CHAPTER V

FIRST PHASE 1916-1923
Murry's critical activity covers a long span of forty years, during which he produced about twenty-two books on literary criticism besides writing poems, novels, drama, sociological, political and religious commentaries, and editing magazines and journals. This long and fertile period can conveniently be divided into three phases beginning with the first phase from 1916 to 1923, the second from 1924 to 1939, and the third from 1940 to 1957, each phase marking a definite quantitative as well as qualitative increase in his critical output. Passing through a process of aesthetic apprehension to aesthetic comprehension, Murry's work as a whole gives the massive impression of unity. Though we may be more interested in having a clear notion of the final shape of a man than an exact record of his phases, yet it is essential to watch and study the inward growth of a writer; more essential in the case of a literary critic, to judge not only the perfection of his critical apparatus but also the maturity of his judgements. Murry himself laid emphasis on tracing the development of a writer's attitude through its various phases, and observed: "We may suspect that a writer who does not really develop, the vitality and significance of whose latest work is less than that of his first, has not the root of the matter in him.... It may not be given to mortal men to understand life more deeply at the end than at the beginning of their share of it; but they can more keenly feel its complexity and its wonder; they can attain to an eminence from which they contemplate it calmly and undismayed."
A phase-to-phase study becomes all the more necessary in the case of Murry not only to find whether he achieves towards the end an eminence from which he can trace calmly and undismayed the quality of soul which, he believes, manifests itself in the artistic perfection of a work of literature but also to establish whether in evaluating a writer's work according to what he called "the completeness of his incineration on the altar of Art" there exists any harmony in the multitudinous reactions of his own soul.

The first phase opens with Fyodor Dostoevsky, A Critical Study, which is Murry's first major triumph. It was written during one of the happiest periods of his life in the company of Katherine Mansfield at the Villa Pauline in France — "it was to be a memory of beatitude between us for ever." There Murry forgot himself entirely. "There was Katherine, there was the book I was writing: both engrossed me."

The book had been commissioned by Secker over two years before, to clear off a debt of £30 on Rhythm; but as often as Murry had tried to begin it, he had found that he really had nothing to say. Now, reading the four major novels of Dostoevsky through once again from cover to cover, with the self-abeyance conferred by his love, he became, all at once, completely receptive to the personality and purpose informing them. "Suddenly the whole thing had fallen into pattern; and I was, for the first time, the victim of the strange sensation of being hardly more than the amanuensis of a book that wrote itself... For the first time in my life, I had the experience
of certitude. It was no question of my opinion of Dostoevsky; I had no opinion of Dostoevsky: and if I expressed any personal opinions about him in the book, they were certainly exaggerated and probably wrong. All that happened - I speak, of course, of my sensation only - was that the objective 'pattern' of Dostoevsky had declared itself, through me as instrument."

Dostoevsky was a phenomenon which had burst upon the astonished minds of Englishmen and acquired immense prestige, particularly among members of D.H. Lawrence's circle to which Murry also belonged. Frank Swinnerton, in The Georgian Literary Scene, notes that "it would be hard to exaggerate the impressions made upon young readers (in England) in 1912 by the appearance of The Brothers Karamazov." Dostoevsky was indeed a prophet who contemplated and sought to penetrate into a new consciousness and a new mode of being which he saw was metaphysically inevitable for mankind. He was "the prophetic soul of the wide world dreaming on things to come." No wonder a new thirst rose within Murry, "the thirst for a fuller knowledge of Dostoevsky's soul."

Dostoevsky was a new creation who demanded a new criticism for his understanding. He could not be approached by the same road as other men. "Our methods and standards are useless to elucidate and to measure Dostoevsky, not because he is greater than the heroes of art who went before him, but because he is profoundly different." A new attitude towards his work, Murry thought, had to be adopted. One would have to go boldly into dark and undiscovered countries of the mind.
as expressed in his novels and bring back the results of one's explorations. It is a new world in which the sense of time is annihilated; in which causes are monstrously inadequate to their effects, and the smallest actions take on the character of portents. It is a Kingdom in which "the figures grow in stature until it seems that no integument of clay can contain the mightiness of their spirit. They pass beyond human comparison, and are no longer to be judged by human laws. That which was evil in our sight, changes swiftly and incessantly, like a point of blinding incandescence, from black to white, and white to black again. Shade appears to be part of the very essence of light and light of shade, so that the man who was evil has become a spirit in whom good and evil are but names for a unity which contains them both... They burst the bonds of human law and human time together. Their earthly acts, their earthly misfortune and tragedy, even their very names, seem now to be in some sort a caricature of that which they are. And as we read, the printed letters of their names are no longer recognisable; we are lost in a wonder that this mean, black hieroglyph should contain the awful spirit which lives within our memory and haunts our imagination."\textsuperscript{10} It is in these figures, superhuman and human, that the strangeness and the fascination and the power of Dostoevsky rests. "They are champions; the issue of the battle rests with them."\textsuperscript{11} If they can be understood, then the whole of Dostoevsky can be understood.
In Dostoevsky Murry found a new and passionate synthesis of thought and life; in his work the anatomy of his tormented soul. "His work is," as Murry says, "the record of a great mind's seeking for a way of life; it is more than a record of struggle, it is the struggle itself."\(^1\) All his life the eye of Dostoevsky's soul was turned to the contemplation of Pain. "All that the human soul can suffer is somewhere expressed within his work; but there are lesser and greater sufferings, or rather there are sufferings and there is absolute suffering. Sufferings may be forgotten in happiness; but absolute suffering never. Dostoevsky's heroes are tormented by this absolute suffering.\(^1\)\(^3\) As Ivan Karamazov says: "There is suffering and suffering." To know that Murry thinks is to know the key to Dostoevsky.

Dostoevsky's own life was an unending struggle to reconcile himself with life. He was constantly in search of a secret which would serve him as a key to the mystery; a secret the triumphant knowledge of which would open his being to the full acceptance of life. The name of that secret was God, and the name of the knowledge, Faith. In sooth, Dostoevsky was a God-tormented man. "God was for him the possibility of acceptance, the hope of a way of life. He knew that belief in God as a person, the faith of religion as we understand religion, was denied him for ever. He asked for no more than a way of life. What must he do to be saved? The posing of that terrible problem and the attempt to answer it with something more than barren silence, forms the
It was this argument that Murry tries to elucidate. He is not concerned with Dostoevsky as an artist. He is concerned with Dostoevsky as a seeker, who simply made use of the novel as a vehicle for his explorations; a philosopher, indeed, though not in the academic sense. "Abstract thought was for him not merely a fascinating occupation, as it is with many philosophers so called, not a habit of mind learned in a school, but an awful necessity upon which his life depended. It was born anew in him from the shock of his contact with life itself."^{15}

The Dostoevsky who "fascinated and perplexed and stimulated"^{16} Murry, was the Dostoevsky who lost his faith and did not dare to be a sceptic; who could neither renounce the intellect (since 'the man who is most truly man can acquiesce in no limitations to his knowledge')^{17}, nor live in the meaningless universe it exposed (that 'metaphysical terror and obscenity which is the appointed end of the striving of the human consciousness'):^{18} who, therefore, could only dream at the last of a change in the nature of consciousness - "the sudden revelation of a new consciousness, when all eternity shall be gathered into a moment, where there shall be no more barriers between the knower and that which is known, when there shall be no more time."^{19}

Champion after champion Dostoevsky sent forth on to the bloody battle of life in his gigantic attempt to get an answer to the question: "Is there a God?" Of these champions
Svidrigailov was the first. "He placed him in life to contend with it, and the end of Svidrigailov was death by his own hand. Svidrigailov found no answer, and he brought none back to Dostoevsky: perhaps Dostoevsky expected none, for he knew that his creature was predestined to die. Svidrigailov was a scapegoat sent from his creator's soul." 20 There are two ways by which mortal man can struggle with the world. The one is to act, the other to suffer. "In each the individual will is pitted against the unknown power." 21 Svidrigailov possessed the will to act which ended in disillusion. In The Idiot Myshkin is the embodiment of the will to suffer. His way of suffering all things to wrest the secret of life led him also to self-annihilation. The new hero of The Possessed is Nikolay Stavrogin upon whose creation Dostoevsky lavished himself. Shatov and Krillov saw in him their God. Yet he too was defeated. "In Stavrogin Dostoevsky had sent forth the greatest of its champions, and he had been vanquished. There remained only the new man, clothed and in his right mind, for a hope. In the new man must be found the new consciousness; in him the assurance of eternal harmony which came to the old man only in the delirium of his sickness, shall be part of his waking knowledge." 22 This new man was Alyosha Karamazov. "Aloyosha," as Murry says, "is the only one of all Dostoevsky's characters to whom this consummation is vouchsafed." 23 Dostoevsky knew that the death and suffering which attended the quest of the great men who bear the full burden of humanity was not the final word; out of their chaos will be born the child who will be assured of
eternal harmony. This child is Alyosha whose spirit comprehends the world:

"He did not stop on the steps either, but went quickly down; his soul overflowing with rapture, yearning for freedom, space, openness. The vault of heaven, full of soft shining stars, stretched out vast and fathomless above him. ... The fresh, motionless, still night enfolded the earth.

"Alyosha stood, gazed and suddenly threw himself down on the earth.... He could not have told why he longed so irresistibly to kiss it, to kiss it all. But he kissed it weeping, sobbing and watering it with his tears, and vowed passionately to love it, to have it for ever and ever. 'Water the earth with the tears of your joy and love those tears,' echoes in his soul.

What was he weeping over?

Oh, in his rapture he was weeping over those stars which were shining to him from the abyss of space, and he was not ashamed of that ecstasy. ... He had fallen on the earth a weak boy, but he rose up a resolute champion, and he knew and felt it suddenly at the very moment of his ecstasy. And never, never, all his life long could Alyosha forget that minute...."

All his life Murry also could not forget those moments of ecstasy he realised at Villa Pauline when he, like Dostoevsky and his massive heroes, was wrestling with a problem of his own. Through the 'striving soul' of Dostoevsky came to Murry an aspiration that became an integral part of his life. Like
Dostoevsky he would now accept no division in his soul.
Above all, in Alyosha, the magnificent creation of Dostoevsky,
whose 'outward bears the impress of his inward harmony', Murry
recognised an 'intimate personal possibility':

"He is a being beautiful, conscious only of his unity,
and feeling within himself that which binds him to all huma-
nity, the knowledge that he is the appointed end of all their
striving."25

In 1920 was published Aspects of Literature. It is a
collection of nineteen essays which were contributed to
different periodicals like The Times Literary Supplement,
the Nation, and the Athenaeum. Except two, all the essays
are arranged in the order in which they appeared. The
second part of the essay on Tchehov is placed with the first,
although it appeared later. 'The Function of Criticism',
although it was written last, is placed at the top, because
"it treats of the broad problem of literary criticism,
suggests a standard of values implicit elsewhere in the
book, and thus to some degree affords an introduction to the
remaining essays."26 When Aspects of Literature was published,
the blurb had declared 'a new theory of criticism, of which
the essence is an emphasis on the intimate relation of lite-
rature to life.' The new theory was a 'reference to life as
a whole' which Murry had come to regard as essential to
criticism. He found a new touchstone of poetic greatness.
That art, he believed, was best in kind which expressed and
communicated a comprehension of life; that greatest
which comprehended life most completely. "What is essential in poetry," declared Murry, "is an act of intuitive comprehension." Moreover, Murry insisted on the necessity of establishing a hierarchy in literature, a system of values by which the various acts in intuitive comprehension may be judged. "It does not suffice," said Murry, "at any time, much does it suffice at the present time, to be content with the uniqueness of the pleasure which you derive from each single act of comprehension made vocal... It is not sufficient to get a unique pleasure from Mr. de la Mare's Arabia, or Mr. Davies's Lovely Dames or Miss Katherine Mansfield's Prelude or Mr. Eliot's Portrait of a Lady, in each of which the vital act of intuitive comprehension is made manifest. One must establish a hierarchy, and decide which act of comprehension is the more truly comprehensive, which poem has the completer universality. One must be prepared not only to relate each poetic expression to the finest of its in the past, or to recognise a new kind if a new kind has been created, but to relate the kind to the finest kind."

It is, then, by this standard of 'complete comprehensive whole' that Murry judges Georgian poetry and finds it "devoid of any emotional significance whatever." The Georgian poets "are fond of lists of names which never suggest things; they are sparing of similes. If they use them they are careful to see they are not too definite, for a definite simile makes havoc of their constructions, by applying to them a certain test of a reality." Murry finds them empty because
they forgot three things: "that poetry is rooted in emotion, and that it grows by the mastery of emotion, and that its significance finally depends upon the quality and comprehensiveness of the emotion."\textsuperscript{31} Not that Mr. Davies's 'Lovely Dames,' or Mr. de la Mare's 'The Tryst,' or 'Fare Well,' are not beautiful poems. They are, but they are not adequate to our experience. Compared to these poems, Wilfred Owen's \textit{Strange Meeting} possesses "an awe, an immensity, an adequacy to that which has been most profound in the experience of a generation."\textsuperscript{32} Likewise Murry finds American poets all diffuse, careless, and slipshod because none of them has proved that "he is capable of addressing himself to the central problem of poetry, no matter what technique be employed - how to achieve a concentrated unity of aesthetic impression."\textsuperscript{33} Similarly Murry does not appreciate W.B. Yeats. His \textit{The Wild Swans at Coole} contains 'no prophetic fervour' to make it alive. "He has the apparatus of enchantment, but no potency in his soul.... He is by structure and impulse an artist indeed. But structure and impulse are not enough. Passionate apprehension must be added to them."	extsuperscript{34} On the other hand, Murry admires Edward Thomas, a lesser poet, because he "has still more to tell of the experience of the soul fronting its own infinity."\textsuperscript{35} Edward Thomas was not a great poet, but he possessed many of the qualities of a great poet. His most powerful poem entitled 'The Other' shows "that Edward Thomas had something at least of the power to create the myth which is the poet's essential means of exploring the unknown of his emotion."\textsuperscript{36} Gerard Manley Hopkins's uses of complex
internal harmonies Murry regards his most essential achievement. But Murry laments the failure of his whole achievement which, he thinks, was "due to the starvation of experience which his vocation imposed upon him..."  

Murry demands of art that "It must be adequate to all our experience, it must be not a diversion from, but a culmination of life; it must be working steadily towards a more complete universality." That was the standard by which he set head and top of twentieth-century writers Thomas Hardy and Chekhov. In Thomas Hardy's Wessex Novels and his poems Murry marks "a unity unlike that of any contemporary author." He discerns that "they are the work of a single mind; but they are separate works, having separate and unique excellences." The poetry of Hardy, Murry reminds his contemporary critics, is not a late flowering. It exists independently and not as a by-product of his novels. Some of the poems written as early as 1866 display, Murry notices, "an astonishing mastery, not merely of technique but of the essential content of great poetry." The secret of Hardy's poetry lies in an all-embracing realism, an adequacy to all experience. In a single incident Hardy recognises the essential quality of life. The uniqueness of the whole is apprehended in a part. Hardy is a great poet because he knows the quality for which he seeks; but this knowledge is rather a condition than a possession of soul. It is a state of responsiveness rather than a knowledge of that to which he will respond. But it is knowledge inasmuch as the choice of that to which he will respond is determined by the condition
of his soul. On the purity of that condition depends his greatness as a poet, and that purity in its turn depends upon his denying no element of his profound experience. If he denies or forgets, the synthesis... which must establish itself within him is fragmentary and false."42 It is this purity of responsiveness, according to Murry, that puts Hardy high above all other modern poets.

For similar reasons Murry was attracted to Techehov. He finds that what is essential in Techehov is that his attitude is complete, not partial. "His comprehension radiates from a steady centre, and is not capriciously kindled by a thousand accidental contacts."43 Discernment of a unity in multiplicity is what makes Techehov a great literary artist. This kind of unity cannot be imposed. "It is an emanation from life which can be distinguished only by the most sensitive contemplation."44 The peculiarity of Tchehov's unity is "that it is far more markedly aesthetic than that of most of the great writers before him."45 A prominent aspect of Techehov, which Murry emphasises, in his modernity. He was in advance of all that is habitually labelled as modern in the art of literature. "He had been saturated in all the disillusions which we regard as peculiarly our own, and every quality which is distinctive of the epoch of consciousness in which we are living now is reflected in him - and yet, miracle of miracles, he was a great artist.... He was and wanted to be nothing in particular, and yet, as we read these letters of his, we feel gradually form within ourselves
the conviction that he was a hero - more than that, the hero of our time." 46

Aspects of literature gives a clear, if not elaborate, outline of the principles and method of Murry's criticism. Though it is sometimes marred by his 'convictions', yet it has the merit of distinguishing between major and minor poetry. At least three of the essays 'The Function of Criticism,' 'The Poetry of Hardy,' and 'Thoughts on Tchehov' may be classed among Murry's best criticism.

At the invitation of Sir Walter Raleigh Murry delivered a course of six lectures at Oxford, which were later published in 1922 in book-form entitled The Problem of Style. The dons were so much impressed that The Problem of Style became a standard work. It has been reprinted more often than anything else Murry ever wrote.

In The Problem of Style Murry has attempted in a coherent manner a lucid and systematic exposition of the theory of psychology of creative writing. His aim is "to scrutinize the means by which the man himself, his manner of seeing, or his superb feeling, is expressed in language." 47 He brushes aside the old superstitious theory that style is something separate from content, a kind of ornament. It is a misconception nourished by Robert Louis Stevenson's confession that he 'played the sedulous ape'. In a later book Murry pointed out that "no man's habit of thought or vision (if he is to be an original writer) is sufficiently like another's for
him to imitate his technique except at his own peril." Style cannot be considered apart from the whole system of perceptions and feelings and thoughts that animate it. Style wholly depends upon the precise communication of emotions or thoughts, or a system of emotions or thoughts, peculiar to the writer. "Style," according to Murry, "is the direct expression of an individual mode of experience." True style is achieved when the writer compels language to conform to his mode of experience.

The problem of style is how the writer compels language to conform to his mode of experience. Here Murry expounds the conception of an originating emotion which plays a predominant part in the process of creative writing. The literary artist has keener sensibility than the ordinary man. Objects and incidents in life arouse emotions in him, which he feels more intensely than the ordinary man. As these emotions accumulate, they intensify each other. At last a 'coherent emotional nucleus' is created in him. These are further consolidated by his area speculative thought or attitude to life. "It is by virtue of this mysterious accumulation of past emotions that the writer, in his maturity, is able to accomplish the miracle of giving to the particular the weight and force of the universal." He is then able to achieve "the perfect condensation of a whole universe of experience into a dozen lines, or a hundred words." The greatness of the style, however, depends on the comprehensiveness of the mode of thought or feeling. It is visible in "the expression which, even when the exact
relation has been achieved, rises or falls in the scale of absolute perfection according as the mode of experience expressed is more or less significant and universal - more or less completely embraces, is more or less adequate to, the whole of our human universe. In comparison with this meaning of the word style, others seem to fade away almost into triviality; for this is the style that is the very pinnacle of the pyramid of art, the end that is the greatest of all as Aristotle would say, at once the supreme achievement and the vital principle of all that is enduring in literature, the surpassing virtue that makes for many of us some few dozen lines in Shakespeare the most splendid conquest of the human mind.\textsuperscript{52} Such style, for instance, reaches an absolute perfection in the death scene of Cleopatra.

Closely following on the heels of The Problem of Style was Murry's next volume entitled Countries of the Mind. It is a collection of twelve essays, the majority of which originally appeared in The Times Literary Supplement; others in the Nation and Athenaeum, the London Mercury, the Dial, and the New Republic. The two essays on Shakespeare deal essentially with the same subject; while 'The Poetry of William Collins' and 'The Poetry of John Clare' are examples of contrasted types of poetic sensibility. 'The Poetry of Walter De la Mare' and 'Arabia Deserta' may be studied together. The three essays on Baudelaire, Amiel and Flaubert, written on the occasion of their anniversaries, are best understood in relation to one another. Like Dostoevsky, Baudelaire, Amiel and
Flaubert were all born in 1821; and, like Dostoevsky, all three were men with whom Murry could identify himself. The last essay 'A Critical Credo' like 'The Function of Criticism' at the beginning of Aspects of Literature, discusses the canons of his criticism. "Underlying all the essays in this volume," declares Murry in the Prefatory Note, "is a theory of the psychology of literary creation, which is expounded in greater detail in a series of lectures on 'The Problem of Style', recently published. A few shorter essays are included, either because they are examples of the application of this theory or because they make clear my conviction that a theory of this kind, whether mine or another, is necessary to literary criticism, if it is not to be incoherent and spasmodic."53

Murry regards Shakespeare as the pre-eminent poet of the 'universal love'. "Shakespeare's conception of love is ideal in the most human sense of the word, an enchanting and attainable perfection of the real."54 Murry's letters to Katherine Mansfield, abounding in tributes to the poet's conception of love, show that he had already discovered, in Portia, Perdita and Imogen, his life-long ideal of womanhood. Now, however, conscious of the connection between his own self-abeyance in love and work, he sensed a similar connection in the dramatist. It was, Murry surmised, precisely that capacity for losing himself in the creatures of his imagination which had predisposed Shakespeare to create such embodiments of love - and, conversely, precisely that loyalty to love which had enabled him, ultimately, to comprehend all his experience in a "vision
of life as a whole." This conclusion was important to Murry. It must have powerfully reinforced his instinctive faith in the "holiness of the heart's affections." The opening essay of Countries of the Mind is virtually a declaration of that faith.

The poetry of William Collins indicates that he was too much engrossed in perfecting his technique. His aesthetic preoccupation impoverished his sensibility. "It seems," thinks Murry, "that Collins could have expressed anything so rich was his technical endowment; yet that endowment came near preventing him from having anything to express at all." His Ode to Evening is a perfect and a great poem. "For the one and only time Collins's sensibility was brought into direct contact with a profound experience; for the one and only time he had a deep and particular emotion to recollect in tranquillity, on the embodiment of which he could fitly lavish his art." Collins, thus, provides an example of the triumphs and dangers of the pursuit of style. "The pursuit of Style," as Murry observes, "is a perilous thing; but without it there is no permanence.... for style is the name we give to the specific transmutation of the sensibility into the created thing." In contrast, John Clare had a rare capacity for intense emotions. Take, for example, Song's Eternity, the most perfect of his poems. "It has a poetic unity of a kind that he attained but seldom, for in it are naturally combined the highest apprehension of which Clare was capable and the essential melody of his pre-eminent gift of song." Clare
was an unalloyed poet. Yet he lacked the power to refine and shape his metal. "It may even be suspected," concludes Murry, "that his unique gift would have suffered if he had possessed that element of technical control which would have made him a master indeed."  

In 'The Poetry of Walter De la Mare' Murry discovers that the whole gamut of his emotions is expressed between the longing for an eternity of beauty and an acquiescence in its transitoriness. "It is, in short, neither the ideal nor the real which fascinates the true poet, but their incessant and conflicting interplay. Each is a light which illuminates the other with 'an earthly gleam'; without the real to give it substance, the dream is clear, calm and colourless; without the dream to give it shadow, the real is a vague and confused chaos."  

Doughty's *Arabia Deserta* is "one of the finest examples of English artificial prose." Its unique quality is an ascetic purity. The author found the subject pre-eminently fitted to his character and his gifts, and devoted himself entirely over a long space of years to the task of completely crystallising his sensibility. The book is a triumph of a pure and deliberate art. In it "the garment of his style fits the man so closely that unless we diligently remember the ten years' labour we may lapse back into thinking that the writing was natural in the common sense of the word..."  

Murry's essays on Baudelaire, Amiel and Flaubert are perhaps the best in this book. The peculiar quality of
Baudelaire's work derives from the interaction of two different factors, the decadence of the age in which he lived and his own poetic conviction. Murry marks that strands of realism and romanticism are closely woven in Baudelaire's work. He further marks that "a single thread runs through the work of Stendhal, Merimee, Baudelaire, Nietzsche, and Dostoevsky; in spite of their outward dissimilarity, and the great differences between their powers, these men are united by a common philosophical element which takes bodily shape in their conceptions of the hero. They are all intellectual romantics, in rebellion against life, and they imagine for themselves a hero in whom their defiance should be manifested." 64 Baudelaire's strong will in transforming his keen emotions that had tormented him is a poetic achievement that makes a massive impression of unity upon our minds. "As an artist," Murry says, "Baudelaire works from a single centre; his attitude to life and his attitude to art lend each other aid and confirmation." 65 For the same reasons Murry was fascinated by Amiel. The same bold acceptance of birth and death and pain in the universe forms the solid foundation of his work. The whole octave of the nineteenth century consciousness is reflected in his soul. "He was so enamoured of perfection," writes Murry, "that he could not accept the imperfect, so desirous of the whole that he could not be satisfied with the part, whether of knowledge or even of life itself. He could not love for fear his love might be less than the perfect consummation he dreamed of." 66 Murry is highly
critical of Flaubert. In him he finds another glaring example of starved sensibility. He ruthlessly exposes the insecure foundation on which rested the praise of a generation that had seen in Flaubert's art the highest achievement of literature. This, Murry points out, is merely a will o' the wisp, because Flaubert "was never passionately possessed by a comprehensive theme, and never clearly saw that the rendering of such a theme was the final purpose of all the explorations of language on which he lavished himself." Flaubert's style could be praised only if style could be separated from content. And this distinction Murry thought out of question.

Countries of the Mind is definitely a better book than Aspects of Literature; it is written with a single-minded absorption in the object. Murry loses himself in the work or the man before him.

Pencillings is a collection of short essays on life and literature. In all there are twenty-eight pieces, most of which were published in The Times during the summer of 1922. A few appeared in the Nation and Athenaeum. Some of the essays such as 'Chiaroscuro,' 'The Reader's Duty,' 'Literature and Science,' 'What is style', 'Manners and Morality', and 'Morality Again' deal, as the very titles suggest, with the fundamental problems of literature - the relation of literature to life and its significance for living, the old problem of art and morality, and the mystery of literary creation. Others, more personal and less philosophical, such as
'Dr. Johnson and the Swallows', 'On Reading Reviews', 'Beauty Hunting', 'On Grammar', and 'Fact and Fiction', are concerned with the byways of literary criticism, with styles and men and idiosyncrasies. In the more familiar manner permitted by the short essay the book is a restatement and a development of the critical principles and preferences already expounded by Murry in *Aspects of Literature, Countries of the Mind* and *The Problem of Style*.

During the first phase from 1916 to 1923 we find Murry, as we have already seen, grappling with two sovereign activities of the human mind, the creative and the critical, both emanating from a single centre animated by man's profound moral convictions, and both flowering in the man endowed with a unified sensibility. Nothing better sums up Murry's attitude than the little essay 'Morality Again' in *Pencillings*: "In the great work of literature we demand perfection of art, integrity of the writer's soul, and comprehensiveness in his attitude."68