Chapter Three

THE INDIAN MODERNISTS

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In this chapter, three major critics, namely; B.S.

Mardhekar (1909-56), R.B. Patankar (b.1926) and Suresh

Joshi (1922-1986) are discussed. They are selected for

study as being significant critics representing Indian

critical discourse, carried out largely within the frame
work of Western criticism. It is not intended to analyse

the process of the Western influence as such. That kind of

endeavour would lead to analysing the larger cultural text,

including the historical and political context.

The comments in the 'Introduction' and the two previous chapters may have made it obvious that the modern Indian criticism is influenced and guided by cultural colonisation. Rather than returning to this theme, the philosophical and theoretical issues related to what these three critics have to say will be taken up. The critics are not contemporaries in the strict chronological sense.

B.S. Mardhekar was active as a poet and a critic between 1935 and 1955. Suresh Joshi began his literary career in 1957 and continued to write till 1986, the year of his

death. His first important critical essay was the preface to <u>Grihapravesh</u>¹, a collection of short stories, and his last important critical work <u>Chintayami Mansa</u>², was published in 1982. R.B. Patankar has consistently published essays and books on criticism and aesthetics, during the last twenty five years.

While B.S. Mardhekar and Suresh Joshi were 'writer' critics. R.B. Patankar is an facademic critic. B.S. Mardhekar and Suresh Joshi ushered in the era of modernism in their respective, Marathi and Gujarati, literature, In the literary history of Marathi B.S. Mardhekar's age is termed 'Mardhekar era'3, just as in the literary history of Gujarati, Suresh Joshi's age is occasionally described as Suresh Joshi era. 4 R.B. Patankar's contribution is of a different nature. It is confined primarily to aesthetics and literary criticism. Besides being an acknowledged commentator on Mardhekar, he is the founder of this branch of philosophy with Mardhekar. Mardhekar's Arts and Man', and Patankar's Saundryamimansa, 6 have been significant landmarks in the development of Aesthetics in Marathi. Both have been bilingual writers, and have written criticism both in English and Marathi. Suresh Joshi wrote exclusively in Gujarati and none of his works have been translated in English. Apart from being a writer and a critic, he was an avid translator. By virtue of his translations of contemporary Western works and by his

avant-gardism as a writer-crític, he became a powerful modernising force in Gujarati.

These three critics shaped the critical idiom of their respective languages, and generated important critical debate. It would not be an exaggeration to say that no history of Marathi criticism could ever be written without giving a significant space to Mardhekar and Patankar, or that of Gujarati criticism without giving an equally major space to Suresh Joshi. In comparative terms, one may say that what Tagore was to Bengali critical tradition, these three critics have been to their respective critical traditions. Apart from their significance as critics, what is common to the three is their capacity to absorb a wide range of Western critical thoughts and to reinterpret them. But none of them show any affinity for Marxist literary criticism or the psycho-analytic criticism. On the other hand, they show preference for philosophy and linguistics. Within the Western tradition of criticism, their choices were in favour of Formalism, Phenomenology and philosophy of art. In other words, their critical efforts have been guided by those segments of the Western theory which has been termed the autonomous theory by M.H. Abrams.8

These three critics are discussed here with a view to presenting their ideas on criticism and literature, discribing the general orientation of their theoretical

projects, and generalising on the nature of the Indian critical discourse influenced by the Western theories.

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Since 1940s Mardhekar has been a crucial influence on Rep literary thought in Marathi, and has been very central to Marathi criticism. His significance in Marathi literature is aptly described by R.B. Patankar in the following words:

> During the last twenty years Mardhekar has been a name to conjure within Maharashtra, and his influence is gradually spreading outside Maharashtra also. If this trend grows steadily stronger, he would soon become an author of National importance. 9

It is possible to say without exaggeration that Mardhekar is one of those very few Indian critics of this century who formulated a cohesive theory of literature. Mardhekar's work did not go unnoticed in the West. His Arts and Man was published in London in 1937 and the Times Literary Supplement found it to be 'a bracing little book', 'consisting of four closely reasoned essays'. His collection of addresses on Aesthetics titled Why Art? was shown to Herbert Read and T.S. Eliot in the manuscript form, both found it interesting and T.S. Eliot in particular found it 'provoking' and 'well written'. 10 Very rarely did an Indian critic of his generation receive a comparable comment in the Western literary circles.

Mardhekar's Arts and Man, is a collection of his lectures and essays, (earlier published separately), on Art, Aesthetics, literature, and literary criticism. The subject of the book is Aesthetics proper, or the experience of beauty. Mardhekar himself puts the aim of his critical writings as follows:

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In the aesthetic which I have attempted to suggest, I have linked up the various fine arts with one or more of the sense organs, and beauty or aesthetic delight is said to depend upon the qualities of sensations absolutely exclusively, without the addition of any other cognitive item to those sensations, and upon the manner in which these qualities are organised in the particular field of consciousness in which the relevant sense organ or organs are active. I cannot emphasise too strongly that the knowledge of this organisation of qualities is involved in the experience of the sensations themselves and is not the outcome of any parallel or subsequent cognitive process outside this experience.11

Thus the field chosen by Mardhekar for his work pervades all arts, and is not peculiar to literature.

Mardhekar's main interest is Aesthetics more than literary criticism. Accordingly, his emphasis is on philosophical aspects of the process of the cognition of beauty. When he comes to discussing the epistimological problems specific to the verbal arts, he observes:

... poetry in my aesthetic scheme only yields pure or aesthetic pleasure at all because its elements are formally organised, i.e., are dealt within accordance with formal principles such as contrast and rhythm. But this pleasure is not as

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rich as that which the other fine arts give, and this for two reasons. In the first place, poetry presses into service all qualities of sensations indiscriminately, and calls upon all sense organs to be active almost simultaneously. And in the second place, poetical sensations are really not actual sensations at all but are images of sensations, and lacking as they do the profound reality of actual sensations, they are impoverished in their capacity to give pleasure. 12

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Mardhekar thus tries to place poetry in a general qualitative hierarchy of arts. Within this hierarchy poetry has a relatively inferior place, mainly because the aesthetic order in poetry is dependent upon the semantic structures at play. 'Meaning', to use the New Critical jargon, interferes with the being of a poem. Mardhekar's Aesthetics takes into account the semantic problems of poetic meaning at the same time, separating the two orders - the aesthetic and the semantic - of the being of a poem. Reiterating his comments from the introductory sections of his book, he states that meanings are:

.... "tainted by the traffic of this human world", and are "so fundamentally interwoven with the evanescence of that world that one can hardly help suspecting that they have no significance beyond it."13

In discussing 'The Nature of Aesthetic Judgement',
Mardhekar distinguishes between a logical proposition and
an aesthetic proposition. To illustrate the same, he
argues that on the basis of his having seen the Ajanta

frescoes, he can say that Ajanta frescoes are eautiful. If this very proposition is addressed to another person, who in turn may repeat it to a third person, it will lose its base of a direct experience and will become a heard/versite reported proposition. The act of reporting transforms an Aesthetic proposition into a merely linguistic one. So he concludes that an aesthetic judgement must be "a judgement by experience not by description", and that "a logical judgement can be either by experience or by description". Therefore in essence, an aesthetic judgement cannot be identical with a logical proposition, though both have identical linguistic forms.

Mardhekar's assumption about aesthetic judgement extends itself to the language of criticism. The language of criticism, then, is a typical form of language which cannot be tested on the basis of its meaning. The legitimate ground for art criticism is epistimological authenticity and not semantic or logical validity. An aesthetic judgement can be valid, if only it is based on an unmediated experience. The question as to why an 'unmediated' experience is so necessary, is answered in Mardhekar's belief that beauty can be felt only through sensations. Such a position leads him to a converse assumption, i.e., all that is beautiful, emerges from an object's capacity to appeal to sensations. He claims that since an aesthetic judgement sheds light only on ego-centric particulars,

each aesthetic judgement is unique because it sheds light only on its own context. Thus every work of art is unique and every aesthetic judgement is unique.

To explain the nature of the aesthetic appeal that all arts have. Mardhekar proposes the following three laws:

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The Law of Harmony states that if two relations are simultaneously given such that one of them either is or tends to be identical in quality with the other, then the relation between them is of harmony. The law of contrast states that if two relations are simultaneously given such that one of them either is or tends to opposite in quality to the other, then the relation between them is that of contrast Lastly, the Law of Balance states that if a group of interrelated relation can be divided into two halves such that the number of relations in one is equal to the number of relations in the other, then the relation between the two halves is that of balance. 16

The law of harmony, alone, could not possibly explain all art, so there is the law of contrast, since both these laws are antithetical, there comes the third law of

balance. As Mardhekar maintains:

order by means of qualitative patterns obeying the laws of harmony, contrast and balance, then it yields judgements which are aesthetic and describe beauty. 17 but one can make an aesthetic fudgement work.

'Rhythm' is thus the distinguishing feature of arts and hence of literature. By rhythm he does not mean metrical arrangement but experience:

.... the word 'rhythm' does not really indicate an object as its grammatical character would seem to imply. It is in fact an instance of the nominalising process of language and is really the name not of an object but of a quality of experience. Rhythm is not an entity by itself; it is an objective of experience. 18

The quality of experience depends on the relations of the constituents of arts. There can be simple or complex relations between the constituents, or in other words, different relations are 'related' differently. In Mardhekar's view there are two ways ofinterrelatedness of relations:

(1) logical, ami (2) aesthetic. The binary opposition between the logical and the aesthetic seems to have been derived from Kant's distinction between pure reason, and aesthetic judgement. However, Mardhekar accepts this opposition as an axiomatic philosophical position thus:

Different relations can be inter-related either according to the principle of coherence or according to the principle of rhythm. In the first case, the relations are inter-related logically; in the second case, they are inter-related aesthetically. 19

This is how he differentiates the aesthetic order, organised on the basis of harmony, contrast and balance, from the nonaesthetic order based on logical principles. He states:

If the experience is logical, the constituent relation will follow the principle of coherence in obedience to the law of identity and excluded middle. If the experience is aesthetic, it will follow the principle of rhythm obeying the laws of harmony, contrast and balance.20

These laws are also the laws of rhythm, and therefore rhythm is a type of relation of relations. He says:

Rhythm ... is a type of relation which can exist only between two or more relations. In other words, an experience which is rhythmical is an experience in which only relations are interrelated. As a quality of experience, rhythm can only be experienced; it cannot be further analysed in terms of other qualities. As a type of relation between relations, its nature can be described in terms of the qualitative or quantitative aspects of the relations which it unites. Rhythm thus conceived can be defined... in terms of its laws. The laws of rhythm are three: the Law of Harmony, the Law of Contrast, and the Law of Balance. 21

The very definations of the three laws, and their application to Mardhekar's concept of rhythm, have an apparently Aristotelian precision. These definations are central to the debate in his essays about literary form.

The implication for literary criticism is that criticism must seek to establish, in a given work of art, the complexity of inter-relations, and a pattern of emotions, or emotional variations. Mardhekar's belief in the universal character of art, is seen in his attempt to present the

Beauty in art or literature is invested with the capacity to evoke a specific quality of aesthetic response in a viewer/listener. Further, the assumption is that this response can be described with reference to certain constants that constitute works of art. The desire, clearly,

aesthetic judgement in terms of abstract laws.

compare Mardhekar's attempts to form a science of aesthetic judgement, with those of Northrop Frye to build a systematic theory of literature. The tendency reflects the belief that 'Beauty' is the common factor, binding all arts together. In this sense, Mardhekar is with Tagore, and Sri Aurobindo. But the insistence upon systematisation and the treatment of beauty as a non-subjective experience, put him on par with I.A. Richards and Benedetto Croce.

The general theory of beauty leads him to the consideration of semantics. He points out that the meaning of a sentence depends on the correct syntax only in part.

There can be a syntactically correct yet nonsensical sentence. He elaborates as follows:

A sentence is constructed out of words and syntax. Words and syntax are of course not enough for a significant sentence. One may for instance, say that 'the distance from the sun to the moon is blue'. In this sentence although there are words which are significant, and although they are arranged in the correct syntax in the sentence, yet the sentence is not significant whenever a sentence is either written or uttered as a part of a work of literature it conveys a certain meaning.²²

Thus, in his opinion, in poetry the logical relationship of significance is of no importance, but aesthetic relationship of significance is. Hence poetry functions through interrelationship of emotive meanings. It is necessary to add here that Mardhekar's analysis of the relationship

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between syntax and significance is merely a matter of methodological convenience. His emphasis on poetically significant "sentence" does not seem to have been derived from Bhartrhari's Vakyapadiya, 23 or Vishvanath's idea of poetry as 'poetic syntax'. 24 He seems to have entered into an analysis of sentence structure as a philosophical preliminary towards establishing the distinction between logic/grammar, and aesthetics. This neat distinction proposed by Mardhekar has to be perceived as a tentative step, rather than the foundation of his aesthetics. If his aesthetics is not approached with this caution in mind, there is a possibility of misunderstanding his concept of total structure of poetry. His semantics takes into account the poem in its enterety, in terms of the syntax as well as individual words.

all verbs except those which an occur only in an existential proposition; all adverbs and adverbial phrases except those of time and place; and all adjectives which are not names of primary qualities. It is with the help of these words that one must graps, in the main, the emotional relations involved in a sentence and their qualities. In trying to determine whether a particular piece of writing is a work of art or not, one must first detect these emotional relations by fastening one's attention upon these words, and then endeavour to see if they disclose any inter-relations. If they do so, the next step is to assertain the nature of these inter-relations. As soon asone finds that these inter-relations exist and that they are governed by the laws of harmony, contrast and balance, one can be sure that that particular piece of writing is a work of art.25

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Mardhekar's analysis is "a technique and a criteria for the aesthetic evaluation of literature". 26 Accordingly, criticism has to concern itself with analysis of the inter-relations of emotive significances and find "the instantaneous gestalt" of the relationships which work is terms of harmony, contrast and balance. This view noticeably deviates from the Aristotelian poetics based on the concept of structure as a probable sequence. Mardhekar affirms that;

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A work of literature must ... be viewed as a whole pattern, an instantaneous gestalt, a rhythmical configuration. All the terms in this whole must be present to consciousness either in sensation or in imagination but simultaneously. And the difference between the rhythmical view of literature, which I am advocating and the Aristotelian view is precisely this that whereas all the terms in a rhythmical whole must be actually given if the rhythm is to be perceived at all, all the terms in a probable sequence need not be so given.²⁸

The purpose of Mardhekar's defination of rhythm, is to establish clarity about the function of criticism, which in his opinion, concerns aesthetic orders and not logical ones, and emotive relationships of significances and not the logical order of syntax.

Mardhekar is perhaps the only Indian critic to challenge Aristotelian concepts. But the line of his argument does not even remotely indicate that he has anything in common with the Chicago Aristotelians, who in any case appeared later on the literary criticism scene. The roots of his disagreement with the Aristotelian concept of

structure have to be traced to European thinkers ranging from Kant to Croce. His theory is a systematic, philosophic, exposition of a hypothesis which claims to have universal validity. His enterprise was to have a science of criticism, based on principles of Aesthetics, in which he proceeds by refuting some of Aristotle's ideas.

In the essay titled 'The Doctrine of Necessity'. Mardhekar questions the emergent, 'principles of literary criticism' and the 'fundamental outlook' 29 in Aristotle's Poetics. He points out that due to the dependance of both epic and a tragedy on a 'story', the Poetics was led to emphasise the primacy of plot. Mardhekar appreciates Aristotle's defination of plot as 'arrangement of incidents'. The 'arrangement', in his opinion not only imposes a form in a given literary work, but also leads to the idea of a 'whole', i.e., a literary whole, which is also an organic whole. According to Aristotle, the whole has 'a beginning, middle and an end', and that it is organised on the basis of 'the probable or necessary sequence'. and that sequence is required to be 'logical'. In Mardhekar's opinion, Aristotle was thus trapped in his own logic in deciding the conditions for an authentic whole. He refutes the Aristotelian catagories of probable impossibilities and improbable possibilities on the grounds of logical and hermeneutical inconsistency:

The whole doctrine of probability as formulated by Aristotle in its application to literature is both meaningless and irrelevant. It is vulnerable from a larger and a narrower point of view. In the first place, the distinction which Aristotle makes between 'probable impossibilities' and 'improbable possibilities' cannot be held to be philosophically tenable in any intelligible analysis.30

As Mardhekar believes, though it is prior knowledge, which can suggest what can happen and what cannot happen. 'reality' remains 'self determined', and so does a literary work. Characters, plot incidents etc., emerge out of a whole, i.e., a literary work, and not out ofprior logical categories of what may be possible or impossible. A work of art or literature may organise human experiences and emotions. Such an organisation may even be parallel to a logical process, yet the unifying principle in both aesthetic and logical orders, remains different. In other words. a work of art is entirely governed by the laws of beauty. So in Mardhekar's opinion Aristotle falls a prey to the fallacy of considering the material of literature as its medium. As he argues "it was the nature of the literary medium which was largely responsible for Aristotle's misconception of the type of organisation which is peculiarly appropriate in literature". 31

His project is to build a comprehensive theory of Aesthetics and he wants poetry also to be a part of that scheme, and in that context, he wishes to explore the relationship between poetry and other arts. He feels that

poetry has not received proper philosophical consideration, and that criticism of poetry tries to imitate the aesthetic aspect of language, rather than using language philosophically. Discussing the interest of people in poetry, he maintains:

Art critics and aesthetic philosophers, sharing this interest and moved by this attraction like the vast majority of human beings, with leanings primarily humanistic, tend almost invariably to resort to poetry while illustrating their analysis of aesthetic problems all discussion, and therefore, aesthetic discussion must be carried out in words. 32

Mardhekar wishes poetry to be placed in the hierarchy of fine arts, without being partial to it as a creative writer. He does not perceive poetry as a cultural force to be substituted in place of religion, in the manner of Matthew Arnold. Nor does he see it as the spiritual panacea, as T.S. Eliot did. His aesthetics operates within what one may describe as a cultural vacuum, free from the pressures of a disintegrating society. He voices this difference in unmistakable terms as follows:

This all too human prejudice in favour of poetry, and the natural inclination to regard poetry as a typical fine art instead of recognising that there is a hierarchy of order among the fine arts, have received their most powerful philosophical sanction from the intuitional aesthetics of Benedetto Croce. It is a significant indication of the 'pattern of criticism' to use a happy phrase of Mr. T.S. Eliot, which the Crocean aesthetics has set33

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He refuses to subscribe to the position that poetry as an aesthetic entity and has problems that are identical with the other arts. After discussing this confusion between poetry and other arts, he alludes to the confusion between life and poetry:

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Since everyone understands, or thinks he understands, poetry, more or less, because its counters are his counters, and because the poets experience differs from his experiences only in being more integral, less attenuated, and not essentially; and since there is a prima facial similarity between poetry and the other fine arts as both are in a strictly limited sense useless, the temptation is as obvious as it is compelling, to interpret all artistic creation and every aesthetic process in terms of those involved in literary production. 34

Mardhekar's contention is that the laws governing language as used in life, and the laws governing language used in poetry, ought to be different. According to the earlier discussion, the laws of language used in poetry would be those of harmony, contrast and balance. So according to him, though poetry is written in language, language is not everything in poetry. It is merely the medium of poetry. Hence the concepts of both poetry and its medium need rigorous analysis:

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Most of the errors, conflicts and confusion which are visible in the various aesthetic theories will be found ultimately to spring from a failure to define the concept of medium of art.35

This concern for the medium of poetry leads him to discuss

separate parts or aspects of poetry, such as the affective aspects or the cognitive aspects. He concurs with I.A. Richards that poetry is a function of affective meanings and not cognitive meanings. He makes a further distinction between absolute emotions and contingent emotions, and says that the rhythm or the pattern of absolute emotions is aesthetic:

rasa? ilij. cord? the affective aspects or two categories of emotions. The first category we may call that of pure or absolute emotions, and group the second under the heading of contingent emotions. Pure or absolute emotions are the immediate accompaniments of the perception of the quality of any sensation, or of a pattern, a gestalt, an organisation of relations. They are the necessary concomitants of any experience that is sensuous or formal, and do not derive from any 'experience of this world' 36

Mardhekar treats 'emotion' in its pure state, as existing independent of language. This position implies the philosophical assumption that there is 'Reality' outside language. When 'emotion' depends on language for its effect, it becomes, in his opinion, contingent emotion:

.... We may call this emotion 'aesthetic' and so distinguish it from the other group of contingent emotions which are 'poetic'. They are contingent because they depend upon a specific human world order. They are contingent upon the existence and persistence of a particular demand of the environment. 37

There are important linguistic assumptions in Mardhekar.

They are: (1) Language is a system shared by a community,

the system is capable of having simultaneous and mutually exclusive order within it, One such order is the logical order and the other is the aesthetic order.

(2) The logical order of language operates through the causal relationships of the syntax and the word order, whereas the aesthetic order operates through the complex interrelations of harmony, contrast and balance of the affective aspects of diction.

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- (3) Not all affective aspects of language are permanently 'affective', some become affective through their contingent placements, and some are 'absolutely affective'.
- (4) Language has within it the capacity to be transformed from normally used counters to logically ordered discourse, contingently affective order and absolutely affective rhythm.

Such a theory may be debatable from the perspective of modern linguistics but it is sufficiently comprehensive and is logically argued.

There is an inexplicable paradox in Mardhekar's literary career. As a poet he was influenced Marathi Saint poetry, and he is supposed to have revitalised that tradition. But in his criticism, he rarely refers to any contemporary or past Indian critic or philosopher. He does mention A.K. Coomaraswamy but, once, in support of an argument about the symbolic function of art. Here follows that solitary reference to Coomaraswamy:

The function of art, says Dr. Coomaraswamy in a recent essay on "Why Exhibit Works of Art".... is "primarily to communicate a gnosis", and if we add that this gnosis may be mediate or immediate, we have a neat statement of the function of art.38

The very fact that he did read Coomaraswamy, establishes that his reticence about Indian critical trends or tradition does not indicate his lack of awareness. It was a conscious choice as R.B. Patankar points out:

.... his approach to literary problems was utterly unconventional; he consistently refused to talk the traditional language of Rasa, Dhvani, Alankara, Style, Diction, Verbal music; eschewed the critical categories of literary kinds plot construction and characterisation dismissed as irrelavant problems like Art and Morality, Art and Society He made a conscious break with the past. 39

On the other hand, there are many allusions to Plato, Aristotle, Croce, Kant, T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, etc., to mention a few. Rarely does he cite Indian examples to illustrate his theory. In one exceptional instance, he refers to a judgemental premise about the Ajanta frescoes, as a part of the argument about the nature of aesthetic judgement. All other examples in him are of Western origin. The fields of knowledge from which he drew support for his aesthetic theory were, linguistics, philosophy, logic and the arts. In these Mardhekar relies only on Western sources. One does not find any acknowledgement in him of even the existence of these fields within the Indian tradition. His

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him a very typical Indian critic who attempted conscious Westernisation of criticism.

His theory has been repeatedly questioned by Marathi critics. The most persistent and systematic in them, has been R.B. Patankar.

Mardhekar's contribution to Indian criticism is in his pointing out the redundency of Sanskrit poetics and the ideas derived from it in the context of modern Indian literature But in order to cure one type of redundency in the tradition, he invests it with yet another kind by resoting to the Western discourse of criticism. He was doubthessly responsible for introducing many fine and useful critical concepts, such as form, structure, harmony, medium, aesthetic judgement, affective meaning, rhythm of the aesthetic form etc. His influence on Marathi literary criticism has been pervasive. A comparative study of the history of criticism in modern India, would reveal that similar changes occured in criticism in other Indian languages around the same time.

Mardhekar stands out as a highly 'original' critic, who spearheaded a stupendous change. A right assessment of his contribution is perhaps that he was more of a catalyst in the process of the ultimate colonisation of the mind, a process which began with the Bengal renaissance, and

terminated in the field of literary criticism in the works of Mardhekar. When one places him with Coomaraswamy, his near contemporary, one gets a clear picture of the final fragmentation of the critical discourse in India. Apparently, the critical texts by Coomaraswamy, and those by Mardhekar, represent mutually exclusive discourses. But both can be seen as jointly representing the intellectual tendencies released by the colonisation of India.

III

In many ways R.B. Patankar is similar to Mardhekar. He is a seminal critic like Mardhekar, like whom, he too writes in both Marathi and English, and happens to be an equally profound scholar of Western philosophy. The distinction between them is that Mardhekar wrote within the framework of Aesthetics with reference to arts, while Patankar writes within the field of meta-criticism with reference to criticism. In that sense Patankar has no predecessor in the twentieth century Indian criticism.

Patankar, who taught English literature and aesthetics at Bombay till 1986, is necessarily 'contemporary' in his concerns. His critical work reflects the preoccupations of an academic critic. It may be noted that the role of a critic had come to be changed in the post-independence India, from that of a prophet to that of a teacher. Patankar is

befittingly adapt at analysing concepts, rendering their definitions with precision, and outlining the limitations in their application. Within the Marathi literary context, Patankar's criticism is a sharp reaction to the confused critical activity which grew out of misconstrued readings of Mardhekar's theory. Patankar intends to invest the critical thought with precision, and critical practice with a sense of purpose. He stresses the importance of the following in a critical enterprise: (1) the nature of a given literary culture (2) the exact philosophical contours of the terms employed and (3) the correspondence between critical terminology and the works to which it is applied.

In addition he has been exploring the possibility of forming a viable historiography for Marathi criticism. The corpus of his critical works is made of numerous essays and the following books: Aesthetics and Literary criticism, Saundaryamimansa, Kantchi Saundaryamimansa, and Kamal Desai Yanche Kathavishva. 40

The driving force of Patankar's critical writings is the wish to investigate the relationship between critical criteria and concepts of beauty, or the relationship between literary criticism and literary aesthetics. In his early writings, he tries to approach this problem theoretically with a special emphasis on semantics, while in his later writings, particularly in <u>Saundaryamimansa</u>, he approaches the problem with a historical orientation by emphasising

the works of major thinkers.

His essay 'Aesthetics and Literary Criticism'. 41 needs to be discussed at this point. The aim of the essay is stated with Patankar's characteristic clarity of thought. He says: "I propose to discuss the problem of the exact relationship between literary criticism and philosophical aesthetics".42 He lists several difficulties facing such an inquiry. He begins by offering functional and rudimentary definations of the terms 'literary criticism' and 'beauty'. Literary criticism is a two/pronged activity; i.e.. "(a) analysis and interpretation of individual works of art and (b) their evaluation and grading". 42 A. But the two functions are never performed in exclusive isolation of know each other. Each interpretation is an implicit evaluation, and each evaluation subsumes multiple sets of criteria which are mutually exclusive and yet interchangeable. Patankar observes :

If we analyse critical writings we shall notice two interesting features of the critical discourse: (a) Critics appear to use not just one criterion with a limited application, but a spiral of criteria, each criterion depending upon a more general criterion for its justification (b) We shall also observe many such spirals of criteria continuously competing for supremacy and therefore always living in an uneasy atmosphere of precarious co-existence.43

The argument here is that the apparent certainties of literary criticism are embedded in a non-apparent flux of notions guided by the intellectual discourses surrounding the field of literary criticism. One such adjacent area is

metaphysics, and hence the relationship between aesthetics and literary criticism becomes important. Patankar argues that aesthetics is less interested in beauty as a property of a work of art than in the criteria of assessing that property. This point of view owes itself to G.E. Moore's philosophy. Patankar says:

Once we accept that the universal aesthetic propositions are statements not about the meaning of beauty but about its criteria, we can conceive the possibility of there being many criteria of beauty. It is only if we say that a universal aesthetic proposition is a defination of beauty that we are indissolubly wedded to only one set of beauty making properties. Moore says that different classes of good things might have nothing in common except their goodness. He gives the instance of love and admiring contemplation of beauty and shows that these two have only their goodness in common. The same is true of the different classes of beautiful things; they might have nothing in common except their beauty.44

The ideas expressed in this passage are central to Patankar's work. Throughout his critical writings, he has persistently refuted the tendency to essentialise critical concepts, or towards metacritical theorisation. While he takes absolute ideas of beauty into account, he does so only to expose the essentialist fallacy. There is therefore a hint of deferral quality of aesthetics, which constantly beckons literary criticism. Patankar says:

Aestheticians in the past assumed 'beautiful' must have the same meaning in whatever context it appeared. The assumption is acceptable if it means that the word is always valuationally

loaded. But if it is further meant that the word is permanently tied up with one definite set of properties the assumption is questionable. It is a mere prejudice to suppose that a general term always denotes a well defined class of objects characterised by a definite set of properties.45

So, in natural sciences the terms can signify 'a definite set of properties' permanently. In the case of value concepts like art and beauty the same does not happen.

Thus from simple definations of 'criticism' and 'beauty', he proceeds to the exploration of ontological complexities of these two areas. He points out the inevitable inter-dependance and the mutual transgression of the two, and proposes that it is in the analysis of the inter-relationship that one can begin to have some idea of the profoundly intriguing questions related to these areas. He observes:

A large number of such concepts need careful analysis. And it is the job of the critic to analyse them. The Analysists are not interested in literary problems or they look upon the analysis of literary concepts as a mode of intellectual relaxation. 46

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Another important essay by him is titled 'Art - An Essentially contested - concept', is an exposition of Gallie's idea of contested concepts. 47 Patankar distinguishes between a particular use and general use of concepts. It is the proper, general concepts in the field of art and criticism, which are 'essentially contested' ones. Gallie argues that in order to understand such essentially contested

concepts, one should have a historical awareness of their evolution. Patankar lists seven logical conditions given by Gallie, to which the use of any essentially contested concepts must conform. They are : (1) a concept must be appraisive of a valued achievement. (2) the achievement must have complexity and worth, (3) discussion of its worth must include reference to its various parts, (4) the valued achievement should be modifiable according to changing circumstances, (5) the concept should be both aggressive and defensive. (6) the concept should be drawn from a common acceptable 'examplar', (7) the original 'examplar's achievement may sustain or develop. 48 Patankar then takes up the concept of art and establishes after Gallie's manner that art is an essentially contested concept. This exercise appears to be derivative. However, when this derived notion of art is used to understand the failure of aesthetics to give ultimate definations and universally valid observations, Gallie's theory acquires significance. Patankar's argument is that the categorical framework of art is not a static and limited one, but as argued by him (in the previously discussed essay), a set of mutually exclusive and competing frameworks:

"The peculiarity of aesthetic experience is that there are alternative categorical frameworks obtainable and all of them make the relevant valuable experiences possible."49

The implication is that for a post colonial literary

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culture like India's, there has to be an indigenous framework of Aesthetics. The categorical framework should be historically sonsistent with the supporting conceptual frameworks peculiar to a given community or culture. This position is important in two respects: (1) it suggests the need for a nativistic aesthetics, and (2) it is a systematic and philosophic attack on the alleged claim of universality of art made by Formalism, which was fashionable in Marathi in the 'sixties. Patankar is aware of the latter and observes:

Then it might become necessary for a new school to assert the claims of Form. The movement thus goes on, each new phase in it correcting the earlier excess in some direction. The changes are necessary because each change is brought about by the constraint of the totality of value realisable at the level of enjoyment. But what happens when different categorical frameworks are operative at the enjoyment levelitself? How do new frameworks come into existence? That is one of the ultimate mysteries of human nature which we cannot penetrate.50

It is in pursuance of the second problem of the two mentioned above, that Patankar develops his later criticism.

Saundaryamimansa documents Patankar's aesthetic concerns. That the book is different in its concerns is obvious from the title. Instead of conventionally calling it Saundaryasastra, he calls it Saundaryamimansa. He wishes to discuss Aesthetics as a cultural practice related to philosophical articulation of concepts implicit in practical

criticism, not as a science. In Marathi the book received appropriate attention, and is available in Gujarati translation. 51

Saundary amimansa is a map of aesthetics concepts drawn with a view to examining the formal features of the concepts in the Western and Indian traditions. In the introduction. Patankar states 'One of my important concerns is to analyse the concepts of criticism and draw a conceptual map'. 52 In this map he traces two main lines of the developments in aesthetics; one of them is meta-aesthetics, and the other is practical criticism. In his view, Aesthetics has been a field of !! failures, because the nature of Aesthetics as a field of knowledge differs from that of a science. Scientific concepts are logically inter-related and form a pyramidal structure of discourse. Aesthetics is a circuitous journey of concepts round the question "What is Beauty/Art?". It cannot be said that one particular concept of beauty or art is more appropriate than any other of its kind. It is not therefore implied that conventional Aesthetics is a science without sense. The problem arises from the fact that aestheticians - treat objects of art as any other objects, leading to

"false expectations being created, and to hopelessness when such unnecessary expectation are not fulfilled. Perhaps the discoveries in aesthetics are not like the ones in science."53 He argues that cows have essential 'cowness', with reference to which, it is possible to define all cows. But it would be wrong to think that all tragedies have a common element of Tragedy. Similarly all arts may not have a 'common' element of beauty. Traditional aesthetics assumes that there are essential features of beauty or art to be found in all objects of beauty or literature. Patankar terms this tendency 'essentialist fallacy':

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To say that we have realised the essence of art or beauty, by defining beauty as 'expression' or as a creation with harmony - contrast-balance - rhythm' is to effect an essentialist fallacy. Such limited definations of beauty or art have been avoided in the present book.54

Patankar's attempt is not to deny the quality of intelligence that has gone into the making of traditional aesthetics. He brings logical vitality to bear upon his analysis of aesthetic concepts. In order to analyse the function and scope of aesthetics, he offers probing study of Kant, Hegel, Bosanquet, Croce, Collingwood, Plato, Aristotle, Shankuk, Anandavardhana and many others. Thus his book is not an attempt at a new theory of beauty or art. It is a new orientation towards understanding the conventional map of aesthetic concepts. In support of his method, he quotes Wittgenstein from Philosophical Investigations; "The problems are solved, not by giving new information, but by arranging what we have always known".55

Saundaryamimansa is a compendium of critical theories, discussing almost all major debates known to the field of

literary study and criticism till 1960, (Structuralism and Post-structuralism - therefore do not figure in it). It discusses problems of criticism related to value judgement, ethics, ontology, form, structure, organicism, expressionism, and aesthetic reception. It concerns a range of both Western and Indian critics and philosophers and offers insights into their works. The first three chapters of the book are highly thought provoking in their discussion of Aesthetics and aesthetic judgement.

In his attempt at resolving whether aesthetics is a field of knowledge or a science, Patankar lists the functions performed by any science. They are:

- (1) to analyse problems and distinguish their constituents
- (2) to classify various constituents according to a common quality;
- (3) to suggest a hypothesis to understand the cohesiveness of the constituents;
- (4) to infer what may be probable and logical on the basis of the hypothesis;
- (5) to test the hypothesis in reality. 56

He then argues that aesthetics differs from science mainly because it does not proceed from a foundational hypothesis.

It proceeds from aesthetic facts. Aesthetics will not 'teach or 'train' an individual to acquire aesthetic sensibility.

It is not required to build hypothesis related to beauty or art objects. Patankar maintains that aesthetic concepts have at their back, a subsumed and a highly complex structure of

ethical, ontological and formal concepts. To throw light on the relationship between the aesthetic concepts and the subsumed backdrop of the supporting concepts is the primary function of aesthetics. Patankar repeatedly maintains that all aesthetic concepts are implicit in critical practices, and are nothing more than a systematic articulation of them. Aesthetics is thus not a legislating discourse, nor is it a process of inventing ideas, nor even a technology of art appreciation. It is a branch of philosophy which systematises problems of logical relationship implicit in critical praxis.

Patankar's approach to Aesthetics, is deeply influenced

by G.E. Moore's philosophy. In the seminal chapter on the nature of aesthetic proposition, Patankar discusses Moore's views. Moore had argued that 'goodness' as an abstraction cannot be enfolded within a single defination, or to use Moore's words 'stipulative verbal defination'. ⁵⁷ To combine together various attributes of goodness, which are mutually exclusive or contradictory, is to commit the 'naturalistic fallacy'. ⁵⁸ Another way of defining certain abstractions amounts to tautology. For example, to say 'beauty is beautiful', is to say 'yellow is yellow'. Logically these definations are unexceptionable. But cognitively, they do not serve their intended purpose. Hence any defination of art or beauty, becomes a highly contestable construct. The definations of beauty offered from the perspectives,

respectively, of (i) naturalism, (ii) intuitionism, and

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(iii) emotivism, have their peculiar problems. It becomes necessary therefore to think of beauty not as a simple concept, but as an essentially contestable concept.

Patankar then shifts to Wittgenstein, and invoking his idea of 'family resemblence', tries to tackle beauty. Citing games as examples, Wittgenstein argues that all games have their rules, but all games do not have identical rules. On the other hand different games may have mutually overlapping rules. Game 'A' may share some rules in common with game 'B', and game 'B' may share some rules with game 'C', though there may not be anything common between game 'A' and game 'C'. Wittgenstein argues that the relationship between games 'A', 'B', and 'C' is that of family resemblence. Such a conceptualisation helps describing art or beauty almost. as genus, and at the same time accounting for the differences between the various expressions of the genus. Patankar accepts this approach and argues that any attempt at defining all art is bound to fail owing to the essentialist fallacy involved in such an attempt. His mesthetics therefore, is not a definational enterprise. It is a philosophical examination of the premises, concepts, and terms generally used in the field of Aesthetics.

Saundaryamimansa is not/as stated earlier/a rendering of Western concepts for Marathi readers. It does not attempt either an explication of traditional Sanskrit theories for

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the Western readers, or a synthesis of Indian and Western theories. It does not even postulate any new theories of beauty or art. Its strength lies in its sustained meta—aesthetic treatment of the conceptual frameworks, and their linguistic transactions, involved in the field of Aesthetics. The ideas which uplift Patankar's discussion to the level of meta—aesthetics are rooted in the modern analytical philosophy. This philosophy is a result of collective developments in linguistics, logic, and mathematics. The field of philosophy was strengthened by the works of Russel, Whitehead, Moore, and Wittgenstein. Patankar uses this ground to reflect upon the field of critical practice. In this sense, he contributes to the Westernisation of Indian literary criticism.

Patankar has contributed to the analysis of literary culture, in addition to Aesthetics. It is believed that beginning with Mardhekar, Maharashtra has contributed a lot to the field of Aesthetics. There are frequent debates about the nature of beauty, art, form and aesthetic judgement, in Marathi. Patankar has analysed Mardhekar's aesthetics in an essay titled 'Aesthetics: Some Important Problems', in which he makes a scathing attack on Marathi literary culture. He maintains that Aesthetics is not an autonomous discipline, but is inevitably dependent on the corresponding developments in creative literature as well as other branches of Humanities. He mentions three necessary

conditions in which a new aesthetic order can grew. are (1) there should be new and dynamic movements in arts, demanding fresh evaluative formulations, (2) there should exist a strong critical tradition, and (3) there should exist a strong intellectual tradition. Seferring to the debates in Marathi about Kant's relationship with expressionasm, he comments: 'All that the debate shows is that we cannot yet distinguish between instruction and delight. 60 He suggests that an overall development in the field of aesthetics, presupposes a range of scholars having wide knowledge of arts as well as history. The present/day critics are generally exposed to just one or two fields of art. Reiterating his stand in Saundaryamimansa, he asserts that aesthetics does not describe beauty but tries to analyse the logical peculiarities, and the content/substance of the relevant concepts from the statements about art.

Patankar cites many examples to show that the definations of literary forms invariably commit the essentialist fallacy. He therefore advocates that aesthetic concepts should be treated as open concepts.

One can see that in the course of his career as a critic Patankar moves towards the critical position of nativism. His refusal to consider Aesthetics as an autonomous discipline reflects his awareness of intellectual concepts originating from life as lived in a given society. Implicit in this position is a radical critique of

Mardhekar's aesthetics. Mardhekar, as discussed earlier was engaged in describing universal differentials of art. Patankar, on the other hand, dismisses the attempt as an essentialist fallacy. He goes to the extent of stating that what the Marathi critics have developed so far is not aesthetics at all. In his opinion that development has to correspond the development in the allied branches of humanities. He observes:

Now that we know something definite about the nature of aesthetics, it should not be difficult for us to see and evaluate what the Marathi critics and aestheticians have been able to do, and what they have not been able to do. Theories of beauty grow in the womb of art traditions, they begin to become explicit in criticism, and if there is a strong intellectual tradition in the community, they can be formulated with logical rigour. If we resist the temptation of indulging in self-glorification and decide to pace reality, we shall have to admit that nothing significant has been done in any of the three fields: aesthetics, criticism and creative writing. It is a saddening realization that this all-round poverty is not a recent phenomenon in Maharashtra; it has been there for decades. That there should spring into existence new aesthetic theories in this atmosphere of poverty seems to be almost impossible. We shall have to come to the same conclusion about all disciplines that are given the general name of 'humanities'. It is only when society is vibrating with life and vigour in all its aspects, traditions and institutions that the possibility is created for the emergence of new theoretical systems. Great problems arise in such a living society; and the traditions in that society throw up great men endowed with genius to tackle them. No such problems have arisen in our art tradition; and we have not produced great geniuses to tackle them. 62

This devastating critique of Marathi literary culture is a logical culmination of Patankar's earlier theoretical

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position. His nativism is thus quickened by his Westernisation. He asserts that mere imitation of Western theories will not contribute to the enrichment of Indian criticism. If these theories can be used to formulate fresh questions in the context of Indian literature, they may be put to creative use, Patankar states:

It is here that we can hope to get much help from the Western aesthetic theories.... The Western aesthetic structure is very comprehensive, complex, and well-built. It has received solid support from art-tradition on the one hand and the tradition of philosophical thinking on the other. It is necessary to study indetail the different constituents of this vast structure, to evaluate them, to examine their mutual bearings with regard to one-another, to construct a conceptual map. It is for them to ascertain where we and our theories can be placed on this map It is in fact a sort of project that only a group of researchers scholars, critics, philosophers can tackle. While this work is being done on the plane of theory, we must at the same time maintain continuous and direct grass-root contact with literature, by functioning as practical critics with all the necessary equipment and substantial help from our native common sense.63

Patankar has been somewhat of a missionary in the cause of Aesthetics. His contribution to Aesthetics has been the introduction of philosophical rigour, and analytical logic into this traditionally speculative field. He will be remembered as the century's most remarkable theoretical critic in Marathi.

Suresh Joshi occupies a place in Gujarati literature and criticism that Mardhekar does in Marathi literature and criticism. Like Mardhekar\Suresh Joshi remained an avant-gard writer all through his career, and the pioneering modernist antrevenies ? in Gujarati literature. He has been a debated writer. Unlike Mardhekar, Joshi does not offer any specific theory of beauty or literature. What Joshi offers is a mode of critical practice. If Mardhekar proposed specific solutions to the eternally contested field of Aesthetics, Joshi introduced a style of formulating new and incisive questions. In that sense/his critical stance is closer to that of R.B. Patankar than that of Mardhekar. Yet the main difference between the criticism of Patankar and that of Joshi is that Patankar is interested in aesthetic concepts and their philosophical contours, while Joshi is primarily interested in the process of creative language. His contribution to Gujarati criticism lies in that he raised very fundamental questions about the use of language in the context of creative literature. The questions he raised, involved profound philosophical thinking about the relationship between language and reality and the nature of creativity in language. He constantly invoked the process of linguistic transformation of reality; and in doing so, he upset most of the established aesthetic ideas in the field of Gujarati literature. His predecessors

belonging to what is generally described as the 'Gandhi era' 64 in Gujarati literature had concerned themselves with ethics and didecticism. Joshi, in his role as the pioneering modernist, focused his attention on expressivity and linguistic structures within the fictional space and on idiom and texture of language in poetry. He drew his ideas freely from sources both Indian and Western, transmuting them all while applying them to the purpose of practical criticism. His insistence on fictional transformation of life was fervently debated in Gujarati, often attracting undue appreciation or indiscriminate criticism. His position as an avant-gard figure caused a continuous misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his basic critical concerns. The fate of Joshi in the history of recent Gujarati literature has been that of a cult figure. The attempt here is to view his critical statements dispassionately and to disentagle the major philosophical strands that go into its making.

Suresh Joshi's critical writings are scattered through his copious works. One finds his major critical statements coming through the prefaces to his fictional work, stray articles in periodicals and little magazines, most of which he himself edited, and occasionally through journalistic articles. Many of the statements show Joshi as an embattled mind, embroiled in some or the other literary controversy.

As such there is no single and definative critical opus of Suresh Joshi. One can think of Chintayami Mansa', as a candidate nearly qualifying for that description. The book contains essays reproduced from various sources and with various functions to perform. This book too did not escape controversy, as Joshi turned down the Sahitya Akademi prize awarded to it. Such being the nature of the corpus of Joshi's critical writings, it is somewhat difficult to give a historical treatment to his work. Therefore, thematic and practical perspective is adopted in evaluating Joshi's contribution to Indian literary criticism. The two major themes central to it are literary language, and the language and reality relationship.

The preface to Joshi's <u>Grihapravesh</u>, a collection of short stories, is a major critical statement by itself, and the stories in the collection are examples of modernistic fictional practice in Gujarati. Therefore, the preface acquired the status of a manifesto. It was a strong reaction to the moralising fiction of the 'Gandhi era' in Gujarati. For its epigraph, <u>Grihapravesh</u> has an extract from the high priest of Western Modernism, Ortega & Gasset:

Art has no right to exist if, content to reproduce reality, it uselessly duplicates it. Its mission is to conjure up imaginary worlds. That can be done only if the artist repudiates reality and by this act places himself above it. Being an artist means ceasing to take seriously that very serious person we are when we are not an artist. 65

As the epigraph indicates, the preface takes up the question of artistic transformation as its central concern. Joshi states at the beginning that literary creation is a kind of Lila. He explains it thus:

Lila means an act of unintended creation....

Sometimes what is created cannot be understood by the help of any sembalance it might have with either a thing or event or memory common to us. A sculptorcreates a form out of stone, that form does not remind us of any form known to us, yet it is pleasant to look at. What pleasant here is the creation of that form. Why was the artist inspired to create it? His mind wanted to indulge in such a lila, is the only answer possible. 66

The business of literary creation is not to reproduce reality, but to restructure it. Joshi argues that reality has its own temporal and spatial framework, while art belongs to a different order of existence. Besides reality is not confined just to the phenomenal world. As Joshi points out, reality has infinite possibilities. Hence mimetic fiction becomes a very limited kind of writing. Joshi believes that all good creative writing is always indirect. He cites Tomas Mann who states: The real artist never talks about the main thing. ⁶⁷ Joshi argues in favour of symbolisation in art. He does not think of art as a mere set of beautiful objects. He looks at it as a process which involves the process of reformulation of experiences. So art has to be experienced as symbolic transformation set within artistic space and time. Joshi quotes Paul Klee to

reinforce his argument: "The work of art is experienced primarily as a process of formation, never as a product." Referring to Western thinkers and artists like Ortega Y. Gasset, Rilke, Van Ghogh, Paul Klee, Tomas Mann, Proust, and George Santayana, the preface creates a Modernistic ambiance.

In response to the question regarding the truth in art,

Joshi states that the truth is 'the pure state of existing'.

Thus for him art has no reference outside itself. But
he does not subscribe to the 'art for art sake' view.

His concern is more of ontological nature than a pragmatic
one. He is not interested in the purposes that art serves
so much as in the nature of its being. He believes after
the Modernist fashion, that art has its own laws and has
its own spatio-temporal order of existence. In this
aesthetic world, fantasy and the absurd merge with what
we normally call reality: For him fantasy is the opposite
extreme of the truth:

Fantasy and absurdity are included within the omniscient scope of the truth Many a precious elements of the truth are embedded in fantasy and absurdity. Who, except an artist can save them? Rabindranath speaks of two kinds of truth: the truth and the truth plus. An artist's realm is the realm of the truth plus. 69

In his opinion the aesthetic transcendance of the polarity

between reality and non-reality is achieved in literature through an organised use of language. The concern with literary language as being different from the language of ordinary use is the corner stone of Joshi's criticism. One of the favourite metaphors of his is that of a multi storeyed mansion. He always tried to explore the multiple levels of the mansion of language. For him literature is a kind of game, <u>Lila</u>, which can be compared to games played by children in a large house, literature thus becomes an exploration of the house of language. He further says:

Language is used in day to day life and also in literature. This dual function of language creates problems. A writer has to process language afresh. He has to free it from the conventional context and give it an independent form. 70

With Joshi the self-reflexive awareness about literary language enters Gujarati criticism for the first time. Significantly enough the title of the collection is Grihapravesh Joshi's subsequent work centers round two aspects of the <u>lila</u> within the <u>griha</u> of languages: (1) the character of language itself, and (b) the relation between the mansion of language and the reality outside.

One of the seminal essays by Joshi is <u>Navalkatha Vishe</u> (on the novel), published in his own journal <u>Kshitij</u> in 1963. In this essay he takes up two fundamental issues related to fiction: (1) the nature of the genre novel, and (2) the nature of the transformation of reality that it

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effects. The essay is written in the context of the Gujarati fiction tradition and it attempts a radical revaluation of that tradition. As such he opens his argument by referring to major Gujarati classics. In the Gujarati novel tradition Sarasvatichandra 71 of Govardhanram Tripathi has been considered a great literary classic. Joshi enumerates the grounds of criticism which lead to that conclusion. Critics have praised Sarasvatichandra for its range and M. (elusiveness. It has also been compared to the Indian epics and puranas. Joshi argues that greatness of fiction cannot be measured in terms of the range of topics it deals with. it has to be measured in terms of the organicity of its aesthetic structure. He argues that majority of the critics concentrated only on the philosophical content of Sarasvatichandra without discussing its form seriously. He points out that :

Govardhanram himself called the form in Sarasvatichandra, a mosaic. B.K. Thakore calls it a garland.... the hero being the thread and the episodes being the flowers. But the meticulous arrangement suggested by a garland is missing in Sarasvatichandra. Govardhanram.... wanted a blending of the actual and the ideal aspect in it and acknowledged that the ideal becomes dominent in the novel Seeking the form of a work of art in terms of the scheme and intension does not lead to criticism.72

Similarly, he has the following to say about Munshi's historical fiction.

Munshi accepted entertainment as an aim, without trying to guage the contemporary reality; hence our novel shed all literary characteristics. The reality of the past cannot be achieved by general logy, monotonous deeds of valour, diplomacy, some eroticism and a general coating of wonder.... hence, to use Ortega's term, they are 'Whim adventures, or at the most 'romances', they cannot be called novels.73

In challenging the established critical views, Joshi implies that the criterion for assessing fiction needs to be redefined. He argues that the laws of fiction need not be derived from the laws of life, that fictional characters may be like people in the real life but they cannot be identical with people in the real life. Taking up the central Formalistic concept of virtual representation, 74 he maintains that time in fiction is abridged. The events in fiction occur in the fictional time and not in the chronological time.

Our reality is the reality grasped by senses. So if the past has to be there in a novel, it has to be in the form of the present. The present is only a point of indication and has no proportions the past remains with us in the form of images, which we impose on the present and strive to achieve our reality. 75

What applies to the time also applies to the fictional space. In his opinion, critics often overlook the difference between life governed by the rules of the possible, and fiction governed by the laws of the probable. He devotes much energy in specifying the distinction between life and fiction. Inevitably/therefore/he cannot accord the

status of fiction to reportage. In the light of this argument, the greatness of <u>Sarasvatichandra</u> needs to be located not in its thematic range, but in its aesthetic organisation.

Language is the medium of literature, and the criticism of poetry does study the behaviour of language. But the criticism of fiction tends to overlook the fact that fiction is more language than life. Joshi tries to draw attention to the linguistic features of fiction by arguing that what makes fiction 'fiction' x is not the mimesis of life but the formal structuring of life represented. In this sense form and structure take precedance over the act of representation. This perspective is central to Joshi's celebrated thesis about ghatnavilop, by which he means that fiction does not depend primarily on the plot elements, it is the form which creates the plot. The subsequent interest developed by Joshi in Phenomenology, is closely linked with his philosophy of form. Joshi alludes to several Western critics while expounding his view of fictional form and argues that characters in fiction must cohere with the fictional time and space whether they adhere to real life or not. In that sense fiction is more of a metaphor for life than a mimesis of it.

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Life gets metaphorised in literature through the process of transformation of semantic relationships. This

process is described by Joshi as arthaghatan, literally meaning semantic reduction. The original Gujarati term also means semantic formation. Joshi draws attention to the fact that arthaghatan, Joshi draws attention to the fact that arthaghatan does not mean only 'meaning', it also means rasa, or aesthetic structure according to him. Thus literature becomes metaphoric through the process of aesthetic transformation of life. In correspondence with New Criticism, Joshi thinks of literature as a process which begins with the text but continues to the point of reception. In his view literature uses meanings differently from their lexical use. Merely knowing the lexical meanings of words used in a poem does not help understanding of the poem. A poem's identity as a poem is decided by the aesthetic interrelations of the words used. Thus it is the form which makes literature what it is.

In a strong reaction to literature of the 'Gandhi era',
Joshi redefines the place of philosophy in literature. The
writers of that era, believed that literature must be put to
the service of enlightenment. Joshi inverts the terms of
reference completely and argues that it is poetry which is
the mother of philosophy:

exclamation about the world was in the form of poetry. It had seeds of future philosophy. Poetry and philosophy seem to have merged into each other in the vedas and Upanishads In our times existentialist philosophies placed materiality of life as lived, and the human context first, and the philosophical off—shoots next.... Merleau—Pontil has said that literature and philosophy cannot be opposites of or apart from each other. Grasping the originary experience of individual consciousness in the

instantiancity of life as lived, these two modes of expression strive to express it through language.76

Poetry has the power to invoke the 'originary' consciousness and to restore the ontological dignity to the self of the reader. At this point Joshi turns to Existentialist Phenomenology by alluding to Merleau-Ponti's dictum that "the world is such that it cannot be expressed except in 'stories' and as it were. pointed at". 77 Since literature has this unnamed capacity to appeal to the primeval sources of cognition in man, It transcends the limits of philosophy in Joshi's opinion. Referring to Plato's attack on poetry. he calls it misleading. He points out that in The Republic, Plato establishes a continuum of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, and such a continuum is possible only in the realm of poetry. Therefore, Plato cannot be said to have been against poetry. Philosophy. thus, is not an anti-thesis of literature. Literature, as if, subsumes philosophy.

Philosophy conveys ideas while literature heightems man's capacity to perceive life. Literary experience is more profound than the experience of philosophy, because the literary form endows a work with creative potentials. This view of literature contradicts the view of literature as enlightenment and a vehicle of philosophy, held by Joshi's predecessors in Gujarati

literary tradition. The two essays, 'Arthaghatan'and 'Sahitya Ane Philsufi' (Philosophy), ⁷⁸ are the initial stages in Joshi's transition from Formalism to Phenomenology.

His interest in Phenomenology, coupled with his interest in Existentialism, strongly attracted Joshi to the writings of Jean Paul Sartre. In his creative writings. Joshi was constantly occupied with the theme of marginalisation of modern man, whereas in his critical writings he was occupied with the problem of social marginalisation of the aesthetic. Both these concerns. drew him irresistably to the works of Sartre. However. Joshi did not lose the awareness of his Indianness while admiring Sarte. Sartre wrote for his contemporary generation of French youth, which experienced life as an unending punishment in the realm of boredom. Joshi is aware that this condition does not prevail in India to the same degree. In India/on the other hand/life gets straight -/ jacketed due to prevalent bureaucratism, and creates incurable lethargy and indifference. Joshi finds Existentialism meaningful in the Indian context from this perspective. He finds modern India a varitable Kafka(esque) castle. It is from this perspective, that he adopts the French Existentialism.

In Joshi's critique of culture, the hiatus between literature and its reception features with a regular

the marginalisation of art. Therefore the phenomenology of aesthetic reception is of special interest to him.

In 'Sarjak, Sarjan, Vivecham Kriyashil Ne Pranvant
Sannikarsh', 79 refers to the phenomenology of Hegel, Max
Dessoir, Roman Ingarden, Merleau-Ponti and others. The essay describes the process of aesthetic reception in terms of a continuous activity, transcending the separate identities of the creator, creation, and the aesthetic response. Such a continuity of aesthetic response determines the ontological status of the creation, at the same time bringing about a transformation in the consciousness of the recipient. The phenomenology of aesthetic reception involves therefore an intricate connection between the object perceived and the perceiving consciousness.

Variety of changes and processes occur simultaneously in the consciousness of an artist or an aesthate and in the matter. A work of art gradually comes into being and during this span the form and the properties of the evolving work of art keep changing perception and realisation of an object as a work of art, and its sense experience both are parallel.80

The implicit assumption in Joshi's Phenomenology is that the process of marginalisation of art can be arrested only by changing the consciousness through artistic means. If the artist is marginalised today, his work is all the same very important as the only cure of the modern existentialist condition. Alluding to valeri/Joshi emphasises that the primary function of literature is the "increase of consciousness". 81 If that is the function of literature, then criticism which is consciousness of literature, becomes the consciousness of consciousness. Joshi finds it necessary therefore to introduce the Critics of Consciousness to Gujarati readers.

For the Critics of Consciousness, criticism is literature about literature or consciousness about consciousness the critics of this school differ from other contemporary schools of criticism. French Structuralists, Russian Formalists, or New Critics regard criticism as objective kind of knowledge.... on the other hand for the Critics of Consciousness literary criticism is a kind of literature....82

At the beginning of his essay 'Vivehanano Chaitanyavadi abhigam' 3 Joshi points out that the Critics of Consciousness school differs from the Structuralist school and the Formalist school. Structuralism and Formalism think of criticism as a discipline allied to human sciences. The Consciousness school thinks of criticism as a creative activity, because the art object takes on a dynamic inter-relationship with the perceiving consciousness, becoming almost one with it. Criticism in the opinion of the Critics of Consciousness is a kind of meditation. If this is so, Joshi asks what literature itself is In answering this question, he discusses the debatable nature of the consciousness itself.

Though the critics of this school agree on literature being a kind of consciousness, they differ in their ideas of consciousness itself....

If criticisms aims at the consciousness of the critic being one with that of the artist, it would depend on our idea of consciousness criticism is the consciousness of the critic about the consciousness of the artist.84

Joshi argues that literature is not an activity dissociated from self consciousness. It is, alluding to his earlier statements he says, an activity which transcends the tension between the consciousness and the self consciousness. It is, in other words, an activity which increases the intensity of life experience. Invoking Georges Poullet he writes:

Poullet invokes the consciousness within the consciousness the *ins*tant an artistic consciousness dissociates itself and tries to be manifest, is significant for Poullet criticism aims at dissociating the artistic consciousness and assimilating it....85

In most part Joshi agrees with Poullet's transcendental Phenomenology, in which he prefers the term 'convergence', to the term 'transcendance'. 86 He quotes Poullet approvingly:

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I am above all attracted by those for whom literature by defination/a spiritual activity which must be gone beyond in its own depths or which, in failing to be gone beyond in being condemned to the awareness nontranscendence, affirms itself as the experience and verification of a fundamental defect.87

In Joshi's approval of the Critics of Consciousness,

is implicit his transition as a critic from Formalism to Phenomenology. Formalism treats art objects and literary works as objects in themselves. Phenomenology treats literary works as objects in the consciousness. They come into existence through the consciousness of the perceiver, just as they shape the consciousness of the perceiver. The question of literary form raised by Joshi in the preface to Grihapravesh, is thus resolved by him with reference to Phenomenology. Aesthetic form is not an objective attribute of a literary work, it is an inter-subjective and dynamic process of semantic bracketing. The form then is thus linked with the consciousness of the perceiver. Joshi's interpreters often feel baffled when they do not find precise defination of 'Form' in his criticism. The reason is that / Joshi looks at the form as a living, organic, process, rather than as a frozen, linguistic, structure. Phenomenology helps him to articulate this conceptualisation of the form. The form for him is a kind of perpetual play, played simultaneously in the house of language, as well as the consciousness of the critic.

Joshi's transition from New Criticism to Phenomenology is evident in the essay 'Navya Vivechan Vishe Thodun'. In this essay, he presents a sympathetic summary of the fundamental tenets of New Criticism. Yet he points out

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the limitations of New Criticism. The essay is a good historical perspective on New Criticism. Joshi makes it a point to recall that the term 'New Criticism' was first used in the nineteenth century by Schlegel brothers. In offering a historical perspective on New Criticism Joshi implies that historical study of literature is not as worthless as the New Critics made it out to be. The perspective also shows his total grasp of Western trends in criticism. His talent for critical cartography is seen in the remarks such as the following:

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The term New Criticism was first employed by Schlegel brothers, Croce also uses the term 'New critic' for himself. Spingarn has borrowed this term from Croce. After, John Crow Ransom wrote 'The New Criticism' this term was accepted The sings of this new trend are seen in the writings of Ransom, Tate, Blakmur, Kenneth Burke, and Winters. This trend is extended by Cleanth Brooks, Robert Pen Warren, and Wimsatt882

The above extract shows his capacity to discriminate between Western trends of criticism in terms of their original, philosophic and social contexts. Besides, he is also aware that New Criticism has had its allied philosophical positions formulated in the tradition of Indian poetics.

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experience is distinct from day to day, immediate concerns; it is distinct from theoretical statements or overflow of feelings or rhetorical appeal. The state of poise or harmony is achieved by the unity or by of a work of art. This point of view preceds the art for art sake movement. On our side, Anandavardhana and Mammata have said the same.89

He points out that Anandavardhana and Mammata anticipate Kant, Coleridge, Croce, and the subsequent Western Formalists. However, he finds it difficult to accept the autonomy of poetry alleged to it by the New Critics. For Joshi, poetry is inseparable from the consciousness of the creator and the reader. Thus, if he accepts the interest

in language activated by the New criticism as a useful critical method, he does not accept its basic philosophy of total autonomy of poetry. In Joshi's perspective New Criticism and Formalism are the beginnings of literary Aesthetics, the culmination, however comes with the Phenomenology of aesthetic consciousness.

Joshi was perhaps the only Gujarati critic to keep up with the rapidly changing scenario in the West during the last four decades. His perceptive essays on linguistics and semiotics are a testimony to his vibrant interest in critical theories generated in the West. It must also be added that he was passionately committed to transfusing the New Critical ideas into the body of contemporary Gujarati criticism. The essays 'Sanketvignanni saidhantik bhumika', 'Sanketvignan' and 'Sahitya Vivechan Ane Bhashavijnan', 90 continue to be, till date, among the seminal essays in Gujarati on these topics. They also reflect Joshi's abiding interest in the language of literature. One feels by looking at the copious body of Joshi's literary and cultural criticism, that he perceived rejuvenation of Gujarati language in a multi-faceted manner as the mission of his life; and he undertook diverse, creative, critical, and translation activity towards this end.

Unlike his contemporary Indian critics, Joshi did not stop with New Criticism and Structuralism. He carriedout

profound study of Post-Modernism; and, true to the spirit of his mission, he wrote about it in Gujarati. In his essay on Modernity, and Post-Modernity 'Arvachinta Ane Anuarvachinta', 91 he examines the dimensions of the post-Modern condition. It can be said without any exaggeration that his critique of Post-Modernism is unique in terms of its originality. He explains Modernity and its scope thus:

The chief characteristic of modernity is the advancement in science and technology. Prior to 1480, the calculative genius of Man was considered significant then Man cultivated the sense of perspective and developed spatialization and mathematization. Man's ability to control Nature by technology increased. As a result the objective viewer and his environment were separated. Material world viewed in terms of extension and mass lead to the separation of the consciousness and the material world. Galelio's dictum "to measure everything measurable and to make measure what is not yet measurable" became the rule of the day. Time also began to be understood in terms of space. 92

In Joshi's opinion the modernist thought creates dichotomy between the consciousness and the material world, and also limits the forms and aims of knowledge. It is no wonder therefore that such 'logocentrism' 3 is challenged by Post-modernism, which Joshi describes as follows:

Post-modern ity is something different.

It aims at being mystical. It derives its
dynamism by exploring the creativity within
the consciousness. It has the scope of dreams
and fantasy. It also indicates a fruitful
relationship between technology and human
thought. 94

Joshi is able to map out the literary dimensions that both Modernism and Post-modernism created. Without offering detailed analysis of Formalism, New Criticism, Phenomenology, Structuralism etc., he gives a lucid summary of the philosophical forces responsible for generating both Modernity and Post-modernity in literature.

Joshi's contribution to Gujarati criticism can be said to have been of the utmost importance. In relation to Anandshankar Dhruv and B.K. Thakore, he was, what Rolland Barthes was to A.C. Bradley and F.R. Leavis. Joshi offered Gujarati criticism in intense awareness of literature as literary construct rather than as a vehicle of enlightenment. He established the need to examine literary language / itself, and in relation to the phenomenology of aesthetic experience, as the basic procedure in literary criticism. He rendered contemporary Western critical trends usable in the context of Gujarati criticism. He also taught his contemporary critics and writers the need to use discrimination in adopting Western modes of knowledge as absolute forms of knowledge. His phenomelogical perspective was rooted in his awareness of the Indian traditions of philosophy and poetics. His attempt was not to bring about a synthesis of the Western and Indian literary theories. It was also not an attempt to revive Indian poetics, nor was it an attempt to initiate Western theories slavishly. His

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criticism was motivated by a philosophical urge to explain the basic purpose of the creative act and the aesthetic response. This philosophical urge lead him to a searching analysis of New Criticism, Formalism, Phenomenology, and Semiotics. In the process, he activated Gujarati criticism, expanding its awareness of various theoretical positions, and its array of critical tools. Suresh Joshi can be described as a Westermising Indian critic for endowing Gujarati criticism with a sense of selfhood and self-liberation.

Notes and References

- 1. Suresh Joshi, <u>Grihapravesh</u>, (Butala Prakashan, Baroda, 1956/73).
- 2. Suresh Joshi, Chintayami Mansa, (Sadbhav Prakashan, Ahmedabad, 1982).
- 3. <u>Marathi Sahitya Prerna Va Swarupa 1950-1975</u>, ed., G.M. Pawar, M.D. Hatkanglekar, (Popular Prakashan, Bombay, 1986), 323.
- 4. Considering the pervasive influence that Suresh Joshi remained during his creative years (1955-1986), the period can be termed 'Suresh Joshi era' without any exaggeration.
 - 5. B.S. Mardhekar, Arts and Man: Lectures and Essays, (Popular Book Depot, Bombay, 1960).
 - 6. R.B. Patankar, <u>Saundaryamimansa</u>, (Mauj Prakashan, Bombay, 1974).
 - 7. Patankar tries to use Psychoanalytic method in his criticism of Kamal Desai's stories. But in this work he is rather feeble as a critic.
 - 8. M.H. Abrams, <u>The Mirror and the Lamp</u>: <u>Romantic Theory</u> and the <u>Critical Tradition</u>, (Oxford University Press, London, 1953/74).
 - 9. R.B. Patankar, <u>Aesthetics and Literary Criticism</u>, (Nachiketa Publications, Bombay, 1969), 204.
 - 10. Mardhekar, Arts and Man: Lectures and Essays, III.
 - 11. Ibid., XIII.
 - 12. Ibid., XIII.
 - 13. Ibid., XIV.
 - 14. Ipid., 186.

- 15. Ibid., 187.
- 16. <u>Ibid</u>., 195-196.
- 17. <u>Ibid</u>., 198.
- 18. <u>Ibid.</u>, 29-30.
- 19. <u>Ibid</u>., 31.
- 20. Ibid., 32.
- 21. <u>Ibid.</u>, 32-33.
- 22. Ibid., 36.
- 23. <u>Vakyapadiya</u> by Bhartrhari is a treatise on Sanskrit grammar written in the fifth century.
- 24. In his <u>Sahityadarpan</u>, Vishvanath (fourteenth century), defines poetry as 'poetic sentence'.
- 25. Mardhekar, Arts and Man: Lectures and Essays, 43.
- 26. <u>Ibid.</u>, 43.
- 27. <u>Ibid</u>., 50.
- 28. Ibid., 50.
- 29. <u>Ibid</u>., 118.
- 30. <u>Ibid.</u>, 126.
- 31. <u>Ibid</u>., 138.
- 32. Ibid., 76.
- 33. Ibid., 77.
- 34. <u>Ibid.</u>, 78-79.
- 35. Ibid., 81.
- 36. Ibid., 86.
- 37. <u>Ibid.</u>, 86.
- 38. <u>Ibid.</u>, 157.

- 39. Patankar, Aesthetics and Literary Criticism, 204.
- 40. R.B. Patankar, <u>Kantchi Saundaryamimansa</u>, and <u>Kamal Desai Yanche Kathavishwa</u>, (Mauj Prakashan, Bombay, 1977 and 1984).
- 41. Patankar, Aesthetics and Literary Criticism, 13-33.
- 42. <u>Ibid.</u>, 13.
- 42a. Ibid., 14.
- 43. Ibid., 16.
- 44. <u>Ibid</u>., 23.
- 45. <u>Ibid</u>., 26.
- 46. <u>Ibid.</u>, 31-32.
- 47. Ibid., 92.
- 48. <u>Ibid.</u>, 93-94.
- 49. <u>Ibid</u>., 101-102.
- 50. Ibid., 103.
- 51. R.B. Patankar, Saundaryamimansa, trans. Suresh Dalal and others, (S.N.D.T. Women's University, Bombay, 1985).
- 52. Ibid., VIII.
- 53. Ibid., VII.
- 54. <u>Ibid</u>., VII.
- 55. Ibid., XIII.
- 56. <u>Ibid</u>., 3-4.
- 57. Ibid., 50.
- 58. <u>Ibid</u>., 51.
- 59. R.B. Patankar, 'Aesthetics: Some Important Problems', Journal of Arts and Ideas, No.6 (1984) 43-66.
- 59a. Ibid., 43-44.

- 60. Ibid., 44.
- 61. Ibid., 49.
- 62. Ibid., 64-65.
- 63. Ibid., 65-66.
- 64. The period between 1920 and 1948 is termed Gandhi era in Gujarati literary history.
- 65. Suresh Joshi, Grihapravesh, no pagination.
- 66. Ibid., 2.
- 67. <u>Ibid</u>., 3.
- 68. Ibid., 4.
- 68a. Ibid., 6.
- 69. Ibid., 7.
- 70. Ibid., 9.
- 70a. Suresh Joshi, 'Navalkatha Vishe', Kshitij, No.43-44 (1963).
- 71. <u>Sarasvatichandra</u> by Govardhanram Tripathi, is generally considered the first novel in Gujarati. It was published in four parts between 1887 and 1901.
- 72. Joshi, 'Navalkatha Vishe', 513-514.
- 73. <u>Ibid.</u>, 609.
- 74. <u>Ibid</u>., 483.
- 75. Ibid., 488.
- 76. Suresh Joshi, Chintayami Mansa, 13.
- 77. <u>Ibid.</u>, 14.
- 78. Ibid., 1-12, 13-30.
- 79. <u>Ibid.</u>, 52-64.
- 80. Ibid., 59.

- 81. <u>Ibid.</u>, 64a.
- 82. <u>Ibid</u>., 64b.
- 83. <u>Ibid</u>., 64a-74.
- 84. <u>Ibid</u>., 67.
- 85. <u>Ibid</u>., 72.
- 86. <u>Ibid</u>., 73.
- 87. <u>Ibid</u>., 74.
- 88. <u>Ibid</u>., 118-125.
- 88a. <u>Ibid.</u>, 121-122.
- 89. <u>Ibid</u>., 124-125.
- 90. <u>Ibid</u>., 103-108, 126-130.
- 91. <u>Ibid</u>., 131-156.
- 92. <u>Ibid</u>., 140.
- 93. <u>Ibid</u>., 134.
- 94. <u>Ibid</u>., 145.