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UNIVERSITY OF CEYLON REVIEW

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University of Ceylon Review

Vol. XII, No. 2

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The Mahābhārata: Origin and Growth

IN the history of Indological studies there has always been evident a tendency to exaggerate the importance of the Vedic Aryan element in India's culture-complex. According to this school of thought, the Veda has made the greatest contribution to the moulding of the Indian way of life and thought through the ages. As a matter of fact, ancient Indian culture, or, more precisely, the Hindu culture, as a whole, is not infrequently characterised as the Vedic culture. Even a casual survey of the Hindu way of life and thought would, however, lay bare the inadequacy of such a characterisation. The principal gods of the Vedic pantheon, such as Indra and Varuṇa, are now no longer worshipped; their place has long since been taken by the gods of the people, like Viṣṇu and Rudra-Śiva. Mythology and demonology other than those of the Veda have been ushered in and now cater to the instinctive demands of the people in connection with what may be called the embellishment and ornamentation of religion. The elaborate system of sacrifice, which had been evolved and consolidated during the *Brāhmaṇa*-period and resuscitated and reorganised during the *Sūtra*-period, and which had come to be recognised almost as the hallmark of Vedic religious practice, has now become well-nigh extinct. The profound philosophical speculations of the *Upaniṣads*, which were once regarded as the last word in the field of mysticism and spiritualism, have either undergone vital modifications or have been entirely superseded by other systems of thought. The fastidious rules governing man's personal, domestic, and social life, prescribed by the *Sūtras*, have given way to a new ethical code. In short, the ideals sponsored by the Veda have long since ceased to operate as the exclusive motive forces so far as the Indian way of life and thought are concerned. Therefore, the claim that no literary work has influenced and still continues to influence India's cultural life to such a remarkable extent as the Veda can be regarded as hardly warranted. It has to be realised that Brahmanism of the Veda has long since disappeared, and Hinduism, which traditionally claims to have derived its inspiration from the Veda but which, historically speaking, has actually assimilated within itself perhaps more non-Vedic elements than the Vedic ones, has become the dominant force in the socio-religious life of India. And the literary works, which have left an abiding imprint on the socio-religious life sponsored by Hinduism, are not so much the Veda as the

popular epics. Even, among these popular epics, if there is any one single work which has proved to be of the greatest significance in the making of the life and thought of the Indian people and whose tradition continues to live even to this day and influence, in one way or another, the various aspects of Indian life, it is the *Mahābhārata*, the great national epic of India. Men and women in India from one end of the country to the other, whether young or old, whether rich or poor, whether high or low, whether simple or sophisticated, still derive entertainment, inspiration, and guidance from the *Mahābhārata*. In times of stress and trial, the *Mahābhārata* has given consolation and brought a message of hope as much to an illiterate villager as to an experienced statesman. Indian writers, ancient and modern, have found in the stories of the great epic excellent vehicles for the expression of their creative genius. If we were to consider, for instance, the popular folk-songs, or the ballads sung by itinerant bards, or the well-known literary works written in various Indian languages by eminent men of letters, we would find that many of these have drawn their inspiration and material from the *Mahābhārata*. There is indeed no department of Indian life, public or private, which is not effectively influenced by the great epic. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the people of India have learnt to think and act in terms of the *Mahābhārata*.

The *Mahābhārata* is indeed a unique phenomenon in the literary history not only of India but of the world. Just consider its extent. The *Mahābhārata*, as we know it today, consists of 100,000 stanzas. It is thus by far the biggest single literary work known to man. A comparative statement would, perhaps, make the enormity of the work more patent. The *Mahābhārata* is eight times as big as Homer's *Illiad* and *Odyssey* put together; it is indeed bigger than all the epic poems in European languages put together. The tradition about the various forms in which the *Mahābhārata* is known to have existed, as mentioned in the epic itself,¹ is still more astounding. We are told that the great Vyāsa produced the *Mahābhārata* consisting of six million stanzas. Of these six million, three million are recited among gods, one and half million among the *pitars*, one million and four lacs among the Gandharvas, and the remaining 100,000 have been assigned to the earth for the human beings. The mythical character of this tradition apart, there is no doubt that it contains some indications regarding the history of the text of the *Mahābhārata*. This much at least can be safely assumed on the strength of that tradition, namely, that, in its long course, the literary activity, which eventually gave rise to the great epic, was characterised by the processes both of compression and expansion. At this stage, attention may be incidentally drawn to another remarkable feature of the *Mahābhārata*. In spite of its vast extent, the epic does not give the impression of being a motley mass piled up together. Without dilating upon the *Mahābhārata* as a piece of literary art, one can say this much

1. Ādi, *29.

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that, on a closer study, the epic, as a whole, would present itself as a surprisingly well-balanced and harmonious structure.

But it is not only its size that entitles the *Mahābhārata* to the claim of uniqueness. Its contents too are unique in many respects. Even a casual reader of the *Mahābhārata* would be struck by its essentially encyclopaedic character. Indeed, it embodies all knowledge about Indian religion and mythology, law, ethics, and philosophy, statecraft and art of war, and history and ethnology. *Vyāsocchiṣṭam jagat sarvam* : There is no subject under the sun which the versatile Vyāsa, the traditionally recognised author of the epic, has not tackled. The *Mahābhārata* constitutes a very comprehensive historical record of a large slice of India's past—a record which, to boot, is prepared with a marvellous insight into the lives of men and women belonging to all strata of society. In a truly cinematographic fashion, the epic unfolds, through reels after reels, as it were, the moving picture of the cultural life as lived by the people of India through centuries. The name, *Mahābhārata*, is explained in the epic itself as follows:² *mahattvād bhāratatvāc ca mahābhāratam ucyate* : whatever the true intention of the author, the striking character of the epic tempts me to interpret this verse-half as : This epic is called the *Mahābhārata* on account of its *mahattva* (that is, its enormous size) and its *bhāratatva* (that is, its essential 'Indianness'). None could have brought out this 'Indianness' of the epic in a more telling manner than that versatile German Indologist, Oldenberg, who has declared that 'in the *Mahābhārata* breathe the united soul of India, and the individual souls of her people'. In the fullest sense of the term, therefore, the *Mahābhārata* can be said to be the national saga of India. There is indeed no wonder that the Indians should have raised the epic to the status of the fifth Veda (*bhāratam pañcamo vedah*) and thus invested it with the sanctity and authority of the four Vedas. As a matter of fact, the verse-half about the name, *Mahābhārata*, which has been quoted above, is, through a clever pun, sometimes, read as : *mahattvād bhāravattvāc ca mahābhāratam ucyate*, thereby perhaps suggesting that the *Mahābhārata* actually outweighs the Veda and other sacred writings of India.

But the appeal of the *Mahābhārata* is not merely Indian or national; it is essentially human or universal. A proud claim is made on behalf of the epic :³

*dharme cārthe ca kāme ca mokṣe ca bharatarṣabha
yad ihāsti tad anyatra yan nehāsti na tat kvacit.*

In the matter of religion and ethics (*dharmā*), of material progress and prosperity (*artha*), of the enjoyment of the pleasures of personal and social life (*kāma*), and of spiritual emancipation (*mokṣa*), whatever is embodied in this epic may be found elsewhere; but what is not found in the epic, it will be impossible to find elsewhere. And a close study of the *Mahā-*

2. I. 1.209.

3. I. 56.33.

bhārata would convince one that this claim is not at all exaggerated. Verily the *Mahābhārata* constitutes an outstanding record of the collective conscious, unconscious, and subconscious of man. There is hardly any human thought or sentiment which has not found expression in this epic; there is hardly any conceivable situation in human life which has not been portrayed in it. Indeed one of the most striking features of the *Mahābhārata* is that every reader finds in it something, which is, as it were, specifically addressed to him. In this sense, the *Mahābhārata* belongs not only to Indians but to every citizen of the world.

How must have this unique work—vast in extent, encyclopaedic in character, and universal in appeal—come into being? *Prima facie* it would appear that the *Mahābhārata* could not have been the creation of one author or even of one generation of authors. With reference to it, therefore, one has to speak in terms not of creation but of growth. The suggestion that the epic is the outcome of a long and continual literary activity is, however, by no means acceptable to all critical students of the epic. There is, for instance, the view of Rev. Dahlmann.⁴ According to Dahlmann, who, incidentally, is one of the most prolific critical investigators of the *Mahābhārata*-problem, it is quite unnecessary to speak of the different layers of the composition of the epic, because it can be proved that the epic belongs to one single stratum. It would be seen, asserts that scholar, that, inspite of its general prolixity and the fact that didactic digressions and irrelevant episodes often break the continuity of its main story, there is in the epic a striking unity of purpose and an unmistakable unity of characterisation. In other words, the author of the epic does not ever lose sight of the main argument. The feud between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas, which forms the central theme of the poem, is, according to Dahlmann, not historically authentic. Had it been so, some traces of it would certainly have been preserved also elsewhere in Indian history. It would appear that the main purpose of the author was didactic—that is to say, to present the conflict between Good and Evil and to emphasize that Good would in the end prevail over Evil. As an adequate vehicle for this didactic teaching, the poet has spun out a story from the ancient epic material relating to the Kurus and the Pāṇḍavas. Dahlmann eventually concludes that the *Mahābhārata* presents itself as a unified work, that, in it, two elements—the didactic and the epic—have been artistically welded together, that this welding together of the didactic and the epic elements was conceived of and worked out by a single inspired poet, and, finally, that all this must have been accomplished not later than the 5th century B.C. It may be incidentally stated here that, even before Dahlmann's time, Sørensen, the eminent compiler of the famous *Mahābhārata*

4. J. Dahlmann, *Genesis des Mahābhārata ; Das Mahābhārata als Epos und Rechtsbuch*.

Index, had, in 1883, spoken of the oldest form of the *Mahābhārata*, which, according to him, must have been of the nature of a saga, as having represented a unified whole.⁵ Barth, who has subjected to a critical examination the views of several *Mahābhārata* scholars, also finally pronounces the judgement that the epic can lay claim to being an unmistakably uniform work.⁶ If, according to Sörensen, the factor, which invests the epic with a unity, is the ancient saga of the Kurus, according to Sylvain Lévi, it must have been some didactic teaching such as the one which is embodied in what later came to be known as the *Bhagavadgītā*.⁷ Sylvain Lévi characterises the *Bhagavadgītā* as constituting a Kṣatriya code of conduct based on the religious ideology of the Bhāgavatas. The central purpose of the poem is, according to that scholar, to rally together the Kṣatriyas in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. With a view, then, to convincing the Kṣatriyas that the service of Kṛṣṇa is indeed the true guarantee of their success and welfare, a Bhāgavata poet must have woven round the *Bhagavadgītā* the epic tale of the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas.

Oldenberg has characterised all such attempts at discovering in the *Mahābhārata* a unified and harmonious whole—more or less justifiably but rather in strong terms—as constituting ‘scientific monstrosity’.⁸ When, for instance, Dahlmann speaks of the unmistakable unity of characterisation in the epic, one can hardly persuade oneself to accept that claim. There are, in the *Mahābhārata*, certain obvious inconsistencies, both pertaining to the story and the characterisation, which would remain unexplained in case of the assumption of the unified authorship of the work. Again, if the central purpose of the *Mahābhārata* had really been to instruct the Kṣatriyas in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the single poet, who is averred to have been the author of the epic, would have taken care not to represent Kṛṣṇa in a dual character. Further, it is indeed curious that, in this unified poem, in which didactic teaching is claimed to have been presented in the garb of an epic with a view to propagating that teaching among the people at large, there should have been glaring discrepancies between the theory of law and ethics, which must have been sought to be taught, and their practice as manifested through the persons and events in the story. And, finally, may we not ask how one single author could have been—as he is actually seen to be in the *Mahābhārata*—at once a great poet and a miserable bungler, a wise sage and a weak-headed simpleton, a genial artist and a droll pedant? How could he have sponsored mutually opposing systems of religion and

5. S. Sörensen, *Om Mahābhārata's Stilling i den indiske Literatur*.

6. A. Barth, *Oeuvres* IV, 347-403.

7. S. Lévi, ‘Tato jayam udīrayet’, *R. G. Bhandarkar Comm.*, Vol. 99-106.

8. H. Oldenberg, *Das Mahābhārata*.

philosophy? It may also be pointed out that, if Dahlmann's date of the epic-poem were to be accepted, it would have to be presumed that the cultural trends represented in the *Mahābhārata* synchronise with those represented in the *Jātakas*. But Fick's remarkable study relating to the *Jātakas*⁹ clearly indicates that there is a wide gulf between the two. But perhaps the most convincing argument against the acceptance of the unified character of the *Mahābhārata* is the mention in the epic itself that it had been narrated on three different occasions and, therefore, has three different beginnings and three different forms.

The more common method of approach to the study of the *Mahābhārata* has, therefore, been what is popularly known as the analytical method. Even a casual reader of the epic would be struck by certain conspicuous inconsistencies in it. He would, for instance, find—and this to his dismay—that the Pāṇḍavas, who have been glorified as the heroes of the epic, are never shown to conquer except through some kind of deceit or fraud. Bhīṣma, the veteran warrior, could be overpowered only on account of Śikhaṇḍi's strategic intervention between him and Arjuna. Droṇa became the unfortunate victim of an ambiguous declaration purposefully made by Dharmarāja, who is generally represented as the standard of piety and righteousness. In his final encounter with Karna, the Pāṇḍava hero, Arjuna, is shown to have disregarded all rules of *dharma-yuddha*. Indeed several such instances can be quoted. And the wonder of it all is that these unchivalrous acts were perpetrated by the Pāṇḍavas not only with the connivance of their friend, guide, and philosopher, Kṛṣṇa, in whom, as a matter of fact, they recognised the incarnation of God, but on his active instigation. How can such obvious inconsistencies be explained away? This question constituted the starting point of the penetrating investigations of Adolph Holtzmann.¹⁰ Following in the foot-steps of his paternal uncle, Holtzmann ultimately evolved a theory in connection with the growth of the *Mahābhārata*—a theory, which is more ingenious than convincing. He suggested that, in its original form, the epic must have been a poem in which the Kauravas were the heroes. Later on, however, as the result of changed circumstances, the epic was, as it were, set upon its head. It was, in other words, subjected to a process of tendentious inversion. The Kauravas, who were the righteous party in the original epic, now came to be represented as the villains and the Pāṇḍavas became the heroes. Holtzmann does not stop only with enunciating a theory. He has also tried to offer some historical motivation for this wholesale inversion of the epic. He suggests, for instance, that the military feud between the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas is but a reflection of a conflict between the ancient

9. R. Fick, *Die soziale Gliederung in nord-östlichen Indien zu Buddha's Zeit*.

10. A. Holtzmann, *Zur Geschichte und Kritik des Mahābhārata*.

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ideal of chivalry sponsored by the Kauravas and the new polity and statecraft, which had been evolved in the meantime and which were adopted by the Pāṇḍavas. That feud is, according to him, also the reflection of a religious conflict. The Kauravas, who seem to have been the votaries of ancient Śaivism, had to encounter the subsequent rise of Vaiṣṇavism, which the Pāṇḍavas seem to have accepted as their religious creed. In the *Mahābhārata*, however, there is to be found no trace of such a collision between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism. Holtzmann is, therefore, required to adopt, in this connection, a more or less circuitous way. He points out that Śaivism and Buddhism had many things in common, that Buddhism and Brahmanism were opposed to each other, and that Vaiṣṇavism had assimilated several teachings of Brahmanism. So the conflict between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism must have actually been represented as a conflict between Buddhism on the one hand and Brahmanism on the other. As a matter of fact, this entire process of inversion is, according to Holtzmann, characterised by certain distinct stages. Originally there must have existed an ancient poem composed by court-singers to extol the mighty deeds of the Kauravas. In course of time this ancient poem underwent two main transformations—both the transformations being tendentious in character. Firstly, a talented poet transformed it into a poem in praise of an ancient Buddhist ruler, perhaps the great Aśoka. The principal teachings of the poem in this new form were, of course, essentially Buddhistic. These teachings, however, soon came into conflict with Brahmanism, which had been rapidly gaining in strength. Consequently the Buddhist teachings began to decline. The Brahmanic teachers, therefore, took this opportunity to effect another transformation of the epic. They converted it so as to make it serviceable for the propagation of Brahmanism. To achieve this purpose they were required basically to reverse the original purpose of the poem. The Pāṇḍavas, who are generally believed to have had a decided predilection for Brahmanic doctrines and who were, accordingly, the villains of the ancient poem, now became the heroes and superseded the Kauravas. So far as religious doctrines are concerned, Buddhism came to be superseded by Brahmanism, which latter, in its turn, was further superseded by Kṛṣṇaism—the Pāṇḍavas having in the meantime transferred their allegiance from Brahmanism to Kṛṣṇaism. Holtzmann then speaks of the assimilation, into this Pāṇḍava-Kṛṣṇite epic-poem, of several elements of ancient Purāṇic material and the interpolation of numerous didactic passages. This final form of the epic, which is almost similar to the present form, had, according to him, not been accomplished earlier than the 12th century A.D.

Theories implying something like the inversion of the original epic are put forth also by L. von Schröder¹¹ and Grierson.¹² According to Schröder, the epic-poem was originally composed by the bards of the Kurus. It sang of wars between the Kurus, whose principal god was Brahmā, and the neighbouring tribes who had elevated their tribal hero, Kṛṣṇa, to godhead. Therefore, in the original poem, which belongs to a period between the 7th and the 4th centuries B.C., the tribal god of the opponents of the Kurus was represented in as black (*kṛṣṇa*) a colour as possible. Later on, however, the cult of Kṛṣṇa superseded the cult of Brahmā, which religious fact had its political counter-part in the downfall of the Kurus and its literary reflection in the inversion of the original epic-poem. The followers of Kṛṣṇa were shrewd enough not to give up altogether the original epic, which had already struck deep roots among the people. They only recasted it by giving it a strong Kṛṣṇaite bias. But this their recasting must be said to have been only skin-deep, for, even after being tendentiously recasted, the new epic clearly betrayed several essential features of its original form. This is the reason why the present recension of the epic is characterised by many obvious inconsistencies and contradictions. Grierson mentions a Brāhmaṇa- anti-Brāhmaṇa conflict as the principal motive of some kind of inversion of the original epic. The Kauravas of Madhyadeśa were, according to him, sponsors of Brahmanism. They came into conflict with the Pāñcāla-Pāṇḍavas, who were unorthodox people, as is indicated, for instance, by the polyandrous marriage between the Pāñcāla princess, Draupadī, and the five Pāṇḍavas. The starting point of the actual struggle would then seem to have been the insult given to the Brāhmaṇa, Droṇa, by the anti-Brahmanic Pāñcāla king, Drupada. Droṇa, seeking retribution, went over to the Kauravas, who claimed to be the defenders of Brahmanism, while Drupada was supported by the Pāṇḍavas, who were matrimonially allied to the Pāñcālas.

The fact that different—and, what is more significant, mutually contradictory—motives have been suggested for the inversion of the epic by Holtzmann and the other two scholars, definitely detracts from the soundness of their ingenious hypothesis. Moreover such a hypothesis has absolutely no external evidence to support it. For instance, Grierson's assumptions regarding a war between the Kauravas of the Madhyadeśa and the Pāñcāla-Pāṇḍavas and of a Brāhmaṇa- anti-Brāhmaṇa conflict are historically quite untenable. Equally untenable is Holtzmann's assertion that the present recension of the *Mahābhārata* could not have been in existence before the 12th century A.D. For, it can be proved, on the strength of epigraphic evidence, that no substantial or significant additions must have been made to the epic.

11. L. von Schröder, *Literatur und Kultur*.

12. G. Grierson, *JRAS* (1908), 837-44.

after the 11th century A.D. Even in the 8th century A.D., the *Mahābhārata* must have been known in the form in which we now know it, namely as epic plus *dharmaśāstra*. Indeed there is inscriptional evidence to show that, in the 5th century A.D., the *Mahābhārata* was known as the work of Vyāsa and as consisting of 100,000 stanzas. There is thus sufficient ground to suppose that, since at least a couple of centuries before 400 A.D., the epic has remained practically unchanged. Even so far as internal evidence is concerned, one would search in vain for any traces of Buddhism in the epic. Holtzmann, who speaks of a Buddhist transformation of the epic, himself admits this. Similarly it would be difficult to find any portions of the epic where Brahmā is specifically glorified as the leading god. As a matter of fact, a conflict between the cult of Brahmā and the cult of Kṛṣṇa is almost unknown in the religious history of India. All that can, therefore, be said of the inversion theory is that it is an ingenious hypothesis and must, at best, remain a proof of itself.

Ever since 1837, in which year Lassen may be said to have inaugurated the modern period of critical scholarship relating to the *Mahābhārata*,¹³ it has been the theory of additions and normal revisions which has held the field in one form or another. Such a theory has, indeed, the initial advantage in that it is fully supported by the ancient Indian literary tradition. Moreover, as has been already pointed out, there is a clear mention in the epic itself that it was narrated on three different occasions and accordingly has three different beginnings and three different forms. It was, therefore, safe to start with the assumption that the *Mahābhārata*, as we know it, is the result of a long process of growth. All that one was then expected to do was to trace the various stages of that growth and rationalise it, if possible, by offering some culture-historical motivation for it. Lassen himself is of the opinion that the present recension of the epic, which he calls the Śaunaka recension because Sauti gave a recital of it at a sacrifice performed by Śaunaka, is the second recension of the *Mahābhārata*. It is, according to that scholar, this recension, which is referred to in the *Āśvalāyana Grhya-Sūtra* (III. 4) where a *Mahābhārata* is mentioned by the side of a *Bhārata*. The *ĀśGS*, which is ascribed by Lassen to about 350 B.C., thus knew of the two recensions of the epic—the *Mahābhārata* recension and the *Bhārata* recension. It can be presumed that by the *Mahābhārata* recension *Āśvalāyana* actually meant the Śaunaka recension, for, as Lassen argues, *Āśvalāyana* is traditionally known to have been a pupil of Śaunaka. The Śaunaka recension must, accordingly, have come into being before about 460 B.C. Lassen further adds that all Kṛṣṇaite interpolations are later than the Śaunaka recension, that is later than the 4th century B.C. It will be easily seen that Lassen's dating of the *ĀśGS* in the

13. C. Lassen *ZKM* I; *Indische Altertumskunde*, I and II.

4th century B.C. as also his identification of Śaunaka, the teacher of Āśvalāyana, and Śaunaka, who celebrated the sacrifice at which the *Mahābhārata* was recited, are quite hypothetical. Further it is not clear why Lassen should regard the Kṛṣṇaite elements in the epic as belonging to a period later than the 4th century B.C. Pāṇini's reference to Vāsudeva and Arjuna clearly implies the existence of the Bhāgavata cult and Pāṇini is certainly older than the 5th century B.C.

Through his analysis of the *Mahābhārata*, Weber has tried to discover Vedic sources for the epic material.¹⁴ But he cannot be said to have succeeded in discovering any direct organic connections between the Veda and the epic. Ludwig follows,¹⁵ to a certain extent, the lead given by Weber. But his main contribution to the *Mahābhārata*-problem must be said to be the emphasis which he put on the two-fold motif of the epic—the historical and the mythical. The historical kernel of the epic is, according to him, the fact of the capture of the Kurukṣetra on the banks of the Sarasvatī by the Bharatas, who are already celebrated in the Veda in connection with the *dāśarājñā* battle. The character of the Pāṇḍavas is by no means strictly historical. As a matter of fact, Ludwig suggests that each of the five Pāṇḍava brothers must have originally belonged to a different tribe and that the concept of the five Pāṇḍava brothers implies only a confederation of five tribes (again a reminder of the 'ten kings' of the *dāśarājñā*). On these scanty and perhaps mutually unrelated historical foundations the epic-poet built up an entire superstructure embodying a seasonal myth. Some of the pointers to this seasonal myth are, according to Ludwig, the blindness of Dhṛtarāṣṭra (which stands for the powerlessness of the winter sun), the polyandrous marriage between the Pāṇḍavas and Kṛṣṇā (which implies the contact of the rays of the pale sun [Pāṇḍu] with dark earth), and the self-imposed blindfoldedness of Gāndhārī (which indicates that the consort of the winter-sun was covered with clouds). Without examining all this at any length I shall only say that this method of telescoping natural phenomena into mythology, which had once been very common, now fails to convince any critical student. Even the protagonists of this method would find themselves at loose ends, should they attempt to go the whole hog with it!

Perhaps the most detailed elaboration of this analytical method is seen in Hopkins's famous book, the *Great Epic*.¹⁶ He speaks of the four stages of the growth of the *Mahābhārata* extending from 400 B.C. up to 400 A.D.—the stages, that is to say, of the Bhārata lays, of the *Mahābhārata* tale with the Pāṇḍavas as heroes, of didactic interpolations, and of later additions. The

14. A. Weber, *Indische Literaturgeschichte*, pp. 179 ff.

15. A. Ludwig, *Abh. BGW VI*, pp. 1 ff.; *Stzb. BGW IX*, pp. 15 ff.

16. E. W. Hopkins, *The Great Epic of India*.

suggestions of Hopkins, so far as they go—and they do go far enough—, certainly have the great merit of clearing the ground for a proper approach to the *Mahābhārata* problem.

I may now briefly state my own view in the matter: I believe that, in a sense, the beginnings of the *Mahābhārata*, viewed as a whole, have to be traced back, both from the points of view of cultural history and literary history, to a period before the Vedic *saṃhitās* came into existence. A critical student will find that the beginnings of ancient Indian literature are characterised by two distinct literary traditions, which, for the sake of convenience, I have chosen to call the *sūta*-tradition and the *mantra*-tradition. It will be easily realised that both these literary traditions were oral traditions; but there were certain essential differences between them. Broadly speaking, the *sūta*-tradition related to what may be described as secular matters and the doings of human heroes. The *sūtas* or bards, who were mainly responsible for this tradition, sang of the achievements of human heroes and kings, and of the normal life of the common people. In their ballads and popular folk-songs, traditional legends and historical narratives, one finds represented several aspects of the secular life of the ancient Indians. The *sūta*-tradition thus comprised quite a large amount of popular, bardic, legendary, and historical material. The *mantra*-tradition, on the other hand, related to what is generally understood by the terms, religious thought and practice. It consisted of the prayers and magical incantations of the ancient Vedic Indians, their ritual formulas and imprecations, and their spiritual yearnings and philosophical speculations. It may be safely presumed that these two literary traditions—one secular-historical and the other mythological-ritualistic—both of which, must have, for obvious reasons, been originally fluid in character, had been growing side by side. In course of time, the very nature of the contents of the *mantra*-tradition demanded that the literature produced in that tradition should be properly organised and given a fixed literary form. For, in the matter of religious thought and practice, the poet-priests and the ritual-priests of those days, as indeed of all times, brooked no elasticity. It is verily a universal phenomenon that some kind of rigidity and woodenness soon begins to prevail in religious practice and correspondingly in religious literature. The literature produced in the *mantra*-tradition, accordingly, came to be collected and crystallized at a very early date and, as the result of this, the Veda, as we know it, came into being. The *sūta*-tradition, on the other hand, continued to remain in a fluid and floating condition. This fact leads to the interesting paradox, namely, that though many aspects of the contents of the *sūta*-tradition chronologically refer to a period perhaps earlier than the one to which the contents of the *mantra*-tradition refer, the literary monuments, as such, of the *sūta*-tradition, which have come down to us, are distinctly later than

those of the *mantra*-tradition. The advantages of being reduced to a fixed literary form at an early stage of growth are self-evident. For one thing, it must have certainly facilitated the preservation of the *mantra*-tradition in a more or less perfect condition. On the other hand, a very large portion of the literature produced in the *sūta*-tradition must have drifted along and eventually been lost. But there is also a serious disadvantage, from the culture-historical point of view, from which the *mantra*-tradition must have suffered. On account of the very fact that it was reduced to a fixed literary form at an early stage of its growth, the literature in the *mantra*-tradition was bound to become more or less static. It must have also soon lost its capacity to be responsive to the various vicissitudes in the life of the people at large. The *sūta*-tradition, on the other hand, remained dynamic and reacted and responded to the changing conditions. The result of all this was that the *sūta*-tradition assimilated into itself various elements belonging to both the Vedic Aryan and the pre-Vedic proto-Indian cultures, while the tendencies represented in the *mantra*-tradition were, to a very large extent, priestly-hieratic. The literature in the *mantra*-tradition was essentially the literature of a limited section of the community while the *sūta*-tradition necessarily possessed a far wider popular appeal. One thing, however, must be emphasized in this connection. In spite of its general fluid and floating condition, the existence of the *sūta*-tradition was recognised by the *mantra*-tradition. For, in several texts belonging to the latter tradition, we come across frequent references to what was then known as *itihāsa-purāṇa*. As a matter of fact, such references have led some scholars to assume that, side by side with the literary monuments belonging to the *mantra*-tradition, there must have been in existence actual literary monuments belonging to the *sūta*-tradition also. But there is not much evidence to support such an assumption. All that we can say in this respect is that the *sūta*-tradition had certainly been in existence and recognised at that time, but that that tradition had not then come to be consolidated so as to manifest itself in the form of fixed literary monuments. There is another point to which attention may be drawn in this connection. Apart from the frequent mention of *itihāsa-purāṇa* in the literature belonging to the *mantra*-tradition, several elements of the *sūta*-tradition had actually found their way in that literature. This was indeed inevitable. But, while adopting such elements in their literature, the sponsors of the *mantra*-tradition gave those elements an essentially priestly bias. The real purpose of the *sūktas* relating to the battle of the ten kings, for instance, is not so much to celebrate the exploits of the Bharatas as to glorify the magical potency of the priest-craft of Vasiṣṭha. The elements of the *sūta*-tradition have been preserved in the literature of the *mantra*-tradition in various forms. In the *Samhitās* we come across hymns, which are essentially human-historical in character, such as, for instance, those relating to historical events like the

dāśarājña or those containing the praise of the liberality of patrons (*dānastutis*). Each of the *Brāhmaṇa*-texts can be normally divided into two parts, namely, the *vidhi* part and the *arthavāda* part. The *vidhi* part mainly deals with the theory and practice of some Vedic sacrifice, while the *arthavāda* part is generally devoted to the glorification of that Vedic sacrifice. By way of such glorification, the authors of the *Brāhmaṇas* very often quote historical or mythical instances, which confirm the promised efficaciousness of that particular sacrifice as a whole or of a specific item or detail of that sacrifice. Presumably many of these stories originally belonged to the literary tradition of the *sūtas*. Then there are quite a number of *gāthās* (or floating stanzas of popular wisdom) quoted in the *Brāhmaṇa*-literature—and these too have to be traced back to the *sūta*-tradition. Finally, there is prescriptive provision made in some Vedic sacrifices for the recitals of ancient mythological and historical legends, which are technically known as *pāriplavas* and *nārāśamsīs*. But, as has been indicated above, all these elements of the *sūta*-tradition were exploited for purely priestly purposes and must be said to have accordingly lost their essential sautic character.

In the history of ancient Indian literature we can thus visualise the growth of two principal literary traditions. One of them, namely, the *mantra*-tradition, soon came to be consolidated, so to say, on account of its avowedly priestly-religious purpose and consequently began to manifest itself in fixed literary forms. The *sūta*-tradition, on the other hand, continued to remain fluid, for a pretty long time, presumably because its sponsors had not found any central motif or any adequate literary nucleus which would serve as a unifying factor for its many and varied elements. In due course, however, such a motif for the unification and consolidation of the sautic elements offered itself in the form of an important event in the history of ancient India. As the result of the famous Vedic battle of ten kings, the clan of the Bharatas had attained a kind of sovereignty over the other states and principalities—both Aryan and non-Aryan. The scions of this great clan seem to have held sway over a major portion of Northern India, more or less unchallengedly, until some time between the 17th and the 15th centuries B.C., when an apparently minor domestic quarrel among them began to loom large on the political horizon of the nation as a whole. The story of the conflict between the Kauravas and their cousins, the Pāṇḍavas, is too well-known to need recounting. That conflict arose out of the claim which the Pāṇḍavas advanced for a share in the blind king Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sovereign kingdom of Hastināpura. By virtue of the preeminent position which the house of these scions of the Bharatas held in Indian politics of the time, what should have been an ordinary family feud soon assumed the proportions of a national crisis. Kings and chieftains from all over the country arrayed themselves into two belligerent camps in accordance

with their respective loyalties. An epoch-making war was fought on the famous battle-field of Kurukṣetra. This war continued just for eighteen days, but those eighteen days shook the whole country. Entire armies on both sides—comprising mostly the flower of Indian youth—were laid low on the earth. Eventually the Pāṇḍavas came out as victors in the war, which, very appropriately, came to be called the Bhārata war.

It is perfectly understandable that an event of such great magnitude and national significance should have stirred the imagination of the bards of that time. Numerous ballads and songs must have been produced by the bards patronised both by the Kauravas and the Pāṇḍavas—the same episodes in the conflict being perhaps sometimes described with the Kaurava bias as well as the Pāṇḍava bias. After the dust raised by this national catastrophe had settled down and a comparatively more peaceful era had been ushered in, all those ballads must have come to be welded together into a single unified literary work with a common central motif, namely, the victory of the Pāṇḍavas over the Kauravas. During this process of literary unification efforts must have naturally been made to revise many of the older ballads so as to bring them in line with the general trend of glorifying the victors, though, as can be easily realised, the results of such tendentious revision could not have been other than superficial. It may also be presumed that in redacting these ballads, many ancient bardic and legendary elements were grafted, more or less organically, upon the historical elements relating to the Bhārata war. It is not unlikely that, in many cases, this operation substantially changed the original complexion of personalities and events. But with all this, one thing must be conceded, namely, that the central motif was never lost sight of in this redaction and that, ultimately, a homogeneous literary work, with a more or less fixed literary form, was brought into being. This work claimed to constitute a historical poem with its central theme developed through the three stages of *bheda* (dissension), *rājyavināśa* (loss of the kingdom), and *jaya* (victory) :

*evam etat purāvṛttam teṣām akliṣṭakāriṇām
bhedo rājyavināśaś ca jayaś ca jayatām vara.*¹⁷

This historical epic-poem, which dealt with the Bhārata war and which was very appropriately called *Jaya* (=Victory), must, indeed, be regarded as the first literary monument belonging to the *sūta*-tradition. As a matter of fact, this poem facilitated, to a great extent, the crystallisation of further sautic material. For, once a literary nucleus was created, it was easy to rally round it various other elements of the fluid *sūta*-tradition. Accordingly, many ancient bardic lays—more particularly those which celebrated the exploits of the Bhārata clan—must have been added to the *Jaya* in such a manner

17. I. 55.43.

that they soon came to form an integral part of that historical poem. While more and more material belonging to the *sūta*-tradition was thus becoming consolidated, the historical poem, *Jaya*, was being gradually transformed into the epic *Bhārata*.

But such transformation of the *Jaya* into the *Bhārata* seems to have received perhaps a stronger impetus from another quarter. In order to discover the source of that impetus, we shall have to turn to the religious history of ancient India. While, on the one hand, the *sūta*-tradition had just begun to become crystallised in a fixed literary form, the literature belonging to the *mantra*-tradition, which, as we have seen, had got an earlier start in the matter of crystallisation, had, on the other hand, already passed through at least three distinct periods of its history—the *saṃhitā*-period, the *brāhmaṇa*-period, and the *upaniṣad*-period. On an earlier occasion,¹⁸ I have tried to show how the conditions created during the *upaniṣad*-period resulted in bringing about a virtual break in the continuity of the Vedic (or Brahmanic) way of life and thought. The interregnum following the *upaniṣad*-period indeed proved to be exceedingly eventful from the point of view of the religious history of India. The natural reaction to the conditions created by the *Upaniṣads* manifested itself mainly in four forms—firstly, the rise of the heterodox systems of thought; secondly, the comprehensive movement, initiated in the *sūtra-vedāṅga*-period, for the resuscitation and consolidation of the Vedic way of life and thought (this movement having been started as a counterblast against the heterodox movements); thirdly, the development of new ideals in polity and statecraft (as seen in the *arthaśāstra*); and fourthly, the steady growth of a popular religion—a religion, which had its roots in the thought and practices of the indigenous population of India but which had not altogether forsworn the Vedic Aryan influences. It is the last two aspects—and, more particularly, the fourth aspect—of the reaction, which seems to have operated most fundamentally in the matter of the consolidation of the epic *Bhārata*. The comprehensive movement started for the revival of Brahmanism, which found its literary expression in the *sūtras* and the *vedāṅgas*, did, no doubt, serve as an efficient counterblast against the heterodox religious movements. But, as it happened, the *sūtra-vedāṅga*-movement could not free itself completely from the spell of the fastidious ritualism and exclusive social order sponsored by the earlier Brahmanism. It could not, therefore, command a truly popular appeal. Indeed, what started as a popular Vedic movement to counteract the influence of heterodox religions, reverted, in a sense, to the exclusiveness which was characteristic of the *Brāhmaṇa*-period. As against this, another popular religious movement, which, as a matter of fact, started with a kind of opposition to certain features

18. *University of Ceylon Review*, XI, 135-151.

of Brahmanic religion but which, in the long run, claimed to owe allegiance—howsoever nominal and superficial—to the Veda, proved remarkably effective in arresting the onslaught of non-Vedic religions. This popular religious movement seems to have started mainly among the tribes of the Vṛṣṇis and the Sātvatas and to have soon spread among other tribes such as those of the Ābhīras, the Yādavas, and the Gopālas. All these tribes belonged to and ruled over various parts of the middle and western India. The principal teacher and leader of this new religious movement was Kṛṣṇa, who, in course of time, came to be associated, in one way or another, with the various tribes mentioned above. As is but natural in such cases, he soon became their tribal hero, and, later, their tribal god.

There were four main planks in Kṛṣṇa's religious platform. The first of these pertains to the goal of spiritual life. The goal of spiritual life as enunciated in the *Upaniṣads* is *ātma-jñāna* (= realisation of the self). The spiritual emancipation of an individual consists, according to the *Upaniṣads*, in his realisation that the individual soul (*jīva*) is, in the ultimate analysis, identical with the universal soul (*brahman*). As the result of nescience, the universal soul, which is the only reality, becomes conditioned by the limitations of the physical body, the sense-organs, and the intellect, and thereby the illusion of the individual soul is created. Through true knowledge, the individual shakes off his individuality, which is after all unreal and temporary and becomes conscious of his real nature. The *Upaniṣads* also emphasise that the phenomenal world is essentially unreal and that, therefore, so long as an individual remains involved in its various operations, he has no chance of attaining his spiritual goal. By thus denying the reality of the world and by making the individual the centre of their speculations, the upaniṣadic teachings have, in a sense, divested themselves of all social value. The individual is indeed encouraged to run away from his social responsibilities and bury himself within himself. As against this individualistic, abstract, and more or less negative concept of spiritual life, Kṛṣṇa taught that the true spiritual life consists in *loka-saṁgraha*—that is to say, in the promotion of the stability and solidarity of society. Society, as a whole, can function properly only on the principle of ethical interdependence of its various constituents. Every individual must indeed regard himself as an essential constituent of society and must make his contribution towards its building up, preservation, and progress. Kṛṣṇa thus gave a distinctly social significance to the thought relating to spiritualism. The upaniṣadic ideal of *ātma-jñāna* necessarily presupposes a complete renunciation from this worldly life. In the new popular religion of Kṛṣṇa, with its goal of *loka-saṁgraha*, such an empty life of renunciation had no place whatsoever. In the place of *saṁnyāsa*, therefore, Kṛṣṇa taught the doctrine of *karmayoga*. Every person has got to perform his social duties as best as he can.

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But this does not necessarily imply that he should indulge in all kinds of activities and thus neglect his personal spiritual emancipation. In *karmayoga*, Kṛṣṇa has struck the most remarkable compromise between the metaphysical ideal of individual emancipation and the ethical ideal of social service. It is not action, as such, which constitutes a bar to individual emancipation; it is the attitude in which any particular action is done, which determines whether or not that action would constitute such a bar. It is, indeed, possible, according to Kṛṣṇa, to combine the ethical advantages of activism with the spiritual advantages of renunciation by adopting a way of life, in which one fulfils his social obligations through proper actions which he performs in an attitude of renunciation so far as his own personal interest in those actions is concerned. The goal of one's life should not be merely to attain one's own emancipation; it should rather be to continue to work even after attaining personal emancipation, with a view to securing the emancipation of his fellow-men. In his religious teaching, Kṛṣṇa may be said to have thus reinterpreted the upaniṣadic ideals of *saṁnyāsa* and *mokṣa* in terms of social ethics.

The third aspect of Kṛṣṇa's teaching pertains to religious practice. The Brahmanic ritualism, as we have seen on another occasion,¹⁹ could not, for obvious reasons, become a truly popular religious practice. It also implied some kind of social and intellectual exploitation. With a view, therefore, to counteracting the inevitable exclusiveness engendered in religious matters by the cult of sacrifice, Kṛṣṇa replaced that cult with the cult of *bhakti*. And, as is very well known, in the religious history of India, nothing indeed has proved so successful in bringing about a truly democratic spiritual brotherhood among men as the cult of *bhakti*. It may, however, be incidentally pointed out that, so far as ritualism is concerned, Kṛṣṇa has not altogether given up the concept of sacrifice. Like the concepts of *mokṣa* and *saṁnyāsa*, he has rather reoriented it in the light of social ethics.

And, finally, the popular movement of Kṛṣṇa is characterised by its emphasis on religious and philosophical synthesis. The Brahmanic teachers, as we know from the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upaniṣads*, had been notoriously dogmatic in their speculations relating both to ritualism and spiritualism. As a shrewd leader of men, Kṛṣṇa realised that religious and philosophical dogmatism often tends to divide the people while synthesis unites them. Without, therefore, sponsoring any particular system of thought exclusively, he tried to discover the possible similarities among the various systems and to represent them as but different points of view and different ways of approach—all, in the ultimate analysis, having the realisation of the one and the same supreme reality as their common goal.

19. *University of Ceylon Review*, XI, 135-151.

This new teaching, characterised by its bold emphasis on *loka-saṁgraha* instead of *ātmajñāna*, *karmayoga* instead of *saṁnyāsa*, *bhakti* instead of ritualism, and philosophical synthesis instead of dogmatism, naturally appealed to all strata of society. It served a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, through its drastic departure from the Brahmanic teachings, it made up for the inevitable weakness of the Brahmanic way of life and thought, and, on the other, while doing so, it took care to create the impression that the Brahmanic way of life and thought was not being altogether abjured.

The rise of Kṛṣṇaism on the religious horizon of ancient India synchronised with the partially accomplished process of enlarging the historical poem, *Jaya*, into the epic, *Bhārata*. This newly created literary monument belonging to the *sūta*-tradition had instantly caught the imagination of the people. What wonder then that the practically-minded sponsors of Kṛṣṇaism should have thought of employing this popular epic as a vehicle for propagating their religious teaching? They, accordingly, redacted the partially completed epic, *Bhārata*, in such a way as to make it serve their own purpose. They started by associating the heroes of the epic, namely, the Pāṇḍavas, with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa came to be represented as a relative of the Pāṇḍavas, indeed, as their friend, guide, and philosopher. The Pāṇḍavas, in their turn, came to be represented as being fully conscious of the god-head of Kṛṣṇa. It came to be suggested that Kṛṣṇa was really responsible for all that the epic heroes were enabled to achieve. In short, Kṛṣṇa soon became the central figure of the epic—the pivot round which all persons and events in the epic revolved. And as Kṛṣṇa's personality grew in divinity, the epic correspondingly grew in its extent. New legends were produced or old legends modified with the sole purpose of confirming and glorifying the divinity of Kṛṣṇa. And these legends were introduced at proper contexts in the older epic and where such contexts did not exist they were artfully created. All credit is indeed due to the remarkable ingenuity and resourcefulness of the Kṛṣṇaite redactors, who brought about these basic changes in the older epic in such a manner as not to give any cause for even a faint suspicion that the character of Kṛṣṇa was really extraneous to the original epic. But the real cornerstone of this Kṛṣṇaite superstructure must be said to be the *Bhagavadgītā*. The *Bhagavadgītā* epitomises, in the most perfect manner, the religious, ethical, and metaphysical teachings of Kṛṣṇa, which have been briefly indicated above. This work indeed gave quite a new complexion to the whole epic. The Kṛṣṇaite redactors, who seem to have been great literary artists, conceived a very dramatic background for this Lord's Song so as to render it more appealing to the people. In a sense, it made the people realise that philosophising is not something to be practised in isolation by a select few; philosophy rather deals with problems which confront a common man in his normal life. One may, therefore, say that, just

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as the *Bhārata* represented the literature of the people, the *Bhagavadgītā* represented the philosophy of the people.

Broadly speaking, the epic *Bhārata* is thus the result of the operation of the processes of bardic enlargement and Kṛṣṇaite redaction on the historical poem, *Jaya*. The heroes of this historical poem were Kṣatriyas; the large amount of bardic and legendary material which came to be added to that poem is also mostly related to Kṣatriya warriors; even the religious teachings which came to be propagated through the epic were derived from non-Brahmanic sources. In short, the epic, in this form, showed a distinct Kṣatriya—non-Brahmanic—imprint. In the religious history of India, two movements, originating in two distinct ideologies, seem to have been jointly responsible for stemming the growth of heterodox systems of thought, which had strengthened their position during the interregnum following the upaniṣadic period. They were the *sūtra-vedāṅga*-Brahmanism and Kṛṣṇaism. By its very nature, however, it was the latter which held the field after the decline of heterodox religions. But once the danger of the avowedly anti-Brahmanic religions was past, the sponsors of Brahmanism again began gradually to assert themselves. They knew that, though Kṛṣṇaism represented, in some respects, a definite reaction against Brahmanism, it was not avowedly anti-Brahmanic. It was, therefore, possible to bring about a workable compromise between Brahmanism and Kṛṣṇaism. The sponsors of Brahmanism, accordingly, attempted to brahmanise, so to say, the popular religion of Kṛṣṇa as far as it was feasible to do so. Indeed they attempted thus to brahmanise several minor popular religious sects. Incidentally it may be pointed out that the collective outcome of all such attempts was Hinduism. So far as Kṛṣṇaism was concerned, the sponsors of Brahmanism seem to have started their brahmanising operation with the epic *Bhārata*, which had, by then, almost come to be regarded as an authentic Kṛṣṇaite document. They introduced in the epic—sometimes in place, but, more often, out of place—a large amount of material relating to Brahmanic learning and culture. Whole tracts dealing with Brahmanic religion and philosophy, law and ethics, cosmology and mysticism, and social and political theories found their way in the epic. New legends with a distinct Brahmanic bias now came to be introduced in the epic. In most of these legends, the heroes of the epic came to be represented as the defenders of Brahmanic faith and culture. In this context, it may be incidentally pointed out that, in comparison with the methods of the Kṛṣṇaite redactors, those of the Brahmanic redactors were obviously gross. As a matter of fact, the activity of the sponsors of Brahmanism ought to be described not as artistic redaction but as flagrant interpolation.

In this process of brahmanisation a significant change was effected also in the character of Kṛṣṇa himself. The personality of Kṛṣṇa had by that time

already become essentially syncretic, for, there were assimilated into it elements derived from various sources—elements, for instance, relating to Vāsudeva-Kṛṣṇa, the tribal hero of the Vṛṣṇis; Gopāla-Kṛṣṇa, the tribal god of the cowherds; Bhagavān-Kṛṣṇa, the teacher of Kṛṣṇaism as embodied in the *Bhagavadgītā*; and Yādava-Kṛṣṇa, the mentor of the Pāṇḍavas. As the result of the Brahmanic revision, Kṛṣṇa now came to be regarded as an *avatāra* of the All-God, Viṣṇu, and, ultimately, even as being identical with the upaniṣadic *Brahman*. The elements relating to Brahmanic *dharma* and *nīti* were superimposed upon the bardic-historical elements derived from the *sūta*-tradition and the religio-ethical elements derived from Kṛṣṇaism—and eventually the *Bhārata* became transformed into the *Mahābhārata*.

It is possible to derive, from the *Mahābhārata* itself, certain clues which would help us in formulating a hypothesis regarding the identity of the Brahmanic redactors of the epic. A critical examination of the legends and doctrines, which have been inserted into the epic during the brahmanising process, would reveal that a majority of them show an unmistakable bias in favour of the family of the Bhārgavas.²⁰ The Bhārgavas have, no doubt, played a very significant role in the cultural history of ancient India. But when we take into consideration the fact that they had not the remotest connection with the kernel of the epic, the other fact, namely, that the largest number and the greatest variety of legends in the *Mahābhārata* should relate to them, assumes a special significance in connection with the growth of the epic. The tendency to *bhṛguise* the epic, so to say, becomes manifest in several ways. Just consider the very beginning of the *Mahābhārata*. It is well known that the famous Bhārata war was fought at Kurukṣetra. But the *sūta*, Ugraśravas, who recited the epic at the sacrificial session of Śaunaka, refers to the scene of the war not as Kurukṣetra but as Samantapañcaka. This then gave the epic redactors an opportunity to glorify an outstanding event in the career of one of the most intriguing personalities among the Bhārgavas, namely, Paraśurāma. For, on being asked by the sages, assembled at Śaunaka's sacrificial session, why the place was called Samantapañcaka, the *sūta* narrates the story of how, between the *tretā* and the *dvāpara* ages, Paraśurāma extirpated the entire race of the Kṣatriyas, collected their blood into five pools, and offered that uncanny oblation to his *pitars*.²¹ Indeed this exploit of the total annihilation of the Kṣatriyas, which was repeated by Paraśurāma twenty-one times, has itself been referred to over and over again in the epic. Bhārgavarāma is further glorified by being represented as the preceptor of several *Mahābhārata* warriors—Droṇa and Karṇa being the most outstanding among

20. V. S. Sukthankar, 'The Bhṛgu and the Bhārata: a Text-historical Study', *ABORI*, XVIII, 1-76.

21. I. 2.3. ff.

them. And lest one might feel inclined to doubt how Bhārgavarāma, who had lived between the *tretā* and the *dvāpara*, could at all be the *guru* of the epic warriors, who are believed to have lived between the *dvāpara* and the *kali* ages, the epic redactors have forestalled such a doubter by already proclaiming that it was quite possible since Rāma Bhārgava was *ciramjīva* (=an immortal). The inclusion of Paraśurāma in the list of sixteen kings in the *ṣodaśa-rājakīya* section of the Dronaparvan,²² which recounts the heroic deeds of sixteen illustrious kings of antiquity, when, actually, Paraśurāma was no king at all; the reference, in the *Bhagavadgītā*, to the three Bhārgavas, namely, Śukra (*kavīnām uśanā kavīḥ*),²³ Paraśurāma (*rāmaḥ śāstrabhṛtām aham*),²⁴ and Bhṛgu (*maharṣīnām bhṛgur aham*)²⁵ as the *vibhūti*s of the All-God; the mention of Bhṛgu as having been born directly out of the heart of Brahmā (*brahmaṇo hrdayam bhittvā niḥsrto bhagavān bhṛguḥ*)²⁶—and this in close proximity to the celestials;—these are some of the other instances of a tendentious revision of the epic by bold Brahmanic redactors with strong Bhārgava leanings. The Bhārgavas are often represented in the epic as great teachers of *dharma* and *nīti*. This is, indeed, a claim to which they seem to be entitled, for, is the expert knowledge of the Bhārgavas in the field of *dharma* and *nīti*, also not otherwise confirmed,—for instance, by such works as the *Bhṛgusaṁhitā* and the *Śukranīti*? Even the normal life of the people has not escaped the influence of the Bhārgavas. There occurs in the *Mahābhārata* an interesting legend explaining how two things, which later became familiar in every-day life, namely, sandals and umbrella, came to be introduced—the person responsible for this introduction, of course, being a Bhārgava.²⁷ All these and similar other facts would thus lead one to the irresistible conclusion that it must have been the Bhārgavas who were primarily responsible for the brahmanisation of the epic. As a matter of fact the brahmanisation of the epic not infrequently amounted also to its bhṛguisation.

R. N. DANDEKAR

22. Drona, App. I (No. 8).

23. BG X, 37.

24. BG X, 31.

25. BG X, 25.

26. I. 60. 40.

27. Anuśāsana, adhy, 95.

Psychical Research—A Lifelong Interest

IN the early fifties of the last century there was formed in Trinity College, Cambridge, a 'Ghost Society'. The founder was Brooke Foss Westcott, Fellow of Trinity College and afterwards Bishop of Durham. The principal members included Edward White Benson, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, Alfred Barry, afterwards Primate of Australia, Joseph Barber Lightfoot, Westcott's predecessor as Bishop of Durham and Fenton John Anthony Hort, the greatest English theologian of the last century, one who 'aimed at arriving at truth not at confirming opinion'. Others less clerically-minded were Henry Bradshaw, Fellow of King's College, afterwards University Librarian, Henry Richards Luard, afterwards University Registrary, and the Hon. Arthur Gordon, afterwards Governor of New Zealand. They were obviously a very able group of earnest investigators, but that did not prevent them from being called by outsiders the 'Cock and Bull Club'. Somewhere between 1855 and 1860 Henry Sidgwick, then an undergraduate of Trinity College, joined this 'Ghost Society' and became actively interested in the investigation of alleged supernatural appearances and effects.

In Oxford a 'Phasmatological Society' for investigation of the Occult was founded in 1879. The name, derived from the Greek word **PHÁSMA** a ghost, links it in a sense with the Cambridge Society. Although the Oxford Society more immediately precedes our own Society in date and some of its members at once joined us when we were formed in 1882, the fact that Henry Sidgwick, the first President of the S.P.R., was a member of the Cambridge 'Ghost Society' justifies us in tracing back our ancestry to the earlier body.

A comparison of the Circular issued by the Cambridge Ghost Society with the statement of the objects of our Society, given in Volume I of our *Proceedings*, shews a change of emphasis, though the spirit of honest and fearless enquiry underlying the activities of the two bodies is much the same. The programme of the Ghost Society included appearances of angels, queer feelings, and a limited group of physical effects; thirty years later these are replaced for our Society by the phenomena of spiritualism, hypnotism and the general influence that one mind may have on another, apart from the generally recognized mode of communication and perception.

One important piece of work was the study and the exposure of the methods of fraudulent mediums, who were imposing on the public for money. In this the Society was helped by some first-class conjurors who carried out, avowedly as conjurors the tricks which the mediums claimed to be the work of spirits. One well-known performance was to fasten two children's school-slates together with a piece of chalk between them. Subsequently the slates

were separated and so-called spirit-writing was found on the inside faces of the slates. Observers would affirm that once the chalk had been put inside the slates, they remained under constant observation and were never touched by the medium until they were opened up. As a matter of fact the trick was one of substitution of prepared slates for those used at the start of the performance. Davey, one of the members of the Society carried out the trick successfully as a conjuror: while the audience would agree that he never touched the slates, observers stationed outside and looking through a window, but not subject to his pattern would see him change the slates. It seems that constant unbroken observation over a length of time is beyond the power of most human beings.

My own earliest research after I joined the Society in 1902 consisted of a series of experiments with a set of discs marked with numbers from ten to ninety for quantitative guessing experiments.

They had been used originally for a game of lotto, which I had been familiar with as a child: the game is now frequently played under the name of 'Bingo' to amuse passengers on board ocean liners. Experiments with these discs supervised by Mrs. Sidgwick and carried out in 1889 by Mr. G. A. Smith and two subjects, whom he had hypnotised, are recorded in Volume VI of the *S.P.R. Proceedings*. The results are interesting and well worth study and analysis even to-day. The chief point that struck me on reading the report on these experiments was the very different degree of success on different days, ranging from complete failure to startling success. I carried out a number of experiments with these discs over a period of years (and still have the records) but never found an agent or percipient who gave significant results. I confess that after a time I lost interest in this quantitative work and gave it up—a performance in which I have been put to shame by such later investigators as Dr. Rhine, Dr. Soal and Mrs. Goldney.

Among the early publications of the Society were two valuable studies on Phantasms of the Living and Phantasms of the Dead, collections of well-evidenced cases of apparitions. These were largely the result of a widely distributed questionnaire; the answers received to this questionnaire shewed what a high proportion of people had had personal experiences, not easily explained in terms of ordinary sense data on physical causes.

When I first joined the Society for Psychical Research its President was Sir Oliver Lodge. There is no need to say anything here of his distinction as a scientist nor of his devoted service to psychical research in general and to the Society in particular. As President he steered us through the critical years following the deaths of Myers and Sidgwick. He reached positive convictions, which he was never afraid to utter, though he knew that they would bring him discredit in the world of orthodox science. But at least he

had studied carefully and deeply the evidence which underlay his beliefs and he had the right—and, as he also felt, the duty—to give expression to them. After the First World War, in which he lost his son Raymond, a belief grew up that under the stress of personal emotion he had changed from an impartial observer to a somewhat credulous believer. That this was not a true judgment may be shewn from the statement that he made in his Presidential Address in 1902, after he had been an active investigator for some twenty years: 'I am', he said, 'for all present purposes convinced of the persistence of human existence beyond bodily death and though I am unable to justify that belief in a full and complete manner, yet it is a belief which has been produced by scientific evidence, that is, it is based upon facts and experience, though I might find it impossible to explain categorically how the facts have produced that conviction'. That was his personal view, but of the Society itself, which he regarded as a successful machine for the spread of scientific truth, he said: 'Belief is not our business, but investigation'.

Lodge's share in the practical research work of the Society was concerned with experiments in telepathy, sittings with Mrs. Piper and Mrs. Leonard and also with Eusapia Paladino, an investigation along with Lord Balfour of the scripts of Mrs. Willett and a series of studies of cross-correspondences. I feel that his experience with Mrs. Piper and his acquaintance with her trance communications in the United States were the principal factors that led early on to his positive convictions.

Sir William Crookes, who was President of the Royal Society and of our Society, was convinced as a trained scientific observer of the genuineness of the phenomena that he observed with D. D. Home and certain other mediums. To the end he remained courageously ready to state that fact despite the ridicule that he received from scientific colleagues. In his Presidential Address to the British Association in 1898 he gave his confession of belief in the following terms: 'Outside our scientific knowledge there exists a Force, exercised by intelligence differing from the ordinary intelligence common to mortals', and he added that 'to stop short in any research that bids fair to widen the gates of knowledge, to recoil from fear of difficulty or adverse criticism, is to bring reproach to Science'.

Records of his sittings with D. D. Home are to be found in our *Proceedings*, Vol. VI;—and of Home's sittings with the Earl of Dunraven in Vol. XXXV. I will not quote from them, but I cannot forbear from drawing your attention to a recent account by Dr. Dingwall in the *British Journal of Psychology* (Vol. XLIV, Part I, p. 61, February 1953) of a letter from Lord Lindsay (later Earl Crawford) giving a statement that he had just received from his brother-in-law Robert Lindsay. At a sitting with Home in full lamplight a heavy table at which seven people could sit comfortably rose to a height of

five feet, higher than the heads of the sitters at it ; Robert Lindsay stooped down and crawled under it to see that nothing visible was holding it up. Later, when all the party was gathered round the fireplace talking, a table with a loose marble slab on top at the further end of the room rose to the height of three feet, then descended and tilted over. Robert Lindsay tried with all his strength to force it back into its natural position and had the greatest difficulty in doing so. No simple explanation offers itself for these observations.

Life in the Society was exciting when I joined. The interest roused by the records of Mrs. Piper's trance scripts and of the cross-correspondences has only been equalled in recent times by the thrill felt on the publication of the results of the experiments of Dr. Soal and Mrs. Goldney with Mr. Shackleton and Mrs. Stewart. I well remember the impression that the simple case of 'Hope, Star and Browning' made upon me. The ingenuity and scholarship displayed by Piddington in the more complex cases did not appeal so directly, though they went a great deal further to convince one that some intelligence outside the automatists themselves was at work. Perhaps the most striking case of all was that of 'Lethe'. Here Myers—the so-called Myers control of Mrs. Piper—had more or less to force, by repetition of his clues, the interpreters (Piddington, Gerald Balfour and Mrs. Verrall) to realise the inner nature of the cross-correspondence developed in the scripts of Mrs. Verrall, Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Piper.

The 4th Baron Rayleigh who, like his father, was one of our Presidents, was interested mainly in physical phenomena. Though well aware of the fraudulent nature of many of the phenomena of trance he held the view that "there seems to be an appreciable residue which has not been successfully dissolved by the acid of destructive criticism, which has been so freely poured over it. The evidence seems to stand and if we dogmatically reject it, we shall be open to the reproach of laying down what *ought* to be the order of nature instead of observing what *is*'. In conversation he expressed himself disappointed at the general indifference to the subject of his scientific colleagues.

On the whole men of science keep aloof from psychical research, even when they are not openly hostile to it. And I may be allowed to spend a short time in discussing some of the reasons for this state of affairs. One reason lies in the sporadic, unrepeatable nature of many of the phenomena that we examine. Lord Rayleigh, the former President of the Royal Society, in his Presidential Address to our Society referred to an analogous set of phenomena—the falls of stones from the sky, recorded from the earliest times but not accepted by men of science until last century. 'The witnesses of such an event have been treated with the disrespect usually shewn to reporters of the extraordinary and have been laughed at for their supposed delusions'. Meteorites are now firmly established in the world of science. Hypnotism, whose early treatment

by the medical profession seems to a layman like myself a sad blot on medical history, has now passed from the doubtful field of psychical research to an accepted position in the world of psychological medicine. Indeed claims have been made from time to time during the last thirty years that the practice of hypnotism should be restricted to the members of the very profession which once refused it any recognition. The position of scientific respectability attained by meteorites and hypnotism has not yet, however, been reached by the unrepeatable spontaneous phenomena with which our Society is frequently called upon to deal. We are still at the stage of a dim beginning through which many sciences have had to pass in their turn. Do not let us despair because we have not made all the progress that we could have wished in our seventy years of existence as a Society. Think of the hundreds of years that the alchemists patiently pursued the problem of changing one element into another, before the answer came with the development of nuclear physics. When we find our philosopher's stone, the discovery may come from a very unexpected quarter.

Can we bring our evidence, which at present must be judged according to the canons of the historian and lawyer rather than of the scientist, to the point where we can appeal to the latter also? We can follow the lines adopted by Professor Rhine, Dr. Soal, Mrs. Goldney and others and produce quantitative results which are convincing to those who are willing to study them. We can follow up these results in the light of the psychological build up of the percipients, as has been done at Harvard, New York and Duke Universities. That is one promising path of progress that must be followed through, towards the discovery and establishment of laws which govern the successful production of results. But is the laboratory method not limited in its nature? If we restrict ourselves to such types of investigation may we not miss some of the key factors which underlie some of the remarkable recorded cases of extrasensory perception? Some sensitives through whom valuable qualitative results have been secured are not interested in such experiments as card-guessing and are not successful at it. It lacks any dramatic element, any human touch such as may be required to set other factors to work. If we are to discover laws governing some of the happenings examined in psychical research, I am confident that we must continue unabated our collection of well-evidenced spontaneous cases.

As Tyrrell put it we are pioneers in unexplored virgin territory. Our duty is to make a rough map of the terrain and then we can see where best to drive our railways through it. One difficulty that we have to face in securing an interest in our work among the outside public, scientists and philosophers alike, is to overcome the feeling that the Universe is limited to that of our sense data, the external world to which we have become adapted

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in the course of evolution. We do need to get a deeper insight into the spontaneous phenomena so that one day they may become predictable, if possible, or at least as normal and as well understood, as the fall of a meteorite. More experimental telepathy such as the transmission of pictures or the production of apparitions—where success has been attained in the past—may help to establish a link between the qualitative and the quantitative studies.

In time we may find clues which will enable us to regulate the conditions governing some of these phenomena and the value and trustworthiness of fresh phenomena and of some of the earlier phenomena may both increase. The meteorites, once the subject of scoffing disbelief, now play a part in discussions of the age and origin of the solar system. Psychical phenomena may one day play an important part in the understanding of mental processes.

I have already mentioned the fact that the unrepeatability of many of our phenomena gives men of scientific training one reason for ignoring our work. But there is more in it than that. There are a number of other factors at work. There is the feeling that a research worker has more valuable work to do along the path that he is opening up in other fields; he has no time to give to the study of our case, which still in his mind carries with it some stigma of charlatanism—that very stigma that it has been our endeavour for seventy years to remove from the subjects of our research. Many people are anxious not to appear to their colleagues as nonconformists or heretics. It was not without reason that last year at Belfast Professor Macbeath uttered a Plea for Heresy to the British Association for the Advancement of Science: 'The function of the heretic and critic', he says, 'is to force us to keep examining and testing, revising and perfecting our beliefs and ideals. His attitude is the attitude of science whose conclusions are always on trial, and this is the only safeguard against error and degeneration. It has performed an indispensable part in the slow progress of mankind towards civilization; and the day it is no longer allowed to perform that function stagnation will set in, and freedom and science and all that they stand for will decay and die'.

To orthodox science we are heretics and while accepting that fact we must make sure that we are heretics of the right sort, those from whose actions and beliefs progress will ultimately follow. It may mean a reshaping of some of the cherished beliefs of science. That has often been the result of heresy in the past in other fields—politics or religion. And in the need for this reshaping, I believe, lies the real opposition of the scientist to our investigations and conclusions. He sees, and I feel rightly, that our work will lead to a setting up of a new framework for the Universe, and against such an idea he instinctively reacts. He has at the back of his mind a certain system of knowledge and belief. Science is making rapid progress in all directions with its present fundamental basic preconceptions. Against any phenomena which may force

him to reconsider these basic ideas the man of science sets up a kind of defensive mechanism which prevents him from looking at them. I need only quote Helmholtz's remarks about thought-transference to illustrate this point. This was his conclusion to a discussion with Professor Barrett: 'I cannot believe it. Neither the testimony of all the Fellows of the Royal Society, nor even the evidence of my own senses would lead me to believe in the transmission of thought from one person to another independently of the recognized channels of sensation. It is clearly impossible'. Against such a position evidence and argument alike are of no avail. There is something to be said for the charge made by A. N. Whitehead that 'To-day scientific methods are dominant, and scientists are the obscurantists'.

There have been however, distinguished scientists ready to help in the study of the phenomena of psychical research. Sir Ronald Fisher has helped us in the matter of scoring coincidences in quantitative tests with cards. Two Lord Rayleighs—father and son—have been Presidents of our Society; the elder Lord Rayleigh stated that he had never felt any doubt as to the importance of the work carried on by our Society. A similar view was held by John Couch Adams, the discoverer of Neptune. 'He was', wrote Myers, 'sure that what we are doing was right to do; he held unwaveringly that through these adits lay an unassailable, if a slow, advance into the knowledge of things unseen'. Sir William Crookes remained to the last convinced of the reality of phenomena such as the fire test which he had witnessed along with Sir William Huggins (both Presidents of the Royal Society) in the presence of D. D. Home.

I do not wish to ignore the strides towards recognition that have been taken during the last forty years or so. First we may mention the acceptance in 1912 by Harvard University of a fund in memory of Richard Hodgson, the income to be devoted 'to encourage the investigation and study of mental or physical phenomena, the origin or expression of which appears to be independent of the ordinary sensory channels'. This was the first recognition of psychical research by a University of the first rank. A large endowment for psychical research was accepted by Stanford University, California, which published a volume *Experiments in Psychical Research* by Dr. J. E. Coover (1917). Then there came the establishment of the psychical research laboratory under Professor J. B. Rhine at Duke University. This came about through the stimulus of William McDougall, F.R.S., a former President of our Society. What it has meant in the development of quantitative studies of psi-phenomena is known to you all. Next came the foundation at Trinity College, Cambridge, of a Perrott Studentship in Psychical Research as a memorial to F. W. H. Myers. This continued the close connexion of Trinity College with our Society which has been so marked throughout our life. Interesting and valuable results well known to you all have already come from the holders of the Perrott

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studentship, Whateley Carington and Dr. Soal. Much interest has also been raised by the investigations of the last holder, Mr. Spencer Brown, though it is not yet clear what will be the ultimate significance of his results. Then we must record the foundation for Professor Tenhaeff of a Chair of parapsychology at Utrecht University. In addition we must note that at the Universities of Oxford, Cambridge and London doctorates have been conferred for research in subjects coming well within the range of psychical research. Lastly, I must mention a grant made by King's College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne in the University of Durham to Dr. Gerhard Wassermann for experimental work in the field of parapsychology.

On a wider basis hope has been raised by the recent revival of international co-operation in psychical research : owing to the generosity of the Parapsychology Foundation of New York, of Mrs. Eileen Garrett and of the Hon. Frances P. Bolton, a member of the Congress of the United States, an International Conference of Parapsychological Studies was held this summer in Utrecht, under the Presidency of Professor Gardner Murphy. A publication centre and secretariat have been established there, charged with arranging subsequent meetings of specialised groups. This establishment of a European centre under the auspices of the Parapsychology Foundation is a welcome development which will be watched with much interest from this country.

Although at the suggestion of Mrs. Sidgwick I tried my hand unsuccessfully some fifty years ago at quantitative experiments in thought-transference, my real interest has always lain on the qualitative side. Sporadic phenomena have always seemed more stimulating ; and it is surprising how many cases one can pick up from one's friends, if conversation turns in the direction of psychical research. Within less than three weeks recently I picked up six new cases. That may have been because I had arranged to visit an allegedly haunted farmhouse every night for a week and that fact had naturally come up in conversation and had led to the mention of other cases. As is usual not all the cases could be followed up—some were second-hand stories and the original percipients were no longer living. But they were told me convincingly by close relatives of those concerned. I am, however, still working at three of the cases—one poltergeist case, one case very reminiscent of what I may call the Dieppe raid case, and one of a haunted room.

In my experience it is a hard task to get written evidence, up to the standard required by the Society for publication, even from friends, still more from strangers. But I believe that it is well worth the effort except when one comes across a complete stone wall of silence or an unwillingness to answer questions ; sometimes this unwillingness arises from a desire not to reawaken memories that are still emotionally unpleasant, sometimes from a fear that some friend's property may lose value if a story of a haunt gets published or even spoken about.

Though my own experience so far has been uniformly negative I do not doubt the existence of definite cases of haunted houses. You will find in the *Journal* of the Society a number of cases which have gone on over a long period of time and in which a number of people have had abnormal experiences: the usual phenomena include phantasms of figures, both human and animal, unexplained sounds, voices or bangs, experiences of unseen beings apparently stopping and brushing past a percipient and sometimes unexplained scents or smells. Any of the four senses of sight, hearing, touch and smell may be hallucinated. I have not met with a case of more than three senses being affected at the same time. But one friend of mine saw and heard a figure of a nun walking across his bedroom floor: the figure stopped at the end of his bed and bent over to touch his feet. This statement occurs in the account of the most interesting house that I have investigated. Over a period of more than forty years four different families or in many cases visiting friends and even apparently animals have had strange experiences in this house.

I should like to repeat here a request that has often been made in the past. Would members of the audience try to follow up cases that they may hear of from friends or through friends? A case may prove to be just a single happening of an unexplained nature, or it may refer to a house which is already on the files of the Society: two records of haunts in the same house are—if they can be shewn to be independent—of much greater interest and value than two single haunts at different places. It may be that by comparison of the details of repeated haunts from one year to a later year we may find out some general law that governs them, say, for instance, a gradual weakening in intensity.

But it is not merely haunts, or poltergeists, of which the Society wishes to hear but also cases of apparent thought transference or clairvoyance, either experimental or spontaneous, and again simple phantasms of the living or the dead. Complaints appear from time to time in our *Journal* that we have fewer cases reported than in years gone by. That is certainly my own feeling after looking through the *Journal* for the last fifty years.

But here in the East you may be able to supply us with cases which are of a type with which we are unfamiliar and which may in their turn provide the key to some of our unsolved problems. That is one reason why I welcome the formation of this group of workers in Peradeniya and I shall be happy to give a report of this meeting to the Council of the *S.P.R.* when I return to England. I can assure you of their readiness to help you in any way that they can.

We do need today more sensitive mediums and automatists, who can produce results of the quality and evidential value to be found in the past records of the Society. We have to find them and to encourage them: we

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have to learn how to train them and educate them. They form a rare group of beings. I cannot believe that they are a group that is dying out though we have found it of late growingly difficult to find the right members of the group for our needs. There is a changing pattern in our psychical research and one is inclined to wonder whether this lies primarily in the investigators and their interests rather than in the shadowy realm that is under study.

We are used to the idea in the writings of physicists that in reality man is largely the creator of the physical universe or at least of that universe as pictured by him. Is it possibly also true of the wider universe of our studies? The picture (or rather the shadowy picture) that we have of it is in a constant state of flux, like the scientist's picture of his universe. We need not be troubled by that. What we really desire is to develop our dim and shadowy outline picture into something more clearly outlined, something more readily acceptable to mankind as a whole.

Professor G. A. Coulson in his recent Riddell Memorial Lectures on the relations between religion and science appeals for the co-operation of all who 'wonder'—the philosopher, the scientist, the artist, the musician, the poet, the theologian: I would add to that list the psychical researcher. He belongs supremely to the brotherhood of those who 'wonder' and he appeals for help from all other 'wonderers' as he steps boldly forward into his special region in the world of the unknown.

F. J. M. STRATTON

The Social Novel, 1844-1854

THE fourth decade of the nineteenth century is often referred to as 'the hungry 'Forties'. It has also been described as the culmination of 'the bleak age' and as 'the age of discontent'. The agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, the rise and fall of Chartism and the struggle for some measure of factory and mines legislation are familiar features of the period. These movements, in themselves indications of a changing society, serve to define in general terms the social problems of the time. The agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, which set landowners against factory owners, is at bottom a demonstration that for the future industry would be more important than agriculture and that the growing population, which accompanied commercial expansion, had burst the bonds of the older society which had had a rural basis. The rise of Chartism, with its demand for universal manhood suffrage, equal electoral districts, the secret ballot and the rest was the logical deduction for the principle of reform which had been accepted by the Whigs in 1832; a deduction, however, which the ruling classes were not prepared to make. They felt that they had gone far enough in the modest concessions of the Reform Act. The struggle for factory legislation (and the Mines Acts) raised the issue of State intervention in industry; a principle, obnoxious not only to the factory and mine owners, but contrary to the prevailing economic teaching. It was important that, while the Whigs and Tories might agree to resist further extension of the franchise, they differed on the questions of the Corn Laws and Factory Legislation. The repeal of the Corn Laws in 1846 was an event of the greatest significance but it should not be allowed to overshadow the Ten Hours Act of the following year. The landowners, defeated in their defence of the Corn Laws, were not averse to supporting a movement which restricted the powers of the factory owners and, what was in its inception a humanitarian impulse, became a political issue and in the end a powerful solvent of individualism.

All these cross-currents exercised strains and stresses on a society which was still in the making. The new industrial towns were over-crowded and most of them without the services, even of water or sewage, much less of education and the social amenities, which we have come to think are the essential requirements of civic life. The causes of discontent in the 'Forties were therefore many and genuine. There was, as Thomas Carlyle proclaimed to his contemporaries, an acute 'condition of England' question; but the fulminations of the prophet rarely provides objective facts or suggestions as to what practical steps should be taken. It is fortunate, however, that the novelists were more specific and the causes of the general unrest and nature of the

remedies put forward can be illustrated by reference to their works. They wrote social novels ; novels, that is, in which social and economic conditions of the time are discussed and policies advocated which in their opinion would lead to amelioration of such conditions. Whether this be a proper function of the novel as a literary form was questioned at the time and has often been discussed since ; but the point of view of the social historian this deviation, from strict orthodoxy, if deviation it be, is to be welcomed.

The Reform Act of 1832, although the franchise it granted was so limited, had the merit that it based representation on an intelligible principle. The old constitution, which was defended as an expression of the wisdom of our ancestors and regarded with awe as something of a mystery, had given place to a logical scheme obviously contrived by the Whigs to go so far and no farther in meeting radical opinion. It was certainly not sacred. Reform had been accepted as an objective. It had stimulated a general investigation of our institutions. Royal Commissions were appointed, of which the most important were those on the administration of the Poor Laws and the government of the towns. Drastic changes were recommended and adopted. The Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834 had a profound effect. It set up machinery, central and local, to bring to an end the giving of outdoor relief to the able-bodied, the vicious system of relief in aid of wages which dated back to the early days of the French Revolutionary Wars. The Municipal Corporations Act of the following year introduced popularly-elected councils with the power to levy rates for general administrative purposes ; a power which many towns were slow to employ at first, because of the expense involved, but by degrees adopted, particularly when the sanitary movement was stimulated by periodical outbreaks of cholera.

But the reforming zeal of the Whigs began to flag. It lost its momentum. The social problem remained and measures to meet its insistent demands became increasingly urgent. It was a moment to be seized by a politician with imagination and an ambition for leadership. And so it appeared to the young Benjamin Disraeli. He decided to employ the form of the novel as a means of defining his programme. In *Coningsby, or the New Generation* (1844) he poured scorn both on Whigs and Tories and drew the outlines of a new party of young noblemen prepared to devote their talents to the service of their country. But of the trilogy of novels, *Coningsby*, *Sybil* and *Tancred*, *Sybil* (1845) deserves special attention because in it Disraeli sets out to deal with the social question. Its sub-title is 'the two nations', that is, the rich and the poor. The contrast between them is skilfully exhibited by rapid transitions, from the bored in London clubs who find it hard to while away their time and the groups of intriguing politicians, one passes to the sufferings of the handloom weavers, the evils of the truck system and the conditions under which women and children were employed in coal mines. There are long disquisitions

on political evolution which suggest a reading of history, not perhaps entirely untenable, but certainly unusual. It is characterised by a constant pressing back to a lost golden age. Of course, it was beyond 1832. It was indeed beyond 1688, when the Whigs established their oligarchy. It was beyond the Reformation when the Church was despoiled and the property basis given to the class which ultimately overthrew the monarchy in the seventeenth century. Was it not beyond 1066 when Saxon Harold was over-thrown by Norman William and the people were divided into conquerors and conquered? Reference is made to long centuries of degradation and the poor are often identified with the Saxons. In a rhapsody on the accession of Victoria, Disraeli speaks of a nation near her footstool, which looks to her with anxiety, with affection, perhaps with hope. 'Fair and serene, she has the blood and beauty of the Saxon. Will it be her proud destiny at length to bear relief to suffering millions, and, with those soft hands which might inspire troubadour and guerdon knights, break the last links in the chain of Saxon thralldom?'

This peculiar gift of thinking of history in a symbolic way makes the novel seem so artificial to modern readers. There is the tacit assumption that nobility is an innate characteristic, passed on from generation to generation, and somehow associated with the possession at one time or another of extensive landed property. The outstanding personalities in the book are aristocrats, real or disguised; for Walter Gerard, working man and Chartist, is of the 'Saxon nobility' and has retained its high qualities. It would seem only necessary to endow genealogical research to find our true leaders rather than to extend the franchise to the general mass of nobodies. Was Disraeli really sincere? By descent, training and temperament, he was wholly un-English. And yet he identified himself with a reading of English history which gave to English blood and English institutions an almost sacred importance. Monarchy, Church, Aristocracy, Constitution—of these he speaks with the deepest reverence. It is difficult not to believe that he was indulging the vanity of those he means to lead. He was invoking a legend which might serve to create a party. With his great imaginative insight he was blending all the elements which offered means of regenerating the Tory Party. The recent accession of the girl Queen, the revival of sacerdotalism within the Church of England, the prejudice of the landed gentry against the new factory lords, the sentimentalism of the period—all are skilfully employed. He also opposed the principles which endangered the legend. Utilitarianism, the application of logic to reconstruction problems and all rational analyses were anathema to him. He was building on loyalties, intuitions, sentiment. On those foundations he thought a party could be based which would counter the teaching of the individualists; for like Carlyle he abominated the doctrine of *laissez faire*.

For his description of the working classes Disraeli depended on the series of Blue Books which had recently appeared rather than on personal knowledge or observation. His account of the distress of hand-loom weavers comes from the Report of the Hand-loom Weavers Commission of 1841. He puts into the mouth of Warner, the representative of this class, language which in sentiment and artificiality is Disraelian. 'I loved my loom and my loom loved me. It gave me a cottage in my native village, surrounded by a garden of whose claims on my solicitude it was not jealous. There was time for both. It gave me for a wife the maiden I had ever loved; it gathered my children round my hearth with plenteousness and peace . . .'. With this idealistic picture is contrasted the steady lowering of the standard of living owing to the adoption of power-loom weaving. It is worth remarking, however, that Disraeli suggests how society should deal with such a problem as the supersession of skilled labour by the introduction of new methods of production. It is a proposal of a revolutionary kind which he does not develop. 'If a society that has been created by labour suddenly becomes independent of it, that society is bound to maintain the race whose property is labour, out of the proceeds of that other labour which has not ceased to be productive'. He apparently means that the hand-loom weavers should be placed on compensation, the funds for the purpose being found out of the profits of power-loom weaving. When he turned to coal-miners Disraeli extracted his points from the Report on the employment of women and children underground, and that of the Select Committee on the payment of wages. The latter provided him with material for the vivid description of a truck shop. Finally the description of Wodgate is based on that of Willenhall in the Appendix to the Second Report of the Children's Employment Committee. The children were ignorant of the Queen's name, had never heard of Moses or Paul and confused Adam and Christ. There probably has never been so much use of Blue Books to fill out the details of a work of fiction. It must be added, however, that probably no decade has ever provided such lurid descriptions of industrial conditions in official form. Those Reports have indeed had a greater repercussion than Disraeli's use of them. They provided Karl Marx with evidence for the indictment of capitalism.

The weakness of Disraeli's treatment of industrial problems is that it is so eclectic. He offers a composite picture by blending accounts of different industries and is vague in his indications of locality. In this respect—and indeed many others—Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton* is superior. She had a purpose—a very definite purpose—and that was to expose the condition of the poor in such a way as to appeal to the social conscience and in particular to ask what were the social implications of Christianity. Like Disraeli she rejects the prevalent teaching of Political Economy and is in favour of intervention; but she does not expect it from a political party but from a change in the social outlook. The moral of the book may almost be expressed in the trite phrase

'the promotion of better relations between employer and employed'. To illustrate her thesis she sets her story in an environment which she knew at first hand, for she had lived in Manchester in the 'Forties. The novel is remarkable because, save for the Carson family, it deals from beginning to end with artisans, especially in their home life. The central character is John Barton, Mary's father, around whom Mrs. Gaskell confesses all the others formed themselves. 'He was', she says 'my hero, the person with whom all my sympathies went and with whom I tried to identify myself at the time'. John Barton, like Walter Gerard in *Sybil*, was a Chartist. He had been driven to extreme courses, not by the acceptance of any revolutionary economic doctrine, but by despair about bridging the gulf between Christian profession and everyday practice. 'You see', says the unfortunate man on his death-bed, 'I've so often been hankering after the right way: and its a hard one for a poor man to find . . . When I was a little chap they taught me to read, and then they never gave me no books; only I heard say the Bible was a good book. So when I grew thoughtful and puzzled I took to it. But you'd never believe black was black, or night was night, when you saw all about you acting as if black was white and night was day. It's not much I can say for myself in t'other world, God forgive me; but I can say this, I would fain have gone after the Bible rules if I'd seen folks credit it; they all spoke up for it and went and did clean contrary . . . I think one time I could e'en have loved the masters . . . that was in my Gospel-days, afore my child died o'hunger . . . I gave it up in despair, trying to make folk's actions square with the Bible; and I thought I'd no longer labour at following the Bible myself'.

It is interesting to read the notice of *Mary Barton* by W. R. Grey in the *Edinburgh Review*; for it is always difficult to appreciate contemporary reactions to a book, especially one which develops a thesis which runs counter to prevailing beliefs. The reviewer declared that the book was marred by 'false philosophy' and 'inaccurate descriptions'. Referring to Mrs. Gaskell's plea for a greater degree of sympathy between the rich and poor, he remarks 'the rich can never have the same knowledge of the troubles and difficulties of the poor which the poor have of their own. Their paths lie apart. However much they may endeavour to visit among them, to become familiar with their circumstances, and acquainted with their griefs—they *can* do all this, from the very nature of the case, only very imperfectly . . . Difference of position, therefore, lies at the root of the alleged want of sympathy'. Afternoon calls would, I suppose, be embarrassing to both parties. But notice how Grey reveals the individualist presumptions of the day. 'Another consideration to which due weight is seldom allowed is this; the cause which, of all others, most deadens and restrains the hand of charity, is the fear of bestowing it unworthily and mischievously. Immense difficulty is experienced by the rich, when they

attempt to discriminate between cases of imposture and cases of real destitution'. Perhaps this was the dilemma which weighed on the mind of the young man who had great possessions when he went away sorrowful. The writer is wholly unconscious of the fact that his air of patronage is offensive. It is no surprise that he falls foul of Mrs. Gaskell's John Barton. He declares that he was not typical of his class. The press and certain members of Parliament had disseminated the idea that bad feeling existed between employers and workpeople. Mrs. Gaskell had been misled. Such feeling was not widespread. Then, John Barton's conduct was 'radically inconsistent with his qualities and character'. He is represented as an intelligent steady and skilful workman. But where is the intelligence of a man who does not save when in employment for the days when trade is bad? Why did he waste his time and money on trade unions? How could a man of such powers of reflection and discussion be so ignorant of 'the first principles of commercial and economic science?' All workpeople ought to save because what were the employers but men originally poor who had exercised prudence and foresight. Apparently the reviewer saw no obstacle to all workmen becoming capitalists, except their recklessness when they were receiving a regular wage. For him, the industrial system was an order within which each individual should be animated by a desire to better his own position. If each person worked hard and exercised prudence, it was assumed that industrial harmony would be achieved. This was the assumption which Mrs. Gaskell challenged. She did not believe that, if the economic motive became dominant and material wealth was piled up by a hard-working and prudent generation, a satisfactory society would result; in fact, she did not believe that end or the means of attaining it to be consistent with Christian principles. On these grounds she was an interventionist.

Mrs. Gaskell was content to say that society would be changed if Christian principles were followed in practice. She did not prescribe any particular application of those principles. In this she differed from the Christian Socialists. They definitely declared that competition was essentially unchristian and ought to be eliminated. The Christian Socialist Movement arose out of the social discontents of the period; its prophet was F. D. Maurice and its propagandist Charles Kingsley. They were clergymen with a concern for the condition of England. Looking backward, it is a curious episode falling within the years 1848 to 1854, the second half of the period under review in this paper. It had no relation to the Socialism taught by Robert Owen, or to that which was promulgated by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* of 1848. So far as it had a body of doctrine, it was derived from J. M. Ludlow, who had been educated in France and was influenced by the ideas of a self-governing workshop, or producers' co-operation, which had found expression there. Ludlow held that men would prefer co-operation to competition if the alternatives were presented to them. He also contended that the attainment of

political emancipation—the avowed aim of the Chartists—would prove futile unless it was accompanied by industrial freedom. His teaching fired the imagination and stimulated the innate pugnacity of Charles Kingsley. He investigated conditions under which tailors worked for middlemen in London and gave a vivid account of his enquiries in the pamphlet ‘ Cheap Clothes and Nasty ’. The shops where the garments were offered for sale were denounced as ‘ the temples of Moloch—their thresholds rank with human blood ’ and no Christian he declared should disgrace himself by entering one. Kingsley followed this up with *Alton Locke*, a novel, which, under the guise of being the autobiography of a tailor-poet, was a manifesto of the Christian Socialist group. It scored an immediate success. It served the two-fold purpose of drawing public attention to what we would now call a sweated trade, and also of advertising the remedy which the Christian Socialists would apply. The *laissez faire* position was held up to ridicule ; a political economist was represented as saying there was no remedy for the evils exposed because competition was regulated by natural laws beyond any control. As against this, Kingsley proclaimed ‘ a Holy War against the social abuses which are England’s shame ; and, first and foremost, against the fiend of competition ’ and the weapon he proposed to employ was the organisation of self-governing workshops, small groups of tailors, shoemakers and other craftsmen working for themselves and sharing among themselves the profits of their labour. As a solution of the industrial problem this must appear to us hopelessly inadequate because it ignores the economies of large-scale production and the problem of securing a market. It could only be applicable to petty trades under special circumstances. But Kingsley’s enthusiasm knew no bounds. He felt that the collapse of Chartism in 1848 was a challenge, and that the Christian Socialists had the answer to it. On the ruins of so many hopes he thought could be built a society in which competition would be eliminated and Christians would recognise the implications of their beliefs. But the Christian Socialist Movement proved to be more short-lived than the Chartist ; the experimental workshops, for one reason or another failed, and Kingsley himself found new outlets for his abounding energy. *Alton Locke* was written with great rapidity under the spell of an idea. It remains the outstanding example of a novel with a definite social purpose and it undoubtedly had a permanent effect on public opinion. The social conscience was stirred.

Hard Times represents the nearest approach which Charles Dickens made to the treatment of the industrial question. It is not generally regarded as ranking high among his novels, though attention has recently been drawn to it by Mr. F. R. Leavis, who claims that it is of all Dickens’s works the one that has all the strength of his genius and is a completely serious work of art. He contends that in *Hard Times* Dickens is for once possessed by a comprehensive vision, one in which the inhumanities of Victorian civilisation are seen

as fostered by a hard philosophy, the aggressive formulation of an inhumane spirit. Regarded as 'a moral fable', a term Mr. Leavis applies to it, *Hard Times* is remarkably consistent throughout. The theme is illustrated by comparison and contrast with a skill, relevancy and lack of diffuseness which is not paralleled in the more famous of Dickens's novels. As an account of industrial conditions *Hard Times* is inferior to the novels we have already noticed; it does not exhibit the diligence in making use of Blue Books we found in *Sybil*, nor does it show that first-hand knowledge which is so evident in *Mary Barton* and *Alton Locke*. The protagonists, Josiah Bounderby and Stephen Blackpool, are not envisaged as employer and employed. Their temperaments come into collision; their clash of interests is not stressed. Ruskin remarked that the usefulness of *Hard Times* is diminished 'because Mr. Bounderby is a dramatic monster, instead of a characteristic example of a worldly master; and Stephen Bounderby a dramatic perfection, instead of a characteristic example of an honest workman'. But his criticism would fall to the ground if we admit Mr. Leavis's argument and regard the story as a moral fable. Dickens is not so much concerned with the clash of industrial interests as with exposing the inadequacy of an economic doctrine. He wished to hold up the principle of *laissez faire* to contempt. His sense of justice was outraged by his suggestion that social evils would be corrected by allowing free play to self-interest. His antipathy towards the teaching of the Utilitarians practically dictated the form of the novel; it is not a detailed exposure of actual conditions, but a bitter satire on a point of view. Thomas Gradgrind, 'a man of realities, a man of facts and calculations' is made to pay dearly for his delusion that he could 'weigh and measure any parcel of human nature'. His children are educated on the lines which an 'economic man' might be thought to consider right. But human nature asserts itself; the finer sensibility of his daughter Louisa saves her from disaster, while her selfish brother makes a complete wreck of his life. The system had never completely conquered Louisa. She married Bounderby, not because the match could be approved on financial grounds, but because of her affection for her brother, which was a completely irrational motive. As to her brother Tom, when confronted with the fact that he had been guilty of embezzlement he told his father: 'So many people are employed in situations of trust; so many people, out of so many, will be dishonest. I have heard you talk a hundred times of its being a law. How can I help laws? You have comforted others with such things, father, comfort yourself'. Gradgrind was in fact better than his professed principles. He gave his protection to the deserted Sissy Jupe, persuading himself that her misfortunes would be a lesson to his own children. This act, which could not be justified in its inception or approved in its consequences by the principles he enunciated, proved to be a great blessing to his family. The day came when Gradgrind had to confess that the ground on which he stood had ceased to be solid under

his feet. Not so Bounderby. He died a hypocritical humbug, having made in his will what provision he could for the perpetuation of bluster and balderdash. Towards Bounderby Dickens never relents ; he does not allow him a redeeming trait in his make-up. He is a veritable incarnation of Carlyle's 'Mammonism'—successful in business, though essentially stupid ; boastful, he invents lurid details about his upbringing to create a stronger impression of his achievements of self-help ; contemptibly mean in his treatment of everyone with whom he has to deal. The little peculiarities of speech, which give a humorous turn to the characters painted in darker colours in other novels of Dickens, here only increase the sense of loathing with which one comes to regard Bounderby. How we writhe when we are so often reminded that the object of the 'hands' is to be fed on turtle soup and venison with a gold spoon ! 'You see our smoke. That's meat and drink to us. It's the healthiest thing in the world in all respects, and particularly to the lungs . . . You have heard a lot of talk about the work in our mills. I'll state the fact of it to you. It's the pleasantest work there is, and it's the lightest work there is, and it's the best paid work there is. More than that, we couldn't improve the mills themselves, unless we laid down Turkey carpets on the floors'. There is no spirit of playful banter about this satire.

Just as the personal idiosyncrasies of Bounderby obscure the wider issues involved in the relations between employers and employed, so Stephen Blackpool's domestic troubles evoke deeper sympathies than his position as a worker does. The cross-currents in his life, particularly his unfortunate marriage, make him a special instance ; his actions are dictated by personal considerations, though they are by no means selfish. He would not consent to act with the United Aggregate Tribunal because he had given a promise. He was a member of the Union but he had no confidence in the policy of its leader, Slackbridge, and dared to be the only dissentient. Slackbridge was an unprincipled agitator and it is significant of the middle-class attitude to Trade Unionism at that time that both in *Sybil* and *Hard Times* it is represented as anti-social. But Blackpool will not agree that the agitators are the cause of his trouble. ' 'Tis not by them the trouble's made', he declares, 'I ha' no favour for 'em—I ha' no reason to favour 'em—but 'tis hopeless and useless to dream o' taking them from their trade, 'stead of takin' their trade from them . . . I canna, wi' my little learning an' my common way tell . . . what will better all this . . . but I know what will never do't. The strong hand will never do't. Victory and triumph will never do't. Agreeing for to make one side unnaturally alwus and for ever right, and the other side unnaturally alwus and for ever wrong will never never do't. . . . Most o'aw, rating 'em as so much power, and reg'latin 'em as if they was figures in a soom, or machines, wi'out souls to weary and souls to hope—whan aw goes quiet, draggin' on wi' 'em as if they'd nowt of the kind, and whan aw goes unquiet, reproaching 'em

for their want of sitch like humanly feelings in their dealings with yo', this will never do't, till God's work is onmade '.

This passage contains the essence of Dickens's teaching. Discontent is deep-seated because it arises from a denial of common humanity. The workers are not always wrong and their employers always right. *Laissez faire* will never remove grievances. Kindness and patience and cheery ways, however, will prove a wonderful solvent. Nor can intervention be avoided. In this Dickens is at one with Disraeli, Mrs. Gaskell and Kingsley. They all opposed the prevailing teaching of Political Economy. But the grounds on which they would base intervention differ according to their temperaments and opinions. Disraeli calls for a renewal of the sense of aristocratic obligation to the poor. Mrs. Gaskell appeals to the fundamentals of the Christian faith. Kingsley agrees with her, but has a specific remedy. Dickens was too much of a radical to appreciate Disraeli's plea, and not enough of a puritan to understand Mrs. Gaskell's seriousness. Nor had he any programme so definite as that of the Christian Socialists. He stood, as G. K. Chesterton has so well said, for a more humane and hilarious view of humanity.

Orthodox Political Economy, as one expression of a narrow and dismal view of human nature, is bitterly satirized in *Hard Times*. For this Dickens has been accused of ignorance. 'His tale', wrote A. V. Dicey, 'is from beginning to end a crude satire on what Dickens supposed to be the doctrine of the political economists'. There is, of course, little to show that he had studied the subject; but it is useless to argue that a proper understanding of the writings of Adam Smith and his successors would have saved Dickens from the crudity of the attack. The economists had certainly taught the doctrine of *laissez faire*, and their analysis of industrial society lent support to the opinions of Gradgrind and Bounderby. Qualifications that they may have made, or were implicit in their teaching, were overlooked when self-interest found their general principles congenial. Dickens judged Political Economy from the fact that those who did not take a humane and hilarious view of humanity appealed to its principles in support of their attitude. The economists themselves may have been disinterested inquirers after truth; but undoubtedly their conclusions were employed in practice to bolster up the ambitions of the aggressive employers and to counter the claims of the workers. It was this practical application that Dickens attacked. In this he was justified, for a line of conduct cannot be regarded as purely economic; other issues are necessarily involved. Sissy Jupe cannot follow Mae Choakemchild's statement that a nation is prosperous because it has so much money—she wants to know how it is distributed among its inhabitants. She cannot see that starvation is any more pleasant to those starved because they form a fractional part of the population. She could find no comfort in the fact of the low percentage of those drowned at sea or burnt to death at home. It is always the mechanical or statistical

treatment of human problems that Dickens will not tolerate. 'So many hundred hands in this mill; so many hundred Horse Power. It is known, to the force of a single pound weight, what the engine will do; but not all the calculators of the National Debt can tell me the capacity for good or evil, for love or hatred, for patriotism or discontent, for the decomposition of virtue into vice, or the reverse, at any single moment in the soul of one of these its quiet servants, with the composed faces and the regulated actions. There is no mystery in it; there is an unfathomable mystery in the meanest of them, for ever. Supposing we were to reserve our arithmetic for material objects, and to govern these awful unknown quantities by other means'.

Mr. Gradgrind had shown his devotion to the economists by naming two of his children Adam Smith and Malthus, though we are not told how they sustained this affectation in later life. He was a diligent collector of statistics and a close student of Blue Books. 'Whatever they could prove (which is anything you like) they proved there, in an army constantly strengthening by the arrival of new recruits'—so runs the description of Gradgrind's private room. 'In that charmed apartment, the most complicated social questions were cast up, got into exact totals and finally settled—if those concerned could only have been brought to know it. As if an astronomical observatory should be made without windows, and the astronomer should arrange his starry universe solely by pen, ink and paper, so Mr. Gradgrind, in *his* Observatory (and there were many like it) had no need to cast an eye upon the teeming myriads of human beings all around him, but could settle all their destinies on a slate and wipe out all their tears with one dirty piece of sponge'. This is the same note. It is always the confusion of abstractions with realities, the application of averages to society, the ruling out of the human element, that characterises the political economist to Dickens.

He makes a few concrete applications of his criticism which are worth noticing. For instance, he ridicules the view that State intervention would have an evil effect on industry and should therefore be avoided. Speaking of the prosperity of Coketown he remarks—'It had been ruined so often that it was amazing how it had borne so many shocks. Surely there never was such fragile china-ware as that of which the millers of Coketown were made . . . they were ruined when they were required to send labouring children to school; they were ruined when inspectors were appointed to look into their works; they were ruined when such inspectors considered it doubtful whether they were quite justified in chopping people up with their machinery; they were utterly undone when it was hinted that they need not always make quite so much smoke . . . Whenever a Coketownman felt he was ill-used—that is to say, whenever he was not left entirely alone, and it was proposed to hold him accountable for his acts—he was sure to come out with the awful menace that

he would "sooner pitch his property into the Atlantic". This had terrified the Home Secretary within an inch of his life on several occasions'.

It has already been mentioned that Dickens gives an unfavourable view of trade unionism because his account of it turns round the activities of the agitator Slackbridge. But he recognises the hollowness of the pretence that there was any possibility of freedom of contract between employees and employed. When it is reported that the operatives were 'uniting and leaguering and engaging to stand by one another', that lost tart old lady Mrs. Sparsit declares 'It is much to be regretted that the united masters allow of any such class-combinations Being united themselves they ought one and all to set their faces against employing any man who is united with any other man'. But Dickens was definitely against violence. Slackbridge was a dangerous and unscrupulous demagogue. How, then, could industrial peace be secured in a world of Bounderbys and Slackbridges? He had no solution on the economic plane. Allow the finer emotions free play, cultivate friendliness, follow the heart—it all comes to some such general precepts. In his attack on the Orthodox Political Economy over seventy years later, Ruskin in 'Unto this Last' pays a high tribute to Dickens. 'He is entirely right', he insists, 'in his main drift and purpose in every book he has written; and all of them, especially *Hard Times* should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told'.

Dedicated to Carlyle and clearly influenced by his teaching, accepted by Ruskin as substantially just in its social outlook, *Hard Times*, although not usually considered among the greatest of Dickens's novels, occupies an important place in our literature. It is a notable link in the chain of literary protest against the assumptions of the Orthodox Political Economy. For it is an interesting fact that, even in the days of its almost unchallenged ascendancy, the classical political economy did not commend itself to imaginative writers. There is a continuous protest from Southey the conservative and Shelley the revolutionary, through Carlyle, Kingsley and Dickens to Ruskin and Morris, and indeed to Shaw, Wells and Galsworthy.

FREDERICK REES

Basis of Ceylon's Taxation

THE 'public revenue' of a country today is chiefly derived from taxation. The term 'public revenue' is deliberately chosen in this context, to include local government taxes. 'Government revenue' in the generally accepted sense means revenue of the Central Government. But taxes are of two kinds; the Central Government taxes and the Local Government taxes. These together, I call 'public revenue'. I propose to leave the discussion of Local Government taxes to the end of this study.

Central Government Taxes

Taxation is the main source of state finance in Ceylon at the present time. Table I illustrates this :—

TABLE I
(in million rupees)

Year	1949-50		1950-51		1951-52		1952-53	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Taxation Revenue	536.6	86.1	734.7	87.9	759.8	86.7	713.6	87.2
Other Revenue	86.7	13.9	101.2	12.1	115.6	13.3	104.6	12.8
Total	623.3	100	835.9	100	875.4	100	818.2	100

According to the above Table it is apparent that taxation accounts for more than 85 per cent of our total government revenue. It follows that a careful study of taxation in the field of public finance is of vital and paramount importance.

Ceylon's tax system is a multiple one. Over-complexity, however is avoided by confining it to a small number of substantial taxes. Like those of all other multiple tax systems, the taxes of Ceylon can be broadly divided into two categories; viz. Direct and Indirect taxes. Direct taxes are Income Tax, Profits Tax, Estate Duty and Stamps. The Excess Profits Duty which was in operation till the year of assessment 1947-48 was given up in favour of the Profits Tax, which came into force on the passing of the Profits Tax Act, No. 5 of 1948 on January 29, 1948. This tax applies to all business and other profit-making concerns and any current revenue appearing under Excess Profits Duty is by way of arrears only. Indirect taxes on the other hand are sub-divided into two, Customs duties and Excise duties.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

Customs Duties

Customs duties are derived from exports and imports and are known as Export duties and Import duties respectively. Customs duties may be specific or *ad valorem*. Specific duties vary with the weight of goods, while *ad valorem* duties depend on their value. *Ad valorem* duties were first levied on our exports with the passing into law of the Customs (Amendment) Act, No. 27 of 1951 on August 13, 1951. The relevant section reads thus :

- ‘ 9A (1) Any resolution under section 9 imposing export duty—
- (a) may impose upon any goods, duty at rates varying in accordance with fluctuations in the f.o.b. value of the goods ; and
 - (b) may provide for the estimation from time to time by the Collector of the amount which shall be deemed, for the purpose of the application of the resolution, to be the f.o.b. value of the goods to which it applies ’.

The Table II below, indicates the amount and percentage of revenue derived by the Government from each of these taxes.

TABLE II¹
Government Revenue (in millions)

Year	1949-50		1950-51		1951-52*		1952-53†	
	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%	Amount	%
Direct Taxes	137.0	22.0	157.8	18.9	222.7	25.4	219.9	26.9
(a) Income Tax	78.5	12.6	91.9	11.0	222.7	25.4	219.9	26.9
(b) Excess Profits Duty	58.5	9.4	65.9	7.9				
Indirect Taxes	399.6	64.1	576.9	69.0	537.1	61.3	493.7	60.3
(a) Import Duties	188.3	30.2	245.0	29.3	487.2	55.6	427.9	52.3
(b) Export Duties	167.2	26.8	282.5	33.8				
(c) Excise Duties	44.1	7.1	49.4	5.9	49.9	5.7	65.8	8
Miscellaneous	86.7	13.9	101.2	12.1	115.6	13.3	104.6	12.8
Total	623.3	100	835.9	100	875.4	100	818.2	100

It is clear from Table II that there was a gradual rise in Government revenue from 1949-50 to 1951-52 and a drop from 1951-52 to 1952-53. Indirect Taxes were mainly responsible for this fluctuation, constituting as they did

1. TABLE II = Source—Administration Reports—1951-52 and Statistical Abstract 1952.

*Provisional.

†Estimate.

more than 60 per cent of our revenue, and they varied with the volume and price of our imports and exports which experienced extreme fluctuations during the years 1950 to 1952. Table III will illustrate this :—

TABLE III²
(in millions)

<i>Year</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
1950	1563	1167
1951	1904	1559
1952	1502	1702

Export duties increased in the years 1950-51 and 1951-52 with the increase in value of our exports. But with the break of the Korean boom in April 1951 export price-index fell by 21 per cent in the year 1952 while the import index rose only by 9 per cent. This resulted in a net fall in our customs revenue. Excise duties however increased in the year 1952-53. This was no doubt due to the large revenue derived from arrack. It is estimated that in the year 1952-53 the consumption of arrack was about 1,217,000 gallons and the corresponding revenue to the government aggregated over Rs. 45,000,000. Income Tax showed a gradual upward trend in the first three years under consideration. This was chiefly due to the larger incomes earned by Ceylon's export and commercial enterprises during the boom. Another important factor that was responsible for the high export incomes during these years was the food subsidy bill, which increased the profit margins of producers and thus enabled the Government to tax away a considerable proportion of those profits by way of income tax. The following Table will compare the increase in food subsidies with the increase in export duties during the years 1949 to 1952 :—

TABLE IV
(in millions)

<i>Year</i>	1949-50	1950-51	1951-52
Subsidies	35·8	133	245
Export Duties	167·2	282·5	351·6*

2. Source—Central Bank Reports.

*Estimate.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

Excise Duties

Excise duties are derived mainly from arrack, toddy and tobacco. 'Tapping of trees for fermented toddy for distilling and tavern supplies or on special permits for medicinal purposes was allowed free of any tax or other charge all over the Island, but a tax or duty which is really in the nature of a licence fee was charged in the case of trees licensed for domestic consumption and sale in the island of Eluvaithivu and Udayar's divisions of Cheddaikuruchchi, Kollakuruchchi and Pallavarayankaddchi of the Maniager's division of Punakari and Tunukkai in Jaffna district '³ a tax or fee of -/50 cents per coconut tree tapped for vinegar manufacture was levied by the order of Government on the Colonial Secretary's endorsement, No. 138 (14441/24) of June 13, 1924. A tax which may be more appropriately called a fee of -/50 cents per coconut tree and Re. 1.35 per kitul tapped for supply of toddy to an estate canteen was levied under a *Gazette* notification (No. 7995 of August, 1933) and a duty of -/50 cents in Eluvaithivu and Rs. 3.00 in the three Udayar's divisions of Punakari-Tunukkai was levied per palmyrah tapped for domestic consumption and sale. (Excise Notifications Nos. 220 and 268). All these were made uniform by the Tree tax which came into force on 1st January, 1937, in the whole of the Jaffna district. According to the law

- (a) toddy tapped must be sold at the foot of the tree
- (b) one licensee cannot buy another's toddy and sell it and
- (c) tapping and sale are prohibited near schools, places of worship, markets and public roads. According to the *Daily News*, January 11, 1954 there are about 25,000 tappers in Jaffna and 200,000 depend on incomes derived from tapping.

Tobacco tax was introduced by the Tobacco Tax Act, No. 27 of 1953. According to this Act, a tax of Rs. 4.00 per pound shall be levied on all Ceylon tobacco leaf which is intended to be used in the manufacture of cigarettes or pipe tobacco. The Act also prohibits any person from manufacture of cigarettes and/or pipe tobacco till the tax has been duly paid. Reference may be made to sections 2, 3(1), (2) and (3) of the above Act.

Total Excise duties constitute only about 7 per cent of Government revenue and as it was pointed out earlier arrack brings in more than three-fourths of such revenue.

Income Tax

Income tax may be on resident income or non-resident income. According to the Income Tax Ordinance, Resident tax is defined as 'tax on residents in Ceylon for income received by them either in Ceylon or income from outside due and receivable in Ceylon', while Non-resident tax is 'tax on income derived from Ceylon, due to non-residents or foreigners'. Table V will show the classification of taxes on the above basis :—

3. Administration Report of the Excise Commissioner, 1935.

TABLE V⁴

	<i>Residents</i>		<i>Non-Residents</i>		<i>Resident Companies</i>		<i>Non-Resident Companies</i>	
	1950-51	1951-52	1950-51	1951-52	1950-51	1951-52	1950-51	1951-52
Gross Income	440,976,260	526,660,680	23,131,767	25,627,914	85,408,102	132,357,475	93,545,695	128,024,504
Total Tax	47,079,119	68,822,167	5,054,865	6,191,799	22,527,484	37,925,797	27,031,651	39,228,409

4. Source—Administration Reports of Commissioner of Income Tax years 1951 and 1952.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

The Income Tax Ordinance nowhere defines what income is. But it enumerates sources from which income is derived. According to the Income Tax Ordinance, Chapter II, Art. 6, they can be summarized as follows :—

1. Profits from trade, business, profession or vocation.
2. Profits from any employment.
3. House and property.
4. Rent-free quarters.
5. Dividends, interest and discounts.
6. Annuities.
7. Rents, Royalties and Premiums.
8. Any other source other than casual or of non-recurring nature.

The eighth, has been obviously mentioned to make amends for the lack of a definition of income. Income derived from gambling is not estimated for income tax purposes. Money won at the races is excluded from tax liability ; so is income from ' raffles ' and sweeps. Lack of a proper definition of income may give rise to certain difficulties. In fact such difficulties have arisen in Britain, with regard to free residence and free maintenance. An agent for the Bank of Scotland was provided with free residence in a portion of the bank's premises. He occupied that portion as a custodian of the whole premises and for the purpose of transacting bank business after ordinary banking hours. One of the conditions of his appointment was that he should not vacate the premises even temporarily without the consent of the bank and in the event of his removal from office he would quit the premises forthwith. It was held by the Court of Exchequer that the annual value of the residential portion of his house formed part of his income. But this decision was unanimously reversed by the House of Lords which held, ' It is certainly true that the occupation of a house rent-free is not income. Of course the possession of a house which may be used for purposes of profit, is property and taxable as such. But the bald dry proposition that the mere fact of occupying a house which house as property is already taxed is not income in any sense, could hardly be disputed ' (Lord Halsbury). ' His position does not differ in any respect from that of a caretaker or other servant, the nature of whose employment requires that he shall live in his master's dwelling house or business premises instead of occupying a separate residence of his own ' (Lord Watson). On the authority of the above judgment,⁵ it was held that the value of free maintenance provided for a priest at a communal presbytery was not assessable as part of his income, and further it is regarded that the provision of free clothing for an employee stands on the same footing as the provision of free meals or free residence, though a monetary allowance given to an employee in order

5. Tennant, V.: Smith—(1892) A.C. 150, 154-6 ; Tax Cas., 158, 163-7.

that he may provide himself with clothes suitable for his duties is undoubtedly income.

Computation of Tax Liability

Before estimating the tax liability of an individual, his income from all sources must be ascertained. This total income is known as Statutory Income. All statutory incomes of Rupees 4800 and above are liable to tax. From the statutory income the tax-payer is allowed to deduct certain fixed annual charges incurred by him. They are annuities, ground rent and royalties.⁶ Statutory income minus such charges, if any, is defined as Assessable Income. Further he is given certain allowances free from tax, i.e. (i) Earned Income Relief, (ii) Personal Allowance, (iii) Wife's Allowance, (iv) Children's Allowance and (v) Dependant's Allowance.

- (i) *Earned Income Relief* : One-fifth of the earned income (income earned from trade, business, profession, vocation or any other employment) is free from tax. In case of agriculture, this is reduced to one-tenth. But the maximum in any case is Rupees 4000.
- (ii) *Personal Allowance* : A fixed sum of Rs. 2000 is allowed as personal expenses.
- (iii) *Wife's Allowance* : A man married legally and whose wife is living is given a further sum of Rs. 1500 as an allowance free from tax.
- (iv) *Children's Allowance* : Children under eighteen years of age are recognized for this allowance. They should be neither employed nor recipient of any assessable income exceeding one thousand rupees for the year preceding the year of assessment. In respect of children over eighteen but under twenty-one years in age, the father is given this allowance, provided they are pursuing a higher education. University education or technical education or professional education is deemed to be valid in this instance. It should be understood that children here do not include adopted or illegitimate children. This allowance has an upper limit of Rupees 4500.
- (v) *Dependants' Allowance* : The tax-payer is entitled to this allowance only if the dependants are living with him and are maintained by him. He is allowed to claim Rs. 500/- in respect of each dependant whose assessable income for the year preceding the year of assessment does not exceed Rs. 250/-. The dependant allowance is ceiled by a maximum of Rs. 1500 and the sum of Children's Allowance and Dependants' Allowance is further limited up to Rs. 4500.

6. The Income Tax Ordinance, Ch. V. 13 (i).

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

Taxable Income

When all the above allowances are deducted from the Assessable Income we derive the Taxable Income, i.e. income on which tax is levied. The latter is subject to a tax-liability on the following graduated scale :—

SCALE I

First	6000	at 10 per cent
Next	6000	„ 20 per cent
„	6000	„ 25 per cent
„	6000	„ 30 per cent
„	6000	„ 35 per cent
„	10000	„ 40 per cent
„	10000	„ 50 per cent
„	20000	„ 60 per cent
„	20000	„ 70 per cent
„	30000	„ 80 per cent
Over	30000	„ 85 per cent

The above scale was introduced in the Budget of 1953-54 to replace the existing scale which is listed below :—

SCALE II

First	6000	at 9 per cent
Next	10000	„ 19 per cent
„	20000	„ 24 per cent
„	50000	„ 43 per cent
„	100000	„ 68 per cent
Over	100000	„ 76 per cent

The above scale is in addition to the unit rate (i.e. 1 per cent) which is imposed on those Statutory Incomes of Rs. 4800 and above, which reduced to their taxable levels would either give no tax at all, or the tax estimated would be less than 1 per cent of the Statutory Income. According to the Scale II only those whose taxable incomes are over and above Rs. 186,000 used to pay 76 per cent on the amounts over that figure while the Scale I, subjects everyone whose taxable income is above Rs. 120,000, to a liability of 85 per cent tax. The new scale was introduced as a financial measure in the 1953-54 Expenditure and Revenue proposals to reduce the budget deficit.⁷ The World Bank Mission commented on the Scale II as follows :—

‘ Though the graduated scale is fairly progressive, the actual tax liabilities are very low. Even incomes of Rs. 100,000 of which there are only about

7. The World Bank Mission Report, Part II, pp. 30 et seq.

200⁸ in the country pay an average rate of only 37·6 per cent. The comparatively low level of the actual rates charged on incomes ranging from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 50000 indicates that lower and middle class groups are carrying a surprisingly small share of the financial burden'.

This is well illustrated in the Table VI.

TABLE VI

Married man with two children

(under 18), income all earned (in rupees).

Income	5000	7500	10000	20000	50000	100,000
Allowances	7000	7500	8000	10000	10000	10,000
Taxable Income	Nil	Nil	2000	10000	40000	90,000
Tax Liability	*50	*75	180	1300	8960	37,585
Average per cent	1%	1%	1·8%	6·5%	17·9%	37·6%

There is scope for disagreement with the World Bank Mission that the lower groups should bear any more of the burden. The burden should really fall more heavily on the middle and upper classes. The Minister of Finance says with regard to the new scale of taxation that he proposed in his last budget speech (Scale I) 'It will be noted that the additional burden is cast more especially on people whose income is over Rs. 25,000. Incomes up to Rs. 25,000 have been dealt with very leniently and in fact between 20,000 to 24,000, there is a reduction of liability as compared with the year 1952-53'. His speech is not clear as to whether he was referring to the old scale inclusive of the two 10 per cent temporary surcharges that were levied or exclusive of them. If it was inclusive, then, the liability has been reduced by the proposed new scale; or else the liability has increased as shown below.

TABLE VII

(Taxable income under consideration is Rs. 24000).

<i>Old Scale</i>				<i>Old Scale With 2, 10% Surcharges</i>				<i>New Scale</i>	
		<i>Tax</i>			<i>Tax</i>			<i>Tax</i>	
First	6000-	9%	540	First	6000-	653·40	First	6000-	600
					10·89%			10%	
Next	10000-	19%	1900	Next	10000-	2299·00	Next	6000-	1200
					22·99%			20%	
„	8000-	24%	1920	„	8000-	2323·20	„	6000-	1500
					29·04%			25%	
	—	—	—		—	—	„	6000-	1800
								30%	
TOTAL	24000-18·16%	4360		TOTAL	24000-21·98%	5275·60	TOTAL	24000-21·25%	5100

8. According to the Administration Reports of the Commissioner of Income Tax, etc., this figure is much under-estimated.

*Unit Rate.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

Rates of tax for non-residents and Hindu undivided families as obtained in 1951-52, are as follows :—

SCALE III

Non-Residents

On first	18000	18 per cent
next	10000	19 per cent
„	20000	24 per cent
„	50000	43 per cent
„	100000	68 per cent
over	100000	76 per cent

SCALE IV

Hindu Undivided Families

On first	50000	24 per cent
next	50000	28½ per cent
„	50000	41 per cent
„	50000	49 per cent
„	50000	58 per cent
„	100000	66 per cent
over	100000	74 per cent

Business profits are taxed at following rates :—

	<i>Before '53 March</i>	<i>After '53 March</i>
Resident Companies	30 per cent	34 per cent
Non-resident Companies	36 per cent	40 per cent

The following rates apply to various other institutions listed against them :—

Body of Persons, Executors, Trustees	22½ per cent
Mutual Life Insurance Companies	15 per cent
Governments (other than Ceylon or U.K.)	36 per cent

Here we note that insurance companies share only a very small proportion of the tax burden. This may be explained as an inducement for more insurance business in Ceylon.

Excess Profits Duty

Excess Profits Duty was introduced to Ceylon for the first time in October 1941 and it applied to business. In 1942, it was extended to agriculture and plumbago mining.

Profits Tax

Business for Profits Tax purposes include (1) any trade or gainful undertaking of any nature or description whatsoever; (2) in the case of a regis-

tered company of which the functions consist wholly or mainly in the holding of immovable property or investments, the holding of such property or investments; and (3) the practice or pursuit or conduct of any profession, vocation, art, craft or skilled occupation of any description, with a view to earning remuneration, fee or pecuniary reward.

In arriving at a total profit for Profit Tax purposes the profits, from all liable sources reduced by losses if any, are aggregated. A rate of 25 per cent is levied on the surplus of profits over either Rs. 50000 or 6 per cent of the capital employed in the business whichever is higher. This Profits Tax is in addition to the Income Tax though it is allowed as a charge against profits for income tax purposes.

Estate Duty

Estate Duty Ordinance was amended by the Estate Duty (Amendment) Act, No. 3 of 1948, whereby gifts made not more than five years before date of death were brought into liability where the date of death was April 1, 1947, or subsequently.

The direct taxes from these various sources along with their respective amounts in arrears are shown in Table VIII.

TABLE VIII⁹
Years '51 and '52.

<i>Year</i>	1950-51 <i>Rs. Cts.</i>	1951-52 <i>Rs. Cts.</i>
INCOME TAX		
<i>Revenue</i>	91,922,265·47	145,756,444·55
<i>Arrears</i>	13,839,838·78	17,683,398·59
EXCESS PROFITS DUTY		
<i>Revenue</i>	11,152,182·50	4,972,009·34
<i>Arrears</i>	72,672,510·04	62,495,372·10
PROFITS TAX		
<i>Revenue</i>	27,423,457·39	52,935,171·86
<i>Arrears</i>	— —	10,223,960·71
ESTATE DUTY		
<i>Revenue</i>	4,235,480·61	5,856,116·74
<i>Arrears</i>	2,266,893·50	1,437,192·43
STAMPS		
<i>Revenue</i>	12,955,064·66	12,003,583·73

9. Source—Administration Reports of Commissioner of Income Tax, etc.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

The above Table further reveals the increasing indebtedness of our people. Arrears are mounting up and the uncleared files increase in numbers yearly. Unsettled files in October, 1951, were about 70000 (World Bank Mission Report, Part II).

A well-ordered system of taxation should satisfy certain fundamental tests, namely the principles of justice, productiveness, economy and simplicity. Under justice we consider, people's ability to pay; under simplicity, clarity of methods and convenience of time of payment. People's ability to pay is open to serious doubt when we study the arrears of income tax during the past few years. Under productiveness it is held that a tax system should in no way reduce incentive to production. The Government has taken stock of this fact in passing the Income Tax (Amendment) Act, No. 36 of 1951. It refers to Government Sponsored corporations and New Industrial Undertakings, in this manner.

Government Sponsored Corporations

' All the profits of such a corporation and the dividends payable to shareholders will be exempt from tax for the first three years after the commencement of business of the corporation.

New Industrial Undertakings

The profits of new industrial undertakings as described in the Act up to a maximum of 5 per cent and dividends attributable to such profits are exempt from tax for the first three years from the time of commencement of the business. In both cases the exemption applies only if the commencement is within three years from April 1, 1951'. New Industrial Undertakings according to the Act should employ more than 25 persons and use electricity or mechanically transmitted energy.

Besides these exemptions applicable to new undertakings all sorts of agricultural and industrial enterprises are allowed (in addition to the usual depreciation allowances) to make an initial deduction of 33 1/3 per cent on new buildings used for the housing of employees and 10 per cent on business buildings and 15 per cent on machinery provided such buildings or machinery are installed before March, 1954.

The World Bank Mission recommends that the exemptions granted above should extend beyond three years and in the case of private undertakings exemptions granted should be more than 5 per cent. The Mission is also of opinion that reinvested earnings for productive purposes should be exempt from tax.

The Philippines went a step farther than Ceylon in granting a four-year tax exemption to her new industries. ' In order to set up industrial production,

the Philippines Government has exempted new and necessary industries from taxation for four years, and the incentive has been very strong. From 1945 to beginning of this year about 45 million pesos (Rs. 130 million) have been invested in new private industries. Among the new products manufactured are (a) chemicals, drugs and medicines, (b) textiles of cotton and rayon, (c) plastic and rubber products, (d) pianos, bicycles, radios, gramophones, (e) metal zippers and toilet goods, (f) paper and sacking, (g) steel products, (h) electric light bulbs and glass products. The Government Rehabilitation and Finance Corporation which grants loans for industrial activities has been responsible for a great deal of the acceleration of the island's industrialization. The rate of this industrialization has resulted in more factories being established in the last five years than in the whole of the Philippines' previous history'—*Ceylon Daily News*. The above results would only prove that a productive tax system is of dire necessity to under-developed countries. But this does not mean productivity should be achieved at the expense of economy. For economy of a tax system should be well studied before it is introduced. Taxation, it has already been mentioned, is the chief source of public revenue. In the result a tax system should be such as to bring in sufficient revenue to the exchequer. Not only should it collect sufficient revenue but the cost of collection should be as low as possible. As far as the cost of collection goes, Ceylon is well above most of the other countries. In 1950-51, the cost of collection was only 1,826,330 rupees (1.2 per cent) and in 1951-52—2,151,218 rupees (.97 per cent). But as far as the revenue collecting capacity of our tax system is concerned, it does not look so bright.

The budget deficit for the year 1952 was Rs. 314 million and this continued in the year 1953 too. One way of correcting this deficit is by means of higher taxation. The Honourable Minister of Finance made certain proposals in his budget speech of 1953-54, to some of which have been already referred. He estimates an additional revenue of only 24 million rupees by those measures. This figure seems to be a gross under-estimate on the part of the Minister. He asserts in his speech, 'if we appropriate in full any excess income after allowing the tax-payer a maximum of Rs. 75,000 per year for his use, the additional revenue derived thereby would be only Rs. 5½ million. The total number of individual tax-payers in this class is only 204. According to the Table IX the number of individuals whose incomes were above 75000 rupees were 546 residents and 48 non-residents. Their total income was Rs. 81,539,135. The total income they could be allowed at the rate of Rs. 75000 per head was Rs. 44,550,000. The surplus the Government could appropriate on the basis suggested by the Minister would have been Rs. 36,989,135. Surely this figure could not have fallen to Rs. 5½ million within two years, nor could the number of people decrease from 594 to 204. Nevertheless it is true, that our tax system is not flexible enough to collect that amount of revenue necessary to eliminate the budget deficit.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

TABLE IX¹⁰

	Residents				Non-Residents				Resident Companies				Non-Resident Companies			
	Number		Income		Number		Income		Number		Income		Number		Income	
	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951	1950	1951
25000—	710	875	19,411,207	23,433,275	33	36	934,919	981,263	21	20	586,233	576,524	11	11	212,855	299,962
— 40000	784	879	27,067,529	32,294,848	28	60	1,091,636	2,283,368	32	31	1,132,800	1,120,890	16	18	567,141	640,887
— 50000	419	546	18,940,943	24,455,495	19	23	853,215	1,057,001	36	21	1,649,081	992,224	14	18	648,368	830,873
— 75000	441	579	26,723,881	34,747,469	47	41	2,951,720	2,708,159	64	61	3,951,174	3,895,085	31	30	1,920,582	1,763,897
— 100000	149	230	12,900,488	20,161,827	12	27	1,022,908	2,324,843	39	43	3,434,454	3,825,192	33	18	2,932,524	1,610,268
— 150000	117	183	14,218,137	22,614,932	10	12	1,204,174	1,488,233	47	59	6,133,757	7,651,149	33	14	4,186,218	3,080,314
— 200000	35	64	5,898,241	11,380,384	3	6	512,845	1,031,415	28	39	5,022,005	6,783,025	14	20	2,433,455	3,409,528
— 300000	25	47	6,023,913	11,008,798	2	2	497,387	485,485	40	53	9,653,159	13,486,092	19	25	4,619,386	6,080,640
— 400000	6	10	2,051,343	3,531,143	1	—	335,434	—	20	27	6,586,344	9,601,999	12	18	4,183,941	6,155,834
— 500000	2	5	891,784	2,396,962	1	—	459,928	—	14	21	6,475,559	9,661,878	7	9	3,027,394	4,076,044
— 750000	2	5	1,181,108	2,925,853	—	1	—	550,108	6	36	3,244,181	21,811,259	15	17	9,196,888	10,583,224
— 1000000	—	2	—	1,639,100	—	—	—	—	8	15	6,834,277	12,398,594	15	13	13,217,914	11,213,494
— Over	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	15	21	25,862,432	34,994,487	16	19	25,932,855	42,578,820

10. Source—Administration Reports of Commissioner of Income Tax, etc., 1951 and 1952.

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Table X shows income classified by reference to various sources. The greatest percentage of income is derived from Trade though in numbers, employment occupies the first place. One noteworthy feature is that in the year 1951-52 though the number of people engaged in Agriculture is only 4439 as compared with 24879 engaged in Employment income derived from Agriculture is higher than that obtained from employment. This indicates the essential agrarian economy of our country.

*TABLE X¹¹
1951 and 1952

	<i>Number</i>		<i>Income</i>	
	1950	1951	1950	1951
	1951	1952	1951	1952
Agriculture	3224	4439	126,162,868	229,391,901
Trade	16579	14473	239,244,239	264,343,486
Profession	989	1616	15,679,518	24,715,102
Employment	28507	24879	212,278,434	227,304,442
Investment	3258	3189	28,748,652	34,829,506
Miscellaneous	409	115	4,363,441	2,435,236
TOTAL	52966	48711	626,477,152	783,019,673

Local Government Taxation

There are four types of local government bodies namely Municipal Councils, Urban Councils, Town Councils and Village Committees. There are seven Municipal Councils namely Colombo, Kandy, Galle, Jaffna, Kurunegala, Nuwara Eliya and Negombo. The last four of these were formerly Urban Councils. Jaffna, Kurunegala and Nuwara Eliya were granted Municipal status from January 1, 1949, and Negombo from January 1, 1950. In January, 1951, there were 36 Urban Councils. Sanitary Boards which were functioning till December 31, 1946 were either converted into Urban Councils, Town Councils or Village Committees. Town Councils Ordinance No. 3 of 1946 gave birth to these new local bodies with effect from January 1, 1947. Total number of Town Councils was 36 in 1951.

There are 400 Village Committees in the island. They are corporate bodies with perpetual succession and power to hold property, the taxation of land and the conversion of certain small towns administered under the Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance, into the Village Committee jurisdiction.

11. Source—Administration Report of Commissioner of Income Tax.

*Without including additional assessments.

BASIS OF CEYLON'S TAXATION

Total current revenue of all types of local governments recently stood at an annual level of about Rs. 35 million including recurrent government subsidies. This is about 5 per cent of central government revenue. Table I shows that the total revenue of the Central Government varied between 600 and 900 million rupees within the last five years.

Total revenue of Municipalities in the year 1949 was 21 million rupees of which tax revenue aggregated 384,000. The tax revenue thus forms only 1·8 per cent of the total revenue, and this is in striking contrast to about 85 per cent of central Government revenue which is derived from taxation.

Total revenue of Urban Councils in 1951 was 12,968,000 rupees of which tax revenue constituted about 25 per cent, aggregating 3,348,000 rupees. On the other hand, total revenue of 400 Village Committees was surprisingly low. It was only 3 million and 85 of these had less than rupees 2000 a year each.

Property Rate Tax and *Acreage Tax* are the most important. In small villages and towns it is 6 per cent, in larger towns and communities, it varies from 10 per cent to 15 per cent and the maximum in Colombo is 30 per cent. The Acreage Tax is imposed on cultivated land at a maximum rate of half a rupee per acre. All land 5 acres and more in extent is liable to this tax. All lands under paddy or chena cultivation are exempt. This exemption may be to encourage growing of more food. There was a recent suggestion to bring even uncultivated land under this tax liability. In 1946 another tax namely Entertainment Tax was introduced on the passing of the Entertainment Tax Ordinance.

The World Bank Mission recommends that local bodies should have more revenue and the Mission suggests that the Government aid should be increased. The following table shows the aid given by the Government to the local bodies since 1948.

TABLE XI¹²

<i>Amount</i>	<i>Purpose</i>
7,000,000	Slum clearance and 1528 houses
15,920,000	2250 working class houses
7,500,000	Water supply
6,349,528	Extension to water supply
1,276,250	Drainage
9,000,000	Village works
2,550,000	Village wells
253,000	Village Sanitary Services
1,200,000	Maternity and Child Welfare
2,667,271	Block Grants
2,729,322	In lieu of abolished local revenue.

12. Source—*Ceylon Year Book*, 1951.

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The above grants advanced by the Central Government are hardly adequate to meet the needs of these various bodies. Much relief was not obtained from the Committee which was appointed in 1948 to look into their needs. It should be the grave concern of the present Government to appoint a Commission with two main terms of reference, firstly to undertake a deep study of the specific needs of these bodies and secondly to recommend various methods by which their 'finance' may be improved.

A. D. V. DE S. INDRARATNA

Reviews

Religions of India. By Prof. Louis Renou. University of London, The Athlone Press, 1953 ; pp. viii + 139.

The six lectures now printed in book form with the above title were delivered by Prof. Renou in 1951 at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, under the Louis H. Jordan Bequest. The School could not have found a more worthy lecturer to inaugurate this series and it is to be hoped that the high standard set at the inception will be maintained in the future.

Of these lectures the first two deal with Vedic religion, the next three with Hinduism, and the last with Jainism. One cannot help wondering why Buddhism, in many ways the most important of Indian religious manifestations, has been left out, particularly in view of the implication in the title. The author admits in his *Preface* that these 'summary studies' were intended only 'to give an account of the present state of the main problems'. Even on such a basis the omission of Buddhism from a discussion of Indian Religion seems difficult to justify.

The great value of these lectures to all students of Indology becomes apparent from the very first one on 'Vedism'. It is a critical survey of the present state of our knowledge of the early Vedic period, its chronology, cultural and religious significance particularly in relation to the Indus Valley civilization, its linguistic character and literary value. The author's method has been more or less to provide a critique of 'criticism' rather than to offer final judgements and definite conclusions. In his final assessment of Vedic studies the author says: 'It is difficult to sum up the general impression that the Veda makes on us; in many respects it is a strange and even monstrous testimony; the utmost caution must be exercised in using it as material for any subject not directly envisaged by it, whether it be linguistics, sociology, the history of religion or ethnography. We must approach it dispassionately, putting aside all the absurd and untenable thesis to which many researchers in the West as well as in the East, have subscribed' (p. 42). It is clear that the author admires the 'healthy scepticism' attributed to Whitney and Keith (p. 2). This is conspicuous in his treatment of the Indus Valley problem, particularly when he writes: 'It was at first hoped that the discoveries at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro might throw some light on the Veda; but this hope was not fulfilled. What is known as the Indus civilization appears to owe nothing to the Veda... nor does it appear that the Veda owes anything to it' (p. 3). In the light of this criticism, one would have very much liked to have the learned author's opinion on the relevant studies of Mackay, Childe, Wheeler, Piggott and other writers. The sceptical attitude is most commendable, with regard to this problem where many seem to be groping in the dark, so long as no evidence of a positive character, however meagre it may appear at present, is brushed aside as unimportant. Perhaps Prof. Renou himself is not so pessimistic about the final outcome of this issue, for, later on he says: '... we must bear in mind that Vedism itself contains elements of primitive religion, and therefore of Hinduism (or, we might say, of pre-Hinduism), the existence of which at a period earlier than the Veda could be verified by the evidence of the Mohenjo-Daro excavations' (p. 47).

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Prof. Renou presents his views clearly and succinctly, eschewing all irrelevancies. His discussion of *Bhakti* (pp. 70-73), for instance, is a brilliant example of his lucid style. The reader is made to halt only at a thought-provoking remark that the author makes in the course of his general discussion. His casual remark that 'Buddhism played little part in developing science and technology' (p. 55), is certainly one of such 'asides', which, I presume, is not to be taken as a value-judgement made with deliberate intent. There are very few instances of phrasing that may cause any puzzlement. In this connection one may mention the use of the adjective 'static' to qualify *ṛta* (p. 19) and the rendering of *sat* in the well-known R̥gvedic line 'ekam sad viprā bahudhā vadanti' by 'supreme being' (p. 56). On the whole, however, his presentation is characterized by a preciseness and perspicuity unusual among Indologists. One may mention in passing that the spelling of the famous Indian philosopher's name as 'Rādhākṛṣṇan' (p. 48), with Sanskrit diacritical marks and a dialectical suffix, seems rather odd.

It is unnecessary to add that this work will remain a standard treatise on the subject for a long time. No Indologist or student of Comparative Religion can afford to ignore Prof. Renou's valuable studies on Indian Religion now presented to the public by the generosity of the Trustees of the Jordan Bequest.

The Athlone Press deserves the highest praise for the neat printing and elegant get-up of this volume.

O. H. de A. W.

Sinhalaya hā Saṃskṛtaya. By Ananda W. P. Guruge, B.A., PH.D., C.C.S., Loko Press, Colombo 1954; iii + 76 pp. Rs. 1.50.

The influence of Sanskrit on Sinhalese is a subject that deserves the careful consideration of every student interested in the origin and growth of Sinhalese language and literature. Unfortunately the available literature on the subject is extremely limited and critical writing on it is almost entirely wanting. The present work strives to meet this need in some measure. It is a collection of eight radio talks, in a slightly enlarged form, originally delivered in 1953 under the title 'Sanskrit influence on Sinhalese Literature'. Dr. Guruge's booklet provides a useful introduction to the subject which is, at once, vast and intricate.

An introductory essay entitled 'Sanskrit in Ceylon' traces the use of Sanskrit in this country from the early period up to the 12th century, A.D. The influence that Sanskrit exerted on the development of Sinhalese language in its formative period is reviewed. Reference is made to the Sanskrit inscriptions of Ceylon with quotations drawn from the lithic records of the first twelve centuries of the Christian Era. The next chapter deals with the Sanskrit vocabulary that came into Sinhalese. Examples are quoted to show to what extent Sanskrit words entered into Sinhalese prose writings and how, in some instances, the abundance of Sanskrit loan words hampered the growth of a clear and direct prose style. A description of the effects of the Sanskrit *kāvya* style on the Sinhalese prose works follows. An attempt is made to show how the Sinhalese prose *kāvyas* which drew their inspiration

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from the Sanskrit prose works became, in course of time, overburdened with long, high-sounding Sanskrit compounds. Sanskrit influence, if it did not positively hinder the natural development of Sinhalese prose and cripple the originality of the authors, prevented their unhampered growth and gave rise to the laboured prose works like the *Sarāṇa* books whose authors strove after rhythmic sound effects at the expense of content. A discussion of the branches of literature that flourished on account of Sanskrit is next given and then a short account of Sinhalese Prosody. The author deals with the Theory of Poetics and Literary Criticism which sprang as a result of contact with Sanskrit and then traces the Sanskrit ideas that entered Sinhalese poetry. The concluding section is a brief survey of the influence that Sanskrit has exerted especially on Sinhalese writers of the present day.

The sections dealing with poetics, prosody and criticism deserve to be mentioned as being of special interest. In some instances, however, the conclusions appear to be somewhat audacious and go beyond what the evidence adduced would warrant.

A minor error of fact should be noted. *Prātihārya Śatakaya* was not the first Sinhalese work to be composed in the *Sloka* metre, as stated in p. 46.

The work is a useful addition to critical writing in Sinhalese. It should help to stimulate further inquiry. Even if the views expressed by the author are not always acceptable on account of insufficient evidence to back them, they should be more widely known. The work deserves to be read both by the general reader and the specialist.

A. S. K.

The White Umbrella. By D. Mackenzie Brown. University of California Press, Berkely, 1953; pp. xv + 205.

The history of Indian political thought is marked by a long and barren gap dividing the ancients like Manu and Kauṭilya from the moderns. Although the dates of 'Laws of Manu' and 'Arthaśāstra' cannot be fixed with accuracy, there is no doubt that they reflected the early feudal stage of Hindu polity. The Muslim invasions, the establishment of the British *rāj*, and the consequent changes in the political, social and economic life, produced new forces within India's body politic. The growth of a significant middle-class heralded a renaissance in Indian political speculation. With Ram Mohan Roy, Vivekananda, Ranade, Gokhale, Tilak, Tagore and Gandhi, India's political renaissance reached maturity. One noteworthy feature in all these thinkers is the conscious attempt to synthesise what is good and traditional in Hindu society with the liberalism and humanitarianism of the West. The attempt to synthesise what is good in both East and West is still going on and is nowhere better reflected than in Professor K. P. Mukherji's *The State* (1952). To expound India's ancient and modern political thought, therefore, is no easy task. It involves not merely a reading of political writings, but also an understanding of India's socio-economic changes from early times to the present day. Professor Brown's *White Umbrella* gives a bird's eye-view of the various strands of Indian political thought by selecting what he deems to be the most representative passages in each thinker's writings. If the purpose is a limited one of introducing India's political ideas to the West, he has succeeded. If as the author suggests the aim is 'to provide the western reader with a

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concise survey of Hindu political ideas', the book is not adequate. There are two weaknesses in the book which one cannot fail to see. Firstly, Professor Brown attempts to explain Indian ideas by comparison with western political thought. To suggest, for example, a similarity of Kauṭilya with Machiavelli or Vivekananda with Spencer and Comte cannot be considered a concise survey either of Kauṭilya or of Vivekananda. A far more suitable approach would have been to relate them to the socio-economic conditions in which they wrote.

Secondly, while Professor Brown admits that 'Dharma' is the 'core concept of Hindu political theory', he gives neither a connected history of the development of the concept of Dharma, nor a statement of what this concept implies in any fair measure. When Professor Brown attempts to discuss the ethical aspects of Dharma it is surprising that he makes no reference to the idea of Dharma as practised by Aśoka. Since the author himself concludes that the 'problem of government is the ethical problem of the individual projected onto the field of the state', and that 'its solution lies in Dharma' these are rather serious acts of omission.

Nevertheless, the usefulness of this study to the western reader cannot be denied. Professor Brown's book shows that he has read through the vast mass of Indian political writings, the only important omission being Mukherji's *The State*. For the western reader he has carefully explained the meanings of Indian political terms. The book itself is very well got up, with a good bibliography and a comprehensive index.

O. H. DE A. W.

I. D. S. W.