

# 琉球大学学術リポジトリ

## Robert Goddardのミステリーについて

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# The Mystery of Robert Goddard

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Robert Goddard is known to be a consummate writer of mystery fiction. Any reader who has gone through his work will immediately encounter the layers of the impenetrable as he reads along deeper into the sanctum of his stories. But the mystery does not simply unfold in his works. It rather constantly tugs all the circumstantial evidence around it to itself and camouflages itself in the end as if it were wrapped in multi-ringed significations of misleads that the reader finds himself compelled to travel through. In other words, the mystery Goddard deals with is the kind that does not easily show its identity until the very end of the story the reader holds in his hands. Even at the final destination the reader is often confronted with the open ended interpretations the suggested words of the author/narrator give rise to. The result is that the reader finds himself unknowingly embedded in the process of unraveling the hopelessly complex twine of loose threads that make up the entirety of the author's fiction. That is rather surprising considering that the reader throughout his act of consuming the fiction of Goddard preserves the privileged status of a reader with all the attributes usually associated with his ontological status. Nevertheless, he is drawn into the process of separating the leads from the misleads in order to arrive at the right assumption about the circumstances of the crucial moment usually cast in the murky past which nevertheless has an enormous impact on the continuing present. In this essay, I would like to treat the particular instances in which the mystery manifests in Goddard's fiction in its variegated concretization as it accrues all the signficatory nuances with the development of the narration. As with the methodology of the author in his strategy to bring out the characters and the incidents they are involved in, mine would also be the kind that entails the transmogrification of the evidence and conclusions into many more forms than they are initially deemed possible.

Enough of an abstract preamble. Let me plunge into the misty world of Goddard's right away. The mystery he treats could appear in many forms. But the most representative kind may be the one that can be glimpsed in the story entitled *In Pale Battalion*. The mystery in the book emerges from the crevices of the dank past that seems to be perennially wrapped in the murk that rarely allows the reader an

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opportunity to see what lies beneath the gray detritus that the passage of time inevitably leaves behind. Let us look at the following passage to see how we can define the mystery Goddard treats in his writing. Although no one type of its manifestation is adequate to fully comprehend the mystery that prevails in his work, we at least set our long journey with all the aspects the passage presents. Without much more ado then I will quote the one I promised.

The mystery of my mother thenceforth became the grand and secret obsession of my childhood. My father's death, after all, had a comforting simplicity about it. Every November there was an Armistice Parade in the village to commemorate the sacrifice of Captain the Honourable John Hallows and the many others like him. Though not permitted to join the Brownie troop that took part in the parade, I was allowed to go and watch and could imagine myself marching with all the little girls who, like me, had lost their father. But, at the end of the parade, they went home to their mothers: I could not even remember mine. (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 24)

As I already mentioned, time in Goddard invariably plays an important role as it influences the minds of the characters, especially the protagonist's, in such a way that he is forced to relive a crucial moment innumerable times. In a way the perspective the narrator obtains is subtly shaped by the swing of his mind as it travels back and forth between the two moments. But since the narrator is the leading intelligence who best provides insight into the characters who inhabit the fictional space, the reader is also influenced by the way the narrator's perspective defines the incidents he portrays. That is of course nothing new. Any window on the fictional world is inevitably opened through the eyes of the central intelligence who dominates the fictional space. Although I do not discount the role the reader also plays in the act of reading, the information he culls from the story that he sets out to read is at least limited by the way the narrator perceives the events he reports. Well then, what does the narrator in this story, Leonora Galloway, manifest in terms of the deep repercussion she makes on the development of the story as she bridges and shapes the transfer of significations between the then and now and as an implication all the circumstances comprehended by the present timeframe? All the doubts and questions and uncertainties flash through the readerly consciousness as he attempts to figure out the best answers to all these. But what once again characterizes Goddard's stories is that all the spheres enclosed by the narrative intelligence who resides in each individual fictional space is circumscribed by, or rather shot with, ambiguities that defies easy explanation either by the narrator or the reader who observes the whole scene evolve. Look at the passage again. On second glance the reader might notice the literary overtone the

short quote exudes, the tone that hearkens back to the British classics in the genre of novel. More specifically the status of orphan the narrator, Leonora, purports to have been forced on her immediately establishes the story's kinship with such novels as *Jane Eyre* and *David Copperfield* and many other Victorian stories. And the somber mood generated through the introspective tone the narrator resorts to also evokes the ambiance that prevails in George Eliot and other writers who portrayed psychological nuances of the characters they populated their works with. But the traces of the classical novels become soon blotted out as the timeframe is explicitly put forward. the story is intertwined with the World War and there is no mistaking that it shatters any lingering illusion on the part of the reader with the explicit announcement of the event. But the circumstances that leads to the global carnage are still kept vague. The temporal discrepancy between now and then remains unexplained for. Despite that uncertainty, the departure for the story from the Victorian past is definitely established. What strikes the reader then as he goes through the passage is the ambivalence that arises from the disparate elements that are laid in the excerpt and the certainties that nevertheless come out of the murk that the whole passage is thrown into. And the outlines of all the opposed configurations are ever blurred as the narrator herself admits that the things that rely on a person's memories are ever elusive at least in some aspects. But as with other narratives produced by Goddard, the reader has to rely on the central intelligence before he can form any amount of assumptions about the incidents that hopefully give rise to the crucial issues to be dealt extensively by the author/protagonist. But however thickly the murk prevails throughout the narrative, the reader must latch onto the stated mystery the narrator so laboriously tries to throw at the face of the reader. I should have said that the narrator attempts to put up a nonchalant attitude to give out the explicitly stated word mystery. But whatever may be the case, the reader is well advised to take his cue from the narrator, who is herself unsure of the direction where her memory will take her with it. Caution is the key word here. Everyone concerned in the mystery is distanced from the core of it because of the person who has the direct knowledge of the secret has just started on her journey to trace back the memory she gives out as not quite sharply delineated. And even the connections to the past which is the matter most essential to advance the story is somehow rendered tenuous by the early death of the two people who could have provided the necessary link to understanding the mystery. Although the reader may be bothered by the pat removal of the two key figures from the earliest days of our heroine/narrator, that heretical consideration is soon pushed aside as he goes on to penetrate the murky past Leonora grudgingly, as it

were, reveals. As the reader discards the thought that could drive a cleaving wedge into the narrative if pursued, the layer that is impacted by the Victorian literature comes out to the fore. The move realized in this process is the kind in which the reader departs from the assumption made possible from the two deaths of the people more dear to the girl, although the memory associated with them is admittedly vague. The imaginative reconstruction suggested to the reader is also spurred by the implicit encouragement by the author to seize on the hidden signification adumbrated by the loss of both parents at a girl's early stage of life. Is the reader supposed to read then a Freudian complex that is somehow involved in the mystery now vaguely rising out of the space in the interstice between the past and the present? Or is he to read a gut wrenching tragedy that is layered into the past now the narrator finally decided to dig out at the point of her life much distanced from those crucial days? What is it that the reader can salvage and grasp with even a modicum amount of accuracy? The answer to that has to wait for the moment. After all the clues to the mystery as yet is hermetically contained in the woman's memory. It has not spilled over to a degree where the reader can safely make an assumption. Then let us proceed along with the leading intelligence.

The reader's uncertainty about the direction he should take forces him to assume a stance, as I mentioned, to join the narrator to delve the mystery, or rather, whatever the past contains. Then let us trace back the memories of Leonora as she trudges on in a search to salvage the tangible evidence of her connectedness with the people who she considers hold keys to the mystery surrounding her lie. Before I go even further on this I had better quote the passage that pertains to the subject I am pursuing.

Sometimes, though, I thought I could remember her. It was impossible, of course, if what I had been told of her was true, but Olivia had succeeded in making me doubt everything I had not personally experienced, and there was one, dim, early memory, seemingly at the very dawn of my recollection, to sustain what I so wanted to believe. (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 24).

It turns out that there is a force that tries to keep the protagonist from attaining the understanding necessary to come to terms with the truth. Why is such a force necessary? That is a question that flickers through the reader's mind as he tries desperately to arrive at a stage where he can safely start exploring the mystery that still, he knows, lays further away from where he is at the moment. But it soon dawns on the reader that such an antagonistic force is nothing new in the genre that thrives in an environment where all the ambiguities that incite the readers, or for that matter

all the acting agents who want to advance their understanding of the situation presented to them, into overcoming every obstacle that drops before his path, only if it is there just for the sake of giving way to a definite elucidation of the matter at stake. All this process of intertwining the readerly consciousness with the working of the narrative strategy, however, is a tour de force on the part of the author. The path to solving the mystery, although at this stage that status may be still an inchoate assumption that needs to be further developed, must necessarily involve intricate patterns of variegated factors that often interact with each other and other times contradict what the other stand for. That is, the solution to the mystery is intentionally refracted by diversions that thrive in a space in which a vortex of complex factors incessantly shift and turn. Indeed dynamism is the key element in Goddard's work. nothing remains static, showing only one fixed side of its nature. Rather, incidents and acting agents transform themselves as the story advances and present themselves in a manner that was unthinkable previous to the event that occurs at this moment. But that is not necessarily to contradict themselves. It is more like multiplying their signification and drawing the reader's attention to different aspects of the element in question. The multiplication in signification of the elements that are focused on in the author's work becomes in fact a prominent feature as the story increases in complexity and counter-strands ever proliferate. As we cast a backward glance at the passage I quoted above, we notice this trend once again. When the narrator thought she was completely frustrated by the gatekeeper of her inner trip to the past, she reassert the ascendancy of her memory. She is almost certain, she claims, that there was something else she could be sure of. It is a fragment of a scene that played itself out sometime in her childhood. But in the short glimpse of the past Leonora is enabled to catch, the blurry images of people whom she thought she had encountered somewhere long time ago gradually take shape. But that is to say, I have to quote more that follows upon the heel of the passage I quoted.

I was sanding on the platform at Droxford railway station. It was a hot summer's day: I could feel the heat of the gravel seeping up through my shoes. A train was standing at the platform, great billows of smoke rising as the engine gathered steam. The man standing beside me, who had been holding my hand, stooped and lifted me up, cradling me in his arms to watch the train pull out. He was stout and white-haired. I remember the rumble of his voice and the brim of his straw hat touching my head as he raised his free hand to wave. And I was waving too, at a woman aboard the train who had wound down the window and was leaning out, waving also and smiling and crying as she did so. She was dressed in blue and held

a white handkerchief in her right hand. And the train carried her away. And then I cried too and the stout old man hugged me, the brass buttons on his coat cold against my face. (*In Pale Battalions*, pp. 24-25)

The crucial event took place on the platform at Droxford. Or so the narrator confesses. But can she trusted in her report of the past she delves into? The question the reader can rightfully ask under the circumstances is that if she really remembers the particular town as Droxford, why is the rest of the memory so wrapped up in the vague murk? Where did she derive the name of the town at all? But another suggestion occurs to the reader. Is casting a doubt of the sort likely to lead to the elucidation of the mystery which all the parties concerned in the pursuit are interested in? As the reader moves along in his reading, the significance of remembering the particular name seems to decline. Instead, the reader finds the importance of the flow of the story as the narrator divulges the fragments of her memories as they flashes through her mind. Let us then follow the narrator's conscious path back to the past. As Leonora recollects the bits of clues to the reconstruction she desperately want to attain, she realizes certain associated images rush back to her. The name of the station, as I mentioned, is one. If we simply accept the evidential significance of the name without much skepticism, we then simply register along with the central intelligence that the relevant images that all gather around it well out of the depth of the subconscious that long lay dormant. Now is the time for the narrator to engage in the genuine recollection of the past with the implicit participation of the readers. What then is the person who seemed so gently to hold her in his arms to be made of? The narrator confesses that the tactile sensation she must have felt when she came in contact with a metallic object thrusts its jagged and cold sensation through the passage of time to her current consciousness. Indeed, as the reader hurries over the passage, the reader notices that what comes to the fore is the particularized sensory impression that Leonora subconsciously had absorbed into her deepest self. Starting with the heat that seeped up her shoes, the entire sequence of recollection is initiated by the stimuli that left an indelible sensory impression on the narrator. But paradoxically enough, that is one of the reasons why she has so much difficulty remembering and reconstructing the events that supposedly took place in those days. After all, nothing that ultimately relies on sensory evidence alone is so trustworthy. Sensory impressions may outlast any other impressions generated by other means. But when it comes to the corroborative values of the human senses they do not make good witnesses. Be that as it may, from the author's point of view this difficulty pertaining to the recollection imbues the whole temporal space that is linked to

Leonora's early childhood with a profoundly enigmatic aura. Laying down a block, as it were, in the path of the reader's comprehension of the whole scene in other words helps to push the object to be comprehended even further. The recollection of the past, in this sense is indeed a time-honored yet quite an effective means to achieve the complication the story of this kind needs. The reason for the intervention of mysterious elements in the space between now and then is rather obvious. The more the consciousness detaches itself from the occurrence of an event with the passage of time, the further it needs to project itself to come to terms with the circumstances that surround the crucial event. That is why the madeleine in Proust's *Remembrance of Times Past* attracts so much defamiliarized mystic qualities. They are in a sense detritus that the intervening time leaves behind and the patina the madeleine acquires through the passage of time. When Goddard uses the strategy of recollection to reconstruct the circumstances that hopefully lead to the crucial event he essentially resorts to the same convention.

Let us pursue the passage in the same mental train. The narrator admits registering billowing smoke rising from the train perched at the platform. It is always the extraneous sheathing that first wraps up her attempt to go into the depth of the mystery. The same holds true in this instance too. Note the contrast or a congeries of sensory impressions and images that form in her mind. The heat that rise from the ground and felt to the feet as she walked through the gloom of her uncertain past, the touch as she brushes over the hard metal, and the rising smoke. Each one of them constitutes a sharp edged image which is as concrete as anything she can touch and feel in the present. But as they rush through her mind in an order she cannot quite make any good sense of they somehow increase the depth of mystery that tantalizingly eggs the narrator and the reader as well on to fathoming the ever illusive secret that supposedly arise from the past ponderously impacted upon the narrator. but needless to say there is no guarantee that merely following the memory lane of Leonora's will lead to the destination both the reader and the narrator are yearning for. Helpless though it may sound, the reader is rendered a vulnerable entity. All he can do at this moment is just to take in what the narrator can offer though the uncertain recollection she is engaged in. Then at this given moment, if the reader detaches himself from the act of reading the novel, he realizes he is somehow drawn into the vortex of complex business, as it were, of making an involuntary participant in evolving the mystery. That is, the mystery as it generates from the story does not merely exist per se. It is implicated in the interactions that take place between all the parties concerned. As the story evolves the past that Leonora so desperately tries to reconstruct and salvage



the secret from comes to signify as it does because the reader unbeknownst to himself assumes the position of the second illuminating intelligence to create the meanings that redound to the story. The result is that all the elements that merely exist are increasingly colored by the desires and doubts harbored by the reader. Nothing as a consequence remains independent of others that surround it in a space ultimately generated by the act of reading. All the elements and factors in this space are inexorably pulled into the process of creating one larger meaning. Indeed this process itself is the organic evolution of the mystery that engulfs everything that comes in contact with the story. But back to the passage. The author can be praised for his realism as he depicts the scratchy images of the scene that the narrator is enabled to recollect. That is after all the way long distant memories are indeed evoked and dragged out of the misty past. Notice that what Leonora comes up with, as she lets her mind romp freely through the murky immensity of the inchoate, indistinct misty expanse that lies between now and then, are the fragments that may or may not constitute a meaningful whole. In this case, these bits are the voice, hand, hard metallic piece and the heat. Needless to say, the narrator does not exactly know what to do with these fragments. She simply proceeds with the imaginative wandering through the temporal expanse. But what happens here, as I already suggested, is that Leonora initiates the same imaginative excursion in the minds of the readers, who delve into their minds trying to find events that correspond to the one Leonora has gone through. The empathic search in the readers' mind is merely a part of the process I described above. The readers are at this point pulled into a vortex of activity that circumscribes the mystery as it emerges from the interface between everything that is contained in the fictional space and all the factors the readers bring into it, including themselves as an agent to configure the story in their image.

Then let us follow the passage though onto the next one to see how the interface between all these participants and everything for that matter involved in the story work together to make the fictional space quite as active as I am suggesting. As the narrator becomes only befuddled as she tries to recollect the scene at the strain station, she needs to ask someone who she deems can till bridge the gap between now and then. after all her attempt to see through the murk of time has not been that successful. Unless there is sudden epiphany she is not likely to go any further than she has fathomed so far. this reconfirmation and clarification with the assistance of a third party is analogous to the interaction between the reader, for instance, and the central characters who are engaged in elucidating the mystery they are pursuing, although whether the pursuit is unconscious on the part of those pursuers or conscious

is not quite relevant at this stage. From the structural point of view, and the way the author meets the expectations of the readers, this sequel to the previous passage in more than one sense, is indeed a demonstration of how the act on one ontological level is mirrored by another which is ontologically heterogeneous to it. Before I exhaust your patience with too much abstraction, let me quote the passage I refer to.

I recounted the memory to Fergus one day, when we were returning from a mushrooming expedition. When I had finished, I asked him who he thought the old man was.

'Sounds like old Mr Gladwin,' he replied. 'The first Lady Powerstock's father. He lived here...till she sent him away.' By she Fergus always meant Olivia.

'Why did she do that?'

'She'd have had her reasons, I don't doubt.'

'When did he go?'

'The summer of 1920, when you were three. Back to Yorkshire, so they say. A proper caution, was Mr Gladwin.'

'Who was the pretty lady, Fergus?'

'That I don't know.'

'Was she...my mother?'

He pulled up and looked down at me with a frown. 'That she was not,' he said with deliberate slowness. 'Your mother passed away a few days after she had you. You know that. No amount of wanting is going to make you remember her.' (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 25)

This passage is clearly a confirmation either by the author or narrator, or even by both (the last seems more likely), that the path to elucidation entails a dialogue. It does not have to be between two people. It could actually be more like self inquiry into the depth of her soul. But to make the thoughts at play more manifest to all the parties concerned the stairs to the moment in the past is facilitated by the concrete conversation between two characters. very conveniently for the readers, the one party to it is, as I already mentioned, is a person who is supposedly to be qualified to connect the hiatus in time between the two temporal points. Needless to say Fergus does not guarantee unwavering truth Leonora is seeking. But at least the two enact the process of ascertaining what probably took place then and there. In this instance of course at the train station. The interaction will surely lead the way to another dimension in the narrator's search for the circumstances at least under which the door to mystery will be located. That is for a definite advantage. Because the mystery itself at this point still hangs in the air as a supposition, if we are to take a rigorous

angle on the story. Although without the supposition the reader cannot even proceed to construct the story he has in his hands. Without this presupposition the reader after all may not have started on his journey of exploring Goddard's fictional space at all. That is a nullifying assumption. But the interaction between Leonora and Fergus is indeed a counteraction to that possibility. It in other words keeps from materializing. The reader assents in the natural course of events that immediately ensues after the misty recollection Leonora indulges in. then back to the passage. what Leonora as well as the reader is most interested in is the identity of the person who waved at another unidentified person on the train. The cold sharp-edged metallic object and the billowing smoke all conspire to let the reader's attention on the old man's remark as the question so expectedly come out of Leonora's mouth. Can Fergus prove the amount of certainty every one needs at this point? Is he going to set their minds at ease? Fergus in a way meets the expectations placed on him when he casually refers to Mr Gladwin. What is a reader to make of the person brought out by the old man? what the significance the reader has to place on the identity of the suggested person? Unfortunately all these remain still unanswered. Then Fergus connects the person he referred to with Lady Powerstock. This impressive sounding name immediately evokes a certain set of emotions in Leonora. Distanced as she is from those days, the connection between now and then is not only Fergus alone. The name now suggested immediately elicits an reaction in the mind of Leonora as she associates the aristocratic sounding name with Olivia. And at this moment the reader is assured that there is more than one agent that can help bridge the temporal gap. But what exactly can Fergus suggest in line of clarifying the mystery? Does he hold crucial secret that will immediately open up the door to the seemingly heavily guarded secret? Or is he only part of the mystery that is ever enfolding and engulfing all the dramatis personae in the fictional space? The answers to these questions do not come easily. At least they do not materialize in a definable form as the reader passes his eyes over the passage. first of all, what is the reader to make of Fergus' association of she with the aristocratic sounding name? What amount of relevant signification is contained in that association? That is indeed an intriguing idea. After all in a story belonging to the genre of this kind no allusion to a potentially widening possibility is not to be taken lightly of. And if we allow for the peremptory departure of Mr Gladwin presumably by the order Lady Powerstock what is the whole incident to be reflected upon the nature of relationship between these characters and how is the incident to be impacted upon the character of Lady Powerstock? Unfortunately for those who cannot thrive in an environment where everything is only

dimly delineated and everything comes across with ambiguity, the fictional sphere that is developing is an unbearable one. But that is the kind of setup Goddard thrives in. The reader is simply left suspended and hung over a tantalizing mass of information which he cannot quite well define. The situation that develops before the reader's eyes simply exists and presents an inchoate aggregation that turns out every possible meaning. The fact that Fergus describes Lady Powerstock a supposedly domineering person may or may not affect the manner in which the mystery will take shape in the end. That is simply irrelevant in Goddard's world. What is important is that the reader goes through the murky world mentally drawn in every possible direction wondering whether the words that come out of each character are to be comprehended in this way or that. As I mentioned, the mystery is in the process of this activity. Or rather, it is the process of this activity, in which the reader is inextricably entangled with the events in the sphere that is in fact detached from where he is ontologically. But before becoming too abstruse and enter into the world of generalization, let us go back to the story and see what actions and interactions as well as reactions occur.

As the narrator further inquires after the shadowing figures in the past, Fergus readily supplies information as much as he can. Then the year when the memorable event happened is introduced. As with any concrete details in a story the sudden thrust of the actual year directs reader's attention onto a different level. He is in a way greeted with a n actual time and place rather than unshaped, foggy somewhere he had been forced to adumbrate in his mind. The place not only existed, at least supposedly existed according to Fergus, but the people he refers to position themselves in a place framed by the temporal marker provided by Fergus. That is, even the place comes to be concretely delineated by the timeframe introduced by the old man. Along with the concrete delineation of the year and all the incidents related to that particular timeframe, the characters of the two personages involved in the event evoked through an uncertain recollection of the narrator arise with so much more immediacy. The mystery surrounding the two people at the train station, that is, are no longer totally veiled under the murky probability, but rather at this point they shoot through the intervening passage of time and reach the audience with quasi-concretized and possibly fleshed out figures. In this context, the relationship suggested in the passage comes to make more sense. If they are actual adversaries, or at least people placed in such relationship, then what is the reader to make of the hint dropped by Fergus? Is the implication that can be derived from the relationship to be salvaged or at least followed through and determined? But at least a tantalizing thought lingers

in the reader's mind. What complications are to be impacted upon the person of the protagonist that arise from the relationship between Lady Powerstock and Mr Gladwin? The overall effect Fergus leaves behind is certainly the kind that encourages the reader to speculate in that line. If the two people from the past do not have any impact at all on the protagonist or the development of the story the protagonist is helplessly entangled with, then what is the use of them popping up at this juncture in the story? Then the reader is confronted with a very unpleasant possibility that they, the two characters being tied together in the narrator's memory, may simply be just a red herring. A bait that is dropped to keep the reader from pursuing in the most direct and surest path to the resolution. But who is to know if that is the case at this point? Least of all, the readers. They are still kept in the gloom, as it were. The readers have no choice, as they have been up until this moment, but to keep company of the narrator, who has proved not such a reliable guide into her own past. Then as the last straw to her credibility, she manifests a tendency to wish for something that did not materialize. Since the past cannot be altered in any way, this wish constrained mental path the narrator tries to take becomes a rather dangerous attempt. Especially as she implicitly assumes the position of a guide to supposedly lead the readers along with her to the right destination. When her suggestion as to the identity of the woman is flatly rejected by Fergus, she still leaves a trace of unresignation. That is unwillingness to wholeheartedly believe what Fergus asserts. The interaction between the two indicates Leonora merely desires to locate her mother in the person of the woman who vaguely makes a cameo appearance in the scene, which itself is dubious, to say the least. What substantiating proof is there for the reader to side with the narrator in her uncertain belief in the identity of the two people? It is hard to find. But on the other hand, when the reader hears the lingering wish resonating in the space the scene occupies in the narrative, he intuitively feels the gist of truth that somehow has to be salvaged later on. or at least something the reader has to keep in mind, expectantly and yet with a forlorn awareness that that expectation is completely unfounded. But why does the lingering implication left by Leonora's wishful thinking so resonating, as it were? If there is no foundation to her suggested identification between the two women, what makes the reader cling to the unfounded possibility? That is rather suggestive in itself. Could it be the manner in which Fergus's words are uttered? Could it be because the suggestion posed at the end of the passage is calculated to leave a hint of contradictory possibility that automatically plays itself out to etch complex possibilities into the reader's consciousness? What is at work here? That is an interesting subject to pursue.

Then the concrete numbers come into play as if to completely reject the idea that what Leonora suggests might turn out to be not so unfounded after all. The previous introduction of a concrete number, the year mentioned a few lines above in the passage, functioned in a way that the passage suddenly expanded in its signficatory volume, as it were, and affected the relationship of each element so that the way, for instance, the characters interacted appeared to shift and change to the reader, who stood ontologically apart from everything that acted its part in the fictional space. But as the subtle transformation took place, even the reader, though separated by the seemingly unbridgeable planar gap, were dragged into the narrative space and made to fulfilled his role by acting and being acted upon on and by the characters in the fictional space. With the introduction of the actual numbers, this time the protagonist is shown to be less or more than, depending on how you assess the characters in the fictional space, what she purports to be. Through the exchange of vital information as to the date of her mother's death, Leonora exhibits an aspect that is irrational for a leading guide through the complex world that is evolving in the story. that is, as I mentioned, is certainly a detracting quality for such a person. The reader does not want to be left out with so many uncertain factors when he himself is in the dark. Fergus on behalf of the reader in fact causally dismisses the possibility that she could recollect the person of her mother if she tried hard enough. Because after all when she was born, her mother had been dead for a few days. Unless Leonora possesses a prenatal memory, it is impossible that she could delineate, or even adumbrate, the person of her mother, however strongly she desired it. The cold numbers then function as a irrefutable obstacle to Leonora's memory. If the fact were as what Fergus mentions then there is no argue the statement to further Leonora's wishes. It completely douses water on burning desire to recover the memories of her dear mother. In that sense she disappoints the readers in their expectations that somehow she would allow them an elucidating view on the secret that seemed to have been unfolding. But does what appears to the readers' eyes on a cursory glance at the interaction that takes place between the two characters fully substantiate the assumption made just above? Or is that more likely to betray the coarse seams that will eventually fray and reveal the substance underneath that is much different than initially supposed? That is indeed an intriguing possibility. And the tone of the conversation between the two figures does not flatly exclude that possibility outright. On the contrary there is more likely to be turns and twists that will waylay the readers and present them with a surprising outcome. Why does the reader get the impression that Fergus is not totally sincere when he mentions the day Leonora's mother putatively died? Or is it his

mannerism that comes across from the story that the author cleverly manages to modulate to convey the impression the readers are allowed, or for that matter, forced to accept? That again is an impossible question to answer. But one thing definitely arises from the complex web of possibilities interspersed in the passage. That Leonora's suggestive remark concerning the death of her mother cannot be offhandedly excluded from the reader's consideration as being simply too improbable. Needless to say, if we follow upon the words of Fergus and become blind to all other possibilities, her suggestion of an intuitive, vague memories of her mother can immediately be dismissed as a fantastic vagary. But why is there that lingering ambivalence when the old man rejects Leonora's nagging sense of contact with her mother while she was alive? Why is that impression so doggedly made to act upon the readerly consciousness as he tries to reject that fantastic suggestion himself? Is not there a chance that Leonora will in fact prove to be more right than all the other verbal evidence seems to indicate? Then the idea of a mystery suddenly pops up in the reader's mind. When a mystery is at the center of the exploratory search in order to attain a level at which everybody concerned can safely wind down and say all the puzzles that had arisen along the way had been solved and the mist that had prevailed throughout the fictional space had finally cleared away, all the merely dropped clues on the wayside are not taken lightly. They may prove to be the keys to open creaky doors to the heavily guarded secret that have remained so warily tucked away from the knowledge of those who have sought it. In the world where anything is possible, therefore, how to interpret the interaction between the two characters is left to the readers. But the decision is not completely left at the mercy of the party who is consuming the stuff presented to him. On careful analysis, the interposition of the author at the crucial juncture where the two interact is not after all so casual. The lingering effect the reader felt about the other possibility than what the old man suggested redounds with sharper-edged clarity on which the reader for the first time realizes he is made to seize by the invisible, manipulative hand that zooms out of the passage. That is a momentary epiphany but the conscious eyes of the reader were enabled to glimpse the path by which to travel through the space he has entered.

Since at least the direction, although still vague at best, in which to proceed to reach the intended destination is ascertained, or surmised with the help of the invisible presence of the author, now the reader is ready to delve the ever deepening mystery that presumably lies at the core of the story. But the course set by the implicit author is still too vague to become the surest way to the final promised land. There are in fact innumerable misleads and red herrings galore even to reach the foot of the hill that

would launch the reader onto his path to the final destination. In fact just when the path seemed to loom out of the dark terrain of the impenetrable mystery, the murky haze reasserts itself and casts its poll over the land inhabited by Leonora and others. The mystery after all does not approach from itself to be read out by the central intelligence in the story. No one is capable of that. Especially our heroin cum guide Leonora is as mystified as anyone else by the past which seems to generate only complications from the mystery, which nevertheless is only contained in that timeframe and thus solved through it. In fact the way she came across the mystery that she later came to regard as such only by way of a chance encounter with a menial boy in the village. She happens to carry a glass of lemonade to the boy at the behest of Cook. Then suddenly the word drops out of the boy's mouth as if it had been primed to be fired at that particular moment. Needless to say, as Leonora confesses, she had not suspected even a tip of the mystery connected to Meongate. But the fact that the knowledge that something unusual was harbored by the estate was shared by such a menial boy proves that even the narrator who is supposed to be directly concerned with the household secret is not so ready to be trusted. At least she is not such a reliable source of information to arrive at the destination everyone concerned with the story has their eyes focused on. Let me quote the passage in question before I argue my point nay further.

Being sent away to boarding school at the age of eight meant I knew virtually nobody in Droxford—of my own age or nay other. That, I suppose, is why I did not learn sooner about the murder at Meongate, why I was ignorant for so long of that fragment of our family's mystery.

I think it was the Cribbins boy who first told me. He used to help with the gardening during the summer holidays and was one of the few village children I had anything to do with. One warm, overcast afternoon, Cook gave me a glass of lemonade to take out to him in the orchard where he'd been put to cutting back brambles. We stood talking while he drank it. He asked me what the house was like inside. (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 26)

The passage leaves a impression that the narrator in search of the clues to the mystery is indeed n an inchoate state when it comes to reconstruct the deepest sense that is embroiled with the household as it its implicated with the mystery as it comes out of the story. She needs to salvage every single snippet of past history in order to reconfigure even the circumstantial evidence that such mystery had indeed exited. In a sense the encounter that takes place as a result of the errand is a necessity that needed to happen for the resulting trains of recollective mental processes to be



triggered. Without the encounter, however cursory it might have been, the ensuing inquiry Leonora embarks on would never have been possible. From the author's perspective, then, the Cribbins boy is an integral device to let the imaginative process to develop and enable the story itself to take the present shape. Another thing that arises from the passage is that Leonora is essentially made out to be a lonely character who does not associate with others of her own age in the village. What is it to be made of? Are the readers to attach any special significance to that fact? Or is it something that needs to be immediately dismissed and only made a stepping stone, as it were, to proceed to the next phase of the story's development? It is hard to tell but there is a way to integrate the lonely character demonstrated here with the general character of the narrative. Since Leonora is constituted by this essential tendency to brood over whatever accumulates inside her, she needs to search even deeper into her psyche to match the inner meaning with that of whatever phenomenon that impacts on her and at the same time influence her to eventually fathom her inner self to connect the two worlds. In so doing, she becomes a convenient reservoir for the author to throw all the incidents and events that can be impacted on her with all the historical depth and later to be reworked by the person that is turned into the mouthpiece of a narrative that is based on the source provided by Leonora. Needless to say, the narrator draws on the reservoir with all the detritus of the past in which Leonora and the crucial memories are intertwined. So, if we combined the identity of the narrator with the person whose memories are the object to be salvaged by the recollective process of that very person, we have an interesting dilemma. Since that very person turns out to be quite ignorant of the mystery which emerges as the central fulcrum on which everything contained in the story will turn, the unreliability and the unawareness of the mystery until relatively late age threatens the inquiring process at the very beginning of the exploration into the mystery. What ground does the reader have to put confidence back in the narrator who could remain ignorant of something which a mere village urchin held nothing so as important as to be kept secret from anyone, let alone from Leonora? All the clues that are tied to the credibility of the protagonist try to come unhinged as the reader is suddenly seized with the fear. But that is for the better for the author. Actually for the readers too. Because the narrator proves so unreliable once again, the reader has to disentangle himself from the webs of leads which contain both false and authentic ones. Since the narrator, who so far functioned as the sole purveyor of information as to the configuration and the contents of the mystery that is hinted at, proves so unreliable the reader at this stage is forced to assume a stance that is not quite totally dependent on the supposed sole informant. The reader in other

words is forced to establish a more independent role as he wades through the web of contradictory clues. After all the fog that prevails in the fictional space does not clear out so easily. It becomes a norm by which the reader has to live by, as it were, when he positions himself in the terrain formed by the convergence of the fictional characters and the space that contains them and the acting agent that gives meaning to the former two. In a world where no one holds an absolute perspective, the reader has to assume an existential position from which to develop his own interoperations and reconfigurations of the plot that is meaningful enough to make any sense at least to himself, if not to all the readers. The relationship that arises from the necessity the reader is confronted with is the kind in which he is forced to take proper distance from the central intelligence despite the fact that the central intelligence is the only purveyor of inside information, at least the kind that actually manifests in the form of printed letters. What makes the reader's position precarious, however, is that because his interpretational process cannot begin unless the leading, central intelligence provides the food he can ingest. But when that food might contain ingredients that could turn out to be the cause of the reader's ill constitution, then the steps he could possibly take become extremely complicated. On the one hand, he cannot stay just observing all the enticing objects play around him and expect to gain something by that mere act but on the other hand, he cannot so readily venture onto the journey of taking in whatever is offered before his eyes, because doing so might entail a disastrous effect. No one wants to be unpleasantly surprised. The same with interpreting stories. After spending hours and possibly days on a narrative with the expectations that he would find the result he had gradually formulated with the help of the all the minutest information supplied to him along the way, he suddenly is confronted with the outcome he did not even dream of emerging before his eyes. That is a prospect he wants to avoid if possible. But the way out of that entanglement is not so easy. Now the reader is virtually on his own, seeking the truth in a world filled with existential uncertainties.

But in the meantime we have to wade in the vortex where contradictory leads swirl unchecked. That is more of a necessity than choice. As the village boy willingly supplies the information which is quite new to Leonora, the mystery begins to assume a more concrete shape, at least in the framework the narrator constructs in her imagination. The secret is about a murder that took place in the house where the narrator lives at present. Although the news comes from the boy's mouth without any authoritative corroboration, the narrator is convinced of the authenticity of the story. Or at least she recognizes intuitively that the story is at least worth being explored. I

will quote the passage that describes the scene.

'Haven't you ever been inside?' I retorted, a touch haughtily, for Howell's had trained me well.

'No fear,' he said between gulps. 'My dad's told me.'

'Told you what?'

'Bout the murder.'

'What murder?'

'Don't you know, Miss? There were a murder done at Meongate, years ago. My dad told me.'

'Oh that?' I replied. 'Of course I know about *that*.' It wouldn't have done to let him see that it had been kept from me.

The obvious person to ask for information was Fergus. I found him polishing the silver in the pantry.

'Murder, you say? Well, maybe there was and maybe there wasn't. What would Cribbins know?'

'Stop teasing, Fergus.'

He laid down the knives he had been cleaning and stooped close to my ear. 'I'm not teasing,' he whispered. '*She'd* skin me alive if she heard me talking about it. It's a subject best left alone.' (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 26-27)

As you can see, the mystery evolves rather slowly for it to be defined and reconfigured in the narrator's mind. The process always entails the act of reconfirmation. Since the boy, as I have pointed out, is merely a mouthpiece for hearsay, the narrator cannot be satisfied with the information that arose seemingly coincidentally. However, intriguing the story maybe, no wonder so because the story concerns the murder that took place at her own present abode, for the mystery to evolve and continue to breathe life and grow the process the narrator is engaged in is essential. From the reader's point of view, the process of confirmation is a chance for him to reassess the information that is presented to him. Since no information can be taken at its face value (after all he is in the midst of an existential murk where he has to decide on the right kind of clues in order to arrive at the destination), the repeated assessment, or more accurately the narrator's attempt to repeatedly evaluate the given information, becomes vital for the reader to maintain his objective readerly status. Then duly the narrator seeks Fergus to gain some elucidation on the matter. He turns out not such a willing provider of information this time. Unlike the previous encounter he seems to have undergone a subtle transmission. The reader needless to say wonders why. But the answer to that is quite banal, as Fergus points out to the lady who he and Leonora

are sure to take offence at the subject the narrator brought inadvertently to the old man. in this brief interview, however, the reader is enabled to eavesdrop on the darker layer that underlies the episode introduced by the village boy. Regardless of its authenticity, the reaction elicited from the old man certainly suggests there is more than mere allusion to the murder seems to suggests. The darker implications generated by the very wary reaction on the part of the old man further feed the reader with the ominous thought, which he nevertheless has to evaluate objectively. Does the initial attempt by the old man to dismiss the topic as something created by a fecund idle minds of the villagers impart more import to the mystery as a whole? Is the reaction, seemingly reflexive, meant to hide, and therefore by reverse narrative mechanism, give rise to speculation that the murder involving the renowned household not only took place but also holds explosive ramifications, impacting the people still residing there? No one knows the answer to that yet. But the reverse strategy by the author suggests that the truth lies between the layers of evidence. The reader has to strip the surface first and then put it back to see how the overall planar configuration looks as a whole. Nothing is taken apart and looked at singly by itself, as if it is not related to others laying around it. In order to put the pieces of puzzle together the reader needs to ascertain each one of them to see how each one affects the other in terms of its synergistic value. In that context, Fergus's remark, "maybe there was [a murder] and maybe there wasn't," becomes an unconscious revelation of the process involved in solving the mystery that is constantly evolving in the story. One more issue that arises from the casual remark thrown at the reader by Fergus is what to make of the old man's remark in view of the gruesome consequences suggested by the old man. Is he being serious when he whispers the blood curdling punishment, or is he merely being facetious? The reader has to accurately register the tone and digest the information in the manner most appropriate under the circumstances. Coming out of the mouth of the old man who has been with the family for many years and who knows the family history better than anybody else except those who have gone through the period in question, he is in a position to judge what to expect if the murder is bandied about without the consent of the mistress of the house. Unfortunately he does not offer any concrete proof that if such harsh retribution as indeed suggested by him would result if the topic is overheard by the person he alludes to. But again the reader is left to judge for himself. Under the given circumstances, the ghoulish image supplied by Fergus seems too extreme. There is no preparation for the reader to expect that the mistress of Meongate is endowed with such grizzly quality as being capable of what Fergus refers to as skinning him. Besides the manner in which

Fergus imparts the dreadful news to Leonora seems to belie the dreadful consequences he implies. Occurring in the midst of a small talk, as it were, the suggestion of the punishment does not sound convincing. The reader is rather enabled by the remark to see the other side to the story, or more accurately, the other side to the whole setup in which the murder is hinted at. It is a narratorial angle in a way that the reader feels arising from the scene. As the issue of murder is introduced the reader is directed to the side of the Meongate history that has not been openly treated so far in the story. Because of the furtive revelation through which the case grudgingly seems to loom out of the penumbra of the family past, the significance that is to be attached to the episode seems to increase and color the incident with more sinister shades than if it had been introduced openly. So, the question of the retribution that could result from the leakage of the topic to the mistress of the house ceases to be as important as it initially suggested. Rather, what assumes the central position at this point is the issue of whether the murder case gathers increasingly broader layers of significance both to the characters concerned and the readers. Once the reader puts himself in the author's position, he is confirmed that the mistress's hinted cruelty and wrath at the resurfacing of the unwelcome subject merely attests to the important status the case holds for the story as a whole. At this stage, whether the murder referred to is authentic or not does not matter so much as the ramifications even the possibilities of it entail. Either way, the reader is more and more deeply embroiled in the story that is unfolding before his eyes.

Despite the ineluctable consequences the case of suggested murder entails, the reader has no choice, as I have indicated time and gain, that even to find the vaguest clue to the final solution of the mystery lies in his close accompaniment with the narrator through the murky joinery she is undertaking into her past. Leonora pursues the subject and insistently follows upon the topic in her deliberate encounter with the old man. Actually she seeks him out whenever is possible to the point of very likely annoyance to the old man. when the occasion arises which satisfies the conditions set by the old man under which he would divulge the deadly secret from the past, she does not mince her word but plunges into the subject at where they left it off. Fergus meets her with more procrastination. But she is by now used to his pretense at ignorance. She duly eggs him on to the real story. at this point the reader feels the presence of the author's hand. He is there trying incessantly take the readers away from the real core of the subject, contrary to the expectations of the reader. The author in other words resorts to the delaying tactic to keep the reader primed for the secret that is ever hidden behind a veil of history. The interesting thing is that the

more the author delays the release of the information through the character of Fergus, the more eager the reader becomes to obtain the information he supposes exists somewhere in the space that contains all the extensive gamut of history and place. The reader is tantalized. But fortunately for him, the narrator puts herself in the same position as he. So, there is a way to force what the reader desires out of the old man, if at all he holds the genuine information pertaining to the murder case. But before I go on further let me quote the passage I am following.

He knew better than to think I would leave it alone. The following afternoon, I tracked him down on the riverbank, at his favourite spot for fishing, where I could be certain we would not be overheard.

'Well? You can tell me here.'

'Tell you what?'

'About the murder.'

He grunted and flicked his line. 'They're not biting today.'

'Fergus!'

'I can see I'll get no peace till I tell you. It was during the war. One of the lordship's guests. Shot in his bedroom.'

'Which bedroom?'

'Don't worry. It wasn't yours. It was one of those that are shut up.'

'Who was he?'

'I told you: a guest. I forget his name.'

'Who killed him?'

'They never found out.'

'Gosh. You mean it's never been solved?'

'Not to this day.'

'How exciting.' (*In Pale Battalions*, p. 27)

The conversation, initiated by the old man's blatant ignorance of the subject he himself cut off the day before, takes an inevitable course. The reader is expectant that Fergus will lead everyone involved in the story with no small amount of interest somewhere other than the murky terrain all of them have been occupying. But the old man meets Leonora in the function of the readers still with that invariably amiable yet deadpan arrogance, as it were, and bucks against the force that pounds on him to open up. The message does not sink in, or rather has not sunk in yet, on the old man. It takes extremely urgent request from the then little girl to convince the man that he has no choice. Then he reluctantly imparts the secret he has kept from everybody. Once again this prolonged resistance to the urgings of the narrator cum reader by the

man who purportedly shares the rare knowledge and insight into the past that supposedly matters most in the story keeps the reader on the verge of despair. The latter almost fears the worst. That the narrative, rather than going anywhere, just gets trapped in the limbo of spiraling triviality with all the bits and pieces of leads dropped here and there which merely turn out to be nothing more than red herrings. But fortunately, the old man confesses to what he believes is the true story. What actually happened at Meongate, according to him. If the information he shares with the interlocutor cum narrator is so important as to be worth being hoarded for such a long time both in terms of family history and narrative history, the sparse information that finally comes out of the man is certainly disappointing. All the intense wait for the revelation of the deadly secret culminates in a bathetic divulgence of what the man believes is the fact. But the fact, what Fergus is convinced of, is already revealed in the narrative history somewhere a number of pages previous to this occasion. Then what does the old man's mere concession to admit that the village urchin has been telling the truth all along amounts to? If the author has been successful in grabbing the readers' attention and keeping them in tenterhooks, then the ultimate answer to the expectations the reader felt building up inside them is less than satisfactorily supplied by the author. Why cannot the old man provide more of what the reader is really after? If the author thinks he can arouse the reader's interest and prick the balloon so arbitrarily without actually delivering on what he implicitly promised the reader along the way, then he fails in his project in every sense of the word. The author should have followed up on what has been suggested and should have allowed Fergus to divulge more than a mere repetition of what he has coyly been indulging himself in. the lighthearted tone the narrator/interrogator exudes by her final expression does not quite rescue the reader from going into the pit of disappointment. In fact, the tone Leonora adopts may offend the reader's sensibility as she seems to marginally partake of the authorial duplicity when she flips around in her attitude toward the object of her inquiry. The manner in which she suddenly comes out of the urgent inquisitiveness to banal indifference to the suggested truth about the incident could easily facilitate the transition in the reader's view on Leonora from the one that Leonora is a mere innocent inquirer to the somehow disenchanted one that Leonora after all has been in cahoots with the author all along. The mask of innocence threatens to come off from the face of the narrator. Or so the reader momentarily suspects as he is disenchanted with the way the author and the narrator bring the subject to such an anticlimactic end for the moment. In any case, the passage is disappointing. The subject that has so long been bandied about has is not

properly delved into and deal with. What the reader expected to obtain turns out to be nothing more than the thing they have been told time again in the process of reaching the final confession by Fergus. This is unfortunately the rough edge that comes out of the otherwise seamlessly smooth narrative the reader has been content with being simply carried on. The strategy the author takes here could cost all the intense interest he has built up in the reader. He may be encouraging the reader to think that what has been adumbrated as the profound mystery, even involving a murder and countless secretive deeds linked to Meongate and the narrator, are not as ominous and profound as they are touted to be. What if they are a mere wisp of overexcited imagination? Then the story may not even be worth being browsed through. That is the train of thought the author could arouse in the readers. It is a dangerous move the author and the narrator cum the mouthpiece of the former exhibit in this passage. If the author took up the habit of disappointing the reader too often the price he has to pay would be enormous. He would be forced to sever his ties to the readership he could otherwise have preserved. But this may be just a wild imagination on my part. The hint of the authorial dictatorship is only dropped in the interstices between the mental transitions the narrator exhibits. It is by no means certain that all the readers have the same impression as I have. But what I am arguing here is that the author cannot completely hide his complicitous, and duplicitous at the same time, presence as the narrator so complacently accepts the explanation provided by the old man.

I have been following the mechanism and aspects of Goddard's mysteries in his story entitled *In Pale Battalions* so far. Since he has written so many other interesting books that demonstrate the qualities I have focused on, it is time that I move onto other of his works. The work of choice does not have to be decided by the manner in which the mysteries are adumbrated. The reason is that his works, any of them, are full of cleverly crafted schemes and reality impacted events the reader finds intriguing. Rather than following the same train of thought (that is, trying to find new aspects of his mysteries, how they work in the overall work, how they are spliced into the characters who occupy the main part in the story, etc.), however, I have decided on *Closed Circle* because of the different possibilities the work promises to suggest of the mysteries Goddard works out in his fiction. It is a story about two crooks who have thrived in the land of their choice, the United States. But through some uncontrollable forces they were exposed and had to flee for their lives as well as fortunes. The story begins onboard the transatlantic ship they took for their passage to their old country England. The mystery in the book evolves around a young heiress who is



supposed to be the only daughter of a legendary millionaire Charnwood. The scheme the two crooks hatched is to draw the girl into a romantic relationship with one of them and force the father to buy the romantically involved two apart. Since the two crooks assume the father of such immense fortune and global reputation would not brook the alliance of the girl to such ill reputed crooks, he would easily be induced to pry the resulting relationship in the future asunder with money. After all the man is flowing with it. Or so they assume. But what the two crooks do not expect is the complicated rings of mysteries that develop as they get closer to the girl and the family. The mysteries, as it were, well out of the dark past and the present the family represent. In a sense it is a repeat of the pattern I found in the preceding story. Time plays an important part as it accompanies (it is more like history as it impacts the characters with its layer of accumulated temporal significations) the murky gloom of the past with its patina accumulated through the years. In both stories the murk the passage of time exudes hangs over the space every consciousness inhabits. The ominous and nebulous secrets ebb and flow before the readers, tantalizing them and yet getting them helplessly stranded in the intricate web of threads the secrets leave behind in the reader's consciousness. As the time is called in to play a major part in both stories the roles of the active agents in two disparate ontological worlds are also thrust to the foreground. Besides these there are many other similar features concerning the mysteries between the next novel and the preceding one. It is then high time to discuss in what aspect the author differs in his rendition and treatment of the mysteries he inextricably splices into his stories. Before I run far ahead of myself, not to say the readers who are following this wandering essay, I think I had better quote the passage I will consider first. Look at the following one.

Those of us who live by our wits can never afford to relax completely. Since abandoning the humdrum world of fixed hours and monthly salary ten years before, I had ceased to relish total idleness, tinged as it always was with a suspicion that I was wasting my time rather than somebody else's. Where was the profit in it, I would inevitably wonder, where the opportunity? (*Closed Circle*, p. 11)

The mystery promised in the title of the book, although coming from such established mystery writer as Goddard the implicit mysteries in the story immediately put the readers on the clues to the core of the darkest secret that has not even become apparent yet, does not immediately become evident as the narrator indulges in a relaxed tone, which makes a neat contrast with the one resonated in the previous story we have looked at. In fact the tone is the kind that even suggest an easy going rapid triviality which tends to plunge into the realm of sassiness that the reader is caught

offguard if he had not wandered into the world mistakenly. Notice the belittling truism expressed by the narrator. He mentions that he decided to quit his job because the routine work load had had to go through made his life so "humdrum" without any surprises that could have made life more piquantly interesting. The sentiment contained in that remark is nothing new as a matter of fact. Any one who has lived such a sedate life as the narrator expresses would easily concur that the nine to five routine days do not indeed hold many interesting twists and turns unpredictable beforehand. But despite its rapidly trite truism the warped sassy sentiment the narrator through the author's narrative skills manages to throw into the remark somehow generates an interesting dynamism which the reader finds irresistible to appreciate. The dynamism which is the kind that ingratiate into the readerly consciousness and works it up to arouse the kind of euphoria which the reader sees as an interesting ingredients to make that exact humdrum life more tolerable. After all anyone who often stops to mull over his life, especially his inner life, needs just more than the routines of life have to offer. He needs to be tickled and coddled and turned topsy-turvy in his sentiment, at least, in order to bravely go through the life's most difficult phases, which very often coincides with the monotonous periods most people undergo day to day. The uneasiness one feels going through such daily routines would be all the more unbearable if the person happened to be more ambitious. That is, if he could claim himself to be at least more clever than others around him. Such a person chanced to be our narrator, as being evident by his own confession. He claims he live more by his wits than otherwise. That is indubitably a testament to his own mental prowess that he is capable of as opposed to others'. The narrator therefore is presumed to have left his previous job, although it is indicated that the time he took that decided turn in his career is not so recent past, as a result of boredom that redounded by the narrator's awareness that he was in fact wasting his talent in an environment which did not even hold opportunities to advance himself further than where he was. The sense of bore was further deepened by his view on others that compared to him they were somehow less than equal in intelligence. What the narrator wanted was in other words to leave and make something of himself. The old environment was not designed for him. That is, not designed to make himself avail of his real talent. That is why he refers to the condition of being employed by others as "wasting his time." Rather than wasting his time, the narrator rationalizes through some twisted logic, "why not waste others?" That obviously made quite a sense, as he barked on that idea when he decided to make a move and crossed the Atlantic to put himself in the new theater of activities. The whole train of thought is rendered

through a lens which somehow rectifies the faulty logic as the narrator sees it. The voice that comes out across to the readers is therefore quite plausible but at the same time implicitly lopsided to the narrator's favor. But as the author intervenes to again modify the tone the reader is enabled to locate the objectivity that arises in the nexus between the lines where the three parties interface. Needless to say there is no objectivity per se. What the reader conceives as objective is the point of view that merely materializes at that particular point where the optimum balance of tone, as it were, is formed when the disparate voices converge and shape themselves into something audible to the active intelligence, that is to someone who resides in the ontologically heterogeneous sphere than the others in this fictional nexus.

But the risibility the narrator expresses arises from the fact that he is even beyond anyone else when it comes to intelligence. His confession that he would rather waste other's time than his, implies that he even dares to challenge the intelligence of the ontologically advantaged reader when he preambles the story by way of introducing the mystery that is not yet even adumbrated, although intuited. The audacity of the narrator is so outrageous that the reader is duly cued to take a cautious stance as he reluctantly takes the narrator as a guide through the facetiously mysterious narrative that is evolving. But whatever the pitfall that might await the readers, the mundane truth that comes out of the passage is so convincing that the reader is ready to connive in the story despite such an unpredictable narrator. No one after all wants to waste his time if he can save his own by wasting others. Such a truism but so charmingly rendered through the mouth of a potentially great source of humor.

As the reader moves on to the next passage, he registers the same range of humor as he did in the previous one. The narrator just exudes the carefully air, which he suddenly found out he had been after all born with when he decided to quit his humdrum job. The idea that arose from such a realization is reflected in the line pithily expressed by the narrator. Nothing suits him better than a luxurious life the kind of freedom provides. The lifestyle he has established is exactly the kind that contributes to make his life richer, although for the moment he is not necessarily materially content. But he is at least not wasting his time. The humor simply bursts out of the passage as the reader skims over the passage. The abundance of the joviality disguised as a glum skepticism only emphasizes the kind of slanted humor the author lets the narrator manifest but which the great manipulator wants the reader to perceive and enjoy as a profound source of reading pleasure. But before being carried away ourselves by the flowing humor the narrative flashes at the reader, let us stare at the passage once again and see if we can make out any harbingers of what is to come.

Notice the smug confidence the narrator manifests as he measures his fiend's move. Since both were planning to attend the party sponsored by Miss Charnwood, a reputed heiress of a billionaire father, both are in fact quite aware of the purpose of introducing themselves to the heiress. They are understandingly excited. After all they had lost an important chance of making themselves quite personages in the New World in a rigged stock speculation. (At least, that is what is suggested by the arrest of their former coconspirator and the occurrence of a sudden stock devaluation that wreaked havoc on most prominent financiers culminating in the Great Depression. Although the two are linked at most tenuously by a mere suggestion of the two in juxtaposition, there is hardly any doubt that the author wants to turn the reader's thought channel in that direction.) Now that they are onboard the Empress of Britain Horton might as well throw the agony of the recent bitter faux pas to the wind and enjoy the opportunity that seemingly offered itself in their way. (Although that may be too much of a coincidence. The two might quite possibly planned their embarkation to coincide with the boarding of the future heiress. But since there is not explicit statement by the narrator or the author to that effect, I am simply letting my imagination running amok.) As the ships triumphant sails away for the new World Horton cannot help the bubbling elation take over himself. Finally the window of opportunity is within his reach. Only he has to do, and his partner Max, to do is to cooperate and act on the mutual understanding they reconfirmed even through the exchange of a contract that whatever benefits, booty is more appropriate, accrue from this venture (Horton reefsers to it as a business venture) the two of them share like two gentlemen. The joke can hardly escape the ferrite minds of the readers as the word pops up. No deal can become gentlemen's when it is made between rogues. But that is by the by. Let me quote the passage I will follow and have been following.

Knowing Max to be of the like mind, I sauntered up from my cabin to meet him that evening feeling distinctly pleased with myself. Miss Charnwood's party might yet prove the dreariest of non-events, but, then again, it might not. Unpredictability had been the key to many of our successes and I was not about to lose faith in it. Stepping out onto the promenade, I filled my lungs with the sun-cleansed air of New World confidence, then went in to infect my friend. (*Closed Circle*, p. 11)

But self-deprecatingly he casts a gloomy doubt that the party might turnout quite unfruitful. If that is going to be the case, then Horton with his New World optimism rationalizes that let it be so. After all there are other preys out in the world. A single failure should not upset him unduly. After all he has suffered a setback of a lifetime. And it nearly cost him life. That is life in prison, most likely if caught along with his

accomplice who is now in fact in prison. But now aboard the Empress of Britain, he cannot help being infected by the cheerful mood the people in transition give off. Besides Horton can brook with the unpredictability life is rife with. He has gone through many a compromising situations before and escaped all of them except the recent one. The noneventfulness the party might provide would be simply one of the series of them. Nothing more. Such unpredictability after all gives piquancy to his otherwise monotonous existence. Is it not the implicit message the reader is supposed to gather from the truism expressed by Horton that the humdrum life he had led before was nothing but a pattern of predictability. The wastage of time of his own or others did not actually matter because the kind of life he had itself was not congenial to his constitution. That is it did not quite appeal to the inner core that constituted his self. So, in that sense whatever the outcome of the party he is pleased with the way things are turning out onboard the ship.

Now let us take a close look at the motivation that lay behind the narrator's apparent voice that the readers are directed to hear. That may sound rather recondite. What is the difference between what is heard point blank, as it were, that directly arises from the narrator's mouth and the subtle shades of nuances that actually constitute the manifested meanings of the narrator's utterances. I agree that the distinction is indeed quite murky and oftentimes depends on the subjective conjectures based on the hints dropped by the characters inadvertently here and there. But once the reader becomes attuned to the nuances he may find the mere conjectures not so unfounded and even provide great possibilities that the meanings woven through the mixture of the two layers of linguistic codings will significantly inflect the tides of nuances that the reader culls from the whole story. That is rather abstract and overgeneralized. Let me show how I gather cues from the narrative portrayal and configure meanings that impact the story. First of all, the two characters are rogues. No matter what amount of conscience they manifest the evolving scenes in which the two is intercalated should be interpreted with that inflection in mind. When I say inflection, that is meant to mean that since these two characters figure as a codified signficatory activators who influence the manner in which the overall lay of the story is conveyed to the readers they are reasonably considered the agents who inflect the nuances that arise from the process between the origin of the inception of signification and the point where that signification reaches the agents of signficatory construal, that is readers. When these two intervene, which is most of the time and as far as the narrative is conveyed to the reader in its material form through the mouth of Horton, always, the narrative has to be placed in a proper perspective by the readers if they

want to cull the most objective meanings possible. After all the two do not necessarily represent the intentions of all the characters of the story. That is such a banal point that I do not have to reiterate. But despite the two's unreliability as agents of reportage, they cannot be removed without jeopardizing the presence of information itself. Without a person who partakes of the episodes described in the story and somehow report them there is no possibility that the story itself would arise. That is sheer nonsense, as anyone would agree. But the two most promising reporters are by nature untrustworthy as purveyors of correct information. Then the readers are definitely forced in a predicament. They are in a position to gather the most reliable facts and evidence to construe the incidents which form the core of the mystery in a story like Goddard's. But to just rely on such rogues as Horton and Max, they have to always carry this fear that they are constantly misled and given misinformation. After all dropping red herrings is the most convenient way for the author to involve the readers in the mystery that evolves. When the red herrings are easily discarded and the readers are on a sure course to the final destination where all the conflicts are resolved, then the middle part of the story, the most exciting and entrancing part of the story where everything is complicated and seems somehow rife with suggestive possibilities, then the story itself loses its life blood, as it were. The reader would lose interest and would possibly be never motivated to go far before he gave up on his attempt to even solve the mysteries. That would be a disaster from the author's point of view. He needs to keep his readers entertained and hooked to his work. Otherwise the very activity of attempting to be engaged in the story by the reader would not happen. In other words, the readers will not choose the books to start with and the encounter between the material representation of the author and the configuring intelligence reified as the reader would not take place. That is the nullifying proposition. No intellectual consumption would result from such proposition. Well, that is too skeptical a view that I even abhor to imagine such a possibility. We are sure to more usefully employ our time if we turn our attention to the subject we started this contemplation with. Now, if you remember, we were concerned with what constituted the hidden signification that inflected the episodes beyond the superficial meanings that were merely culled from the vocalized words of the characters who resided in the fictional space. One lead I picked up was the two characters' manifested status. As I mentioned, it subtly, I would say more than subtly, inflects the meanings that come out of the story. Besides the status, I tend to direct my attention to the implicit rivalry between Horton and Max. Now that is rather odd, considering that they are supposed to be partners and have been so for a long time. If

there is even a tinge of that bitterness between the two then what made them cling to each other for so long? Then the simple question leads me back to their predatory nature. The two characters are essentially constituted by their motivation to better themselves materially. That in itself may not be so immoral. In fact on the contrary. To break out of the status quo is a admirably quality which in fact pushed the European civilization so far ahead of any other civilizations. But what parts the two from the rest is that they do not choose the means to attain the goal. After a near disastrous debacle which ended with one of their former business partners being apprehended by the authorities for finance irregularities, the two are determined to gain wealth even by repeating the same ploy they adopted before. What amounts to the just retribution does not alter the course Horton for one had set for himself. The pursuit of money is his engrossing passion. The same goes true for Max. His only purpose, ultimately as things turn out (here I am observing retrospectively), for forming a partnership with Horton is that he also can hope to attain a goal he has dreamed of since his early age. Although the latter point is not explicitly mentioned, the underlying strain that is shared by Horton as he quit his job because he realized he had been wasting his own time rather than others', is understood to be also ingrained in Max as he ventures on this scheme aboard the Empress of Britain. I described my observation retrospective, that is, looking back from the vantage point of having read the whole story, because Max turns out indeed more indifferent to the partnership than Horton. Although he acts on the contract to set up the heiress in order to reap a huge fortune from the deal that will they think result from the trap they will lay for Miss Charnwood, that contractual self dissipates before the beauty and charm of the woman. Despite Max's promise that they will go to the party together and introduce themselves as they have been presented to the reading audience throughout the story up to this moment, he reneges on the promise and furtively seeks Miss Charnwood to present a more favorable image without any forced comparison with his partner, which according to Horton's admission (which may or may not be true, for he being himself rather mortified with the injured pride) would have proved disastrous. If Horton is to be believed at his words, he would easily have beaten Max in this competition for the hand of the heiress. But what comes out of this rivalry is the precarious partnership they have been positioned themselves in for as long as they were together. And that fact colors the nuances that emerges from the passage and subtly inflects the signification the reader initially grasped as hurried onto the next passage. Obviously the most important reservation the reader now brings to his reading activity is the increased degree of skepticism he splices into the voice that superficially occurs in the

story. Nothing is what it appears to be, at least nothing turns out to be what it signified at the initial stage of the reader's perception. That is a devastating realization. Because if the reader cannot trust anything that is stated and even confirmed by the characters, who are often the mouthpiece of the author, then the reader is left to his own arbitrary world in which he has to constitute the meanings based on the possibly faulty pieces of information supplied by the characters. That is a formidable task. If the characters are suspected of suffering from an idiosyncratically limited view, reflecting no absolute truth, then the reader himself might be tempted to fall into a precarious state of isolated subjectivism. Whatever the case, the story now reads more than it apparently did before. It means not only not what it purported to signify but also it potentially means something completely different than what it sounds it is. The reader is on his own.

Then what does the reader make of the passage I quoted above? As I already suggested it exhibits the superabundant sentiment triggered by the rivalry between Horton and Max. Because it is brimming with other strong sentiments, which is actually indicated by the word superabundant I used, the rivalry cannot help but impact the calm view stated by Horton. When Horton remarks that the party might turn out the "dreariest of non-events," the reader is forced to perceive something that is contrary to the most uneventful event that will develop from the encounter between these two rogues and Miss Charnwood. That may be another retrospective observation. But if the reader's memory is capable of carrying that much information with him as he reads along, he is certainly surprised with the confirmation that results from the reader's comprehension of events that accrue in the ensuing episodes. But let us go back to the passage. Horton states that his life has been filled with unpredictabilities. The hint of a possible reversal of the configuration of the state that had been suggested by the preceding line suddenly magnifies in its impact as it comes to assume a prophesying note. Stepping out into the salty air he is reconfirmed with the confidence he has accumulated since his crossing over to the New World. Without a doubt his decision to come over to this land of liberty and opportunities is construed to have brought the positive feedback to his psyche brimmed with the ambitions only a man of his psychical constitution could possess. That is why he is ready to welcome the unpredictabilities he reeferes to. In fact, without them he could easily be dragged into the abyss he had complained of having exited in his previous life. That is the last straw. All he wants to do is to take his own destiny in his own hands and shape it in the way he sees as most adventurous, and thus potentially promising. So, in that sense his past and future are ineluctably connected in a way that is convenient for the



author as well. Since the two time points are organically compatible, Goddard is allowed to render the unpredictabilities in fact quite predictable ingredients in the story. All the tools the reader needs are the clues and some directions from the person who are truly complicit in the mysteries frequently hinted at and adumbrated throughout the story. But unfortunately those clues are not easy to detect. As I mentioned, even to get the general direction in which to proceed and go about comprehending the true signification of the story, part from the purported meaning, is not that easy. But the reader has no choice but take in as much information with the objective intelligence thrown in which only the ontologically advantaged intelligence can attain. No matter what the potential interactions between the reader and the characters in the story, there is at least one other source to make the connection and establish a relationship to understand the story at a deeper level than a mere superficial reading provides. That is, to pick up the threads that are loose by themselves but become quite insightful when they are woven across the episodic borders that each episode seems to manifest. One of the requirements for the reader to achieve that kind of reading is needless to say to perceive the organicity, or integrated nature of each episode while playing into the organic strategy of the author. Of course the reader has to be careful not to get helplessly embroiled in the authorial plan when he tries to attain the objective stance. But at least he needs to understand that there is give and take even in the act of reading. Especially so, if the object at hand is a mystery story as the present books happens to be. The reader is well advised to remember that there is no absolute dictator in the triangle that constitutes the reading activity. Each one constitutes a little to the sphere which exudes the effluvia which makes up the whole experience of reading, and when the proper balance is struck then only then the true understanding arises. At that point the fruit of the reader's labor will be as exquisite as anything else he has ever experienced. He will truly become one with the characters in the story and experience the aura that is contained in the material being called the book. Although he has certainly to maintain the distance from the world that develops before him through the medium, i.e. the story, he has to shun the temptation to keep it forever apart from him. The two states are quite distinct but somehow need to be melded into one. I realize I have certainly been sucked into the vortex of generalizations. Before I get hopelessly mired in the argument, let me go on to the next passage to see if I can make any useful comments regarding the author's treatment of the mystery. I make it singular because every square inch of Goddard's fiction is filled with suggestiveness that somehow contributes to the aura that in turn gives rise to all kinds of mysteries.

The next passage is again from the vicinity of the one I just quoted above. I wanted to pursue the implications I have been hinting at in order to locate them actually manifested in the fictional space. Then without much more ado, let me introduce you to the passage

Perhaps age was the problem. Max was only a few months older than me, but in recent years his hair had thinned and his waist had thickened, so that he could have been taken for ten years my senior. He drank little more than me but seemed to carry it less well than once he had. There was a vagueness sometimes to his thoughts and words, a vacuity to his gaze. He frequently complained of migraines and I could not help suspecting some connection with the head-wound he had had suffered in Macedonia. I did not voice my suspicion, of course, so whether he feared the same himself I had no way of knowing. Whatever the cause, he was not quite the devil-may-care Max with whom I had first crossed the Atlantic seven years before. (*Closed Circle*, p. 12)

Here Horton deliberately brings the age difference between himself and Max, or rather I should have said the ramifications of aging, to the foreground. Since they are nearly of an identical age except for merely a number of months that separate them, that point may appropriately be expatiated upon. Horton emphasizes the visible consequences of age that have become particularly pronounced in recent years on Max. Max is no longer as trim as he once used to be, Horton reports sounding rather banal. He identifies the ravages of time on Max as the bloating waistline and thinning of hair, among others. As a consequence, he looks ten years older, at the least. That is a rather unflattering observation on Max. But notice how their relations turn sour soon. Although I should say my view is not a little distorted by my retrospective insight, Horton is already indicative of the future state in which he is hopelessly gripped with jealousy when he learns the closer ties that develops from the preemptive move his partner makes in order to gain Miss Charnwood's favors. If I interpolate the enhanced understanding that comes from that hindsight, the sentiment that can be salvaged from this passage is found to be subtly inflected by not so flattering a view Horton, even unbeknownst to himself, holds toward his partner. He is quite possibly racked by a bitter rivalry with his longtime partner that even manifests in his implicit attempt to put him down in his estimation. Needless to say, since Horton's estimation is the direct and almost exclusive voice that the reader hears concerning the circumstances of their relationship, his observation threatens to project as the sole and only view which will occupy the reader's consciousness. But as I mentioned above, the surface tone cannot be allowed to come across from the pages of the inscribed surface

without the intervention of the objective assessment which the ontological vantage point will easily provide for the readers. Then as the reader is encouraged to use his discretionary subjectivism he begins to weave subjective interpretational coloring into the direct voice uttered by the characters. The result of course is sometimes the opposite of what at first seems to materialize in the space between the readers and the objectified book the reader sees and consumes right in front of him. Well, in this train of conjecture I am actually engaging the readerly subjectivism in the story for a larger picture to become generated. My strategy may be premature at the time when the reader encounters the scene for the first time. But as I mentioned I am executing the possible reading retrospectively. Although such a reading may not be completely justified, the signification that arises from the maneuver in which the signification that is generated from the surface voice is spliced into the signification that is redounded on the overall meaning of the mystery may not be totally invalid. Let me explain myself more fully. Since a book assumes its signifiatory importance only when there is an acting intelligence to process it, that is consume it, the reader's reading consciousness becomes the single most important ingredient in the act of reading/consuming the story. That does not signify that all other virtual or real intelligences do not play any role in the act of generating meaning. If there is no character who does not report what is going on, either directly or indirectly, the intelligence outside the book has no way to process the story. That is of course not surprising. Unless the reader is given a handle by which he can shift it around then how he can he view, or read in some cases, the scene that develop in the physically bound world that is the story? After all the reader needs to observe the scene from every possible way in order to attain the fullest understanding. Without that opportunity given to him then even the chance of that activity to begin would not materialize. Unfortunately that is the sad limitation of communication. With only one party ardent about establishing a mutual relationship, the communication of the kind I am delineating does not arise. Communication by definition does not obtain in the real sense of the word when there is the other party lacking. It always takes the other party to complete the bi-directional dialogue which is exactly needed to give rise to the ideal reading activity I have in mind. That brings us back to what is really taking place in the passage I quoted above. When Horton alludes to the disfiguring effects of time on Max, then he is not merely reporting the effects that are manifested on the body of Max. That is, he is not merely reading the language inscribed upon the person of Max. Horton is initiating the maneuver in which a massive rock of tightly compacted impenetrable and nebulous mysteries become dislodged from where it has been precariously perched. In other words, the

equilibrium is somehow broken and the mysteries start flashing at the audience coyly. Needless to say, as the mysteries try to manifest themselves completely before the audience, either they themselves or the crafty hands of the author or even the sinuous tale of the narrator withdraw them and pull them back from the naked eyes of the readers. But it is exactly this seen but not seen, the manipulation that is so craftily executed which pulls the audience into the story and drag them along as long as the story lasts. Paradoxically enough, that is when the invisible hand makes its presence felt most tellingly. All that the audience can do is let themselves go and let themselves slip into the cradling bosom of the story that was skillfully produced by a consummate writer of mysteries.

Once again let me go back to the passage. The interesting point about the way the narrator manifests his sentiments is that he attributes the apparent degeneration in the health of his poor partner to the wounds he had sustained in the past military skirmishes. By doing so, he definitely musters the reader's sympathy in Max's favor. What is coming in terms of their personal confrontation involving the heiress is now prepared in a way so that the reader is at least primed to respond more compassionately toward Horton's rival. When someone's weakness resides in actual physical, or possibly pathological cause, then what can one say about the person in question but take pity and overcompensate for the loss he sees in the "handicapped" person by misdirecting his sympathies and urging the handicapped on to taking an action he otherwise would not. But needless to say, the reader does not have a clue as to the possible existence of the overtones that the author manages to weave into the innocent reportage by Horton. The emotional conflict and the derivative conjecture I am splicing into the passage is mere a proactive, or rather retrospective, move on my part. Throwing more lines of signficatory possibilities in the seemingly one layer narrative gives so much more nuances and thus makes the story itself more interesting. But that may be rather heretical from the perspective of the readers who are attuned to traditional reading activities. As my writing style suggests, heresy is actually implied even when I started engaging myself in this act of writing on Goddard. I consider taking an unorthodox approach is merely one way to inject new life into the field which has long suffered from atrophic indifference at the hands of the populace who do not feel literature, even a story of this sort, quite relevant to them. I realize I am again off rack here. I may be overtaxing the readers' patience. Let me promptly go back to the passage again for the umpteenth time. Apart from the reference to Max's wound Horton makes in the present passage, it clearly brings the concrete historical details on center stage, as it were. The conflict in Macedonian is one.

Although it is conveniently introduced simply because the author needed to explain the cause for Max's wounds, the actual name somehow thrusts the reader out of the murky penumbral realm of imagination into the light of reality. The reader is as if told that the characters not only exist in the ontologically differentiated world of fiction, which is definitely apart from the world where the reader himself exists, but also they impinge on him more substantially than a mere figment of imagination because the concrete reality impacted name helps the two parties come closer by its bivalent status. That is a technique as old as literature of the world. But Goddard's use of real names are especially effective as they tend to fall in places when they are transitive in nature. That is, they connect two or more heterogeneous objects or states and then make them more relevant to each other. That is why the name Macedonia suddenly evokes the historical context in its whole complex ramifications in the reader's mind and tempts the reader to either bring himself or the events developing before him into the ontologically differentiated, or supposedly differentiated, world and vice versa. The reality impacted names induce a harmonious world where there had been only an catenation of discontinuous realms. In that sense, it is natural that the name Macedonia spawns the New World episode in its train. The reader is by then completely pushed to a state in which he is rendered one with the characters in the story. Of course that state the reader is transported to is demarcated by the bounds of his own imagination. As soon as the author lets fly Pegasus too high the reader may find it too hard to follow the path of the legendary winged equine and must choose to come flying back down to the earth. But what a consummate joy the reader will feel as he traces the paths of the mystery the author describes. Indeed the holiest secret of Goddard's writing is that the reader is constantly treated to a chance of leaving this mundane world behind and let his imagination engage in the intricate suspense and hints of mysteries the author paints in the welkin of his imagination. Thus the excitement. Thus the pleasure. And thus the joy of throwing yourself in the way of literature. (Do you object his writing is not quite literature? I dare say I drag his opus under the umbrella of holy literature. Period. That is my final verdict.)

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#### Robert Goddard のミステリーについて

Goddard の文章はその示唆的性格の故つねに読者の好奇心を掻き立てる。この論文はその根源に迫るべく、Goddard の世界のかもし出す特有な Ambience をその世界を持つ特異なミステリーという観点からアプローチしてみた。そしてその最も大きな要因が Goddard のもつ stylistic reticence に存在するのではないかという hypothesis から特に Goddard の表現技術に力点をおいて論文を展開してみた。