ESSAY

Melville and faith and doubt in 19th century America

FAKRUL ALAM

ON his way to the Holy Lands in 1856, Herman Melville stopped in Liverpool, where his sometime friend and neighbor Nathaniel Hawthorne was Consul General. Melville stayed with Hawthorne only for a brief visit, but Hawthorne was characteristically perceptive in diagnosing the state of Melville's mind. Hawthorne wrote in his English Notebooks that Melville had "reasoned" with him about "providence and futurity" and had apparently made up his mind that self-annihilation was the one way out in a world without God.

Nevertheless, Melville appeared to be unable to stop thinking about God and the after-life. As Hawthorne so vividly puts it: "He can neither believe, nor be uncomfortable in his unbelief, and he is too honest and courageous not to try to do one or the other." The paradox, Hawthorne wrote, was that though by no conventional standards a religious man, Melville had a "truly religious" nature, and was "better worth immortality than most of us." (quoted by Bezanson, xiv). In fact, Melville's was a mind ceaselessly oscillating between faith and doubt, as was the case with most of the sensitive intellectuals in nineteenth century Europe and America.

It was the pervasive spirit of the Enlightenment, of course, that led to the epic struggle between faith and doubt that possessed someone like Melville in mid-century America. The Enlightenment, for example, fed into the Unitarian movement that represented one of the first challenges to faith in America by questioning the idea of the threefold nature of God. In 1785 the first Unitarian Church came into being; by 1815 there were 14 such churches in the city; and by 1829, Ralph Waldo Emerson was openly preaching ideas which would have been considered heretical in Puritan New England. As the Unitarian Minister of the Second Church at Boston, Emerson spoke not only against the threefold nature of God, but also the idea that Jesus was divine or the Bible a book not written by men.

Doubt, in other words, was introduced at least partly by Unitarianism in New England. But Unitarianism, paradoxically, preached faith, and believed in salvation by character, the brotherhood of Man, and unending progress of mankind. It seemed to make irrelevant the doubts of Puritans about the innate depravity of Man. One of Emerson's most important predecessors in the Unitarian Church, William Ellery Channing thus preached that "God is all-loving and all-pervading; the presence of this God in all men makes them divine, and the true worship of God is good will to all men" (Horton and Edwards, 115).

Unitarianism, it can be said with hindsight, led to Transcendentalism, for Emerson combined the liberalism of the New England-based religious movement with the moral fervor of Puritanism. Add to this the optimism of European romanticism and its privileging of feeling and intuition over reason and you have a movement that affirmed faith in man even as it moved its adherent away from the external trappings of religion. God was present everywhere, within every individual, and throughout the universe, and evil, or Original Sin, was to be discounted in the ultimate spiritual accounting.

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Inevitably, Emerson had drifted away from orthodox religion, even as he affirmed faith, and in 1831 he resigned his position as pastor of the Second Church of Boston because "of scruples over praying in public and because of his inability to believe in the sacramental significance of the Lord's Supper" (Horton and Edwards, 119-120). Instead, he turned to essay writing and lecturing to preach self-reliance, independence from tradition, the divinity of each and all, amity, the nurturing power of Nature to which we must turn for renewal, and, amazingly, the absence of evil. In the process, he had become the apostle of Faith, although he had played a major role in subverting established Christian beliefs in New England.

Certainly, Emerson must have inspired many Americans into moving away from revealed religion and in viewing Christianity critically, but the critical minded had more than their share of problems in accepting the optimism of transcendentalism and its almost "fuzzy mysticism" (Horton and Edwards, 116). For one thing, evil was not to be explained away so easily even by people who had begun to despair and doubt organized religion. Hawthorne, for example, was suspicious of the established church, doubted "official" versions of the truth, and yet held on to the Calvinistic notion of the inherent sinfulness of all men. As Melville put it so succinctly in his celebrated review of Hawthorne, the writer of Mosses from an Old Manse had a well-developed sense of the "power of blackness", something that issued from an inherited sense of "Innate Depravity and Original Sin", a notion from which "no deeply thinking mind is always and wholly free." (Melville, 406).

Hawthorne's, indeed, is a mind "obsessed by the problem of evil, sin and death" (Lombardo, 172), even as he undermines the Church and conventional religion in tale after tale, or a novel such as The Scarlet Letter. Almost everywhere he looked, he seemed to find things to confound optimists such as Emerson. The net effect of reading him is to doubt all "official" versions. Not a Puritan, and if anything, a fierce critic of it in his fiction, he had nevertheless inherited "the bitter, tormented religiosity" that drove Jonathan Edwards and his own Puritan ancestors (175). No doubt embittered by his experience in the Customs House, by the rampant materialism of antebellum America, by the failure of utopian experiment of Brook farm colony, by the notion of progress valorized in expanding, industrializing America, Hawthorne sought to subvert faith and introduce doubt, despite reminding us of his proximity to Puritanism all the time.

As Melville puts it in a now famous letter: "the grand truth about Nathaniel Hawthorne is that "he says NO! in thunder, but the devil himself cannot make him say yes" (Melville, 428). But it was Melville who was most clearly tormented by doubt and driven to saying "no" to official versions while staying close to Puritan ideas about man's infinite capacity for evil. As early as Typee (1846), he shows his hostility to established churches even as he notes the itch for the infinite in the Marquesan Islanders. Moby-Dick, of course, is the "wicked book" of an author who feels "spotless as a lamb" (453). The pages on the whiteness of the whale surely are the most visible evidence of Melville's dogged pursuit of the truth that would solve the faith-doubt dilemma. Pierre (1852) attacks American priesthood and the official church in Reverend Falsgrave, but Emerson and his brand of facile optimism is also targeted in the character of Plotinus Plinlimmon, the supposed Grand Master of a Society of mystics. Religious hucksters are frequently satirized in his subsequent fiction, but nowhere so cynically and intensely as in his final novel The Confidence-Man: His Masquerade (1857).

And yet Melville continued to be racked by the need to believe, and never strayed completely away from the beliefs of Christianity. On the contrary, as he grew older, he seemed to be overwhelmed by a sense of precariousness he shared with other thoughtful minds of the nineteenth century having to react to the vision of a world without God. Clarel (1876), the long poem that Melville published late in his life, records not only the barrenness that he discovered in a trip to Palestine in 1856, but also the anguish induced in believers by discoveries being made by geologists in the Holy Lands, movements such as the Higher Criticism, and the findings of Darwinian evolutionism. The massive poem is nothing less than the rendering of the spiritual exigencies of the late Victorian era.... an intricate documentation of a major crisis in Western civilizationthe apparent smash-up of revealed religion" pace Darwin (Bezanson, x).

Clarel is a reminder that American writers, as well as European ones, confronted the faith-doubt problem in their works, and made great literature out of it. Melville ended his spiritual quest for the infinite without finding a stay against doubt, and the loss of faith is a problem even at the end of the poem. However, the integrity and resoluteness with which he communicated his vision of a world without God and his feeling that we need to look for answers in life and art make his long poem, like his other major works, compelling reading.

(This is the synopsis of a lecture given at Calcutta University's Academic Staff College).

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REFLECTION

Enchantment of a lifetime: Chekhov, Maupassant and Tagore

SYED MAQSUD JAMIL

LIFE has great demands. Time and attention have many duties to perform many priorities to fulfill. Yet, I fondly remember the observation of the great short story writer Anton Chekhov on the need and the value of leisure. He offers his observation in a charming love story, 'The House With An Attic'. I find it an enchanting reading. The principal character, a landscape painter spending his time in Russian countryside speaks of it in an animated conversation with stern and highly opinionated Lydia Volchaninov. She is the elder sister of Zhenya, the tender young lady of eighteen with whom the painter is to fall in love. The painter tells Lydia "Every man's vocation lies in spiritual activity, in the constant search for truth and the meaning of life".

Mankind must have time to look in to their soul and the time to nurse it. Fears of many kinds, and from many directions bar their way from spiritual activities. It distinguishes man from dumb beast and makes life worth living. Thus he speaks of his views on the futility of tending the rural institutions without freeing mankind from the slavery of day long toils. Lydia on the other hand is highly charged with her mission of uprooting the district coterie and developing the rural institutions of community support. This according to Chekhov will enslave them further, by increasing their number of needs and by introducing new standard in their lives. He holds out a vision, "Imagine that all of us, rich and poor, worked three hours a day and had rest of the time free". Three hours may not be all together a realistic proposition for the economy to work. Nevertheless, it is healthy that we should have time for spiritual activity, time for our intellectual and aesthetic fulfillment. One fine way is to have time for the treasures of world literature in short stories. And Chekhov along with Maupassant and Tagore are the magicians of their trade. When they write of love, the enchantment lasts for a lifetime.

My fascination with the three love stories of Chekhov, Maupassant, and Tagore is a life long affair. The one I have chosen from Chekhov is "The House With An Attic", that I have discussed so far. "The Wreck" is the one I have selected from Guy De Maupassant. My choice from Tagore is "Ek Ratri" or One Night. I will proceed to discuss about these short stories. The setting of "The House With An Attic" is exquisite. The rolling Russian countryside, the steppe region with its fir trees corn fields, the long days of summer, the sprawling country houses, they make an idyllic setting for a love affair that blossomed tenderly. The story develops around the Volchaninovs of Shelkovka estate, and the landscape painter staying at the cottage of his friend Belokurov. The elder Volchaninov, a privy councilor at Moscow in his time has died. He is survived by Yakaterina Pavlovna, his widow and two daughters, the elder being Lydia and the younger one being Zhenya.

The family is dominated by Lidya or Leda. She is attractive, but has a stern and intense look on her face. Leda has chosen to work as teacher in the local school, and spends much time on the education and medical care of her area. She finds a worthy cause in it, and in working against the local leader Balagin and his coterie. Obviously she is a self-contained person, single minded, austere, combative and unrelenting in her approach. The younger sister Zhenya or Missie and the mother are meek observers, subdued by the assertive nature of Leda.

The painter, in his bid to drive away boredom, discovers the mansion of the Volchaninovs. He starts going there, spending most of the time playing croquet or tennis with Zhenya. The mother and the younger daughter find him a pleasant company. Leda however keeps away from the painter, believing that her practical issues will not interest the fancy of the painter. Zhenya is of tender age, a young lady. Tall, slenderly built, with large and languid eyes. Most of the time, she is absorbed in her books, sitting on the terrace. Togetherness develops between the painter and Zhenya, through games of croquet. Love was inside the two lonely hearts. It blossomed in a moonlit night with crisp early autumn chill setting in. That day the painter for the first time got in to an argument with Leda's stubbornly held ideas of rural development. The painter countered her by saying that without freeing the farmers from the fetters of hard labour, her ideas will only increase their needs that will have no time for fulfillment. It turned into animated conversation, with sarcastic remarks from Leda about the leisurely and unproductive nature of painting. A tense air surrounded the house. When the painter was living the mansion, Zhenya went out to take a walk with him, and to see him off.

It was a romantic situation of great elegance and tenderness. The late August clouds were wafting across the full moon. Zhenya was wearing a white blouse and a skirt. She was shivering. He puts his arm around her. That was not enough to beat the chill. He took out his coat and put it around Zhenya. She nestled in to his arms. Soon he covered her with kisses. Chekhov's description of the endless moments is magical. They were to see each other for the last time. Chekhov writes, "Zhenya walked beside me along the road and tried not to look at the sky so as not to see the shooting stars, which for some reason frightened her". While the painter also felt very sad, perhaps sensing the tragic ending writes "The thought of being left alone, irritated and dissatisfied with myself and other people, frightened me; and I too tried not to look at the shooting stars." He begs Zhenya, "Stay a little longer, I implore you." Zhenya had her concerns and speaks to the painter, "We have no secrets from another, and I must tell my mother and my sister everything at once. Oh, I am so terrified. Mother is all right, she is fond of you, but Leda!"

The next day when the painter turned up at the Volchaninov's estate, there was no Zhenya turning up from behind the flowerbeds, or from the avenues of the park. Her voice was no longer coming from inside the house. He went in to the drawing room. Only Leda's voice could be heard, giving lessons to her students. "The crow . . . a piece of . . . ". She had no time for him. On coming out of the house, he was met in the avenue by a boy, who handed him a note. It was from Zhenya, she wrote, "I told my sister everything, and she insists that we should never see each other again. I had not the strength to grieve her by disobeying. God grant you happiness forgive me, ". The story ends with a touching note, the painter prays aloud, "Missie, where are you?"

It is an exquisite piece of love story. I think a lengthy discourse of the literary talents of Chekhov or the literary value of the story is not suited to the purpose of my writing. And I do not want the enchantment to decline in ponderous analysis. Chekhov leads the readers to give them up to tender thoughts that roam in an environment of great expanse and interesting human diversity. Chekhov's narration is lucid, mellow, and steeped in the solitariness of tender human thoughts. The attention settles of its own will. He focuses on what is adorable in the story that will hold the reader and bring them to its fold. Lydia's stern and combative character and her unrelenting and animated pursuit of her ideas serve as contrast to the endearing human quality in the painter and in the delicate nature of Zheny's timorous presence. It is this unforgettable quality that brings me again and again to Chekhov.

I would now talk of Maupassant. We know him as the writer of 'Necklace', a highly popular short story in world literature. 'Boule De Suif', a short story of larger volume, written on Franco-Prussian War, is considered to be one of his greatest short story. I have chosen 'The Wreck', because it is a love story, tragic in its ending, and a night has a place in it. Maupassant, as we know, was a passionate man. His writing understandably has earthly sensuality. Physical ardour is a natural element in his love. His composition of the story is masterly. A surprise waits for the readers in many of his stories. The story is narrated in the style of a keen observer. It is marked by earthly sarcasm and familiar details. The oddities of the characters and the ironies are expressed in easy and in incisive descriptions. He has phenomenon quality of bringing down the mighty from their pedestals and laying bare their frailties. The short stories of Maupassant are prolific in their presentation of characters from all walks of life. From a landed aristocrat to a farm hand, from the illustrious to the ordinary, from the exalted to the prostitutes, from a mariner to a stove mender, Maupassant's knowledge and command of folks from all walks of life is translated in to highest form of literature.

The Wreck is the story of a maritime insurance investigator. It begins from the night of 30th December and concludes past midnight of New Year. He was informed by his director to rush immediately to the Isle of Re', off the coast of St. Nazaireth to make an on the spot survey of the English vessel Joseph Marie that ran aground on the island. The investigator boarded the night train to La Rochelle, which he reached in the morning of 31st December. He is to board the 'Jean Guiton' to reach the Isle of Re'. The description of the day has sadness in it, which was to mark the end of the story. It unfolds in the Isle of Re'. One can understand the genius of his pen, when he tells, "It was one of those sad days that oppress the mind and crush all thoughts, stifle the will and make one sluggish: a gray and raw day, begrimed by a heavy mist, damp as drizzle, like a cold jellyas revolting to breathe as a whiff from a sewer."

The ship reached the small town of Saint Martin. After having his lunch he proceeded to the spot. It was low tide. He walked across the yellow plain to the grounded wreck. It was a sandy expanse and the Atlantic has receded in to the distance. The ship laid over to one side. In the words of Maupassant, it was like a beast with its breast split open and showing its broken ribs. He boarded the ship and was inspecting the damage. He heard sounds coming out of the broken ship. It occurred to him that ghosts were inside. He promptly hoisted him to the bridge. From there, he saw an English gentleman and three young ladies, his daughters. He helped the daughters to climb up. Maupassant, being a passionate man describes the ladies with great profundity, showing his natural interest in women. "They were charming, the girls, particularly the oldestan eighteen year old blonde with a complexion like a pink flower and very fine and lovely features. Pretty English girls have something about them that makes one to think of the tender fruit of the sea, and this one looked as if she has risen from the sand and that her hair had kept its reflection."

The girls have been to the site of the wreck with their father with sketchbooks to draw sketches of the wreck. The investigator was feeling attracted to the eldest girl. He started liking her talking, her laughing, her eyes as blue as deep water. When he was enraptured with the girl, the sea has returned to the wreck. The rush of the sea was sliding on to the wreck and soon it was full of water. Fear crept in among the girls and also caught him. The two younger girls were clinging to her father. They could understand that they would have to stay on the wreck. Darkness was all around. The eldest girl was sitting beside him. She was trembling. He was feeling the intoxicating sensation of love, passionate love. They sat motionless and mute and crouching against each other. In spite of the danger of being engulfed by the surging sea, he was feeling happy to be there, a strange sensation of wellbeing and joy enveloped him. He was asking himself, "Or isn't it a fleeting touch of love, of that mysterious love which constantly seeks to unite beingslove that tries its power whenever man and woman meetby penetrating them with a misty, deep and mysterious emotion, just as one sprinkles the earth that it may bring forth flowers." She was feeling cold, and he put his overcoat around her. The waves were growing in strength and beating violently against the wreck. Suddenly, the pounding of a big wave threw them over the deck. The girl fell over him. He held her closely and covered her with kisses. Eventually, they were rescued by a boat, and the girls returned to Biarritz where they were spending their winter holiday.

The link continued through the years. Kate, the girl was married and was settled in New York. All these years they kept in touch with each other. After twenty years, he looks back and observes, "Well, I think now that she is the only woman I have ever lovedno, I mean I ever could have loved. But who can tell? Life flows on and then before you realize it, everything's gone."Yes, indeed, only life can be as big as Maupassant's love.

We adore Tagore greatly for his poetical works and his songs. His short stories are equally important part of his literary genius. He is unquestionably one of the greatest short story writers of all time. Tagore's short stories have a flowing and personalized style. They create a rapport with the readers. Attention never falters. His characters give us the feeling that they are around us and that we have known them since a long time. The ironies of life are presented with the finest literary treatment. Tagore's weaving of the substance is an exercise in endearment. The bits and pieces of life are put together with great fondness for the ordinariness that live unsung. He is at his best in his tribute to the common men and women. Their joys and pains, hopes and disappointments, strengths and frailties make unforgettable reading, an enchantment of a lifetime.

Ek Ratri or One Night is one of many such jewels Tagore crafted with care and compassion. They hold their literary worth for all times. Ek Ratri's second master is one of the faceless millions, yet he has all the qualities for being idolized. It tells us that we, in our quest for self-fulfillment, neglect the happiness that could have been ours, although it may not have the grandeur of our dreams. Surabala, his childhood playmate was for him for taking, but he had other thoughts, other dreams to pursue. The dreams did not realize, and Surabala who could have given him a life of happiness in anonymity, as his wife, was lost, wedded to Ramlochan the lawyer. He was caught in the ideals of the youth, of bringing liberty for the country, of becoming Garibaldi. The prospect of ending up as a clerk of the local landlord did not appear befitting. It could have offered him a life of ease and Surabala, but not the idealistic fulfillment. He fled to Calcutta to build a life of his ideals. The first year Arts examination was near, the news of his father's death reached him. Surabala was already away at her husband's place. He did not pay it much heed when the news of his childhood playmate's marriage reached him. The death of his father brought him down to his destined place in life. A second master in a village school of distant Noakhali.

Tagore writes of the irony of broken dreams, "Ordinary people like us weave many dreams in our house, in the end, on getting in to the toils of earning a livelihood, taking up the plough on their shoulder, remain happy on having a stomach full of meals in the evening after finishing the daily work of breaking the soil with fortitude, their tails being twisted from behind; not much interest is left in jumping up and down. " It vividly projects the ironies of our unfulfilled dreams, and ideals and the ordinariness of our situation. Destiny has placed Surabala and the second master in the same place. He visits Ramlochan's house but never gets the opportunity of seeing Surabala. She is the wife of another person. He hears the tinkering of her glass bangles, the rustling of her Sari, but could never catch a glimpse of her. Indeed two curious eyes are following him from behind the curtain. What was for asking is now a taboo.

The second master is now lost in the remembrance of his playmate, her large dark eyes. He could not rest in peace in his house. A feeling of something deep clasping his heart puts him to pain. He keeps asking himself why did it happen, where is your Surabala? Tagore writes "What is to happen, has happened, who is Surabala to me? Back came the reply, Surabala is today nobody to you, but Surabala could have been many things to you. Yes, that is true. What Surabala could not have been to me.

My closest, my nearest, she could have been the co-sharer of the joys-sorrows of my lifetoday she is so far away, it is forbidden to see her, talking to her is an offence, it is sinful to think of her. And a Ramlochan with no ties comes from nowhere and snatches away Surabala from others in the world just by reciting some hymns."

Surabala's thought absorbed her thoroughly, he could devote his attention to nothing and he fell in to great mental turmoil. Life to him appeared a web of fallacies. Tagore describes with mesmerizing eloquence the restless state of his mind, "A man like you could have lived much happily well in to old age as the husband of Surabala; whereas you went to become Garibaldi and ended up as the second master of a village school. Moreover, Ramlochan Roy, there was no urgent necessity for him specially to become the husband of Surabala; before this marriage, Surabala to him was like any other Bhabashankari." Then came the fateful night, the cyclonic night when destiny brings Surabala and the second master together on the embankment beside the pond. The surging tidal water has submerged everything, and was a few feet below the embankment. There Surabala and the second master have taken shelter. They stayed there through out the squally night. It was a dark night; there were no stars in the sky. Not a word was exchanged. The night stood still. It was like a lifetime. Love found its pristine expression, and Tagore writes, " Today Surabala stands before me leaving behind all of the world. Today Surabala has no one except me. Let another wave come to pluck us from this part of the world, from the stem of this tragedy, we two will become one." The next moment, he prays let that wave not come, let Surabala live in happiness with his husband and son.

The cyclone weakens the night ends. They return to their places. My journey through three short stories of my liking, written by three great short story writers of all time nears its end. It was more a matter of personal fulfillment for me, not an exercise in critical analysis. For me the three masters are an enchantment of a lifetime. I shall be happy if my efforts succeed in meeting the worth of becoming my personal tribute to these great short story writers of all time.

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PEOPLE AND PLACES

Fish out of 'Another' Water-IV

A Rabindrapremi in the hills of Bundelkhand

'Charaiveti'
'Take the train, take the train.' That's all it said.

LUBNA MARIUM

THAT was the most piquant message I'd received in ages. I dreamt I was taking the train; eating, sleeping, waking my heart seemed to be throbbing in rhythm with the chugging engine; I browsed in the musty street-corner bookstore and my eyes kept falling on 'Railway Timetables at A Glance'; as I went about my lazy chores in our lazier still small-town market it seemed as if every second person was preparing for a journey and I too wanted to drop everything and take off with them.

'Do you know her?' asked Kunti, as I almost stopped the scurrying young woman, lugging a near bursting suitcase towards a waiting vehicle. I gave myself a shaking and turning towards my puzzled chum told her all about my latest whimsical fancy. She ordered an extra glass of ganna ka ras for me and edified, 'You know, you are definitely going queer.' 'Yeah, you've been saying that Grade Two onwards. Honestly, though, don't you get these urges?' 'Goutam will surely abandon me.' Standing in the sweltering heat under the shade of the scented amra tree, I savored the tang of the pudina that they put here in the ras and looking straight into her eyes quizzed, 'So, what's it got to do with Goutam?' Kunti pulled out her dainty, scalloped handkerchief and wiping her sweaty upper lips snapped in a voice gone thick, 'Life's a straight-jacket, darling, one doesn't just up and go.' I sighed. The voice of prudence refused to drown the pulsating beat of the train.

Come morning as I hung my washing out, Mohan of 'Room 18 strutted out with the usual whiff of cologne swaggering about him. After his usual tongue-in-cheek 'unpleasantries,' I put my question to him, wondering what the machismo riposte would be. 'Whose paying for the trip?' Suddenly I was queasy.

Twinkling eyes in a wizened face, ensconced in his antique easy chair on the guest-house balcony, Dr. Srivastava looked up from his regular, early morning ritual of a bowl of porridge topped with bananas, flavored with the Daily News, and interpolated with his maxim of the day, 'Suryasya pashya sremanam, yah na tandrayate charamscharaiveti Observe the constancy of the Sun, that which traversing never tires, chara eva iti. Keep on going on, keep going on. Life is a journey, Madam.' Why were all the sweetest men in your life always a hundred years too old?

'But where to?' 'Priya, I wish I knew.' 'That's a paradox then a journey without a destination.' I liked the sound of that and we played around with the idea all day through. Pulling out those ubiquitous peppermint gums from her denims, Priya popped into my chamber intermittently as she too got embroiled in the conundrum. It's like a digital-video game isn't? You get the ensuing instruction only after you've crossed level-one?' Later, downing a plate of tarka and roti, Priya shouted over the lunchtime cacophony, 'What if you're supposed to make out your own instructions?' 'I don't even know the rules.' 'Hey, check that out, a game where you get to decipher the rules exciting!'

In the yellowed light of my bedside lamp I read, 'Man's existential freedom drives him each day towards his Utopia.' Could one take a train to Utopia? I went on to read, 'A utopia by definition is nowhere; it exists only in human imagination; but since it is conceived as a desirable alternative to the social order that currently exists, it is both a critique of that order, and an incentive to change that order.' By the time I dozed off these introspections had lulled the clanging of the train into a well settled, regular beat which, yet, would not roll away into oblivion.

The next day, as I idled my way around the hill, I rued the shedding of the pawlash as spring bid a silent adieu. I sat down on a jutting rock overlooking the slopes around the valley for a last glimpse of the ochre blossoms. Gazing, it gradually dawned one me that, the pawlash had given way to fresh foliage of green. The world now was vibrating with hope. Life moves on. It continually moves.

'This flux within me cannot be expressed. From darkness to light does it move.
The wind and the sky perceive its joy, as does the silent star in the stillness of the night.'

I knew then, I was already on the train as it hurtled on towards its destination.