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**ST. JOSEPH’S COLLEGE (AUTONOMOUS), BANGALORE- 27**

**II SEMESTER M.A - END SEMESTER EXAM – JULY/AUG 2022**

**EN DE 8418 - World Literature - II**

**TIME: 2 ½ HRS MAX. MARKS: 70**

**This paper contains FIVE printed pages and THREE parts**

**SECTION A**

**I. Read the following excerpt from Ron Rosenbaum’s article titled “The Shocking Savagery of America’s Early History” in which Bernard Bailyn, a historian, shines his light on the nation’s Dark Ages, and answer the questions that follow:**

Enter Bernard Bailyn, the greatest historian of early America alive today. Now over 90 and ensconced at Harvard for more than six decades, Bailyn has recently published another one of his epoch-making grand narrative syntheses, The Barbarous Years, casting a light on the darkness, filling in the blank canvas with what he’s gleaned from what seems like every last scrap of crumbling diary page, every surviving chattel slave receipt and ship’s passenger manifest of the living and dead, every fearful sermon about the Antichrist that survived in the blackened embers of the burned-out churches.

Bailyn has not painted a pretty picture. Little wonder he calls it The Barbarous Years and spares us no details of the terror, desperation, degradation and widespread torture—do you really know what being “flayed alive” means? (The skin is torn from the face and head and the prisoner is disemboweled while still alive.) And yet somehow amid the merciless massacres were elements that gave birth to the rudiments of civilization—or in Bailyn’s evocative phrase, the fragile “integument of civility”—that would evolve 100 years later into a virtual Renaissance culture, a bustling string of self-governing, self-sufficient, defiantly expansionist colonies alive with an increasingly sophisticated and literate political and intellectual culture that would coalesce into the rationale for the birth of American independence. All the while shaping, and sometimes misshaping, the American character. It’s a grand drama in which the glimmers of enlightenment barely survive the savagery, what Yeats called “the blood-dimmed tide,” the brutal establishment of slavery, the race wars with the original inhabitants that Bailyn is not afraid to call “genocidal,” the full, horrifying details of which have virtually been erased.

“In truth, I didn’t think anyone sat around erasing it,” Bailyn tells me when I visit him in his spacious, document-stuffed study in Harvard’s Widener Library. He’s a wiry, remarkably fit-looking fellow, energetically jumping out of his chair to open up a file drawer and show me copies of one of his most-prized documentary finds: the handwritten British government survey records of America-bound colonists made in the 1770s, which lists the name, origin, occupation and age of the departing, one of the few islands of hard data about who the early Americans were.

“Nobody sat around erasing this history,” he says in an even tone, “but it’s forgotten.”

“Conveniently?” I ask.

“Yes,” he agrees. “Look at the ‘peaceful’ Pilgrims. Our William Bradford. He goes to see the Pequot War battlefield and he is appalled. He said, ‘The stink’ [of heaps of dead bodies] was too much.”

Bailyn is speaking of one of the early and bloodiest encounters, between our peaceful pumpkin pie-eating Pilgrims and the original inhabitants of the land they wanted to seize, the Pequots. But for Bailyn, the mercenary motive is less salient than the theological.

“The ferocity of that little war is just unbelievable,” Bailyn says. “The butchering that went on cannot be explained by trying to get hold of a piece of land. They were really struggling with this central issue for them, of the advent of the Antichrist.”

Suddenly, I felt a chill from the wintry New England air outside enter into the warmth of his study.

The Antichrist. The haunting figure presaging the Apocalypse from the Book of Revelation plays an important part in Bailyn’s explanation of the European settlers’ descent into unrestrained savagery. The key passage on this question comes late in his new book when Bailyn makes explicit a connection I had not seen before: between the physical savagery the radical dissenting Protestant settlers of America wreaked on the original inhabitants, and the intellectual savagery of their polemical attacks on the church and state authorities they fled from in Europe—and the savagery of vicious insult and vile denunciation they wreaked upon each other as well.

“The savagery of the [theological] struggle, the bitterness of the main contenders and the deep stain it left on the region’s collective memory” were driven by “elemental fears peculiar to what was experienced as a barbarous environment—fears of what could happen to civilized people in an unimaginable wilderness...in which God’s children [as they thought of themselves] were fated to struggle with pitiless agents of Satan, pagan Antichrists swarming in the world around them. The two [kinds of struggle, physical and metaphysical] were one: threats from within [to the soul] merged with threats from without to form a heated atmosphere of apocalyptic danger.”

Bernard Bailyn made his reputation when he took upon himself the leviathan task off cataloging the store of pre-Revolutionary War-era pamphlets, the denunciations and speculations and accusations privately published by surprisingly literate gentlemen farmers, Greek- and Roman-quoting tradesmen—“the Ebenezers,” as I think of them—most of whose colorful and thoughtful works had not been read for two centuries. He drew on that knowledge base to write The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution, which won him the first of his two Pulitzers after it was published in 1967. Bailyn could have coasted on that success, researching and publishing on the multitude of controversies still raging over the meaning of the Revolution and the Declaration and the Constitution. Going forward, the way most historians have done.

But instead, he did something unusual: He stepped backward, not just in time but in spatial perspective. He had what he would call his “cosmic eye” on a grand vision of the massive westward movement from Europe and Africa to North and South America that began before 1492, and he chronicled it in his subsequent book, Voyagers to the West. In examining the interactions of four continents bordering the Atlantic, and seeing them as a single, mutually interacting whole, he reshaped the modern history profession and helped create what is now known as “Atlantic history.”

“From 1500,” he wrote in an earlier book, “it has involved the displacement and resettlement of over fifty million people and it has affected indirectly the lives of uncountable millions more.”

But Bailyn’s “cosmic eye” saw even deeper. He wanted to capture not just physical movements but also “the interior experiences, the quality of their culture, the capacity of their minds, the patterns of their emotions.” He wanted to look inside heads and read minds. Bailyn’s voyage was a monumentally ambitious project, a voyage through unmapped oceans of data analo­gous to the Columbus-era explorers setting out on a vast uncharted ocean.

The opening section of his new book stands out for his profoundly sensitive appreciation of the sensibility of the original inhabitants whom he introduces simply as “Americans” rather than “Native Americans.” He captures that sensibility as well as any attempt I’ve read: “Their world was multitudinous, densely populated by active, sentient and sensitive spirits, spirits with consciences, memories and purposes, that surround them, instructed them, impinged on their lives at every turn. No less real for being invisible...the whole of life was a spiritual enterprise...the universe in all its movements and animations and nature was suffused with spiritual potency.” In person, Bailyn expresses an almost poetic admiration for this sort of spirituality. “All the world was alive!” he exclaims. “And the wind is alive! The mountains are alive!” Then, he adds: “But it’s not a terribly peaceful world. They were always involved in warfare, partly because life would become imbalanced in a way that needed justification and response and reprisal. And reprisals, within their lives, are very important. But partly the onus is on the threats that they’re under.”

“Would both civilizations have been better off had they not been forced into contact,” I ask, “or if all the colonies on the verge of failing had, in fact, failed and the two civilizations continued separately, merely as trading partners?”

“Well, the Indians were not genocidal on the whole. Their effort, even the 1622 massacre [which he calls “genocidal” in his book], was not to wipe the Europeans off the face of the map. It’s the English after the massacre who write these letters saying ‘wipe them off the map.’ “But the Indians had the view they wanted to use them [the Europeans]. They wanted the English there on the fringe so they would have the benefit of their treasure, their goods, even their advanced weapons. They wanted that, but under their control.” It didn’t exactly work out that way.

Bailyn does not let either of the two adversary cultures off the hook. He recounts little vignettes of the original inhabitants’ behavior such as this: Following the ambush of four Dutch traders, Bailyn quotes a report, one “had been eaten after having [been] well roasted. The [other two] they burnt. The Indians carried a leg and an arm home to be divided amongst their families.”

And, on the other side, consider that fixture of grade school Thanksgiving pageants, Miles Standish, an upstanding, godly Pilgrim stalwart who does not at all seem the sort of man who would have cut off the head of a chief and “brought it back to Plymouth in triumph [where] it was displayed on the blockhouse together with a flag made of a cloth soaked in the victim’s blood.” (Happy Thanksgiving!)

“What happened,” Bailyn continues, “is a legacy of brutality in intercultural relations developed through this period of which, of course, the overwhelming legacy was slavery.” Bailyn points out that although there were only “a few thousand” slaves in the colonies toward the end of King Philip’s War in the 1670s, when he concludes The Barbarous Years, “The rules for chattel slavery were set.” And so the legacy of the barbarous years continued beyond the white male liberation of the Revolution.

Bailyn is fascinating when he speaks of questions of value. The day we talked was the peak of the fevered notion that the American government should settle its national debt by minting a platinum coin arbitrarily given a “trillion dollar” valuation. And it made me think of wampum, the original inhabitants’ currency. I’d always wondered how you could found an entire centuries-long economics on beads and shells as these “Americans” did. And yet, isn’t that what we’ve done since, basing our economics on shiny metal objects that have a declared, consensus value unrelated to their worth as a metal?

**I.A.** **Answer ANY ONE of the following questions: (20 marks)**

1. According to Bailyn, “What happened, is a legacy of brutality in intercultural relations developed through this period of which, of course, the overwhelming legacy was slavery.” What is your understanding of this statement with respect to the above excerpt? You may draw references from all the reading and discussion done in this semester.
2. With respect to the above excerpt is there any way you can make connections with the two stories “The Jumping Mouse” and The Walker Brothers Cowboy” that you read this semester.

**SECTION B**

**II. Answer the following questions: (4x10=40)**

1. The universe, according to early twentieth-century cosmology, was expanding, but also infinite; it was, in the words of William Empson from one of his poems written in the late 1920s, “finite though unbounded.” Is this also true of Borges’ story? Explain with reference to the story.
2. Over the years, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* grew to have “a texture of its own,” to use Updike’s words, and it became less a story about Latin America and more about mankind at large. How? In the light of this statement explain with reference to Márquez’s book.
3. *Moby Dick* possesses various symbolic meanings for various individuals. Identify some of them from the novel that you read and justify what you understand about them.
4. It is much on Derek Walcott’s mind to “give his people heroes, if not saints, and to stir them to characters and purposes of their own.” Do you agree with this statement? Provide evidence from Walcott’s “The Fortunate Traveller.”

**SECTION C**

**III. Respond critically to Derek Walcott’s poem “A Far Cry from Africa”. In your opinion what worldview/attitude does Walcott offer in this poem? (10 marks)**

Awind is ruffling the tawny pelt  
Of Africa, Kikuyu, quick as flies,  
Batten upon the bloodstreams of the veldt.  
Corpses are scattered through a paradise.  
Only the worm, colonel of carrion, cries:  
"Waste no compassion on these separate dead!"  
Statistics justify and scholars seize  
The salients of colonial policy.  
What is that to the white child hacked in bed?  
To savages, expendable as Jews?  
Threshed out by beaters, the long rushes break  
In a white dust of ibises whose cries  
Have wheeled since civilizations dawn  
From the parched river or beast-teeming plain.  
The violence of beast on beast is read  
As natural law, but upright man  
Seeks his divinity by inflicting pain.  
Delirious as these worried beasts, his wars  
Dance to the tightened carcass of a drum,  
While he calls courage still that native dread  
Of the white peace contracted by the dead.  
Again brutish necessity wipes its hands  
Upon the napkin of a dirty cause, again  
A waste of our compassion, as with Spain,  
The gorilla wrestles with the superman.  
I who am poisoned with the blood of both,  
Where shall I turn, divided to the vein?  
I who have cursed  
The drunken officer of British rule, how choose  
Between this Africa and the English tongue I love?  
Betray them both, or give back what they give?  
How can I face such slaughter and be cool?  
How can I turn from Africa and live?

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