and a future artist and epitomises his life-story from start to finish. The mythical Dedalus was imprisoned in a labyrinth on the island of Crete and escaped by inventing wings. Stephen also considers himself caught in the nets of authority—family, religion and country – from which he is impatient to escape. Talking to his friend Davin he remarks : 'When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nation-

ality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets' (p. 327). A little later, gazing at birds in flight Stephen remembers his mythical namesake :

> A sense of the fear of the unknown moved in the heart of his weariness, a fear of symbols and portents, of the hawklike man whose name he bore soaring out of his captivity on osierwoven wings, of Thoth, the god of writers, writing with a reed upon a tablet and bearing on his narrow ibis head the cusped moon. (pp. 344-45)

The first effective indication of the analogy is conveyed in the crucial scene of the novel, near the end of the fourth chapter. Stephen finally decides against entering the priesthood, in spite of the temptation to power it holds and wishes to be guided by his own wisdom : 'His destiny was to be elusive of social or religious orders. The wisdom of the priest's appeal did not touch him to the quick. He was destined to learn his own wisdom apart from others or to learn the wisdom of others himself wandering among the snares of the world' (p. 269). Soon after taking this momentous decision he goes out on the seashore and has a vision of his true vocation. He watches the clouds drifting Westward, bound for Europe, and seems to hear 'a confused music within him as of memories and names which he was almost conscious of but could not capture even for an instant' (p. 300)—the voices of tradition. The music recedes and he hears some of his playmates calling :

> —Hello, Stephenos !
> —Here comes The Dedalus !
> . . .
> —Come along, Dedalus ! Bous
> Stephenoumenos ! Bous
> Stepheneforos ! (p. 300)

The mockery, while deflating him, also flatters 'his mild proud sovereignty' (p. 301) :

> Now, as never before, his strange name seemed to him a prophecy. . . . Now, at the name of the fabulous artificer, he seemed to hear the noise of dim waves and to see a winged form flying above the waves and

slowly climbing the air. What did it mean? Was it a quaint device opening a page of some medieval book of prophecies and symbols, a hawklike man flying sunwards above the sea, a prophecy of the end he had been born to serve and had been following through the mists of childhood and boyhood, a symbol of the artist forging anew in his workship out of the sluggish matter of the earth a new soaring impalpable, imperishable being ? (p. 301)

A little later he muses over his new vision, 'He would create proudly out of the freedom and power of his soul, as the great artificer whose name he bore, a living thing, new and soaring and beautiful, impalpable, imperishable' (p. 302).

Notwithstanding the grandiloquent presumptions of the hero here the critics have not failed to catch the author's ironic tone of voice in the use of the word 'forging' in the first passage. While engaged in his quest of new aesthetics Stephen is again shown 'striving to forge out an aesthetic philosophy' (p. 309). At the end of the novel he postulates himself as supreme creator and proclaims : 'Welcome, O life ! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated consceince of my race' (p. 367). Though what Stephen means is to create things in the manner of the Grecian smith, 'his fabulous artificer', the word, 'forger' as suggested by William York Tindal, has 'another, less creditable meaning'[11]—a 'deceiver or faker'. That Joyce mockingly intended this latter meaning cannot be brushed aside when we find him describing Shem the Penman, a character corresponding to Stephen, in *Finnegans Wake*, as a forger in the sense of being a fraud. While a 'penman' stands for a writer, "Shem" is an equivalent of 'a sham, a forger'. Joyce also called himself 'a trickster'.[12] Looking at Stephen's amateurish aesthetic philosophy and juvenile attempts at artistic creation the writer is justified in treating him as a pretentious forger rather than a successful artist. Robert S. Ryf rightly observes : 'The idea of Stephen as forger should not surprise us. His pitifully few attempts at artistic creation in the *Portrait* are narcissistic or onanistic forgeries'.[13]

The fact that Joyce wishes to consider his hero a failure[14] also becomes obvious when we find him ironically identifying Stephen with Dedalus's son, Icarus, who tried to fly on his father's wings, went too near the sun and fell into the sea. Soon after Stephen's imagining himself Dedalus we find him soaring sunwards :

> His heart trembled; his breath came faster and a wild spirit passed over his limbs as though he were soaring sunwards. His heart trembled in ecstasy of fear and his soul was in flight. His soul was soaring in an air beyond the world and the body he knew was purified in a breath and delivered of incertitude and made radiant and commingled with the element of the spirit. An ecstasy of flight made radiant his eyes and wild his breath and tremulous and wild and radiant his winds-wept limbs. (p. 301)

Then he is suddenly brought down by his bantering playmates :

> —One ! Two ! . . . . Look out !
> —O, Cripes, I'm drowned !
> . . . .
> —Stephaneforos ! (pp. 301-302)

At the end of the novel Stephen himself, as if unknowingly, makes a demand upon Dedalus as father : 'Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead' (p. 367). In *Ulysses,* Stephen directly identifies himself with Icarus, the fallen son.

III

The two voices—the overt one of the inflated ego of the young hero dreaming of other-worldliness and trying to turn into an exile to escape the constricting pressures of family, religion and country[15], and the latent one of the jeering author bent on deflating him to make him realize the insignificance of this-worldliness—constitute the undercurrent of the entire novel. Turning the hero into an exile to help him pursue his vocation as an artist, determines the structure of the novel. Each of the five chapters represents a series of trial flights and reveals a stage in the hero's development. This five-part structure, with climax in the fourth and resolution in the fifth,

is similar to that of the classical drama. As William York Tindall points out the other analogies for this veritable quincunx 'suggest themselves, the classical symphony, for example, or the poem'.[16] At the end of each chapter Stephen discovers his own identity in a new role which frees him for the moment from the pressure of outer and inner reality which operates as a constricting force. For these moments of revelation which Stephen reaches through the dialectics of the novel Joyce coined the word, epiphanies.[17] It may be noted that these epiphanies are always preceded or followed by very prosaic and depressing experiences. While the former are intended to underline the different stages of the young hero's understanding and exalt him, the latter represent the ironic voice of the hidden author and help diminish his stature.

The first chapter dwells upon Stephen's infancy at Bray and his childhood period at a Jesuit School in Clongowes Wood. Throughout this movement he appears as a fear-stricken child subjected to repression by his family, bantering by his playmates and pandying by his teacher. Left to himself he nurses high ambitions and imagines himself placed against the setting of the Universe. Examining his geography book, he comes upon an inscription written by him on its flyleaf :

Stephen Dedalus
Class of Elements
Clongowes Wood College
Sallins
Country Kildare
Ireland
Europe
The World
The Universe

And on the opposite page his friend Fleming had written :

Stephen Dedalus is my name,
Ireland is my nation.
Clongowes is my dwelling place
And heaven my expectation. (p. 183)

The author ironically juxtaposes his high expectations against his timidity when he shows the infant Stephen hiding himself under the table as his angry mother and aunt ask him to apologise 'if not, the eagles will come and pull out his eyes' (p. 177). Stephen is being punished for announcing his intention to marry his neighbour Eileen when they grow up. In the school he keeps apart from his schoolmates and is unable to participate actively in the games because of his 'small and weak' constitution and 'watery eyes'. The boys ridicule him for his absurd name and one of them, Wells, even shoulders him into a stingy ditch with a big rat jumping in it, for declining to swap a little snuffbox for a chestnut.

Stephen's 'sickness of heart' turns into physical ailment and we find the delirious nine-year-old boy obsessed by thoughts of death. The scene changes to the Christmas dinner at home and he witnesses a dispute arising between the aunt Dante defending the Catholic priests and Stephen's father and Mr Casey castigating them in their defence of Parnell. 'Stephen, raising his terrorstricken face, saw that his father's eyes were full of tears' (p. 202) for his 'dead king', Poor parnell. Back at the school Stephen suffers humiliation when he is unjustly beaten as 'a lazy little schemer' (p. 210) by one of the Jesuit priests, Father Dolan. The boy shows the first signs of revolt against authority when egged on by his classmates he boldly reports the cruelty to the rector of the school. His schoolmates hail him as a minor hero and he feels 'happy and free' (p. 217).

The second chapter shows Stephen growing from childhood into adolescence. The little hero suffers humiliation when he is kept out of the school because of his father's financial crisis. He passes his time in walking, and day-dreaming. His pride and egoism make him shun the company of children at play : 'The noise of children at play annoyed him and their silly voices made him feel, even more keenly than he had felt at Clongowes, that he was different from others. He

did not want to play '(p. 221). He soon begins to 'taste the joy of his loneliness' (p. 224). The reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the romantic tale of an exile, appeals to his growing sense of isolation. He conjures up for himself numerous romantic interludes with the heroine Mercedes whose marriage with Monte Cristo was prevented by destiny. Brooding upon the flickering vision of her he yearns feverishly for his own ideal image of beauty .

> He wanted to meet in the real world the unsubstantial image which his soul so constantly beheld. He did not know where to seek it or how, but a premonition which led him on told him that this image would, without any overt act of his, encounter him. They would meet quietly as if they had known each other and had made their tryst, perhaps at one of the gates or in some more secret place. They would be alone, surrounded by darkness and silence : and in that moment of supreme tenderness he would be transfigured .... Weakness and timidity and inexperience would fall from him in that magic moment.
> (p. 222)

As Stephen is lost in dreaming of his tryst with his ideal beauty two yellow moving vans abruptly intrude and his house is dismantled : 'Two great yellow caravans had halted one morning before the door and men had come trampling into the house to dismantle it' (p. 222). The ironic author here deflates Stephen to awaken him to the sordid reality of life and make his vision appear ridiculous.

Shifting to another house, 'the bare cheerless' one, Stephen meets a ringletted girl Emma Clery of the neighbourhood and becomes enamoured of her. He, however, fails to respond to her overtures just as he had earlier failed in his relations with Eileen. Emma travels alone with him on a tram and he realizes that she wishes him to catch hold of her and kiss her, but he does neither. He keeps sitting alone in the deserted tram, tearing his ticket into shreds and staring gloomily at the corrugated footboard. Next day, however, he secretly composes a poem about her and hiding the book, goes into his mother's bedroom and gazes' at his face for a long time in the mirror of her dressing table' (p. 226). The sneering

author exposes here the young egoist as a figure of fun. The would-be poet 'turns out to be a rapt Narcissus'.

As his father rehabilitates his financial postion Stephen resumes his studies by joining Belvedere College. He dinstinguishes himself and, in view of his reputation for essay writing, is elected secretary to the gymnasium. His egoistic isolation from his classmates, however, arouses their jealousy and one of them, Heron, who discerns his passion for Emma Clery, teases him and strikes him playfully on the leg with a cane, saying 'admit'. Though roused to anger Stephen joins his classmates in their jovial mood and wishes the banter to end without any acrimony : 'Stephen's movement of anger had already passed. He was neither flattered nor confused, but simply wished the banter to end. He scarcely resented what had seemed to him a silly indelicateness, for he knew that the adventure in his mind stood in no danger from these words : and his face mirrored his rival's false smile' (p. 232).

Stephen is further deflated when the essay which 'was for him the chief labour of his week', is described by Mr Tate, the English master, as containing heresy. He evades the charge by a quibble and appeases his teacher, but his rival in the class, Heron, corners him and humiliates him for preferring the heretic, romantic poet Byron to Tennyson. Though beaten by his classmates he bears no malice or anger towards his tormentors : 'He had not forgotten a whit of their cowardice and cruelty but the memory of it called forth no anger from him' (p. 235). It is obvious that this detachment originates from Stephen's feeling of superiority over his classmates whom he considers much beneath his notice. Even his habit of quiet obedience to exhortations of his father and his masters 'to be a gentleman', 'to be a good Catholic above all things', 'to be strong and manly and healthy', and to 'be true to his country and help to raise up her language and tradition', is only on the surface and is not an integral part of his personality. The voice of authority carries little weight with him, for he is engaged in the pursuit of 'intangible phantoms' of his mind :

> And it was the din of all these hollowsounding voices that made him halt irresolutely in the pursuit of phantoms. He gave them ear only for a time but he was happy only when he was far from them, beyond their call, alone, or in the company of phantasmal comrades. (p. 236)

That he prefers to be alone becomes obvious when he feels unhappy to find his father and family waiting for him outside the chapel after the drama in which he has participated is over. He leaves them on a flimsy pretext and runs across the road down the hill. 'He hardly knew where he was walking. Pride and hope and desire like crushed herbs in his heart sent up vapours of maddening incense before the eyes of his mind. He strode down the hill amid the tumult of suddenrisen vapours of wounded pride and fallen hope and baffled desire' (p. 238). The scene is a symbolic foreshadowing of Stephen's later escape from his family when he turns into an exile to pursue his artistic vocation. The jeering author, however, ridicules him when he breathes the smell of decaying vegetation and animal urine: 'That is horse piss and rotted straw, he thought. It is a good odour to breathe. It will calm my heart. My heart is quite calm now' (p. 238). Is it for the pursuit of this enchantment that the young hero turns into an exile ?

Stephen's trip to Cork in the comany of his father, which affords him a glimpse of the past family life, makes him feel still more restless. He finds himself lacking the vigour and *joie de viure* of his ancestors :

> He had known neither the pleasure of companionship with others nor the vigour of rude male health nor filial piety. Nothing stirred within his soul but a cold and cruel and loveless lust. His childhood was dead or lost and with it his soul capable of simple joys and he was drifting amid life like the barren shell of the moon. (p. 245)

For the time being he spends his time merrily in the company of his family and resolves to consolidate its financial position with the money accruing from his essay prizes. His feeling of unrest, deepens as he begins to realize his inability to establish communion with his father and other members of the family : 'He had not gone one step nearer the lives he had

sought to approach nor bridged the restless shame and rancour that had divided him from mother and brother and sister' (p. 247). The wasting fires of lust overhwelm him now and he broods upon them. He grows increasingly restive 'to appease the fierce longings of his heart before which everything else was idle and alien' (p. 248). The young hero who has yearned for a tryst with the ethereal Mercedes, strays into the crooked maze of narrow and dirty streets and ironically enough encounters an Irish whore. The experience with the harlot which ends the chapter, though so different from Stephen's dreams of romance, is again expressed as a triumph. 'In her arms he felt that he had suddenly become strong and fearless and sure of himself' (p. 249).

The third chapter shows Stephen in a state of utter mortification as the sense of the horror of sin committed by him grips his soul : 'He had sinned mortally not once but many times and he knew that, while he stood in danger of eternal damnation for the first sin alone, by every succeeding sin he multiplied his guilt and his punishment' (p. 251). In this state of anguish he even stops praying : 'What did it avail to pray when he knew that his soul lusted after its own destruction' (p. 251)? His agony is further aggravated when at the religious retreat in honour of saint Francis Xavier, Father Arnall, his aged teacher from Clongowes Wood, preaches a terrifying sermon on the horrors of hell and eternal damnation. Stephen is so overwhelmed that he feels : 'Every word of it was for him. Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed. The preacher's knife had probed deeply into his disclosed conscience and he felt now that his soul was festering in sin' (p. 260). He feels so horrified that he imagines death creeping towards his heart and body : No help; No help; He--he himself—his body to which he had yielded was dying into the grave with it' (p. 256). In an agony of self-abasement he prays earnestly for forgiveness and resolves to confess his sin to save his soul : 'A madman! Confess! O he would indeed be free and sinless again' (p. 279)! Fearing

exposure before his friends he seeks another chapel and lays bare his soul before a benign priest. The chapter ends as Stephen after the experience of penance strides homewards in gay spirits :

> He strode homewards, conscious of an invisible grace pervading and making light his limbs. In spite of all he had done it. He had confessed and God had pardoned him. His soul was made fair and holy once more, holy and happy. (p. 283)

The mature Joyce's irony in this chapter is aimed at both the church and the young sinner. The sermons addressed to 'dear little brothers in Christ Jesus', constitute the crudest appeal to fear in the way they describe the physical and mental tortures devised by the benevolent God for his erring children. Joyce also ridicules the young hero for overemphasizing his state of damnation and taking the religious sermons on their face value. 'The little laughter of a girl', which reaches Stephen's 'burning ear' as he crosses the square, walking homewards (p. 260) in a dazed and distressed plight, symbolizes the author's sly sneer aimed at him.

The ironic voice of the author becomes more pronounced at the beginning of the fourth chapter. Joyce here ridicules Stephen's repentant piety as he describes his absurd devotional disciplines. One of these is to get used to the foul smell of long-standing urine: 'He found in the end that the only odour against which his sense of smell revolted was a certain stale fishy stink like that of longstanding urine: and whenever it was possible he subjected himself to this unpleasant odour' (p. 287). Stephen dedicates each day to some aspect of Church ritual or dogma and makes sure that his acts of piety are re-echoed 'radiantly in heaven': 'and at times his sense of such immediate repercussion was so lively that he seemed to feel his soul in devotion pressing like fingers the keyboard of a great cash register and to see the amount of his purchase start forth immediately in heaven, not as a number but as a frail column of incense or as a slender flower'

(p. 285). Joyce's sneer becomes still more obvious when after describing Stephen's funny acts of self-mortification, he makes him ask himself : 'I have amended my life, have I not' (p. 289) ?

Impressed by Stephen's life of chastity and devotion the director of the college summons him to discuss his vocation and inspires him to join the holy order: 'And you, Stephen, have been such a boy in this college, prefect of Our Blessed Lady's sodality. Perhaps you are the boy in this college whom God designs to call to Himself' (p. 292). Stephen leaves, pondering the possibility of the Reverend Stephen Dedalus, S. J. The chilly orderliness of the life of a priest, however, repels him and 'at once from every part of his being unrest' begins 'to irradiate' (p. 295). He feels revulsion against being a part of a rigid organization and asks himself: 'What had come of the pride of his spirit which had always made him conceive himself as a being apart in every order' (p. 295) ? The instinct to reject grows stronger as he meditates on the life of the priest, and he finally clinches the matter : 'He would never swing the thurible before the tabernacle as priest' (p. 296). He resolves to be guided by his own wisdom even if it leads him to 'the snares of the world' and 'its ways of sin': 'He would fall. He had not yet fallen but he would fall silently, in an instant' (p. 296). The author bent on deflation brings this falling 'Icarus' close to the kitchen of his house from where 'the faint sour stink of rotted cabbages came towards him from the kitchen gardens on the rising ground above the river. He smiled to think that it was this disorder, the misrule and confusion of his father's house and the stagnation of vegetable life which was to win the day in his soul' (p. 296).

Stephen now wanders by the seashore musing over the vague objective he is destined to achieve and for whose sake he has rejected the dignified office of the priest : 'The end he had been born to serve yet did not see had led him to escape by an unseen path and now it beckoned to him once

more and a new adventure was about to be opened to him' (p. 298). As he crosses the 'trembling bridge', he raises his eyes and sees 'the slow drifting clouds, dappled and sea-borne', voyaging high over Ireland, westward bound. The floating clouds symbolize his own voluntary drift from his country. He hears a confused music and as it recedes, finds himself ridiculed by his classmates bathing in the sea: 'Stephanos Dedalos! Bous Stephanoumenos! Bous Stephanaforos!' Though denigrated by the jeering cries of youthful swimmers who bring him down to earth from his lyric attempt to soar, Stephen is reminded by their voices of his fabulous namesake—Greek artificer Dedalus—and sees an apparition of the hawklike man flying sunward. He feels exalted as the vision reveals to him his true vocation, not of a priest but of an artificer or artist. He is not disheartened by the ironic cries, '—O, Cripes, I'm drowned', which suggest to him that he is more like the son Icarus who failed than the father Dedalus. Unmindful of the sneers of his classmates he affirms triumphantly that he will create imperishable beauty, instinct with life, out of his own soul. He will become a writer and fly from the snares of authority by forging the wings of language. Stephen wades in the sea, all alone and is happy contemplating the revelation of his function and destiny. Suddenly he sees a girl standing in the water, alone, gazing out to sea :

> She seemed like one whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird. Her long slender bare legs were delicate as a crane' and pure save where an emerald trail of seaweed had fashioned itself as a sign upon the flesh. Her thighs, fuller and softened as ivory, were bared utmost to the hips where the white fringes of her drawers were like feathering of soft white down. Her slateblue skirts were kilted boldly about her waist and dovetailed behind her. Her bosom was as a bird's, soft and slight, slight and soft as the breast of some darkplumaged dove. But her long fair hair was girlish : and girlish, and touched with the wonder of mortal beauty, her face. (p. 303)

She returns Stephen's gaze and his soul cries out with 'profane joy'. He sets off across the strand in ecstasy, 'singing

wildly to the sea, crying to greet the advent of the life that had cried to him' (p. 303) :

> Her image had passed into his soul for ever and no word had broken the holy silence of ecstasy. Her eyes had called him and his soul had leaped to the call. To live, to err, to fall, to triumph, to recreate life out of life. A wild angel had appeared to him, the angel of mortal youth and beauty, an envoy from the fair courts of life, to throw open before him in an instant of ecstasy the gates of all the ways of error and glory. On and on and on.
>
> (p. 304).

Stephen wanders on, unmindful of time and place. Finally he stretches out on the sand and experiences the divine vision: 'Glimmering and trembling, trembling and unfolding, a breaking light, an opening flower, it spread in endless succession to itself, breaking in full crimson and unfolding and fading to palest rose, leaf by leaf and wave of light by wave of light, flooding all the heavens with its soft flushes, every flush deeper than other' (p. 304).

The last chapter begins with Stephen's deflation when the ironic author abruptly makes him confront the sordid realities of life. After his epiphany, showing his soul swooning amid heavenly flowers we find him back in the kitchen of his house draining his third cup of watery tea to the dregs and chewing the crusts of fried bread scattered about him. His father teases him by asking one of his sisters: 'Is your lazy bitch of a brother gone out yet' (p. 305) ? As Stephen takes his morning walk across 'the squalor and noise and sloth of the city', he dreams of the great celebrities of literature—'the silverveined prose of Newman', the dark homour of Guido Cavalcanti', 'the spirit of Ibsen', 'aesthetic formulations of Aristotle or Aquinas' and 'the dainty songs of Elizabethans' (p. 306). At the University he keeps himself away from the common herd of students and thus invites the criticism of his classmates. McCann tells him: '—Dedalus, you're an anti-social being, wrapped up in yourself' (p. 307); Davin, who alone calls him by his first name, says, 'You're a terrible man, Stevie . . . always alone' (p. 326), and a little later continues :

'Try to be one of us. In your heart you are an Irishman but your pride is too powerful' (p. 327). His closest friend Cranly asks him searchingly : 'Have you never loved anyone' (p. 357) ? Stephen's isolation increases and he refuses to sign a petition for universal peace which exposes him to the criticism of his friends.

Having chosen the vocation of an artist as his life-career Stephen forges his aesthetic theories by accepting Aristotle and Aquinas. He expounds these formulations to his friend, Lynch, who nonseriously interrupts him by his irreverent ejaculations throughout his discourse. The author here ridicules Stephen's enthusiasm by making Lynch debunk him. As Stephen initiates his theories Lynch tries to brush him aside by saying : 'Stop ! I won't listen! I am sick. I was out last night on a yellow drunk with Horan and Goggins' (p. 238). When Stephen persists in offering his definitions of pity and terror Lynch asks him, '—Repeat'. At various places Lynch breaks into 'a whinny of laughter' rubbing 'both his hands over his groins but without taking from his pockets' (p 329). Responding to Stephen's definition of art as 'the human disposition of sensible or intelligible matter for an aesthetic end' (p. 330) Lynch makes a grimace at the raw grey sky and says : 'If I am to listen to your aesthetic philosophy give me at least another cigarette. I don't care about it. I don't even care about women. Damn you and damn everything. I want a job of five hundred a year. You can't get me one' (p. 331). Lynch appears to be impressed by Stephen's elaboration of Aquinas's theory: 'Three things are needed for beauty, wholeness, harmony and radiance'. After Stephen has explained *integritas* ('Wholeness') and *consonantia* ('harmony') Lynch remarks : '—Bull's eye again! Tell me now what is *claritas* and you win the cigar' (p. 335). Stephen reaches the climax of his discourse and elaborates his doct ine of the impersonality of the artist : 'The artist, like the God of the creation,remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence,

indifferent, paring his fingernails', Lynch adds : 'Trying to refine them also out of existence' (p. 337). As it begins to rain and they move to the national library Lynch further remaks : 'What do you mean by prating about beauty and the imagination in this miserable God-forsaken island? No wonder the artist retired within or behind his handiwork after having perpetrated this country' (p. 337). This final observation bedevils Stephen's whole discourse and his pretensions as an aesthete suffers a further set-back when the artistic product of his lyrical ecstasy, the villenelle he composes immediately after formulating his aesthetics, turns out to be just a mediocre poem.

If Lynch ridicules Stephen for his flamboyant aesthetic theories Cranly tries to pull him down for his denigration of his family, country and church as mere pitfals in his life. When Stephen tells Cranly about his resolution to leave Ireland in order to achieve unfettered self-expression :

> I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church : and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use—silence, exile and cunning. (p. 362)

Cranly laughs 'almost slyly' and pressing 'Stephen's arm with an elder's affection : 'Cunning indeed! Is it you? You poor poet, you!' and further adds gaily, 'Yes, my child' (p. 362). Unheeding Cranly's apprehensions about the risks involved in being alone and without a friend Stephen prepares himself to leave the country and start a new life : 'Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race' (p. 367). His pretensions, however, sound hollow as we find him turning his back on those very realities which he wished to encounter and refashion.

IV

It is worthwhile to notice that the mature Joyce's irony is directed against Stephen's theories of art and his aesthetic

indulgence. This irony is brought into play in underscoring the repeated clashes between his artistic imagination and the world of external reality. Whenever Stephen tries to escape the sordid aspects of life in order to catch a glimpse of an ideal and 'unsubstantial image of beauty', the sneering attitude of the author brings about his deflation. What Joyce is anxious to impress upon the reader is the futility of any attempt to flee from reality, for all its sordidness has to be confronted and assimilated rather than rejected.

This emphasis on reality acquires special relevance when it is juxtaposed with Stephen's lofty idealism in his aesthetics. Propounding his definition of art Stephen remarks :

> To speak of these things and to try to understand their nature, and having understood it, to try slowly and humbly and constantly to express, to press out again, from the gross earth or what it brings forth, from sound and shape and colour which are the prison gates of our soul, an image of the beauty we have come to understand—that is art. (p. 330)

Stephen rejects any art which provokes either mere desire or loathing because such an art fails to reflect the ideal image of beauty :

> Beauty expressed by the artist cannot awaken in us an emotion which is kinetic or a sensation which is purely physical. It awakens, or ought to awaken or induce, an aesthetic stasis, an ideal pity or an ideal terror, a stasis called forth, prolonged and at last dissolved by what I call the rhythm of beauty. (p. 330)

Referring to Plato, he remarks : 'Plato, I believe, said that beauty is the splendour of truth. I don't think that it has a meaning but the true and the beautiful are akin '(p. 331). The kind of art which Stephen advocates is thus remote from everyday existence. Darcy O' Brien is correct when he remarks: 'Stephen's theory dissociates art from life'.[18] The hidden author's repeated attempt to bring Stephen in contact with the baser facts of life reminds the reader of the limited range of his aesthetics. Joyce's own conception of art

matures as as result of the synthesis of the beautiful and the sordid aspects of mundane reality.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] Gustave Flaubert's letter to Mademoisella Leroyer de Chantepia (19 February 1857), *Correspondence* (1903).

[2] Keats's letter to Richard Woodhouse (27 October 1818), Lord Houghton, *The Life And Letters of Keats* (London : J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 1938), p. 133.

[3] Darcy O' Brien, *The Conscience of James Joyce* (Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 9

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 11

[5] Robert S. Ryf, *A New Approach to Joyce* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962), p. 158.

[6] William York Tindall gives credit to Henry James for inventing the subjective-objective method in his novel, *The Ambassadors*. See *A Reader's Guide to James Joyce* (Thames and Hudson, London, 1959), p. 63. Though Henry James unfolds the story in *The Ambassadors* from the 'Central consciousness' of one character, his narrative is not a sustained 'interior-monologue' like the narrative of the *Portrait*.

[7] 'The *Portrait* in Perspective', *James Joyce : Two Decades of Criticism*, ed. Seon Givens (New York : Vanguard Press, 1948), pp. 154-155.

[8] Wayne C. Booth. *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (The University of Chicago Press, 1965), p. 333. According to Eugene Jolas, Joyce 'was always astonished that so few people had commented on the comic spirit in his writings'. See Eugene Jolas, 'My Friend. James Joyce', in *James Joyce : Two Decades of Criticism, op. cit*, p. 8.

[9] Tindall, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

[10] *The Portrait of The Artist As A Young Man* included in *The Essential James Joyce*, ed. Harry Levin (Jonathan Cape, London, 1956), p. 178

[11] Tindall, *op. cit.*, p. 67

[13] *Letters*, ed. Stuart Gilbert (1957), p. 409.
[14] Ryf. *op. cit.* p. 167
[15] Joyce's brother Stanislaus has revealed that the word 'hero' is satiric. Quoted by Wayne C. Booth, p. 332.
[16] The *Portrait*, p. 362.
[17] Tindall, *op. cit.*, p. 59
[18] It is an example of Joyce's use of religious vocabulary for his artistic concepts. Joyce used it first in *Stephen Hero*.
[19] Dary O' Brien, *op. cit.*. p. 10.

Z. A. Usmani

ULYSSES —TO NO END GATHERED

With respect to meanings and values the fundamental form of the novel is what Alan Friedman calls 'the stream of conscience'.[1] In this light Stephen's pronouncement towards the end of *A Portrait* becomes all the more meaningful:

> Welcome, O life! I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

Along with other conscience-forging perceiving selves Stephen figures in *Ulysses*. But in this novel he can be only partially identified with Joyce the artist who is present in and beyond his work. The stream of conscience of a perceiving self or character must be distinguished, therefore, from the composite stream of the conscience of the race—not only the Irish race but also the human race—that Joyce forges in the mind of the reader. He forges it as multi-perspectival knowledge—and it is in this inclusive sense of 'Knowledge' (*Conscientia*), which implies consciousness as well as moral awareness, that we would like to use the term 'conscience'—through a collation of various fragments of awareness. Though one is tempted to seek analogues in post-impressionism, cubism, montage, musical *leit-motifs*, Bergsonian vitalism, relativism etc. one gets the impression that the Joycean fragments of awareness lie in a chaotic mass. Thus F.R. Leavis is of the opinion that there is 'no organizing principle' in *Ulysses*. I do not take it to be wholly true. And yet I take it to be true in a very important sense.

Critics are to be blamed for looking for a finished or 'closed' structure in *Ulysses*. The novel has an 'open' structure, and

its end is a new beginning, a juncture of open possibilities, for the conscience of the race, informed by this structure, to proceed on its endless journey. Critics are also to be blamed for not taking proper note of the myth which operates as a structurally controlling principle and unites the various fragments of awareness. Eliot was the first to draw our attention to this mythical method, which he himself followed for his own purposes. But I am afraid the myth in *Ulysses* has not been properly defined and understood. Without denying the importance of Stuart Gilbert's work, we must realize that the novel embodies the myth of a Ulyssean journey which is significant, neither because of its outward events nor because of its destination, but because of its endless trajectory of inward, mental events. In other words, it is the myth of the endless Ulyssean journey of the ever-developing conscience of the ever-exiled, ever-unappeased human race—on a deeper level it runs through *The Odyssey* itself. So much for the critics. But Joyce himself is to be blamed for lacking the high-seriousness of value-concern in his treatment of the myth and of the material the myth would organically unite. (What would have happened if Wordsworth had such an attitude in *The Immortality Ode*, or Eliot in the *Waste Land?*). Thus there *is* an 'organizing principle' in *Ulysses*, in a loose, rather jocoserious sense. But there *isn't* an organizing principle in an immanently absolute sense, in the sense of an all-pervading high-seriousness of value-concern, such as we find in very great works of art.

With his jocoserious attitude Joyce 'forges' (shapes, and also shapes in order to deceive) the conscience of the race through an interplay of multiple conscience-perspectives. There are the personal perspectives of the perceiving selves created through interior monologue and authorial comment, and along with them there are the impersonal perspectives of various modes and varying degrees of sympathy, ranging from the dramatic through all manner of narrative down to the coldly scientific. The central conscience-perspective which

is also the most fractured one, even to the extent of lending itself to relativism, is that of Ulysses-Bloom's stream of conscience which is defined in relation to the streams of conscience of other perceiving selves, particularly those of Telemachus-Stephen and Penelope-Molly, and in relation to the whole stream of relevant events in the novel.

The jocoseriousness may be unforgivable, but with his multiple perspectives Joyce is countering all absolutism to create a new consciousness. He would forge the uncreated conscience of the race through the multi-persectival knowledge of a reality which would seem all the more devastatingly and yet all the more fascinatingly mysterious because of such knowledge. It is not fair, therefore, to call *Ulysses* a nihilistic work. It moves towards an acceptance of the human situation and a saying of 'Yes' to all that life offers. In its own way it affirms life, and it also affirms the love which is 'life for men and women'. Think of Bloom, the common man whose epic *Ulysses* is. He who fails miserably in his tragi-comic but nonetheless 'heroic' attempts to establish satisfying relationships with Molly and Stephen, he who is to no end cuckolded, humiliated, tormented, persecuted, abnegated emerges out of his hell-purgatory with equanimity, with a will to live by adapting himself to changing conditions, and with a persistent ability to love – about which we have never been in doubt ('There is much kindness in the jew'). Not love in any glorious, romantic, possessive or self-exultifying sense. But 'love . . . the opposite of hatred', as he himself puts it in the 'Cyclops' episode (432). 'it's no use. Force, hatred, history, all that. That's not life for men and women. And everybody knows'—unless his heart has been hardened by political cynicism, like that of the foreigner-hating, Cyclops-like Citizen—'that it's the very opposite of that that is really life'. This love which is 'really life' is the love that persists as a primeval 'great bond' of instinctive kindness towards the other person, whatever happens. It loves, so to say, the indulgence in loving action, unconditionally and persistently. 'Love loves to love

love', thinks Bloom jocosely. And then he goes on to deflate his belief by thinking of the tragi-comic odds of love : 'You love a certain person. And this person loves that other person (for example Bloom loves Molly and Molly loves Blazes Boylan) because everybody loves somebody but God loves everybody' (433). You come up against such tragi-comic odds in a universe of 'void incertitude'. In Bloom's own case they are most intensely tragi-comic.

But I would hasten to add that Joyce's jocoseriousness of attitude detracts from the quality of his affirmation in as much as it prevents him from having any discriminating imaginative insight into ultimate values. The mere will to live and the love which is 'the opposite of hatred' would 'promote life', not on any higher or transcendental level, but only on an aboriginal, animistic level—at which the conscience of the race may run along a course of disindividuated cosmic continuance ('In my end is my beginning'). The mere will to live which rolls on with it is not the will made perfect and impelled, as in Dante, by the 'Love that moves the sun and the stars'. Not the will that makes a choice, 'costing not less than everything,' which is basically an act of faith. So, to make Joyce's conscience of the race run along a higher plane of life a drastic, existentialist jump is needed—with which a personal God may also pop in again! Let us assume that the 'open end' of *Ulysses* leaves this, too, as an 'Open Possibility'.

For Joyce the conscience of the race is man's developing knowledge of the human self and its world; the knowledge of the microcosm and the macrocosm and their relations both in terms of actual and possible events in the past and in future. Forging this conscience would be a business of 'stirring memory and desire,' of the evocation of the very hell-purgatory of the world of experience and of dreaming of some kind of paradise. Joyce goes about this business with a jocoserious attitude; but the shifting conscience-perspective of his ironical composition can vibrate with man's deepest

hopes and fears. They can effect a contemplation of the paradoxes of the flesh-bound, contingent existence and of the problems of the sinning-suffering human self in the world of 'Nobodaddy'—its aching loneliness and exile, its inner sense of being, its tormenting conflicts, its disintegration and reintegration, and its possible destinies. It is in the fitness of things that *Ulysses* incorporates an argument on Shakespeare and his works, especially *Hamlet*, and evokes ironical reminders of, not only the *Odyssey* and various stories, legends and parables of exile and return, but also of the works of Blake, Goethe, Dante and Mann. Conscience-forging works, all of them; in so far as they explore the possibility of arriving at a new, atoned and integrated conscience from the disintegrative state of man's exile into experience. And works greater than Joyce's novel, too. But let us not forget Joyce's countryman Swift. For like Swift Joyce, who is again a lesser artist, makes a devastatingly ironical examination of man and his values in order to smash our assumptions, illusions, pretensions and pride. He makes such an examination as he proceeds into the exploration of the human situation and of the mystery of the universe, both the microcosm and the macrocosm. Quite naturally he comes up against metaphysical questions with regard to the nature of the universe and the predicament and destiny of man—questions with regard to the whatness, whoness, whoseness, whenceness and whereness of things.

Stephen's and Bloom's perceiving selves are like different musical instruments raising these questions in their own way turn by turn, the former having metaphysical overtones but the latter resonating with greater 'realism' and intensity of feeling. Both these 'Keyless citizens' who profess 'their disbelief in many orthodox religious, national, social and ethical doctrines' (777) seek, tragicomically, to 'forge' the meaning of things through this or that mythical fancy. For in Joyce's world man lives by fancy alone—'O tell me where fancy is bread?' (706). It is bred (bread) in *Ulysses*, and owing to the author's

deficiency of an all-organizing, value-discriminating power of creative imagination it is not transformed into the 'bread' of the higher life of the spirit. In this novel the myths, which are reduced to mythical fancies and which involve our imaginative energies only jocoseriously, keep cutting across one another through the interplay of shifting ironical perspectives. Thus the myths of 'eternal return' and 'paternity' are cut across by the myth of 'continuity-in-change', which in its turn is cut across by the myth of 'void incertitude'. But this too is finally cut across by the myth of the (amoral) 'stream of bodily life'—Anna Livia Plurabelle.

The mythical fancies that are jocoseriously associated with the figures of Stephen, Bloom and Molly do lend to these characters a mythical concrescence. Thus Stephen Dedalus is not only man as an artist, fallen into decadence and condemned in the pride of his intellect to a self-imposed seclusion, martyrdom, or exile, but also fallen man-angel—his very name reminding us not only of St Stephen but also of both Dedalus and Icarus (270; 674). Add to these the figures he fancifully assimilates to himself in his discourse on the cuckolded Shakespeare who wrote *Hamlet* and on the mystery of paternity. And Stephen is montaged, jocoseriously enough, as proto-Martyr-Telemachus-Christ-Shakespeare-Hamlet-the Ghost-Joyce-Dedalus-Icarus-Lucifer. To assert the freedom of his soul he 'would fly by those nets' of established institutions—nationality, language, religion etc.—that are flung at the human soul. For this reason he has crossed the wish of his dying mother by refusing to pray. But in his flight he is pulled down by the unconscious power of the institutions he has rejected and Blake's Nobodaddy (264), the Hang-man God who presides over them, torments him with remorse and the fear of the judgment to come. He has exiled himself from the house of his father, Simon Dedalus, and thinks that 'Paternity may be a legal fiction.' 'Fatherhood, in the sense of conscious begetting, is unknown to man. It is a mystical estate, an apostolic succession, from only begetter to only begotten. On

that mystery... the church... is founded irremovably because founded, like the world, macro- and-microcosm, upon the void. Upon incertitude, upon unlikelihood' (266). Thus Christ is consubstantial with God according to orthodox theology. In his discourse on *Hamlet*, Shakespeare and paternity, Stephen evokes the various concepts of God's fatherhood of Christ with sacrilegious freedom. He is jocoseriously searching for an adopted father, one of like but not identical substance, as God is of Christ according to the Arian concept. When he meets him in the form of Bloom he does not recognize him as such. And that is the tragi-comedy of it. With the same jocoseriousness he regards Dedalus the fabulous artificer as his spiritual father, whose substance is identical with his own, as God's is with Christ's according to Sabellius.[3] As with Hamlet, the foundations of his ethical values have disintegrated and he has nothing to rely on but his personal convictions and sense of fulfilment of being—nothing but his own fractured conscience.

Leopold Bloom is an exile in a more deeply existentialistic sense. He is the common man, the Everyman-Noman (Ulysses) aspect of the human self. Stephen who is the bullock-befriending bard' is always befriending the powers of sex and fertility. He has no sex-inhibitions; but Bloom has. Bloom has left his father (to die of suicide in a hotel) and the God of his father and has 'sinned against the light', not in the priest's sense, but in that of evading the responsibility of love towards the other person, by breaking his father's heart and by evading the mutuality of pleasure (e.g., in the case of Gerty Mac Dowell and that of the 'bride of darkness' of whom he thinks in 'The Oxen of the Sun' episode). His sexual indulgences and flirtations, which are products of the sex-frustration he feels because of his wife's adultery, are not of a criminal nature, are even close to being innocuous. He suffers for being married to this woman just as he suffers for being born in a jewish family of Hungarian origin. Only if he had a son to hear in his heart the suffering father's mute voice! But his

only son Rudy died when he was only eleven days old, and his death had also something to do with the estrangement of Bloom's conjugal relations with Molly. So Bloom has been exiled to sinning-suffering through the very fact of his birth, which is a coincidence followed by other coincidences. He keeps dreaming Utopian dreams of some promised land of the future—of Agendath Netaim (and subconsciously of 'the new Bloomusalem' and the 'paradisiacal era') and then, in spite of knowing that it has little chance of realization, of a home called 'Bloomville' or 'Flowerville'. In fact he is a jocoserious mythical concrescence of Everyman, Ulysses, Moses, Christ, the sacrificial lamb, Elijah, Shakespeare, Sinbad, Rip Van Winkle and the Wandering Jew. Perhaps he is divine in his essence but God manifests Himself in him and for him as a 'darkness shining in brightness' which brightness cannot comprehend. The personal God has been eclipsed by a cloud of scepticism and His Signs speak no more; they have become mere 'coincidences' in a world of 'void incertitude' through which his mind is making an endless journey. This is not to say that Bloom is irreligious. With his 'kindness' and 'love which is the opposite of hatred' he has more of the spirit of Christian Humanism than his 'christian' persecutors. But the lack of the sense of revelation brings his religion down to an animistic, aboriginal level. If he were to hear Molly's interior monologue he would, possibly, recognize her as *mana*.

Molly (Marion) Bloom has a seemingly unending series of lovers, 'originating in and repeated to infinity' (863), as it were—we can assume Captain Mulvey as the first and Blazes Boylan as the last term of the series, with Bloom himself coming somewhere in between, but none of them is 'neither first nor last nor only nor alone' in the series, though each of them imagines that he is. She seems to be always groping forwards toward some ideal combining pleasure with happiness through beauty. Ironically enough, she has a vague sense of revelation as she intuits the existence of God the Creator

while meditating on the wonderful beauty of nature (931). Being a 'lowly form of an immortal' (15)—like the milk-woman—she with her insatiable desire; her miraculous fecundity; her all-enticing charm; her cat-like ways (65-66); her instinctive, amoral, sub-intellectual responses; her docile aquacity, protean variability and irresistible vitality; her goddes-like indifference to everything except her own concerns; her ever-flowing energy of bodily life, a self-defiling, self-purifying stream, like some mythological river people have worshipped from times immemorial—a Liffey or a Ganges—fascinating, drowning, devouring, deceiving, blessing her people, but sweeping away everything in the onrush of her current—she cannot be taken jocoseriously, in spite of all his ironies, even by Joyce: this blind, elemental, mysterious power or *shakti*. She has always her way ('Ann hath a way', quipped Shakespeare). And it is she who is always finding her way through the 'incertitude of the void'. She is, therefore, an ironical, but pretty serious mythical concrescence, of The-cat-like-Eternal Feminine-Gea-Tellus-stream-of-bodily-life-Liffey-Anna Livia-Plurabelle.

II

Joyce begins by focusing on his main character through the third-person narrative and gradually involving us more and more with the character's personal conscience-perspective through a phenemonological perception developing into interior monologue—or what is loosely called 'the stream of consciousness'—before he shifts to other personal and impersonal perspectives. But there is a continual change—'change-in-continuity'—of tonality causing a continual exaltation-deflation, and this occurs even in the same perspective, as we noted in the case of Bloom's pronouncement on love. The exaltation-deflation is an effect characteristic of *Ulysses*; but unfortunately it is not axled along a value-concern of absolute high seriousness.

Joyce's focus shifts from the personal conscience-per-

spective of Stephen to that of Bloom, who becomes more important, and then finally to that of Molly whose lengthy and unpunctuated stream of consciousness balances our previous involvements with Bloom and Stephen. Apart from Molly's long rhapsody, which forms a coda to the whole composition, Bloomsday (16 June 1904) begins and ends with the sound of the church bells announcing the hour, reminding us of the orthodox institution which acts as the guardian of conscience in the world of time. But the sound produces peculiar vibrations of feelings in the minds of Stephen and Bloom who have professed disbelief in all orthodox institutions. It occurs in their consciousness at crucial moments. In the sound Stephen hears the prayer *Liliata rutilantium* while Bloom hears *Heigho, Heigho*. Both the intimations are associated with death, loss, separation, loneliness and exile. The former is associated in Stephen's mind through the circumstances of his mother's death with the feelings of intellectual pride in the freedom of soul, bitter wretchedness, pangs of grief and remorse and the subconscious fear of damnation. These feelings are contemplated in the impersonal light of the 'Ithaca' episode, when Bloom and Stephen part, so as to turn the prayer into an ironic appeal that man makes to heaven in his inevitable loneliness and in the face of existential paradoxes and 'the incertitude of the void'. In the same light, Bloom's intimation of *Heigho*, which is a dance-of-death cry initially associated in his mind with funerals, with the doom of the exiled human creature whom 'nobody owns' (121) and who, as he thinks, will 'wake no more' into resurrection and life, is transformed at the moment of parting with Stephen into a jocoserious comment over this creature's tragi-comic failure to redeem his irreparable loss and the inevitable loneliness and wretchedness of his situation in the face of existential paradoxes and 'the incertitude of the void.' *Liliata* and *Heigho* are important *leit-motifs* that vibrate with tragi-comic significance in the developing conscience of the race. Between their first and final occurrence lies the whole tragi-

comedy of coincidences which some indifferent Fate seems to be tossing up out of the incertitude of the void by way of practical jokes on the human victims. They are ultimately cruel and always in bad taste—very much like the one in the 'U.P. UP' affair of the Breens (199; 385-86).

Through the use of *leit-motifs* joyce proceeds by a continual concretion and intensification of effects though because of his jocoserious attitude his effects seem 'to no end gathered' and, in fact, do not converge into any deep imaginative insight into reality. He also achieves through his *leit-motifs* the ironic complexity of a mythical concrescence.

To take an example. Bloom who has been trying to make sense of his predicament through the myths of eternal return (Cf. the Viconian Cycles of history in *Finnegans Wake)* and metempsychosis, which Molly reads as 'met him pike hoses', her obscenic reading ironically epitomizing the whole tragi-comedy of her adulterous business of meeting her lovers in bed; Bloom who has bought a smutty novel *(Sweets of Sin)* in his attempts to make up with Molly after reading in it how some married woman spent all the money her husband gave her to make herself attractive 'with frillies' for her lover Raoul and how she displayed her 'heaving embonpoint' for him; Bloom who, to compensate for Molly's persistent adultery, is carrying on an epistolary flirtation with a typist-girl Martha (under the guise of Henry Flower) who calls him 'naughty boy' and who has written to him: 'What kind of perfume does your wife use'; Bloom who thinks of Molly the Andalusian *senorita's* plump girl-hood in Gibralter and of her first love affair with Captain Mulvey; Bloom who has been dreaming of the promised land Agendath and the return of the golden years of love-life which began in the same month, in June, when Molly first gave herself to him on Ben Howth, with her heaving young breasts all perfume—Bloom, compensating for his sex-frustration, and humiliations of the day, masturbates over Gerty MacDowell (Nausicaa)

who, in watching the fire-works, bends far back and reveals her legs and undergarments for him, her dream-husband. This is how the year of love-life has returned. But after his auto-erotic excitement is over and after he has discovered that Gerty MacDowell is lame he realizes that return is not the same. The returning year of love-life brings Boylan and Molly together : 'I am a fool perhaps. He gets the plums and I the plumstones'. Youth comes only once. Returning is not the same for any Rip Van Winkle (492). He is a cuckold to whom the returning year of love-life brings only auto-erotic indulgence and epistolary flirtation. While he is thankful to Gerty MacDowell for all this chance that made him feel so young and is reminded of Martha he is troubled by Molly's continuous adultery from year to year. Gerty and Molly on the one hand and Captain Mulvey, Boylan and himself on the other mythically fuse and interact in his consciousness with a tremendous ironic complexity and concentration of feelings as he reminisces :

> O sweety all your little girlwhite up I saw dirty bracegirdle made me do love sticky we two naughty Grace darling she him half past the bed met him pike hoses frillies for Raoul to perfume your wife black hair heave under embon *Senorita* young eyes Mulvey plump years dreams return tail end Agendath swooney lovey showed me her next year in drawers return next in her next her next.

Joyce continually keeps up the tension between desire and fear as he involves us with the personal conscience-perspectives of Stephen and Bloom. The first three episodes 'Telemachus', 'Nestor' and 'Proteus'—involve us with the conscience-perspective of Stephen—his intellectual pride in the freedom of his soul and the agony of his spirit in the face of the all-drowning eternal mystery of things—the Protean sea of the universe. The remorse of his conscience—'Agenbite of Inwit' - is evoked against a background of the fall into the 'Snotgreen' bitterness of grief, humiliation, wretchedness, loneliness and exile—the 'Snotgreen' on his handkerchief from Mulligan's shaving razor, the 'Snotgreen' of the sea to which

Mulligan points calling it 'a grey sweet mother', and then Mulligan's sudden stab on the sore spot of his conscience : 'The aunt thinks you killed your mother .... You could have knelt down, damn it, Kinch, when your dying mother asked you'. Later on he says patronizingly : 'Ah, poor dogsbody, I must give you a shirt ....' Stephen is a 'keyless citizen'. He pays the rent; but Mulligan always keeps the key of the room. As he hears *Liliata* in the sound of the church bells he decides not to come back to Martello Tower for sleeping. Home also he cannot go.

Stephen thinks that as an Irishman he is the servant of two masters, 'the imperial British state and the holy Roman catholic and apostolic church'. In his head he must kill the priest and the King ('Circe'). The theme of Ireland (which is symbolized by the old milkwoman 'serving her conquerer and her gay betrayer') echoes his personal agony. The 'Nestor' episode deepens it by emphasizing the humiliation of his material conditions and expands it by relating it to a sense of history—which Stephen teaches to the mocking boys at Mr Deasy's school. Though the past had other possibilities which did not become actual what became actual makes history a nightmare. If history moves towards the 'goal' of manifestation of God, the shouts he hears from the playing field-battlefield make him think that God is 'a shout in the street'. Blake is continually evoked to remind us that 'symbols of beauty and power' have been 'soiled by greed and misery'. The anti-semitic but greedy wise-fool, Mr Deasy, says the jews 'sinned against the light'. 'Who has not?' retorts Stephen. With this we are introduced to the basic motif of Joyce's theme of distintegration-and-reintegration of human conscience. The motif is sounded with an existentialistic irony, which gets deeper and deeper when the focus shifts on to Bloom. As for Mr Deasy, we are reminded of his own 'sin against the light', which is his greed for coins, as we take a last look at him : 'On his wise shoulders through the checker-work of leaves the sun flung spangles, dancing coins'.

Stephen thinks of his soul as 'tranquil brightness . . . form of forms'. The symbols of algebra make him think of the human intellect as a soul-mirror : 'Gone too from the world, Averroes and Moses Maimonides . . . flashing in their mocking mirrors the obscure soul of the world, a darkness shining in brightness which brightness could not comprehend'. The 'darkness shining in brightness' is the Whole Reality, soul of man and soul of the world, in terms of possible human experience.

Stephen wants to make an epiphany of the 'darkness shining in brightness', which would be a 'Third Testament', one doing away with the personal God of orthodox religion. But on account of his self-imposed isolation, pride and sentimentality he fails. He hears the 'thud of Blake's wings of excess' but without the aid of imagination (Los) or love—for 'they are each to each' (Wordsworth)—his own flights become so many abortive attempts towards reaching the epiphany of reintegration. For one thing, he fails to see the 'darkness shining in brightness' in the living Bloom, who also represents what has happened to Christianity—which is another irony. Stephen is tossed about for 'sinning against the light' by the Hangman God who presides over the eternally mysterious, Protean sea of the universe, which in terms of human experience, lends itself to a limited perception through the ineluctable modality of the visible and of the audible—

> Ineluctable modality of the visible ; at least that if no more, thought through my eyes. Signatures of all things I am here to read, seaspawn and seawrack, the nearing tide, that rusty boot. Snotgreen, bluesilver, rust : coloured signs. Limits of the diaphane . . . . Diaphane, adiaphane.

Evidently the 'Proteus 'episode plays the basic themes that inform the conscience of the race in a new key, one which has metaphysical overtones. 'Seaspawn and seawrack' lead to the contemplation of the very mystery of birth, sex, life and death, which, seem intertwined to Stephen—'bridebed, childbed, bed of death' ; 'mouth to her womb. Oomb, allwom-

bing tomb'. They will also appear intertwined to Bloom in 'Hades' and elsewhere. In fact, Stephen contemplates the eternal mystery of things, of which the sea is a symbol; the mystery of their Protean identity—the dead dog and the living dog who snuffs at it being both manifestations of God ('Ah, poor dogsbody. Here lies poor dogsbody's body') who undergoes a perpetual sea-change—the mystery of their existence; and the mystery of their ultimate destiny when they seem 'to no end gathered'—

> Under the upswelling tide he saw the writhing weeds lift languidly and sway reluctant arms, hissing up their petticoats, in whispering water swaying and upturning coy silver fonds. Day by day: night by night: lifted, flooded and let fall. Lord they are weary: and whispered to, they sigh. Saint Ambrose heard it, sigh of leaves and waves, waiting, awaiting the fullness of their times.... To no end gathered.

The themes vibrate with longing and pain and hope and fear in relation to the conscience of young Stephen who questions why his shadow is 'not endless till the farthest star'. As he walks across the sands of Sandymount Beach and paces over the rocks, 'hearing Elsinore's tempting flood' and the cries of those who are drowned by the bitter waters of the world he thinks of his mother (a mother's love is perhaps the only real thing, he thought while helping an ugly and futile boy at the school) : 'I could not save her. Waters : bitter death: lost.' In fact he has lost everything, mother, home, country, shelter, job (he will not go back to work at Mr Deasy's school), family, relations (he will not go to Uncle Richie Golding's house, though he visualizes his visit there), friends—everything except his soul, for even the clothes he is wearing are not his own. 'Take all, Keep all. My soul walks with me.... Endless, would it be mine, form of my form?'

His metaphysical flight results in a fall evoking a vision of the fall of Lucifer—'Allbright he falls, proud lightning of the intellect, Lucifer ... Where? To evening lands. Evening will find itself'. Finding that Mulligan has not returned but thrown

away his handkerchief Stephen lays 'the dry snot picked from his nostril on a ledge of rock'. This is the mark that his bitter and proud soul leaves on a mysterious and indifferent universe.

But Stephen has perceived hints of crucifixion too—'a drying line with two crucified shirts'. The 'homing ship' that he sees at the end of the episode is a painful reminder not only of exile but also of persecution and crucifixion—'a three-master, her sails brailed up on the crosstrees'. And this looks forward to Bloom.

From Stephen's metaphysical awareness when we turn to that of the unjustifiably suffering and persecuted Bloom we find ourselves groping for some definition of 'sin against the light'. Why should he suffer torture, humiliation and persecution? He himself feels remorse for leaving his father, to die of suicide in a hotel, and for leaving the God of his father. Is that the jew's 'sin against the light'? As we get more and more involved with him our concept of 'sin' changes. It is sinning-suffering. In All Hallows Church he sees the letters I.H.S. on the back of a communion priest. He thinks they stand for : 'I have sinned : or no : I have suffered, it is'. The letters may stand for something else, but the ambivalnce of Bloom's interpretation is significant. It is not 'sin' in the priest's sense. It is error : experience.

Like his paradisal—and even 'paradisiacal'– dreams his remorse calls up mythical associations from the far-East. His personal feelings expand into universal significance through his awareness of the lot of the jews, 'the oldest, the first race' and of the lot of the human race whose conscience he represents in a very important sense. The personal and the universal fuse when his patterns of awareness acquire a mythical concrescence. They often acquire it. But for the very reason that they are reaching out to it the staccato phrases of his interior monologue are packed with greater 'realism' as well as a greater concentration of feeling. Thus on his way

to the Turkish bath ('Lotus-Eaters') the poster *Lea Tonight* reminds him of his father who always spoke feelingly about a play-scene, one in which old blind Abraham recognizes Nathan's voice and puts his fingers on his face. Witness the mythical concrescence :

> Nathan's voice! His son's voice! I hear the voice of Nathan who left his father to die of grief and misery in my arms, who left the house of his father and left the God of his father.
>
> Every word is so deep, Leopold.
>
> Poor papa! Poor man! I'm glad I didn't go into the room to look at his face. That day! O dear! Ffool! Well, perhaps it was the best for him (93).

Later on in the 'Hades' episode the fate of a child in the coffin, the fate of his helpless, little son Rudy and the fate of his heartbroken father who died—leaving a letter 'For my son Leopold'—are mythically fused into a realization of the fate of the disowned human creature, which he is himself, too : 'Rattle his bones. Over the stones. Only a pauper. Nobody owns'. Nothing like 'the resurrection and the life. Once you are dead you are dead'.

In 'Calypso' we hear the 'jingle' of Molly's adulterous bed, which is a motif associated with tormenting and humiliating impertinence. Boylan is coming for his tryst whith Molly at four.

After 'Calypso' and 'Lotus-Eaters' have modified and intensified the themes of freedom of conscience, sin and error, remorse, suffering, humiliation, loneliness and exile in relation to Bloom's perceiving self the 'Hades' episode reiterates these themes in a new key, which is provided by a sense of death and decay—so that 'Papa's little lump of love' (48) becomes 'Papa's little lump of dung'. Through a Hamlet-like vision Bloom sees his world transformed into a graveyard : 'The Irishman's house is his coffin'. The process of the decay of the dead body is visualized vividly. The dead 'must breed a devil of a lot of maggots . . . Your head it simply swurls. Those lovely seaside gurls.' Death is intertwined with sex and

life. 'There is another world after death named hell. I do not like that other world she [Martha—by way of typing mistake] wrote. No more do I . . . Warm beds : warm full blooded life'. Thus Bloom's mythical journey to the underworld results only in quickening his love of life, and this in spite of all the sufferings and humiliations that life involves. I think this is significant. But life is a matter of mystery and 'void incertitude', which is symbolized by the appearance at Paddy Dignam's funeral of the unknown man in the mackintosh. Nobody knows who he is and how he happens to be there.

By coincidence the 'void incertitude' throws Boylan in Bloom's way again and again, but not Stephen whose path crosses Bloom's repeatedly without their meeting each other till they meet at the Lying-in Hospital ('Oxen of the Sun'). Whenever Bloom sees Boylan his torment is betrayed by some abrupt irrelevancy of behaviour. He examines his fingernails on one occasion. At another he forgets to pay the shop-girl who reminds him of it with a smile. His consciousness is broken into abrupt gestures and painful flashes of awareness. 'At four she. Winsomely she on Bloohimwhom smiled. Bloo smi qui go. Ternoon'.

In the 'Aeolus' episode the stream of life is seen in terms of the flux of our commercial ('cloacal') civilization, with the Aeolus-like newspaper editor 'puffing' over it. Bloom raises a pertinent question : 'Whose land ?' Can he really own anything—Agendath, Molly, Stephen—when everything is in a state of flux? In the 'Lestrygonians' episode while he is feeding gulls by the symbolic Liffey stream he muses : 'How can you own water really ? It's always flowing in a stream, never the same, which in the stream of life we trace. Because life is a stream'. And again : 'Cityful passing away, other cityful coming, passing away too . . . No one is anything'. But *Ulysses* is persistently concerned not only with the destiny ('Where ?') but also with the identity of things. Thus Bloom: 'I was happier then. Or was that I? Or am I now I? Twenty-

eight I was. She twentythree . . . Could never like it again after Rudy' (213). Then he thinks how Molly gave herself to him first. That was on Ben Howth among the rhodendrons. 'She kissed me. I was kissed . . . Kissed, she kissed me. Me. And me now' (224). After acting the good Samaritan to the blind piano-tuner boy Bloom muses : 'Karma they call that transmigration for sins you did in a past life the reincarnation met him pikehoses'.

He has turned away in Swiftian disgust from Barton Restaurant on seeing men feeding like Lestrygonians. Earlier he has thought : 'Justice it means but it's everybody eating everyone else. That's what life is after all.' Now as he is reminded of Plumtree's Potted Meat ad., in which he has already read 'jingle' (91), he muses : 'All up a plumtree. Dignam's potted meat ['A corpse is meat gone bad']. Cannibals would with lemon and rice' (218). We are reminded of Stephen's parable of the plums in 'Aeolus' which he also calls *A Pisgah Sight of Palestine.* It gets connected up with what Bloom thinks in 'Nausicaa' : 'He [Boylan] gets the plums I the plumstones.' At the newspaper office Stephen says quoting St Augustine : 'It was revealed to me that those things are good which yet are corrupted which neither if they were supremely good nor unless they were good could be corrupted'. His Parable of the Plums, which tells of the Vestal virgins 'peering up at the statue of the onehandled adulterer' at Nelson's pillar and eating plums to 'take off the thirst of the brawn' has suggested as much. Through all these associations Plumtree's Potted Meat implies what the cannibalistic, lusty human animal feeds on and is transformed into in his coffin-home-'abode-of-bliss'—

What is home without
Plumtree's Potted Meat?
Incomplete.
With it an abode of bliss.

'Beward of imititations. Peatmot. Trumplee. Montpat. Plamtroo.' (800). One can look at 'The heaventree of stars hung with

humid nightblue fruit.' But that is a Utopia ('Ithaca'). Thus in the conscience of the race that Joyce 'forges' Plumtree's Potted Meat epitomizes the whole tragi-comedy of married life, of life, sex and death of man, the essentially lonely creature—'Madam, I'm Adam'.

As we stop moving in time in 'the Wandering Rocks' we see, in nineteen fragmented visions, these creatures strangely muddling through the maze of 'void incertitude', performing some disjuncted, irrelevant, blind and mechanical actions, reaching out to and 'just missing something'—while the Viceroy of Ireland's procession, which is the symbol of imperialistic domination, passes. Each of them seems isolated within his or her own subjective and relativistic sphere of experience, though each of them, prone as he or she is to illusions, prejudices, pretensions, and fallacies of stance, observation and judgment, 'forges' his or her own 'reality'. Where is the human self ? thinks Stephen. 'Throb always without you and the throb always within'—the Wandering Rocks of the macro- and the microcosm. 'Between two roaring worlds where they swirl. I. Shatter them, one and both. But stun myself too in the blow. Shatter me you who can'. (This foreshadows the events in 'Circe'). Only Anna Liffey—the stream of life—seems to be infallibly finding her way through these 'Wandering Rocks.'

Stephen meets his sister Dilly at a bookshop, whose poverty releases a flood of remorse in him. He misses meeting Bloom who comes a moment later at the same shop and buys *Sweets of Sin* for Molly. Boylan who is on his way to his tryst with Molly enters a flowershop to buy flowers and flirts with the shopgirl. 'Above the cross blind of the Ormond Hotel, gold by bronze, Miss Kennedy's head by Miss Douce's head, watched and admired His Lordship's procession'. They are barmaids who are the 'Sirens' of the next episode. They symbolize the alluring rhythm of beauty mutually included with that of sordid materialism in the drowning waters of the

world—The Rose of Castille (opera) is The Rose of Cast Steel (railway train), as Lenehan's riddle reminds us in 'Aeolus'. What with the impertinence of boots and the brief, though vulgar, flirtation of Boylan, who drops in to have a drink and to please whom the barmaid-sirens compete among themselves, these idols themselves are essentially lonely, sad-in-longing, dolorous—'Idolores'.

By the time we reach the *cadenza* of the 'sirens' episode Joyce's *leit-motifs* which have been recurring in various contexts acquire such a tremendous ideality that he can use them as sound-patterns on the analogy of music and yet make them resonate with meanings like words in poetry. For example the *leit-motif* 'jingle' has gathered various associative meanings of troubling impertinence—the 'jingle' of Molly's adulterous bed, of the Editor's keys—who rudely dismisses Bloom when he comes back to have a 'puff' for his 'House of Key (e)s advertisement—of the horsehoofs of British soldiery, of the coins in a commercial civilization, and, what is more of Blazes Boylan's jaunting car as he goes for his adulterous tryst with Molly. Through such *leit-motifs* Joyce can proceed by a continual concretion and intensification. Thus even the 'overture' of the 'Sirens' episode is not meaningless sound. Witness the opening bars :

> Bronze by gold heard the hoofirons steelyringing
> Imperthnthn thnthnthn . . .
> A jumping rose on satiny breasts of Satin, rose of Castille.

Blazes Boylan drops in for a drink at Ormond where 'with patience Lenahan waited for Boylan with impatience, for jingle jaunty blazes boy'. After a brief but vulgar flirtation with the barmaids he goes off on his way to Molly. 'He's off. Light sob of breath Bloom sighed on the bluehued flowers. Jingling. . . . Jingle haunted down the guays. . . . Mrs Marion met him pike hoses. . . . Jiggedy jingle jaunty jaunty'. *All is lost now*, sings Simon Dedalus. 'Woman : As easy stop the sea'. But music distances the personal feelings, and even brings about an objective contemplation of the ecstasy of sex-love—of the 'flood of warm, jimjam lickitup secretness. . .

Tipping her tepping her tapping her topping her .... The joy the feel the warm the. Tup. To pour o'er sluices pouring gushes. Flood, gush, flow, joygush, tupthrop'.

The various songs evoke Bloom's personal feelings to make them universal. Lionel's song from *Martha* echoes 'in cry of lionel loneliness' Bloom's own longing for ideal love as he sits secretly writing his letter to Martha, a tragi-comic coincidence, this. 'Alone. One love. One hope... For only her he waited. Where?' The recurrent question 'Where'? which first occurred when Stephen thought of his dead mother and which is related to man's predicament and destiny goes on acquiring an increasing force in the novel. In this context it is related to an aching sense of personal loneliness—of 'So lonely blooming'—which is submerged into a sense of cosmic loneliness as Simon Dedalus sings *C-ome, thou lost one!* Co-me thou dear one! in

> a swift pure cry... soaring high, high resplendent, aflame, crowned, high in the effulgence symbolistic, high, of the ethereal bosom, high, of the high vast irradiation everywhere all soaring all around about the all, the endlessnessnessness...

This sense of cosmic loneliness modulates into a sense of awesome dreariness with the singing of *The Croppy Boy*—a symbol not only of the suffering spirit of Ireland but also of the conscience of the human race suffering under the tyranny of Nobodaddy's institutions—which sounds painfully 'the voic of dark age, of unlove, earth's fatigue.. Croak of vast manless moonless womoonless marsh'.

Against a background of gaiety and flirtation are evoked: 'as obligato, the suggestions of the eternal mystery of life and the passing of all beautiful things—the cosmic loneliness of mankind; as ground bass, the constant echo of the sea, symbol of the ceaseless flow of nature'[4] The fact of mere physical loneliness is reiterated by the 'Tap. Tap' of the blind piano tuner boy who is coming back for his tuning fork—'I too, lost my race... No son. Rudy. Too late now. Or if not? If not? If still?' It is ironically mingled with the painful blows of the

adulterous Boylan's rapping and tapping at Bloom's house—'one rapped on a door, one tapped with a knock...with a loud proud knocker, with a cock carracarracarra cock. Cock-cock'. Bloom thinks that women are like flutes. 'They want it: not too much polite. That's why he gets them. Gold in your pocket, brass in your face'. As Bloom leaves Ormond—Bloom, 'soft Bloom, I feel so lonely Bloom'—we are reminded of the split in the personality of this tormented man.

> Up the quay went Lionelleopold, naughty Henry with letter for Mady, with sweets of sin with frillies for Raoul with met him pike hoses went Poldy on.

As the above quotations testify, Joyce's sound-picture language often acquires a symbolic transparency in *Ulysses* owing to an artistic patterning of *leit-motifs*, its opsistic function being subsumed by its symbolic function. But as Joyce tends to overdo things he forgets that the essential nature of language is not so much opsistic, musical or magical as symbolic. Again it is because of Joyce's jocoseriousness, his lack of discrimination of values, that his words, in *Finnegans Wake* particularly, fail to focalize precise meanings; they inwardly crack, sometimes break, and get distorted under the tension of contradictory meanings. They acquire the immediacy, concreteness and self-subsistence of magical incantation[5]—promoting life on the aboriginal level. Freed from the life of symbolic referentiality they acquire an independent phenomenological life of their own—'funnoumenological' life, to imitate Joyce. Joyce's distorted language, which is a product of his jocoserious attitude, becomes more and more of a block in the way of the reader's participation. It becomes a turbid 'stream of consciousness' through which we cannot have very deep imaginative insights into 'forms of things unknown' or, for that matter, into the inarticulate feelings of the unconscious. We think of Lawrence—not to speak of Shakespeare—who is able to do all this without distorting the language and we feel sorry for Joyce who for all his astounding labours at artifice cannot become as great an artist.

III

The 'Cyclops' episode, while it further intensifies Bloom's humiliation and persecution, brings out not only the tragi-comedy of man's victimization of man on account of his fallacious understanding and generic imperfections but also the mystery of a universe of coincidences and 'void incertitude'. Think, for example, of Bantam Lyon's earlier meeting with Bloom, of his misunderstanding of Bloom's words 'I was just going to throw it away', of Bloom's coming to Barney Kiernan's pub to meet Martin Cunningham in order to arrange the insurance of the recently widowed Mrs Dignam, and of the cynical Citizen's prejudices and his interpretation, in the light of Bantam Lyon's wrong information, of Bloom's withdrawal to seek Martin Cunningham as a blind to cash his winnings on the horse Throwaway. The Citizen gets more and more enraged at Bloom till he throws a biscuit-tin at him in the manner of the Cyclops throwing a rock at Odysseus. Bloom escapes. But the catastrophe caused by the clattering tinbox is described in terms of a terrific earthquake; and in the end the narrator's own mock-heroic perspective is fractured into an awe-inspiring vision of Bloom ascending to heaven as Elijah. Bloom himself has flung the throwaway *Elijah Is Coming* into the symbolic Liffey and it is being carried by the stream 'which in the stream of life we trace', which is another irony. But it might turn out that the victimized man was divine and his victimization was another instance of man's repetitive 'sinning against the light (Christ himself was a jew, Bloom has said to his persecutors). Who Knows ?

Bloom's own 'sin against the light' gets defined, not in terms of external, institutional standards, but in terms of his own internal standard of conscience as a failure to realize his responsibility towards the other person in some unique situation. He feels guilty after his auto-erotic excitement is over in 'Nausicaa' : 'What a brute he had been! At it again? A fair unsullied soul had called to him and, wretch that he was,

how had he answered?' However, returning is not the same, and, as Stephen had said, 'No later undoing will undo the first undoing (251).

'The Oxen of the Sun' episode emphasizes the holiness of sex and fertility. It traces the foetus-like development of the conscience of the race in relation to the theme of sex and fertility, which development is organically constituted by a similar development of the symbolic form of language—the English language in this case. Critics who have missed the conscience theme see here only an uncalled-for parody of various English prose styles having an unjustifiable parallel with the development of the foetus. But to disagree with these critics is not to deny Joyce's pedantry. The scene of the episode is the Lying-in-Hospital where Bloom comes out, of his humane concern for Mrs Purefoy, and meets Stephen. Indifferent to the condition of the poor Mrs. Purefoy Stephen and his medico friends are indulging in an obscene and vulgar conversation. Bloom is shocked, and he begins to feel more and more concerned for Stephen. He feels remorse for what can be called his 'sin against the light' as he is reminded of his affair with the 'bride of darkness'. 'Did heart leap to heart? Nay, fair reader. In a breath 'twas done'—and the poor girl fled away in terror. This reminiscence is followed by a vision. 'Agendath is a waste land'; the 'ghosts of beasts . . . revengeful Zodiacal host', which are his own 'sins against the light' externalized as lustful rivals, 'tramp to drink, unslaked and with horrible gulpings'; they loom 'over the house of Virgo'; and the veil of the 'ever-virgin bride'—'it is she, Martha . . . Millicent'—'blazes [Boylan], Alpha, a ruby and triangled sign upon the forehead of Taurus'—which is the eternal triangle of Bloom's hell-purgatory.

Under the hallucination of drink the revengeful, tormenting 'ghosts of beasts' are evoked, as if by magic of Circe, in the 'Circe' episode which has been called the *Walpurgisnacht* of *Ulysses.* But let us keep in mind a saying of Goethe's to which Stephen referred in the 'Scylla and Charybdis' episode :

'Beware of what you wish for in youth because you will get it in middle life' (251). With all its climactic intensity the 'Circe' episode dramatizes the hell-purgatory of the dark penetralia of the conscience of the race. In this surrealistic drama, while 'snakes of river fog creep slowly', all our archetypal impulses come to life in the form of persons, things and ideas. Here we have in disguise King, Queen, Magician, Redeemer, and Eternal Parents—and for Chance or Luck we have Homer's *moly* disguised as Bloom's potato. As their secret desires, hopes and fears are enacted in this tormenting region Bloom and Stephen meet themselves in meeting others, and in meeting them and the other characters of this phantasmagoria, we meet ourselves (Cf. Stephen's remarks on Shakespeare's works, p. 273). As the 'revengeful ghosts' are let loose Bloom suffers all he wishes to suffer. He is accused (by various women), lynched, carbonized, brutally tortured after exchanging sexes with the whoremistress Bella—'The sins of your past are rising against you', says Bella—is even made to witness Blazes Boylan rubbing in his adulterous triumph. And he dreams all he secretly wishes to dream—the dreams of being Lord Mayor, King, Messiah, and of 'the new Bloomusalem' and the 'paradisiacal Era'. Both Bloom's and Stephen's paths lie through harlot street (Cf. Stephen's recall of his dream of street of harlots in 'Proteus'), but it is for Bloom, and not for the egotistical Stephen, that the hell would turn into purgatory. In his intellectual pride Stephen would fly through it, though he cannot evade his 'Agenbite of Inwit' (he has been trying to evade it through idle talk, ribaldry, drinking and whoring) which sticks deeper, like a malignant crab, in his heart after his refusal to repent at the behest of his mother's ghost. Lacking proper imaginative sympathy even for his mother's tortured soul he can make only a nihilistic movement to shatter the nightmare of history which to him is a manifestation of the Corpse-chewer God. In a symbolic, though farcical action, he smashes the chandelier—as if he had smashed the whole world of time: 'Time's livid final flame

leaps and, in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry' (even Freemasonry). But Bloom (the Freemason) has been caring for him. After Stephen himself has been knocked down ('shatter me you who can') by the British soldier Bloom tends him with paternal care. As he bends over Stephen he sees a redemptive vision of his son Rudy. It implies that the conscience of the race can be self-redeeming; it can be redeemed, not through the dictates of any orthodox religion, but through imaginative sympathy.

Bloom is able to rescue Stephen, thanks to certain coincidences—'tooralooms' and 'reassuralooms'. He feels his own lost son has returned to him as Stephen. But after cliches have been paraded in 'Eumaeus' we once again realize that returning is not the same; rather, it turns out to be a mere illusion. Bloom and Stephen whose mental trajectories have been meeting at various points without their knowing of it exchange opinions. For example, both of them do not believe in orthodox institutions and are sceptical of a personal God. With his sympathetic attitude Bloom is even able to touch Stephen's conscience with regard to his undesirable companions and his deserted and poor family. Stephen whose one value has been a proud belief in his own soul makes an advance into utter scepticism by thinking of 'the possibility of its annihilation by its First Cause', Who may thereby add to 'the number of His other practical jokes'. Bloom acquiesces in it broadly and goes on to question the existence of a supernatural God. Religious beliefs are 'genuine forgeries' (of monks and poets). So are all beliefs and the values associated with them. Thus we are heading towards the scientific-relativistic reductionism of 'Ithaca'—another hell-purgatory: an intellectual one this time.

Though Stephen seriously accepts Bloom's 'marks of hospitality' (791) he flies through this hell-purgatory too, maintaining his pride and his self-imposed seclusion. But Bloom is most intensely involved in this hell-purgatory as

he was involved in the earlier one in 'Circe'. The reductions he is subjected to have some positive, purgatorial implications in his case.

The reductionism proceeds through scientifically impersonal questions and answers so as to shatter all the myths, illusions, pretensions, assumptions and fancies with which man 'forges' meanings and values. The myths of paternity and return—the circus clown was not Bloom's son and Bloom's coin never returned—and even the myths of perfectibility and possible redemption are nothing but such 'forgeries' in view of the 'irreparability of the past', 'the imprevidibility of the future' and the social and generic imperfections of the human condition. Stephen affirms, and Bloom apprehends, man's significance as a conscious rational animal . . . and a conscious rational reagent between a micro- and a macrocosm ineluctably constructed upon the incertitude of the void'. Our experience of the novel bears testimony to it. But it also bears testimony to the novelist's lack of an all-organizing, all-transforming and predominant passion of faith in higher values—and faith, as Kierkegaard reminds us, is a belief in the impossible; it is creative imagination at its intensest. Without embodying this faith *Ulysses* falls short of being an autotelic work of a high order. In it things seem 'To no end gathered'.

The conscience of the race that Joyce 'forges', by joco-seriously regarding all creations of the human spirit as 'forgeries', implies knowledge; knowledge and knowledge, but not wisdom and insight in any deeper sense. A competent keyless citizen may proceed 'energeticelly from the unknown to the known through the incertitude of the void', but since even heaven is a Utopia there is no known method from the known to the unknown'. In an existence which is 'a parenthesis of infinitesimal brevity, individual human selves pursue their ineluctably lonely conscience-trajectories—which meet, if at all, only tangentially. Only tangentially in view of our 'natured natures of dissimilar similarity'. Consider Everyman-Noman

(Ulysses)-Bloom: 'From inexistence to existence he came to many and was as one received : existence with existence he was with any as any with any : from existence to non-existence gone he would be by all as none perceived'. So Bloom and Stephen contemplate each other 'in both mirrors'—the 'mirror' image is an important recurrent motif—'in both mirrors of the reciprocal flesh of theirhisnothis fellowfaces'—and part; for Stephen has declined Bloom's offer of lodging in his house. The church bells sound, and in the sound Stephen hears *Liliata* and Bloom *Heigho*. After Stephen is gone Bloom feels 'the cold of interstellar space'. As he is coming back into his house his illusion of sameness is shattered by a bump on the temple from an unexpected article of furniture. He performs a symbolic burning of the prospectus of Agendath; and is involved with a symbolic interchange of reflection in the mirror with three objects on the mantlepiece—a timepiece, a dwarf tree, matrimonial gift of a friendly couple, and an embalmed owl : matrimonial gift of one of Molly's lovers, which now exchanges with Bloom a gaze of mutual compassion—the composite image in the mirror being that of 'a solitary (ipsorelative) mutable (aliorelative) man'. Yet Bloom indulges in schemes and dreams. He knows that though they are extremely difficult of realization they can alleviate fatigue, produce sound sleep and renovate vitality. In his intellectual hell-purgatory he fears 'the committal of homicide or suicide during sleep by an aberration of the light of reason' (848). He thinks of his father's suicide and experiences a sentiment of remorse: 'Because in immature impatience he had treated with disrespect certain beliefs and practices' which now appear to him, in the light of relativistic reductions, 'Not more rational than they had then appeared, not less rational than other beliefs and practices now appeared'. With this new remorse takes place the purgation of his old remorse. Bloom is further reduced, on the level of mathematical possibility, 'by cross multiplication of reverses of furtune . . . and by elimination of all positive values to a negligible negative

irrational quantity', with all its attendant indignities. After various possible reactions have been coldly scrutinized Bloom is drawn into the bed in which Molly is lying. It is an 'abode' ('his own or not his own'). He is aware of its mythical 'snakespiral springs of the mattress being old', and thinks of himself as only a term 'in a series originating and repeated to infinity'. The scientific reductionism also reduces the sentiments of envy and jealousy. He understands that Molly's adultery is less calamitous than a cataclysmic annihilation of the earth and less reprehensible than so many crimes, and, in view of her 'natured nature', is 'more than inevitable, irreparable'. So he feels more abnegation than jealousy, less envy than equanimity. He justifies his sentiments by reflecting, among other things, on 'the futility of triumph or protest or vindication : the inanity of extolled virtue : the lethargy of nescient matter : the apathy of the stars'. He rationally understands and accepts his situation and is willing to live, to go on adapting himself to changing conditions and to persist in loving her in his own non-glamourous way. We have already commented on the significance of these positives that emerge from this intellectual purgatory of Everyman-Noman-Bloom. In his present situation Bloom cannot do anything but kiss 'the plump mellow yellow smellow melons (Cf. Stephen's dream in which Bloom carries a melon as he leads him into the street of harlots) of her rump'. A testimony of his adaptation, this. Over the bed there moves 'the upcast reflection of a lamp and shade, an inconstant series of concentric circles of varying gradations of light and shadow'. This is the emblem of the 'comprehension in incomprehension' of the reality of things. (Cf. Stephen's 'darkness shining in brightness'). The mystery of this reality and even of the void incertitude on which it is founded is as fascinating as it is devastating. With a sense of 'something evermore about to be' (Wordsworth) it impels the conscience of the race onward and onward with a love of life, turning its endless Ulyssean journey into a continuous adventure.

Bloom is finally reduced to 'the childman wearythe m 'an-child in the womb' as he lies beside Molly-Gea-Tellus. 'He rests'. And as he is sinking into sleep he thinks he has travelled. 'With?' 'Sinbad the Sailor and Tinbad the Tailor and Jinbad the Jailor . . .' etc. As we fade on him we do not know where he goes 'in the night of the bed of all the auks of the rocs of Darkinbad the Brightdayler'. The question 'Where?' not only in the case of death and life but even in the case of sleep remains unanswered.

But now, as Molly has awakened, out of the incertitude of the void itself gushes forth the stream of life, of bodily life, which is the first and the last myth, one which is too palpable to be dismissed as fancy or 'forgery'. It gushes forth with its rhythm of divine beauty and creativity manifested, paradoxically, in the gross impulsions of the ever-unsatiated flesh; gushes forth with her indifference to moral, intellectual and spiritual concerns, sweeping away the painful ingenuities or 'forgeries' of conscience in the blind vitality of an assertion from the loins. To this self-defiling, self-purifying stream her adorers are drawn, are 'drowned and devoured, born and reborn, cherished, corrupted, deceived and blessed'[6]. The mysterious fascination she exercises keeps alive the love of life and even the love of love, though on an aboriginal, animistic level; but without this fascination of hers the conscience of the race would freeze in 'the cold of interstellar space'. We contemplate this stream as we contemplate the unpunctuated flow of Molly's stream of consciousness. She goes on and on with 'he' and 'he' and 'he'—to her everyman is a 'he'. To her adultery is not such a big harm 'in this vale of tears'—she thinks of having even Stephen as her next lover. Though she feels all men are brutes she seems to be searching for some ideal with her insatiable desire, as suggested earlier. But it is important that her really happy time, when she came close to the ideal, is the period of her courtship with Bloom; that was also the time when she realized the wonderful beauty of the world. She sinks back into sleep

while reminiscing how she first gave herself to Bloom on Ben Howth among the rhodendrons :

> . . . and then I asked him with my eyes to ask again yes and then he asked me would I yes to say yes my mountain flower and first I put my arms around him yes and drew him down to me so he could feel my breasts all perfume yes and his heart was going like mad and yes I said yes I will Yes.

Ultimately, the question is : How much concerned do we feel for Molly ? for Bloom ? for Stephen ? Not terribly much. Not even as much as we feel for Gulliver, the imaginative creation and discovery of the 'devastating' Swift. Again, it is because Joyce lacks that high-seriousness of value-concern which is the immanently absolute 'organizing principle' of very great works of art; and not merely an organizing principle either, but a way of gathering things, which would otherwise remain 'To no end gathered', into the dialectical unity of a highly significant form or pattern of sentience, through which our imaginative sympathies are evoked and directed into an energizing, life-exalting, insight into reality. Think, both Joyce and Eliot use the mythical method. But it should be Eliot who can more convincingly say : 'I have not made this show purposelessly'.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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Mohammad Yaseen

VIRGINIA WOOLF'S THEORY OF FICTION

Among the post-War English novelists, Virginia Woolf not only occupies a distinctive place as a creative writer but also as an exponent of modern psychological novel. Her critical essays, besides throwing light on Victorian and contemporary writers of fiction, show her deep sense of aesthetic appreciation and highlight her individual way of response to literary experience in a particular genre. Historically she belongs to the category of fiction critics who had emulated Flaubert's artistic theories and pleaded for the assimilation of the spirit of French and Russian fiction in the English novel. It is curious to note that both Henry James and Joseph Conrad wrote disparagingly of the Russian novelists (barring Turgenev) and held Balzac and Flaubert as masters in the field. Virginia Woolf, on the contrary, besides showing awareness of Russian contribution to the art of the novel, stressed the vitality of Tolstoy in depicting 'life' and of Dostoevosky in probing the human 'soul'. Partly because she could read and appreciate French and was well-acquainted with English masterpieces since the Renaissance she was able to keep abreast of the most interesting experiments made by her contemporaries. In her essay 'The Leaning Tower' she emphasized the influences (heredity, education, socio-political factors) that determine a writer's particular angle of vision.[1] Her critical theories and literary pronouncements emanated from her liberal education, refined taste, acute perception and capacity to enjoy a work of art and communicate that joy to the common reader. Virginia Woolf considered the creative process as an 'adventure.' Her criticism, with some qualifica-

tions, may also be taken as an adventure in the appreciation of Victorian and modern novel.

Of Virginia Woolf's critical writings, two volumes of *The Common Reader* appeared in her life time. *Her Diary* and four more critical anthologies were published posthumously by her husband. Leonard Woolf. Most of these essays and reviews which were contributed to English and American literary journals have only a peripheral value for us today. But some of her representative essays will continue to interest the coming generations partly because 'they are permeated by her personality and partly because they record acute critical perceptions.'[2] A close study of these essays reveals Virginia Woolf's genius as a highly sophisticated and perceptive critic of English fiction and links her with the great masters of English fiction criticism. Eminent critics on both sides of the Atlantic, while considering her a post-Impressionist novelist, have recognized her critical acumen.

One of the important traits of Virginia Woolf's criticism is her lucidity. As a novelist she is a complex writer because of her proneness to psychological analysis of the inner conflicts and subtle experiences of the mind and soul. As a critic of fiction she does not seem to pose much of a problem. She treats herself as a common reader and wishes to share her impressions with others. Like Dryden she also seems to affirm that the business of criticism is 'to observe the excellencies which should delight a reasonable reader'. One may add that she not only delights but also enlightens.

It is a patent fact that Virginia Woolf felt disgusted with the Materialist school of fiction writers—Arnold Bennett, H.G. Wells and Galsworthy. She was also convinced of the inadequacy of their critical methods for doing justice to the new psychological novel. Writing about Percy Lubbock's *The Craft of Fiction* in one of her earlier essays, Virginia Woolf had stated that 'when we come to judge a novel, we have no tradition to guide us'. There is, she continues, 'something so personal, so emotional, so unamenable to rules of art in

fiction itself, that it is hopeless to judge it by the old stern standards'.[3] Henry James could have been a possible guide but, perhaps, he too did not conform to her modernist stance. Harvena Richter observes that in her search for an ideal critical method she struck upon two principles which seemed to lend order to her ideas about fiction.[4] The first was a seemingly random remark that a book 'is not form which you see, but emotion which you feel'. The second was implied in her essay, 'The Moment : Summer's Night', which deals with the myriad flashes of stimuli and responses that make up the lived moment of being and shows that not merely visual and auditory scoring on consciousness is registered but felt impulses from the body as well.

No less sensitive to the spirit of the age than her other illustrious contemporaries Mrs Woolf was also alive to its effect on fiction. In a series of essays she tried to highlight the problems pertaining to creative art and the role of criticism in solving them. The essay, 'Mr. Brown and Mrs. Brown', contains the famous statement : 'In or about December 1910 human character changed'. She explained the change in the light of a shift in human relations—'between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children'. Obviously the shifts were considered a part of a larger complex of changes in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.[5] Mrs Woolf realized that while Conrad, Joyce and other 'spiritual' novelists recognized the change and their work reflected their conscious effort to hold the mirror or the prism upto nature the Materialists failed to cross the conventional barriers of Victorianism. What they were doing, she said, was 'writing against the grain and current of the times'.[6] The modern current pertained to the flux and the flow, to the shifting and the discontinous phenomena. Her famous essay 'Modern Fiction'[7], is a sort of manifesto, and may be read and interpreted in the light of this historical background.

Recognizing that modern fiction requires a change from simplicity to complexity, from the painting of the external to

the depiction of the interior landscape and from the writing of comedy of manners to the delineation of subtle human emotions, and realising also the pathetic limitations of the Materialists she observes :

(i) It is because they are concerned not with the spirit but with the body that they have disappointed us. (p 185)

(ii) They write of unimportant things . . . they spend immense skill and immense industry making the trivial and the transitory appear the true and the enduring. (p 187)

(iii) 'Life' escapes their ken; and perhaps without life nothing else is worthwhile. (p. 188)

The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerful and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest and an air of probability embracing the whole. In such a predicament Virginia Woolf exhorts us to 'look within':

> Examine for a moment an ordinary mind on an ordinary day. The mind receives a myriad impressions—trivial, fantastic, evanescent, or engraved with the sharpness of steel. From all sides they come, an incessant shower of innumerable atoms; and as they fall, as they shape themselves into the life of Monday or Tuesday, the accent falls differently from of old; the moment of importance came not here but there : so that, if a writer were a free man and not a slave, if he could write what he chose not what he must, if he could base his worth upon his own feeling and not upon convention, there would be no plot, no comedy, no love interest or catastrophe . . . Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end'.
>
> (p. 189)

Convinced that for the moderns the point of interest lies in the 'darker places psychology', Virginia Woolf suggests that it is the task of the novelist to convey 'this varying and uncircumscribed spirit with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible'. She cites James Joyce as an exponent of this new school of psychological novel :

> In contrast with those whom we have called materialists, Mr Joyce is spiritual; he is concerned at all costs to reveal the flickerings of that innermost flame which flashes its message through the brain.
>
> (pp. 189-190)

At this stage one realizes the extreme polarization between the so-called realists and the stream of consciousness novelists. One is free to stress the significance of 'inner life', 'subjective experience' or even 'mystical visions' but to deny the external world its due is to evince one's literary myopia. Virginia Woolf, both in theory and practice, inspite of her deep knowledge of eighteenth and nineteenth century English novelists and her keen perception of the vitality of the Russian novel, could not help being different from what she was. The internalization of the external when carried to the extreme results in a one-sided approach to life. It was not for nothing that D.S. Savage considered her a decadent in *The Withered Branch*. Perhaps legitimately so. For if 'life' escapes the materialists, she and her allies also fail to show its comprehensiveness, its variety, its human dreams, its beauty or sordidness. What Conrad remarked about Proust may be applied to Virginia Woolf and other post-Impressionist novelists also:

> In that prose so full of life there is no reverie, no emotion, no marked irony, no warmth of conviction, not even a marked rhythm to charm one's fancy.[8]

One may or may not feel piqued by Conrad's remark but on the whole it appears an objective assessment of the limitations of the psychological novel in general and of the stream of consciousness novel in particular.

One of the significant contributions of Virginia Woolf to fiction criticism is her idea of 'form'. Being conscious of the transition from the old to the new and committed to the moment of feeling, she decided to renounce old methods and asserted that the modern novel should imbibe the mould of the modern mind itself. This form or structure, as is obvious from her essay 'Modern Fiction', is necessarily one of infinite complexity because it is made up of many kinds of emotions. Her rejection of past literary forms– the lyric poem, the poetic play and even the conventional novel—was prompted by the exigencies of her unique vision. The entry in her *Diary* concerning *The Waves* after 7 November 1928, is about form.

Though still having a vague idea as to the nature of the new form, she expresses a determination to 'eliminate all waste, deadness, superfluity: to give the moment whole; whatever it includes'. Her own novels, as most critics agree, followed the pattern of breaking and remaking of form. Each novel was 'breaking' the 'mould,'[9] for the individual emotional value of a work demanded from her a fresh matrix. Perhaps her idea of 'form' was a unique and highly personalized synthesis of earlier literary forms which continually modify and adapt themselves to new themes, and feelings. In certain respects, Virginia Woolf's ideal form could be the culmination of Flauberts's dream of absolute style. In her essay 'The Narrow Bridge of Art' she refers to this form which would be dramatic and yet not a play; it would have the 'exaltation of poetry but much of the ordinariness of prose'. It would give the outline rather than the detail. Finally, it would give 'the relations of man to nature, to fate; of his imagination to his dreams'.[10]

If the new novel's form would express a more comprehensive view of man, his mind and his emotions, then the 'proper stuff of fiction' would consist of 'every feeling, every thought, every quality of brain and spirit'. Life is 'a luminous halo' or as William James called it a 'halo of relations'. This 'halo' is the aura of the moment of feeling which Virginia Woolf underscores in her essay 'Modern Fiction'. She believes that the needs of the novel are frequently those of the author. Thus the novel becomes a convenient medium for self-discovery. For Virginia Woolf, as for other writers of the stream of consciousness school, the conjunction of time and temperament resulted in the uniqueness of their contributions. The shift from without to within and the freedom from traditional patterns of novel writing necessarily led them to make the novel 'a little voyage of discovery'. Virginia Woolf not only succeeded in extricating the English novel from conventional modes of plot construction and characterization but also made sincere attempts to widen its thematic and artistic horizons.

Virginia Woolf carries the tradition of James and Conrad in fiction criticism still further. Some of her earlier essays in *The Common Reader* do not show that obsession with psychological stuff which characterizes her later cogitations. They communicate impressions made by particular works upon her well-trained and receptive mind. They also show her generous appreciation of the authors of different schools. The essays on Defoe, Jane Austen and Gissing clearly indicate how she appreciated their keen grasp of life and healthy view of human society. Writing of Defoe,[11] she maintains that 'he achieves a truth of insight which is far rarer and more enduring than the truth of fact which he proposed to make his aim' (p. 130). The conclusion of the essay is equally pertinent :

> He belongs, indeed, to the school of the great plain writers, whose work is founded upon a knowledge of what is most persistent, though not most seductive in human nature'. (p. 131)

Her remarks about Jane Austen's range[12] show that she was quite aware of her limitations :

> Her gaze passes straight to the mark, and we know precisely where, upon the map of human nature, that mark is. We know because Jane Austen kept to her compass, she never trespassed beyond her boundaries. (pp. 171-172)

But the quickness of her observation is worth noticing :

> The wit of Jane Austen has for partner the perfection of her taste. Her fool is a fool, her snob is a snob, because he departs from the model of sanity and sense which she has in mind. . . . Never did any novelist make more use of an impeccable sense of human values. (p. 177)

The criteria Virginia Woolf adopts for judging masterpieces —human life, human nature, human values—testify to her humanistic approach to literary works rather than mere preoccupation with technique. She is superb in her analysis of the works of certain novelists even though she does not approve of the stuff of which they are made. Take, for instance, her essay on George Gissing.[13] Commenting on the dismal chronicle of life in modern *Grub Street* she remarks :

> The writer has dined upon lentils; he gets up at nine : he walks across London; he finds Mr. M. still in bed. whereupon he stands forth as the champion of life as it is, and proclaims that ugliness is truth, truth ugliness, and that is all we know and all we need to know. (pp. 221-22)

And yet 'the imperfect novelist' draws her attention to something rare :

> With all his narrowness of outlook and meagreness of sensibility, Gissing is one of the extremely rare novelists who believes in the power of the mind, who makes his people think'. (p. 223).

Few would doubt Virginia Woolf's sincerity when she reviews the works of eighteenth or nineteenth century novelists. She is seldom banal or aggressive. She belongs to the group of those genial critics who without compromising their standards reveal fresh aspects of an author's art.

Virginia Woolf's critical faculty touches its high water-mark in her two essays on Thomas Hardy and Joseph Conrad. They are the novelists whom she regards as 'spiritual' in a special sense and considers their novels supreme works of fiction. The essay 'The Novels of Thomas Hardy'[14] (1928) though a bit impressionistic, reveals her keen perception of Hardy's art as a novelist. It is refreshing to hear this gifted novelist speak so lovingly of her elder contemporary. 'While Hardy lived there was no excuse for thinking meanly of the art he practised' (p. 245). According to her he was the one novelist who made the art of fiction seem an 'honourable calling.' She reminds us of Hardy's theory that a novel is not a toy, nor an argument : it is a means of giving truthful if harsh and violent impressions of the lives of men and women. She believes that since Hardy was not a 'conscious' writer like Henry James his genius appears to be uncertain in development and uneven in accomplishment. But when the moment comes he is superb in achievement. *Far From the Madding Crowd* is such an achievement in which the subject and the method are perfectly harmonised.

Virginia Woolf compares Hardy with other English and

European novelists to bring out his apparent limitations :

> He has not the perfection of Jane Austen, or the wit of Meredith, or the range of Thackeray or Tolstoy's amazing intellectual power. . . . In the drawing room and club-room and ball-room, where people of leisure and education come together, where comedy is bred and shades of character revealed, he is awkward and ill at ease. (pp. 252-53)

But she impresses upon us the fact that his distinction lies in being the greatest tragic writer among English novelists. This means that he occupies a place next only to Shakespeare in delineating human nature in conflict with Destiny. By reading the Wessex novels we feel free from the cramping pettiness imposed by life :

> It is a vision of the world and of man's lot as they reveal themselves to a powerful imagination, a profound and poetic genius, a gentle and human soul. (p. 257)

Some of these illuminating remarks find an echo in the critical studies of later-day critics and one feels reassured that literary appreciation can still be made lively and readable in an age of awesome scholarly endeavour.

The essay 'Joseph Conrad'[15] was written as a tribute to the genius of the Polish writer when he passed away in 1924. Virginia Woolf rightly observed that though Conrad's impact as a novelist was tremendous he was not very popular in England :

> He was self-conscious and stiff . . . and the sound of his own voice was dearer to him than the voice of humanity in its anguish. (p. 283)

In spite of these limitations, Virginia Woolf recognizes in Conrad a master of the art of fiction, a creator of memorable heroic characters, a delineator of the mysteries of life. According to her Conrad's vision is both complex and specialized. That is why he appears, like his own Marlow, 'a most discreet, understanding man'.

One very important point in Virginia Woolf's essay concerns Conrad's so-called 'decline' in the later period of his life. She believes that after his Middle period Conrad never again was able to bring his figures into perfect relation with their background :

> The world of Conrad's later period has about it an involuntary obscurity, an inconclusiveness, almost a disillusionment which baffles and fatigues. (p. 290)

Thomas Moser, in his book, Conrad's *Achievement and Decline*, has developed Virginia Woolf's view into a full-length thesis. One may or may not agree with Virginia Woolf's judgment about Conrad's later works, the so-called 'political novels', yet it is certainly worthwhile to view these works from her angle of vision.

Virginia Woolf's literary criticism is not the criticism of a professional critic or a University scholar. For, when she is inspired, she is almost always superbly illuminating. The reader tends to forget everything about Conrad (or any other novelist) and is overwhelmed by her characteritic overtones :

> One opens his pages and feels as Helen must have felt when she looked in her glass and realised that, do what she would, she could never in any circumstance pass for a plain woman. (p. 283)

It is difficult to improve upon this poetic encomium.

No study of Virginia Woolf's theory of fiction would be complete without a reference to her remarkable essay, 'The Russian Point of View'[16]. An excellent comparative study of English and Russian fiction, it evidences Virginia Woolf's catholicity of outlook in the appreciation of works of fiction. She is conscious of the fact that Russian fiction cannot be understood properly through translations and yet the impression that one carries after reading them enables one to distinguish them clearly from the English novels. She feels that it is the 'deep sadness' of the Russian people that is imprinted upon their literature :

> Indeed, it is the soul that is the chief character in Russian fiction. Delicate and subtle in Tchekov, subject to an infinite number of humours and distempers, it is of greater depth and volume in Dostoevosky.... The novels of Dostoevosky are seething whirlpools, gyrating sandstorms, waterspouts which hiss and boil and suck us in. They are composed purely and wholly of the stuff of the soul. (pp. 225-26)

The English novelist, partially guided by his reader's preference or perhaps his inherent limitations, tends to regard social

comedy as a high water-mark of artistic achievement. But compared to the Russian novel it is just superficial.

There remains the greatest of all novelists—the author of *War and Peace*, Leo Tostoi Virginia Woolf feels that both his senses and his intellect are acute, powerful and well-nourished. That is why there is something proud and superb in the attack of such a mind and such a body upon life :

> Life dominates Tolstoi as the soul dominates Dostoevsky. There is always at the centre of all the brilliant and flashing petals of the flower this scorpion, 'Why Live ?' There is always at the centre of the book some Olenin, or Pierre, or Levin who gathers into himself all experience, turns the world round between his fingers, and never ceases to ask even as he enjoys it, what is the meaning of it, and what should be our aim. . . .Thus fear mingles with our pleasure, and of the three great Russian writers, it is Tolstoi who most enthrals us and most repels. (p. 231)

The essay clearly brings out Virginia Woolf's preference for stories and novels dealing with 'life', 'human nature', 'cosmic forces' as against mere drawing-room courtesies and ball-room romances. The novel, if it has to live, should not only partake of all great forms of literature but should also hold the prism to Nature, if possible, both inwardly and outwardly.

When Virginia Woolf was writing criticism some contemporary novelists of the younger generation were making their presence felt. Her judgment of their works highlights her own view of the art of novel-writing. To some extent her assessment was not different from that of Henry James's estimate of the younger generation. Though she held E. M. Forster in great regard as a friend and as a member of the Bloomsbury group, she was not always enthusiastic about his novels. 'The social historian will find his books full of illuminating information'. In her essay 'The Novels of E.M. Forster' she noticed in him a tendency towards didacticism.[17] In 'How it strikes a contemporary'[18] Mrs. Woolf refers to the loss of 'centralising influence' in contemporary criticism. The age of Drydens, Johnsons and Arnolds is gone. We have

reviewers but no critic; a million competent and incorruptible policemen but no judge' (p. 295). As she goes on to view it, the contemporary scene is without the masters in whose workshop the young could serve apprenticeship. As a result of this phenomenon of 'fragmentation' or dissociation of sensibility the work of contemporary writers gives the impression not of cohesion, but of disintegration. With this theory in mind she judges James Joyce's *Ulysses* as 'a memorable catastrophe, immense in daring, terrific in disaster'. (p. 297) The comment on D.H. Lawrence is equally emphatic : 'Mr. Lawrence, of course, has moments of greatness, but hours of something very different' (p.297). This obviously reflects Virginia Woolf's limitations as a critic and her infatuation with a sort of personal aesthetics which does not do justice to writers of a sensibility different from her own.

Even before Virginia Woolf started writing reviews and essays for English and American journals English fiction criticism had already come into its own with the writings of critics like Percy Lubbock and of creative artists like Henry James, Joseph Conrad and E.M. Forster. Her criticism as far as its tone and style is concerned reminds us more of traditional geniality rather than of objective analysis. Whereas, in her creative work she appears to be far ahead of her times, in fiction criticism she seems to have not gone farther than the Impressionist critics. Barring her essay on 'Modern Fiction'—and some remarks about 'form' and 'technique', her contribution appears to be meagre. However, her cogitations about the art of the novel are valuable in as much as she pleaded for the extension of the range of English novel and also made a fervent appeal for a new approach to technique and craftsmanship.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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S. Wiqar Husain

VIRGINIA WOOLF : THE CRITIC

But Bloomsbury, for all its prentensions, was not intelligent, at any rate about literature, and its sophistication ran astonishingly to cheap ness.

The above observation was made by F.R. Leavis in a lecture on T.S. Eliot's poetry delivered in 1969 and published just before Dr Leavis passed away.[1] Perhaps there cannot be a better way of testing the validity or otherwise of this wholesale condemnation of the literary sensibility of the so-called Bloomsbury intellectuals than going back to the critical writings of Virginia Woolf more than forty years after the last of her essays was written; for she was, upon her own testy yet proud admission,[2] a Bloomsbury highbrow to the very tips of her fingers.

Even in quantitative terms the critical output of Virginia Woolf is considerable. The first thing that strikes the reader of her literary criticism is her relaxed and informal manner. No doubt she deliberately avoided writing like a literary critic, or to be more precise, an academic critic; yet one cannot help discerning the overseeing presence of a rigorous mental discipline that controls the even and smooth flow of her perfect sentences. As she was primarily a creative writer she did often break into a pictorial idiom but here too the precision of her language is remarkable :'. . . when criticism is necessarily in abeyance; when books pass in review like the procession of animals in a shooting gallery, and the critic has only one second in which to load and aim and shoot and may well be pardoned if he mistakes rabbits for tigers, eagles for barndoor fowls, or misses altogether and wastes his shot upon some peaceful cow grazing in a further field'.[3] This effortless writ-

ing is guided by a definite sense of purpose. Virginia Woolf aimed at communicating with 'the common reader' of literature and not the expert or the specialist. It is the belief that a considerable number of educated people can be made to approach literature with an enlightened critical consciousness that determined the form and content of most of her criticism. By its very nature her task was educative but as far as possible she did not put on the airs of a preacher. She was quite firm and emphatic in her views on literature, yet she was too discreet to force them down the throats of her audience. She knew that she was not one of the common readers of literature, nevertheless, it was her endeavour to identify herself with 'the common reader' in her critical writings. She studiously avoided the use of all critical jargon and terminology and made her essays extremely interesting and readable. Establishing a friendly rapport with the reader was one of her primary aims in which she succeeded remarkably.

Though she mostly focused on individual writers and books and generally avoided unnecessary theorizing about literature and criticism, Virginia Woolf had certain clear ideas as to how a piece of creative writing could best be approached. She considered literature a complex art, and thought that even a lifetime's preoccupation with it may not enable one to produce any worthwhile criticism. However, it was necessary for every serious reader to develop his own critical response to literature. For Virginia Woolf meaning is inseparable from language. So first of all one should contemplate the nature of words. Words have their own associations. They are not single or separate entities. Raising the question as to what 'the proper use of words' is Virginia Woolf observed that words do not make a useful statement :' for a useful statement is a statement that can mean only one thing. And it is the nature of words to mean many things'.[5] Thus she goes about the task of making the uninitiated reader of literature conscious of the complexity of what he is dealing with. Since her mission was mainly educative, she did not, at

times, mind being a little too explicit and emphatic about what she expected the reader to do. For instance in a paper which she read at a school, she counselled her young listeners not to be guided by any critical authority as they start reading poems, plays and novels. Like T.S. Eliot she too wanted the reader to be on his guard against the critic who supplies *opinion*. She thonght that what really matters is our own taste or feeling for literature; and the critics can help only if we go to them with some questions arising from our study of literature. She wished the reader to approach a work of literature with an open mind, without any preconceptions or prejudices : 'Do not dictate to your author; try to become him'.[4] Once a book is properly read, the reader can be as severe in his assessment of its merit as he may like. Here Virginia Woolf seems to favour the famous *touchstone method*, for she wants every book to be compared with the best of its kind. She thinks that the standards of literary judgment which have been useful in evaluating the literature of the past can, with a slight adjustment, be quite serviceable for testing the newest of the new books. Though she had faith in the permanence of the values of good writing, she, nevertheless, wanted the reader to be conscious of the time when a work of literature was produced and also of the time when it was being judged. It is in this context that she suggested that the Elizabethan view of reality was different from our view of reality.[6] In order to bring home the significance of historical time in relation to literature, Virginia Woolf could be quite dramatic, as for example when she declared :'. . . in or about December 1910 human character changed'[7]. Thus she maintained that the writer is a social being and despite his loneliness he cannot be completely isolated from his social milieu. She in fact went to the extent of saying. 'When human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics and literature.'[8] Even the readers may influence the writer as no writer can be totally immune to the general climate of literary response in his time. But, paradoxically, it may not

always be possible for a writer to learn from his predecessors. Virginia Woolf did not bar even the wildest of experiments in literature; what she would not allow was 'falsity and pretence'. She believed in the intrinsic unity of form and meaning and had no preference for any particular *method*, for methods were means which could be tried out and discarded. The supreme value of literature does not lie in its technical perfection but in its ability to compass *life* with all its intensity and significance. The literature that excluded 'life' and the writer who tried to drive a wedge between life and literature were unpardonable. It was on this score that Virginia Woolf indicted, though rather unfairly, the critic Walter Raleigh.

Virginia woolf did not fully subscribe to the theory of the impersonality of the artist. 'Has any writer who is not a typewriter succeeded in being wholly impersonal?'[9], she asked. Elsewhere she declared that no theory of fiction could eliminate the artist himself. However, she qualified this view by saying that what we see in art is not the man but the spirit or personality. The novelist who cannot cover himself up well in his fiction is an imperfect novelist. She cited, in this regard, the case of George Gissing and observed that our relationship with such writers is not artistic but personal. Though she generally insisted on the poem or the novel itself, she thought that our knowledge of the author could be useful in understanding his work.

Intensely conscious as she was of the Englishness of English literature, Virginia Woolf was not parochial or chauvanistic. In fact some Russian and French writers often made her feel quite small; yet she believed that the English people had, as a race, certain characteristics which determined their attitude to life and this attitude found its reflection in their literature. She was all admiration for the great Russian novelists but thought that an English reader would not take without protest their sense of deep despair; for the English reader represents 'an ancient civilization' which seems to have given him 'the instinct to enjoy and fight rather than to

suffer and understand'.[10] As it was difficult for a foreigner to achieve any level of intimacy with English literature, so would an Englishman have to surmount the culture-barrier when approaching an alien literature. Virginia Woolf warned the English writers of the disastrous results if they tried to write like the Russians.

The foregoing brief survey of some of the general critical concepts which Virginia Woolf adhered to with a degree of consistency may serve as a background as we now come to the major corpus of her criticism. Since she almost always tried to avoid using the formal language of criticism she had to charge certain words with extraordinary meaning. Of particular interest in this regard is her use of the words *life* and *soul*. She used both these words in a largely subjective way; nevertheless, it was her endeavour to establish them as critical terms. The chief thrust of her polemical essays about contemporary fiction greatly depends on one's comprehension of what she means by *life* and *soul*. Her now famous division of writers into 'materialists' and 'spiritual' has also its roots in her special use of these two words. She begins by admitting the unavoidable vagueness of her pronouncements on contemporary fiction yet she has succeeded remarkably well in making her point of view clear to the reader. What one should bear in mind here is that Virginia Woolf has assessed contemporary novel from a viewpoint which is not strictly a critic's but also that of a practitioner of the art. She certainly prefers James Joyce, whom she calls 'spiritual', to the 'materialists'—Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy, but she is not wholly partisan in her advocacy of a particular kind of fiction. She concedes that Joyce has his limitations; for instance, he leaves out a good deal of life which another type of novelist would take in. She also does not deny the excellent workmanship of Arnold Bennett. Her precise objection to Bennett and other writers of his kind is that they do not create freely. By surrendering to the pressure of certain rituals and conventions of literary creation they have compro-

mised the all-Important freedom of the artist. As a consequence *life* has escaped from their work leaving it filled with trivia:

> The writer seems constrained, not by his own free will but by some powerfull and unscrupulous tyrant who has him in thrall, to provide a plot, to provide comedy, tragedy, love interest, and an air of probability embalming the whole so impeccable that if all his figures were to come to life they would find themselves dressed down to the last button of their coats in the fashion of the hour.[11]

Her relentless attack on the Edwardians soon assumes the tone of a manifesto as she declares :

> Life is not a series of gig lamps symmetrically arranged; life is a luminous halo, a semi-transparent envelope surrounding us from the beginning of consciousness to the end. Is it not the task of the novelist to convey this varying, this unknown and uncircumscribed spirit, whatever aberration or complexity it may display, with as little mixture of the alien and external as possible? [12]

May be this whole exercise is by way of self-justification; perhaps she is a little ambiguous too, but she does not miss her mark. *Modern Fiction* and *Mr. Bennett And Mrs. Brown* represent some of the most important criticism Virginia Woolf ever wrote.

Returning to the question of 'life' and 'soul' in the context of literature it is to be noted that Virginia Woolf refused to adopt a merely formal critical criterion. This, however, should not lead one to expect that she had any great faith in the pattern of abstract meaning emerging from a novel. Perhaps no work of literature, worth the name, can help being somewhat allegorical or symbolic but that's not where Virginia Woolf's chief interest lies. Again, when she used the word *spiritual*, it seldom had any purely metaphysical connotations: by it she meant the inner life of the individual. Since this life did not leave out anything, it included the supernatural and the transcendental, too, but without any special emphasis. For her neither God, nor Nature, nor the things created by man, but man himself is the centre of the universe and the measure of all things. Her individual is a social being

but his privacy is to be jealously guarded, for the hazy goings-on of the inside may be much more significant than the outward mechanical movements of the body, or the solid surroundings among which the individual finds himself placed. Virginia Woolf does not deny that a novel deals with character but maintains that there cannot be just one way of expressing character. A character's being real or unreal is again a matter of opinion. Differentiating between a *real* character and a *lifelike* character, she concedes that great novelists may bring us 'to see whatever they wish us to see through some character'. Such a character, it would be commonly agreed, is real. But the more important question for Virginia Woolf is whether or not a novel is 'complete in itself' and 'self-contained' like *Tristram Shandy* or *Pride and Prejudice*. It's here that she finds Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy lacking:

> But the Edwardians were never interested in character in itself, or in the book in itself. They were interested in something outside. Their books, then, were incomplete as books, and required that the reader should finish them, actively and practically himself.[13]

Since most of its contemporary interest is gone this criticism may have lost some of its bite; but it is still relevant as it dramatises the conflict of a new sensibility with the older and more placid modes of literary creation : an extension of the crusade carried out by Eliot and Pound in the field of poetry. Besides D. H. Lawrence and E.M. Forster, Virginia Woolf placed Lytton Strachey and T. S. Eliot among the Georgians whom she distinguished from the Edwardians. She thinks that Lawrence and Forster, in their earlier phase, made a mistake by trying to write like their immediate predecessors, for their vision was altogether different and the techniques perfected by Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy could hardly be of any use for them. Though Virginia Woolf protested against the tyranny of methods and techniques, and also believed that there is no such thing as 'the proper stuff of fiction', she could see an intrinsic relationship between the artist's meaning and the means through which he communicates it.

Virginia Woolf was fully aware of the hazards of criticizing the work of contemporaries as she has listed them at the beginning of her essay : *The Novels of E. M. Forster.* Though she goes about her task 'tentatively and cautiously', yet her studies of E. M. Forster, George Gissing and George Moore are comprehensively perceptive. She sees Forster as a novelist who is 'extremely susceptible to the influence of time' and 'who sees his people in close contact with their surroundings'. Such a novelist would not ordinarily interest Virginia Woolf but for the fact that in Forster 'observation is not an end in itself' and that Forster is 'the most persistent devotee of the soul'. There is a combination of realism and mysticism in E.M. Forster which reminds Virginia Woolf of Ibsen but she thinks that, unlike Ibsen, Forster leaves us puzzled as he shifts from one plane of reality to another. Since we are not sure of Forster's meaning we hesitate and 'the hesitation is fatal; for it makes us doubt both 'the real and the symbolical'. Thus Virginia Woolf pinpoints what she considers Forster's major flaw. In his earlier novels, too, she discerns the presence of 'contrary currents' :

> Yet if there is one gift more essential to a novelist than another it is the power of combination—the single vision. The success of the masterpieces seems to lie not so much in their freedom from faults—indeed we tolerate the grossest errors in them all—but in the immense persuasiveness of a mind which has completely mastered its perspective.[14]

Even in *A Passage to India*, Virginia Woolf finds Forster's attitude to be 'the same four square attitude' but she remarks that his double vision is in process of becoming single'. One may not wholly agree with Virginia Woolf's criticism of Forster's novels; perhaps, she has underestimated both *Howards End* and *A Passage to India;* nevertheless, this criticism stands out even today for its detachment and sharp analytical quality, particularly as it comes from a contemporary of Forster's who belonged to the same literary milieu to which Forster did.

Another example of an important critical assessment of a

contemporary's work is provided by Virginia Woolf's well-known essay: *The Art of Biography*. Besides focusing on Lytton Strachey (to whom *The Common Reader : First Series* was dedicated), this essay attempts to define the scope of biography. Virginia Woolf concedes that biography is a restricted art as the biographer does not have the freedom of the novelist. Again, the biographer may not like to reveal all the facts available to him as so many Victorian biographers did and thus produced lifeless biographies. However, the biographer's facts are not like 'the facts of science' as 'they are subject to changes of opinion' and 'opinions change as the times change'. Virginia Woolf's attitude to this genre of writing seems to be a little condescending. She does not allow the biographer the status of an artist, for her he is just a 'craftsman'; and biography 'is not a work of art, but something betwixt and between'. The life portrayed in a biography is 'a life lived at a lower tension'; hence it cannot acquire that immortality which the creations of the artist can : Boswell's Johnson will not outlast Shakespeare's Falstaff. In the final analysis, Virginia Woolf sees the value of the biographer's work in its being the supplier of 'sober fact', which, according to her, is the 'proper food' for 'the tired imagination'.

Virginia Woolf has hailed Lytton Strachey as a new kind of biographer and she thinks that his books, in a way, demonstrate what biography can and cannot do. Her analysis of the comparative failure of *Elizabeth and Essex* is thought-provoking as she points out that it is the failure of the form of biography itself rather than that of Strachey who tried to treat biography as an art. Surprisingly, Virginia Woolf has almost ignored the gentle irony of *Queen Victoria*, nor does she pay any attention to the effective portrayal of Albert; and, perhaps, she is not wholly right in declaring that in times to come Strachey's Queen Victoria will be taken for the illustrious queen much in the same way as Boswell's Johnson has almost replaced the famous critic and lexicographer. Although it, in many ways, represents the best achievement of the

author, Virginia Woolf has not given *Eminent Victorians* its due, and dismissed it rather cryptically. The tone of her criticism of Lytton Strachey's biographies is generally laudatory but there is no trace of any group-loyalty or partisanship in it. However, her observations on the art of biography seem more interesting and relevant now than her evaluation of Lytton Strachey as a biographer.

After having had a look at Virginia Woolf's detailed critical studies of two of her major contemporaries, we now come to a less formal mode of her criticism, namely, her reflections on contemporary poetry as contained in *A Letter to a Young Poet*. Here she has offered her views more as personal impressions than as considered critical pronouncements. She feels that modern poetry has lost touch with life and left life to the novelist; nor has the combination of reality and beauty worked well in it. The self which the modern poet projects is an isolated self and the poet is not interested in what he has in common with others but in what is exclusive to him. This predilection of the modern poet makes his poetry so difficult to follow. Virginia Woolf wonders why modern poets cannot write about other people. In her opinion (expressed in 1933), no living poet was able to strike the right relationship between 'the self' and 'the world outside'. She sees no danger to poetry from any external circumstances, for 'the instinct of rythm' is primitive and profound. The poets who followed W.B. Yeats lacked the richness of his 'exactitude' and they have denied 'the eye and the ear' their due. May be this indictment of modern poetry is a little too generalised, but, it, like some other of Virginia Woolf's off-hand critical remarks, strangely succeeds in reaching to the heart of the matter as it points to the modern poet's inability to look beyond his own self. This, however, should not give the impression that Virginia Woolf was always up to the mark in her judgment of contemporary literature; nor did she make any such claims. She was, for instance, quite enthusiastic about Joyce's *Ulysses*, as she read some of its fragments, but later she had

only this much to say about the novel : '*Ulysses* was a memorable catastrophe-immense in daring, terrific in disaster'.[15] Needless to say, Virginia Woolf failed to see the potential of the book. She was herself painfully conscious of the unavoidable recurrence of such errors of judgment, as she has discussed this problem, at great length, in the same essay in which she expressed the above opinion about *Ulysses*. Despite many pitfalls, Virginia Woolf just could not visualize any escape from involvement in contemporary literature. For her 'reverence for the dead is vitally connected with the understanding of the living'.

Virginia Woolf was no less pre-occupied with the literature of the past than with the work of her contemporaries. Her literary interests and sympathies were indeed catholic. Moreover, she often reviewed books which included new editions of classics. Her criticism of the established writers of the past is not radically different from her assessment of the moderns. Perhaps she is a little more tolerant, and the asperity which she reserves for some of her contemporaries is not there, for example, she has shown a remarkable degree of patience and understanding in writing about the letters of Lord Chesterfield to his son even though she clearly disagreed with some of the cherished views of Lord Chesterfield.

Among non-fiction prose forms, the essay, besides biography, letters and journals, considerably engaged Virginia Woolf's critical attention. She saw no room for literal truth and moralizing in the farmework of this form. Also she thought that the essayist must be sensitive to public opinion. But a more important observation of hers in this connection is about the problem of the writer's self in literature : unless one masters the art of writing, one can hardly make any use of the self in one's literature. The writer's dilemma is precisely this : 'Never to be himself and yet always'.[16] The essays of Montaigne interested Virginia Woolf as she could see in them 'an attempt to communicate a soul'—something which she always regarded as a hall-mark of significant literature. She

found Addison's address to his own age a kind of hindrance for the modern reader, but acknowledged that it was because of Addison that English prose was 'prosaic' by which she meant the essential quality of prose. Perhaps the most incisive of Virginia Woolf's studies of the essayists is that of William Hazlitt whom she regarded as the finest mind and the best prose writer of his time. But she also notes that Hazlitt's range was narrow and his sympathies few and that he could seldom achieve the perfection and unity of Montaigne, Addison or Lamb. Yet Hazlitt had 'something solid to write about', he had conviction and loved to turn ideas inside out. Thus Virginia Woolf has taken a balanced view of Hazlitt.

Though Virgina Woolf has not written as much about poetry and drama as about fiction, the Elizabethan age greatly fascinated her. To her, Elizabethan prose, in general, appears to be imperfect, and that of Sidney 'an uninterrupted monologue'. She, however, found a kindred soul in Sir Thomas Browne :

> His immense egotism has paved the way for all psychological novelists, autobiographers, confession-mongers, and dealers in the curious shade of our private life. [17]

In this way Virginia Woolf constantly relates herself to the past and creates a sense of tradition to serve as a backdrop for her criticism. Her essay *Notes on An Elizabethan play* contains some of her sharpest critical remarks about the Elizabethans, who, according to her, suffocate our imaginations rather than set them to work'. She also feels that outside Shakespeare and Ben Jonson there are no characters in Elizabethan drama but only 'violences'. Ford is supposed to be a psychologist and analyst but he has not succeeded in depicting his Annabella as a real woman. However, to be fair to Ford, Virginia Woolf soon reminds us that the dramatist's aim is not to show us Annabella but love itself. At this point she draws a broad distinction between a play and a novel by saying that while in the former we recognize the general, in the latter it is the particular on which our attention is focused. She views

Donne as a poet who is in rebellion against his times, but, in a later phase, Donne 'the eulogist' seems to be submitting to the pressures of his time. She also finds his divine poetry to be different from the divine poetry of Herbert or Vaughan. The memory of the poet's sins returns to him as he writes. Another characteristic of Donne's which Virginia Woolf calls 'UnElizabethan', is that Donne always speaks from his own centre. Apart from our agreement or otherwise with them, such observations are valuable because they startle us into rethinking about some of the half-forgotten aspects of an age or an author, and thus Virginia Woolf's active and energetic literary sensibility perpetuates itself.

That fiction was Virginia Woolf's first priority no one will doubt. Defoe, Sterne, Jane Austen, the Bronte Sisters, George Eliot, Meredith, Hardy, Conrad—she has written, at length, about them all. The question is whether she has applied the same critical criteria to the great masters by which she has judged some of her contemporaries like Wells, Bennett and Galsworthy. Did she write on these novelists because she found them akin to herself and her view of fiction? Is it an attempt to build a selective tradition of English novel? Surely Virginia Woolf insists on certain qualities in a writer and upholds them as a kind of ideal; for instance, she praises Defoe who 'deals with the important and lasting side of things and not the passing or the trivial'. But she, at the same time, wishes the reader to master the perspective and refrain from imposing his own on the novelist. This may be taken as the central principle of her criticism. She points out that though Scott, Jane Austen and Peacock were contemporaries, their perspectives differ considerably. She does not fail to note that by describing the effect of emotion on the body, Defoe followed a course which is the opposite of the psychologist's. Again she admires Sterne who transfers the reader's interest from the outer to the inner, But she cannot overlook his sentimentality. About Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf says that even an inferior story of hers has the permanent quality of

literature—an insight into human values. It appears as if a quality like this makes a writer immediately acceptable to Virginia Woolf, but, it, in no way, makes her oblivious of what she considers the author's shortcomings. Clearly there is not much common ground between Virginia Woolf and Jane Austen whose limited experience leaves out 'vice, adventure, passion.' Nevertheless, Virginia Woolf can appreciate Jane Austen's model of sanity and sense and her uniform level of perfection. When she observes that if Jane Austen had lived longer she would have written differently; she, in a way, gives expression to her dissatisfaction with Jane Austen's work. Of course she was not always as discreet in her criticism of her contemporaries. Also she sometimes overestimated a novelist as her brilliant yet wasteful essay on Meredith would amply demonstrate. Virginia Woolf kept comparing different novelists and pinpointed what she considered a striking similarity, as, for example, she declared that Charlotte Bronte and Thomas Hardy share a power of personality and a narrowness of vision and that their style is founded upon a 'stuffy and decorous journalism'. Emile Bronte is great because 'she could free life from its dependence on facts'. George Eliot has no such magic, still *Middlemarch* is one of the few English novels meant for grown-up people. Hardy's characters do not so much comprehend one another as they comprehend life. Something unsaid always lurks in the margin of his pages. Thus one can go on quoting bits of perceptive criticism from Virginia Woolf's essays on great novelists which display the full range of her critical powers.

There is not a single dull moment in Virginia Woolf's criticism and hardly an essay that does not revive one's interest in the subject—no mean achievement this!

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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Vijay Kapoor

A JUNGIAN INTERPRETATION OF *MRS. DALLOWAY*

Virginia Woolf's attitude towards the variegated themes of *Mrs. Dalloway* is not analytical but synthetical.[1] She gives a certain tone, depth and direction to her novel by building up the actual situation towards the future instead of simply resolving the present into the past. From the beginning to the end and moving in a spiral-like form, the novel attempts to establish a relation between consciousness and the unconscious, between all the pairs of psychic opposites on which is built a lasting psychological equilibrium. The process is in itself dialectical[2], and involves confronting the elements of consciousness with those of the unconscious—a process which evokes a reaction between these two psychic realities, and aims towards and results in bridging over both with a synthesis. The synthesis may in other words emerge from the juxtaposition of libido—a general force bringing people together and psyche—the developmental theory of personality involving a final reintegration or rebirth. To work out this interplay of psychic realities Virginia Woolf first determines the framework of the novel—a transition from morning to late evening—within which the dynamic processes of Mrs. Dalloway's psyche are shown moving forwards and backwards, progressively and regressively, inwards and outwards, corresponding to the introversion and extroversion of a Jungian psyche. But the movement is constantly oriented towards a future goal, and all her actions, whether trivial or important, are found to be symptomatic and therefore meaningful in terms of the whole character-structure of her personality. The

opening statement of the novel[3] : 'Mrs. Dalloway said she would buy the flowers herself' is a conscious, wilful choice of her ego personality whose complete meaning is not clear even to herself. The choice of the direction is consciously taken, but her psyche is shown to be beyond the governing control of causal laws. What 'happens' next—for psychic events always happen; they cannot be caused—beginning with the rise and fall of an emotion complex : 'What a lack ! What a plunge !' is beyond her conscious schematization. Mrs. Dalloway is now at the mercy of the inner dynamics of her psyche that has its own ordered laws, associations and regulating systems, obviously formed on the principle of oscillation between two poles.

Since the movement of the psyche is essentially progressive and continuous, since an unhindered process of adjustment to the conscious and the unconsious demands of life is taking place, it is often seen that through failure of the conscious adjustment and the resultant repression, a one-sided development results which blocks the free flow of the energy. Jung believed that it was necessary for a balancing counter weight to express itself in the later half of life because it is then that man's values, and even his body, tend to change into their opposites. Mrs. Dalloway, the middle-aged, sophisticated wife of a British M.P., is in such a state of flux when the novel opens. From her monologues we gather that over the years, as she was evolving the corpus of behaviour which make up her ego identity, another side of her personality was systematically ignored or suppressed because she found it distasteful, inadequate or unpleasant. In order to fulfil the demands of her ego identity, she made choices and selected certain set patterns of behaviour which were essential to assist her in the realization of the dreams and aims of her life. In the early days of their courtship, Peter Walsh often teased her about her future, saying that 'she would marry a Prime Minister and stand at the top of a staircase;

the perfect hostess he called her,. . .'(9-10) Later, Clarissa's decision to reject Peter's proposal and marry Richard Dalloway was deliberately and coolly made. Peter Walsh still remembers the day he proposed to a stiff and cold Clarissa who had already made up her mind. He re-lives the painful experience of that day when he had wanted to know the answer:

> 'Tell me the truth', he repeated. He felt that he was grinding against something physically hard; she was unyielding. She was like iron, like flint, rigid up the back bone. (72)

Having lived with Richard all these years, Clarissa can congratulate herself on her right decision. In one of her reveries that morning, as she is going to celebrate her fifty second birthday, we find her thinking, reasoning mind still justifying her decision to marry Richard instead of Peter:

> So she would still find herself arguing in St. James's Park, still making out that she had been right—and she had too—not to marry him (Peter). For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him.(10)

Fortunately, both Peter Walsh and Richard Dalloway still love her, and she knows it. Her servants adore her. She is still well-sought after in the high social life of London. But then, why this discontent? Why this dissatisfaction and this odd feeling of being 'Mrs. Dalloway not even Clarissa anymore, this being Mrs. Richard Dalloway?' (13) Evidently, Mrs. Dalloway is completely disillusioned with her life and is disorientated with her roles of a wife, a mother and a hostess. Hence, she muses : 'Oh if she could have had her life over again! she thought, stepping on the pavement, could have looked even differently!' (13) Yes, given a choice, she would have been like Lady Bexborough dark, stately, large, interested in politics like a man. The change she desires is of a psychological nature. She desires to do things which, for one reason or another, she had denied herself and thus fallen into the trap of enacting the fixed roles for a woman in

a male-oriented society. How much she would like to be 'like Richard who did things for themselves, whereas, she thought ... half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves; but to make people think this or that, perfect idiocy she knew ..., for no one was ever for a second taken in.' (12-13). The social approbation has thus been part of her life upto this point. The choices she mistook as her own were hardly the result of her own free thinking. The reason why she refused to marry Peter Walsh was not what her rational mind had coined up. It was because Peter Walsh had never got on well with her father. Conversing with her in her gilted drawing-room that morning, Peter says with a sigh, 'I often wish I'd got on better with your father'. 'And the truth spills out of Clarissa unconsciously : 'But he never liked any one who—our friends', said Clarissa; and could have bitten her tongue for thus reminding Peter that he had wanted to marry her.' (47) The approval of the father was imperative, for he represented the Patriarchal society that Clarissa, as a woman, could then never have dared to ignore or undermine. What she did was to suppress all her natural desires, urges and emotions, and she did what others wanted her to. Yet, thirty years later, Clarissa sits by the side of of Peter on the sofa in her tastefully decorated drawing-room, 'feeling as she sat back extraordinarily at ease with him and light-hearted, all in a clap it came over her, 'If I had married him this gaiety would have been mine all day!' (52) What immediately follows this revelation is a horrifying but revealing nightmare of her reverie:

> It was all over for her. The sheet was stretched and the bed narrow. She had gone up into the tower alone and left them blackberrying in the sun The door had shut, and there among the dust of fallen plaster and the litter of bird's nests how distant the view had looked and the sounds came thin and chill (once on Leith Hill, she remembered) and Richard, Richard! she cried, as a sleeper in the night starts and stretches a hand in the dark for help. Lunching with Lady Bruton, it came back to her. He has left her, I am alone for ever, she thought folding her hands upon her knee. (52-53)

If we follow the patterns of her thought in the passage we notice a growing sense of loneliness and isolation in her. She is a prisoner in the narrow cell of her own making; a cripple who constantly needs the crutches or help from her husband who, she fears, has left her. Even a reminder from her conscious mind that he is lunching with Lady Bruton does not diminish the reality and the horror of 'I am alone for ever.' In her heart of hearts she knows that her husband and her daughter, Elizabeth, do not need her for the fulfilment of their desires or needs : '(where was he this morning, for instance ? Some committee, she never asked what)'. (10) and, Elizabeth really cared for her dog most of all. (14).

The masks of patterned behaviour that she had worn as adjustment devices to get along in life prove brittle. All her attempts to appear gentle and generous-hearted turn out to be facades to cover up that side of hers, 'faults, jealousies, vanities, suspicions' (42), which Jung calls the shadow or the negative side of the personality. The eruption of the shadow side of her personality is suggested by Miss Kilman who appears to Clarissa as a brutal monster of the under world, 'down in the depths of that leaf-encumbered forest, the soul' (15). Miss Kilman becomes a projection of all the negative and unpleasant qualities whose existence she had refused to admit in herself. Her reaction to fight off this 'spectre' that disturbs the peace and content of her life is the first conscious inkling she has of a shadow complex in her. The shadow, according to Jung, provides a fundamental contrast to the conscious realms of personality. These shadow-contents must be brought into the conscious in a form which will allow us to confront them, and then ultimately conquer them lest they gain control of our being. Clarissa's desire to confront the brute, personified as Miss Kilman, 'with the power and taciturnity of some prehistoric monster armoured for primeval warfare' (139) is the first step towards her individuation, for no one can achieve integration of personality without first confronting one's

shadow. There is no fulfilment of the desire for wholeness without a recognition of the opposites; without establishing contact with the deeper and more meaningful regions of the psyche—personal unconscious and collective unconscious.

The desire to straighten the tilt of her one-sided personality takes birth in Clarissa's psyche which is no longer satisfied with the ego centre of her conscious personality and now seeks a new centre—a centre that can act like a magnet to the disparate elements of her personality that annoy her. She has an inkling of the desire as she passes through a busy Westminster street:

> But what was she dreaming as she looked into Hatchard's shop window ? What was she trying to recover ? What image of white dawn in the country, as she read in the book spread open : Fear no more the heat o' the sun Nor the furious winter's rages. (12)

There is obviously no wholeness without being exposed to the heat of the sun or to the 'furious winter's rages', both being part of the realities of life. Peter Walsh knows it; he notices a certain coldness in Clarissa, a certain incompleteness in her. In one of her moments of exaltation when she is reliving the most cherished moments of happiness in her youth with Sally Seton, Clarissa also dimly perceives the hidden potentials in one's personality:

> She could see what she lacked. It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman, or of women together. For that she could dimly perceive. (36)

What is needed for her individuation, for her becoming whole once again, is breaking through the surfaces of her ego-shell, piercing through the personae (masks) of her patterned behaviour. What she needs is a plunge into the depths of her inner being. But how can she do that when she is afraid of leaving the safe and familiar paths ? She feels strongly attracted to her former orientation in spite of a dim awareness of its self-denying and conformist ways. She is not willing to give away the sense of security she has built up around

her in the form of a hard crest of her social aplomb. But the other questions also make their presence strongly felt as she grows more and more dissatisfied with her mundane existence. How long can she refuse to be guided by her natural inclinations or ignore their signals and promptings? The emotional dynamics of Clarissa's divided self disturbs her. But like a perfect hostess and a lady that she is, she has neatly stitched the irreconcilable parts of her personality so that the tear may not be seen at her parties and social gatherings. In her attempts to achieve an ordered and peaceful life and an idealised personality, she has imposed severe and crippling restrictions on her natural and instinctive urges. When she peeps into her mirror she discovers : 'That was herself—pointed; dart-like; definite;' (42) her mirror-self which she takes to be her real self. But where does her true self reside ? Can she discover it in the mirror-image? No. Peter Walsh informs us :

> For this is the truth about our soul, he [Peter] thought, our self, who fish-like inhabits deep seas and plies among obscurities. . . (178)

Before our self can emerge, it is necessary to become fully developed and individuated, to be 'reborn' at the mid-point in life by making a journey backward, into the depths of the unconscious, and by returning to meet the outward-inward demands of life.

The paradoxical and intricate mosaic of thoughts and feelings of Clarissa, and the tumultuous passions that lurk beneath the disarmingly calm surface of her social identity, show her standing at a point in her life where a retreat means death and a forward movement signifies release and liberation of her caged self. In the process of the recovery of her true self Peter plays as significant a role as does Miss Kilman in helping her discover and locate her shadow-complex. The social triumphs satisfy Clarissa no longer as they used to. At he most exhilarating moment of her life at the party as she stands triumphant by the side of the Prime Minister, she is

able to recognize the most vital emotion of hatred for Miss Kilman—'hot, hypocritical, corrupt' (193) whom she hated and also loved. This is a mark of her progressien towards self actualization. Jung has rightly maintained that 'one cannot argue the shadow out of existence or rationalize it into harmlessness'[4]; it has to be recognized as such. The dark has to be understood as dark. Instead of suppressing or ignoring it Clarissa becomes unsparingly critical of the shadow in her own nature and brings it in juxtaposition with her ego-identity, its counterpart, and holds the two together in opposition. A release from the shadow triggers off a new processing down to the unconscious for a psychic equilibrium which is the goal of human mind. Opposition, the Jungians believe, not only 'moves the object off dead centre, and thus prolongs its existence, but may be resolved into progress within itself.'[5] Recognition of the evil within Clarissa frees her, and she is now prepared for a change.

II

Peter Walsh has received very casual treatment at the hands of critics. An ex-lover of Mrs. Dalloway, a rejected suitor, a vagabond, a fantasizer, unconventional in behaviour, a ratttler who has not been able to find his roots anywhere—these are the impressions gathered from a general reading of the novel. Since most critics approach the novel via Mrs Dalloway, they interpret Peter Walsh from the viewpoint of the chief protagonist. No wonder Reuben Brower calls him 'one of the destroyers of the privacy of the soul.'[6] In a novel like this, where the chief protagonist herself is a suspect and at the mercy of her various emotional complexes, the vantage-point of viewing things must not be her psyche which is just a criss-cross of fleeting perceptions, sensations and emotions. An objective view shows Peter Walsh not only as a great preserver of the 'privacy' of Clarissa's soul but also a great healer of her 'sick' soul. Similarly, his presence in the novel is not merely a technical device to let loose in Clarissa

impressions of her life at Bourton. Peter Walsh is constantly present in Clarissa's thoughts much before their actual meeting that day. Conversely, once the meeting has taken place, there is hardly a mention of Peter in her monologues. After the meeting, it is Peter who takes it upon himself to conceive Clarissa in his imagination with a definite purpose of comprehending her. In fact, the reciprocal interaction of these two psychic realities is the main argument of the novel. Clarissa and Peter form one of the pairs of psychic opposites which weave the novel's thematic pattern. They experience mutual attraction as well as antagonism. Once Peter was passionately in love with Clarissa and wanted to marry her. He dreamt 'how they would change the world if she married him perhaps' (172). The extent to which Clarissa's decision not to marry him affects her and leads to the one-sided tilt in her personality can be easily gauged. The partially neurotic state to which Peter is reduced is also the result of the same decision. His suppressed passion now finds an outlet in unconventional and idiotic acts like opening and shutting of his penknife and his rash and impulsive marriages. Both Clarissa and Peter are now over fifty and in a state of mind when one looks inward to assess the past and orient for the future. The psychological and therapeutic value of their meeting at this stage is incalculably significant. It is like the mixing of two different chemical substances which react to each other and, in the process, are transformed.

Clarissa and Peter, on the psychological level, represent certain states of mind which need counterbalancing of psychic attitudes between the sexes – the male and and the female or, what Jung calls, anima and animus. In Clarissa there is a strong attraction for the male principle even when it is found in a woman. That explains her adoration and love for Sally Seton who shows courage and daring to defy conventional norms in her teens. Later, when Sally gets married and settles down with her husband and five strong sons in the country side, Clarissa ceases to feel any emotion of love

for her because she had adopted the conformist's attitude and feminine roles readily accepted by society—the type of life she herself had opted for much against her natural urges. This suppressed and undeveloped side of her personality has been seeking fulfilment in many a dubious way, e. g.. when she yielded like a man to the charm of a woman confessing before her. There is a controversial passage in the novel in which Clarissa speaks of her failure in marriage and of her 'virginity preserved through childbirth which clung to her like a sheet.' (36) All her oscillating emotions of isolation and communion, frustration and ecstasy make sense when psychologically interpreted. At 52, Clarissa reads *Memoirs* of General Merclin de Marbot at bed time, and mentally indulges in violence and rage by identfying herself with the general's manliness. In her life she has failed to meet a 'real' man. Her father was a weakling, prattling, careless man. Richard is very nice and very good, but hardly a man to satisfy all her inner demands. Peter Walsh had the potential of becoming such a one. 'He was a man. But not the sort of man one had to respect—which was a mercy; not like Major Simmons, for instance. . .' (173). But his growth was retarded in his youth by an emotional blocking. Despite all his weaknesses and emotional outbursts Clarissa still experiences some of her happiest moments with him. The solitary voyager, the adventurer, 'a romantic buccaneer, careless of all those damned properties' (60), he can still evoke tremendous passion in Clarissa, the middle-aged housewife and mother. Her heart swells at the sight of him standing near the window with his back towards her:

> Take me with you, Clarissa thought impulsively, as if he were starting directly upon some great voyage; and then, next moment, it was as if the five acts of a play that had been very exciting and moving were now over and she had lived a lifetime in them and had run away, had lived with Peter. (53)

But this ecstasy is short-lived. Peter is impulsive, moody, restless and rootless. He also falls into a one-sided mental

illness and fails to live upto his inherent potential. His adventures remain confined to the fantasies of his highly provocative imagination.

Peter's 'whole life had been a failure' (10) from Clarissa's social standards. As a compensation for this failure, Peter's psychic energy is orientated towards fantasizing those repressed aspects of his personality which have found no adequate medium of expression within a constricting society. But his dreams indicate a psychic commitment to a certain goal. He must fulfil an inner urge to understand Clarissa who has come to represent for him the *anima* of the unconscious. He must know Clarissa; must understand her; must see through her. On his return from India, this is now he reacts to his traditional role of a lover of Clarissa.

> No, no, no! He was not in love with her any more! . . . this was not love, it was thinking of her, criticizing her, starting again, after thirty years, trying to explain her. (85)

He must know what she has made of her life, sitting thus with her scissors and silks all the while he was undergoing adventures, rides, journeys, love affairs. How much of real life she has missed, he muses. And yet, she has the power to move him to tears, to make him look ridiculous in his own eyes. Mrs Dalloway becomes a riddle for him that he must solve for the resolution of his own inner complexes. The resolution for him is shown worked out in his diurnal dreams in which his personal conflicts are resolved when he is able to establish contact with the collective unconscious and the archetype anima. His dream becomes a psychic activity of the unconscious as it occurs to provide a balanced relationship with his conscious apprehension of Clarissa. A dream, according to Jung, has its own regulating system and is dramatically structured as a whole with a-rounded-off series of happenings. Peter's dream that continues despite intervals can be seen developing at four different stages. In the first stage he is in a waking state. The sound of St Margaret strikes

omniously and he associates the stroke with 'death that surprised in the midst of life' (56). This triggers off the reverie, and he goes back in time to Bourton where he stands waiting for Clarissa near the staircase. Clarissa appears dressed in a snowwhite gown slowly descending the steps. But before she reaches the last step, 'the sudden loudness of the final stroke tolled for death that surprised in the midst of life, Clarissa falling where she stood, in her drawing-room' (56). Peter bursts out crying: 'No! No! he cried. She is not dead!' The experience of the fake death of Clarissa gives Peter an impetus to replace the heroine of the first reverie by a woman who is strikingly dissimilar to Clarissa. The third phase begins. The dream woman is young and not married; 'not worldly, like Clarissa; not rich like Clarissa'. (60) He keeps on making her up till she disappears behind a door and his fantasy is smashed to atoms. But the reality exists: 'Like the pulse of a perfect heart, life struck through the streets' (61). In the warm sun, he sits down on a bench and 'Down down he sank into the plumes and feathers of sleep, sank, and was muffled over'. (61) Now begins a nocturnal dream of a solitary traveller. There arises from the womb of mother earth, from the troubled seas, a large figure with 'magnificent hands, compassion, comprehension, absolution' (65), a figure made of sky and branches. In the final phase, he is filled with a longing for death and annihilation. The solitary traveller is soon 'beyond the wood'; he is the lost son whom the mother seeks. Peter wakes up with 'extreme suddenness, saying to himself, 'The death of the soul!' (66) This is Peter's diagnosis of Clarissa's psychic illness. The dream sequence is a natural psychic phenomenon and it conveys its meaning in its own mysterious language. It releases in Peter a chain of submerged, painful memories that he must re-live before he can comprehend Clarissa with a deeper psychic understanding of his anima, the mother image. There is a clear indication in the reveries relating to their past that Peter-Clarissa relationship is

basically that of mother and son. Peter often looks like, and behaves like, a child in front of Clarissa. He does not find himself strong enough to oppose Richard when he becomes his rival in love. His yielding to Richard is unmanly and embarrassing: 'He deserved to have her' is a lame excuse he gives to cover up his own failure. Like all failures, he seeks to assert his manliness in false acts. His seduction a major's wife in India is not an act of love, but of vengeance and spite. He confesses that he is not in love with Daisy and wants to be out of the affair at any cost, and even speculates that Daisy would change her mind in his absence. He now develops the habit of shirking all responsibilities of the worldly affairs. He often encourages a situation which ensures his failure. He is the 'lost son' of London. He was expelled from Oxford; exiled in India from where he returns 'battered, unsuccessful, to their secure shores'. (119) But there is another side to the coin. His repeated failures to belong to a social order or conventionality make him more prone to revelations and an intuitive grasp of any situation. Towards the close of the novel it is Peter alone who can catch the meaning of Clarissa's individuation. While the guests at the party move out of the hall to the security of their homes Peter stands there transfixed and overawed by the spiritual rebirth of Clarissa:

'I will come up', said Peter, but he sat on for a moment. What is this terror ? What is this ecstasy? he thought to himself. What is it that fills me with extraordinary excitement?

It is Clarissa, he said.

For there she was. (215)

III

London has swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents have thought to distinguish them. (94)

This sums up the tragedy of Septimus Smith, the modern individual who has lost his unique identity in the reality of his being a crowd member. He too must have thought over the questions : What is man? Who is he? What is the meaning of life? While 'devouring Shakespeare, Darwin, *The His-*

tory of Civilization and Bernard Shaw' (95). He must have felt the wide cleavage between what a man is and what is become of him in the modern times. Naturally, his own adjustment devices with the outer world cause him to suffer a kind of 'psychic paralysis'; a kind of inability to 'connect' his disparate experiences of living and feeling. This results in irreconcilable contradictions in his personality. He considers himself guilty of a heinous crime and, yet, he is a messiah come with a message. This mingling of the guilty and the godly in him makes him a complex character that is both a scourge and a minister. His guilt-ridden consciousness 'condemns' him, The unconscious forces, on the contrary, create a kind of inflation of his conscious identity, so that when he 'looks out' (with projections from the unconscious) he finds that he is superior to ordinary mortals; 'the lord of men', 'the greatest of mankind, Septimus,. . . the scapegoat, the eternal sufferer' (29). He must suffer for the sins of his acts committed in a state of panic during war: 'the sin for which human nature had condemned him to death; that he did not feel. He had not cared when Evans was killed' (96). An unnatural stage of affairs, i.e. war, has stifled his natural feeling, and now he must condemn himself to a state of loneliness which brings in its wake a sequence of other 'sinful' acts. He now deplores 'how he had married his wife without loving her; lied to her, seduced her . . .'. to escape from the loneliness of his life following Evan's death by a bullet in a trench. His refusal to give his wife a child that she desperately wants is another of such sins. But he finds the whole business of copulation filthy. He defies all those codes which demand from him the so-called normal behaviour. His final act of throwing himself out of a window down to the pavement becomes an act of defiance against authority and rigid order of society and a meaningful attempt to establish contact with the unconsciousis symbolized here by the earth which receives him in her womb. He escapes the rapacious attacks of the real intruders into 'the privacy of the soul';

these doctors like Holmes and Bradshaws, who impose their will on others. Clarissa intuitively grasps the whole situation :

> Suppose he had had that passion, and had gone to Sir William Bradshaw a great doctor, yet to her obscurely evil, without sex or lust, extremely polite to women, but capable of some indescribable outrage—forcing your soul, that was it—if this young man had gone to him, like that, with his power, might he not then have said (indeed she felt it now), life is made intolerable, they make life intolerable, men like that? (204)

The relationship between Septimus and Clarissa in itself is an enigma that has deepened since the time the author herself made an attempt to define it for the public. In a Preface to the novel when it was reprinted in 1922, Virginia Woolf wrote'... in the first version Septimus, who later is intended to be her double, had no existence; and... Mrs Dalloway was originally to kill herself or perhaps merely to die at the end of the party.' This shift of focus in the thematic meaning and structural design of the novel has been an issue of considerable debate. In what sense is Septimus Mrs Dalloway's double has remained an enigmatic question. Keith Hollingworth's attempt to unravel the mystery by application of Freudian theories has succeeded only in perpetuating the confusion. In her article, 'Freud and the riddle of *Mrs. Dalloway*', she writes :

> The character nevertheless remains a puzzle in itself: when the differences between Septimus and Clarissa bulk larger than the likenesses, how can he be her double?[7]

Jean Guiguet looks at these two characters as if they were two sides of a single coin and hence identical in all their thoughts, responses etc. He states :

> In fact these beings, Clarissa and Septimus, not only communicate with one another through identical emotions but are superimposed on one another to the point of identity.[8]

However Virginia Woolf's use of the 'double' may be seen as a juxtaposition of two lines that run parallel to each other so that one can see the contrast as well as similarities. A 'double'

is thus a device to compare and contrast the two. Clarissa and Septimus share a common collective unconscious which makes them 'echo-chamber' of each other. Any number of illustrations regarding the repetition of words, phrases, thoughts, feelings etc. in their reveries can be given from the text to prove it. But they are also studies of two different psychic attitudes. Both have an ego-identity as the centre of their personalities, but while Clarissa strives to reach the mid-point of selfhood that can keep a link with the conscious and the unconscious, Septimus's psychic energy is reverted to the unconscious by way of identification with his inner projections. Consequently, he loses his ego-identity while Clarissa's psychic activity is directed towards a more purposive goal, namely, the achievement of selfhood—the most treasured goal in life. To accomplish this desired end Clarissa grapples with the meaning of life at all levels. Her contact with the unconscious, which represents one's inmost feelings that never touch the visible surface of life, is established through her realization and understanding of Septimus's death. Viewing the youngman's defiant act of throwing himself she becomes aware of another weakness of her personality : her desire to cling to the railings of her surface existence. 'She had once thrown a shilling into the Serpentine, never anything more. But he had flung it away. They went on living' (203). This brings the awareness of oppositional distinction in her psyche: fear of extinction. The young man is dead, the old lady opposite her house is preparing to go to bed; the clock is beginning to strike; the passage of time is being marked irrevocably. Clarissa is holding out in the midst of psychological flux. She can no longer remain in the same fluctuating position. Her serious efforts to comprehend the various components of her personality change the centre of it from the conscious ego to one that is midway between the conscious and the unconscious. Her ego personality had earlier consumed most of her time. Her dissatisfaction with stereotyped activities brings about the de-energizing of the conscious ego, and activates

the unconscious. The unconscious, according to Jung, is the most difficult to discover. Only a symbol may represent it. Clarissa's discovery of Septimus as a symbol, subtle and cogent, of her innermost urges of the dark regions, helps her maintain the dynamic equilibrium of her personality. In the ante-room, she enacts the spiritual process of dying into life; of self-discovery which is also a discovery of the full reality of the other world. The arrangement of the party is a volitional act which effects expansion of libido and thus helps forging people together. The energizing of libido serves to throw into sharper relief the old concerns and preoccupations of her material world, the value of which is not cancelled. It has only become relative because of her recognition of its anti-thesis. There is no retreat from life for her. Her psychic development gives her enough energy to flow from one point to another, from the ego to the archetype, from the conscious to the unconscious. As an individual she feels free to move. She must now respond to the demands of her daily life, even when she felt very much like the young man who had killed himself. 'The clock was striking. The leaden circles dissolved in the air. But she must go back. She must assemble. She must find Sally and Peter. And she came in from the little room' (206).

Mrs Dalloway is once again ready to return to her former roles. But this time, Clarissa, who moves away from the little room to the larger hall, will be a woman of great strength and direction. She will be a woman changed and transformed from her former self. 'For she had come to feel that it was the only thing worth saying—what one felt. Cleverness was silly. One must say simply what one felt' (212). Even Peter whose psychic journey was simultaneously taking place also explores his own feelings for Clarissa which were not simple, but he gathers up the courage to tell himself that 'one could not be in love twice' (212). Peter has grown up now; matured. 'Now that one was old . . . mature then, said Peter, one could watch, one could understand, and one did not lose the power of

feeling, he said' (214). Clarissa's capacity to feel for the young man; Peter and Sally feeling more deeply and more passionately, every year; Richard's feeling of happiness at the sight of his daughter in pink;—all these create a syndrome of emotion with its ennobling effect. Lady Rossester makes a befitting concluding remark when she says, 'What does the brain matter . . . compared with the heart?' (215). The extension of the range of awareness in these individuals marks a new birth for them. This is the positive gain in their lives; this is what strikes the positive note in the novel.

Department of English
R. G. College
Meerut

NOTES AND REFERENCES

[1] The manuscript revisions of *Mrs. Dalloway* and also the entries in the *Diary* show Virginia Woolf trying to 'screw up' into one structural whole various themes like (a) two opposite views of life—one seen by the sane, another by the insane, (b) the movement of consciousness in time and space,(c) the social system etc.

[2] How the dialectical experiences of reality bring into dualistic operation some principal psychic forces, and how a definite pattern emerges in each of Virginia Woolf's novels as a result of this dialectical interplay of contrary experiences of a potentially bisexual mind, are some of the significant aspects of her aesthetics which have been discussed in detail in the fourth chapter of my book *Virginia Woolf : The Shaping Vision* (Meerut, 1978) pp. 44-101.

[3] All quotations are from *Mrs. Dalloway*, Penguin Books (1964).

[4] Joseph F. Rychlack, *Introduction to Personality and Psychotherapy* (U. S. A., 1973), p. 178.

[5] *Interpreting Personality Theories*, (London, 1964), p. 124.

[6] 'Something Central Which Permeated: Virginia Woolf and Mrs. Dalloway', *Twentieth Century Views on Virginia Woolf* (N.J. 1971),p.57.

[7] 'Freud and the Riddle of *Mrs. Dalloway*': *Studies in Honor of John Wilcox*, A Dayle Wallace and Woodbuen O. Ross, edn. (Detroit: 1958), p. 240.

[8] *Virginia Woolf and Her Works* (London, 1962), p. 234.

M. L. Raina

NOVEL AS AESTHETIC : AN ASPECT OF TO THE LIGHTHOUSE

I

In his biography of Virginia Woolf, Quentin Bell has drawn attention to her zest for books, ranging from novels to art books and memoirs.[1] Her reviews and essays on novelists also reveal her keen interest in the novel as an art form. Not only does she expound her own aesthetic ideas in letters, diaries and essays, but she also makes her novels turn on the problems of writing and establishing the proper relationship between the world and the book. In this respect she is very much like the modernist pioneers whose works show serious, even problematic concern with the art they practise. Eliot, Pound, Proust, Lawrence and Mann meditate in their works as well as their letters on the significance and possibilities of their creative efforts. This is as it should be. No longer owing allegiance to verisimilitude, the modernist writers began to explore the basis on which the realistic assumption is built, As God's authority faded from the centre of intellectual attention, the novelists began to search for another anchor. Hence the intense involvement of novelists in the aesthetics of their craft.[2] Eliot's wrestle with words, Proust's struggle to recapture lost time in the very structure of his epic novel, Mann's questioning of the very purposes of art in an age of cultural decay in *Dr. Faustus*—all point to the modernist writer's preoccupation with the relationship of art and reality.

Often this preoccupation is built into the very fabric of the book. The presence of artist figures such as painters, writers and musicians as principal characters in modern writing

underlines the importance of this subject. That Virginia Woolf also concerned herself with the issues of art and reality shows how much she belonged to the modernist movement in which experiment and exploration became bywords for being creatively alive.[3] The present paper would focus on one of her novels, though this one is her representative work.[4]

II

To the Lighthouse, among other things, is a novel about the art of the novel. It is not a tract on aesthetics, although some vital aesthetic issues are raised by Lily Briscoe's painting. It is an exploration of the creative aspects of the symbolic gesture, a problem Virginia Woolf had posed but not accounted for in *Mrs. Dalloway*. In *To the Lighthouse* symbolic gesture is examined as of living concern to the artist, the creator. Lily Briscoe makes the point towards the completion of her painting. Her sole problem is to create symbolic significance out of matter-of-fact experiences. She wants to render experience in such a way that she could 'feel simply that's a chair, that's a table, and yet at the same time, it's a miracle, it's an ecstay'[5] (p. 310). In her 'Notes on an Elizabethan Play' Virginia Woolf asks the same question: 'Is it not that literature, if it is to keep us on the alert through five acts or thirty-two chapters, must somehow be based on Smith, have one toe touching Liverpool, take off into whatever heights it pleases from reality?'[6] It is interesting to note that Virginia Woolf's review of Forster's *Aspects* appeared the same year as *To the Lighthouse*. In *To the Lighthouse* she presented life, not in terms of social relationships as in a realistic novel, but in the manner of what Roger Fry called 'the general intellectual and instinctive reaction to their surroundings of those men (and women) of any period whose lives rise to complete self-consciousness.'[7] Intellectual and instinctive reaction—that is what the novel explores both in terms of Mrs. Ramsay's vision of the Lighthouse and Lily's vision of the harmony of art.

The novel is divided into three sections. The first section, 'The Window', creates a symbolic world from the materials of life. The second section, 'Times Passes', shows the evanescence of this world and its inevitable decay. The third section, 'The Lighthouse', is a re-creation of the symbolic world of the first section in terms of art. Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe are the two agencies working to transform the material of life into symbolic form. They are not'polar opposites', as one critic would have us believe.[8] They work to the same end: the creation of a pattern of significance. That the world of Mrs. Ramsay and her husband is to be regarded as symbolic is indicated by two factors. There is no attempt to tell a story, just as in *Mrs. Dalloway* the element of 'narrative' as such is very slight. Nothing really happens except Mrs. Ramsay's death (casually reported) and the symbolic journey to the Lighthouse. Secondly, the symbolic character of the first section is suggested by the remoteness of the scene from day-to-day concerns of living. In *Mrs. Dalloway* life as a vast movement outside the consciousness of the characters is present as a background to the metaphoric dialectic working through the symbolic character of Clarissa's and Septimus's actions. London is a palpable force and functions as an extension to the metaphor of life and death. There is hardly any movement in *To the Lighthouse*. The scene is an island, remote from the fret and fever of daily living and surrounded by the sea and its waves, the two archetypal symbols of movement. The characters have reached a degree of sophistication and are very self-conscious. The outlines of the book are simple and clear. Although the design of *Mrs. Dalloway* is simple, the symbolic levels are so varied that the life and death themes are far more complex than will appear at first. *To the Lighthouse* has, in comparison, a clear-cut structure built on a few basic elements. Fry, with his puritanical approach to form, would have approved of the basic design of the book. Yet he felt the 'Time Passes' section to be too poetic and therefore an imposition on the book as a whole.[9]

In a diary entry (18 January, 1939) Virginia Woolf records her own dissatisfaction with the lyric vein and agrees with Fry's criticism.[10] These objections notwithstanding, the 'Time Passes' section has a choric function in the book like the vision of the solitary traveller in *Mrs. Dalloway*. Such interludes are necessary from time to time because they serve to maintain the right perspective for the evaluation of symbolic significance.

The first section of the novel creates a composite symbol of harmony through the symbolic agency of Mrs. Ramsay. This harmony is created through 'a synthesis of the intricacies of life in which Mrs. Ramsay's incomparable beauty has been caught, in which it at once manifests and conceals itself'.[11] The synthesis thus created has a dynamic quality because it evolves out of the changeable elements that constitute life. Since Mrs. Ramsay's symbol does not stand for something but 'negotiates insight' into the larger existential concerns, she is an artist.[12] Lily Briscoe recognizes this fact in her attempts to create her own art symbol, the symbol of harmony:

> Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)—this was of the nature of a revelation. In the midst of chaos there was shape; this eternal passing and flowing. . . . .was struck into stability. (pp. 249-50)

Her greatest symbolic gesture, like Clarrissa's, is an attempt to bring people together. The culmination of this section is the dinner party over which she presides. There are here certain Biblical overtones of the Last Supper, for, after Mrs. Ramsay's death, Lily Briscoe is re-enacting the ritual of creation on a different plane. Mrs. Ramsay has striking affinities with Mrs. Wilcox of *Howards End*. Like her Mrs. Ramsay is both a symbol and a symbolic agency. Again it is through Lily that we recognize her symbolic character:

> The figure came readily enough—She was astonishingly beautiful. William said. But beauty was not everything. Beauty had this penalty —it came too readily, came too completely. It stilled life—froze it. One

forgot the little agitations; the flush, the pallor, some queer distortion, some light or shadow, which made the face unrecognisable for a moment and yet added a quality one saw for ever after. It was simpler to smooth that all out under the cover of beauty. (p. 273)

Like Mrs. Wilcox, Mrs. Ramsay is elusive. Lily does not pin her down to one particular quality. She has the attributes of a genuine symbol—indeterminacy, pervasiveness and suggestibility.[13] Although she symbolizes harmony and seeks to create it around her, there is 'something incongruous to be worked into the harmony of her face'. (p. 50). Like Mrs. Wilcox, she distrusts facts (p. 53) and seems ridiculous to her husband for her 'extraordinary irrationality'. Just as Margaret Schlegel feels that Mrs. Wilcox alone could unite the 'prose and the passion' of life, so does Lily regard Mrs. Ramsay as the creator of harmony. Both *Howards End* and *To the Lighthouse* are concerned with tbe problem of harmony. Yet their different approaches to it elucidate the different uses to which the symbolic mode can be put. With Forster, *Howards End* is a normative symbol and does not interfere with the realistic tenor of the book. With Virginia Woolf, the entire symbolism of the book illustrates the problem of creation and is far more relevant to the technique. This is underlined by the fact that Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic nature is seen through a painter and evaluated in terms of an artistic act. Thus, Lily, contemplating Mrs. Ramsay's personality, is surprised at the artistic perfection of the women's gestures of harmony:

(a) Immediately, Mrs. Ramsay seemed to fold herself together, one petal closed in another, and the whole fabric fell in exhaustion upon itself, so that she had only strength enough to move her finger, in exquisite abandonment to exhaustion, across the page of Grimm's fairy story, while there throbbed through her, like the pulse in a spring which has expanded to its full width and now gently ceases to beat, the rapture of successful creation. (p.64)

(b) That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that miserable silliness and spite . . . something—this scene on the beach for example, this moment of friendship

> and liking—which survived, after all these years, complete, so that she dipped into it to re-fashion her memory of him, and it stayed in the mind almost like a work of art. (pp. 248-49)

Lily dose not fail to perceive Mrs. Ramsay's gift of negative capability, and aspires to the same condition :

> What device for becoming, like waters poured into one jar, inextricably the same, one with the object one adored ? Could the body achieve it, or the mind, subtly mingling in the intricate passages of the brain, or the heart ? (p. 82).

Mrs. Ramsay's awareness of the Lighthouse and her complete identification with it is her way of creating the artistic synthesis between the inner and the outer, the subject and the object. Her dinner creates for her a small world of harmony within the vast disorder of life outside. The whole atmosphere of the party is ceremonial, ritualistic and awe-inspiring. The significant moment is when the eight candles are lit and a stability is perceived :

> Now all the candles were lit, and the faces on both sides of the table were brought nearer by the candlelight, and composed, as they had not been in the twilight, into a party round a table, for the night was now shut off by panes of glass, which, far from giving any accurate view of the outside world, rippled it so strangely that here, inside the room, seemed to be order and dry land; there, outside, a reflection in which things wavered and vanished, waterily. (p. 151).

When we compare this with Clarissa's experience of death (her major revelation in the party), we see the opposite ends to which the symbolic gestures point. The Lighthouse symbolism objectifies Mrs. Ramsay's mystical longings and connects them with the artist's search for expression. The Lighthouse is to Mrs. Ramsay a means of realizing the synthesis between her unconscious and conscious self, a synthesis which is the ultimate goal of artistic activity. This function is finally fulfilled when Mr. Ramsay completes his symbolic pilgrimage to the Lighthouse, and Lily Briscoe completes her picture.

For Mrs. Ramsay the creation of the symbol of harmony is a matter of right relationship between various attitudes represented in the first section. Once this relationship is achieved

an aesthetic order is created. Fry describes this order as the 'balance of a number of attractions presented to the eye simultaneously in a framed picture'.[14] Susan Langer speaks of the art symbol as 'a much more intricate thing than what we usually think of as a form, because it involves *all* the relationships of its elements to one another, all similarities and differences of quality . . .'[15] Mrs. Ramsay's elements are created out of two basic polarities : Intellect and Intuition, the one typified by her husband and the other by herself. These polarities are suggested in the beginning of the novel. Mr. Ramsay is certain that the journey to the Lighthouse cannot be undertaken owing to bad weather. Mrs. Ramsay seeks to palliate her son's injured feelings by hoping for good weather. These contrary attitudes determine the relativity of truth. For Mr. Ramsay truth is determined by the abstract reasoning of the intellect. Mrs Ramsay feels outraged by his pursuit of abstraction 'with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings', his attempt to 'rend the thin veils of civilisation so wantonly, so brutally.' (p. 54). Mr. Ramsay is conscious of the inexorable process of life represented for him by the sea. Behind his metaphysical enthusiasm is a feeling of failure. Hence his need for sympathy from his wife as well as from Lily Briscoe. The sterility of the male concept is seen in its desperate bid to seek protection in the warmth and understanding of Mrs. Ramsay, embodiment of the female principle. (pp. 61-63). These implications are also conveyed by the associative imagery of the particular scenes. This imagery supports the significance and meaningfulness of the metaphysical truths represented by Mr. & Mrs. Ramsay. Their reactions to the sea help to create the scenic basis on which the metaphysical truths are built. Mrs. Ramsay's acceptance of the sea is in keeping with her intuitive understanding of life. Early in the book her reaction to the sea is one of wondrous admiration :

> For the great plateful of blue water was before her; the hoary Lighthouse, distant austere, in the midst; and on the right as far as the eye

could see, fading and falling, in soft low pleats, the green sand dunes with the wild flowing grasses on them, which always seemed to be running away into some moon country, uninhabited of men. (p.25).

But she is also conscious of the other aspect of the sea, its destructiveness and indifference to romantic idealization :

... the monotonous fall of the waves on the beach, which for the most part beat a measured and soothing tattoo to her thoughts and seemed consolingly to repeat over and over again .... 'I am guarding you—I am your support", but at other times suddenly and unexpectedly, especially when her mind raised itself slightly from the task actually in hand, had no such kindly meaning, but like a ghostly roll of drums remorselessly beat the measure of life, made one think ... that it was all ephemeral as a rainbow. (pp. 29-30).

Thus the sea imagery represents the whole concept of life to her, its beauty as well as its terror. By losing herself in her speculations on life and death she rises above the narrow egotistical speculations of her husband. His attitude to the sea is different from his wife's. It does not drive him to a recognition of existential concerns but merely acts as a foil to his own egotistical broodings. He imagines himself as a 'desolate sea-bird, alone', standing 'on a spit of land which the sea is slowly eating away' (pp. 71-72). For him the sea symbolism only echoes his own feelings. This is why he cannot possess his wife's gift of disinterested contemplation. A significant contrast is brought out at the crucial moment when Mrs. Ramsay is identifying herself with the Lighthouse beam and he is brooding on his reputation as a philosopher. For Mrs. Ramsay the only way to peace is by losing personality. 'Losing personality, one lost the fret, the hurry, the stir' (p. 100). This is a moment of triumph for her and she identifies herself with the stroke of the Lighthouse. "... She looked out to meet that stroke of the Lighthouse, the long steady stroke, the last of the three, which was her sroke ... Often she found herself sitting and looking, sitting and looking, with her work in her hands until she became the thing she looked at—that light for example' (pp. 100-101). This is a crucial moment in which the two symbolic strands,

one emanating from Mrs. Ramsay and the other from the Lighthouse merge and the theme is clarified. The voyage to the Lighthouse is symbolically a 'voyage' to Mrs. Ramsay. The Lighthouse becomes all that Mrs. Ramsay stands for, a symbol of stability against the buffeting waves of change, 'a stark tower on a bare rock' as James comes to realize towards the end of the book (pp. 311-12). This moment is also important structurally. Since the entire book is a symbolic illustration of an idea, the principal symbolic signposts, Mrs. Ramsay and the Lighthouse, must be identified in order that the 'voyage' should take place as a rounding off of the idea. Secondly, Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic significance can only be conveyed by a 'marriage' of the polarities on which the novel is based. This is achieved by the actual voyage of Mr. Ramsay and his children to the Lighthouse. In another sense the voyage to the Lighthouse is a concession to the fact that at a certain stage even the lyrical mode of the book must come to terms with the necessity of the novel as a narrative of some sort. One can understand Virginia Woolf's hesitation in labelling this novel as 'elegy'.[16] This seems to spring from the twin claims of the lyrical vision and the non-lyrical form of the novel. We also see this hesitation with *The Waves*. In the latter book, however, the entire framework is removed from the plane of actuality.

Mrs. Ramsay's dinner is another scene of central importance. This is her supreme gesture, her creative act. In this scene all her insights into life, death and the frailty of human endeavour are gathered into a vision of unity. Again it is the sea and water imagery that conveys the symbolic significance of the scene. Thus Mrs. Ramsay becomes an agency for 'merging and flowing and creating' (p.131). The party is 'in a hollow, on an island' against the fluidity 'out there' (p. 152). As Norman Friedman shows, this association of the sea imagery with Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts, as also of Lily's, presents the ambiguities of the sea symbolism.[17] Mrs. Ramsay is trying to create a haven in the midst of the ceaseless flux

of the symbolic sea and at the same time immersing herself in the flux in order to be able to attain that detachment necessary for seizing the symbolic moment. By bringing together her guests in the party and by the success of Boeuf en Daube she feels a harmony has been created. Charles Tansley feels soothed, the marriage of Lily and William Bankes seems as good as accomplished. She is conscious of a 'coherence in things, a stability' as against 'the flowing, the fleeting, the spectral' (p. 163). For her, at least, the symbol of harmony is created out of those sitting around her ceremonial dinner table:

> It could not last she knew, but at the moment her eyes were so clear that they seemed to go round the table unveiling each of these people, and their thoughts and their feelings, without effort like a light stealing under water so that its ripples and the reeds in it and the minnows balancing themselves, and the sudden silent trout are all lit up hanging, trembling. So she saw them; she heard them; but whatever they said had also this quality, as if what they said was like the movement of a trout when, at the same time, one can see the ripple and the gravel, something to the right, something to the left; and the whole is held together; for whereas in active life she would be netting and separating one thing from another. (pp. 165-66).

Yet there is something lacking in Mrs. Ramsay's creation, some solidity of conception. One is always conscious of the evanescence of this so-called harmony. For one thing, Mrs. Ramsay's symbol is expressive of her own sense of peace. It does not communicate. Mrs. Ramsay's perceptions are sharp enough to enable her to create a significant symbol, but she lacks the power to mediate her insight into the lives of those around her. Of course, she receives deference from William Bankes and Tanslay and demands sympathy from her husband. It is only Lily Briscoe, herself endowed with a keen sensibility, who perceives her significance as a creator. Mrs. Ramsay's symbolic gesture is a form of intuition, rather than expression. The condition for such an act is solitude. 'Life: she thought but she did not finish her thought. She took a look at life, for she had a clear sense of it there, something

real, something private, which she shared neither with her children nor with her husband' (p. 95).

Her gesture is creative only in the Crocean sense.[18] If the aesthetic experience consists in recognising the feelings evoked by an art symbol through its form, then Mrs. Ramsay's symbol is incomplete. It remains centred in the artist's own apprehensions of her private vision. It lacks that quality of abstraction in achieved form through which a symbol communicates. Perhaps Virginia Woolf is aware of the transitoriness of Mrs. Ramsay's efforts. The 'Time Passes' section is an expression of regret at the ravages of time.[19] It is the last section that tackles the problem of harmony from a different position. Art does not deal in perishable matter like human relationships, but in an abstracted essence of them. What Lily is concerned with is not Mrs. Ramsay as fact, but as that 'wedge-shaped core of darkness' in which her symbolic essence lies. Secondly, Mrs. Ramsay's symbol needs the voyage of her husband to complete it. It is Mr. Ramsay who completes the pattern apprehended as unity by his wife. The implication is that she is an imperfect agent, being human, though she remains the object of the symbolic quest. There has to be a fusion not only of Mrs. Ramsay and the Lighthouse but also of Mr. Ramsay and the Lighthouse. Then and then alone is the pattern complete. The creative faculty is as much dependent on a correct understanding of the nature of the object as the object is dependent on the transmuting powers of the creative imagination to lift it from the plane of humdrum reality, of bare fact. It is here that the significance of the creative vision of Lily Briscoe comes in.

III

Lily Briscoe's concern with symbolic form has two aspects. She seeks to recapture the emotional content that the Ramsay world affords. To her the Ramsays are a complete pattern and it is this that she seeks to present through her painting. Secondly, her concern with symbolic form has a

technical aspect. She is not concerned with realistic portrayal but with an imaginative reconstruction of reality. Looking at the paintings of Mr. Paunceforte she finds them 'pale, elegant, semi-transparent' (p. 34). What she is looking for is 'shape' beneath the appearance. Mrs. Ramsay represents to her a perfect embodiment of the 'shape'. 'What was the spirit in her, the essential thing, by which, had you found a glove in the corner of a sofa, you would have known it, from its twisted finger, hers indisputably?' (p.79). On the level of her painting she is determined to create a pattern in which she could feel the 'colour burning on a framework of steel; the light of a butterfly's wing lying upon the arches of a cathedral' (p. 78). This pattern, according to her, 'you could ruffle with your breath; and a thing you could not dislodge with a team of horses' (p. 264).[20] Both Mrs. Ramsay's and Lily's quests are creative, but the latter has this advantage : she is changing the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting. (p.245). Thus Lily's use of colour is not merely representational but is harnessed in the service of form, of 'an architecture and a logic', which appeal to one's most 'intimate feelings'.[21] Like Cezanne, Lily is a desperate searcher for the reality behind appearances:

> This other thing, this truth, this reality, which suddenly laid hands on her, emerged stark at the back of appearances and commanded her attention . . . this form, were it only the shape of a white lampshade looming on a wicker table, roused one to perpetual combat, challenged one to a fight in which one was bound to be worsted (p. 245).

At the same time as she is creating a pattern of experience, Lily is also trying to recover for herself and also for the sake of communicating it, her sense of emotional identification with the Ramsay world. It is only when the Ramsay world is completed as a formal symbol that Lity has the final vision. Lily's understanding of the Ramsay world is accompanied by her success in transmuting it to the level of art. The emotoinal understanding is a continual process. She has occa-

sional glimpses of the truth of the Ramsay world:

> Directly one looked up and saw them, what she called 'being in love' flooded them. They became part of that unreal but penetrating and exciting universe which is the world seen through the eyes of love. The sky stuck to them; the birds sang through them. And, what was even more exciting, she felt, too, as she was, Mr Ramsay bearing down and retreating, and Mrs Ramsay sitting with James in the window and the cloud moving and the tree bending, how life, from being made up of little separate incidents which one lived one by one, became curled and whole like a wave which bore one up with it and threw one down with it, there, with a dash on the beach. (p. 76).

This is as yet an unformed vision. It is finally crystallized with the completion of Mr Ramsay's voyage. As Mrs Ramsay's leaven is love, so Lily's leaven is art. Lily's painting becomes expressive of (a) the artist's emotional attitude to his material and (b) the proper disposition of this material in a unity of texture and a unity of formal relationship. She is not interested in merely reproducing Mrs Ramsay. Instead, she represents her by means of a triangular purple shape in order that she may balance the brightness on the other side of the canvas. (p.84). Mr. Bankes is simply scientific minded and all his prejudices are on 'the other side'—the naturalistic, representational side. For him the 'relations of masses, of lights and shadows', (p. 86) are not important. In *Vision and Design* Fry describes how, in a work of art, the objects lose their representational character and become integrated into the total design:

> Almost any turn of the kaleidoscope of nature may set up in the artist . . . detached and impassioned vision, and, as he contemplates the particular field of vision, the (aesthetically) chaotic and accidental conjunction of forms and colours begins to crystallize into a harmony; and as this harmony becomes clear to the artist, his actual vision becomes distorted by the emphasis of the rhythm which has been set up within him . . . In such a creative vision the objects as such tend to disappear, to lose their separate unities, and to take their places as so many bits in the whole mosaic of vision."

This is precisely Lily's position. Like Proust, Lily is concerned with the emotional contemplation and re-creation of her

material for a purely formal significance.[23] Thus the balance in the relationship of the bright wall and the purple shape is an aesthetic counterpart of the balance in the relationship of the active principles in the Ramsay world. To Lily, as to us, the Ramsay world is the symbolic pattern of intuitive and intellectual principles. This realization comes to her after Mrs Ramsay's death. Now she is emotionally detached from the Ramsays and can see them in an artistic perspective. While Mrs Ramsay was alive Lily had a feeling of insignificance. Once detached, she is in a position to recreate the idea behind the formal pattern. In the process of actual painting Lily does invoke Mrs Ramsay's memory. She goes 'tunnelling her way . . . into the past'. (p. 267). The particular associations with the past affect the picture in hand:

> And this, Lily thought, taking the green paint on her brush, this making up scenes about them, is what we call 'knowing' people, 'thinking' of them, 'being fond' of them! Not a word of it was true; she had made it up ; but it was what she knew them by all the same. (p. 267).

Although, at every stage of her recovery of the past, she is emotionally worked up, particularly when Mrs Ramsay's associations are aroused, she is able to master her emotions for purposes of her art. The concept of distance, both spatial and temporal, enables the artist to see his material from a detached perspective and to evaluate it without personal involvement. Ten years' time lag between the first conception of the picture and its final achievement enables Lily to assess her emotional relationship with the Ramsay universe more clearly. In the 'Window' section Lily is mainly absorbed in Mrs Ramsay and forgets to fit in Mr Ramsay into her pattern. This is because her attitude to him is of mute deference. In the last section she is still uncertain whether to extend her sympathy in response to his entreaties. When Ramsay goes on the symbolic voyage after ten years, Lily's apprehension of the Ramsay world is modified to such an extent that Ramsay is seen as an integral part of the symbolic design. She gradually sees the formal clarity of her picture through her vision of

Mrs Ramsay. She now realizes the importance of Ramsay's symbolic passage to his wife for her total design. Such a revelation would have been impossible in the first section owing to Lily's absorption in the elder woman. This explains why Lily only gets occasional glimpses of her vision in the first section but never a complete and unified vision. During the dinner, for instance, she watches Mrs Ramsay commiserating with Tansley and William Bankes. Suddenly Lily has a glimpse of her vision. 'She remembered, all of a sudden as if she had found a treasure, that she too had her work. In a flash she saw her picture, and thought, Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle'. (p. 132). Further on, during her argument with Tansley, Lily continues to think of the configuration of her painting:

> For what happened to her, especially staying with the Ramsays, was *to be made to feel* violently two opposite things at the same time; that's what you feel, was one; that's what I feel was the other, and then they fought together in her mind, as now. (p. 159. My emphasis).

Now from a distance of ten years the Ramsay world gets associated in Lily's picture with the colour and texture of her design, giving her canvas a vitality and meaning she was unable to perceive in the earlier sections of the book. It is through this heightened significance of the facts of the Ramsay world that Virginia Woolf succeeds in creating her 'miracle'. The Ramsay world becomes a symbolic pattern although it retains its temporal attributes.

Further light is thrown on Lily's role in the book by her association with the sea imagery. Just as the sea is symbolic of the whole life and its moments of illumination as represented by the intermittent beams of the Lighthouse, so do Lily's efforts represent the movement of those waves of creative turmoil through which she seizes her personal vision. The following is a key passage in which the symbolic sea imagery is merged into Lily's ceaseless struggle with her material:

> Where to begin ?—that was the question; at what point to make the first mark ? One line placed on the canvas committed her to innumera-

ble risks, to frequent and irrevocable decisions. All that in idea seemed simple became in practice immediately complex; *as the waves shape themselves symmetrically from the cliff top, but to the swimmer among them are divided by steep gulfs, and foaming crests*. Still the risk must be run; the mark made.

With a curious physical sensation, as if she were urged forward and at the same time must hold herself back, she made her first quick decisive stroke. The brush descended. It flickered brown over the white canvas; it left a running mark. A second time she did it—a third time. And so pausing and so flickering, she attained a dancing rhythmical movement, as if the pauses were one part of the rhythm and the strokes another, and all were related . . . Down in the hollow of one wave she saw the next wave towering higher and higher above her. For what could be more formidable than that space ? Here she was again, she thought, stepping back to look at it, drawn out of gossip, out of living, out of community with people into the presence of this formidable ancient enemy of hers—this other thing, this truth . . . . (pp. 243-44. My emphasis).

Like Mrs Ramsay, the artist in life, Lily faces the sea alone. 'Out and out one went, further and further, until at last one seemed to be on a narrow plank, perfectly alone, over the sea' (p. 265). Like Mrs Ramsay, she loses her personality in the sea of her canvas and from her depths springs her vision 'like a fountain spurting over that glaring, hideously difficult white space, while she modelled it with greens and blues' (pp. 246-47).

Every time Lily takes up her painting she is simultaneously exploring the significance of the Ramsay world. The meaning of this in terms of the creative process seems to be that there is always an active relationship between the artist and the object of art. This relationship is both active and unstatic. It represents the participation of the artist in the world that is being trasformed into the art symbol. The final vision, both of the novel and of Lily's painting, is achieved by a dynamic interaction between Lily watching Mr Ramsay's boat sailing towards the Lighthouse and the occupants of the boat watching the house slide away as the boat moves on. To Lily a new perspective is opened now that the boat is away from her

immediate attention. 'So much depends then, thought Lily Briscoe . . . upon distance: whether people are near us or far from us; for her feeling for Mr Ramsay changed as he sailed further and further across the bay' (pp. 293-94). Lily begins to perceive the symbolic meanings in Mr Ramsay's voyage. The immediacy with which these meanings are conveyed in Lily's final ecstatic cry results from her participation in the moment of recognition. These new meanings do not refer to something outside the pattern of the Ramsay world. They reveal a harmony created by the aesthetic act. A relativity between Lily's artistic vision and the Ramsay world (now in process of being completed) is created. The Ramsay world, established as a symbol in Lily's vision, does not become another starting-point of a stream of memory but is now an achieved form in its own right.[24] Balancing Lily's recognition of the meaning of the Ramsay world, the Ramsays themselves recognize the meaning of the Lighthouse and by implication, Mrs Ramsay. James's vision of the Lighthouse is also Lily Briscoe's vision.

> The Lighthouse was then a silvery, misty-looking tower with a yellow eye that opened suddenly and softly in the evening.
>
> Now—James looked at the Lighthouse. He could see the white-washed rocks; the tower, stark and straight; he could see that it was barred with black and white; he could see windows in it; he could even see washing spread on the rocks to dry. So that was the Light-house, was it ?
>
> No, the other was also the Lighthouse. For nothing was simply one thing. The other was the Lighthouse too. (p. 286).

Structurally the scene resolves the tension between the attitudes of Lily and James towards Mr Ramsay. Lily always withheld her sympathy from Mr Ramsay. Now that the vision is completed it is recognized as a razor-edge of balance between 'Mr Ramsay and the picture'. (p. 296). Meanwhile, James formerly sworn to fight his father's tyranny, is getting reconciled to him. 'They both James and Cam wanted to say, Ask us anything and we will give it you'. (p. 318). Surveying

the completion of the two symbolic patterns is old Mr Carmichael, like a 'pagan god'. The usefulness of the old man's position here should be clear by now. He serves to remove the vision of Lily from her personal emotional plane and symbolically places it in the total perspective. Since he has been a disinterested spectator of the destiny of both the Ramsays and Lily, his presence at this time creates a universal frame for the contemplation of the two symbolic worlds. The process is completed by the floral imagery with its mythical overtones. 'Now he has crowned the occasion, she thought, when his hand slowly fell, as if she had seen him let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth.' (p. 319). While this is going on Lily is standing midway between her picture and Mr Ramsay as if receiving the benedictions of Mr Carmichael. For now even Mr Ramsay has been transformed into an 'ecstasy, a miracle', something 'in the nature of things'.

In *To the Lighthouse* Virginia Woolf's craftsmanship is undoubtedly far more mature than in any other of her novels. In this novel, more than in any other, she faced the problem of the relationship of art to reality. Her conclusions are in favour of seeing reality through the aesthetic sensibility. For her, reality is the only source of that sudden illumination of meaning which the artist communicates through his art. She would have agreed with Herbert Read in his assertion that 'reality is what we discover by our senses and shape by our intelligence. Its frontiers are continually under revision, and each step into unknown territory is established by some new intuition, some fresh image, some dimension first realized in the plastic form of art'.[25] 'Shape' is the key word, and in this novel Virginia Woolf tried to show how the artistic sensibility can shape the materials of sensuous apprehension into significant form. Lily's apprehension of the Ramsay world is a continual development, each stage marking an entirely new qualitative advance and culminating in the revelation of the

total vision. How this is achieved Virginia Woolf cannot tell, neither can any artist for that matter. Once the art symbol is created the outside elements enter into it through an abstracted formal relationship. For Virginia Woolf, the art symbol differs in conception from that of Fry and Bell. She would certainly question Bell's claim that 'to appreciate a work of art we need bring with us nothing but a sense of form and colour and a knowledge of three-dimensional space'.[26] For her 'life itself' was an essential element in art. Yet her commitment to life was not of the realist's kind, at least not in *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*. Life in these novels has been refined to the simplest possible elements. The concrete facts used are themselves symbolically relevant and not in their own right. The entire imagery is associative. In her search for a pattern Virginia Woolf has reduced the areas of concrete experience. The only concreteness there is between the character's urges and their association in the imagery. In *Mrs Dalloway* 'life itself' is a factor to reckon with. The flow of the London traffic and the minor idiosyncracies of its various characters give to the novel a solidity lacking in *To the Lighthouse*. There is nothing lived in the experience of death and suffering in the latter novel. In the earlier novel the existential concerns were built on certain concrete instances like the death of Septimus, the coming of Peter Walsh and the actual party scene. It is possible for a plastic artist to abstract in the interests of symbolic form. It is difficult for a novel to cut itself away from life as a lived concern. Virginia Woolf herself did not maintain the hard and fast rigidity that is apparent in *To the Lighthouse*. This is evident not only in her hesitation to call *To the Lighthouse* an elegy and *The Waves* a playpoem, but also in her actual practice. *The Years* is the combination of the method of *Night and Day* and *The Waves*. It is in *Mrs Dalloway* that a correct balance between life and vision is maintained. *To the Lighthouse* is the opposite of what Stendhal thought the novel was : a mirror riding along the roadway. The process of symbolization has

been taken almost to the uttermost length. 'Almost', because the linguistic structure is still intact and this is a constant reminder that the novel, however far it may travel, is rooted in a reality whose channels of communication are words.

To the Lighthouse shows up a contradiction in Virginia Woolf's practice as a novelist. While speaking for life and pleading for immersion in it, she fails to achieve a palpable illusion of it in the novel.[27] A successful illusion of life does occur in *Mrs Dalloway* and that is one of its strengths. *To the Lighthouse* is an illustration of how a symbolist novel ultimately becomes a novel *about* ideas, if not an allegory. What is important is not the relevance of these ideas to the virtual world of the novel, as their relevance to the author. This happens also in Forster's *A Passage to India* and in Lawrence's *Women in love*. In *To the Lighthouse* it is the ideas alone that weave the exquisite pattern of the novel.

Department of English
Punjab University
Chandigarh

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[1] Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1972).

[2] On this subject see Gabriel Josopovici: *The Lessons of Modernism* (London: Macmillan, 1977), pp. 87-139.

[3] Just how experimental was this period is suggested by Hugh Kenner in *The Pound Era* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1971), Renato Pogiolli in *Theory of the Avante-Garde* (Camb, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1968) and Herbert Read in *The Philosophy of Modern Art* (London: Faber, 1964).

[4] The publication of Virginia Woolf's Letters edited by Nigel Nicholson (London: The Hogarth Press, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979) as well as the *Diary* edited by Anne Olivier (London: The Hogarth Press, 1977, 1978) has brought to the reader's attention the various contemporary influences on her art. Among the critical

studies that seem to me most significant in tracing influences is McLaurin's *Virginia Woolf : The Echoes Enslaved* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973). All references to Virginia Woolf's works in the present article are from the Uniform Edition published by the Hogarth Press, London, The references from *A Writer's Diary* are from Leonard Woolf's edition (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953).

[5] The search for an art form that would accommodate the hardness of shape within the plasticity of experience has been a principal aim of art historians, artists and theorists in the beginning of the present century. For a useful discussion on this subject see Wihelm Worringer's *Abstraction and Empathy* (London: Routledge, 1967) and *Form in Gothic* (New York: Schocken Books, 1964).

[6] *The Common Reader*, First Series. pp. 73-74.

[7] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design* (Hammondswath: Pelican, 1957).

[8] Ruby Cohn, 'Art in *To the Lighthouse*', *MFS*, 8 (1962), 128. See also John Hawley Roberts, 'Vision and Design in Virginia Woolf', *PMLA*; 61 (1946). pp. 835-847.

[9] Virginia Woolf, *Roger Fry*, p. 241. For further exchanges between Fry and Woolf see Virginia Woolf, *A Change of Perspective: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, 1923-1928*, ed. Nigel Nicholson, p. 385. See also Quentin Bell, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, pp. 128-129.

[10] *A Writer's Diary*, p. 311.

[11] Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis*, tr., Willard Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), pp. 525-553.

[12] See Susanne K. Langer, *Feeling and Form* (London: Routledge, 1953) p. 22.

[13] In keeping with her elusive character as a symbol, Mrs Ramsay has been interpreted variously by various critics. See Glenn Pederson, 'Vision in *To the Lighthouse*' *PMLA* 73 (1958), pp. 585-600; Joseph L. Blother, 'Mythic Patterns in *To the Lighthouse*', *PMLA*, 71 (1956), pp. 547-62; William York Tindall, 'Many-Leveled Fiction: Virginia Woolf to Ross Lockridge',*College English*, 10 (1948), pp. 65-71.

[14] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, p. 32.

[15] Susanne K.Langer, *Feeling and Form*, p. 51 Author's italics. Cf. Benbow Ritchie: 'Aesthetic activity begins with an impulse resulting from a disorder in the environment and consists of converting this disorder into an order . . . The order develops *in* the experience; It evolves as the experience progresses . . . The direction is pointed out by signs which arise during the process'. 'The Formal Structure of the Aesthetic Object', *The Problems of Aesthetics*, edited

by Eliseo Vivas and Murray Krieger, (New York: 1955), pp. 227-228. Author's italics.

[16] *A Writer's Diary*, 27 June, 1925, p. 80.

[17] Norman Friedman, 'The Waters of Annihilation; Double Vision in *To the Lighthouse*', *ELH*, 22 (1955), pp. 61-79. See also Irene Simon, 'Some Aspects of Virginia Woolf's Imagery', *English Studies*, 41 (1960), 180-196.

[18] Croce clearly differentiates between intuition and expression in his *Aesthetic* and other writings. He admits that an image 'that is not expressed, that is not in some way uttered. . . even if it is only murmured to oneself, is an image that does not exist.' Quoted by Galvino della Volpe in *Critique of Taste*, tr. Michael Caeser (London: NLB, 1978), p.100. For further criticism of Croce see pp. 99-101,29-30. Saussure also saw communication, not merely apprehension, as the goal of linguistic expression. *Course in General Linguistics*, tr. Wade Baskin (Glasgow: 1974). p. 112.

[19] Friedman regards the middle section as affirming the victory of the forces of regeneration over time. 'Waters of Annihilation', p.65.

[20] Virginia Woolf found these qualities in Proust's writings. She describes these as the combination of 'the utmost sensibility with the utmost tenacity'. *A Writer's Diary*, 8 April, 1925. p. 72.

[21] Roger Fry. *Cezanne*, (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), p. 37.

[22] Roger Fry, *Vision and Design*, p. 51-52.

[23] Clive Bell wrote about Proust, "It was the contemplation, the realisation, of facts which provoked the poet in him. He kept his eye on the object . . . but what he saw was not what the writers of his generation saw, but the object, the fact, in its emotional significance'. Quoted by Langer, *Feeling* and *Form*, p. 301. Calling the world as 'only a sundial of innumerable aspects', Proust saw reality transformed by emotion. See his literary criticism collected in *On Art and Literature, 1896-1919*, tr., Sylvia Townsend Warner (New York: Dell, 1958). See especially 'Talking to Mamma' (pp. 82-93), The Artist in Contemplation' (pp. 306-313), 'Names' (pp. 230-247).

[24] In a genuine artistic experience, writes Eliseo Vivas, the 'object is not a mnemonic device or a stimulus of associative processes, or a referential sign, but a direct and immediate carrier of meaning". 'A Definition of the Esthetic Experiences', Vivas and Krieger, *The Problems of Aesthetics* p. 408.

[25] Herbert Read, The Social Significance of Abstract Art', *A Letter* to a Young Painter (London: Faber 1962), p 254.

[26] Vivas and Krieger, *The Problems of Aesthetics*, 209. Even Roger Fry admits that in the novel it is difficult to create a purely aesthetic experience. In it words call up images of actual life. The novel is

not a pure art. 'Some Questions in Esthetics', *Transformations* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1926), p. 3. Fry may be said to be the forerunner of the debate which has become the staple of contemporary narrative theory from Nathalie Sarraute's *Tropisms* to Robbe-Grillet's *Snapshots* with major contributions by Iris Murdoch, David Lodge, Malcolm Bradbury, David Coldknofp and, most recently, by Reception Aestheticians, Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, and fabulists such as Robert Scholes and Jerome Klinkowitz. The debate goes on. For a synoptic view of the debate see M. L. Raina 'of Disquisition and Disputation: Contemporary Theory of Fiction, *'Indian Journal of English Studies* (1977).

[37] In spite of the fact that 'life' is refined out in *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf's attitude to 'life' novelists has been very generous. Her remarks on Defoe (*The Common Reader*, First Series, p. 130), along with those on Emily Bronte (ibid. p. 204) should provide an index to her catholic sympathies. There are other instances of this in her non-fictional prose, but the essay on Montaigne (ibid, pp. 90-91) and on 'Life and the Novelist' (*Granite & Rainbow*, pp. 41-47) should suffice as further evidence on this point.

A. A. Ansari

STRUCTURE OF CORRESPONDENCES IN *TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*

As a superb example of mature and intricate artistry Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* has a validity of its own kind; it centres round the attempt to 'crystallize and transfix the moment'[1] (p. 3), to render the fugitive and the transient into a compacted and globed entity as also to identity the point (or points) from which radiate those experiences which have a tendency to repeat themselves. Though glimpses of the outside world—its chain of trivial and commonplace occurrences—are pretty frequently caught up into its matrix and its impingement cannot altogether be ignored yet it is the circuitous processes of the mind which have been isolated for emphasis and concentration. Mr and Mrs Ramsay are not to be treated as mere husband and wife, and James and Cam, in particular, are certainly more than allies in the 'compact to resist tyranny to the death'—the tyranny supposed to be exercised by Mr Ramsay over the family. To insist on equating Mr Ramsay with Leslie Stephen and Mrs Ramsay with Julia Stephen, though it has the sanction of an entry in Virginia Woolf's own *Diary* behind it, amounts to a naive kind of biographical reductionism which has only a limiting kind of legitimacy. It hardly constitutes a paradigm to what happened in the Stephen household, for such characters are bound to transcend their recognizable lineaments. Of far greater salience is the fact that events of reality, when they find entrance into the domain of art, are transformed into visions, units of perception turn into spiritual essences, and the distinction between the outer and the inner worlds is so blurred as to become vir-

tually non-existent. Mediated through the artistic vision and fully organized by it the world of concrete experience is changed into not a substitute for it but into a self-subsistent and autonomous whole.

Mrs Ramsay, who enjoys primacy of place and plays a pivotal role in the inner drama, is a busy housewife, engaged in persuasive and energizing conversation, knitting for the Lighthouse keeper's son, arranging suitable marriages, going with Tansley for shopping, arranges the ceremonial dinner, receives guests and offers them both protection and encouragement in her house, and all these activities are symbols of that domesticity which is pitted against the cerebral preoccupations of Mr Ramsay. But no less important than these voices of the tangible world is that tapestry of consciousness which is woven out of the fragments of thoughts, impressions and fantasies which hover continuously over the frontiers of the psyche. The stream of reminiscences is set afloat by the merest impact made on the mind by the seemingly disparate incidents in the daily humdrum of life. A kind of sensuous impressionism, originating in the act of reminiscing and resulting in the presentation of something tactile, is indeed Virginia Woolf's *forte*. From the beginning Mrs Ramsay is piqued by the impulse of securing, out of the evanescent stream of experience, moments of relative permanence and repose, imposing order on what is tumultuous and intractable and fixing the point of stillness in the heart of the flux. 'And the whole of the effort of merging and flowing and creating rested on her' (p. 97). Mr Ramsay betrays every now and then the fact of his emotional dependence on her and the phases of conflict and disharmony between them lead on to physical exhaustion and lack of equanimity for Mrs Ramsay. The identity of the Lighthouse, the proposed expedition to reach up to it, and the painting of the picture by Lily Briscoe are the primary elements which constitute the brittle fabric of the novel. Attention is focused from the outset not only on the disarray between Mr and Mrs Ramsay but also on the internecine

conflict from which the father-son relationship suffers and which poisons it at its very source; the sympathies of James are therefore enlisted in support of the mother as against the father. Some streak of oppression and sadism is visible in the way in which James's keen desire to make the expedition is thwarted by the father on a rather flimsy excuse. This obviously creates a fissure and the inevitable reaction which it generates is articulated in no uncertain terms : '. . . but most of all he hated the twang and twitter of his father's emotion which, vibrating round them, disturbed the perfect simplicity and good sense of his relations with his mother' (p. 42). James's deep-seated animosity against his father objectifies a patently Oedipal situation and may well be regarded as a projection of the conflict between Mr and Mrs Ramsay and which has more ancient roots. One adequate critical stance would be to treat them as emblematic of the opposition between feminity-fertility and masculinity-sterility principle, respectively, and hence one which is both archetypal and partakes of a recurrent pattern. Mr Ramsay's excuse for putting off the trip, which is anyway an indefensible one, is a constant irritant and feeds the flame of hatred and frustration which has been smouldering in James from the beginning : 'Had there been an axe handy, a poker, or any weapon that would have gashed a hole in his father's breast and killed him, there and then, James would have seized it' (p. 4). Not dissimilar is the case of Mr and Mrs Ramsay—the perpetually warring forces in life—who cannot afford to converge on any single point; they always tend to drift apart and thus the achievement of harmony remains a distant and elusive ideal. And not only James but Cam also feels fidgety and suffers from a suppressed but distinct sense of annoyance and chagrin, and thus at least two of the eight children in the family are conspicuous as isolated monads who refuse to fit into any kind of preconceived pattern which may be imposed on them. They take a firm vow to oppose Mr Ramsay, develop their own egohoods and challenge any form of coercion they are sub-

jected to. In other words the conflict between Mr and Mrs Ramsay has far-reaching consequences and repercussions, and it seeps into the very environment in which the characters live and move. A subtle variation on this motif is brought out in the way in which Minta and Paul Rayley fail to achieve marital harmony and mutual understanding attendant upon it inspite of their being cleverly thrown together by Mrs Ramsay; in fact this relationship is 'the bass gently accompanying the tune' which never ran into a melody.

It is in keeping with the density of the sexual context of the novel that the phallic symbol has been used a number of times and it is of great instrumental value in identifying Mr Ramsay: '. . . James felt all her strength flaring up to be drunk and quenched by the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of the male, which smote mercilessly, again and again, demanding sympathy' (p.44). The symbol of the 'arid scimitar' is repeated later, too and the countersymbol for Mrs Ramsay is the 'rosy-flowered fruit tree', with all the relevant implications of buoyancy and fecundness and which is opposed to Mr Ramsay's 'aridity' : '. . . and James, as he stood stiff between her knees, felt her rise in a rosy-flowered fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs into which the beak of brass, the arid scimitar of his father, the egotistical man, plunged and smote, demanding sympathy' (p. 44). The act of 'smiting' and 'plunging' (apropos of Mr Ramsay) and the desire to be 'drunk' and 'quenched' (apropos of Mrs Ramsay) correspond unambiguously to the assertiveness and violence of male sexuality, and the eagerness of the female to reciprocate and be soothed by it spontaneously. Similarly, 'the fruit tree laid with leaves and dancing boughs' corresponds, imagistically, with all the aura of rich suggestiveness, to the fact of being fructified (Mrs Ramsay is consistently embodied as a positive, fructifying force) and thus being fused into an incandescent flame. The phrase 'demanding sympathy', used twice, insinuates the urgent and irrepressible biological need of undergoing this experience. A little earlier the same phenomenon is obliquely

hinted at thus :

> Mrs Ramsay, who had been sitting loosely, folding her son in her arm, braced herself, and, half turning, seemed to raise herself with an effort, and at once to pour erect into the air a rain of energy, a column of spray, looking at the same time animated and alive as if all her energies were being fused into force, burning and illuminating (quietly though she sat, taking up her stocking again) and, into this delicious fecundity, this fountain and spray of life, the fatal sterility of the male plunged itself, like a beak of brass, barren and bare. He wanted sympathy (p. 43).

It is difficult to miss in this description, with all its swirl of passion and immediacy and its mingling of images of 'rain of energy', 'column of spray' and 'fountain and spray of life', the fact of the pouring of the seminal fluid by the penis into the body of the female. It also reflects the fact of androgyneity or the copresence of the Jungian anima and animus in both man and woman.

'Aridity' or 'sterility' of the cold logical intellect—Reason imposing its own linear schematization upon Reality and regarding it as the whole—is the distinctive trait mentioned with reference to Mr Ramsay. He shares with William Bankes a common interest in scientific speculation, and his passionate absorption in his intellectual pursuits is rather scathingly evaluated by Mrs Ramsay early in the novel thus : 'To pursue truth with such astonishing lack of consideration for other people's feelings, to rend the thin veil of civilization so wantonly, so brutally, was to her so horrible an outrage of human decency that, without replying, dazed and blinded, she bent her head as if to let the pelt of jagged hail, the drench of dirty water, bespatter her unrebuked' (p. 37). She also sums it up, in a parodic idiom, as 'the influence of something on somebody'. 'Subject and Object and the nature of Reality' define the limits and scope of Mr Ramsay's metaphysical enquiries, and his unflinching and impeccable commitment to these makes him an emblem of those who try to move from Q to R on to Z. It is given to very few people to reach up to Z. In terms of this intellectual calculus Mr Ramsay is in no sense a

man of genius, not one of those who 'miraculously lump all the letters together in one flash'; he gets stuck to Q, but in him is nevertheless epitomized the steady march of Reason towards ultimate Truth beyond Q. His blundering and plodding and his pertinacity land him into the region of darkness, with hardly any shaft of light to pierce its depths. On the mythical level he seems to conform more or less to the Blakean Devourer and Mrs Ramsay may likewise have the status of the Prolific :

> Thus one portion of being is the Prolific, the other the Devouring. To the Devourer it seems as if the producer was in his chains; but it is not so; he only takes portions of existence and fancies that the whole.
>
> But the Prolific would cease to be Prolific unless the Devourer as a sea received the excess of his delights [2]

It is therefore legitimate to treat Mr and Mrs Ramsay as not mere antithetical figures but as existential contraries. In other words, Reason or the Devourer, like Freud's Ego who drains off the potential energy of libido and tries to reduce it to manageable proportions, is the outward bound or circumference of the Prolific or producer. The Prolific constitutes the sea of buried potencies, and unless the Devourer is there to receive the superfluity—'excess of delights'—, the Prolific, in Blakean terminology, would cease to be Prolific. Neither of them can afford to live in utter and enduring isolation. And the moment the Devourer seeks to assume an independent appearance he is likely to degenerate into the shadowy and terrible form Blake designates as the Spectre. It is this spectral form of Mr Ramsay, ready to pounce upon the surplus energy of life and consume it voraciously, which is vouchsafed to us thus : 'But now he had nobody to talk to about that table ('scrubbed kitchen table of Lily Briscoe's specification—a compelling and opaque metaphor for the 'stolidity' and integrity or massiveness of Mr Ramsay's intellect), or his boots, or his knots; and he was like a lion seeking whom he could devour, and his face had that touch of desperation, of exaggeration in it which alarmed her, and made her pull her skirts about her' (p.180).

The expedition to the Lighthouse and Lily Briscoe's painting of her picture are the two *leitmotivs* in the novel, and Lily Briscoe is the one character who being in closest proximity with Mrs Ramsay, regards her as her chief source of inspiration and is most sensitive to the vibrations travelling from her fascinating and disarmingly attractive personality: 'The Graces assembling seemed to have joined hands in meadows of asphodel to compose that face' (p. 33). She is declared to be painting the picture of Mrs Ramsay and James sitting in the window. This is obviously an oblique way of suggesting that mass and colour are to be included in it, for her art is not representational but essentially symbolic. Painting the picture is for Lily Briscoe a symbolic gesture which is aimed at achieving integration and harmony. The energies of her art are concentrated and eventually terminate into the dawning of an epiphany. The tree in the picture which she is trying off and on to move to the middle reflects the endeavour to look at Reality not tangentially but with a forthright and penetrating glance and thus get a unified image of it. Unlike Mr Paunceforte's paintings she is not likely to feel contented with the pigments which help her bring into being only 'pale, elegant, semi-transparent' figures. Her art, on the contrary, is pellucid, commanding and compelling, and she is moved by the passion to discover 'the shape beneath the colour'. Failure to do so in the endeavour to translate the raw substance of life into creative artifacts may end up with the space becoming awkward and terrifying to her: 'Yes, I shall put the tree further in the middle; then I shall avoid that awkward space. That's what I shall do. That's what has been puzzling me' (p.98). The art of painting as any other art form, too, is more or less equivalent to creating configurations which may intensify or idealize or enlarge the images of fact in the world of contingency. But this is a painful, perilous and breath-taking venture, an activity which keeps the artist on tenterhooks and puts all his energies on trial. He has to walk warily and judiciously along a narrow and circuitous path which is over-

laid by all sorts of instinctive fears and 'blasts of doubt' and consists in the ultimate emergence from darkness into light: 'It was in that moment's flight between the picture and her canvas that the demons set on her who often brought her to the verge of tears and made this passage from conception to work as dreadful as any down a dark passage for a child' (p. 21). Along with it also went the feeling of confrontation of the naked soul with the materials of art—a confrontation which kept it in a state of flurry : 'Always . . . before she exchanged the fluidity of life for the concentration of painting she had a few moments of nakedness when she seemed like an unborn soul, a soul reft of body, hesitating on some windy pinnacle and exposed without protection to all the blasts of doubt' (p. 183). Lily Briscoe is wedded to the ideal of achieving perspective by placing light and shades where they are needed and without causing any infringement to her artistic conscience. It is not so much a question of achieving verisimilitude as intensification through the juxtaposition of masses with such deftness that a coherent shape may emerge out of the amorphous and the chaotic. And she does it with such 'ant-like energy', such sustained devotion and 'obsessed intentness' as to be sure of a predictable success: 'But she had made no attempt at likeness, she said. For what reason had she introduced them then? he asked. Why indeed?—except that if there, in that corner, it was light, here, in this, she felt the need of darkness' (p.61). And further : 'The question being one of the relation of masses, of lights and shadows, which, to be honest, he had never considered before . . . (p.62).

Among the basic hieroglyphics in the novel attention may be drawn to the boar's skull which is emblematic of the primitive and instinctive fear of death and dissolution which clings to the root of Existenz. The act of covering it with the green shawl by Mrs Ramsay is by contrast the emblem of replacing it with the creativity or fertility of life. Pain, death and transience—traumatic experiences in the novel—cast their baleful shadows upon it from beginning to end. Herself

an intuitive and fructtifying force the act of veiling the skull with greenness is effectively done by Mrs Ramsay for dispelling the spasm of fear to which Cam is unjustifiably subjected in her room and because of which she is deprived of the balm of restorative sleep. These two—the skull and the shawl—may also be imaged as the basic polarities, ugliness and beauty, which coexist and counterbalance each other in life.

Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe are the two central consciousnesses through whom the action of the novel is illuminated at several points. In fact the novel is permeated by their 'verbal hoverings' and 'quiverings' and intimacies. Lily Briscoe is a desiccated young woman whom life has passed by; her solitariness is matched by the plurality of Mrs Ramsay. While Lily is reticent and contemplative Mrs Ramsay is full of exuberence and conviviality; the former's poise, delicacy and charm is opposed to the 'rounded vitality' and resourcefulness of the latter. Both aim at creating a semblance of harmony —Mrs Ramsay by controlling the dynamics of interaction through which the fluctuations of human behaviour are manifested and offering ordered structures of personal relationships, and Lily Briscoe through her wrestle with the medium of art. They are drawn to each other by some magnetic force, some inner resonance of spirit which may be termed love in common parlance but which may also be equated with 'unity' or 'intimacy' in Lily Briscoe's lexicon of symbols: '. . . for it was not knowledge but unity that she desired, not inscriptions on tablets, nothing that could be written in any language known to men but intimacy itself, which is knowledge, she had thought, leaning her head on Mrs Ramsay's knee' (p. 59). This constitutes the 'private code', the 'secret language' of intercommunication which they alone could decipher. It was this beam along which flew their individual souls so much so that the 'little, separate incidents' of their lives 'became curled and whole like a wave'. Love for them was a creative act which permitted them access to that incandescent, imaginative state of being which is living in the spirit of Blake's Los. This has

been accounted for and visualized in the form of the bee-hive image thus : 'How then, she had asked herself, did one know one thing or another thing about people, sealed as they were? Only like a bee, drawn by some sweetness or sharpness in the air intangible to touch or taste, one haunted the dome-shaped hive, ranged the wastes of the air over the countries of the world alone, and then haunted the hives with their murmurs and their stirrings; the hives which were people. Mrs Ramsay rose. Lily rose' (pp.59-60). Moving freely within her orbit of influence Lily Briscoe is most sensitive to Mrs Ramsay's essence and function; she identifies herself with the inner rhythms of her life so completely that carrying the reverberations of the bee-hive image further she comes to wear, 'to Lily's eyes', an 'august shape, the shape of a dome'. When death snatches Mrs Ramsay away from the scene of action with some precipitance—and her death bears strong mythical overtones—Lily Briscoe's sensitivity to her death comes to embrace almost the entire content of the perceptual area which is accessible to her at a particular moment of time:

> Wherever she happened to be, painting, here, in the country, or in London, the vision would come to her, and her eyes, half closing, sought something to base her vision on. She looked down the railway carriage, the omnibus; took a line from shoulder or cheek; looked at the windows opposite; at Piccadilly, lamp-strung in the evening. All had been part of the fields of death. (p. 210)

And later still she visualizes the phantom of Mrs Ramsay in terms of the floral imagery which is in accord with the notion of fecundity which has been underscored earlier too :

> She let her flowers fall from her basket, scattered and tumbled them on to the grass and, reluctantly and unhesitatingly, but without question or complaint–had she not the faculty of obedience to perfection?—went too. Down fields, across valleys, white, flower-strewn—that was how she would have painted it. The hills were austere. It was rocky; it was steep. The waves sounded hoarse on the stones beneath. They went, the three of them together, Mrs Ramsay walking rather fast in front, as if she expected to meet someone round the corner. (pp. 233-4)

In view of the observation made a few lines earlier: 'Especially,

Lily thought, Mrs Ramsay would glance at Prue' (p. 233) it would not be wide of the mark to guess that the phrase 'the three of them together' includes Mrs Ramsay, Lily Briscoe and Prue.

Parallel to the initial triangular shape constituted by Mr and Mrs Ramsay and their son James is the later 'triangular purple shape' which comprises Mrs Ramsay, Lily Briscoe and and Mr Carmichael—the old and melancholy poet who composes poems mostly about death and hardly any about love. What binds them together in an indissoluble bond is their intuitive approach—'this swoop and fall of the spirit upon truth'—, the attempt to transmute experience into significant art forms and thus offering an unpredictable reconstruction of it. Undoubtedly Mrs Ramsay's efforts do not manifest themselves into tangible artifacts yet she is capable of moulding human lives into beautiful and integrated wholes. Mr Carmichael gives the impression of being detached and self-enclosed; he lurched in the corners of the garden and his shadow fell across Lily Briscoe's canvas. The triangular shape is distinguished as 'purple' because all three of them cultivate their art forms with meticulous care and unswerving devotion and these are infused with their precious life-blood. The mythical dimensions of Mr Carmichael's character are brought out obliquely by these lines towards the very end:

> Then, surging up, puffing slightly, old Mr Carmichael stood beside her looking like an old pagan God shaggy with weeds in his hair and the trident (it was only a French novel) in his hand . . . He stood there spreading his hands over all the weakness and suffering of mankind; she thought he was surveying, tolerantly, compassionately, their final destiny. Now he has crowned the occasion, she thought, when his hand slowly fell, as if she had seen him let fall from his great height a wreath of violets and asphodels which, fluttering slowly, lay at length upon the earth. (p. 242)

It is worth pointing out that whereas apropos of Mrs Ramsay one has the feeling that there clings to her a touch of rootedness in the stable social order, there is the inescapable sug-

gestion that Mr Carmichael has grown out of the dark and vital energies of nature. Among 'the gods of earth and sea' (cf. Blake) there is hardly any one to match his uniqueness or his beneficent and mysterious power. And this he combines with his choric function in the novel.

In the tripartite structure of the novel 'Time Passes' has been skilfully sandwiched between 'The Window' and 'The Lighthouse', thus underlining the fact that it serves as the point of focus for the opening and the concluding sections. 'Time Passes' section suffers from the obvious blemish of pushing the heavily surcharged lyrical vein of the novel to its farthest reach—written as it is in an over-elaborate style—, though this in no way detracts from its evocative power or what F.R. Leavis succinctly calls its 'brooding wistfulness about the passage of time'. Whereas in the other two sections one witnesses the functioning of human consciousness, in the middle one it is the erosions which are made into the stuff of experience which confront us. All the ordered structures built up by the persistent and continuous human endeavour are exposed inexorably to the ravages of time. We are placed in the midst of the primal elements of nature and held in the grip of darkness. Everything seems to be subdued to the process of over-ripening and rottenness and human life appears to be a paltry and meaningless affair. It may well be visualized as the region of shadows—the underworld of myth—into which Persephone or Mrs Ramsay ('the wedge-shaped core of darkness') was bound to descend: 'a down-pouring of immense darkness began' (p. 145). It looks as if the last vestiges of human ingenuity and manipulation—everything patiently devised and accumulated over the ages—, have been swept off by the tide of time and the entire world plunged into chaos which is the only proper habitat for the ghostly spirits :

> There were things up there rotting in the drawers . . . The place was gone to rack and ruin . . . Only the Lighthouse beam entered the rooms for a moment, sent its sudden stare over bed and wall in the

darkness of winter, looked with equanimity at the thistle and the swallow, the rat and the straw. Nothing now withstood them: nothing said no to them. Let the wind blow; let the poppy seed itself and the carnation mate with the cabbage. Let the swallow build in the drawing room, and the thistle thrust aside the tiles, and the butterfly sun itself on the faded chintz of the arm-chairs. (p. 160)

Out of this sea of fluidity, of 'sliding lights', 'fumbling airs' and 'clammy breaths' Mrs Ramsay emerges into the twilight world of the 'Lighthouse' when her shimmering figure is distinctly felt beneath one's skin. What is attempted by Lily Briscoe on the canvas—a quest for harmony through the adequate positioning of light and shades—finds its exact counterpart in Mrs Ramsay's observing from the vantage point of 'The Lighthouse' the successful sailing of the boat to its final destination : 'Yes, it must have been precisely here that she had stood ten years ago. There was the wall; the hedge; the tree. The question was of some relation between the masses' (p. 170). Here the 'hedge' and the 'wall', it hardly needs stressing, are symbols of that barrier that interposes itself between Reality and the one who is goaded by the ambition to explore it. Both Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe have been committed in their different ways and according to their own individual predilections to achieving the razor-edge of balance between the contraries—in the Blakean and Jungian normative psyche—'this other thing, this truth, this reality' (p. 182) which lies at the back of appearances and tends to elude human grasp.

About Mrs Ramsay we have been specifically told a little later : 'That woman sitting there, writing under the rock resolved everything into simplicity; made these angers, irritations fall off like old rags; she brought together this and that and then this, and so made out of that silliness and spite (she and Charles squabbling, sparring, had been silly and spiteful) something. . .' (p. 185). The analogy between Mrs Ramsay and Lily Briscoe (each corresponds to elements in the composite Demeter-Persephone myth) is established with even greater perspicuity thus : 'This, that, and the other;

herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs Ramsay saying 'life stand still here'; Mrs Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)—this was of the nature of a revelation' (p. 186). The completion of the picture by Lily Briscoe, 'with greens and blues, its lines running up and across' follows and provides the counterpoint of the landing at the lighthouse by Mr Ramsay, James and Cam, with the murky shadow of Mrs Ramsay hovering over it from beyond the abyss of Time and touching it with benediction. Both James and Cam at long last abandon their vow of resistance, their chafings and irritations are shed and Mr Ramsay also comes to offer them that paternal care and solicitude which had been so callously withheld from them for so long. They are now drawn into the inmost circle of intimacy and understanding. Would it be a wild surmise to regard the Lighthouse—a symbol round which gather many a layer of ambiguity—which is referred to by James as 'a stark tower on a bare rock', which was 'barred with black and white', which confirmed some obscure feeling of his about his own character', which also 'looks soft and misty' and 'had melted away into a blue haze'—as a lover substitute? Hence one is hard put to it to accept the view that 'in its stability, its essential constancy, despite cyclical change which is not really change at all, this symbol refers to Mrs Ramsay'.[8] Lily's drawing a line in the centre of the picture makes the 'hideously white space' disappear, and the picture and the Lighthouse—the two coordinates having a bearing on the relativity of things—merge into a final symmetry. And thus the novel, meant to demonstrate and symbolize a self-justifying achievement, ends on a note of serenity.

Department of English
Aligarh Muslim University
Aligarh

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