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A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ARTHUR KOESTLER'S  
DARKNESS AT NOON

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DARKNESS AT NOON

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## ABSTRACT

In Darkness at Noon the third person narrative and the structure of the story itself are dictated solely by the polemical intent. Koestler wants to force the reader to relive Rubashov's struggle to maintain his individual identity despite overwhelming pressure to adopt that of the Communist Party. His intellect is already so molded to this group that only in his emotions, most of which he has repressed, can he find the seeds of his authentic self. The narrative technique encourages the reader to view the story through the aperture of this inner self but when Rubashov shifts his centre of consciousness to his reasoning persona the reader's perspective is destroyed, along with much of the moral and aesthetic force of the novel.

The unconscious as a subject invites the use of symbols. Those of Koestler grow naturally out of the facts of his story; they even reinforce one another, and spawn related images until some passages approach allegory. They are also useful litmus papers for detecting the emotional attachment to Marxist ideology Koestler retains.

In this novel Koestler dramatizes his arguments by embodying all those he wants us to approve in Rubashov and all those he wants us to doubt in the Party; thus he controls our responses very precisely. But the split in Rubashov designed to clarify Koestler's ideas also

destroys his human quality and so undermines the tragedy of Darkness at Noon.

It is not the didacticism but the subject matter of this novel that undercuts its aesthetic quality. The narrative technique pulls the reader inside Rubashov's emotions but when Rubashov loses contact with this self, the reader loses his window on events and his concern about them. And, in a novel about individual freedom, the process of making explicit the normally implicit motives of an individual celebrates the philosophy of determinism rather than freedom. However, the loss of the reader's connection with the centre of consciousness and the difficulty of communicating the nature of freedom are overcome by the fascination of the contradictory emotions aroused by the ideas in Darkness at Noon.

## TEXTUAL NOTE

In the body of this thesis, references to Darkness at Noon are given in brackets: (18).

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## INTRODUCTION

"Facts are not fit for the reader when served raw; they [have] to be cooked, chewed, and presented in the correspondent's saliva."<sup>1</sup> A German newspaper editor once gave this advice to the young Arthur Koestler. It is a good description of what not only journalists but novelists do. But although the journalist merely digests and spews out accounts of people and places, the novelist aims higher. He tries to place events in a perspective that will compel the reader to re-evaluate his own attitude towards them. In Darkness at Noon, Koestler tries to alert his reader to the dangers of delegating the choice of and responsibility for one's actions to a group. Not only is group-action more apt to result in morally evil results but the smaller the arena left for the individual's freedom of choice, the more his essential self is diminished.

The group mind that Koestler distrusts is full of the utilitarian ethics that were spawned by the rationalism and materialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This analyzing systematizing approach was derived in turn from the predilection for the measuring of quantities developed in the Renaissance. But now in the atomic age, the new scientific principles of indeterminacy have become for Koestler a basis for a new emphasis on a qualitative, rather than a

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue (London: Collins, 1952), p. 171.

quantitative ethic. He isolates the rational, mechanical, uniform patterns of determinism in one particular group, the Communist Party, and finds the elusive germ of unpredictability, of diversity, of freedom, in the individual, Rubashov. Then from these diverse ingredients Koestler concocts a dish, both sweet and sour, and invites up to taste it by becoming part of Rubashov, a Commissar in the Party who contains within himself both the utilitarian ethics of the Party and the transcendental morality of the individual.

Koestler cannot succeed in making us change our attitude unless he makes us undergo new experiences that affect us personally. In Darkness at Noon, the character of Rubashov contains within it all the elements in the argument. In order to emphasize the conflict between these abstractions, they are distributed among the other people in the novel as well. Each is a fragment of Rubashov's conscious and unconscious make-up. By spreading the internal struggle out on a larger canvas, the issues can be disentangled and seen more clearly. In addition, each character triggers in us a response to opposing sides of an argument; we simultaneously identify with and reject each element, torn, like Rubashov, between the needs of self and society. When we mimic his state of mind we become that mind and the clash of ideas takes place not on the pages of the book but in us. All of Koestler's technical skills as a novelist are devoted to making the reader feel as if Rubashov's terrifying loss of personal identity is also happening to him.

## CHAPTER I

### NARRATIVE TECHNIQUE

"The image of a hero in us is a phantom fed from our own mental sources."<sup>1</sup>

Koestler's goal is to persuade the reader to alter his perspective on the dangers of ceding control of the self to others. To do this he needs a narrative technique that will produce a very close bond between the reader and the protagonist so that both will live through the changes and experiences in the novel. The reader must come face to face, as Rubashov does, with the question of the validity of the individual self and the relationship between its conscious and unconscious parts. Only if such an intimate relationship with Rubashov exists will the events described in Darkness at Noon work a change in the reader's attitude. Therefore, both the point of view of the reader and the selection and ordering of the material must be controlled entirely by this need to meld the reader and the protagonist into one consciousness.

First person narration seems the obvious choice for this purpose. Why could Koestler not allow Rubashov to tell his own story? The speaker could reveal the drama of the war within him directly to the

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Koestler, "The Novelist Deals with Character", The Saturday Review, XXXII (January 1, 1949), p. 31.

reader. The immediacy of the method would ensure that he would feel empathy towards the central figure. But even in a daily journal a writer may be presumed to be editing his thoughts, or, at the very least, selecting the kind of language in which to express them.

First person narration would show the truth but never the whole truth; "no man can completely objectify himself".<sup>2</sup> Any attempt by Rubashov to conceptualize his own emotions would crystallize them like flies in amber so that they would be too remote to affect the reader. And it is crucial if the reader's experience is to mirror Rubashov's that nothing in Rubashov's interior, from the topmost conscious layer to the deepest strata of his subconscious, be shielded from the reader. Another disadvantage of this narrative method might be the monotony of a first person diary format. In addition, keeping the reader locked into Rubashov's mind would deny him any opportunity to correct or corroborate his initial impression of the central character. A perspective formed in a vacuum must always be slightly tentative; the reader would never be entirely convinced of the sincerity of the protagonist.

But the chief actor need not be the narrator of the story. Could Koestler have chosen to have a close associate of Rubashov tell Rubashov's tale? Such a raconteur could ground the discharge of emotion and verify it at the same time. However, such an actor-narrator

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<sup>2</sup>Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction (London: Jonathan Cape, 1926), p. 148.

would also filter out the immediacy of Rubashov's experience. Another disadvantage for Koestler of this method would be its irresistible tendency to create an ironic distancing, which would inhibit the establishing of the necessary rapport. This kind of first person might also distract the reader by superimposing the narrator's moral and intellectual limitations on the material and by reducing the amount of it available.

Third person narration, therefore, would seem to offer the most advantages. < The author can control the amount of distance between the reader and the material, zooming in to involve the reader in intimate details and panning away to allow a view of the figure as a piece of a larger scene. > In an essay in The Yogi and the Commissar, Koestler discussed the function of the protagonist in fiction; "as a novel character, the most interesting thing about him will be ... his ... relation to the background."<sup>3</sup> And in third person, not only spatial but temporal distances can be varied to achieve economy, or ambiguity, or an intensification of the emotional impact. Finally, the shift in perspective possible in third person narration makes it possible to change the moral or psychological angle as well as the physical one. Such flexibility allows Koestler to preset the attitude of the reader to the subject.

Moreover the very lack of an intruding actor-narrator, or even the lack of the distorting self-consciousness of a narrator such as

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<sup>3</sup>Arthur Koestler, "The Novelist's Temptations", in his The Yogi and the Commissar (London: Jonathan Cape, 1945), p. 33.

Rubashov himself, promotes a closer psychic intimacy just because it seems to leave Rubashov so alone and in need of our support. It is when Ivanov and Gletkin harrass Rubashov the most that we feel we cannot desert him. Wayne Booth puts it this way:

the central intelligence... will seem most sympathetic if presented as an isolated, unaided consciousness, without the support that a reliable narrator or observer would lend ... So long as what the character thinks and feels can be taken directly as a reliable clue about the circumstances he faces, the reader can experience those circumstances with him even more strongly because of his moral isolation. 4

It is not only a narrator telling a story about someone else and speaking in first person who can create irony. Novelists often also use the shifting points of view available in third person narration to distance the reader periodically from the material and so induce a critical ironic attitude. Koestler, however, is unusual in that he manipulates the reader's perspective only to create sympathy for Rubashov and to establish the reader's trust in him. We always look out at Rubashov's world from within, never down at him from above. The exact matching of the reader's frame of reference with Rubashov's is important. Any tinge of superciliousness on the part of the reader would move him towards the realm of comedy. He would be pulled into the explosion and dissipation of emotion that occurs with humour and away from the swelling and gradual draining away of emotion that occurs in art. He might then feel less involved in the tragic aspect

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<sup>4</sup>Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 274.

of the story and so less moved to rethink his basic attitudes about good and evil.

Koestler repeatedly sidesteps opportunities for generating irony at Rubashov's expense. When Rubashov says, putting on his dressing gown during his arrest, "This time it goes at least",<sup>5</sup> the reader, who has shared his earlier dreams of arrest, understands perfectly Rubashov's ironic perspective. The joke is not on Rubashov; rather the wry flavour of it is a bond between him and the reader. Again, when No. 407's outstretched hands arouse a faint memory in Rubashov that will not come into focus, we are not allowed to view the mental lapse from outside so that we can assume a superior position; the image remains tantalizingly at the edge of our perceptive field as well as Rubashov's, and we share, rather than jeer at, his frustration, his inability to make a connection. Irony in this novel resides only in the actions and speeches of the characters whose awareness of it is exactly co-extensive with that of the reader.

In Darkness at Noon, Koestler's third person point of view is not as omniscient nor as omnipresent as one might expect. The narrator limits the area viewed by the reader largely to Rubashov's inner self but retains the flexibility of being able to give the reader an outside view when necessary. Although it limits and even distorts our

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<sup>5</sup> Arthur Koestler, Darkness at Noon (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1947, first published by Jonathan Cape in 1940), p. 14. All subsequent references to Darkness at Noon will be to this edition.

view of other characters whom we see mostly through Rubashov's eyes, it allows Koestler to control our perception of Rubashov very precisely so we identify with him as the central consciousness through which we experience the events in the novel. Koestler can also manipulate the psychological and moral angle of vision so that Rubashov is always regarded as on our level, rather than above or below us. (By describing everything only as Rubashov perceives it, he forces the reader to inhabit Rubashov's mind, to measure this life according to Rubashov's criteria.) Instead of writing "Rubashov was being watched by the warder", Koestler writes "Rubashov had the feeling he was being watched..." (18).

(Seeing and hearing as Rubashov sees and hears, we become Rubashov.)

Thus, in his constricted version of third person narration, Koestler recaptures that intimate relationship with the protagonist, generally thought to belong only to first person narration. (Never in our own lives do we know anyone, perhaps not even ourselves, in the intimate way we come to know the protagonist in Darkness at Noon.) At the same time, third person allows him to avoid the claustrophobic atmosphere and insidious internal censoring that inevitably accompanies first person.

It is not only readers who feel an unusual intimacy with Rubashov in Darkness at Noon. Rubashov is also the prisoner Koestler himself was and the victim he might have been. Like the young World War flyer, Richard Hillary, whom he eulogized, Koestler is doomed to "go on paying the tribute; for the survivor is always a debtor."<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Arthur Koestler, "In Memory of Richard Hillary", in his The Yogi and the Commissar, op cit., p. 58.

Like the character of Rubashov in the novel, Koestler, in writing about Rubashov, is actually referring to his surviving self as a third person. By calling what is a projection of himself, "he", Koestler achieves the same kind of split between the experiencing and the contemplative parts of himself as Rubashov does when his intellect begins to refer to itself as "he" and to his silent self as "I". The author and the protagonist each tend to view their public selves as distasteful and separate from their real selves. Both the material and the narrative style of the novel could have been, therefore, a kind of verbal therapy for Koestler, intended to alleviate the guilt that curses many of those who have survived when most of their contemporaries have been sacrificed. Furthermore, the failure of Rubashov's rehabilitation in the novel could have been an unconscious expression of Koestler's own wish to die as had so many of his school chums and political comrades.

The possible use of Darkness at Noon by Koestler as an instrument for the expiation of his private guilt suggests the direction in which we may look to explain its eventual shortcomings. The imposition of such a heavy demand for intimacy between the reader and Rubashov would succeed only if the author himself were distant enough from the material to see it more clearly. Although the reader's intellectual and moral perspective may be exactly co-extensive with the protagonist's, the writer's must be much wider. But Koestler's was not. At the time he was writing Darkness at Noon, he had an intellectual appreciation of the flaws in the

Communist system but he was still emotionally bound up with its ideals. He could not get outside Rubashov far enough to transmute experience into art. To extend the culinary metaphor mentioned in the introduction, his offering was not cooked enough. The defects in this novel will be seen to arise from Koestler's feelings, not his techniques.

The right choice of a narrative method to facilitate the creation of empathy is more difficult for Koestler than for other authors because the subject matter of this novel is so remote. In the novel that precedes Darkness at Noon, The Gladiators, he was dealing with a familiar period of history, the Roman Empire, and with an easily admired hero, Spartacus, the leader of an ill-fated slave revolution. In the novel that follows Darkness at Noon, Arrival and Departure, the setting and the hero are familiar aspects of the Second World War milieu. In Darkness at Noon, however, the hero is a grubby looking individual, with a cold, repulsive, cerebral, self-righteousness and a strangely masochistic attitude toward prison and the prospect of punishment. For Koestler's intended audience outside Russia, there is the added difficulty of an unfamiliar culture, politics and ethical dilemma; moreover our puny struggle with the need to be independent and the need to conform to the group are mild echoes of the agony this problem poses for Rubashov. Only by making us care passionately about the survival of someone like this prisoner could Koestler ever hope to coax us to follow him into the psychological labryinths in this tale, and into the quicksands of repressed guilt, up the twisting paths of unconscious associations, culminating in the finding of his

real self. Instead of being intimidated by this quest, we, along with Rubashov, must be made to care about its moral significance: "had these irrational processes become more admissible merely because he had personal acquaintance with them now?" (125). Can right and wrong be changed by the mutation of theory into action? Is "the validity of any experience ... to be judged by the conditions by which it has been induced?"<sup>7</sup> Unless our western minds can identify completely with Rubashov we will not experience the translation of these abstract arguments into actual situations, nor will we face, as he does, the re-evaluation of personal responsibility that they precipitate. That so many readers of Darkness at Noon did have their attitudes towards totalitarian ideology affected was proved by the sale of forty thousand copies of this novel in France (titled Le Zero et L'Infini), immediately after the end of the war when Communist maquis were settling scores with those who had collaborated with the Germans. This, "the first ethical indictment on Stalinism published in post-war France"<sup>8</sup> contributed to the defeat of the French Communists in the next general election. For this audience, the narrative technique did overcome the innate difficulties of identifying with the subject.

The strength of the bond with Rubashov, even for later and

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<sup>7</sup>Goronwy Rees, "Darkness at Noon and the 'Grammatical Fiction', Astride the Two Cultures, ed. Harold Harris (London: Hutchinson, 1975), p. 110.

<sup>8</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Invisible Writing (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1954), p. 403.

larger audiences than these Frenchmen, depends on Koestler's skill in gradually changing the focus of our attention, from the exterior details of the prison cell to Rubashov's interior life. On the first page, he presents all aspects of the scene in the context of Rubashov's reasoned evaluation of them: "the mattress looked newly filled ... the walls ... would stifle the sound of tapping .., the heating pipe itself seemed to be noise-conducting ... So far, everything was in order" (9) (my italics). In the fourth paragraph of the novel, the focal point begins sinking more deeply into Rubashov's feelings; he "decided ... felt protected ... was not afraid" (10). Then we drift with him into his dream and are immediately carried into the depths of the unconscious by the most primitive of the senses - smell and hearing. We sniff the leather worn by German soldiers and hear the sounds of their heavy breathing. They are not as they may actually have been, but are the looming figures of a prisoner's nightmare. A routine frustration, the inside out sleeve of his dressing gown, becomes ours too. The "dizzy, shapeless feeling" (11) Rubashov has on awakening is a kind of disorientation familiar to us also. Finally, after such a dream, we can easily share with him "the delicious feeling of freedom and safety" (12). By the time we awaken with him to the morning bugle call, we are as comfortable as Rubashov is with these surroundings, ready to share the restless pacing, the curious attraction and repulsion of No. 1, the imminence of torture, the nostalgia of song lyrics about death (17) and even his sense of lethargy about

his own execution. Koestler has engaged our emotions before even beginning an assault on our intellectual loyalties. This development of an emotional link before the presentation of the factual basis for that link is deliberate; it follows the theory by which Koestler explained his own mental growth:

Early emotional conditioning plays a decisive part; the arguments which justify and rationalize the credo, come afterwards. <sup>9</sup>

Like Koestler, and like Rubashov, we first believe and then we see.

The initial view of the world from Rubashov's emotional perspective is reinforced by the physical vantage point Koestler sets up. Peering out of the judas, we are allowed to see only what Rubashov sees. When the warder checks on him, he turns the light off "from outside" (10), locking us as well Rubashov inside the cell. Like Rubashov, we only dimly sense the other prisoners "simultaneously arising from their bunks, cursing and groping about on the tiles" (17) and like him we hear nothing "except from time to time retreating footsteps in the corridor" (17). Viewing a scene from an identical vantage point aligns our frame of reference precisely with that of Rubashov. (The prison experience is to be ours also.

If the story were being told either by a narrator (i.e., "I saw Rubashov frowning") or by Rubashov himself ("I frowned"). our camera angle would remain stationary. Neither of these first person narrative techniques has the flexibility that third person has. It carries us smoothly from beside Rubashov watching him inspect his cell, to inside his mind sharing his canny evaluation of prison conditions and of his

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<sup>9</sup>Arrow in the Blue, op cit., p. 92.

chances of communicating with others, back into his past nightmares of arrest, forward to his entrance into the prison gates and his first sight of his cell, and finally into his confused attempts to separate the present reality of awakening in prison from his past dreams of it. Koestler's brand of third person narration focuses exclusively on the experience of one person, but is able to vary the spatial and chronological angle on all the material presented so that we experience it precisely as the subject does. Because it forces us to inhabit Rubashov's body it inevitably forces us to share his mind. This is how Koestler coaxes us to participate personally in the issues in Darkness at Noon.

The illusion of being inside Rubashov produced by this restricted third person view overcomes any initial reluctance we might have had about immersing ourselves in this rather forbidding personality. The narrowing of our perspective has even forced us to imitate Rubashov's thought patterns. We share his "familiar and fatal constraint to put himself in the position of his opponent, and to see the scene through the other's eyes" (24). By the end of the novel we even understand that he, because of his enormous cloud of guilt unanchored to any cause in his conscious memory, feels drawn instead to shoulder the blame for the nearest available sin - the failure of the Party to achieve Utopia. And again and again we are sucked with Rubashov into that ethical no-man's-land in which the betterment of mankind is continually undermined by the impulse to forgive its weaker members. But

if one understands and forgives all, one lacks the anger and aggression to bring about change. It is only because we have developed considerable emotional commitment to Rubashov that we have the patience to follow his convoluted ideology. But perhaps what finally seals our loyalty is the helplessness, the slippery grasp of a sense of self revealed by these frantic intellectual gyrations. We feel keenly his sense of hollowness at the core and his overwhelming desire to be protected from it by something larger and more potent than himself - the Communist Party. In an early unpublished novel about a children's collective, Koestler's teen-age hero expresses this need to be part of a group:

I want to join the others. I want to warm myself against their bodies, I want to belong to them, I rub myself against them like a sheep pressing against the flock. I want to feel that I am not the only person alive in this world. <sup>10</sup>

Once we have staked our claim to a place inside Rubashov from which to view the novel, it is human nature to feel obliged to protect our observation platform. Rubashov may say to Ivanov "'I am tired and I don't want to play this game any more'" (80), but his continued existence has become so necessary for us as a center of consciousness that we applaud Ivanov's plan for his survival despite the fact that we know that the self ~~that~~ must be cultivated to please Ivanov will be the one we have come to regard as false. We are

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<sup>10</sup>The Invisible Writing, op cit., p. 237.

even grateful to Ivanov for the solicitous cossetting of 'our' prisoner and relieved when he gives Rubashov a fortnight to consider the offer. Such is the result of the strength of the bonds forged by Koestler's narrative method.

The mobility of the point of view in third person narration also allows Koestler to step outside Rubashov to corroborate his status as a legitimate protester inside rather than outside the Communist system. Our inner view of him has been in a personal rather than a political context and so we do not know quite how to take his ironic view of No. 1 or his loyalty to "the enormous country for which he had fought and suffered" (12). The first outside view begins with a flashback to the porter Vasily's testimony about Rubashov's former status as a legitimate 'hero' in the revolution; this confirms his loyalty to and affection for the party in the past. But in the present, the possession of Rubashov's picture is, for Vasily, a compromising act; obviously the hero's image has become tarnished. This outside view also shows us the menacing figures of Rubashov's dream through a new lens, as befuddled human beings doing a distasteful job. As we travel through the city to the prison, the lens widens and we see, through the minds of the arresting officers, the roughness of the unpaved city streets and then the disadvantaged state of the country as a whole. Now we can choose to re-evaluate our initial inside view of Rubashov in a broader perspective.

But such freedom of choice is only apparent; by giving us the inside view first, Koestler has rigged the outcome: we are automatically going to view this actual arrest within the context of Vasily's

testimony about Rubashov's trustworthiness and also see it overlaid with the garish tones of Rubashov's nightmare figures. Koestler has ensured that our sympathies will be in tune with the captive rather than with the capturers. We do feel, however, as if we have taken sides, and this 'freely' chosen loyalty is what makes us root for 'our' prisoner to win. Only the control available to Koestler in third person narration could remove us from Rubashov's mind at the same time as it corroborates the authenticity of that mind and also make us believe we have chosen to support it on the basis of the 'facts' alone.

Another way Koestler creates the illusion that we are reacting on the basis of our own, and not Koestler's, perceptions is to induce us to create Rubashov in our own image. Rubashov himself shows us how. He conjectures wildly about the identity and appearance of No. 402: "Certainly No. 402 wore an eye-glass; probably he was tapping with it and the bared eye was twitching nervously" (29). He manipulates his neighbour's sex fantasies. He imagines No. 402 slapping his thighs, twirling his mustache, and blowing smoke in Rubashov's direction. He becomes real for Rubashov because he is a projection of Rubashov's unfulfilled needs. In the same way, Rubashov becomes real for us, as a figure fleshed out with our hopes and desires. As Rubashov believes in his phantom, we believe, no less and for the same reasons, in Rubashov.

It is the lack of direct commentary, the dearth of telling and the insistence on showing, that forces us to fill the figure of Rubashov with our own substance. Koestler maintains that "the reader

should never be given something for nothing; he must be made to pay in emotional currency by exerting his imagination."<sup>11</sup> By refusing to interpret scenes for us, he allows us to participate in the imaging, the creating and the judging of Rubashov. For instance, when Rubashov tests his will power by deliberately burning his hand with a cigarette, Koestler places an observing eye at the spy hold. This seems to give us the option of regarding Rubashov's stunt in a new light, as it might appear, for instance to an ironic observer. Is he a victim of his own pride? Is he a masochist punishing himself for betraying Richard? Or has he been driven insane by the pressures of his imprisonment? However, not surprisingly, we choose to see it as courage. We must, because we have a vested interest in our own creation which we must protect against all that would destroy it. Any kind of ironic detachment is impossible. Our creative imagination is in a straitjacket carefully designed by Koestler.

We have assembled Rubashov from pieces of our own selves. But there is another reason why our bond with him is so solid. From the outset he has seemed to expect, even to want, to lose his struggle with his captors. When he is persecuted, where fear and aggressiveness should be, there is a vacuum. Into this space we must fall, coned into supplying the aggression Rubashov lacks and the self-assertiveness he has repressed. By silently rooting for the sense of identity

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Koestler, "Literature and the Law of Diminishing Returns", in his The Heel of Achilles (London: Hutchinson, 1974), p. 130.

Rubashov seems to have lost, we create it; when we create it we become responsible for it. Thus has Koestler enlisted the reader to do battle on behalf of the protagonist, illustrating his own dictum that "the artist rules his subjects by turning them into accomplices."<sup>12</sup>

To sum up, the reader creates the Rubashov that Koestler intends even while he is under the illusion that he is doing so on the basis of his own judgements. Only third person narration has the impersonality and the authority to make us forget that Koestler is the actual source of everything, and to make us think that we are free to make up our own minds about where Rubashov's real self resides and about whose standards we should adopt to measure the material in front of us. And only through such personal involvement in the conflicts inside Rubashov's mind can we develop a new perspective on the rights of the individual and the state. This is to be not just an exercise but an epiphany.

As we move forward through Rubashov's past by means of three successive flashbacks, each recollection is designed to commit us to viewing the 'silent self', alias the 'grammatical fiction', as the essential part of Rubashov with which to identify. In each flashback Rubashov rejects the chance to interact with another on a personal level; he rejects the transcendental, qualitatively based ethic of the individual, an ethic proposed by his own unconscious feelings. He clings instead to his Party role, treating another human being as a

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<sup>12</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Act of Creation (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1970, first published in 1964), p. 86.

< means to an end, progress towards which is measured only in quantitative terms. His suppressed emotions eventually erupt in the scene in which Bogrov is dragged past his cell door. Suddenly Rubashov's emotional life catches up to his intellectual one. This meeting with Bogrov, like so many other events in the novel, comes to have significance primarily because of the past it contains:

✧ It is the far stretch of the past which makes the shape of [a] book, not any of the knots or networks of action which it contains. 13

These trips back into the past always begin with Rubashov musing on the work of the Party as a whole, then recalling those in the inner circle and finally remembering himself carrying out one of his missions. Such zooming in from the general to the particular gradually pulls us into the picture. It is also an effective way of presetting the emotional angle of vision for the incident we are about to witness. The actions of Rubashov's Party self as it acted in the past are set in the context of his emotional hyperactivity in the present. For us, such a perspective explains, without excusing, the sacrifice of Richard, Little Loewy and Arlova.

It would have been awkward for Rubashov or a narrator-friend of his to have told us about these daydreams. In addition, the recall of them, even if done on some logical pretext, would have been severely censored in a first person account. No amount of honesty on Rubashov's part could have allowed him to give us the spectacle of a sincere Party member feeling both pride and regret for his inhumane treatment of

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<sup>13</sup>Lubbock, op cit., p. 129.

of others. Only a third person narrative, concentrating its focus on a single consciousness could integrate past and present feelings and reveal so much subjectivity in such an objective manner.

The actual mechanism which transports us to all three locations in the flashbacks belongs to one of the most primitive layers in our consciousness, that concerned with smell. The scene with Richard begins when Rubashov finds himself again "on the round plush sofa in the picture gallery which smelled of dust and floor polish" (32). The scene with Little Loewy is initiated when Rubashov "smelled again the smell of the harbour, a mixture of rotting seaweed and petrol" (53). The memory of Arlova returns when "once more Rubashov breathed the air of his erstwhile office in the Trade Delegation, which was filled with the peculiarly familiar odour of Arlova's big, well-formed and sluggish body" (92). The preternaturally vivid sensations of smell and touch in these scenes differentiate them from the present life in prison. They also indicate how closely aligned with the primordial layers of the brain are memories of personal relationships.

Rubashov's own familiarity with prison daydreaming and his surprise at how often he was slipping into this mode prepares us for the real stage for the action in Darkness at Noon - the unconscious. The descent into it is signalled by physical symptoms: pressure in the head, shivering, dryness in the throat, restlessness, involuntary movements of the lips, hunger for food and cigarettes, a sense of dis-orientation and "memories [which] hummed and buzzed subduedly in his

ears" (51). He feels as if "his whole past was sore and festered at every touch" (51). Although the imminence of death "altered the mechanism of thought and caused the most surprising reactions - like the movements of a compass brought close to the magnetic pole" (45-46), the unconscious materials Rubashov needs to tie up the loose ends of his past belong to a large repressed area of his psyche and they cannot be summoned at will, nor, once present, can they be controlled by the conscious mind. They insist on entering, speaking, and exiting according to the laws of association, not logic. Each is, therefore, an event not precipitated by conscious preparation on the part of Rubashov. Only a narrator speaking of Rubashov as a third person could juxtapose the immediate flow of the present and the isolated unresolved fragments of the past so that we are gradually led deeper and deeper into the unconscious. Thus we experience along with Rubashov the dawning of the sense of personal responsibility.

The point of view is only one aspect of narrative technique. The selection and ordering of events are other means of ensuring that we sympathize with Rubashov. We first meet him as we would meet any stranger in our everyday life, by sharing a new situation with him - in this case, the inspection of the cell to which he has just been assigned. Then, as with a new acquaintance in our own lives, we are kept in suspense about his past until, through flashbacks interspersed at random during our relationship, we learn his history. It is the placement of these flashbacks in the narrative that ensures that our

sympathy with Rubashov is locked securely into place. Rubashov's first contact with anyone inside the prison is with No. 402, whose desperate pleas for attention prepare us for the litany of unfulfilled needs reverberating throughout the novel and whose cold reception by Rubashov foreshadows Rubashov's heartless treatment of Richard and of Little Loewy. Then, after the first two daydreams, the meeting with Ivanov introduces a counter melody. By displaying Party thinking in its most coldblooded form, Ivanov puts Rubashov in a warmer, more human light. The longing glances he keeps turning towards the light patches on the wall where his old comrades used to look down, make us feel that he is now a much more morally sensitive being than the one who sits across from him upholding the official Party view. We see his harsh behaviour towards Arlova in the flashback to follow through the veil of his admission that the revolution has failed. Then, in order to confirm our intimation that Rubashov is less of a creature of the state than he thinks, this interview with Ivanov is followed immediately by a diary entry. Rubashov writes: "I destroyed people whom I was fond of ... If I was right I have nothing to repent of, if wrong, I will pay" (83). Rubashov's increasing preoccupation with manifestations of the 'grammatical fiction' which spill out after he writes in his diary, brings further into focus the self buried in Rubashov's unconscious and invites us to identify with it rather than with the public Party persona he regards as the true Rubashov.

But the selection and ordering of incidents is of secondary

importance compared to the manipulation of the point of view. Only a third person narrator can widen the perspective by increasing the distance from which we view Rubashov. For instance, immediately after the diary entry we are pulled back out of Rubashov to witness two other members of the Party, Ivanov and Gletkin discussing Rubashov. Because we have never seen these two except through Rubashov's mind, they suddenly seem naked and new. They provide us with a long shot of Rubashov as a figure in a landscape which stretches away in space and ahead in time. Now we can see clearly the dangers in the future. Ivanov says that Rubashov will not capitulate "out of cowardice, but by logic" (84). First person narration could never have allowed us to gauge correctly the extent of the danger for Rubashov if he had failed to adhere to the Party line; only by switching from the diary to third person and its outside view can we gain knowledge that Rubashov is still to realize. We also see the ultimate flaw in Ivanov's logic: "We vouch for every act with our heads - more cannot be expected of us" (131). We know before Rubashov that a Party policy in which heads but not hearts vouch for every act is doomed.

In this way we are always just a little ahead of Rubashov in sensing the direction of movement of his emotions. Nevertheless, the time lag in his tide of awareness does not allow us to feel superior to him nor ironically detached from his self discovery, but rather gives us the sense of having led the way and somehow having ourselves helped to build the bridge between his conscious and unconscious selves.

When Bogrov's appearance opens the gates and Rubashov realizes at last of what he is really guilty, we reach the climax of the novel because now - "the whimpering of Bogrov unbalanced the logical equation" (117) - now the possibility of personal growth exists. The guilt which had been displaced from his personal life onto the Party is now attached to its proper source. His sin is that he has betrayed his friends. His crime is one of personal irresponsibility. Although Rubashov is just learning this, both the structure and angle of viewing have already oriented us so that we see the significance of Rubashov's past and the validity of his unconscious feelings before Rubashov himself does. This anticipation of the reasons for Rubashov's fractured psyche is another result of Koestler's control of our perspective. It pulls us into the middle of his search for his real self, makes us creators of a solution, and causes us to feel as personally committed to his survival as if it were our own.

But the unconscious feeling that surfaces is guilt. Therefore, the more guilt-ridden Rubashov becomes, the closer we are to locating ourselves in the essential core of his identity. For example, at one point, Ivanov refuses to believe that Rubashov sacrificed Arlova for selfish reasons, maintaining that he must have done it for a cause greater than himself, namely, the opposition. Rubashov simply cannot reply; for the first time he has glimpsed the possibility that his underlying motives could have indeed been selfish. His guilt is even worse than he had imagined. But even though the 'grammatical fiction' is

surfacing with its ugly side up, it is this aspect of Rubashov for which we have begun to care. This 'I' has become the only acceptable place from which the reader can view the issues in the novel.

We seem to view much of the material in Darkness at Noon as if it were passing by under a microscope but the flexibility of third person narration is not always devoted exclusively to decreasing the distance between ourselves and the subject. One passage in Rubashov's reminiscences stands out just because it lacks the minute sensory detail which would establish this air of immediacy. This is the story of the subverted boycott that Little Loewy and his friends refused to support; it is told with such a dearth of concrete particulars and absence of emotional coloration that it seems to be Koestler rather than Rubashov speaking.

The sections of the Party executed these orders with enthusiasm. The dock workers in the small port refused to load or unload cargoes coming from that country or destined for it. Other trade unions joined them. The strike was hard to carry through; there were conflicts with the police with wounded and dead. (60).

Not only the distance but the angle of vision has been changed. Missing from these sentences is that familiar self-mocking undertone in the voice of Rubashov that so often gives a faintly ironic dimension to his comments. We do not know how to take these carefully factual statements. Koestler's control of our point of view seems to have slipped momentarily. Or it is quite possible that this is Koestler's way of putting us into Little Loewy's shoes for an instant, of forcing us to examine 'facts' in an uncertain context as he had to. At the same time, it transplants

us into the rigid Party mind that really believed that Russia's need to sell her raw materials abroad superseded her moral responsibility to quash aggression in other lands. Then Koestler breaks off his history lecture; he shifts his stylistic gears once again and returns to a specific scene, a drama rather than a summary. We are back in the office rooms of Little Loewy's branch of the Party where:

the walls were covered with old election posters, political slogans and typed notices. in one corner stood a dusty old duplicator. In another lay a heap of old clothes destined for the families of strikers... (61).

Koestler is no longer telling us about Rubashov but is showing him to us. We are sensing details once again from inside a specific center of consciousness. Only in third person narration could perspective be so delicately controlled.

The deliberate juxtaposition of a summarizing and a dramatic style highlights both the idiosyncratic moral framework of utilitarian politics and tatty warmth of a socialist brotherhood. But such stylistic variety does more than give us pleasure. The obvious appeal of this comradeship for Koestler is reflected in the tones of longing in many of Rubashov's recollections and belies <the conscious debunking of Communism in this novel.> The flexibility of the narrative technique has given Koestler enough leeway to reveal the cleft in his own loyalties.

The freedom Koestler has in third person to switch to first person and insert passages from Rubashov's diary is also invaluable in allowing us to view Rubashov as he could never view himself. The first excerpt, occurring just after the initial interview with Ivanov,

enables us to watch the way Rubashov's mind works when he attempts to deal with the 'silent partner' on the plane of logical argument. Third person narration, with its omniscient straightforward presentation, could not 'lie' so obviously as Rubashov does as he desperately cultivates his Party persona in order to survive. Unlike most diaries, this one does not give an intimate glimpse of the inner self of the writer; here Rubashov's every word and thought is formed in the pattern of Party policy: < "there is no other rule possible than the old one, that the end justifies the means" (81). Rubashov has chosen this rule "in the name of universal reason" (81). And yet he doubts the infallibility of his own reasoning self: < "That is why I am lost" (84). Even as he assumes his Party self he knows it is fated to be destroyed. It is strange that this first person account by Rubashov places him in a more distant perspective than any of the third person narrative passages.

The recognition of a (false self) is a common theme in literature. In Eugene Zamiatin's We, the hero, like Rubashov, fuses his own sense of identity entirely into that of the group. Then, again like Rubashov, he realizes that another part of himself is observing this carefully fabricated social persona:

... I had firm faith in myself; I believed that I knew all about myself. But then ... I look in the mirror. And for the first time in my life I see clearly, precisely, consciously and with surprise, I see myself as some "him"! I am "he". Frowning black straight brows; between them, like a scar, there is a vertical wrinkle. (Was there that wrinkle there before?) Steel-gray eyes encircled by the shadow of a sleepless night. And behind

that steel ... I understand; I never knew before what there was behind that steel. From there (this "there" is at once so near and so infinitely distant!) I look at myself -- at "him". And I know surely that "he" with his straight brows is a stranger that I meet him here for the first time in my life. The real I is not he. 14

Like Zamiatin, Koestler could have used first person for Rubashov's experience of self discovery. However, he does not:

Now, when he stood with his forehead against the window or suddenly stopped on the third black tile, he made unexpected discoveries. He found out that those processes wrongly known as 'monologues' are really dialogues of a special kind; dialogues in which one partner remains silent while the other, against all grammatical rules addresses him as 'I' instead of 'you', in order to creep into his confidence and to fathom his intentions; but the silent partner just remains silent, shuns observation and even refuses to be localized in time and space.(90)

The use of third person here is a clue to the eventual demise of the 'silent self'. Typically, Koestler's version of the revelation of a hidden "I" is placed in an intellectual rather than an emotional framework. These flat tones of rational speculation are more akin to Rubashov's newly rejected "he" than to the "I" that has surfaced to observe it. For Koestler, even the unconscious must be expressed in terms of the verbal logical conscious mind - in the measured distant cadences of third person rather than the jerky staccato bursts of first person. Because of the non-verbal character of the unconscious, direct expression of it is not only difficult for any novelist who is trying to make his material available in a verbal medium, but it might, in Rubashov's situation, allow the uncontrollable horses of the

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<sup>14</sup>Eugene Zamiatin, We (New York: E.P. Dutton and Co., 1924), p. 57.

libido to bolt in an unexpected direction. His continued physical existence hinges on keeping the logic of the Party in the driver's seat. Thus the narrative style suits the needs of both author and protagonist. When the pressure required to keep the lid of the unconscious down lets up and repressed materials escape, they can only do so by being 'translated' into the concepts of the cerebral part of both Koestler and Rubashov.

C. S. Lewis tells us that "a plot is only really a net to catch something else."<sup>15</sup> The chronology of Rubashov's progress through the apparatus of Communist justice, then, is only a way of convincing the reader that rational utopian schemes can be evil and that some means are not justified by any ends. As long as we can find in Darkness at Noon a self that feels and judges according to human parameters and immerse ourselves in this consciousness, we can participate in such an aesthetically and morally satisfying experience. In the novel, so far, by reducing the distance between us and Rubashov to the minimum, Koestler's narrative technique, in both its third person viewpoint and its structuring of events, has been able to carry us into the center of Rubashov, into the most human part of him, his instinctive feelings. But so much - perhaps too much - hinges on the efficiency of Koestler's technique. If ever we cease to believe that the protagonist really has an individual core from which to perceive his own vision of the world around him, our participation in the conflict of his ideas will evaporate,

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<sup>15</sup>C.S. Lewis, "On Stories", in his Of Other Worlds (New York: Harcourt Grace Jovanovich, 1966), p. 18.

the dramatic tension will escape, and the sequence of incidents will be a report on rather than a literary rendering of a tragedy. Unfortunately, just after the climax of this novel, a breakage of this vital connection does occur.

The climax of Darkness at Noon marks the high point of our empathy with Rubashov and the end of the process of drawing us ever further inside him. The three daydreams have heightened the tension between his Party identity and his individual self, culminating in his final recollection of Arlova. The guilt Rubashov attributed to his failure to bring about the glorious revolution is finally ready to be attached to its proper unconscious source - the deaths of Richard, Little Loewy and Arlova. When Bogrov is dragged past his cell on his way to be executed, even though Rubashov is not technically to blame for this particular death, the proximity of this incident to the daydream of Arlova produces a sudden meshing of gears between the subconscious and the conscious. For the first time Rubashov is responding to his surroundings as a whole person. Now we feel that there is a possibility of real development of the self, not only for Rubashov but for the circle of awareness that the reader has carved out for himself. We have reached the psychological climax of the real plot of this novel. For the first time, the lag between Rubashov's knowledge and ours is eliminated. Now that the bridge to the unconscious has been opened, we can hope, with Rubashov, for his survival as an individual. The centre of consciousness so carefully nurtured by Koestler's narrative skills seems about to flower.

But as Rubashov teeters on the edge, Ivanov arrives in his cell.

Because of the inarticulate nature of the newly emerged self, conversation between the two begins with a monologue by Ivanov. He manages to coax Rubashov back into that realm in which the only identity possible is that allowed by the Party. Afterwards, Rubashov feels "hollowed-out and sucked dry, and at the same time as if a weight [has] been lifted from him" (132). From here on we are on the down-slope of the novel. In the scene that follows, between Ivanov and Gletkin, Ivanov's abrasive treatment of Gletkin sows the seeds of Ivanov's disappearance and Gletkin's domination. Since the session with Gletkin is what will force Rubashov to renounce the last shreds of his rediscovered individuality, this encounter is the functional turning point of the plot. The point of view and the selection and arrangement of events have tricked us into setting up camp in a field of perception which has turned into quicksand. Its disappearance ensures our eventual exclusion from participation in the world and ideas of Rubashov and thus of Arthur Koestler. We have been made to distrust the self that belongs to the Party and yet this is the only self that has any chance of survival. From here on, despite Koestler's continuing superior narrative skills, our identification with Rubashov and therefore our stake in the issues in Darkness at Noon will find less and less firm ground on which to stand.

One of the more mundane drawbacks of first person is that if a person tells his own story, we can be sure that (unless it is a diary serendipitously discovered by a publisher) the protagonist will not die

during the course of his adventures. Koestler's third person technique, in becoming bound up with one person, tries to do just what first person cannot - to have a 'dead' man - a person without an individual identity - tell his story. Perhaps a less restricted perspective from the beginning would have avoided this predicament but it would also have scattered and diffused the focus of our attention and so have prevented us from experiencing Rubashov's dilemma personally.

From now on we are kept at a distance from what we have come to regard as the 'real' Rubashov. Switching into first person in the next diary excerpt, Koestler takes us further away from him as Rubashov's Party self defends totalitarianism with an argument based on the inability of the population to participate fully in the affairs of the state until they 'mature' further. It is as if the recent sensitivity to others as individuals has suddenly been recognized as dangerous. In this passage Rubashov switches to the stilted pedantic style of a speech or a chapter from a textbook. Compare the soaring rhetoric he used earlier in justifying Party policy to Richard:

'History knows no scruples and no hesitation.  
Inert and unerring, she flows towards her goal.  
At every bend in her course she leaves the mud  
which she carries and the corpses of the drowned.  
History knows her way.' (41)

Now, seeking refuge from what he perceives to be his weak 'silent self', Rubashov's tone is strained and his language turbid:

Now, every technical improvement creates a new complication to the economic apparatus, causes the appearance of new factors and combinations which the masses cannot penetrate for a time. (136).

Such a style is deliberately calculated to weary us, to make us reject the reborn logical self, and to encourage us to keep on seeking for that 'grammatical fiction' which alone can be a base for our perception of events in this novel. Rubashov's spirits, however, continue to rise as he works out his explanation of why the revolution has failed.

His excitement grows; he sees a future for himself as a Party reformer. But the thin layer of logic on which this false hope rests soon begins to crack under the weight of the almost palpable presence of the other prisoners and the injustices they represent:

The silence was inflated by their inaudible breath, their invisible dreams, the stifled gasping of their fears and desires. If history were a matter of calculation, how much did the sum of two thousand nightmares weigh, the pressure of a two-thousand-fold helpless craving? (146)

Even as he awaits word from Ivanov to confirm his place in the Party, he is yearning to contact No. 402 and dreaming of Arlova. After this diary entry, the 'grammatical fiction' is in hiding, waiting, just as we are waiting, to see how far Rubashov's rationalizing can stretch before it breaks.

Koestler's third person narration has succeeded too well, weaning us away from empathy with the 'commissar' in Rubashov and trapping us inside the 'yogi' in him. For instance, when Rubashov, lost in his theorizing about the political maturity of the natives of New Guinea, ignores the reactionary peasant from province D walking beside him in the prison courtyard (139), his lack of human feeling makes us feel completely cut off from him. And Rubashov's subsequent mocking conversation with No. 402 about the meaning of honour is more depressing

evidence of the dominance of the rational logical self. In The Yogi and the Commissar, when the commissar has cut himself off from the unconscious, Koestler tells us that "the connection is not re-established - then the dead cord up and strangles its owner."<sup>16</sup> But the end of Rubashov's existence is not only a disaster for him. The dissolution of Rubashov's personal identity into the group mind of the Communist Party also leaves us totally adrift. > If, as Koestler must have intended, the subject matter of this novel is Rubashov's experience of a certain social group, it is imperative that we remain inside him; otherwise the focus will be the character of the group itself rather than how a human being reacts to that character. Being situated inside Rubashov, we have naturally been hoping that the individual component will never completely fade, that it will re-appear at the final trumpet to rescue the hero. Still, from the first pages, there have been hints that death will triumph: "'For golden lads and girls all must, as chimney-sweepers, come to dust'" (17), and, with the final sinking of the 'grammatical fiction' below the level of Rubashov's conscious perception, we cannot help but feel as readers that our part in Darkness at Noon is finished.

The only way to re-anchor us to Rubashov, no matter what identity he adopts, is to give him an adversary whose treatment of Rubashov will arouse our pity and sympathy once more. If the antagonist is horrible enough, almost any protagonist will elicit sympathy. Such a necessary bogeyman is Gletkin. During the time Rubashov spends with him, our

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<sup>16</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar, op cit., pp. 15-16.

connection with the issues in the novel as they are dramatized by Rubashov's involvement with them, is maintained, albeit by a network of rather tenuous threads. The narrative method continues to force us to see all from Rubashov's vantage point; Koestler exploits the intense focus made possible by third person narration to confine us inside the prisoner by consistently describing Gletkin only as he appears to Rubashov. In addition, in confessing to "'having placed the idea of man above the idea of mankind'" (153), Rubashov's honest belief that he is doing the noble thing and his drive to sacrifice himself, especially for a Utopia which he knows now will never come, compels our respect. In this suffering courageous figure, yearning to make the right choice for the good of mankind, is a momentary whiff of the romance of lost ideals and unattainable Shangri-Las. At the same time, our intimacy with Rubashov is reinforced by making him appear so weak that we feel compelled to defend him. For example, when he admits to having desired but not acted in the interests of the opposition, we know Gletkin's logic will destroy this position. And when he confesses to having used that same excuse twice before "'for tactical purposes'" (154), we despair of him ever surviving long in Gletkin's clutches.

For a while, Koestler's efforts to keep us in step with Rubashov work. We welcome the brief resurgence of feeling for Hare-lip and the ironic perspective on happier days with his friend Kieffer. Like Rubashov, we follow Gletkin's manipulations of Hare-lip with a certain bemused detachment, smiling at the clever moves and the slips, almost forgetting that this is anything but a game and enjoying Rubashov's

triumph when he points out that he could not have known, when he plotted with Hare-lip, that Hare-lip would ever have a job giving him access to No. 1's food preparation, and thus could never have planned to poison No. 1. But when Gletkin changes the original accusation to eliminate the mention of the specific means of assassination, the strength of Rubashov's individuality crumbles and he realizes how useless it is, as Gletkin phrases it, "'to deny the [act] which [is] the logical consequence'" (154) of his 'oppositional' attitude. Rubashov's identity is again centred squarely in the public persona of a Party member.

But the logic of Rubashov's guilt is not to be found in words. And this guilt is the lever by which Gletkin will manipulate him. Of all the shapes of guilt in Rubashov's unconscious the most definitive is that of his guilt for the deaths of those who trusted him. It exists as the unseen but potent motive for his almost eager submission to punishment - especially the demolition of his personal identity by Gletkin. In order to cleanse oneself of guilt, one needs to recognize it consciously, i.e., to verbalize it, to grab hold of it with the logical processes of the mind. But Rubashov has signed over his intellectual equipment to the Party and this faculty does not have any language to express emotions. In order to be recognized at all, this guilt must be converted into the syntax of Party logic. This is how the source of personal guilt comes to be displaced onto the Party and why only in the Party will punishment, and, more importantly, forgiveness, be found. Ostensibly Rubashov is paying the price for presuming to theorize independently about Party policy; actually, however, he is

like those others who had been sacrificed on the Party's altar, who were "guilty, although not of those deeds of which they accused themselves." (201)

As Gletkin gradually enlarges the domain of Party logic, he forces Rubashov back to the edges of his repressed feelings, to that 'silent self' "whose realm started just where logical thought ended" (201). The border of the unconscious can only be sensed by pushing against it. The resulting picture is a silhouette, in which the features are blacked out and only the outline is clear. This explains why, after each tussle with Gletkin, Rubashov is "exhausted and yet in a strange way satisfied" (177). The self that can argue has confirmed the existence of the one that cannot. As Gletkin gains ground, Rubashov is forced back to that hinterland between the conscious and the unconscious - sleep. He can confirm the presence of the unconscious by struggling against it; however, once inside it, his conscious self will vanish. Thus he will never be able to control or define his experience there. And for this conscious self to yield will mean the death of the only identity he now knows - his Party self. The two halves of Rubashov's self are doomed to remain forever apart.

In the end, despite the 'over-qualified' antagonist, and Koestler's efforts to confine us rigidly to Rubashov's point of view, the gap between the reader and Rubashov has become impossible. The appearance of Hare-lip, "the consequence of his logic made flesh" (166), should have, with its load of guilt, aroused some reaction from the

unconscious. But the bridge to that realm seems to be down; all guilt for those he has hurt has been permanently displaced onto the Party.

Even the structure of the novel, involving a shift in perspective possible only in third person, testifies to the change in Rubashov: Vasily's re-appearance in the final section is the other half of a pair of parentheses enclosing the development and emphasizing that the old Rubashov was the real one. Although this last section is entitled "The Grammatical Fiction", it is merely a requiem for it. Only Vasily remembers the real Rubashov; only in his memories do we glimpse the harmonious functioning of all Rubashov's levels of consciousness, when he would 'swear in such a pleasant way that it was a joy to God and man" (194). Vasily views Rubashov's 'voluntary' confession in complete perplexity, just as we would have if we had not been witness to the disintegration of Rubashov's individuality. In this way Koestler emphasizes how far both we and Rubashov have travelled since the beginning of our acquaintance.

Rubashov is now without substance, "a man who had lost his shadow" (201). His last attempt to justify himself at his trial had resulted in silence: "the words had burnt on his tongue" (201). On the very edge of consciousness, now that he has paid the fee to recover his individual identity, we catch sight of the human being Rubashov might have been - in the warm relaxed banter between him and

No. 402 just before he is led away to his execution. From a great distance, we watch the end of one with whom we lost our connection long before.

CHAPTER II  
THE USES OF SYMBOLISM

Darkness at Noon is a novel with a special requirement for symbols. Its subject is the power of the unconscious. Since, by its nature, the unconscious is non-verbal, it can only be reflected in disjointed fragments off the surface of the work. Only pieces of it ever emerge, such as the truncated glimpses of the Pietà, the partial view of the hands in the cell across from Rubashov, and the torn off newspaper clipping about the finiteness of the universe. The unconscious manifests itself in Rubashov's daydreams and in his compulsive gestures. In addition, certain sounds and memories trigger unaccountable vibrations in it, making it seem a part of some other larger realm into which one could dissolve and through which one could expand to encompass the entire system. We customarily think of symbols as specific items whose nature indicates the character of some larger class or complex; symbols, therefore, are indeed useful in a novel about a man's unfathomably vast interior life.

Koestler has an enviable natural bent for encasing an idea in the most appropriate physical form, for showing us the shape of the abstract reality behind appearances, and even for illustrating relationships and pressures within it. The symbols in Darkness at Noon are samples of Koestler's special skill in transmuting the flux

of ideas into spatial terms, a skill that makes his later expository prose shine. His eye can encompass large tracts of time and space, see the movement therein and encapsulate the essence of it in concrete imagery. Here is how he summarizes the development of the world view of ancient Greece:

The Ionians had prised the world-oyster open, the Pythagoreans had set the earth ball adrift in it, the Atomists dissolved its boundaries in the infinite. Aristotle closed the lid again with a bang, shoved the earth back into the world's centre, and deprived it of motion.<sup>1</sup>

Making the invisible visible for the reader requires a very precise sense of physical extension and spatial orientation; probably Koestler's scientific background helps him here. The metaphorical descriptions and explanations in his discursive writing, as well as his use of symbols in fiction, are expressions of this ability to match his outer and inner maps.

Even early in his writing career, in Darkness at Noon, the images and symbols Koestler uses are an organic part of the scenes and events, not a superimposed decoration to echo the theme. Their symbolic function is secondary, growing out of the basic function they fulfill in the telling of the story. Each symbol begins as an intrinsic detail, blending seamlessly into the context of the story. Then, as layers of association accumulate around it with repeated use, it evolves into an objective correlative, evoking a specific emotion in

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Sleepwalkers (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1963), p. 58.

the mind of the reader. Each new context adds fresh overtones of feeling until the resonating of the symbol in itself gives a coherence and a continuity to the novel which the narrative technique ultimately fails to provide. For instance, the symbol of the break between the conscious and the unconscious, the toothache, begins as an alibi, is found to have originated in guilt and is finally vanquished by penance. Another example of such a symbol is the photograph of the bearded men who founded the Party. It is referred to first when it precipitates Rubashov's reverie in his jail cell. He remembers that most of these men had disappeared; now they seem to beckon to him to join them. Then, in his daydream about Little Loewy, he remembers how, when he went to Belgium, most of the men in this picture had died because they had been purged, all except Lenin "who had died in time" (54); their sacrifice also seems a sad inexplicable waste. Finally, in this daydream, he remembers that during his last interview with No. 1, this picture with its numbered heads had been missing from the wall entirely, as if it was No. 1 who had personally devoured all these victims and Rubashov was next on the list; the sinister aura is charged in addition with a feeling of immediate danger. With every mention, the photograph has become more encrusted with the callousness of the Party's attitude to those who serve it. Nevertheless, because the symbol has grown gradually out of the repetition of an image endemic to Rubashov's point of view, it remains an integral part of the novel as a whole.

As this picture has been carrying Rubashov back in time, from present reverie to past daydream, and even farther back to the scene with No. 1 that precipitated his trip to Belgium, it has been forecasting the treatment Rubashov may expect in the future. This suggests another important function of Koestler's symbols. They join the present to the past and the future so that despite the passage of time the whole seems connected. By foreshadowing events, moods, or ideas, they set up expectations that are later fulfilled. In Rubashov's dreams of arrest, the arm could never find the sleeve of his dressing gown; in the actual arrest, it does, thus predicting that in prison he will conform to the Party policy he never quite fitted into in the past. Another example occurs just before Bogrov begins his last walk. In the midst of the unnatural hush that falls over the prisoners, Rubashov suddenly "sniffed and noticed that for some time already he had the scent of Arlova in his nostrils" (112). In this way the stage is set for the fusing of his repressed feelings about Arlova's death in the past with the emotion aroused by Bogrov's death in the present. And when Gletkin relates to Ivanov his accidental discovery that interrogations proceed better with sleepy subjects, the men playing chess nearby immediately throw over their chess men and begin a new game. Indeed, for Gletkin, the game is about to begin anew with Rubashov; it is now a matter, not of reasoning with the victim, but of wearing him down, physically and psychologically. Again, when Ivanov is winding down his final presentation to Rubashov in his cell, we would not know that Rubashov is about to leave the realm of the 'silent self' and join

Ivanov on the logical plane except that he looks out of the window and sees that "the melted snow had again frozen" (128). Similarly, at the end of this interview, Rubashov looks at a sentry "doing a right-about turn" (132); this is Koestler signalling to us that Rubashov will capitulate. And in Gletkin's office just before Hare-lip begins the incriminating part of his testimony against Rubashov, Gletkin's secretary breaks off to sharpen her pencil - preparing us for the fact that the conversation will now come to its intended point. Rubashov's final defeat is foreshadowed in many physical details, such as the atmosphere of Gletkin's office "where time stood still ... as in a putrefying pond" (186), a forecast of individual dissolution. Another symbolic detail is the snow Rubashov brings in from the exercise yard which is soon "melting on his hand in the warmth of the bulb" (186), indicating that, in the world of the Party, all things pure and natural must disintegrate in the artificial heat of political fervour. Our sense of inevitability about the outcome is a result of the power of such images to throw their shadows ahead of them into the future.

Such foreshadowing by symbols contributes to the unity of the novel but this unity also stems from Koestler's unique way of combining symbols to reinforce an idea. For example, because of the shapelessness of the unconscious, no one symbol can fully convey its qualities. Instead, the symbols used to represent it in Darkness at Noon are used in concert with each other to achieve a synergistic

effect. First, however, each item must gradually accumulate the required associations through exposure in different contexts. One representation of the unconscious is the involuntary exclamation "I will pay", which occurs both before and after repeated references to Rubashov's guilt. He murmurs it just after he has been refused cigarettes by No. 402 and is wondering if he had shot friends of his in the civil war. He mutters it again just before he receives the enigmatic greeting from Hare-lip, before the steam-bath torture has even taken place. This verbal manifestation of the unconscious is outside the march of time, cut loose from any location in space, and undetermined by a chain of cause and effect. Another symbol of Rubashov's guilt is the reappearance in various guises of the outstretched hands of the Pietà. It is first seen in the hands of No. 407, cupped to receive bread; this triggers the recall of the actual picture of Mary as it had appeared during his interview with Richard. The obscuring of all but its hands by Richard's head prefigures another interview much later between Rubashov and Ivanov when Ivanov's head partially blocks the light patch on the wall where the photograph of the original revolutionaries used to be. Always the figure which triggers the guilt is partially hidden from view just as Rubashov's guilt is hidden from his conscious mind. Rubashov remembers this Pietà in the art gallery when, "in the same instant a spasm of pain throbbled from his jaw up to his forehead and ear" (71) and he thinks, "'Now I am paying'" (71). Now Koestler has assembled each symbolic indication of the nature of

the unconscious: the involuntary words devoid of any immediate motive, the Pietà which can never be seen in its entirety, and the toothache, painful because of the separation of the root from the tooth. He cues each in turn to sound its note. Although individually each symbol by itself conveys only one aspect of Rubashov's repressed guilt, together they sound a chord whose harmonics are more complex than those of each individual note.

← Koestler's symbols are also useful because they give us some insight into the direction of Koestler's divided sympathies. Rubashov is a man trying desperately to do the 'right' thing. 'Right' for him is what the Party decrees; but for Koestler it is crucial that his readers see Rubashov's 'right' as a terrible wrong. Koestler's portrayal of the Communist Party as wrong is, however, undercut by his inability to distance himself from it.

← In Darkness at Noon, as evident as the tragic defects of the Communist world of logic is the emotional appeal of that world. Like many middle class Europeans in the first turbulent decades of this century, Koestler was cut adrift from his roots; as a result, for the rest of his life, he was both attracted and repelled by the stability and safety to be found in groups and institutions. And if the security of a mental and social haven seemed unattainable, then an intellectual one became all the more attractive - even necessary. The lack of an identity derived from a group, made him supersensitive to his own feelings of vulnerability. Koestler tried immersing himself in

various systems; science, Zionism, Communism, metaphysics and parapsychology. All were attempts to escape from the melee of his own unconscious impulses. In his autobiography he wrote that "recognition of the irrational sources of impulses does not invalidate the necessity for their control by reason."<sup>2</sup> Always he sought for order and control over himself and his world, finally finding a measure of security in his idea that general methods of operation apply to the hierarchies of all systems. Koestler projects into Rubashov this need to be inside some system of control, an urge perfectly crystallized in Darkness at Noon in the prisoner's desperate efforts to get his arm inside the sleeve of his dressing gown.

Koestler spent a considerable span of his emotionally formative years in the ranks of the Communist Party; the logical arguments in his novel shine with the gloss of long use. In 1938, Koestler, unlike Rubashov, renounced Communism. But intellectual emancipation does not ensure emotional emancipation. The emotional attachment to a Socialist Utopia emerges in the symbolic contradictions in this anti-Communist novel. He may have been more affected than others who left the Party because of his personal history. An only child, raised by a succession of uninterested governesses, he remembers that he "acquired guilt automatically, in the same way one's hands grew dirty as the day wore on."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur Koestler, Arrow in the Blue, op cit., p. 92.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

During his boyhood "the dark menace of life consisted in acquiring guilt without noticing it."<sup>4</sup> Politics, especially the intellectually closed world of Communist thinking, became for him a surrogate religion, absolving this guilt, and reversing his social rejection by making him a member of a noble band of brothers.

It is not surprising therefore, that Koestler dresses the state in Darkness at Noon in religious vestments. Little Loewy's dockworkers inquire about production statistics in Russia "like children asking the exact size of the grapes of Canaan" (55). No. 1 is "the high priest celebrating the mass" (142). The wounds of the Party are stigmata, signs of its martyrdom. Its propagandists are "defective saints" (52) who sacrifice themselves so that the Party may be preserved in its pristine condition. Such scapegoats are a necessary part of the religious paraphernalia used to cleanse the body politic and keep it pure. The equivalence of church and state which these symbols create is made more explicit in a quote at the beginning of "The Second Hearing" by a fifteenth century Catholic Bishop: "the individual must be sacrificed to the common good" (81). Moreover, political mistakes are seen as deviations from a sacred text. Just as, in The Yogi and Commissar, Koestler excuses the failure of the socialist ideal in Russia by citing the backwardness of the Russian peasant, so, in Darkness at Noon, Rubashov puts the blame for the failure of the revolution on its current practitioners rather than on its pioneers: "No. 1's regime had besmirched the ideal of the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

Social State even as some medieval Popes had besmirched the ideal of a Christian Empire" (205-206).

Curiously, even though the idea of the state as a religious ideal is being consciously presented by Koestler in the pages of this novel in a critical light, the vision of the state as an object of worship is distressingly convincing; Koestler cannot quite bring himself to put it in a full-fledged ironic perspective. There is some sense of distancing, but in a mood of sorrow rather than scorn. We cannot help but feel keenly the attraction of Marxist ideals and understand how for Rubashov and for Koestler and for so many others during the last half-century, the decision to leave the Communist fold was, like the decision of a Catholic to leave the Church, accompanied by a heavy load of guilt. The lingering loyalty of the author to what he pretends to reject also crops up, for instance, in Rubashov's theory that the relative immaturity of the masses excuses the failure of the Communist system. He argues that, during the lag in their awareness of economic and technological changes, dictatorships are necessary. But when the socialist populations catch up to their destiny there will emerge "a new entity which, no longer an amorphous mass, will develop a consciousness and an individuality of its own with an 'oceanic feeling' increased a millionfold, in unlimited yet self-contained space" (207). In the scenario of the novel this theory contributes to Rubashov's downfall but the energy and enthusiasm of this outburst, in the context of Koestler's pairing of politics and religion, betrays the dichotomy of

in Koestler's psyche: what his intellect has rejected still engages his emotions.

In his article "Technique as Discovery"<sup>5</sup>, Mark Schorer points out how authors such as Wells and Lawrence unwittingly subvert their theme by not being consciously aware of the implications of certain images and symbols. Koestler reveals such an ambivalence in his handling of religious symbolism. There is a whole category of religious imagery in Darkness at Noon, referring not to the Party but to Rubashov, which actually pulls in a direction opposite to the plot of the novel. Significantly, this is one set of symbols that seems superimposed on rather than growing naturally out of the text. These are the many references which suggest that we place the mantle of martyrdom on Rubashov: the connection Rubashov himself makes during his first night in prison between his feet and the feet of Christ; his preoccupation with the appealing gesture of the Pietà; the Judas-kiss given to him by Hare-lip; Vasily's regurgitation of the Biblical accounts of the cock crowing and Peter's denial of Christ just as Vasily is about to sign the resolution condemning Rubashov. However, when Koestler casts Rubashov in the role of a suffering Christ, we are now asked to see the Party, not as the one group of true believers, but as a group of Pharisees whose time has run out, persecuting Rubashov, the new 'Saviour', who is challenging the laws of the temple. How can both the

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<sup>5</sup>Mark Schorer, "Technique as Discovery" in Robert Murray Davis, ed., The Novel: Modern Essays in Criticism (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1969), pp. 75-92.

Party and Rubashov be adorned with the same Biblical trappings? <The Communist Party and Rubashov cannot both be the salvation of the race.> If we do decide to see Rubashov in the role of the sacrificial lamb led to slaughter, the implication must be that his death is, in fact, going to save the masses. But Koestler makes it clear the Rubashov does not even save his own soul, much less anyone else's: in Darkness at Noon the logic of this Christ imagery would force us to imagine Christ dying so that Judaism could survive. To defend Koestler's consistency, one might argue that the religious symbols applied to the Party are intended to be seen ironically, but their vividness, their organic origin and their ubiquitousness dilute and weaken such a critical function.

Another way out of the apparent conflict in the religious symbolism might be to explain it as a kind of romantic irony - Koestler's fond look back at a lost ideal self enshrined in the Party member who finds his true identity in serving a larger cause. < But the Utopia imagined by Rubashov is not austere. Near the end, during a break in Gletkin's interrogation he talks to the peasant with the bast shoes about sheep and spring in the mountains. The wish to return to an unspoiled Eden overwhelms Rubashov. He returns to his sessions with Gletkin wistfully yet guiltily imagining himself as a captain of the Israelites who would interrupt the desert trek to lead them back "'unto the fleshpots of Egypt'" (186). He would betray the 'chosen race' (as Koestler 'betrayed' the Communist Party) to lapse back into the world of the 'silent self',

the 'fleshpots' of self-realization and individual growth. Such a dream is a perversion of the socialist belief that the unconscious should be resisted and repressed.

However, these images of Rubashov as an impediment to the attainment of the promised land and of Gletkin as the Moses who will lead the people toward it, do fit into the religious imagery used for the Party throughout the novel. Unlike Gletkin and perhaps like Moses, Rubashov will never see the Promised Land, nor even know if he was ever right to march toward it. Because he deviated from the goal to consider the means used to reach it, he is simply one of the many lost along the way. "and whosoever could not follow her crooked course was washed on to the bank, for such was her law" (65). Thus both the Party and Rubashov have finally been fitted into the same religious framework, the Party as the divinity and Rubashov as the stumbling acolyte. The sporadic viewing of Rubashov as a Christ figure earlier in the novel is merely more proof of Koestler's emotional attachment to an ideology his intellect has rejected.

## CHAPTER III

### DRAMATIZATION

the writer moved by a strong sense of social responsibility is exposed more than anyone else to the temptation to exaggeration, the theatrical, the romantic and the purely external description of things, while the events in the inner life of the characters are what count in literary works.<sup>1</sup>

Rubashov's inner life is indeed what counts in Darkness at Noon. It is the flow of his ideas generated by his interior activity that Koestler objectifies in the plot, the characters, and the setting of Darkness at Noon. The conflict arises from the tension between two ethical poles: transcendental morality and social expediency. The outcome of this ideological struggle has much significance for the growth of individual freedom. Koestler's polemical intention could make him especially vulnerable to the 'temptation' to sensationalize it.

One of the criteria of the success of dramatization is that the dramatic element illustrating the idea be an integral part of the story. In The Theory of the Novel, George Lukacs argues that the creative process of a novelist differs from that of other literary artists in the relationship that exists between its ethics and its

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<sup>1</sup>Ignazio Silone, "A Note on the Revision of Bread and Wine", in his Bread and Wine, trans. Harvey Fergusson II (London: Atheneum House, Inc., 1962), p. iv.

aesthetics. In other genres, the ethic is established before the work is begun, whereas with novels, "the ethical intention is visible in the creation of every detail and hence is, in its most concrete content, an effective structural element of the work itself."<sup>2</sup> It is in the furnace of the structural contrasts and conflicts that Koestler forges the ethical direction of Darkness at Noon. The dramatic force is not the result of a deliberate technique but grows organically out of the ethical dilemma inherent in Rubashov's situation.

If Koestler had contrived to merely illustrate his theme with his tale, we would not sense, as we do, that we are actually participating in its formation. <The success of Darkness at Noon depends completely on reader participation in the dramatization.> Neither telling nor showing can restructure a reader's ethical standards. The reader must feel himself to be a part of the action; by reacting, interpreting, judging, and creating as he reads, he finds out for himself how it feels to be crushed by the psychological and political powers of the group. He acquires Koestler's perspective not by understanding it but by experiencing it. <Koestler believed that the evil in this world stems not from the decisions of individuals but from those of groups.> He uses the Communist Party to demonstrate in their purest form the abuses that infect, to some degree, all social institutions: the denial of individual rights, the lack of diversity, the primacy of ends over means,

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<sup>2</sup>George Lukacs, The Theory of the Novel (London: Merlin Press, 1971), p. 72.

the assumption of determinism and, finally, the necessity of dogma and propaganda to falsify reality. None of these belongs exclusively to Russia in the 1930's and all of them are found in diluted form in all social groups. They are the result of the universal tendency of human beings to find refuge from their inadequacies as individuals in the camaraderie of a group; Koestler describes this as "submission to the authority of a father-substitute; unqualified identification with a social group; uncritical acceptance of its belief-system."<sup>3</sup> Darkness at Noon is an attempt to inoculate us against this common virus. Only by participating in the dramatic process ourselves will we produce the necessary antibodies against it.

In this novel, Koestler dramatizes by separating his abstract ideas into two groups, labelled 'good' and 'bad'. Ironically, he is using on his readers the same rhetorical method that Rubashov recommended to persuade the masses: he colours everything either black or gold in order to ensure that the message is clear. Koestler, therefore, isolates the factors in his argument and lines them up in two columns, seven pairs of ideas, each separated from its opposite: the individual against the group, emotion against reason, freedom against imprisonment, ends against means, concrete experience against abstract thought, darkness against light, and life against death. The first member of each of these pairs is embodied in Rubashov, the second in the Communist

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<sup>3</sup>Arthur Koestler, Janus: A Summing Up (London: Pan Books Ltd., 1979, first published 1978), p. 79.

state. The result of this clustering of ideas is that Rubashov's 'freedom' to feel those 'emotions' stemming directly from 'concrete experience' becomes a measure of his 'individuality' and 'life'; and there is a further implication that this self-actualization takes place in 'darkness' and when he treats himself as an 'end' rather than as a means. In the same way, the other cluster gathers together 'abstract' ideas, engendered by the 'light' of 'reason' in a 'group' which treats the individual as a 'means' to an end, a policy leading inevitably to 'imprisonment' and 'death'. Such polarizing of concepts into two separate camps gives the dramatic conflict in the novel a clearcut shape and strengthens each single idea by making it part of a network of ideas.

But this method of dramatization also accomplishes an insidious kind of brain-washing. The contiguity of ideas in a cluster tars them all with the same brush of approval or disapproval. Each is made good or evil by association. Our beliefs come to be determined not by our conscious perceptions but by calculated connotations slipped into our unconscious, without giving us opportunity for conscious consideration of them. For instance, Rubashov's 'silent self', the only part of his psyche that is free to express his individual feelings, is the only avenue for the reception of emotional experience as well; Koestler is implying that emotions are superior to intellect in interpreting the truths of our world. Intellectual light - clarity, the apprehension of mental constructs - seems to lead only to death and an ever-receding and unattainable 'end'. Perhaps John Strachey was right in "The Strangled

Cry"<sup>4</sup> when he accused Koestler of calling into question the whole rationalist tradition. At any rate, he certainly exaggerates the incompatibility of the thinking and feeling parts of man for dramatic effect. In another similar move, Koestler puts state repression of the individual in the same corner of the ring as logic and goal-directed planning, making both equally reprehensible. Thus hidden assumptions and contradictions are transmitted whole to us without being filtered through our consciousness. If they had been told to us directly as the author's opinions instead of being dramatized in front of us, our intellect would have filtered out some ideas and our emotional response would not have swept us so far in Koestler's direction. Whether we ought to be affected so much by Koestler's beliefs is outside the scope of this discussion.

The dramatization of opposing elements can be illustrated in the interplay between Rubashov and Ivanov. Ivanov is an externalization of Rubashov's Party self, his intellectual reasoning self; he tells him "my way of thinking and of arguing is your own" (121). By reflecting this part of Rubashov in another character, Koestler succeeds in focussing our attention on the struggle for domination between the conscious Party half, in Ivanov, and the unconscious 'silent self' in Rubashov. In Ivanov this reasoning consciousness lacks any 'inner voice'; such urgings are merely a matter of chemical reaction, so much

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<sup>4</sup>John Strachey, "The Strangled Cry", Encounter, November, 1960, p. 3.

so that to yield to them is a betrayal of the 'real' self and "'to sell oneself to one's own conscience is ... to abandon mankind'" (125).

Notice how the idea of 'conscience' is neatly disassociated from the intellect and thrown into the rummage heap of the unconscious. This is Koestler arranging his polarities. The more Ivanov harrasses Rubashov with his logic, the more Rubashov is driven back to the part of himself that eschews argument, that belongs exclusively to him and not to Ivanov as well and the more obvious the differences between these two aspects of human personality become. When Ivanov interviews Rubashov for the second time, he comes right into his cell, deliberately invading his physical territory as he has already usurped his mental territory. Such movement of characters represents the movement of ideas; now the reasoning of the Party is about to overcome Rubashov completely.

Despite the opportunities open to him in third person narration, Koestler does not tell us any of his thoughts or feelings directly. Instead, he embodies them in his characters' speech and behaviour. For instance, the emotional attraction of the philosophy of determinism is dramatized in the incident in which Rubashov tries to 'preview' his response to physical pain by burning his hand with a cigarette. For him, to know the results of certain stimuli means that he will be able to control them and thereby control himself. "The important thing was not to let oneself be caught unprepared" (48). Koestler himself had found this out at an early age when, being taken to the hospital

for an appendectomy, he insisted on holding the ether mask as the anaesthetic took effect in order to conquer his great fear of it.

< The political implications of determinism are made manifest in Gletkin's insistence on, and Rubashov's acquiescence in, the principle that subversive desires necessarily produce subversive actions. And the ultimate sterility of the Party's deterministic logic - the impossibility of it ever reaching its utopian goal - is dramatized in Rubashov's inability to comprehend Rip Van Winkle's belief "that the gates of mankind stood open, and that mankind stood on its threshold"> (107). In spite of Rubashov's usual penchant for "'thinking through others' minds'" (107) he is completely unable to penetrate the mind of this peasant, mired in the Party's naive view of the future. The acuity of Rubashov's intellect extends past the limits of Party logic, demonstrating the inadequacy of determinism in political planning.

~ The relationship between the realm of reason and that of emotion is dramatized in Rubashov's behaviour as he sees Bogrov's body dragged past his cell. Prior to this, "death was an abstraction" (112) and Arlova's death just "a small factor compared to what was at stake" (117). The deaths he has caused exist only in the cerebral part of his brain and not in his emotional experience - that "igniting spark of experienced reality."<sup>5</sup> The emotional linkage is forced up into Rubashov's consciousness by a physical sensation, the sound of fear, Bogrov's whimpering. This sound saturates his present and echoes back

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<sup>5</sup>Arthur Koestler, *The Yogi and the Commissar*, *op cit.*, p. 256.

into his forgotten past. Emotion repressed then is felt now. "Had Arlova whimpered in the same way when she was dragged along the corridor?" (117) The sounds of human wretchedness "upset the mathematical equilibrium" (117). If her death was right before when it was an abstraction, how can it be wrong now just because it has become real? In being forced to participate personally in Bogrov's terror, Rubashov realizes how much of the terror of those others he has blocked out of his consciousness. In that place where his memories sleep, the categories of time and space are non-existent. Therefore it is with one rush that the voices of all of those whom he has betrayed call out to him and he now hears them. Only at this point is Rubashov able to acknowledge his personal responsibility for these deaths. Only here is he a whole person. Only here do the worlds of reason and emotion meet in him. And only here does it become clear that, for Koestler, the experience of the emotions is more valid than that of the intellect. The primacy of the emotions and the brittleness of the intellect have been converted from theory to drama.

One of the most vivid dramatizations of an abstract idea in this novel is the materialization of the Communist Party in the shape of a human body, one that is dead and yet whose "hair and nails continue to grow after his death" (31). The characteristics of a whole group of people are represented in the image of a single body. Party members outside Russia are like the cells in dead flesh which still twitch reflexively when certain nerve fibres are stimulated, animated spasmodically

by the Party in Russia sending "galvanizing currents" (32) through them. Richard and Rubashov, dead fingers of this entity, meet in an art gallery where they are surrounded by static paintings of fleshy nudes, which, even frozen on a wall, seem alive compared to themselves. Rubashov later envisions "the Party's warm, breathing body ... covered with sores" (52). It is rotting while it lives and like any conventional ghoul, surviving on a diet of willing victims. Such an image as this dramatizes the extent of Rubashov's (and Koestler's) disillusionment with the perfect fellowship of mankind the Party seemed to promise. Furthermore, the sickness of this body is reflected in multiple mirrors, in the deaths of the individuality of members of the Party. Each is destined to survive only as a political tool of the state; each, like the state, becomes a live body inhabited by a disintegrating consciousness. Like Little Loewy skinning his cats to make a living, the state mutilates all that it touches to keep itself alive, spawning only distorted echoes of itself. This is why nearly all the characters in Darkness at Noon are physically defective - Richard with his stutter, Little Loewy with his deformed shoulder and Rubashov with his deafness in one ear. The ubiquitousness of the dramatization of the Party as a ghoul makes it into a part of the substructure of the novel, pressing upwards on all that happens; quality of the rapaciousness emanating from it foreshadows the destruction of Rubashov as an individual. The pervasiveness of this figure is like the "text written in invisible ink"<sup>6</sup> Koestler saw in his own life: "though one could not read it,

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<sup>6</sup> Arthur Koestler, The Invisible Writing, op cit., p. 354.

the knowledge that it existed was sufficient to alter the texture of one's existence and make one's actions conform to the text."<sup>7</sup>

Another way of dramatizing the Party and its philosophy is in institutional terms - as a prison. Rubashov enters its walls shortly after he returns to Russia, the nerve center of the Party. As in the Party itself, communication in prison is hesitant and laborious, taking place by means of covert tapping on cell walls. Just as the Party is set apart from the real life of individuals, the use of capital letters for this 'conversation' in the text sets it apart from regular dialogue; they make its fragments seem like telegrams, sent at great cost, containing significant messages, and, like cryptic Party directives, apt to be misinterpreted. Like the Party, the prison purges itself every once in a while of its unwanted members; periodically, it undergoes a giant shudder - a wave of emotion carried through the cell blocks by frenzied beating on cell doors as a condemned man passes by to his execution. Just as Party thinking is regimented, so is physical movement in prison; even during exercise hour, pairs of prisoners plod in circles without talking. And referring to individuals by numbers is functionally appropriate as well as a dramatization of their essential anonymity both in the Party and in prison. Finally, by using an isolated institution such as a prison as an analogue for the Communist Party, Koestler dramatizes the self-contained, solipsistic tendency of any totalitarian government.

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 354.

The emotional refuge that the Communist Party was for its adherents is dramatized in Rubashov's reactions to prison. To be in prison is, for Rubashov, to be home. He is childishly pleased at the name card over his cell door and, once installed in his bunk, feels "warm, secure and very tired" (17); "for the first time in months he was not afraid of his dreams" (10). Now, finally, the punishing parent that Rubashov's guilt requires is somewhere close by in the threatening yet sheltering figure of No. 1. This is why "he could not bring himself to hate No. 1 as he ought to" (18). The Party is for him, as it was for Koestler, his secure refuge from the chaos within.

The only other source of such warmth in Darkness at Noon is Arlova. Although on one level she is one of the most pathetic of Rubashov's victims, on another level, she is a specific materialization of the reassuring aspect of the Party. The Party member needs to believe in the shelter of Party in the same way as a child needs to believe in the shelter of his mother. But the Party/mother is the source of both good and bad. The child in Rubashov, therefore, splits the Party into the mother who nourishes and the mother who punishes; he then projects the bad aspect onto another figure, here the persecuting Nazis. Thus the nurturing aspect of the mother is kept pure; in this novel it is dramatized in Arlova's behaviour toward Rubashov. Like the Party, she facilitates the processes of logic; in her presence, Rubashov finds "the phrase he had been searching for" (96). His sarcasms cannot penetrate her reserve. But even she has an air of intimidation. Like

the Party's other mannikin, Gletkin, she wears and smells of leather; her "only jarring element was the patent leather shoes with the pointed heels" (94). Leather suggests straps, restraints, punishment; even the caring function of Arlova is, like that of Gletkin, a precarious balance of solicitude and threat. Sex with Arlova is just a relieving of physical tension; she is more like a mother or a sister than a temptress. She is like a stuffed teddy bear with which the Party is keeping him amused so that he will stay out of trouble. Furthermore, like the Party's comforting of Rubashov, hers is short lived.

The basic qualities of the Party are epitomized in Gletkin. "Massive and expressionless, he sat there, the brutal embodiment of the State ... Flesh of their flesh, grown independent and become insensible" (183). In keeping with the ghoulish nature of the Party, he is an example of death in life. The leather smell, the shiny skull freshly shaven to expose the scar on it, the crackle and creak of his stiff movements, the incongruous and distasteful warmth of his pen, the harsh profile always silhouetted against the light, the tendency of lamps near him to buzz, his use of a light in his office which does not illuminate but blinds, his practice of conducting the grilling of Rubashov by himself without a break, his habit of never eating or smoking or even yawning - all these aspects of Gletkin emphasize his non-human aspect. He is worse than any human adversary, a part human, part mechanical cyborg, a cardboard creature without an umbilical cord tying him to the past, who lives only in the present and already claims

the future. In him, the Party coalesces into a particular, concrete personality. Compared to both Ivanov and Rubashov, who are survivors of a pre-revolutionary world and who therefore see the present in terms of the richness of their pasts rather than the sterile idealism of the future, Gletkin has a shallow view of life. Speaking to the cynical Ivanov, Gletkin utters his naive belief that the end will somehow justify the means: "'In a hundred years we will have all that. But first we have to get through'" (85). His ethical values are purely utilitarian: "'Truth is what is useful to mankind, falsehood is what is harmful'" (182). His monotonous voice is that of one who has "learnt the alphabet late, when already grown-up" (151). When he reads aloud Rubashov's incriminating writings, the words "acquired a peculiarly naked sound - as though a confession, intended only for the anonymous priest, had been registered on a gramophone record, which now was repeating it in its cracked voice" (187). At times Gletkin's inhuman qualities seem to Rubashov to encompass his whole environment: his voice "came from every side of him; it hammered mercilessly on his aching skull" (188). The glare of the light shining in Gletkin's office makes all outside this 'rational' fortress seem uniformly black and insignificant - emotion, the unconscious, individual wants and needs. All grey areas, both literal and figurative, have been erased. Gletkin is a dramatization of the Party ideal; that he is an icon more than a human being is simply an indication of how unreal such an actualization of Party policy was for Koestler.

The degree of dramatization of any idea may depend upon whether

the novelist wants to focus on the facts surrounding the protagonist or his character's mental climate as he deals with those facts. When we watch what the watcher watches, Percy Lubbock calls this a dramatic treatment and when we watch the way the hero watches his world, we have what he calls a pictorial treatment.<sup>8</sup> It is the subject, therefore, that determines whether a dramatic or a pictorial approach will be appropriate. In Darkness at Noon, the facts seem to be Rubashov's treatment in a Russian prison and the picture seems to be how this affects Rubashov. Since it is the latter that is at the forefront of the novel, we might expect that a pictorial treatment is required. But the story is not simply about a man looking at his exterior world, in which we can view the picture of his mind as he watches. This man is experiencing instead his own interior world. The facts are internal psychic events and, in showing us these, Koestler is creating a scene as much as if he were reporting a battle or narrating a bedroom scene. In Rubashov's consciousness we see, not a picture of his reaction to an exterior scene but a scene itself. This impression that we are in a dream that no one is watching is heightened by the elusive nature of the 'grammatical fiction'. The 'teller' of the tale has become its subject. We see the workings of Rubashov's mind as he cannot; we reflect on his reflections and judge his judgements. It is appropriate, therefore, that we are shown, not told about Rubashov. The mind of the protagonist is indeed matter for the dramatist.

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<sup>8</sup>Percy Lubbock, The Craft of Fiction, op cit., p. 70.

But where is the mind that is experiencing these inner events? What part of Rubashov is sensing the existence of what other part? It depends on whether the data is intellectual or emotional. If Rubashov confronts a part of himself that feels, his reasoning self twists it until it can be handled by verbal concepts; if the material being absorbed is information or argument, the unconscious reacts to it through the physical body - with tremors and pains and uncontrolled daydreaming. In this way, both halves of Rubashov can experience each other, but except in his confrontation with Bogrov, both never react together to an experience. And both are dramatized by the physical repercussions they bring about. The conscious effort to control feelings and behaviour is made visible when Rubashov keeps compulsively cleaning his pince-nez. The unconscious reaction to intellectual manipulation or repression of the emotions surfaces in the form of a toothache.

Whenever Rubashov attempts to relocate himself in the rational world, for him, the world of the Party, his characteristic gesture is to rub his pince-nez on his sleeve. It is as if he is trying to clear away the remaining film that prevents him from seeing as the Party sees. For instance, when Ivanov points out to him how aberrant is his use of the pronoun 'I', "for a moment it was as if Ivanov had hit a tuning fork" (70), and, overcome by the irresistible logic of the Party's position, Rubashov rubs his pince-nez on his sleeve. The gesture is repeated every time he makes another reevaluation of his own place in the tangle of Party policy, and this is frequent throughout the novel. Vasily

recalls Rubashov cleaning his eye-glass when he was being cheered as a hero on his return from a foreign assignment. At the end, when he descends the stairs to his death and the ultimate unconsciousness, the pince-nez fall off and shatter, signifying the end of the reign of reason.

Whenever the loss of contact with Rubashov's unconscious makes its presence known on the pages of Darkness at Noon, it is in the form of a toothache. The prison doctor diagnoses both a physical and a moral trauma when he reports that "'the root of the right eye-tooth has broken off and has remained in the jaw'" (66). Rubashov has physical pain in his jaw because the disconnection of his inner self from his consciousness presents him with a moral dilemma. (Physical pain as a result of psychic trauma is not confined to Rubashov: Ivanov also has pains in the stump of his amputated leg whenever he sees himself cut off from the pure idealism of newer Party members such as Gletkin.) On Rubashov's decision to recognize his amputated unconsciousness as something belonging to him, something for which he is responsible, depends his existence as an individual. As long as the possibility of that choice is hanging in front of him, the psychic separation is neither quite complete nor repaired and he must feel pain.

The pain, then, is actually a dramatizing of the stress of having to mend the tear in his self. Rubashov must choose to see his guilt as something belonging to himself rather than as the result of circumstances. Such choosing is what distinguishes the concept of

the individual. Rubashov must balance all the factors in a situation consciously. Then he must make a choice, not swayed by the relative weight of these factors, but rather buoyed by his belief that he is not bound by their existence at all. Discussing such choosing, Koestler says "it is the delicate balance of pros and cons which lends it the subjective flavour of freedom."<sup>9</sup> Only Rubashov's belief that he is free to decide will make a free decision possible. The free individual must behave as if determinism is false. To do this Rubashov must discard forty years of habit. Moreover he must relocate the focal point of his self: "this subjective experience of freedom is the stronger the closer the process to the focus of attention."<sup>10</sup>

Therefore it is only when there is a possibility of a conscious free choice, when feelings of responsibility begin to invade the domain of logic, that the tooth begins to hurt. The ache is not just pasted onto the text sporadically to remind us of Rubashov's existential turmoil; it arises naturally out of prison life. It is mentioned first, casually, as an excuse by Rubashov to avoid getting out of bed. Only later does it acquire authenticity, when it punctuates different parts of Richard's story, the pain increasing to a torment when the taxi-driver's kindly interest in Richard makes Rubashov realize his personal guilt and consequent responsibility in this case. The tooth aches

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<sup>9</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Ghost in the Machine (London: Pan Books, Ltd., 1975), p. 216.

<sup>10</sup>Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar, op cit., p. 228.

whenever Rubashov begins to suspect he has done wrong and will be 'paying the fare' for it eventually. Just after his betrayal of Arlova, the pain becomes "almost intolerable" (99). Every realization of an unpaid emotional debt causes both psychic and physical trauma.

Since it is only in the struggle to confront personal responsibility that pain is produced, the tooth does not ache when Rubashov is working on his 'position paper' for Ivanov. He has submerged even the memory of a personal conscience by occupying his mind completely with intense logical activity; the urgent commitment to this work suggests that it is a reaction formation devised to shut out the feared unconscious guilt by being preoccupied exclusively with its opposite. With no prospect of contact the unconscious is silent. Likewise, when the connection with the unconscious self is truly established, as after the scene with Bogrov, the tooth does not hurt. Ivanov finds him with a temperature and a swollen cheek but Rubashov himself feels no pain. The ache has lost its psychological validity and is, as it was at the beginning, a merely physical phenomenon. It disappears entirely again while he is waiting for the results of his theory of the political maturity of the masses to be digested by his captors; the passageway to his real self has been blocked up by the fumes of his fevered rationalizing.

But this pain cannot finally be eradicated except by 'paying the price'. It throbs repeatedly when Gletkin mentions that Arlova was

possibly innocent, "executed as a consequence of the lying declaration you made, with the object of saving your head" (155). Even Gletkin cannot justify Rubashov's actions under the guise of Party expediency. Only when Rubashov has atoned for them by sacrificing himself to the Party does the guilt and therefore the toothache leave: "his toothache had ceased in the minute when that blessed silence had closed round him, during the trial" (210). By allowing the Party to destroy his individuality he has done penance and is now free to enter "the darkness with open eyes, ... to sleep and not to be wakened any more" (178). He has earned the right to claim this other self; "the hours which remained to him belonged to that silent partner, whose realm began just where logical thought ended" (201). The new confidence he has in the validity of that realm prompts him to tap the pronoun 'I' to his neighbour. But he can only bring himself to tap it to an empty cell: his verbal skills are still in the chains of Party thinking.

The borderline between the conscious and the unconscious is dramatized in Rubashov's urge to fall asleep. Koestler has introduced this as an intrinsic part of the story by revealing that one of Gletkin's interrogation methods is to keep the victim going without sleep for as long as possible. In his hands, therefore, Rubashov feels that he is continually on the edge of unconsciousness. Since he is also struggling to keep from facing the guilt residing in the unconscious, sleep, guilt, and the unconscious become fused into a single enemy. This is why, when he realizes how he is in fact responsible for Hare-lip's predicament -

how there is "more consistency in the boy's mistake than in his own behaviour in the last few years" (168) - his reaction is to become drowsy. Both sleep and guilt reside in the same house. Both are to be avoided. Only by hiding in the labyrinth of verbal argument can he avoid facing the guilt waiting in his unconscious. In addition, by feeling the unconscious as a force which he must resist, he can become conscious of it. It is a "queer complicated sense of duty" (171) that impels Rubashov to resist, as "step by step, Gletkin forced him down the ladder" (171). By fending off this inner self, Rubashov can feel its shape and prove the existence of a part of him that Gletkin cannot reach and the Party cannot control. Koestler believed that "consciousness ... is a matter of degrees."<sup>11</sup> To use the condition of being sleepy as the expression of the borderline between the conscious and the unconscious selves is, therefore, both functionally convenient and dramatically appropriate.

Rubashov's drowsiness is a magnet drawing toward it several related images as they disappear over its horizon into the unconscious. Rubashov identifies not only guilt with the temptation to sleep but also the barber's exhortation to "'Die in silence'" (103). To surrender to the tempting oblivion of the unconscious means physical death for Rubashov. The state will keep him alive only as long as he remains committed to his Party self. The juxtaposition of sleep with the unconscious implies that in death, Rubashov will move completely into

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<sup>11</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Ghost in the Machine, op cit., p. 205.

the sphere of the 'silent self' and live at last in his 'grammatical fiction', which will not be fictional any more. Such flowering of the individual certainly seems to thrive in the shadow of his approaching execution. He has begun to care about others as persons; it is with genuine regret that he says good-bye to No. 402. Their final farewell is one of the few warm human exchanges in the novel.

But it is all too late. As Koestler sends Rubashov on his way to an indifferent eternity, we are relieved rather than sorry to see him go. He has been dead for a long time; he tells the judges at his trial that "we were politically dead long before the Citizen Prosecutor demanded our heads" (199). His tentative resurgence of a sense of a personal self in this last section is a faint echo of what might have been. Rubashov's misfortune is that the chosen image of himself that he elected to defend was not his but the Party's.

If, in real life, a person suppressed his unconscious self as Rubashov does and tried to live not as an individual but as an extension of some group mind, we would consider him mentally ill. But in an artificial society like the one in the upper echelons of the Communist Party in Darkness at Noon, such splitting of the psyche is perhaps a 'normal' reaction to an 'abnormal' society. Certainly there is no suggestion that Rubashov is insane. Therefore, Koestler's dramatization of two sharply differentiated aspects of the human mind reflects his intention to have us re-evaluate the ethics, not just of an individual, but of a whole society, a society which views the existence of the infinite as "a politically suspect quantity [and] the 'I'

a suspect quality" (204).

→ Koestler's use of Rubashov to dramatize the negative effects of Communism negates Rubashov's status as an individual. The tearing apart of his psyche dramatizes the fragile nature of the ethic that underlies individual identity. He has demonstrated the importance of our decision to believe that, no matter how determined by external events our actions may seem, they are ultimately initiated by our free choice. Therefore, we are responsible for them and our identity is a result of them. Unfortunately, in showing rather than telling us about Rubashov's loss of identity, Koestler has had to sever our connection with the only consciousness through which we could feel the impact of it. He has achieved dramatic clarity at the expense of tragedy.

## EPILOGUE

The artist is no leader; his mission is not to solve but to expose, not to preach but to demonstrate. ... The healing, the teaching and the preaching he must leave to others; but by exposing the truth unavailable to them, he creates the emotional urge for healing.<sup>1</sup>

As this statement by Koestler suggests, he hoped to avoid the label of polemicist. He did not want his purpose to dilute or distort the aesthetic value of his fiction. Nevertheless, he did plan to convert the reader to a new appreciation of the value of individual freedom by showing how, without it, the individual lost touch with the core of his being. Unfortunately, the better Koestler was at demonstrating the loss of that free self in a fictional protagonist, the better he was at erasing his reader's emotional stake in it, and consequently, the reader's conversion to a new sense of its significance. Thus it is the nature of the message itself, not the disproportionate zeal of its intention, that ultimately impairs the aesthetic value, as well as the didactic force of this piece of literature.

The aesthetic value of any literary artefact stems at least in part from the unresolved ambiguities it contains. In all his writings, Koestler illustrates the ambivalence of man's attitudes toward freedom and determinism. Both ideas inspire and repel.

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Koestler, The Yogi and the Commissar, op cit., p. 35.

For Koestler, freedom is an emergent quality. It arises out of the breakdown of strict causality - out of that gap between the sum of component parts and the totality they produce. This mathematical imbalance between causes and effects has an irrational character; the insecurity it creates horrifies us even as we delight in the cold wind of its possibilities. Determinism also calls up equally contradictory attitudes in us. In order for our choices to be meaningful we must believe that results can be reliably produced by their causes; we must rely on the rationality of the world around us. We are addicted to this determined chain of cause and effect even as we are revolted at seeing ourselves as a part of it. We have a love/hate relationship with the unstable yet euphoric nature of freedom just as we also have a love/hate relationship with the dependable yet dehumanizing nature of determinism. These emotional polarities are what create the tension in Koestler's work. And it is the continual variation of the degree of this tension that creates the rhythm and form of an aesthetically pleasing whole.

Koestler translated the abstractions of freedom and determinism into very practical problems. How can any person give away a portion of his autonomy to the control of a social group and still keep the essence of his own being intact? The morality of the individual depends on an evaluation of quality, not quantity. Means cannot make progress toward any end if they themselves negate the kinds of values implicit in those ends. They must create those values as they move toward it.

Progress must be measured by the quality of actions, not their quantity. But group morality tends to value only quantitatively. It sees means in terms of their distance from the goal, instead of comparing how closely the means create values similar to those expected of the end. In Darkness at Noon, Rubashov reports how the state treats one of its means, people; "politics means operating with this x without worrying about its actual nature" (72). The Communist Party tries to heal the evils afflicting mankind but "wherever the knife had been applied, a new sore had appeared in place of the old" (205). Even when their intentions are absolutely pure, the means needed to reach a particular end inevitably gets soiled before reaching it. Only individuals seem to be able to treat others as ends in themselves and so keep the goals uncontaminated.

The intense preoccupation with freedom is characteristic of Koestler's novels. In his first, The Gladiators, the hero, Spartacus, wrestles with the problem of gaining political freedom. He refuses evil means to achieve good ends; by hesitating to purge his slave army of dissident Gauls he ensures the failure of his revolution. His choices build personal integrity but political failure. In Darkness at Noon, Rubashov loses his personal freedom because his self becomes fragmented. He is forced to live exclusively in the only part that seems to promise survival - the part that is patterned on the utilitarian values of the group. In this novel the group's moral standards are

forced on the individual, not as in The Gladiators through law and custom, but through psychological conditioning engineered by the state. In Koestler's next novel, Arrival and Departure, he explores the subjugation of the individual in the context of psychological rather than political determinism. Peter Slavek comes to realize that his political loyalties have been caused by psychological events in his childhood of which he has been unaware. But even after the original root of his guilt has been dug up and identified by his conscious self, it cannot be disposed of. The guilt that fueled prior commitments remains. Freedom from the past does not mean that we will deny that past. Previous guilt feelings and sacrifices are now an ineradicable part of the self. Peter chooses freely not because of but in spite of his knowledge of his own past. Knowing why he chooses does not allow him to escape the responsibility of having chosen. The result of this deliberate acceptance of personal responsibility is his experience of individual identity: "logic could not interfere with this experience of supreme peace which seemed to emanate from a source beyond [his psychiatrist's] reach, from the very core of himself."<sup>2</sup> In Koestler's next novel The Age of Longing, notions of freedom become so entangled in the milieu of post-war Europe that both Hydie and Fedya seem mere puppets of their social and cultural conditioning. In The Gladiators, and Darkness at Noon, Koestler explores historical

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<sup>2</sup>Arthur Koestler, Arrival and Departure (London: Jonathan Cape, 1943), p. 175.

determinism, in Arrival and Departure, he examines psychological determinism, and in The Age of Longing, he discovers cultural determinism. The further he goes with the novel form the less free his characters seem. The act of writing a novel inescapably forces a writer to make the motives of his characters rational and coherent; this is because in making the unconscious conscious, their behaviour inevitably comes to seem entirely determined by external and internal circumstances. Freedom cannot be convincingly depicted in a novel; only lack of freedom can.

Koestler, therefore, turned to other means of expressing his concerns about the genesis and fragility of freedom, to histories of science, biographies, essays, scientific symposiums and philosophy. 'Cassandra' moved from the stage to the lecture hall and the laboratory. Novel writing was not the way to warn mankind that if they shifted personal responsibility onto a group, thus eliminating freedom of choice and a sense of personal responsibility, it would rob them of their individual identity.

But the emotional dimensions of the loss of freedom are never again explored with the same intensity as they are in Darkness at Noon. Although Koestler argued that his crusade against reductionism was based on Heisenberg's principle of subatomic indeterminacy, the real impetus of his drive toward freedom was his horror at being trapped in a deterministic universe. Yet all his diatribes against a world ruled by reason were undermined by his longing for the security it promised.

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