

PART II. THE POET'S LIFE, CHARACTER AND ARTISTICAL

DEVELOPMENT

1858-1901.

AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
GIOVANNI PASCOLI
AND
ENGLISH AND FRENCH POETS

by
Mrs E. B. PENDLETON (née MOSS)

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GIOVANNI PASCOLI AND ENGLISH AND FRENCH POETS - ENGLISH AND FRENCH INSPIRATION IN HIS POETRY.

Part I: The poet's life, character and spiritual development, 1855-1891.

Life at Bologna, 1873-1882 - family tragedy - anarchism - Pascoli's sentimental mysticism begins to assert itself against the positivistic tendencies of his environment - cultural atmosphere of Bologna alien to him - spiritual isolation - condemnation of contemporary ideas. Affinities with Leopardi - differences in temperament and art - reasons why his inspiration could not have guided Pascoli to complete poetical expression - affinities between Pascoli and mystical romantic poets - interest in foreign literature - shares dominant characteristics of romanticism - differences between his qualities and ideals and those of many romantic poets. Foreign influence disputed by critics - inspiration of Poe and Galletti's assertion that Pascoli guided by him to foreign poets - evidence to support this theory.

Part II: Affinities and differences between Pascoli and English and French poets: possible reminiscences from their poetry.

Pascoli's conception of poetry, spontaneous expression of the poet's purest self revealed to him by emotion. Identification of "fanciullino" with "Imagination" of English romantic poets - found also in Baudelaire and Rimbaud - neo-platonism in Pascoli and other poets. Poetry of childhood in Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Coppée, Hugo and Pascoli. Broad conception of poetry - language - attitude towards nature. "Cosmic" poetry of Shelley, Lamartine, Byron, Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Hugo, Rimbaud - affinities, differences, possible reminiscences in Pascoli - preoccupation with evil in Pascoli and Hugo - obsession with death in Pascoli, Poe, Hugo, Baudelaire, Carducci, Maeterlinck - "romantic" atmosphere in Pascoli - mystic awe in poetry - Wordsworth. Poetry, objectified dreams in Pascoli, German, English and French poets. Mystery and super-

(2)

natural elements in Pascoli, Coleridge, Novalis, Baudelaire, French symbolists, Shelley, Poe, Maeterlinck, Hugo. Intuitions of mystery conveyed by symbol and music. Resemblance between Pascoli's use of symbolism and that of Rossetti and Hugo.

Conclusion

Pascoli has less affinity with French symbolists than with English romantic poets - nearest in spirit to Poe and Hugo - Pascoli's originality.

PART I: THE POET'S LIFE, CHARACTER AND SPIRITUAL

DEVELOPMENT

1855-1891.

The poetry of Giovanni Pascoli stands distinctly apart, not only from the general tendency of artistic ideals in Italy during the same period, but from all Italian literature.

He was born in 1855 at San Mauro di Romagna, the fourth child of a large family. His father was steward for the estate of the Prince Torlonia, and the poet's happy childhood was spent playing in the woods and fields round his home so that he early acquired a deep love and intimate knowledge of nature. Whilst still at school he distinguished himself for his remarkable prowess in classical studies, but although, but although later he became a scholar of international repute he never set much store by erudition in itself, retaining all his life the child-like simplicity which was one of his essential qualities.

Life at Bologna - 1873-1882: Family tragedy - anarchism: Pascoli's sentimental mysticism begins to assert itself against the positivistic tendencies of his environment.

He entered the University of Bologna in 1873, but he did

not discover the real nature of his own temperament - either as man or as poet - until some years after that date. At first his own modesty and lack of self-confidence prevented him from asserting his own individuality and breaking away from the uncongenial spiritual atmosphere with which he came into contact. In politics, philosophy and literary standards he accepted the opinions of his companions, although he became aware of a growing sense of dissatisfaction with them as time and events brought to light his true convictions and qualities.

On 10th August 1867 - a date which was to be forever printed indelibly on Pascoli's memory 1) his father had been murdered at the hands of an unknown assassin, and his tragic death was followed by the loss in quick succession of most of the poet's family, and a few years after, of his betrothed. This series of calamities must have had an overwhelming effect upon the young man's mind, especially as he possessed an abnormal sensibility, acutely responsive to every impression with which it came into contact. The fact that the murderer was never apprehended, added to the suspicion that he was being shielded by influence or bribes, filled him with a burning indignation at the unfair privileges of the rich and power-

1) Cf. X agosto (Myrica), etc.

ful. It was not surprising therefore that he joined the ranks of the Anarchist Party, then very active in Bologna, for his innate optimism and sentimental socialism led him naturally to identify his own dreams of a golden age, when all men should be equal, with the pre-marxist programme of the International, and for a time he probably found relief from his own turbulent feelings in the demonstrations perpetrated in the name of brotherhood and freedom. In one of these demonstrations during September 1879 he was arrested, and imprisoned until December of the same year, and it was probably during these three months of enforced solitude and leisure that he first realised how his sensitive, gentle nature instinctively shrank from any kind of violence, and he became aware that he was growing to hate the recent tendencies of the Anarchist Party which was gradually losing its former tone of idealistic communism and taking on a militant note with the impersonal rationalism of Marxist collectivism. This reaction may have been the first inkling which he received of the essential mysticism of his temperament which chafed against any kind of restraint imposed by the intellect. His painful awakening to self-knowledge seems to have begun only when he first really grasped the full implications of the tra-

gic train of events which had struck down his family leaving him desolate in an indifferent world. Up to this time he apparently had not realised the enormity of his loss, but now he would inevitably turn to the past bitterly contrasting his happy childhood surrounded by his family with the loneliness and poverty of his present life. In this state of mind he cannot bear the idea universally accepted by the prevailing positivistic trend of thought that death extinguishes the spirit with the body. In vain he tries to recapture the catholicism taught him by his mother, but this has been too much undermined by the scepticism with which he has come into contact for him ever to embrace again an accepted form of religion. In his gentleness, loving-kindness and in the austerity of his life he exemplifies many of the Christian ideals, but the criticism directed against the Church by anti-clerical groups, the lack of living faith in many of the priests and the sceptical attitude nourished by positivism had sapped the vitality of christianity in Italy so that it had become petrified into an unthinking acceptance of dogma or a mere observance of ritual. Pascoli would find no inspiration in the mediocre time-serving clergy of Bologna, and thus begins the life-long conflict between his intellect - forced to believe the dismal conclusions reached by scientific deduction - and his longing for faith. His mental anguish is increased by the thought of his mother's pain at his unbelief, for he is aware of her watching over him and she appeared to him once when his despair

had driven him to the point of suicide.

At first we may imagine him preoccupied exclusively with his own personal sorrow, but in time this continual brooding on sin and death would inevitably lead him to consider the origin and nature of evil and the destiny of man and the universe. His mystical tendencies and his precocious acquaintance with grief caused him to feel an impatient contempt for the prevalent facile satisfaction with the outward aspect of events and phenomena which failed to take into account the remote, intangible significance which often lies behind them. Pascoli's mysticism, however, was not strong enough to enable him to evolve a satisfying philosophy which would banish completely from his mind the positivistic theories which he had absorbed during his most impressionable years, so that the mystical aspirations which gain increasing ascendancy over his spirit never bring him to the peace of a lasting belief in any of the convictions which momentarily claim him. His complex and impressionable nature succumbs instantly and whole-heartedly to almost any form of mystical philosophy, but his faith in it is always of short duration, being founded on an instinctive and sentimental reaction rather than on a gradual and consistent progress of thought. Moreover his spirit inevitably rebels against any finite conclusion; for him the mystery in life is its most beautiful quality and he knew no greater joy than that which he experienced in savouring that mystery when at last he was able to reconcile his spiritual disquiet by giving it artistic expression.

It was many years, however, before he succeeded in creating the form of poetry which could adequately convey the essential quality of his complex inner life composed of over-whelming sensations and half-realised intuitions.

Cultural atmosphere of Bologna alien to Pascoli - spiritual isolation - condemnation of contemporary ideas in Italy - probability of foreign influences.

His first poems with their impersonal content and regular rhythm are colourless imitations of Carducci, the greatest Italian poet of the time. He had been one of Pascoli's professors at the University, and he had won the younger poet's lasting love and gratitude for his kindness during those difficult days. His influence was increased by the admiration which Pascoli naturally felt for his force of intellect and character, and for the energy and tenacity in which he himself was so deficient so that it was only gradually that he realised how profound was the spiritual gulf between them. Both were great poets with utterly diverse ideals: whereas Carducci's feelings and imagination were always controlled by the exercise of common sense and logical reasoning, Pascoli was liable to be carried away by the stream of sensations and visions which continually beset him. For him the poet is not a realist nor a stylist but a seer who follows the divine guidance of his instincts and gives spontaneous and musical expression to his feelings. According to this conception Carducci's poetical technique was not productive of "pure

poetry", and Pascoli expresses definite disapproval of his style when he himself had at last discovered the real nature of his own genius: "Il poeta e poeta" he protests "non oratore o predicatore, non filosofo, non maestro, non tribuno o demagogo, non uomo di stato o di corte. E nemmeno e, sia con pace del maestro, un artiere che foggia spade e scudi e vomeri; e nemmeno, con pace di tanti altri, un artista che nielli e cessori l'oro che altri gli porga. A costituire il poeta vale infinitamente piu il sentimento e la sua visione, che il modo col quale agli altri trasmette l'uno e l'altra." 1) True poetry is not the polished impersonal representation of reality: it is the incoherent cry of wonder of him who has preserved intact the fresh impressionability he possessed as a child so that he sees all things as new. Thus in his essay Il fanciullino which contains the essence of Pascoli's poetic doctrine he calls upon the Poet as: "il fanciullino eterno, che vede tutto con meraviglia, tutto come per la prima volta. L'uomo le cose interne ed esterne, non le vede come le vedi tu:" 2) Hence a real Poet is also a seer.

Pascoli's nebulous, mystical aspirations, his preoccupation with the unknown and perhaps most of all his general attitude of uncertainty must have been incomprehensible to the clear-cut minds of Carducci and of Saverino Ferrari whose serenity was unperturbed by the vague

1) Il fanciullino (Pensieri e discorsi, pp.29-30.

2) Op. cit., p. 13.

by the vague premonitions of the mystical mind. Thus Carducci declares that "la matura civiltà italiana non ammette volontieri il poeta nero, l'aedo" 1). These two poets, however, represent the best elements in the literature of the period and it was only gradually that he perceived that neither the vigorous trenchant manner of Carducci nor the impersonal classicism of Ferrari could ever succeed in expressing his fugitive intuitions of an intangible world beyond the concrete reality with which they were mainly concerned. His admiration for them and his intimate knowledge of their work is evident from the many reminiscences in the early Myricae, but they seem to have failed to appreciate his equally great gifts - his exquisite sensibility, his awareness of the mystery of life and the music of his verse. They regard him with affection as a "dolce spirito" 2) but at times Carducci even denies that he is a poet, and he is said to have thrown aside a book of his verses exclaiming "questa non è poesia!" For his part Pascoli scorned the general enthusiasm for minute biographical, bibliographical and historical research which had practically taken the place of aesthetic valuation of literature, and another factor which made him shun contemporary writers was his disgust at the pornographic witticisms with which Carducci and others

1) Saggio on G. Prati in: Bozzetti e scherme. Op. III, p. 393:
 (Quoted by Galletti, Op. cit., p. 169. Cf. also: Idillio maremmano (Rime nuove, L.V, LXVII):

"Meglio oprando obliar, senza indagarlo,
 Questo enorme mister de l'universo!"

2) Ave: In morte di G.P. (Odi barbare, L.11).

entertained literary gatherings in the Bologna coffee-houses: such use of poetical gifts must have seemed to him a sacrilege. His growing indifference to everything which the prevailing standards held to be of the first importance probably exasperated the erudite, pedantic circles of Bologna, and may have roused in them an antagonism and impatience of which Pascoli with his hypersensitive nature would be acutely aware and it was inevitable that such a critical atmosphere would have a disturbing effect upon him. Moreover his diffidence and extreme modesty probably helped to prolong this period when he was painfully groping towards a complete knowledge of himself. These obstacles could not, however, destroy his growing conviction that he possessed something which was lacking in even the greatest of his contemporaries.

During his first years at Bologna he had taken part in the rowdy college activities, but when he resumed his studies in 1880 he must have felt himself set apart from his fellow-students because of his tragic memories as well as by his alien temperament, while his antipathy towards every aspect of his cultural environment would drive him more and more within himself so as to escape from all the elements which disturbed his spiritual peace. In his voluntary renunciation of all worldly contacts we sense in him a feeling that he possessed hidden within him a

precious and divine gift which he was not yet ready to bring forth. This he must guard jealously from the contaminating touch of the world and he calls poetry itself "custode d'un segreto tesoro di lagrime e sorrisi" 1). We can imagine his sense of frustration as he felt it pulsating within him athirst for sensation and mystery, striving for the harmony which he was as yet unable to give it. We realise his immense difficulty in finding the exact poetical tone capable of reproducing the imaginary world which was becoming more real to him than his actual surroundings when we consider that twelve years were to elapse between his imprisonment in 1879, when he may be said to have caught his first glimpse of himself, and the publication of his first book of poems. The reason for this slow poetical development must have been that his poetical genre was completely alien from the tradition of Italian poetry, for in the following passages he states that the ideals of his native literature are absolutely false. Thus he says contemptuously: "In Italia la pseudopoesia si desidera, si domanda, s'ingiunge. In Italia noi siamo vittime della storia letteraria!" He admits that these mistaken notions have taken root elsewhere, but asserts that Italy has strayed farthest from the right path: "Per vero, ne in Italia soltanto, mi pare che delle lettere si sia ingenerato un concetto falso. Le lettere sono gli stru-

1) Il fanciullino, p. 13.

menti delle idee, e le idee fanno di se tanti gruppi che si chiamano scienze. Ma noi, fissati sugli strumenti, abbiamo finalmente dimenticato i fini. Siamo agricoltori che non pensano se non alle vanghe e non parlano se non di aratri, e più delle loro bellurie che delle loro utilità. Delle semente, della terra, dei concimi, non ci curiamo più. Quindi avviene che abbiamo, come fisici, filosofi, storici, matematici, così letterati..... E almeno li facessero essi, codesti strumenti: no, li "giudicano" e li "collezionano". Codest'ozio noi chiamiamo ora critica e storia letteraria..... Ma c'è pure, tra le tante branche della letteratura, la poesia che sta a se, la poesia che comprende in se tutto ciò che si dice e scrive per diletto.... Questa non è rispetto alle scienze quello che lo strumento rispetto al fine..... E, poniamo, la coltivazione, affatto nativa, della psiche primordiale e perenne. Ma noi la mettiamo insieme con l'altra letteratura "strumentale", e ne ragioniamo allo stesso modo. La dividiamo per secoli e scuole, la chiamiamo arcadica, romantica, classica, veristica, naturalistica, idealistica, e via dicendo..... ne c'è poesia arcadica, romantica,... ma poesia soltanto, soltanto poesia, e non poesia. Sì: c'è la contraffazione, la sofisticazione, l'imitazione della poesia, Ma in Italia, e altrove, non stiamo paghi a questo compendio.

Ragionamo e distinguiamo troppo.La poesia benefica è la poesia pura, la quale di rado si trova. In Italia poi, che è la mia patria,....in Italia è più rara che altrove. Invero non mai da noi fu amata la poesia elementare e spontanea. Come in genere la nostra letteratura, così in ispecie la nostra poesia ha avuto innanzi se dei modelli. Noi abbiamo specchiato il nostro stile nell'arte latina, come i latini avevano fatto coi greci. Ciò può aver giovato a dare concretezza e maestà alle nostre scritture; ma quanto a poesia, ciò l'ha soffocata; la poesia non si fa sui libri. Poi amiamo troppo l'ornamentazione; e questo gusto lo dimostriamo specialmente in ciò che meno lo comporta: nella poesia:....Noi vogliamo farci sempre onore:.... E anche più che a noi, badiamo al pubblico....e così facciamo tutto senza garbo e senza scioltezza....Perciò la nostra poesia (per chiamarla così) è per lo più d'imitazione, anzi di collezione, e sa di lucerna, non di guazza e d'erba fresca. Noi studiamo troppo, per poetare;" 1)

The above passages contain the germ of the romantic rebellion which had shaken France and England during the early part of the century, but which had not taken such firm root in Italy where the defects most strongly condemned by Pascoli and the early romantics had again crept back. One cannot help noticing that

1) Cf. Il Fanciullino, pp. 33-38. Cf. also Patria e umanità, pp. 61 and 190.

the qualities which according to Pascoli are essential for the production of true poetry are those which were most highly esteemed by the first romantic thinkers - complete naturalness and simplicity, and unstudied spontaneity. These qualities he fails to find in Italian poetry and in the above passages there is a sort of unspoken comparison between Italian poets and other poets - presumably foreign poets, and we must conclude that, having at last acknowledged his complete lack of sympathy for the tone of Italian writing he began to read more and more deeply in foreign literature where he would find that the perfect expression of qualities and ideals identical to his own had the effect of shedding a light through the confusion which for so long had obscured his mind. To those who will demand why his genius could not reach full fruition without guidance from other poets we would say that: (i) his deficiency in intellectual power and original thought would cause him to be worsted in any aesthetic discussion by the logical reasoning of his contemporaries; (ii) his deprecatory nature and humility would hinder his departure from the accepted standards and (iii) these defects were undoubtedly aggravated by his poverty, his humble birth and his grief which, it seems, had permanently bruised his spirit, sapping his vitality to such an extent that he feels a continual desire for rest, for quiet, for solitude; it had also the effect of rendering him incapable of the zest and the virile intensity which we enjoy in most poets. We cannot

wonder, however, that Pascoli never completely recovered from his early experience of death when we consider that the short span of his most impressionable years had been filled with as much grief as most men have to bear at scattered intervals during the course of a long life-time, but his joy and relief at the discovery of his own secret convictions boldly declared by poets of the first rank would give him the courage to admit to himself, and later to the world, that his ideals were not those of his native literature, and the example of those poets with whom he had the deepest affinity - probably the early French and English romantic poets - would give him the self-confidence which gradually succeeded in dispelling all his doubts and uncertainty, guiding him to a full recognition of the essential nature of his genius and showing him the means whereby he could give it adequate artistic expression.

Affinities with Leopardi - differences in temperament and art - reasons why his inspiration would not have been sufficient to guide Pascoli to full poetical expression. Affinities with mystical romantic poets.

The only Italian poet whose spirit was in any way akin to that of Pascoli was Leopardi for whom he had a great admiration, as we may see from the following passage where he says:-

"Ripensavo le sue notti. Ecco una notte tormentata dalla tempesta: a un tratto non più tuoni, non più vento: buio e silenzio. Un'altra: una notte buia: la luna sorge dal mare e illumina un campo di battaglia tutto ancora vibrante del fracasso del giorno: gli uccelli dormono, e appena rosseggerà il tetto della capanna, gorgheggeranno come al solito. Un'altra ancora: una notte illuminata: la luna tramonta, spariscono le mille ombre "e una Oscurità la valle e il monte imbruna (1) e il carrettiere saluta con un melanconico stornello l'ultimo raggio. Oh! i canti e i rumori notturni! il fanciullo che non può dormire, e ode un canto "per li sentieri Lontanando morire a poco a poco", o mentre sospira il mattino, sente, portato dal vento, il suono dell'ora! Nessuno in Italia, prima e dopo il Leopardi, rappresentò così bene l'estasi di una notte estiva:

(1) Il tramonto della luna, lines 13-14.

"..tacito, seduto in verde zolla,
 Delle sere io solea passar gran parte
 Mirando il cielo, ed ascoltando il canto
 della rana rimota alla campagna!
 E la lucciola errava appo le siepi
 E in su l'aiole, sussurrando al vento
 I viali odorati, ed i cipressi
 Là nella selva; e sotto al patrio tetto
 Sonavan voci alterne e le tranquille
 Opere dei servi." 1)

E nessuno meglio sentiva la poesia d'un risvegliarsi in campagna al picchierellare sui vetri della pioggia mattutina; e nessuno esprime meglio il riprendere della vita dopo un temporale: lo schiamazzar di galline, il grido dell'erbaiuolo..." 2). In fact he admires in Leopardi the acute sensibility which he himself possessed and which both poets shared with the English and French romantic poets, and when he declares that no Italian poet can vie with him in evoking the atmosphere of renewed life after a storm we cannot help wondering if he is thinking of Wordsworth who often describes such scenes 3), and perhaps he is tacitly comparing this picture of a summer evening with "les tièdes voluptés des nuits mélancholiques" of Musset 4); with the wonderful Song in Tennyson's Princess:

"Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white"

- 1) Le ricordanze.
- 2) Il sabato: Pensieri e discorsi, p. 61.
- 3) Cf. Ecclesiastical sketches, VII, Recovery.
- 4) Musset, Nuit de

or with Choses du soir 1) which is so very similar to Pascoli's L'Avemaria 2). He would find also incomparable moonlit nights in Shelley and Byron. In the same essay Pascoli writes that Leopardi "rappresenta a noi cose vedute e udite in un giorno, anzi in un'ora: e bene le rappresenta, come non sollevano i poeti italiani del suo tempo e dei tempi addietro" 3).

Pascoli's admiration for Leopardi almost makes us wonder whether it was not after all he, rather than foreign poets, who revealed the true quality of the younger poet to himself, but although they have such a great deal in common, Pascoli's temperament is much nearer to that of the French and English romantic poets than to that of Leopardi. Moreover Pascoli's appreciation of his poetry is sometimes tempered by a tone of criticism which is absent from his unstinted praise of the English poets. 4) For instance he disapproves of his having put roses and violets in the same bouquet 5) saying that "il poeta così nuovo cade - va in un errore tanto comune alla poesia italiana anteriore a lui: l'errore dell'indeterminatezza, per la quale, a modo d'esempio, sono generalizzati gli ulivi e i

1) Hugo L'art d'être grand-père.

2) La sementa (Primi poemetti).

3) Op. cit., p. 58.

4) Cf. p. 15.

5) Cf. Il sabato del villaggio.

cipressi col nome di alberi, i giacinti e i rosolacci con quello di fiori, le capinere e i falchetti con quello di uccelli. Errore d'indeterminatezza che si alterna con l'altro del falso 1) But even Pascoli's passion for exactitude must have been satisfied by the minute descriptions of Wordsworth and Tennyson whose representations of natural objects are characterised by the scientific accuracy which is found in Pascoli himself, and if he ever read any of the works of Scott he would have found there also the same meticulous observation of even the smallest natural phenomena.

There is at least one instance, however, where it is possible that Pascoli may have been inspired by the philosophy of Leopardi, for, seeing that he was admittedly weak in the power of independent, abstract thought, it is probable that the philosophical theories he considers often had their origin in the mind of others: both poets were convinced of the necessity for men to band themselves together in fraternal love against the blind, inimical forces of mystery and the universe; but even here, we must take into account that this idea is one that Pascoli might have been led to naturally by his intense preoccupation with mystery. All the same, reading Pascoli's exposition of this theory in *Il ciocco* 2)

1) *Op. cit.*, pp. 59 and 60.

2) Canti di Castelvecchio.

we have a definite impression that this poem was directly inspired by La ginestra, for besides the similarity in the content the poems contain several identical motifs - that of the ants for example. Notwithstanding the external similarity, when we examine the reaction of each poet toward the possibility that death is probably the end of all things we see how great is the difference between the stoic resignation of Leopardi and the much less virile temper of Pascoli who seeks refuge from this terrifying possibility in a series of spasmodic and incoherent alternatives.

The spiritual development of Leopardi consists of a constant and logical progress towards extreme pessimism; in Pascoli, however, there is, as we have seen, 1) no definite spiritual growth, and his attitude towards almost every aspect of life is characterised by a continual uncertainty. The conception of nature in Leopardi, on the other hand, seems to have taken shape in his mind very early in his poetical development, only gaining in intensity to reach its climax in La ginestra. In one of his early odes - Alla primavera - we get the impression that at first Leopardi believed nature to be kindly disposed towards humanity, so that Zumbini perceives an affinity between him and foreign

1) Cf. p.5.

2) Zumbini; Il poeta e il Leopardi, 1902, I, 254 seq.

3) La ginestra.

4) La ginestra.

5) Leopardi's Prefaces to Lyrics and Primi poemetti with Il cielo and Pascoli a sera (Canta di Castelnuovo).

poets - Wordsworth, Keats, Shelley, Platen, etc. 1). Piccoli 2) contradicts this theory, pointing out that even here Leopardi adheres to his usual idea of nature, and he sees her beauty only as a false show put on to deceive men as to her real character, to make them forget that she is still

"...veramente rea...dei mortali
.....madre in parto ed in voler matrigna." 3)

But Pascoli's conception varies: sometimes he sees nature as full of love for humanity; other times as indifferent - even cruel 4). In the preface to the Primi poemetti, however, he definitely repudiates Leopardi's conception: "Perchè in ciò riconoscere un atroce sgarbo della matrigna Natura, che il poco bene che ci dà, ci dia solo a patto di male? Io dico: O Madre Natura, siano grazie a te che anche dal male ricavi per noi il bene."

This profound difference of outlook is accompanied by an equally great difference in style, seen most clearly when the subject is identical as in the description of the ants in Il ciocco and La ginestra. Pascoli loves to create minute sketches filled with a mass of detail which sometimes makes the reader forget the main subject - a method which is the opposite to that of Leopardi who evokes a complete image in a few masterly strokes, 5).

1) Zumbini, B. Studi sul Leopardi, 1902, I, 264 seq.

2) I canti. Paravia, 1924, p.63.

3) La ginestra.

4) Compare prefaces to Myricae and Primi poemetti with Il ciocco and Passeri a sera (Canti di Castelvecchio).

5) Cf. La quiete dopo la tempesta etc.

Besides these differences in outlook and manner there is also a marked contrast between the actual language used by these two poets, for whereas the poetry of Leopardi is characterised by the grandeur of classical simplicity and sometimes becomes rather too didactic in tone, Pascoli's verse possesses another kind of simplicity - the naive spontaneity of the "Fanciullino" whose spasmodic utterances sometimes descend to puerility, but which possess that musical suggestiveness which alone has the power to express Pascoli's inner life of sensation and mystery - elements which are either entirely absent or held under control in Leopardi, who, far from being almost overcome by them as Pascoli and some of the romantics were, regards them scornfully as "ameni inganni" whose sole justification was the function of consoling those weaker spirits who, unlike him, were unable to bear the contemplation of what he knew to be the terrible truths of life. How Pascoli's heart must have contracted in horror at the hopeless pessimism of Leopardi's philosophy, and with what joy and relief he would drink in the healing optimism of Wordsworth's unshakable faith in a divine and beneficent spirit whose invisible presence informs all being, while we know from his own words 1) that he was

1) Cf. p. 15.

deeply impressed by the way in which Shelley's ethereal imagination pictures the whole universe as interpenetrated with the Spirit of Love! Pascoli may also have derived comfort from the christian mysticism of Lamartine, although he would not have been able to share the ever-increasing faith in a Supreme Being, which in Lamartine was strengthened by that mysticism, and he must have felt an ardent admiration at the persistence with which Baudelaire and Tennyson wrestle unceasingly with the sin and scepticism in their own souls until at last they attain to a firm belief in the divinity and immortality of the spirit. On reading the works of these poets Pascoli would perceive in them that spiritual liberty which he himself needed so much, but which he would not find in any Italian poet - not even in Leopardi - and probably he would never have fully realised his need of it had he not become acquainted with the mystical poets of romanticism of which he himself became the only representative in Italy. As Galletti writes:-

"La mistica liberazione, ecco il sogno di tutte le anime nelle quali la vita sveglia sensazioni così intense che sembra loro di poter ricreare ex novo il mondo, le sue parvenze e le sue riposte armonie: ecco il fantasticato ritorno dell'uomo alle sue origini, fuori degli schemi fissati dall'intelletto, fuori

delle tradizioni e delle formule, fuori della storia, alle sorgenti dell'illusione e della favola, là ove l'umanità si confonde colla natura, è una colla vita delle cose. Pochi artisti hanno sentito più intensamente del Pascoli questo impulso come fosse una legge del loro istinto vitale, e per tale carattere egli esce dalla tradizione della nostra poesia e dalla schiera dei nostri maggiori poeti per ricongiungersi al gruppo di quei solitari sognatori che rappresentano l'estrema sinistra del romanticismo europeo, al Novalis, al Poe, a D.G. Rossetti, al Verlaine, al Maeterlinck. Poiché fu certo il romanticismo che liberò le anime di tali poeti dal carcere dell'intellettualismo classico ed aperse innanzi a loro il campo dell'arte." 1)

We see from the above passage that not only did Pascoli break away from the clear-cut tradition of Italian literature by giving expression to the transcendental tendencies which he shared with all romantic poets, but that he finally became one of the "artist-dreamer" poets, who feel themselves to be alien from the world of concrete reality, for, like them, he found that only by giving full rein to his love of sensation, image and

1) Galletti, Op. cit. pp.46-47.

rhythm was he able to enjoy for a moment the peace and harmony which resolved the inner conflict between his positivistic education and classical background on the one hand and his romantic, mystical aspirations on the other.

Evidence of Pascoli's interest in foreign literature - He possesses the dominant characteristics of romanticism - important differences between his qualities and ideals and those of many romantic and symbolist poets.

In determining the extent to which foreign poets took part in the poetical development of Pascoli, we must first establish the fact that his interest in foreign literature ranged over a very wide field, and this we know from the list he cites in L'era nuova 1) to show that the nineteenth century is rich not only in great scientific discoveries but also in poetry. "Come", he exclaims, "non sono poeti Goethe, Shelley, Tennyson, Byron, Lamartine, Hugo, Musset? Zorrilla e Campoamor, Manzoni, Leopardi, Carducci, Mickiewitz e Tolstoi? He knew something also of the Vyasa and Val'nomšanon for "vecchio e l'aedo... vecchio e Ossian, vecchi molti degli skaldi". Ossian he would read in Macpherson's adaptations which had spread throughout Europe since 1761. His mention of these poets and his masterly translations

1) Pensieri e discorsi, p. 117

from foreign works do no more than show his interest in them, but his own words recorded by Briganti prove that he was fully aware of the deep affinities which existed between himself and the poets of English romanticism. He records how "Il Pascoli mi parlò della letteratura inglese - gustava la squisita cesellatura dell'arte impeccabile del Wordsworth, di cui ammirava il profondo sentimento della natura, e soprattutto dello Shelley, di cui sentiva, oltre lo splendore alato delle immagini, il commosso anelito al Bene. Mi parlava della sua antologia ove avrebbero trovato posto anche poeti stranieri ma principalmente poeti inglesi del secolo scorso che gli sembravano i più vicini al suo sentimento 1).

Orvieto states that "i suoi favoriti erano i poeti del romanticismo francese - Victor Hugo, de Musset, Leconte de Lisle, Alfred de Vigny" 2). According to Arullani "il Pascoli appartiene alla gloriosa schiera francese di Victor Hugo, Leconte de Lisle e Sully Prudhomme" 3); without mentioning any particular poet Bulferetti calls him "Cultore amoroso di poeti diversissimi - Nutrito di studi svariati" 4), while Serra observes that "gran parte dei suoi canti...è fiorita sul margine dei libri altrui come una trasfigurazione e fantastica e simbolica... Poichè questo e non altro sono molti ramoscelli delle Myricae, e tutto, o quasi, il gruppo dei Conviviali. 5), while the same

- 1) Briganti, Gabriele: Testimonianze e valutazioni pascoliane, p. 190.
- 2) Orvieto, Angelo, Il Pascoli e i suoi amici, p.118.
- 3) Arullani, V.A., Il poeta Giovanni Pascoli, 1903, p.9.
- 4) Bulferetti, Domenico, Uomini d'Italia - Giovanni Pascoli, pp.377-378
- 5) Serra, Renato, Scritti critici, 1919, p.34

critic speaks of Pascoli's poetry as "la più profonda e la più nuova poesia del nostro tempo, calling him "l'unico che l'Italia possa mettere accanto ai Verlaine e ai Rimbaud e ai Kipling delle altre nazioni agli inventori e ai creatori di canti." 1)

Another indication of Pascoli's familiarity with foreign works is the presence in his poetry of a great number of reminiscences, some of which may be fortuitous. A certain proportion of them, however, are without doubt remembrances from other poets, although the use of motifs, phrases or images for which Pascoli was indebted to another poet is no reason for supposing that he necessarily received from him any kind of spiritual guidance, especially when they have little else in common, for, with his supersensitive year, Pascoli is naturally liable to assimilate very easily the style of another writer, and, as Galletti observes, he possesses "grande attitudine ad assimilare le forme stilistiche degli scrittori, un'agile maestria..... nell'impadronirsi dell'arte o della maniera propria di questo o di quel poeta e nel rifarla con baldanza...virtuosità grande" 2)

That Pascoli was apt to assimilate the style of poets with whom he had little spiritual affinity is proved by the number of reminiscences from Carducci and Severino Ferrari in the early *Myricae*.

1) Le lettere, 1920, p. 44

2) Galletti, Alfredo, Op. cit., p. 39: Cf. also: Valentin, Albert, Giovanni Pascoli, p. 415.

The list of reminiscences compiled by Vischi 1) also contains references to writers with whom he had little in common, while his poetry abounds in adaptations and translations from the classical writers 2) which was only to be expected seeing that he was one of the greatest classical scholars of his age. His point of view, however, and the atmosphere of his poetry is completely diverse from that of the literature of classical antiquity. We are not, therefore, justified in supposing that Pascoli may have been guided to the fulfilment of his genius by any poet who has not only left traces of his inspiration in the shape of reminiscences, but with whom Pascoli has also deep spiritual affinities.

Pascoli's own words, however, 3) prove that he was aware of his deep affinities with the English romantic poets, while the following shows that he possesses the main qualities and ideals of romanticism as it appeared to one of the most eminent French critics:-

"Le romantisme (et c'est là sa grandeur) est tout traversé de frissons métaphysiques: Où allons nous? la mort? Qu'y a-t-il au delà?..de là le caractère éminent de son lyrisme, qui

1) Vischi, Luciano, Reminiscenze e imitazioni nella letteratura italiana durante la seconda metà del Sec. XIX, 1911, Vol. IX. p. 100. .

2) Cf. Zilliacus, Emil, Giovanni Pascoli et l'antiquité.

3) Cf. p. 25.

dans l'expansion sentimentale et dans les tableaux pittoresques, nous propose des méditations ou des symboles de l'universel ou de l'inconnaissable.....le romantisme est une littérature où domine le lyrisme - et lyrisme est d'abord l'expansion de l'individualisme: nous sommes facilement et constamment individuels non pas par les idées de notre intelligence mais par les phénomènes de notre sensibilité. Ces phénomènes sont de deux sortes:

i) Des sentiments d'amour et d'espérance de haine et de désespérance, d'enthousiasme et de mélancolie:

ii) Des sensations:

Parmi nos sensations:

a) Les unes sont représentatives de l'univers et sont les matériaux avec lesquels nous construisons le monde extérieur dont nous portons en nous l'image.

b) Les autres ne sont pas représentatives, comme certaines sensations musculaires, et pour la plupart des hommes, les sensations d'odorat et de gout. Ces dernières les romantiques en abandonneront l'expression à leurs successeurs....." 1)

The limitation contained in M. Lanson's last words does not apply to Pascoli for he had a great deal in common with the symbolist poets: he, like many of them, was primarily a man of sensation

1) Lanson, Gustave. Histoire de la littérature française.

with a sense of smell as highly developed as that of Baudelaire, and he shares with almost every poet of symbolism his intense awareness and love of mystery, for the transcendental tendencies remarkable in the first phase of romanticism are even more evident in the symbolists.

His many affinities with the foreign romantic poets are, accompanied by equally striking differences and Pascoli gives the impression of having unconsciously absorbed only as much of their spirit as he needed to strengthen his own inclinations and convictions, rejecting those elements which he found incompatible with his own temperament. The same originality is to be seen in the way in which even direct reminiscences in his poetry give the impression of having been completely assimilated so that, having lain dormant in the poet's mind, they rise again to the surface, to be reproduced, perhaps unconsciously, when they have acquired the particular savour which characterises all his poetry. Again, although the Canzone di Re Enzo and other poems of an epic nature may have been suggested to Pascoli by the outwardly similar works of Chateaubriand (Génie de christianisme); of Hugo (Légende des siècles); of Leconte de Lisle (Poèmes antiques); Banville (Les exilés); Heredia (Les trophées);¹⁾ Vigny (Poèmes antiques et modernes).²⁾ He does not conform to the early romantic manner of accurate reproduction of "couleur locale"

1) Cf. Valentin

and historical data. The historical and classical themes of the Odi e inni and the Poemi conviviali are interpreted symbolically, and the real significance of the poetry lies in the secondary meaning which we sense behind every word and every action of these traditional characters.

Another example of Pascoli's divergence from the opinions of many romantic poets is his admiration for science which is probably due to the persistence in his mind of his belief in positivistic ideas. Most of the poets of romanticism deplore modern advances in science which, they believe, have the effect of forcing the poet to see the world by the "light of common day" and not by the -

"Light that never was on sea or land" 1)
 "Down with Newton!" cries Keats,
 ".....Do not all charms fly" he declares,
 At the mere touch of cold philosophy?

 Philosophy will clip an angel's wings,
 Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
 Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine -
 Unweave a rainbow" 2)

and Poe writes his disparaging

"Sonnet to science"

"Science! true daughter of Old Time thou art!
 Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
 Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
 Vulture, whose wings are dull realities?"

- 1) Wordsworth, Stanzas on a picture of Peele Castle in a storm.
- 2) Lamia, Part II, ll. 229-237.

How should he love thee? or how deem wise,
 Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
 To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
 Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing?
 Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car?
 And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
 To seek a shelter in some happier star?
 Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
 The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
 The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree?"

Sully Prudhomme also finds that science sheds no light on the mystery of life and death. 1)

Other romantic and symbolist poets - Coleridge, Rossetti, Verlaine and Maeterlinck - go a step further and ignore its very existence, and it is noticeable that this hatred of science seems strongest in the very poets with whom Pascoli has most in common. It is true that Shelley is enthralled by the

".....murmurings
 Of the unsealed springs
 Where Science bedews her Daedal wings." 2)

and it was only natural that the vigorous and adventurous spirit of Verhaeren should be stirred by contemporary activities in the realms of scientific discovery and industry, but Pascoli's conception of the role of Science in the life of men is of a very different nature, for the benefits which Science confer on humanity are, according to him, spiritual rather than material. Pascoli's admiration for science is bound up with

1) Cf. Sur la mort IV, and Defaillance et scrupule II (Les vaines tendresses).

his religion - with that utopian vision of his where he saw all men and all nations united in brotherhood and love as the result of an inner regeneration which could be brought about only by rendering them fully conscious of the awful powers of mystery and death which surround them; making them realise that death is the end of all things. Science can play an important part in this spiritual renewal by awakening in man a salutary sense of his own mortality, by revealing to him with each new discovery the unprobed depths of the universe yet to be explored, thus rousing him to complete knowledge of his own insignificance and finally by increasing the material amenities of life which give him more leisure in which to brood over the great problems of his destiny. Thus Pascoli writes:-

"La scienza ha ricondotto le nostre menti alla tristezza del momento tragico dell'uomo; del momento in cui acquistando la coscienza d'essere mortale, differì istantaneamente, dalla sua muta greggia che non sapeva di dover morire e restò più felice di lui. Il bruto diventò uomo, quel giorno. E l'uomo differì dal bruto per l'ineffabile tristezza della sua scoperta."

He goes on to say that at first the discovery that there is nothing beyond the grave would bring joy and relief to the

wicked, but that in the long run they would be more terrified of the Nothingness of death than of any definite punishment which they could undergo in an afterlife - "Oh! tutto tutto tutto, mi pare che dica lo scellerato, fuorchè l'annullamento!incancellabile! irreparabile! eterno!"

Questa è la luce. La scienze in ciò è benefica, in cui si proclama fallita. Essa ha confermata la sanzione della morte. Ha risuggellate le tombe. He trovato, credo, che non si può libare il nettare della vita con Giove in cielo. Il rimprovero che le si fa, è il suo vanto....." When man becomes aware of his fate he will be filled with sorrow and will turn in pity to his neighbour and all enmity will cease "E sarà dunque una religione, la religione anzi, che scioglierà il nodo che sembra ora insolubile. La religione: non questa o quella in cui il terrore dell'infinito sia o consolato o temperato o annullato, ma la religione prima e ultima, cioè il riconoscimento e la venerazione del nostro destino." 1)

Pascoli may have noticed that Wordsworth also dreamed of a collaboration between the Scientist and the Poet -

"If the labours of Men of Science" he writes "should ever create any natural revolution, direct or indirect, in our

1) L'era nuova (Pensieri e discorsi) pp. 123-126.

condition, and in the impressions which we habitually receive, the Poet will sleep then no more than at present; he will be ready to follow the steps of the Man of Science, not only in those general indirect effects, but he will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of Science itself." 2).

This interest in science, combined with the latin good sense bequeathed to him by his peasant forebears, long rooted in Romagna - most latin of all Italian provinces - and still further developed by his rich classical education, may account for the moderation and clarity which governs his attitude towards many tendencies which form an integral part of the romantic tradition.

One of the fundamental ideas of romanticism is a belief in the ultimate perfectibility of man. From the Renaissance onwards the increasing ascendancy of humanistic trends of thought has favoured this assumption which has been accompanied by a corresponding weakening of faith in the dogma of Original Sin. Hence the tendency of post-renaissance thinkers to ignore the effect produced upon human nature by man's initial fall, thereby denying the essential imperfectibility

1) Preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads.

of all earthly creations.

This point of view reached its culmination with the assumption held by Jean-Jacques Rousseau and his followers who declared that man had only to be guided by his instincts, and, casting off the false conventions and restrictions imposed upon him by civilisation, lead a simple life in the heart of nature to attain to complete perfection and happiness.

Pascoli participates in these ideas, but only up to a point. He shares the romantic faith in the great spiritual benefit which can be derived from a life spent alone in close intimacy with nature, but he cannot rest satisfied that man can succeed in eradicating all evil from the earth and from his own soul simply by reverting to his primitive state. He shares also the romantic belief in progress, but states that the only way to bring about a state of universal peace and happiness is by the regeneration of each individual soul by fostering in all men feelings of love and pity towards their fellows. As we have seen 1) he believes that this state of mind can only come about when man is made to realise the full significance of death. When we realise that, he says, "saremo più buoni. E saremo anche più mesti... Quella sarà... la povera e melanconica

1) Cf. p. 32.

palingenesi che sola può toccare a questi poveri e melanconici esseri..." 1). How different from Rousseau's theory!

In his preoccupation with death, mystery and the subconscious, and in the suggestive musicality and impressionism of his poetry Pascoli realises the ideals of the symbolists: in the first poets of English romanticism he must have recognised his own delicate responsive sensibility seeking in the solitude of nature an atmosphere where his genius could flower undisturbed by the distractions of civilisation: he is in complete accord with the rebellion of all the early romantic poets against the stilted artificiality, the slavish imitation and the pedantic restrictions of the literary standards of the preceding century, and he must have rejoiced at the challenge which the Preface to Cromwell had flung in the face of French literary tradition. He is not entirely in agreement, however, with Hugo, for instead of accepting absolutely the French viewpoint which sees the ugly and grotesque as equally suitable for artistic treatment as beauty he writes:-

1) L'era nuova, pp. 125-126.

"si trova....che impoetico è ciò che la morale riconosce cattivo e ciò che l'estetica proclama brutto....il fanciullo.... come narrando le imprese dei suoi eroi...e figurando a noi, per esempio, i loro cavalli, e ridicendo che brucavano e sudavano e spumavano, pur non dice mai....che stallavano; così della nostra anima non racconta che il buono e della visione non ricorda che il bello." 1).

Moreover he expresses unqualified disapproval for one aspect of modern poetry which is predominant in the French nineteenth century poets:-

"Non sono gli amori, non sono le donne, per belle e dee che siano, che premono ai fanciulli; si le aste bronzee e i carri da guerra e i lunghi viaggi e le grandi traversie. Così codeste cose narrava al vecchio Omero il suo fanciullino, piuttosto che le bellezze della Tindaride e le voluttà della dea della notte e della figlia del sole." Pascoli evidently wishes to emphasize this point so he adds the following footnote:-

"Non solo i poeti moderni, così assolutamente fissati sull'amore e sulla donna, ma anche gli antichi poeti tragici e persino i poeti corali immediatamente successivi alla poesia epica, si diedero a colorire l'elemento femminile ed erotico dei poemi omerici. E le donne designate e mentovate in essi

1) Fanciullino, pp. 27-28.

poemi, non bastarono, e se ne crearono di nuove. Ciò accrebbe l'interesse drammatico del ciclo, ma segna in esso la diminuzione di essenza poetica. Così Orlando innamorato e furioso per amore è più drammatico, ma meno poetico di Rolando nella Canzone."

1).

The only love-poetry we have of Pascoli besides La tessitrice 2) - a tender and nostalgic record of the love which belongs to early youth - are one or two outbreaks of crude eroticism 3) and a few fragments in the first Myricae such as the poems to the "reginella" and the last verse of l'ultimo canto:

"Canta una sfogliatrice a piena gola;
Amor comincia con canti e con suoni
e poi finisce con lacrime al cuore."

This may be a reminiscence of Wordsworth's Highland girl, although Vischi records it in his list as an echo of The Tuscan "rispetto"

"L'amor comincia con suoni e con canti
E poi finisce con dolori e pianti"

or

"L'amor comincia con pianti e con suoni
E poi finisce con pianti e dolori." 4).

1) Ibid. pp. 4-5

2) Canti di Castelvecchio.

3) Il sogno della vergine (Canti di Castelvecchio; Il chiu (Nuovi poemetti) which may be a reminiscence of Baudelaire: A celle qui est trop gaie (Les epaves).

There is nothing in his poetry to equal the wonderful portrayal of sensual delight in Les fleurs du mal; the aching regret of La tristesse d'Olympio and the elegies of Lamartine or the bitter torment of Musset's Souvenir and Nuits, so that we must conclude that after the loss of his betrothed Pascoli deliberately shut this element out of his life.

Influence of foreign poets disputed by critics.

When Pascoli had at last found the means to express his essential spirit we see a poet who is intrinsically romantic, but who cannot embrace all the important ideals of romanticism, for he was never able to quiet the spiritual unrest which urges him to make continual but useless efforts to reconcile his romantic impulses with the scruples of his intellect. The very urgency of this mental anguish, however, produces in his poetry a most original tone of profound emotion and piercing sincerity, and it is therefore not surprising that by reason of this trait alone, his individuality always stands out distinctly even from those poets with whom he had many deep affinities, and from those who contributed most towards helping him to discover the true quality of his art.

Pascoli's debt to these, however, is considerable, although some critics have attempted to belittle the extent of

foreign influence upon his artistic development during the formative years at Bologna. Thus Borgese cautions critics against exaggerating his acquaintance with foreign literature by drawing their attention to the fact that he "sentiva una certa antipatia per la storia letteraria e non era istruito intorno ai recentissimi movimenti ideologici e letterari come il D'Annunzio." 1). Valentin, also, speaking of the possibility of his having been influenced by the symbolists, and admitting that his translations from Poe, Tennyson, Shelley, Wordsworth and Victor Hugo are proof of his acquaintance with foreign poets, adds a similar warning:- "Est-il suffisant pour parler d'influences? Remarquons que Pascoli a traduit de meme de nombreux passages d'auteurs anciens, chants populaires bretons, les extraits de la Chanson de Roland... Il semble bien que nous avons la les traces de ses lectures plutot que des preuves d'une filiation spirituelle. Gardons-nous d'accorder à ces faits une valeur exagérée et d'en tirer des conclusions hâtives. On risquerait de prendre pour une influence d'école une parenté d'esprit" and commenting on the deep affinity between Pascoli, and Maeterlinck and the English and German symbolist poets he says:- "Il ne peut donc être

1) Borgese, G.A., Idee e forme di G. Pascoli in La vita e
 libro, Serie 3a, Torino, 1913, p. 467; quoted by Gal-
 p. 56.

question entre ces deux poètes que d'affinité d'âme. C'est à quoi se réduisent probablement les relations entre Pascoli et les symbolistes anglais ou allemands." 1) The writer concludes by expressing himself in agreement with the views of Borgese and of Croce, who, though he contemptuously dubs Pascoli "piccolo-grande poeta" 2) fully recognises his originality in a note which he adds to Vischi's list of Pascoli's borrowings published in La critica. Here he denies that Pascoli's owed anything to foreign influence:- "quale sia il giudizio che per altri rispetti si faccia del suo valore, il Pascoli è un poeta che non ha imitato mai, o quasi mai" 3). It is evident, however, that Croce does not fully appreciate every aspect of Pascoli's nature or poetic quality for he makes the questionable statement that, although "La concezione che il Pascoli ha della vita è stata considerata come una forma di romanticismo.....romantica essa non è mancando dell'essenza stessa del romanticismo sentimentale, il disquilibrio....L'ideale del Pascoli invece è antiromantico, perché chiaro e determinato; e, d'altra parte, esclude la lotta." 4)

1) Op. cit. pp. 184-186.

2) Giovanni Pascoli, 1907, p. 57.

3) La Critica, Vol. IX, p. 254.

4) Op. cit. p. 47.

None of these critics take sufficiently into account either the incongeniality of Pascoli's associates at Bologna or the conflict which would inevitably be produced by the prevailing rationalist tendencies when they came into contact with his sensitive, mystical temperament. They also fail to appreciate the extent to which his modesty and lack of self-confidence must have impeded him from striking out independently, away from the traditions of Italian literature, with which he had little sympathy, as we know from his own words.¹⁾ Galletti, however, approaches the problem with more sympathetic insight, and fully understanding how irksome Pascoli must have found the ultra-intellectual atmosphere of contemporary modes of thought in Italy, cannot help thinking how much more congenial England or Germany would have been to him during the time of his spiritual development, for in these "paesi di misticismo endemico, paesi ove il sentimentalismo e lo scudiero legittimo che rigoverna Pegaso.... il Pascoli sarebbe stato aiutato dagli studi, dalla religione, dall'esempio di cento altri poeti ed artisti a cogliere nel suo carattere profondo la vena della propria spontaneità²⁾ and he gives as his opinion that "il più antistorico e anticritico dei poeti

1) Cf. pp. 11-13

2) Galletti, Op. cit. p. 11.

moderni, abbia cercato e trovato nel pensiero e nell'opera altrui aiuti teorici ed esempi alla propria poesia. Era ben giusto che l'età eruditissima e pedantissima nella quale egli si trovò a vivere si prendesse una qualche rivincita su questo spirito così originalmente istintivo!" 1)

Inspiration of E.A. Poe.

Galletti does not, however, assume without adequate proof that Pascoli was inspired by any particular foreign poet, and although he shows himself in agreement with Croce on the subject of Pascoli's originality - "la tempra poetica del Pascoli fu certo delle più originali" he asserts that "le sue letture e le sue curiosità furono maggiori di quello che si creda comunemente" 2). He does not base these assumptions, moreover, only upon psychological deductions, but furnishes indisputable proof of Pascoli's debt to Edgar Allan Poe, by drawing attention to his translation of the Raven, which was published by Pio Schinetti in the Secolo XX of May, 1912 in a section entitled Pagine inedite. These contain also a passage of prose of great significance because of its striking resemblance to a passage of the Marginalia. According to Schinetti this piece of writing was intended to form a preface to a collection of verses of which the young poet writes:-

1) Op. cit., p. 56

2) Op. cit., p. 64

"Tutte le poesie hanno un legame fra loro. E l'enfant du siècle che si è perduto nella notte dei secoli: sente voci strane e terribili e ad ora ad ora una melodia di lire eolie e di liuti. Tutto gli si vivifica intorno: le nuvole sembrano guerrieri, gli alberi sembrano dei. Le memorie del passato brulicano per dove passa e le ombre conversano con lui. Egli è oppresso da tanta vitalità esteriore e si lascia trascinare fuori del presente: egli si trova tra un sogno e una visione, tra il passato e l'avvenire: ma la visione è incerta e vaporosa; colora appena d'oro i lembi delle sue meditazioni angosciose. La poesia che ne esce è perciò soggettiva; ma l'oggettivo prende per lo più il sopravvento. Il poeta non afferma, non scopre, non prova nulla. Egli rende una sensazione che ha subita come l'ha subita; è la malattia dell'astrazione, che è comune ai poeti primitivi. Egli astrae dal mondo piccolo borghese e si slancia come falco nelle lande misteriose illuminate dalla calma luce crepuscolare."

According to Schinetti this passage and the translation of the Raven go back to the period when Pascoli was at the University, and if this is so they were written about 1876; that is to say the same year that Mallarme's translation of the Raven was published 1). Pellegrini, however, is of the

1) Cf. République des lettres, août, 1876.

opinion that Pascoli discovered Poe through the translations of Baudelaire which had appeared from 1852 onwards. 1). This, I think, is the more probable conclusion, as it is not likely, especially in view of Borgese's observations 2), that Pascoli would have seen Mallarmé's version so soon after it appeared, and also when we remember that the first Italian rendering of the poems, in the prose of Ulisse Ortensi, did not come out until 1892.

Galletti draws our attention to the striking resemblance between the dream-atmosphere evoked by Pascoli and the mysterious, unearthly landscapes created by Poe -

".....a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
 Out of SPACE - out of TIME.

 By the lakes that thus outspread
 Their lone waters, lone and dead, -

 By the dismal tarns and pools
 Where dwell the Ghouls, - "

We see here the same effect of mysterious animism as in Pascoli's passage - as if the objects in the scene were controlled by some supernatural force -

1) Pellegrini, Carlo: Pascoli e Baudelaire in Rassegna nazionale, 2a serie, Anno XLI, Vol. XXIII, p. 19

2) Cf. p. 40.

"Nothing there is motionless -
 Nothing save the airs that brood
 Over the magic solitude.
 Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
 That palpitate like the chill seas
 Around the misty Hebrides!
 Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
 That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
 Uneasily, from morn till even,"

The sensation which is described by Pascoli as -

"tra un sogno e una visione, tra il passato e l'avvenire:"

is found also in the Marginalia 1) where Poe calls the moments when he is conscious of experiencing this sensation "fancies" of which he says -

"They seem to me rather psychal than intellectual. They arise in the soul (alas, how rarely!) only at its epochs of most intense tranquility - when the bodily and mental health are in perfection - and at those mere points of time where the confines of the waking world blend with those of the world of dreams. I am aware of these "fancies" only when I am upon the very brink of sleep, with the consciousness that I am so. I have satisfied myself that this condition exists but for an inappreciable point of time - yet it is crowded with these "shadows of shadows";..... These "fancies" have in them a pleasurable ecstasy, as far beyond the most pleasurable of the world of wakefulness, or of dreams, as the heaven of the Northman theology is beyond its hell. I regard the visions, even as they arise, with an awe which, in some measure, moderates or tranquillises the exstasy - I so regard them, through a conviction....that this ecstasy, in itself, is of a character supernal to the human nature - is a glimpse of the spirit's outer world;"

1) Thoughts and words.

According to these poets, then, poetry may be described as the spontaneous reproduction of a moment of ecstasy; it should be as unpremeditated as the cries of joy of the Fanciullino. Pascoli's conception of the essential nature of what he calls "pure poetry" explains why he likens the Divina commedia and the Iliad to oceans where the pearls are these transitory moments of lyricism. 1).

This point of view, also, is expressed by Poe, who also takes as his example the Iliad, and Paradise lost of which he writes -

"This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems.....After a passage of what we feel to be pure poetry there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical pre-judgement can force us to admire.".....The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are through psychical necessity, transient."

Poe says of the Iliad that -

".....we have, if not positive proof, at least very good reason for believing it intended as a series of lyrics". 2).

This conception of poetry seems to guide Pascoli when compiling his anthologies where lyrical passages, each with a

1) Il Fanciullino, p. 43.
2) Poetic principle.

title of their own, appear as a series of short poems.

Coleridge also had the same ideas for he writes: "whatever specific import we attach to the word "poetry", there will be found involved in it, as a necessary consequence, that a poem of any length neither can be, nor ought to be, all poetry" 1).

Pascoli and Poe, with their common antipathy towards long works of epic character, hold similar views on the most fertile sources of poetic inspiration: "intenso il sentimento poetico è di chi trova la poesia in ciò che lo circonda," says Pascoli, "e in ciò che altri suole spregiare" 2) and we find the same sentiment in the Poetic Principle: "We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognises the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven - in the volutes of the flower - in the clustering of low shrubberies - in the waving of the grain fields - in the slanting of tall, Eastern trees - in the blue distance of mountains - in the grouping of clouds - in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks - in the gleaming of silver lakes - in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He

1) Biographia literaria, Chap. XIV.

2) Il fanciullino, p. 21.

perceives it in the songs of birds - in the harp of Æolus - in the sighing of the night-wind - in the repining voice of the forest - in the surf that complains to the shore - in the fresh breath of the woods - in the scent of the violet - in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth - in the suggestive odour that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored." This is the writing of a poet who, like Pascoli, is a fervent lover of nature. The senses of both are continually enthralled by the beauty of the visible world, but they are aware at the same time of a mysterious and unattainable sphere of spiritual beauty beyond these outward forms so that their spirit yearns to penetrate the mystery which in their eyes adds a new beauty to all things, and which is a most fertile source for poetic inspiration. "Nulla e piu proprio della fanciullessa della nostra anima che la contemplazione dell'invisibile, la peregrinazione per il mistero, il conversare e piangere e sdegnarsi e godere coi morti 1).

While the constant preoccupation with mystery and with death in these poets was for them a spiritual necessity their obsession with the physical aspect of death and decay was due to a great extent to the tragic circumstances of their life

which was darkened from their earliest years onward by the loss of those most dear to them. We feel the presence of Death as a perpetual shadow over their poetry, even when it is not directly mentioned. All too often, however, the poet's imagination is tortured by the imaginary spectacle of a dark and rain-drenched cemetery where the dead are conscious of their putrefying bodies. This is the desolate scene described by Pascoli in Il giorno dei morti 1.)

"Sibila tra la festa lagrimosa
Una folata, e tutto agita e sbanda.
Sazio ogni morto, di memorie, posa.

.....

(urtava, come un povero, alla porta,
il tramontano con brontolio roco),"

The expression "festa lagrimosa" may be taken from the following lines of Poe's Conqueror worm where death is accompanied by the same wild symphony of the elements:-

"Lo! 'tis a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres."

Poe seems to experience a kind of sadistic delight in reproducing the gruesome activities of decay. This element is not present in Pascoli, whose mind is filled

with horror at the thought of his mother with her mouth choked by "amari bocconi (di terra)." 1).

This type of mind, which cannot enjoy the beauty of the world without restlessly seeking to penetrate the mystery of what lies beyond finds itself unable to accept any kind of trammel which would confine its activities within definite limits. In Pascoli, as in Poe, we find the same impatience with those who seek to control the sacred inspiration of the poet within the restrictive bounds of a set of rules and precepts. They show the same disgust at any attempt to divide poetry into a classification of schools and periods. Thus Poe says disdainfully in his essay on Shelley "A school arose - if that absurd term must still be employed - a school - a system of rules upon the basis of the Shelley who had none." 2). For Pascoli, also, Poetry is above all man-made laws and he strongly condemns those who class it merely as literature: "c'è pure...la poesia, che sta a se, la poesia che comprende in se tutto ciò che si dice e scrive per diletto.....Ma no, la mettiamo insieme con l'altro letteratura "strumentale" (et tout le reste est littérature). 3). La dividiamo per secoli e scuole, la chiamiamo arcadica, romantica, classica, veristica, naturalistica, idealistica, e via dicendo.

1) La voce, Canti di Castelvecchio.

2) Fancy and imagination.

3) Il fanciullino, p. 34: Verlaine: L'art poétique.

Affermiamo che progredisce, che decade, che nasce, che muore, che risorge, che rimuore. In verità la poesia è tal meraviglia che se voi fate ora una vera poesia, ella sarà della stessa qualità che una vera poesia di quattromila anni sono."

In their hatred of restrictions, of attempts to classify by kind or period that which is divine, absolute and timeless both poets manifest that urge towards spiritual liberty which is found in all mystics. When Poe writes "My life has been a whim impulse - passion, a longing for solitude, a scorn of all things present in an earnest desire for the future" 4) we see that here is a temperament very much akin to Pascoli.

In L'era nuova Pascoli speaks of Poe as one of the poets who, like Leopardi, succeeded in making men feel "la infinita piccolezza nostra in confronto dell'infinita grandezza e moltitudine degli astri," 2) for, like Pascoli, himself, he is a "cosmic poet" and it is very likely that certain passages from the Eureka were present in Pascoli's mind when writing Il ciocco 3)

".....i mondi,
fatti piu densi dal cader dei mondi,
stringan le vene e succhino d'intorno
e in se serrino ogni atomo di vita;

1) Letter to Lowell.

2) Pensieri e discorsi, p. 122.

3) Canti di Castelvecchio.

quando sarà tra mondo e mondo il Vuoto
 gelido oscuro tacito perenne;
 e il Tutto si confonderà nel Nulla,"

This terrifying vision may have been inspired by Poe's supposition that "In the Original Unity of the First Thing lies the Secondary Cause of all Things, with the Germ of their Inevitable Annihilation..." Poe identifies the force of Gravity with "the tendency to collapse" and so he says "Upon the attainment of a certain proximity to the nucleus of the cluster to which each system belongs, there must occur, at once, a chaotic or seemingly chaotic precipitation, of the moons upon the planets, of the planets upon the suns, and of the suns upon the nuclei.... In sinking into Unity, Matter will sink at once into that Nothingness which, to all Finite Perception, Unity must be" 1)

Both poets arrive finally at the same conception of a series of future creations following the apparent extinction of the forces which cause life and death. 2).

It is probable that this is a case of direct inspiration, especially when we remember Pascoli's deficiency in the power of evolving any original train of speculation.

The remarkable resemblance between The Bells and Alba Festiva 3), however, seems to be an instance of similarity of

1) Complete works, 1902, vol. XVI, pp. 242, 301 sq.

2) These derivations were first made by G.A. Purkis in Selected.

3) Poems of Giovanni Pascoli, pp. 92-93.

3) Myrica.

taste and manner leading independently to the expression of identical impressions in almost the same words, for Pascoli is reputed to have denied having seen Poe's poem before he wrote his own 1), and the resemblance is understandable when we consider that most poets are attracted by bells and reproduce them by means of imitative sound-combinations as here where we find gold and silver bells whose joyous voices are evoked with smoothly-flowing sibilants and light, quick syllables:

"Silver bells!

What a world of merriment their melody foretells!

How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,

In the icy air of night!

While the stars, that oversprinkle

All the heavens, seem to twinkle

With a crystalline delight;

Keeping time, time, time,

In a sort of Runic rhyme,

To the tintinabulation that so musically wells"

Pascoli uses the same devices:

"Tra il cantico sonore

il tuo tintinno squilla,

voce argentina - Adoro,

adoro - Dilla, dilla,

la nota d'oro - L'onda

pende dal ciel, tranquilla."

and both poets make use of heavy sounds and long vowels to reproduce the monotonous sadness of the funeral knell:

1) Cf. Valentin, Op, Cit., p. 184.

"Hear the tolling of the bells -
Iron bells!

What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!

.....
tolling tolling tolling
In that muffled undertone,"

and we find the same effect created by Pascoli by the repetition of n, m, nd, and md:

"Ma voce piu profonda
sotto l'amor rimbomba
par che al desio risponda."

In both poems there is a similar transition from joy to sorrow - as in the poets' own lives - and Pascoli would notice how much Poe relied on the consummate use of word-music to create such contrasts of tone. He may even have read the following passage in the Poetic principle where he stresses the absolute necessity of music in poetry: "Contenting myself with the certainty that Music... is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected....I will now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles - the creation of supernal Beauty....I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as the Rhythmical Creation of Beauty..."

It is music - the most abstract of the arts - which enables all mystic poets to communicate their intuition of the mysterious elements which they feel behind the world of concrete reality and it is the means by which they create something akin to that ideal, spiritual beauty which is the object of all their mystical aspirations.

For Baudelaire the effect of music upon the human soul was a definite proof of man's immortality: "C'est à la fois par la poésie, et à travers la poésie, par et à travers la musique, que l'âme entrevoit les splendeurs situées derrière le tombeau; et quand un poème exquis amène les larmes au bord des yeux, elles sont le témoignage d'une nature exilée dans l'imparfait qui voudrait s'emparer immédiatement, sur cette terre, d'un paradis révéle." 1).

For Pascoli, also, the voice of true poetical inspiration is that of the "fanciullino musico" or of the "verGINE vocale" 2) and much of his poetry exemplifies Poe's theory of art in which he insists upon the importance of a "mystic or secondary expression" in poetry, drawing the poet's attention to the advisability of producing an effect of strangeness, unexpectedness and indefiniteness. Poe's description of ideal poetry could be taken for a description of many of the Myricae:-

1) Notes nouvelles sur Poe.

2) Fanciullino, pp. 4 and 97.

"With each note of the lyre is heard a ghostly, and not always a distinct, but an august and soul-exalting echo. In every

glimpse of beauty presented, we catch, through long and wild vistas, dim bewildering visions of a far more ethereal beauty beyond." 1) The striking resemblance between the above passage and Galletti's impression of the poetry of Pascoli shows how nearly Pascoli realised - whether intentionally we cannot tell - Poe's idea of supreme poetical beauty:-

"Oltre l'armonia apparente un'altra più profonda risuona; entro l'immagine dai nitidi contorni s'intuisce il lontanarsi e ramificarsi segreto di altre immagini e di altre forme; vediamo apparizioni fugaci che balenano a fiore del verso come occhi luminosi e tenui volti di sirene..." 2)

Both poets are superb craftsmen in the art of weaving haunting melodies from words. The sweet cadences of their verses have the effect of enveloping the soul of the reader in a sort of spell which lifts him out of the world of ordinary reality, wafting him to a strange and wonderful dream-world. Even after he has come down to earth again the echoes of these poems linger for ever in his memory.

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- 1) Fancy and Imagination.
2) Op. cit., p.2.

Galletti's assertion that Poe guided Pascoli to the English romantic writers: evidence to support this theory.

According to Galletti it was Poe who introduced Pascoli to the "gruppo di poeti che parevano attenderlo come un fratello; lo guidò al Coleridge, al Wordsworth, al De Quincey, allo Shelley, al Tennyson; lo guidò forse al Novalis e ai romantici tedeschi; gli rivelò l'affinità spirituale che lo stringeva al Verlaine, a Dante, G. Rossetti, al Maeterlinck." 1)

Certainly the poets whom Poe places in the first rank are precisely those whose works were translated by Pascoli, and whom he is known to have most admired. In the Poetic Principle Poe explains exactly which qualities in these poets appealed to him, and it is noteworthy that these coincide with his own predominant features and also with those of Pascoli. For instance, he bestows the highest praise upon Shelley's Indian serenade for its "warm yet ethereal and delicate imagination" and it is this very poem - which is cited by Galletti as an example to show that Shelley is worthy to be placed with Coleridge, Poe, and Verlaine - poets who - like Pascoli - "ci avvolgono entro i lacci invisibili di una musicalità ...strana e lontana" 2). Poe speaks of Keats as the most flawless of

1) Op. cit. p. 64.
2) Op. cit. P. 219.

English poets, and of Tennyson as "the noblest poet that ever lived". He also expresses a fervent admiration for Moore, who is essentially a colorist and musician. It is evident that Poe is attracted towards these by reason of their unique musical quality and by the strange, indefinable witchery of their verse - by the sensuous languor created by Tennyson in the Lotus-eaters, etc., and by Keats in the melodious cadences of the Odes. Pascoli, also, as we have seen 1) is an ardent admirer of the English romantic poets.

Thus he could say with justification:

"In fine l'homme, a doué et l'homme qui est
 (come lo creder l'or, et in l'anno l'anno." 1)

Not only did sorrow reveal to Pascoli the essential nature of his art but it also purified his soul from all feelings of rebellion and unforgiveness, so that he could forgive even his father's murderer. 2) We have already seen that his only hope for a better world depends on his being able to realize the full career of death. Thus, he says "maximo pin resti" and then only "sotto gli occhi." 3)

1) Cf. P. 26.

PART II.

AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PASCOLI AND ENGLISH
AND FRENCH POETS.

Pascoli's conception of Poetry: Real poetry is the spontaneous expression of the poet's purest and highest self as it is revealed to him by the action of grief or emotion. Identification of the "Fanciullino" with "Imagination" of the Romantic poets - found also in Baudelaire and Rimbaud. Neoplatonism in Pascoli and the poets of the nineteenth century. The poetry of childhood in Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Coppee, Victor Hugo and Pascoli.

We have seen that Pascoli's spiritual development began when sorrow had brought him face to face with his real self, and he must have recognised his own spiritual experience in many of the romantic and symbolist poets.

Thus he could say with Lamartine:-

"Tu fais l'homme, o douleur! oui l'homme tout entier
Comme le creuset l'or, et la flamme l'acier." 1)

Not only did sorrow reveal to Pascoli the essential nature of his art but it also purified his soul from all feelings of rebellion and unforgiveness, so that he could forgive even his father's murderer. 2) We have already seen that his only hope for a better world depends on man being made to realise the full terror of death. Then, he says "saremo più mesti" and then only "saremo più buoni." 3)

1) L'infini dans les cieux (Harmonies).

2) Il giorno dei morti (Myricae), ll. 91-95.

3) See p. 37.

Therefore he would share Baudelaire's esteem for
 "L'indispensable... la fertilisante douleur" 1) for which he
 gives thanks in "Bénédiction"

"Soyez beni, mon Dieu, qui donnez la souffrance comme
 un divin remède à nos impuretés," 2)

and Pascoli makes L'Eremita pray:

"Dio, non negare il sale alla mia mensa non negare il
 dolore alla mia vita." 3)

Pascoli would have observed that Lamartine, Musset
 and Victor Hugo produced their greatest poetry after their
 already exquisite sensibility had been still further deepened
 and refined by an overwhelming personal tragedy, so that Hugo,
 whose Contemplations and Chatiments are the fruit of his
 exile and of the death of his beloved daughter, sees grief
 as a Furification du feu which he is glad to have undergone:

- 1) Paradis artificiels, p.65.
- 2) Les fleurs du mal, Spleen et idéal, l.
- 3) Primi poemetti.

"Je ne suis pas fâché d'être dans la fournaise.

....

L'âme s'augmente et luit dans la flamme; est esclave
tout ce qui ne sort pas vivant du bain de lave,
et je trouve l'épreuve utile." 1)

He describes also the feeling of peace which he experiences
after the worst of his ordeal has passed:-

".....comme en une église,
Dans les grandes douleurs l'homme se tranquillise.
Après l'ardent chagrin, au jour brûlant pareil,
Le repos vient au coeur comme aux yeux le sommeil." 2)

and the same sensation is expressed in almost the same
words by L'eremita:

"L'anima mia tu percotesti e il mio
corpo di tanto e tal dolor ch'e d'ogni
dolcezza assai più dolce ora l'oblio.

....

Piansi, non piango: io dormirò: sia pace!" 3)

and Pascoli, who always seeks for goodness in everything, finds
consolation in the fact that happiness is rendered sweeter by
the memory of past sorrow. 4)

- 1) Toute la lyre, II, "le moi, XXV. Cf. also Sagesse iv, (les rayons et les ombres, XLIV.
- 2) Sagesse, iv (Les rayons et les ombres) XLIV.
- 3) Primi poemetti.
- 4) Primi poemetti, Preface.

Pascoli may have realised that here he unconsciously exemplified the deliberate and self-conscious efforts of the symbolist poets, for Rimbaud in the headstrong enthusiasm of youth had imposed upon himself the worst possible suffering in order to bring to the surface his real self. For him, as for Pascoli "la poesia...è...la coltivazione, affatto nativa, della psiche primordiale e perenne." 1) and so he writes: "La première étude de l'homme qui veut être poète est sa propre connaissance entière. Il cherche son âme, il l'inspecte, il la tente, l'apprend...Le poète se fait voyant par un long, immense et raisonné dérèglement de tous les sens. Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons pour n'en garder que les quintessences." 2)

Although Pascoli did not believe it necessary for the poet to subject himself to the extreme suffering and indeed degradation by means of which Rimbaud strove to uncover his "psiche primordiale" yet he would agree with the main trend of this

1) Il fanciullino, p. 34.

2) Letter to Paul Demény, 15th May, 1871.

"back to nature" tendency which he would find expressed by almost all romantic writers. He would accept Coleridge's statement that "the first step to knowledge, or rather the previous condition of all insight into truth, is to dare commune with our very and permanent self". 1). Thus the poet must endeavour to rid himself of the veneer of artificiality which too much erudition has deposited upon his real nature:-

"lo studio deve essere diretto a togliere... la ruggine che il tempo ha depositata sulla nostra anima, in modo che torniamo a specchiarci nella limpidezza di prima; ed essere soli tra noi e noi. Lo studio deve togliere le scorie al puro cristallo ... e quel cristallo val piu d'un vetro che noi dilatiamo e formiamo soffiando. Lo studio deve rifarci ingenui....deve togliere gli artifici, e renderci la natura." 2)

The ideal of these poets is not the impersonal serenity of the classicist writers, nor the photographic and plastic renderings of the realists, but the lyrical and spontaneous expression of emotion. Beauty herself is made lovelier by tears, and Baudelaire exclaims:-

1) The Friend, Introductory Essays, XVI.
2) Il Fanciullino, p. 39.

"Que m'importe que tu sois sage?
Sois belle! et sois triste! Les pleurs
Ajoutent un charme au visage,
Comme le fleuve au paysage;
L'orage rajeunit les fleurs." 1)

and Pascoli seems to echo his words:

"Piu bello il fiore cui la pioggia estiva
lascia una stilla dove il sol si frange;
piu bello il bacio che d'un raggio avviva
occhio che piange." 2)

Wordsworth and Coleridge are of the opinion, for in the preface to the Lyrical Ballads they state that for the subjects of these poems "Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil." and Shelley declares that:

"Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought" 3)

The French romantic poets likewise believe that deep feeling is necessary for the production of great art. Like Pascoli Lamartine and Musset see poetry as the transformation of tears into pearls,

"Les plus désespérés sont les chants les plus beaux,
Et j'en sais d'immortels qui sont de purs sanglots." 4)

-
- 1) Madrigal triste, (Nouvelles fleurs du mal, III)
 - 2) Pensieri, vi (Myricae) Cf. also Keats, Hyperion. Bk.1, II 34-6.
 - 3) Ode to a skylark.
 - 4) Nuit de mai.

Poetry does not, however, spring from the immediate effect of emotion, but from the contemplation of past joys and sorrows:-

"Non il dolore, ma la convalescenza del dolore, esprime nell'anima la poesia" 1) writes Pascoli, and he would find the same sentiment expressed by Coleridge; and by Lamartine: so that poetry is "emotion recollected in tranquillity" or as Pascoli puts it:

"Il ricordo è poesia, e la poesia non è se non ricordo." 2)

Poetry therefore is the evocation of memories, but these memories are not to be consciously and unwillingly called up by the poet, and Pascoli, like Wordsworth, realised the value of an attitude of "wise passiveness" towards poetical inspiration. This was lacking in the Italian poets of his time of whom he writes "Noi vogliamo far troppi sforzi." 3)

The writers who adhered to the classicist school of thought regarded man as a fundamentally imperfect being whose faculties needed the polish and refinement of education and varied social intercourse. They dwelt for the most part in towns mixing freely with their fellows. Pascoli and the

1) La Lyra, p. 52.

2) Primi poemetti, Preface.

3) Patria e umanità, p. 190. Cf. Il Fanciullino.

English and French romantic poets saw no profit in such a life: they bestow the highest praise on "the self-sufficient power of solitude" without which the poet will strive in vain to hear the divine voice of his own soul. These poets find that the noise and bustle of men and the teeming life of cities produce in them a feeling of frustration and weariness. For them true riches do not consist of material wealth but in the spiritual benefit which can be derived from solitary communion with nature, and which, moreover, she can give only to him whose spirit is untainted by the distractions and corruption of civilisation. So Wordsworth exclaims:-

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending we lay waste our powers;
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away a sordid boon!" 1)

Keats writes:

"To one who has been long in city pent,
'Tis very sweet to look into the fair
And open face of heaven,-" 2)

Pascoli likewise expresses an equally strong desire to escape from the artificiality, the false standards and the vain ambitions of:

1) Miscellaneous sonnets, XXXIII.

2) Sonnets, X.

3) Il mestiere di Giovanni Pascoli, p. 114.

".....città che parlano tra loro,

 tumultuanti d'un vocìo sonoro,
 di rote ferree e querule campane.

La, genti vanno irrequiete e stanche,
 cui falla il tempo, cui l'amore avanza." 1)

It is evident that an atmosphere of absolute peace and solitude was essential for Pascoli especially. Without it he found it impossible to catch the subtle inflections of his spiritual reactions and to find the exact tone to express them. This is clear when we consider that the Myricae, which are generally considered to be the richest product of his inspiration - for they contain the germ of all his later poetry - are the fruit of ten years' patient preparation and spiritual purification - as Francesca Morabito puts it, of a period of "contemplazione solitaria, di trepida ascoltazione di se stesso nel silenzio." 2)

This kind of environment is necessary also for the French romantic poets: Hugo writes:-

"Pour que la muse se révèle à lui (au poète), il faut qu'il ait en quelque sorte dépouillé toute son existence matérielle dans le calme dans le silence et dans le recueillement. Il faut qu'il se soit isolé de la vie extérieure, pour jouir avec

1) Solitudine, (Myricae).

2) Il misticismo di Giovanni Pascoli, p. 114.

plénitude de cette vie intérieure qui développe en lui comme un être nouveau, et ce n'est que lorsque le monde physique a tout à fait disparu à ses yeux que le monde idéal peut lui être manifesté." 1)

This conception of the nature of poetry is a fundamental part of the romantic mystical idealism which originated in Germany with the aesthetic theories of the Schlegels, Fichte, Schelling and Novalis, who, reacting against the materialistic trend of eighteenth century thought, which had exalted Reason as the highest faculty of man, propounded the idea that the sovereign human quality is the instinct whose divine power can solve problems which the intellect cannot touch. Wordsworth and Coleridge were thinking along the same lines when they evolved their theory of the Imagination which Coleridge describes as either "primary or secondary". Speaking of primary Imagination he says "The primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." 2)

Wordsworth calls Imagination:-

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- 1) Littérature et philosophie mêlées, 1844: Idées au hasard, Juillet, 1824, pp.250-251 et seq.
 - 2) Biographia literaria, Chap. XIII.

".....the Power so called
Through sad incompetence of human speech" 1)

and again:-

"Imagination, which, in truth,
Is but another name for absolute power
And clearest insight, emplitude of mind
And Reason in her most exalted mood!" 2)

This "Imagination" may be identified with Pascoli's Fanciullino - that miraculous spirit of wonder and child-like simplicity which survives only in artists, and which these poets believe to be the source of all spontaneous poetry - that is of all "pure" poetry, and Pascoli must have observed with joy that his own conception of the nature of poetry was in complete accordance with that of the greatest foreign romantic poets. Indeed Coleridge has given us an exact counterpart of Pascoli's image:-

"Imagination; honourable aims;
Free commune with the choir that cannot die;
Science and song; delight in little things,
The buoyant child surviving in the man;" 3)

In the above passages we note Pascoli's characteristic reverence for the untutored, child-like mind which makes him exclaim: "Fanciullino, che non sai ragionare se non a modo tuo, un modo fanciullesco che si chiama profondo, perchè d'un tratto, senza farci scendere a uno a uno i gradini del pen-

1) Prelude, ll. 592-3.

2) Ibid., ll. 189-192.

3) The blossoming of the solitary date-tree.

siero, ci trasporta nell'abisso della verità..." 1)

Pascoli's slight regard for all knowledge which is not revealed by the guidance of the instinct - his mistrust of anything which savours of erudition or sophistry is expressed also by Wordsworth in "The tables turned" and by Coleridge when he voices his great admiration for the unlearned Mystics - George Fox and Jacob Behmen. 2)

The growth of naturalism and the reaction which followed the eighteenth century's exaltation of the cultivated mind led the romantic poets to believe that unconscious life is the source of all conscious life, and their faith in the superior power of intuition over the faculties of the reason created in them a profound reverence for the child-like and the child. The image of the world which is received by the mind of the child is one which is not yet distorted by an individual point of view. It is like that produced by the uniform surface of a mirror which, rejecting nothing, absorbs all things with which it is confronted so that it creates a complete and satisfying conception of life, whose integrity and perfection are never afterwards recaptured, for as soon as the child becomes aware of

1) Il Fanciullino, p. 11.

2) Biog. Lit.

his own individuality it is as if the mirror of his mind were gradually broken up. Until this time he had possessed unaware that sense of the absolute which is prized by mystics as the most precious and wonderful experience of their life.

It is not surprising therefore that the romantic poets came to believe that there must be something divine in a creature so completely guided by intuition, and Wordsworth writes that:-

".....on the child
these truths do rest
which we toiling all our lives to find
in darkness lost." 1)

and again he exclaims:-

"Dear Child! dear girl! that walkest with me here,
If thou appear'st untouched by solemn thought,
Thy nature is not therefore less divine:
Thou liest in Abraham's bosom all the year;
And worshipp'st at the temple's inner shrine,
God being with thee when we know it not." 2)

This attitude of mystic awe leads him to perceive in the child traces of his divine origin which seem to him a proof of the immortality of the human soul: Thus he declares that:-

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
.....trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home."

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- 1) Ode on Intimations of immortality from recollections of early childhood.
 - 2) Miscellaneous sonnets, XXX.

These lines call to mind the words which Pascoli addresses to the new-born child in Ov'è: 1)

"...dal cielo cadesti

.....

il tuo cielo azzurro
dov'è?"

We do not feel, however, the same deep conviction of immortality as in Wordsworth, and we receive the impression that the poem is probably no more than a poetical rendering of various local superstition and of the naive stories told to children.

The same contrast is seen when we compare "I due cugini" 2) with We are seven. The fact that Pascoli translated this poem into Italian and the superficial resemblance between them gives the reader an idea that the Italian poem was modelled on that of the English poet. Here again, however, we find a different conception of death in the English poet who shows that to him the simplicity and trust of the "little cottage girl" is an infallible token of man's immortality, whereas Pascoli's representation is much more material, and as in many other instances, while he seems to feel the presence of the dead still with him, he shows no sign that he has any belief in the survival of the soul.

1) Canti di Castelvecchio.
2) Myricae.

Neither do we find this element in Coleridge's attitude towards the child-like mind, although he fully shares Wordsworth's and Pascoli's appreciation of the child's fresh impressionability and capacity for wonder. Thus he writes: "To find no contradiction in the vision of old and new; to contemplate the Ancient of days and all his works with feelings as fresh, as if all had then sprung forth at the first creative fiat; characterises the mind that feels the riddle of the world and may help to unravel it. To carry on the feelings of childhood into the power of manhood; to combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances which every day for perhaps forty years had rendered familiar..." 1) and again; speaking of the same quality:

"...this is the character and privilege of genius, and one of the marks which distinguish genius from talent. And so to represent familiar objects so as to awaken the minds of others to a like freshness of sensation concerning them." 2)

So Pascoli writes of Il Fanciullino: "senza lui, non solo non vedremmo tante cose a cui non badiamo per solito, ma non potremmo nemmeno pensarle e ridirle, perche egli è l'Adamo che mette il nome a tutto ciò che vede e sente." 3)

1) The Friend, Essay XVI.

2) Ibid. Essay XV.

3) p.9.

In the ecstatic moment of conceiving a work of art the spiritual harmony of childhood is temporarily recaptured in that the artist has the power to perceive the world in a new aspect, and these momentary glimpses of a perfect world reminds him of the golden age of his childhood which appears, on looking back, to have been "apparelled in celestial light." All memories connected with this happy time take on this magic glamour, so that some poets believe all poetic inspiration to be derived from childhood memories stored in the mind. This belief is held by two poets - Baudelaire and Rimbaud - whose childhood, like that of Pascoli, was the only happy period of their life, and so acquired an added glory when contrasted with the disillusionment and sadness of their adult life. Baudelaire writes in his essay on Constantin Guys:-

"L'enfant voit tout en nouveauté; il est toujours ivre. Rien ne rassemble plus à ce qu'on appelle l'inspiration, que la joie avec laquelle l'enfant absorbe la forme et la couleur. J'oserais pousser plus loin; j'affirme que l'inspiration a quelque rapport avec la congestion et que toute pensée sublime est accompagnée d'une secousse nerveuse, plus ou moins forte, qui retentit jusque dans le chevet. L'homme de génie a les nerfs solides; l'enfant les a faibles. Chez l'un la raison a pris une place considérable; chez l'autre, la sensibilité occupe presque tout l'être. Mais le génie n'est que l'enfance retrouvée à volonté,

l'enfance douée maintenant, pour s'exprimer, d'organes virils et de l'esprit analytique qui lui permet d'ordonner la somme de matériaux involontairement amassée.... Tous les matériaux dont la mémoire s'est encombrée se classent, se rangent, s'harmonisent et subissent cette idéalisation forcée qui est le résultat d'une perception enfantine, c'est-à-dire d'une perception aigüe, magique à force d'ingénuité." 1)

Baudelaire therefore attaches great importance not only to the necessity for the poet to retain the delicate sensibility which belonged to his childhood but to the actual impressions and memories of his early years: Thus he relates how:

"Souvent, en contemplant des ouvrages d'art, non pas dans leur matérialité, facilement saisissable...mais dans l'âme dont ils sont doués....j'ai senti entrer en moi comme une vision de l'enfance de leurs auteurs. Tel petit chagrin, telle petite jouissance, démesurément grossis par une exquise sensibilité, deviennent plus tard dans l'homme adulte, même à son insu, le principe d'une oeuvre d'art. Enfin, pour m'exprimer d'une manière plus concise, ne serait-ce facile de prouver, par une comparaison philosophique entre les ouvrages d'un artiste mûr et l'état de son âme quand il était enfant, que le génie n'est que l'enfance nettement formulée, douée maintenant pour s'exprimer,

d'organes virils et puissants." 1)

For Baudelaire therefore the foundation of all great art may be found in childhood recollections brought to fruition in manhood and the passage bears a close resemblance to the following definition of poetry from Pascoli's essay:

"La poesia è soprattutto ricordo di quel particolare modo di vedere che fu proprio della nostra anima fanciulla, riuscendo ad esprimerlo poi dopo aver aggiustato, cogli studi, i mezzi necessari a dare concretezza e maestà alle nostre scritture." 2)

Pellegrini, in his article on Pascoli e Baudelaire 2) discusses possible sources of Pascoli's "Fanciullino" theory. He begins by dismissing the likelihood of its being original by drawing attention to Pascoli's indisputable deficiency in the power of abstract thought. Having thus established the probability of his having obtained the germ of this conception from some of his readings, either in Italian or in foreign literature, Pellegrini goes on to examine a comparison made by Galletti between the ideal poet of Novalis and Pascoli's Fanciullino but regards it as unlikely that Novalis was Pascoli's inspiration in this instance, and, after raising some points

1) Ceuvres complètes, ed. Calman-Levy, pp. 316-7.

2) In Rassegna nazionale, 2a serie, Anno XLI, vol. XXII, 1919 p. 19.

of difference between the theories of the two poets, notes that even Galletti is forced to admit the absence of any evidence to show that the works of Novalis were known to Pascoli. 1) Pellegrini next quotes some words of De Sanctis in his essay on the Character of Dante and his Utopia:-

"Ciascuno ha un po' del poeta, massime nei primi anni....ben presto la realtà ci toglie a' sogni dorati, e incomincia la prosa della vita. Nel solo poeta quel mondo fantastico permane e si fa signore della sua anima."

but he goes on, without stating any reason for his conclusion, to declare that: "è certo che questa non è ancora la diretta ispirazione del Pascoli." Again without giving any reason for his opinion he asserts that "Fra i poeti francesi il Pascoli certo conobbe il Baudelaire:" He continues by quoting the sixth chapter of the Paradis artificiels in which, he says, Baudelaire elaborates an idea of De Quincey, and quotes the following passage:- "C'est dans les notes relatives a l'enfance que nous trouverons le germe des étranges rêveries de l'homme adulte, et, disons mieux, de son génie." He quotes also the passage from L'art romantique already noted above, 2) and à propos of

1) Op. cit., p. 54.

2) See pp. 76-77.

these passages Pellegrini exclaims: "Come non ripensare al Fanciullino... Qui non siamo piu dinanzi soltanto ad una vaga rassomiglianza di concetto, che nella maggior parte dei casi è puramente occasionale, ma ad una quasi identità, non solo riguardo all'idea fondamentale, ma anche per le particolari determinazioni che questa assume." He admits later, however, that "In tutte queste questioni di derivazioni, di riscontri,.....salvo in alcuni casi di assoluta evidenza - rimane sempre una qualche incertezza; e così anche nel caso nostro potrebbe darsi che la rassomiglianza fosse casuale, e che il Pascoli non conoscesse - o piuttosto, non ricordasse neppure - la pagina del Baudelaire."

From the passages of Italian and foreign writers quoted above we see that if Pascoli did receive any inspiration for his "Fanciullino" theory from contemporary sources (which I doubt) it is impossible to say which writer is most likely to have helped him to formulate his conception of "pure poetry", and in this connection the following passages are significant. In Pascoli's essay on Leopardi's poetry the following words occur: "Il più dolce e il più bello della sua poesia sta nel rimpianto di quello stato scave, di quella stagion lieta"

He refers, of course, to Leopardi's childhood, and he goes on to say that "altresì...della sua politica e della sua filosofia bisogna cercare la fonte in questo suo tempo migliore." 1)

It is possible, moreover, that Pascoli knew the passage in the Pensieri where Leopardi writes: "Da fanciulli, se una veduta, una campagna, una pittura, un suono ecc., un racconto, una descrizione, una favola, un'immagine poetica, un sogno, ci piace e diletta, quel piacere e quel diletto è sempre vago e indefinito; l'idea che ci si desta è sempre indeterminata e senza limiti; ogni consolazione, ogni piacere, ogni aspettativa, ogni disegno, illusione ec. (quasi anche ogni concezione) di quell'età tien sempre all'infinito; e ci pasce e ci riempie l'anima indicibilmente, anche mediante i minimi oggetti. Da grandi, o siano piaceri e oggetti maggiori, o quei medesimi che ci allettavano da fanciulli, come una bella prospettiva, campagna, pittura ec., proveremo un piacere, ma non sarà più simile in nessun modo all'infinito, o certo non sarà così intensamente, sensibilmente, durevolmente ed essenzialmente vago e indeterminato. Il piacere di quella sensazione si determina subito e si circoscrive: appena comprendiamo qual fosse la strada che prendeva l'immaginazione nostra

1) Il sabato, Pensieri e discorsi, pp. 71-72.

da fanciulli, per arrivare con quegli stessi mezzi e in quelle stesse circostanze, o anche in proporzione, all'idea ed al piacere indefinito, e dimorarvi. Anzi, osservate che forse la massima parte delle immagini e sensazioni indefinite che noi proviamo pure dopo la fanciullezza e nel resto della vita non sono altro che una rimembranza della fanciullezza, si riferiscono a lei, dipendono e derivano da lei, sono come un influsso e una conseguenza di lei; o in genere o anche in ispecie; vale a dire, proviamo quella tal sensazione, idea, piacere ec., perchè ci ricordiamo e ci si rappresenta alla fantasia quella stessa sensazione, immagine ec., provata da fanciulli, e come la provammo in quelle stesse circostanze. Così che la sensazione presente non deriva immediatamente dalle cose, non è un'immagine degli oggetti, ma della immagine fanciullesca; una ricordanza, una ripetizione, una ripercussione o riflesso della immagine antica." 1)

Whether Pascoli derived any part of his theory of art from any of the poets whose words are quoted above, or whether in this case his ideas are entirely original, we must admit

1) Pensieri di varia filosofia e di bella letteratura.
Le Monnier, 1898, II, pp. 36-37.

that he never acquired the intellectual strength and insight which enabled Wordsworth, Coleridge and Leopardi to retain their capacity for childlike wonder without descending to the puerility which often mars Pascoli's tone: he lacked, in fact, the "adult nerves" which Baudelaire quoted as necessary for the successful transformation of recollections into a work of art. As Bianconi justly remarks: "Il Pascoli non vuole ritrovare l'infanzia come uomo ma come fanciullo, non per sentire quanto ne sia amara la perdita, ma per godere l'illusione di averla ritrovata i.e. senza distacco". 1) He notes, however, that occasionally "un distacco si avverte" for example in L'aquilone 2) where the poet invokes the memory of his dead friend:-

"Oh! te felice che chiudesti gli occhi
persuaso, stringendoti sul cuore
il più caro dei tuoi cari balocchi.

Oh! dolcemente, so ben io, si muore
la sua stringendo fanciullezza al petto,
come i candidi suoi petali un fiore

ancora in boccia!"

As a rule, however, Pascoli attempts to recapture not only the memories of his childhood, but also the point of view which

1) Piero Bianconi, Pascoli, 1935, p. 226.

2) Primi poemetti.

should belong only to that period. This attitude partly accounts for his longing for belief. He never tries to examine religion from an adult angle, but tries to regain the unquestioning credulity which he enjoyed when he learnt his prayers at his mother's knee. Thus Croce is fully justified in stating that he "ha equivocato, scambiando e confondendo in uno l'ideale fanciullezza, che è propria della poesia la quale si libera dagli'interessi contingenti e s'affisa rapita nelle cose, - la fanciullezza, che è immagine della contemplazione pura, - con la realistica fanciullezza, che si aggira in un piccolo mondo perche non conosce e non è in grado di dominarne uno piu vasto." 1)

In this respect Pascoli very much resembles Rimbaud who tried to recreate within himself a child's acute perceptiveness by attempting to retain in his memory every minute experience which belonged to his childhood. It was natural that he would inevitably attach great importance to the period of childhood for this is the age of sensation and the young poet felt that only by undergoing the most varied sensations could he penetrate to the precious essence of himself which lay hidden in his subconscious. The same yearning to be a child again

1) Benedetto Croce, *Op. cit.* p. 62. Cf. also La Critica, V, 1907, pp. 98-99.

which we find in L'aquilone 1) is present also in Bateau ivre when Rimbaud finds that, although his imagination is enraptured by the thought of the strange and wonderful lands beyond the seas, he desires none of them so much as the enchanted region where he dwelt when a child:-

"Si je désire une eau d'Europe, c'est la flache
Noire et froide où vers le crépuscule embaumé
Un enfant accroupi, plein de tristesse, lâche
Un bateau frêle comme un papillon de mai."

Rimbaud had completed his poetical work while he was little more than a child himself, but he endeavours continually to make himself even more child-like in spirit, and with this aim at the back of his mind he cherishes every circumstance and scene which took place during his early years. It is certain that the greater part of the subject matter of Illuminations, like that of the Myrica, consists of recollections of this period combined with dreams. Thus Delahaye reveals that Ornières is a description of an American circus which is known to have visited Charleville in 1865 or 1868. 2) Like Pascoli Rimbaud did not seek to analyse his recollections nor to arrange them so that they formed an orderly and harmonious pattern, but leaves them as beautiful images without any more

1) Primi poemetti.

2) Delahaye, E., Souvenirs familiers, pp. 49-50.

evident significance than the strong emotion with which they are penetrated. He thinks it sufficient to jot down his impressions just as they occur to him, as we know from the testimony of Delahaye who writes:- "Rimbaud ne cherche guère à inventer... Je me souviens que Rimbaud me disait, en l'été de 1871: "Toute la littérature est cela! Et nous n'avons qu'à ouvrir non sens, fixer avec des mots ce qu'il ont reçu, nous n'avons qu'à écouter la conscience de tout ce que nous éprouvons, quoi que ce soit, et fixer par des mots ce qu'elle nous dit qu'il lui est arrivé. Dans ces conditions.....la préoccupation formiste, qui avait fait de lui le poète d'hier, devait...céder presque toute la place à un^e autre, celle de voir, d'entendre, de sentir...de noter".....il note ces souvenirs, ces impressions, ces émotions, ces hallucinations, cette vie psyche-physiologique observée qui forme le recueil des poèmes en prose intitulé par IlluminationsNous y retrouvons.....Barbare, ou il a mis conformément à son programme tout ce qui passait en fait de sensations, curiosités, idées ou images, et même les réflexions contradictoires qui se présentaient." 1)

1) Delahaye, E., Rimbaud: L'artiste et l'être moral, 1923, pp. 37 and 48.

Thus in Phrases Rimbaud has set down at random a disconnected list of things remembered from his childhood days -

"Le haut étang fume continuellement. Quelle sorcière va se dresser sur le couchant blanc? Quelles violettes frondaisons vont descendre?"

+ + +

Pendant que les fonds publics s'écoulent en fêtes de fraternité,
Il sonne une cloche rose dans les nuages.

+ + +

and I think the following fragment has a distinct Pascolian savour:-

"Avivant un agréable goût d'encre de Chine, une poudre noire pleut doucement sur ma veillée. - Je baisse le feu du lustre..."

Here the single particulars are so disconnected as to render the sense almost unintelligible. Pascoli is seldom as obscure as this, but often he also tries to produce in himself the illusion of childhood by noting his impressions just as they come. Thus in Sera d'ottobre which is composed of a series which, although they form a clear and coherent picture of an autumn evening, yet give the impression of being enumerated at random by the poet who does not trouble to show any connecting links between the

very beautiful fragments of this short poem:-

"Lungo la strada vedi su la siepe
ridere a mazzi le vermiglie bacche;
nei campi arati tornano al presepe

tarde le vacche.
Vien per la strada un povero che il lento
passo tra foglie stridule strascina:
nei campi intuona una fanciulla al vento:

fiore di spina!".. 1)

Pascoli, like Rimbaud, tried with all his power of concentration to bring back into his mind the precious sensations and memories of childhood, and, it is because everything belonging to that time is precious and wonderful that both poets attach what seems often an exaggerated importance to the most trivial incidents. In both we perceive the impatience of the immature: they give their whole faith and love to the idea and to the sensation of the moment, imagining it to be the one thing which they had always been waiting for to give them complete happiness and to clear away their doubts and perplexities. Like the children they were, however, their interest quickly flagged, until they found a new interest. This is partly the reason why neither was able to develop his great gifts to their full perfection; Rimbaud abandoning poetry altogether while still

1) Myrica, In campagna, XV.

1) Ion, translated by Jowett, pp. 522 and 523.

in his early twenties and Pascoli producing reproductions and elaborations of his early themes which lack the freshness and beauty of his first works.

Although some passages in the Fanciullino are, as we have seen, almost identical with passages in the writings of some of the foreign writers of the nineteenth century, it is, I think, unlikely that any of them gave Pascoli the idea of personifying poetry as the survival of the spirit of childhood in the poet. The identification of "pure poetry" with the existence of a divine inspiration - fanciullino, etre nouveau, or "Imagination" was probably derived in the first place from the ideas expounded in the Ion of Plato who represents the poet as a demented being possessed of an alien spirit who speaks through him, the poet being, as it were, a medium for the divine voice. Thus Socrates says: "The gift of Homer is not an art, but an inspiration" and he describes the poet as "mystical and possessed..... For" he continues "the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him: when he has not attained to this state he is powerless and is unable to utter his oracles." 1)

1) Ion, Translated by Jowett, pp. 532 and 534.

The platonic conception is certainly the starting-point of Rimbaud's theory of art - that theory which he never completely formulated, but whose outlines are contained in records of conversations and in letters. Thus he writes to Georges Izambard:-
 "C'est faux de dire: Je pense. On devrait dire: On me pense."

1) His words to Démeny are even nearer to the platonic idea:

"Si le cuivre s'éveille clairon, il n'y rien de sa faute.

Cela s'est évident: j'assiste a l'éclosion de ma pensée:

je la regarde, je l'écoute: je lance un coup d'archet:

la symphonie fait son remuement dans les profondeurs, ou vient

d'un bond sur la scène. 2)

Pascoli himself makes it clear that he took at least the image of the Panciullino from Plato, by drawing attention on the first page of his discourse to the following passage from the Phaedrus:- "...there is a child within us to whom death is a sort of hobgoblin; him too we must persuade not to be afraid when he is alone with him in the dark." 3)

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- 1) Letter to Izambard, 13th May, 1871.
 - 2) Letter to Paul Démeny, 15th May, 1871.
 - 3) Phaed. 77 E. Translated by Jowett.

and Pascoli bases his pronouncements upon these words, saying: "E dentro noi un fanciullino che non solo ha brividi, come credeva Cebes. Tebano che primo in sè lo scoperse, ma lagrime.... L'aedo e l'uomo che ha veduto (oïde) e perciò sa, e anzi talvolta non vede più; e il veggente (aoidòs) che fa apparire il suo canto....E se gli occhi con cui si mira fuor di noi, non vedono più, ebbene il vecchio vede allora soltanto con quelli occhioni che son dentro lui, e non ha avanti sè altro che la visione che ebbe da fanciullo....E se uno avesse a dipingere Omero, lo dovrebbe figurare vecchio e cieco, condotto per mano da un fanciullino, che parlasse sempre guardando torno torno. Da un fanciullino o da una fanciulla: dal dio o dall'iddia: dal dio che sementò nei precordi di Femio quelle tante canzoni, o dell'iddia cui si rivolge il cieco aedo di Achille e di Odisseo." 1)

From the above passages it will be seen that Pascoli's imagination has been seized by this aspect of the Platonic mysticism which became the basis of the romantic transcendentalism, for, as Galletti has pointed out: "La filosofia di Platone è antica e inesauribile sorgente di misticismo filosofico

1) Il Fanciullino, pp. 1 — 4.

e poetico. Tutti gli spiriti che non si appagano dell'apparenza: i sognatori, gli asceti, gli scrutatori della vita segreta e profonda dello spirito appartengono alla schiera di Platone e gli debbono qualche parte della loro vita interiore. Il pensiero filosofico e l'arte moderna...gli s'inchinarono come al primo annunciatore della creatrice libertà dello spirito." 1)

As Galletti also points out, Pascoli, like most of the other romantic and symbolist poets, repudiates the more exacting part of platonic philosophy which demands a more rigorous system of mental discipline than he felt himself capable of imposing upon his impulsive, sentimental temperament, for, to quote Galletti again:- "Platone ha un pensiero ordinato e sistematico che comprende interpreta e sorregge tutte le attività dello spirito umano...I poeti romantici e simbolisti rifuggono dall'azione, detestano i sistemi...nel platonismo (il Pascoli) non vide che la porta aperta sul dominio sconfinato dell'invisibile, la realtà dissolventesi in ombre, il prodigio riapparso nel cuore delle cose" 2)

We must not, therefore, fail to take into account the powerful influence which Plato exercised upon the romantic mind

1) Op. cit., p. 196.

2) Loc. cit.

when attempting to enumerate the most important elements which brought to light the true nature of Pascoli's art; once again as Galletti has it:- "Forse lo stimolo più forte ad acquistare coscienza della sua facoltà poetica gli venne dal pensiero platonico, rivelato ed interpretato a lui da Francesco Acri, (Cfr. G. Folchieri, Influenze platoniche nella poesia del P., in La nuova cultura, I, fasc. 9) 1)....Il Pascoli ebbe anche da Platone l'idea del fanciullino perpetuamente vivo nell'uomo adulto, e parve immaginare, come i neoplatonici, che in ogni forma o apparenza si nasconde un principio invisibile." 2)

The tendency which we have seen in the romantic poets to perceive mysterious revelations in the innocence and instinctive spontaneity of childhood, colours their child poetry with a kind of mystic awe. Especially is this to be noted in the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Pascoli, and this attitude combined with the tenderness and affection which they felt towards all children places them among the poets of childhood. A similar tone of intense love and pity is present also in "Holy Thursday" where Blake expresses the same indignation and pity as we find in Agonia di madre, Rosicchiolo 3) and in many

1) Op. cit. p. 195.

2) Op. cit. p. 197.

3) Myrica.

most moving love of babies. He would find the same exquisite poems of Pascoli, who, unfortunately, sometimes degenerates into the rather mawkish sentimentality which mars also the poems of Francois Coppee, whose representations of school-born infants in *Dr's*, 1) but some of the romantic poets and children are however as realistic and sympathetic as Aquilone and Rondinotto 1)

Pascoli would find, also, in Victor Hugo a genuine love of children and an ability equal to his own to depict them as they really are - often noisy and full of mischief and high spirits. Many of Hugo's charming pictures of children, however, are spoiled by his emphasis on his own popularity with young people, so that his own figure is kept always in the foreground - the centre of an admiring group. 2) Here we see emerge one of the fundamental differences between Pascoli and the poet who, perhaps, was nearer than anyone to him in spirit; whereas Hugo often offends the reader by his vanity and bombastic egotism Pascoli charms us by his humble and diffident attitude which makes him eager to efface himself and modestly withdraw into the background.

Pascoli is unsurpassed, not only in his capacity to enter into the cares and joys of older children, but also in his al-

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- 1) Myricae
 - 2) Cf. also: Les rayons et les ombres XV.
 - 3) Cf. for example, Laissez. - Tous ces enfants (Feuilles d'automne)

most feminine love of babies. He would find the same exquisite delicacy and close observation also in Coleridge, whose pictures of his own children when very young are as true as that of the new-born infant in Ov'è, 1) but none of the romantic poets has given us a picture so realistic and moving as that which Pascoli puts into the mouth of Rosa when she recalls the image of her dead baby:

"Ricordo: - un giorno lo sfasciavo, al fuoco
e lo guardavo. Ei tese il dito a un occhio.
Lo vide lustro, gli pareva un gioco,

chi sa?.....

.....E io me lo tenea lontano,
lo patullavo in alto d'in ginocchio,

gli prendea la manina nella mano,
e la scoteva, gli faceva le rise;
ed ecco, anch'egli si provò pian piano,

fece bel bello le fossette, e rise." 2)

Broad conception of poetical subjects - language - attitude towards nature.

Pascoli says: "il poco e il piccolo era il sogno dei due grandi fraterni poeti. Virgilio diceva: Loda la campagna grande, e tienti alla piccina (Georg. 2, 412 sqq.) E Orazio: Questo era il mio voto: un campicello non tanto grande, con

1) Canti di Castelvecchio.

2) La vendemmia, Canto secondo, II, (Nuovi poemetti).

l'orto, con una fonte, e per giunta un po' di selvetta (Serm. 2, 6, 1 sqq.)...il fanciullino che era in loro, preferiva,...cio che e piccolo." 1) These words show how close he is to the conception of poetry which was revived by Crabbe and Blake to whom the sayings of children, the lowly existence of the poor - even the feelings of animals seemed fit subjects for poetical treatment. It has been suggested that Pascoli "tried, under the influence.. of Wordsworth and Victor Hugo, to describe simple, homely people in a simple, homely way, using dialect and the names of many common things which had never been mentioned in Italian poetry before;" 2) but surely it is more probable that the child-like simplicity which was such an integral part of his nature would make him see for himself the beauty beneath the rude exterior and the rough handicrafts of the peasants. We feel how much these poets loved country life from the following similar renderings of a picture which recalls the "Hay-wain" of Constable: Hugo writes:

"J'aime ces chariots lourds et noirs qui la nuit,
Passant devant le seuil des fermes, avec bruit,
Font aboyer les chiens dans l'ombre" 3)

and Pascoli: "...quando passa il grave carro avanti
del casolare, che il rozzon normanno
stampa il suolo con zoccoli sonanti,
sbuca il can dalla fratta, come il vento;
lo precorre, rincorre, uggia, abbaia." 4)

1) Il fanciullino, pp. 25-26.

2) Cf. Purkis, G. A., Op. cit., Introduction.

3) Enthousiasme (Les orientales).

4) Il cane (L'ultima passeggiata, XIII, Myricae).

Wordsworth may have lent Pascoli courage to use dialect words but we do not find in him the deliberate baldness which makes parts of "The Idiot Boy" seem like a mere exercise written to illustrate a theory. Pascoli's *maivete* is completely unstudied, and however much it annoys us we never feel that it is premeditated. He must, however, have been glad to see that this poet whom he loved and admired so much, thought fit to describe the Sheep-washing 1) and the indoor occupations of Michael 2) and his wife with the amount of detail as he himself gives when enumerating the various processes in the preparation of the chestnuts 3) and in the operations connected with the Mietitura, the Sementa, L'accestire, Le armi, and above all in the beautiful and realistic poems on household work and cooking - La Sementa, again, Il desinare, per casa, il bucato, la bollitura (all in Primi poemetti). Both Pascoli and Wordsworth produced vivid accounts of spinning - one of the most attractive crafts delighting both ear and eye, but it is noticeable that whereas Wordsworth finds most joy in the visual aspect 4) only noting the sound of the wheel twice or three times 5) Pascoli, with a keener audible susceptibility, repeatedly uses onomatopœic effects to reproduce the "sibilo assiduo dei fusi;" 6)

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- 1) River Duddon, XIII. 2) Poems of the fancy, XVI.
 3) Vecchio castagno, Primi poemetti. 4) Cf. The brothers, II, 21-26.
 5) Michael, II, 126-129; Song for the spinning wheel, Poems of the fancy. 6) La poesia (Canti di Castelvecchio); Il vischio, L'asino IV (Primi poemetti) Il fuso al fuoco, l'ultimo viaggio (Poemi conviviali.)

Both poets took a lively interest in local folk-lore and old customs - as may be seen from Wordsworth's Childless father, Song for the spinning wheel, Hart-leap well and The white doe of Rylstone, and in many poems of Pascoli as La cincia 1), Nozze 2) and La tovaglia 3)

This simple existence, marked only by domestic joys and sorrows and by the routine of agriculture seemed to both these poets such a perfect life that each shows a tendency to idealise it, representing it as a cycle of pleasant occupations accomplished with the aid of nature without always taking into account the disadvantages of inclement weather and other elements which often make the farmer's life one of arduous toil with little reward. This tendency probably owes something to the un-realistic idealism of Rousseau with whom both poets have many affinities, 4) but is probably also due to their great love for nature, so that for them any kind of work performed close to the soil could not be otherwise than pleasant, and any task however menial became full of poetry. Thus Wordsworth writes in the preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads:-

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- 1) La Sementa (nuovi poemetti).
 - 2) Myricae.
 - 3) Canti di Castelvecchio.
 - 4) Cf. Galletti, Op.cit., p.143, for affinities with Pascoli.

"The principal object, then, proposed in these poems was to choose incidents and situations from common life, and to relate or describe them, throughout, as far as was possible in a selection of language really used by men,....Humble and rustic life was generally chosen, because, in that condition, the essential passions of the heart find a better soil.... The language, too, of these men has been adopted.... because such men hourly communicate with the best objects from which the best part of language is originally derived.. Accordingly such a language... is a more permanent, and a far more philosophical language, than that which is frequently substituted for it by poets who think they are conferring honour upon themselves and their art, in proportion as they separate themselves from the sympathies of men, and indulge in arbitrary and capricious habits of expression, in order to furnish food for fickle tastes and fickle appetites, of their own creation."

Pascoli held precisely the same sentiments, as we know from Briganti who records that the poet "soleva dire che egli anteponeva la schietta parola colorita dei contadini alla parola della lingua dei letterati." 1) Pascoli shared with Wordsworth the conviction that pure poetry should be the

1) Op.cit. p.28.

1) Il Pensiero, pp. 11-12; Cf. also letter to Mario Morelli, 17th November, 1904.

simple expression of deep feeling communicated in language which could be understood by a child - for is not poetry itself the spirit of childhood? So he says of the Fanciullino: "Tu dici in un tuo modo schietto e semplice cose che vedi e senti in un tuo modo limpido e immediato" and he goes on to contrast this true poetical language with the studied effects of "oratori" for "essi dicono altrimenti da quello che sanno che si dice. Tu illumini la cosa, essi abbagliano gli occhi....Il loro insomma è il linguaggio artificiato d'uomini scaltriti,....il tuo è il linguaggio nativo di fanciullo ingenuo, che tripudiando o lamentando parli ad altri ingenui fanciullini" 1)

These ideas were put into practice to a much greater extent by Pascoli than by Wordsworth, who, however strongly he may inveigh against the use of poetic diction, uses it quite often himself. Moreover only a small proportion of his greatest poetry is to be found among that which has as its subject "Humble and rustic life." In the Ode on the intimations of immortality and in Tintern Abbey, where his passionate love of nature finds its loftiest expression, the language, although of a majestic simplicity, cannot be described as that used by la-

1) Il Fanciullino, pp. 11-12: Cf. also letter to Mario Novaro, 17th November, 1904.

bourers or yokels. Occasionally Pascoli also forgets his aim to reproduce the natural speech of the peasants. In La sementa Rigo talks like a poet:-

"io tutta notte l'aspettai, l'aurora!

Che ieri io rinoasava a notte piena,
pensando ad altro, a non so che: zirlare
io sentiva nell'alta ombra serena,

Erano i tordi, che gia vanno al mare,
in alto, in alto, in alto. Io sentia quelle
Voci dell'ombra, nel silenzio, chiare;

e mi pareva un canticchiar di stelle." 1)

but for the most part his characters speak in a most natural manner, without however falling into the self-conscious inanity of the father in Anecdote for fathers or of Goody Blake and Harry Gill. In contrast to this overdone simplicity the dialogue in La tessâtrice 3) give the impression of being absolutely true to life, and the same realistic effect is produced by the words of the mother to Rosina:-

"Figlia,.....staccia la farina.

Viola e fuori con la mucca, via
per Ginestrelle....

.....Io voglio accomodare,
se mi riesce, questi due radicchi,
ch'io ho già intoccati, con altr'erbe amare.

1) Il Cacciatore, II, (Primi poemetti).

E tu, mentr'io soffrigo uno o due spicchi
d'aglio trito, costì, su la brunice,
fa la polenta,....." 1)

This naturalness of expression is not confined to dialogue, but is a conspicuous feature of many of the Myricae where the magical, trance-like atmosphere is achieved by the masterly use of unusual rhythms; by musical combinations of sounds, not by means of rare words, for the language employed is usually that of current everyday usage, and generally the word-order follows that of ordinary speech. As Serra remarks:- "In quanto a fattura e struttura il verso del Pascoli è cosa molto semplice, le parole per solito seguono l'una l'altra secondo la legge dell'uso più comune; non c'è composizione, disegno, discorso.... Da questo punto di vista non sono altro che prosa." 2) and the same observation has been made by Devoto - "Il periodo pascoliano è sempre un periodo parlato." 3) and examples could be cited in abundance to illustrate this last statement:

"Sulla soglia, tra il nembro degli odori,
pingui, un mendico brontola:" 4)

The above illustrations, I think, make it clear that Pascoli's simple and natural style was completely unstudied, and was the spontaneous expression of his naïf and child-like soul. It was not an attempt to

- 1) Per casa, La senenta, stanzas II and III.
- 2) Giovanni Pascoli, In Scritti critici, 1919: pp.18-19
- 3) Devoto, Giacomo, Pascoli e la lingua italiana moderna, in: Blasi, Jolanda de, Giovanni Pascoli: Letture tenute per il Lyceum di Firenze 1937, p. 132.
- 4) Mezzogiorno, (Myricae).

1) therefore, is not a conscious realisation either of imitate the practice of Hugo; nor was it a conscious realisation either of the theories of Wordsworth nor of those formulated by Pascoli himself in the Fanciullino and elsewhere, for most critics are agreed that in his prose writings on the language Pascoli drew his conclusions from a study of his own poetry and of the other great poetry of the world, and that he did not, like Wordsworth, formulate the theory first and then try to put it into practice. It is not known whether Pascoli knew the preface to the second edition of the Lyrical Ballads, but it is extremely likely that he was acquainted with Wordsworth's views on language, and in this case he would fully agree with the English poet's resolve to introduce into poetry dialect words and local expressions. In this respect Pascoli makes a much more lavish use of such vocabulary than Wordsworth, who gives the impression of introducing local terms for the sole purpose of completing the rhyme, as "ghyll" to rhyme with "rill" 2) and "sugh" to rhyme "blue" 3). Indeed the Italian poet sometimes carries this passion for "couleur locale" to excess, as in La morte del Papa 4) which requires a glossary of fifty-seven terms to convey its meaning to those who are not familiar with the speech of Romagna. His conspicuous use of proverbs and old sayings has also given occasion for adverse criticism, but although sometimes the use of a proverb seems somewhat redundant, occasionally, as Micheli observes, "il proverbio serve a dare un preciso colorito locale". 5)

1) See p.97

2) An evening walk, ll. 53-54.

3) Descriptive sketches, ll. 358-359

4) Nuovi poemetti.

The function of true poetry, therefore, is not to record the erudite discourses and polished wit of the rich and learned; it should be:

"una lampada ch'arda
soave!
e ascolta novelle e ragioni
da bocche
celate nell'ombra, ai cantoni,
là dietro le soffici rocche
che albeggiano in fila:

ragioni, novelle e saluti
d'amore, all'orecchio confusi:
gli assidui bisbigli perduti
nel sibilo assiduo dei fusi;
le vecchie parole sentite
da presse con palpiti nuovi
tra il sordo rimastico mite
dei bovi:

This catholic conception of the rôle of poetry which Pascoli shared with the English romantic poets is especially noticeable in the love and sympathy which they show towards the animal world. Pascoli must have recognised in Wordsworth as great a bird-lover as himself, and the verse:

"Di cincie e fringuelli
risuona la ripa.
Sei tu tra gli ornelli,
sei tu tra la stipa?
Ombra! anima! sogno!
sei tu...? 2)

may be an echo of the similar expression of Wordsworth:

"O Cuckoo! shall I call thee Bird
Or but a wandering voice?" 3)

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- 1) Canti di Castelvecchio
 - 2) Canzone d'aprile (Myricae)
 - 3) Poems of the imagination, II. This possible reminiscence is included in Vischi's list in La critica, loc. cit.

Wordsworth's descriptions of birds show that he possessed the same intimate knowledge of their appearance and habits as Pascoli, who, in common with the English romantic poets, tries, not only to give an accurate and detailed picture of animals, but also to enter into their feelings. The contrast between the attitude of the early nineteenth-century English poets and that of the preceding century finds a counterpart in Italian poetry when Carducci's classical representation of Il bove, 1) which rises before our eyes with the serene grandeur of an ancient sculpture, is compared with Pascoli's rendering of the same theme 2) where there is no description, and the poet tries to visualise the scene through the eyes of the bull. Pascoli would realise that the pity and sense of fellow-feeling which he himself expressed in his poems on birds and in Il torello 3) was shared also by Coleridge whose heart goes out in sympathy to the "young ass"

"Chained to a log within a narrow spot
Where the close-eaten grass is scarcely seen,
While sweet around her waves the tempting green!" 4)

Both these poets extend their affection towards even the least prepossessing forms of animal life: In Benedizione 5) Pascoli describes how -

".....il buon piovano
benedice santamente:
anche il loglio, là nel grano;
qua, ne' fiori, anche il serpente
.....
anche il falso, anche il falchetto
.....
anche il corvo....."

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- 1) Rime nuove. IX
 - 2) Il bove (Myrica)
 - 3) Primi poemetti
 - 4) Lines to a young ass
 - 5) Myrica.

These words, which remind us of the Laudes creaturarum, show that Pascoli was informed by the same spirit of all-embracing love of creation which inspired Coleridge when he enables the Mariner to break the spell by blessing even "Gdd's creatures" the water-snakes. 1)

This feeling of brotherhood towards animals is extended to everything in nature - flowers, trees, even the stones. Wordsworth's dialogues - The water-fall and the eglantine; The oak and the broom; The star and the glow-worm and those of Pascoli - La vita e il cavolo 2) Il sole e la lucerna 3) show a preference for nature in her simplest form and Wordsworth sings the beauties of the Poor Robin, the daisy and the lesser celandine with the same care and affection that Pascoli expends upon his descriptions of:

".....i fior di vitalba
per via, le ginestre nel greto" 4) of the Pervinca; Il dittamo; the viole d'inverno; 2) "Rosa di macchia" he says "t'amo, e tuo fratello il biancospino" 5) and especially does he love the plants which bloom in the winter: L'edera fiorita 2); L'agrifoglio; L'ederella; and the Corbez-zolo 6) whose "maggio è nella bruma". These poets love the tiny wild-flowers of the woods and hedgerows much more than the exotic blooms of the garden and hot-house. 7)

This conception of nature which accepts all her manifestations as equally beautiful and significant is part of the reaction against materialism which was at the root of the romantic poets' desire to pierce behind

1) Ancient Mariner, ll. 272-291

2) Myricae

3) Canti di Castelvecchio.

4) Alba (Myricae).

5) La rosa delle siepi (Odi)

6) Odi.

7) Cf. also Keats, letter to Rice, 16th February, 1820.

outward forms so as to bring their souls into contact with the spiritual power which they sensed at the heart of creation. This mystical attitude is first seen in the transcendental philosophy of Kant from which were derived the theories of later German thinkers. The writings of the Schlegels, the Wissenschaftslehre of Fichte and especially the Natur-Philosophie and the System des transcendentalen Idealismus of Schelling, show that for these philosophers nature was much more than a mere concurrence of mechanical agencies. Coleridge attempted to interest Wordsworth in their theories, but German metaphysics played little part in Wordsworth's spiritual growth. It is his own mystic pantheism, tinged with the naturalism of Rousseau, which reveals to him a new conception of nature and he declares: "..... 'tis my faith that every flower enjoys the air it breathes."

Pascoli being much more attracted by poetry than by philosophy would find far greater inspiration in the simple but profound verses of Wordsworth than in the learned expositions of German theorists, and in the English poet he would recognise his own inclination to interpret every movement of nature as the expression of conscious emotion:

"The budding twigs spread out their fan
To catch the breezy air;
And I must think, do what I can,
That there was pleasure there". 1)

Here, and in his description of the daffodils:

"Such a jocund company
.....
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance."

1) Lines written in early spring.

We see the same imaginative power which fills Pascoli's own images with vivacity and animation, as when he exclaims:

"..... vedi se la siepe
ridere a mazzi le vermiglie bacche." 1)

He would recognise this tendency to see feeling and purpose in natural phenomena also in Hugo to whom it seems that the trees :

"Sont joyeux d'être ensemble et se disant des vers." 2)

Pascoli communicates also to nature his own acute sensibility to pain and sorrow. He depicts the olive as content to suffer for the good of man, 3), and in the same way Hugo describes how the: ".....palmier qui croit sur le rocher
Sent sa feuille jaunir et sa tige secher." 4)

Not only have Pascoli's plants power to feel joy and pain but they have a definite personality and also - power to dream and to look back upon their memories. The heady perfume of the Digitale purpurea 5) indicates her passionate nature and the perilous influence she has upon all who come into contact with her; the kitchen broom - "l'umile ancilla" chases the dirt from the house, and when she is at rest in her corner she dwells in imagination upon the happy time when she was growing in a meadow - young and slender. 1) Pascoli would find a similar attitude in Wordsworth's description of daisy "a cheerful flower, alert and gay" and the small celandine :

"Modest, yet withal an elf
Bold, and lavish of thyself;"

When Hugo writes:

"Et les fleurs semblent tour à tour
Se dresser pour que tu les vois," 2)

1) Sera d'ottobre (Myrica)
2) Printemps (Toute la lyre, XXIII).
3) Canti di Castelvecchio.
4) Feu du ciel (Orientales, IX).
5) Primi poemetti.

6) La canzone della granata (Canti di Castelvecchio)
7) Pour Jeanne Seuld (Chansons des rues et des bois)

the picture is so close to two created by Pascoli as to suggest the possibility of a reminiscence:-

In L'assiuolo: 1)

"gergersi il mandorlo e il melo
parevano a meglio vederla. (La luna)."

and in Naufrago: 2)

"Vengono e vanno in un sussurro l'onde
sembra che l'una dopo l'altra salga
per veder meglio."

Although the images in Pascoli's and Hugo's nature poetry reveal her as an animated body, we receive at the same time an impression that their animistic experiences were more often due to a vivid imagination acting on an acute sensibility than to a vision, such as Wordsworth's, of a divine and benevolent influence, for Wordsworth possesses an unshakable belief in the great moral and intellectual strength which the human soul can derive from continual intercourse with nature. He testifies to his own experience of communion with the "secret power that reigns" 3) in nature, and in this poem on the Influence of natural objects he addresses himself directly to this power:

"Wisdom and spirit of the universe!
Thou Soul, that art the Eternity of thought!
And giv'st to forms and images^a breath
And everlasting motion! not in vain,
By day or starlight, thus from my first dawn
Of childhood did'st thou intertwine for me
The passions that build up our human soul;

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- 1) *Myricae*
 - 2) *Nuovi poemetti*
 - 3) *Descriptive Sketches*, l. 346.

"Not with the mean and vulgar works of man,
But with high objects, with enduring things,
With life and nature; purifying thus
The elements of feeling and of thought." 1)

Communication with this divinity has the double effect of uplifting the human soul and imparting a new sweetness and mobility to the human countenance. Thus in one of the "Lucy" poems, he visualises Nature prophesying that:

".....she shall lean her ear
In many a secret place
Where rivulets dance their wayward round
And beauty born of murmuring sound
Shall pass into her face." 2)

At times Pascoli seems to share this faith in the goodness of nature, as, for example, in the preface to the Myricae where he speaks of her as "madre dolcissima, che anche nello spengercci sembra che ci culli e addormenti," and he declares himself willing to let her have her way with him: "Lasciamo fare a lei, che sa quello che fa, e ci vuol bene." This picture of nature as a compassionate mother bears a close resemblance to that of Shelley's Earth:

".....death shall be the last embrace of her
Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again!' " 3)

Usually, however, Pascoli's conception of the goodwill of nature takes on a more material aspect. For him her kindness is confined to the sort of benefits conferred by La siepe. 4)

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- 1) See also Nutting and The prelude, Bk. I., ll, 314-325
 - 2) Poems of the Imagination, X.
 - 3) Prometheus unbound. A.III, Sc.3, l. 105.
 - 4) Primi Poemetti.

"utile e pia"
..... che il passo chiudi coi tuoi rami
irsuti al ladro dormi'l di; ma dai
ricettoai nidi e pascolo agli sciami;"

and by the "pio castagno" 3)[†] in providing food and fuel. The adjective "pio" applied to both these objects savours more of Carducci or of classical poetry than of the fresh inspiration of the English romantic poets, and a similar impression is produced by Il bosco 3)[†]

"..... vivono i fauni ridarelli
ch'hanno le sussurranti aere in balia ;"

and although in this poem Pascoli affirms that

"..... pur viva e' la boscaglia,
viva sempre ne' fior della pervinca
e nelle grandi ciocche dell'acacia."

he generally gives the impression of being not so much aware of "a spirit in the woods" 1) as of the trees providing a refuge for the birds he loved so much. Some times nature even appears to him in the guise of the indifferent "matrigna" of Vigny or of Leopardi. 2) His mixed conception of nature is seen clearly in his very beautiful sea-poetry, especially in the Ultimo viaggio where he shows that he has the power to create in the reader that hunger for the "fresco alito salso" 3) which can be felt and communicated only by those for whom the sea is not only a wonderful spectacle but a source of fascination whose proximity is a spiritual need. We do not feel, however, in Pascoli that passionate pantheism which made Swinburne long to unite himself with it in the embrace of death. Here again Pascoli's attitude is not constant. Sometimes, like Hugo 4) he declares that he loves all aspects of the sea:

+ 3) Myricae (

1) Wordsworth: Nutting.

2) Cf. Il ciocco (Canti di Castelvecchio) and X agosto (Myricae)

3) L'ultimo viaggio (Poemi conviviali), VIII, Le rondini.

4) Cf. Géomé Nox (Les rayons et les ombres) Feu du ciel; Extase; (Les orientales).

" Mare! Mare!
dolce la', dal poggio azzurro,
il tuo urlo e il tuo sussurro." 1)

At other times he sees it as a monster:

"Il mare, al buio, fu cattivo. Urlava
sotto i sciocchi della folgore! Ora
qua e la' brilla (l'ossa la sua basa." 2)

Pascoli would have noticed this conception in Hugo who, after his beloved daughter was drowned, was always haunted by the treacherous malevolence of the "hydre aux écailles vertes." 3)

Hugo also sees nature in different guises according to his own mood, and he seems to echo Wordsworth's creed when he states that:

"Un esprit bienveillant, intelligent, profond,
Circule dans les champs, dans l'air, dans l'eau sonore;
Et la creation sait ce que l'homme ignore." 4)

When Wordsworth's brother was drowned, however, his grief, though very great, did not in the least affect his conception of nature as a power for good. He seems to have been gifted with a kind of spiritual perception transcending that of the senses whereby he received definite assurance of her goodwill. The mysticism of Hugo and Pascoli was not strong enough to give them such complete faith, but Pascoli would notice that his reaction to nature coincides with that of the romantic poets - French as well as English - in that it is so intensely personal that the feelings of the poet are projected on to the landscape to such an extent that they sometimes distort it.

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- 1) Baia tranquilla (Myricae).
 - 2) Neufrago (Nuovi poezetti).
 - 3) Châtiments, I, X.
 - 4) La nature (Toute la lyre), X.

This is the effect which is produced by the characters in Maud. Lamartine, like Pascoli, looks upon the scenes of past happiness through a veil of tears. Pascoli says: "Poesia e trovare nelle cose...il loro sorriso e la loro lacrima;" 1)but actually it is the poet's own state of mind which makes nature either smile or frown upon him.

Pascoli did not possess either the philosophical depth of Wordsworth or the psychological acuteness of Coleridge, or the unearthly spirituality of Shelley. He was, however, endowed with the abnormally developed organic sensibilities remarkable in all the English romantic poets, and although his transcendental tendencies drew him towards these mystical poets, yet his own enjoyment of nature actually had more in common with the more sensuous reactions of Keats, Moore and Tennyson. He would perceive that their nature-poetry, in common with his own, is that of an artist rather than that of a philosopher or mystic. All these poets, whose attitude to nature resembles that of Pascoli, are endowed with the most acute and wide sensibilities - more lavishly endowed than was Wordsworth, whose visual powers were very great, but in whom the senses of smell and taste were practically non-existent, and who appears to have possessed little ear for music 2). Pascoli, in common with nearly all the romantic poets, had a painter's eye for colour and gradations of light and shade; It is true that he had not the appreciative palate of Keats, nor did he possess this poet's unique power to convey

1) Il fanciullino, p. 20

2) Cf. Smith, J. C. A study of Wordsworth, Chap. I.

temperature. He had, however, as keen a sense of smell - almost as acute in Baudelaire - but his dominant sense is, I think, hearing. All his perceptions are abnormally acute, and by reason of this quality he has the power to re-create for us in his poems the actual fragrance and sun-lit colour of the countryside, and he would find that this - one of his most precious gifts - was also a predominant feature of the natural descriptions of Coleridge whose natural scenes are often enriched by vivid colours and piquant country odours:

".....How exquisite the scents
Snatched from yon bean field"

he exclaims in the Eolian harp and in Fears in solitude he comments on the "...fruit-like perfume of the golden furze". In the same way Pascoli brings a breath of the country to the reader with his:

".....pratine
odorate di mente e di serpillo" 1)

Here again we notice that it is not the fragrance of the violet or the musk-rose which is celebrated by these poets, but the pungent scent of mint and thyme: in L'asino 2) he speaks of "un vago odor di timo" and in Suor Virginia 2) he describes how, through the open window:

"Un alito di vento.....
recava odor d'acacia e di ginestra"

In both these we notice an ecstatic receptiveness to the beauty of nature, so that the sunshine and the soft caress of the summer breezes have a most soothing influence upon them, lulling their senses into a state of peace and blissful content until they lose all knowledge of time and place. Coleridge, indeed, participates in the mystic raptures which

1) Nuovi poemetti
2) Primi poemetti

Wordsworth experienced in the following passage from This lime-tree bower my prison:

".....I have stood,
Silent with swimming sense; yea, gazing round
On the wide landscape, gaze till all doth seem
Less gross than bodily; and of such hues
As veil the Almighty Spirit, when yet he makes
Spirits perceive his presence."

Keats, however, is transported over faery seas to enchanted lands by a strongly-felt sense-reaction alone in the same way as Pascoli becomes enveloped in a drowsy trance by the ceaseless clicking of the cicadas - the soft rustling of leaves - the innumerable deadened sounds of a summer afternoon:

"Siepi di melograno,
fratte di tamerice,
il palpito lontano
d'una trebbiatrice,
l'angelus argentino"

He loses all sense of time and place, and asks:

"dov'ero?" 1)

Pascoli's most realistic descriptions are nearly always remarkable for their wonderful rendering of auditory impressions which registered with him more readily than visible objects. Certain sounds seem to have a never-ending fascination for him and reappear constantly in his poetry: the rustling of dead leaves, the stir of the spinning-wheel, a distant church-bell. The extreme delicacy of his hearing is seen in the way in which the unwonted quiet of the empty house in La servetta di monte is rendered to perfection by the mention of those small sounds which are exaggerated by the stillness, and which the girl would not notice if she were not alone:

1) Patria (Dall'alba al tramonto, Myricae)

"E non ode che qualche mosca
che d'un tratto ronza ad un vetro;
non ode che il croccolio roco
che rende la pentola al fuoco.

.....
Il musino aguzzo del topo
è apparito ad uno spiraglio
.....
lontano lontano lontano
si sente sonare un campano." 1)

The striking similarity between this picture and the atmosphere of unnatural quiet created by Tennyson in the following two verses from Mariana suggests the possibility of Pascoli having had some recollection of this passage in mind when he composed it. Not only is the technique identical in the two passages - the representation of almost inaudible sounds so as to create an effect of unaccustomed silence and inactivity - but the setting is the same - a young girl alone in an empty house:

"All day within the dreamy house
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sang in the pane; the mouse
Behind the mouldering wainscot shriek'd,
.....
The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
The slow clock ticking, and the sound
Which to the wooing wind aloof
The poplar made,....."

In Tennyson he would recognise a master of technique as great as himself, and realise that here was a kindred spirit whose delight in beautiful sounds and his ability to reproduce them was an end in itself. The masterly use these two poets made of sound-combinations and their unerring choice of words which would most successfully convey their impressions is shown by their rendering of the sea breaking on the shore, and the famous words of Sir Bedevere:

1) Canti di Castelvecchio

"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds" 1)

are comparable only to Pascoli's:

".....sussurrio lento
dell'acqua che succhia la rena" 2).

It is not only in the reproduction of soft and melodious sounds that these poets excel; for them there is music in every voice of nature. In the forcible description of Lancelot:

"I heard the shingle grinding in the surge" 3)

there is the same consummate use of hard consonants and harsh sounds as in Pascoli's description:

".....assiduo sciacquo
fanno l'acqua tra la ghiaia!" 4)

Shelley was extremely susceptible to the mournful voice of the wind which he hears as a Dirge:

"Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;"

This was one of the sounds which haunted Pascoli, and his poetry abounds in lines like the following from Il castagno 5)

".....lungamente il tramontano
brontolò roco,"

The same image to suggest this sinister howling occurs to both poets, so Pascoli tells how:

"Il vento come un mostro ebbro mugliare udii notturno." 6)

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- 1) The passing of Arthur.
 - 2) Tramonti (Myricae)
 - 3) The Holy Grail.
 - 4) Baia tranquilla (Myricae)
 - 5) Myricae
 - 6) La piada (Nuovi poemetti)

while Shelley hears:

".....a northern whirlwind wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out."

This is a simile which would come naturally to the mind of both poets and it is doubtful whether Pascoli, when writing this line had any recollection of this expression from The Sensitive plant, but something like the fancy which Pascoli expresses in Novembre: 1)

"Ode lontano, da giardini ed orti,
di foglie un cader fragile. E l'estate
fredda, dei morti"

is found in the impression which Shelley receives in the Ode to Naples:

"I.....
.....heard the autumnal leaves like light foot-falls
Of spirits passing through the streets."

The "motif" of fallen leaves is a favourite one with these poets, as it is with many others. Pascoli, however, was particularly fascinated by the atmosphere of autumn, but, as in the beautiful lines above, he prefers to portray its penetrating sadness rather than its rich maturity and "mellow fruitfulness", finding this aspect more in tune with his own gentle melancholy, and he would note his own tone of poignant regret for the decaying year in Tennyson's Song:

"My very heart faints and my whole soul grieves
At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,
And the breath
Of the fading edges of box beneath,
And the year's last rose."

and in Novembre 2) of Victor Hugo, and if he knew the poetry of Hartley

1) Mynsae.
2) Orientales

Coleridge he would have noticed the same sense of desolation in his November, but the poets who were most susceptible to the tragic symbolism which lies behind this season were Verlaine, who expresses it most beautifully in the music of the Chanson d'automne, and Baudelaire in Brumes et pluies, in Chant d'automne and in the following cry wrung from his heart in his Confiteor de l'artiste:

"~~Que~~ les fins de journées d'automne sont pénétrantes! Ah! pénétrantes jusqu'à la douleur! L'immensité du ciel et de la mer..... Solitude silence mélodie monotone de la houle..." 1)

Here, as elsewhere, we feel how close Pascoli is to the French poets of the latter half of the nineteenth century - to the "decadents" whose poetry abounds in such impressions. With the latter, however, we feel that their predilection for autumn scenes arises not only from their refined and delicate perceptiveness, but also from their perverse preference for all aspects of decay, which led them to take more joy in the painted check of fading beauty than in the natural bloom of youth, and to find a greater delight in the season of death and decay than in the exhilarating breezes of spring. There is none of this over-sophisticated perversity in Pascoli, however much his musical impressionism may resemble their manner; ~~the~~ melancholy atmosphere which Pascoli creates in his autumn and evening scenes is most akin to Wordsworth's masterly reproduction of that air of peaceful solemnity which broods over a hamlet or small village when the light is fading, and we hear over the

1) Petite poèmes en prose.

shadowed fields the remote, sad tone of a church-bell. The extreme delicacy of perception which Pascoli shared with the later French poets was, therefore, present already in the English poets of the first stage of romanticism: in Wordsworth and in Coleridge. The "imaginative apprehension of the silent and unseen processes of nature, its ministries of dew and frost" noted in Coleridge by Pater 1) is found also in Pascoli, as we see from the way in which he senses the advent of spring: "Si respira una dolce aria che scioglie le dure zolle" 2)

and again where he describes how:

"La zolla già lievita come il pane
al sollicello e screpola e si sfa" 3)

chez
As Valentin remarks: "(Pascoli) admire surtout/les autres les manifestations d'une sensibilité qui ressemble à la sienne" 4) and in these poets he would find not only this delicate sensibility but also that wide knowledge of every natural phenomenon which is possessed only by those who have lived very close to nature for a long time. Pascoli would notice that in their descriptions - as in his own - everything is particularised: for instance Tennyson speaks not of "grass" in general, but of: "The oat-grass and the sword-grass and the bulrush in the pool." 5) and in all these poets he would note the accuracy and detail of the natural descriptions. The loving care with which Wordsworth describes the smallest creature testifies to his ever-present intuition of the divine in nature. For him:

1) *Appreciations*, 1889, p.92, and Cf. for this quality; The dell; Frost at midnight and Fears in solitude.

2) L'aquilone (Primi poemetti).

3) Cf. Serra, Salti cafi.

4) *Op. cit.* p.431.

5) The may-queen.

"..... The meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears." 1)

He seems to have been gifted with a kind of spiritual perception which enabled him to rise via his sensory reactions to a mystic experience, but poets whose mysticism was not so ardent, but whose organic sensibility was wider and richer, are so responsive to every impression that their overwhelming sensations seem to dazzle and confuse them. The extreme sensibility of these poets is shown by the way in which their sensations mingle so that they describe one in terms of the other. Thus Pascoli writes:

".....e quelle mie viole
gialle, ch'hanno un odore...come il suono
dei vespri, dopo mezzogiorno,....."2)

and he must have recognised the same manifestation of an unusually acute sense of smell in Shelley when he read:

"And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue,
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense." 3)

For Pascoli - as for Baudelaire⁴⁾-every odour has a distinct personality, even a colour, of its own:

"Dore intonò col zufolo silvestre
la sua fanfara del ritorno; e il suono
sparse per tutto un vago odor cilestre:

per tutto un casto odore, un odor bruno," 5)

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- 1) Ode on intimations of immortality.
2) L'oliveta e l'orto (Brani poemetti, l'accestire).
3) The sensitive plant, 1125-29.
4) Cf. Correspondances, Le flacon, etc.
5) Il solitario (Nuovi poemetti).

If Pascoli knew the famous sonnet which later became the creed of the French symbolist school it is possible that when he wrote:

".....ella (la fanciulla) si leva su,
cantando, e inzappa l'erba, onde s'esala
odor di fresco e verde e gioventù." 1)

he may have had in his mind some recollection of the two lines:

"Il est des parfums frais comme des chairs d'enfants,
Doux comme les haubois, verts comme les prairies," 2).

Whereas Wordsworth looks beyond sensation to a clear vision of the Divine Pascoli is so much enthralled by the various impressions which assail all his senses at once that he never gains a definite conception of Nature. Moreover his tendency to lose consciousness of his own individuality and to enter into the feelings of his surroundings makes him see reality from many other angles. Thus although Pascoli feels nature as a living organism, her personality remains an enigma. For him, as for Baudelaire:

"La Nature est un temple où de vivante piliers
Laissent parfois sortir de confuses paroles;
L'homme y passe à travers des forêts de symboles
Qui l'observent avec des regards familiers.

Comme de longs échos qui de loin se confondent
Dans une ténébreuse et profonde unité,
Vaste comme la nuit et comme la clarté,"

For Pascoli also everything in nature is a symbol, not necessarily of the divine, but of the unknown whose essence evades him and which he sees stretching away into ever more impenetrable mystery. It is not known whether Pascoli knew this poem or any of the works of Baudelaire, and even if he did, he would have probably discovered the exact expression of his conception of nature in the following couplet of Poe; which evokes

1) Le armi, IV (Primi poemetti).
2) Les correspondances.

the same dim landscape full of mysterious voices as Pascoli was to create in L'assiuolo: 1)

"All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings." 2)

Following the steps of Pellegrini 3) another Italian critic has attempted to prove that it was Baudelaire rather than Poe who led Pascoli to the transcendental poetry of the romantic poets of northern Europe, and who fostered in him the growth of a mystical attitude toward the universe: "Più che Poe fu il Baudelaire come il più prossimo a guidarlo nello studio degli altri romantici francesi e inglesi attraverso quelli alla letteratura dai mistici tedeschi" and to support the questionable statement that "molti versi e molte idee poetiche del romagnolo sono echi degli atteggiamenti spirituali baudelariani" a comparison is made between Elevation 4) (described as "d'intonazione shelleyiana") and - possibly due to the mention of Shelley - La Lodo-
la 5). Certainly the phrase where he calls the lark's song:

"Un inno.....
Sopra il dolore, più su del destino,
oltre la morte!"

calls to mind the lines in which Baudelaire's spirit rises:

"Par delà le soleil, par delà les èthers,
Par delà les confins des spheres étoilées."

but here, I think, Pascoli meant merely to suggest the heavenly rapture of that voice which seems to soar above all earthly things rather than to express his mystical aspirations. Moreover his attraction towards

1) Myrica

2) Al Aaraaf.

3) Cf. pp. 78-80

4) Les fleurs du mal. III. This assertion was made by Maria Borghesini Rigotti: Il sentimento mistico nella opera di Giovanni Pascoli, 1921: pp.5-6.

5) Odi.

the boundless reaches of the sky is shared by all mystics and is a manifestation of their longing for the unknown and the infinite.

The "cosmic" poetry of Shelley, Lamartine, Byron, Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Victor Hugo and Rimbaud - affinities and differences and possible reminiscences in Pascoli.

Pascoli must have read with delight Shelley's many descriptions, full of light and colour, of the "dark sky's starry cope" 1) and there is a striking resemblance between the expression -

"The point of one white star is quivering still
Deep in the orange light of widening morn" 2)

and that of Pascoli in Vespro 3)

"Dal cielo rosso pullula una stella."

Lamartine too was enthralled by the stars, which he often calls golden dust:

".....les flots de poussière
Qui sont monde aussi." 4)

"..... soleils comme des grains de sable." 5)

and in Etoile 6) he says:

"Alors ces globes d'or, ces îles de lumière
Jaillissent par milliers de l'ombre qui s'enfuit,
Comme un poudre d'or sur les pas de la nuit;"

and in La perte d'Anio 1) he speaks of

".....les cioux semés de leur sable splendide."

The same image recurs also in Pascoli's poetry: in Il Ciocco 2)

he writes:

-
- 1) Revolt of Islam, Canto 11, l, 795.
 - 2) Prometheus unbound, A.I, Sc. I, l. 117.
 - 3) Myricae, In campagna, V.
 - 4) La tristesse, (Harmonies).
 - 5) L'infini dans les cioux (Harmonies).
 - 6) Nouvelles méditations.

".....per le vie, battute
da stelle in fuga, come rossa nube
fuma la densa polvere del cielo;"

and again in the same poem:

"un astro nuovo.....tra tutto
il polverio del nostro vecchio cielo."

In La vertigine 1) he speaks of:

"quel polverio di stelle!"

and once more, at least, in La pecorella smarrita 1),

"In quella immensa polvere di luce
splendeano, occhi di draghi e di leoni,
Vega, Deneb, Aldebaran, Polluce....."

This idea may of course have occurred to Pascoli independently. It was used also by Leopardi in La ginestra, and by Milton, but the source of the image in the last two lines of the above passage is almost certainly contained in the following lines of Victor Hugo:

"Dis, larve Aldebaran, répondez, Spectre Saturne,
Ne verrons nous jamais sur le masque nocturne
s'ouvrir de nouveaux yeux?" 2)

Pascoli would have special reason to notice passages of cosmic poetry, for was it not the divine mission of the cosmic poet to bring about a change of heart in mankind by bringing home to all men a salutary sense of their own insignificance and helplessness before the awful immensity of the Universe? 3) In this connection Pascoli quotes Leopardi and Poe as two of the greatest cosmic poets, adding: "potrei ricordare molti altri." 4) It is not unlikely, therefore,

1) Nuovi poemetti

2) Contemplations, II, IX, ii.

3) Gf. p. 33.

4) L'era nuova. (Pensieri e discorsi) p.122.

that he would be impressed by such passages even when created by poets with whom he had no other affinity, and it may be that he was acquainted with the following lines of Byron:

"The bright sun was extinguished, and the stars
Did wander darkling in the eternal space,
Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth,
Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air;
Noon came and went - and came, and brought no day." 1)

These lines, written by a poet so alien in temperament to Pascoli, may have been at the back of his mind when he conceived the flight of imagination in Il ciocco, where he visualises the end of all things - even of the Universe itself:

".....se, dopo la procella
dell'Universo, lenta cade e i Soli
la neve dell'Eternità cancella?

Che poseranno senza mai più voli
nè mai più urti nè mai più faville,
fermi per sempre ed in eterno Soli " 2)

According to Galletti 3) the only cosmic poetry capable of producing as powerful an effect as these passages are some of the later Contemplations 4) of Victor Hugo. When Shelley, Lamartine or Rimbaud stand enraptured by the glory of the universe, their delight is unclouded by the undercurrent of terror which always takes possession of Pascoli and Hugo for whom the darkness is a sinister void - a pit of blackness, and the contrast between them and the poets whose mysticism is strong enough to lift them above their fear is seen most clearly when we find that Wordsworth also writes of the "chasm of sky" 5), "the abyss of air" 6),

1) Darkness

2) ll. 320-325

3) Op. cit. p.103

4) Cf. Ce que dit la bouche d'ombre, Horror, Numen

5)

6)

and describes the sky as:

".....an abyss
In which the everlasting stars abide," 1)

When used by Wordsworth, however, the word evokes only wonder and awe, and the same impression is produced by this poet's relation of the trances to which he was subject during his boyhood: "I was often unable to think of external things as having external existence, and I communed with all that I saw as something not apart from, but inherent in my own immaterial nature. Many times when going to school have I grasped at a wall or a tree to recall myself from this abyss of idealism to the reality." This incident left in him no terror such as was produced in Pascoli by the nightmare of La vertigine 3) although the sensation of falling into space was actually experienced by Wordsworth, whereas it was only imagined by Pascoli.

Pascoli's dread of falling into "quell'immense baratro di stelle" was also expressed by Baudelaire in Le gouffre which apparently haunted his dreams:

"Hélas, tout est abîme.....
Mainte fois de la peur je sent passer le vent.

En haut, en bas, partout, la profondeur, la grève,
La silence, l'espace affreux et captivant....."

In Lamartine and the first English romantic poets Pascoli would recognise his own feeling for space and his own delight in the "folgorio del firmamento" 4): Baudelaire would help him to see that other great poets shared his terror of the immensity of the universe, but Pascoli

1) Nuovi poemetti

2) La Pecorella smarrita (Nuovi poemetti)

would realise that he was much more of a mystical than a pictorial poet. Baudelaire's sensibilities were acute, but he did not habitually think in images as did Pascoli. In Hugo, however, Pascoli would recognise a poet whose joy, like his own, was marred by apprehension, but who evoked the radiance of the stars in terms of vivid reality; and we have reason to believe that he may have inspired several of Pascoli's most beautiful images, as, for example, in the following passages where both poets describe the stars as flowers of flame. Hugo writes:

"Le pâtre attend sous le ciel bleu
L'heure où son étoile paisible
Va s'épanouir, fleur de feu,
Au bout d'une tige invisible." 1)

and again when he expresses a wish, often voiced also by Pascoli, 2) to see new stars in the sky, he uses the same metaphor:

"A-t-il cessé, le vent qui fit maître ces roses,
Sirius, Orion, toi, Vénus, qui reposes
Notre oeil dans le péril?
Ne verrons-nous jamais sous ces grandes haleines
D'autres fleurs de lumière éclore dans les plaines
De l'éternel avril?" 3)

This expression is used at least four times by Pascoli: in Part VI of Le Memnonidi 4) where he speaks of:

".....un aureo stelo con in cima un astro"
in Il ciocco 5)

"Là, dove i mondi sembrano con lenti
passi, come concorde immensa mandra,
pascere il fior dell'etere....."

-
- 1) Les rayons et les ombres, XXVI
 - 2) Cf. Il ciocco (Canti di Castelvecchio)
 - 3) Contemplations, II, IX, ii.
 - 4) Poemi conviviali
 - 5) Canti di Castelvecchio.

and again in Rossini 1):

"Fioriva, il cielo azzurro già di stami
di fior di croco."

but Pascoli would observe how often a note of fear creeps in Hugo's appreciation of the beauty of the stars:

".....lueurs éloignées,
Feux purs, pâles orient,
Ils scintillent.....ô poignées
De diamants effrayants! 2)

As for Pascoli, for him the universe is always "radioux gouffre!" "abime obscur!" "le gouffre en démençe" "puits du vertige éternel" 3) (Is this phrase the source of La vertigine?) Pascoli shares this obsession with the "profondità dell'Universo" 4). He would find here also an imagination which stops short in terror at the sight of the "baratri profondi colmi di stelle". These two poets realize the full potentialities of the "abisso astrale" 4) "gli abissi ceruli, profondi." 5).

It has been shown that Hugo's preoccupation with the abyss which, like Baudelaire, he sees in all things, is due to the fact that "chez Hugo la description des espaces universels sont, en quelque sorte une peinture grossie des abimes intérieurs" 6). Thus the void of the universe has become fused in his mind with the dark places in his own subconscious, and ~~is~~ very probably the same is true of Pascoli. All three poets were haunted by the mystery which surrounds all things, and which is rendered more conspicuous by the darkness which blots out familiar objects, to reveal the remote heavenly bodies. Baudelaire writes:

1) Canto III (Poemi italiani. Cf. also La pecorella smarrita (Nuovi poemetti) L. 37

2) Chansons des rues et des bois, VII. 3) Pecorella smarrita (Nuovi poemetti)

4) Contemplations, I, XXX

6) Béguin, Albert, L'âme romantique
et le rêve p. 395

5) I due alberi (Nuovi poemetti).

"Partout l'homme subit la terreur du mystère,
Et ne regarde en haut qu'avec un oeil tremblant." 1)

and Hugo writes: "Avec le zodiaque éclatant de la nuit,
Tourne le zodiaque effrayant du mystère;" 2)

while Pascoli exclaims: "O se la notte almeno lei non fosse!" 3).

When Hugo cries:

"Oh! que le gouffre est noir et que l'oeil est débile!
Nous avons devant nous le silence immobile." 4)

and again:

"Nous errons, troupeau désuni,
Partout en nous ce grand mystère,
Oeil borné, regard infini" 5)

we find an echo in Il focolare 6) where Pascoli calls mankind:

"gente che va nè dove sa nè donde.
.....
E chi lo volge al dubbio d'una voce,
e chi l'innalza verso il ciel lontano,"

In the same poem he speaks of the "povero capo stanco di mistero"
and when all three poets gazed into the darkness like Les mages 7) of
Hugo they saw:

".....le fond du gran cratère" and felt

".....en soi du mystère
Entrer tout le frisson obscur,"

-
- 1) Nouvelles fleurs du mal, X.
 - 2) Toute la lyre, I, XXXIX.
 - 3) La vertigine (Nuovi poemetti).
 - 4) Contemplations, Bk. VI, XVI: Cf. also Ibid. Bk. IV, VIII
 - 5) Ceruleum mare (Les rayons et les ombres).
 - 6) Primi poemetti.
 - 7) Contemplations, Bk. VI, XXIII.

Pascoli would also notice that in Hugo, as in himself, the rapt contemplation of the night would have the effect of producing in the poet a kind of mystic trance when he felt that he was almost in the presence of God.

These moments are experienced by all mystics, and Pascoli may have come across Wordsworth's accounts of his visions in Tintern Abbey, The Pedlar and The Simplon Pass. In the English poet, however, the vision is hailed as a divine revelation and a final proof of the "one interior life That lives in all things"]

Rimbaud also felt that he had reached the heart of the Universe when he gazes so intently into the night that he loses consciousness of his separate being, and all sense of time and space disappear:

"Elle est retrouvée!" he cries triumphantly
Quoi? l'éternité.
C'est la mer mêlée
Au soleil." 2)

Pascoli could not attain to the calm, unshakable faith of Wordsworth; neither could he follow Rimbaud on the excursions which his spirit makes into the ether: "J'ai tendu des cordes de clocher à clocher; des guirlandes de fenêtre à fenêtre; des chaînes d'or d'étoile à étoile, et je danse." 3) The exultant rapture which informs this passage and also much of the cosmic poetry of Shelley is never found in Pascoli. Perhaps his spirit, bruised as it was by excess of sorrow, had become incapable of realising the feeling of pure joy. He would, of course, find that many mystics

1) Extract from a passage of blank verse written between 1798 and 1800, quoted by Smith, J.C., Op. cit., p.93.

2) Délires, II, Faim.

3) Phrases.

shared his fear of the universe. Pascal also knew "les frissons de l'infini" 1) but his ardent spirituality enabled him to rise above his fears to a firm faith in God. Pascoli lacked also the intellectual strength and reasoning power by means of which Pascal and Dante organise the material of their visions. He must have known, moreover, that he could never reach these heights, but he would have been encouraged to find that the qualities in which he was deficient were missing also in Victor Hugo, who, like himself, tried to find the key to the riddle of life in the cosmos. All that is given to him also are a few momentary flashes of intuition when he seems to sense a divine presence behind the material world. One of these brief glimpses is described in the following passage:

"J'étais seul, près des flots, par une nuit d'étoiles,
Pas un nuage aux cieux, sur les mers pas de voiles,
Mes yeux plongeaient plus loin que le monde réel.

.....
Et les étoiles d'or, légions infinies.

.....
Disaient, en inclinant leurs couronnes de feu;

.....
C'est le Seigneur, le Seigneur Dieu!" 2)

Here it is evident that the poet's inspiration is derived primarily from his visual appreciation; his eyes are dazzled by the brilliance of the stars multiplied by reflection in the sea; his spirit is wrapt into a religious peace by the silence and stillness of the scene. The passage, owes much of its effect, however, to the music of the verse, and there is, I think, a hint of conventionality in the closing lines.

1) Pensées

2) Extase, Orientales, XXXVII; See also: Les rayons et les ombres XL; Les contemplations, VI, I; XVI, IV.

Pascoli's visionary moments, also, are always produced by some outward cause, by his reaction to an unusual and awe-inspiring scene, as in La vertigine 1) where his vivid imagination, reproducing the sensation of falling into space, gives him for an instant the feeling of having come into contact with God:

"di là di ciò che vedo e ciò che penso,
non trovar fondo, non trovar mai posa,
da spazio immenso ad altro spazio immenso;
forse, giù giù, via via, sperar...che cosa?
La sosta! Il fine! Il termine ultimo! Io,
io te, di nebulosa in nebulosa,
di cielo in cielo, in vano e sempre, Dio!"

Sometimes the visionary experience is produced by a visual reaction combined with an unusual state of mind or body - excitement or exhaustion, as in L'aurora boreale 2) where the poet, in a state of depression and home-sickness, aggravated by the exhaustion of a sleepless night looks out upon a sky lit up by the rare and unearthly glow of the Aurora Borealis. Then, he tells us, he heard the "palpitare del gran tutto" and he really feels the presence of an immortal spirit shedding a radiance through the mystery which veils the universe:

"Ti vidi, o giorno che su l'infinita
via delle nebulose ultime e sole
appari. M'apparisti, o vita
che splendi quando è morto il sole.

Un alito era, solo, per il miro
gurge, di luce; un alito disperso
da un solo acito respiro
e che velava l'universo:

come se fosse, là, per un istante,
immobile sul sonno e su l'oblio
di tutti, nella sua raggianti
incomprensibilità, Dio!"

1) Nuovi poemetti
2) Odi e Inni.

The need for some outward preparation for vision was experienced also by Wordsworth 1) but where the mystic intuition of Hugo and Pascoli falls short is in its failure to lead them to a lasting faith in the goodness and immortality of the spiritual powers which govern the universe.

Pascoli never escapes for long from his fear of the unknown; his attitude is seen in Il ciocco 2) where his anxiety concerning the fate of the universe continually overshadows his enjoyment of the "denso sciame di mondi" and the poet's soul - "fanciullino mesto" shrinks in panic from the contemplation of the Infinite.

Pascoli's preoccupation with the problem of the origin of evil found also in Victor Hugo.

The beauty of the universe makes Pascoli all the more aware of the deficiencies of the earth - the only planet whose peace is disturbed by the wickedness of man.

".....tu, Cielo dall'alto dei mondi
sereni, infinito, immortale,
oh! d'un pianto di stelle lo inondi
quest'atomo opaco del Male!" 3)

This idea of "la Terra, sola rea, sola infelice" 4) is found also in

Hugo's Sagesse 5) where he exclaims:

"L'homme a seul dévié! Quoi! tout dans l'univers,
Tous les êtres, les monts, les forêts, les prés verts,
Le jour devant le ciel, l'eau lavant les ravines,
Ont encor, comme au jour où de ses mains divines
Jénova sur Adam imprima sa grandeur,

1) Cf. Smith, J.C., Op. cit., pp.43-44.

2) Canti di Castelvecchio

3) X agosto. (Myricae)

4) La pecorella smarrita (Nuovi poemetti)

5) Les rayons et les ombres.

"Toute leur innocence et toute leur candeur!
L'homme seul est tombé! - Fait dans l'auguste empire
Pour être le meilleur, il en devient le pire."

Thus Pascoli would notice that Victor Hugo also was sorely troubled by the problem of the origin and cause of Evil, and that he too was unable to find any satisfying reason for the existence of "l'autre mystère que tu nommes le mal". 1)

When Pascoli meditated upon the fact that his own happiness, like that of so many of his fellow-men, had been completely destroyed by the power of wickedness taking possession of the human heart, he turned away from humanity, and tried to find consolation in the beauty and serenity of nature. Even here, however, he sensed the presence of evil as we can see from his representation of the Digitale purpurea 2) whose heady perfume, it seems to the poet, can have the effect of awakening dangerous passions in the hearts of young and innocent girls who are attracted towards its vivid flowers which seem to the poet "dita apruzzolate di sangue, dita umane,". All nature is doomed to suffer: the olive-tree 3); the ants whose peaceful existence is destroyed by fire, and reading Il Vischio 4) we receive the impression that Pascoli believes Evil to be the greatest power in the world 3) and indeed he says precisely this in his "Inno" Al re morto:

"Chi grande nel mondo? nel mondo
di grande c'è il Male.

-
- 1) La pensee (Toute la lyre)
 - 2) Primi poemetti.
 - 2) La canzone dell'ulivo (Canti di Castelvecchio)
 - 3) Primi poemetti. See pp. 187-190.

"C'è il Male che piange, che prega,
ch'ha freddo, ch'ha fame: e quel Male
che accusa il fratello e rinnega
la madre: quel Male ch'è male.

Il Male è sol quello che ride
d'un lugubre riso di folle;
il Male è sol quello che uccide
che temprà di sangue le zolle;

le zolle che poi gli empiranno
la bocca, al Caino"

and then he reaches the last despairing conclusion, which sounds like
a blasphemy:

"Il Male è più grande di Dio!
Dio scende; ma l'uomo l'infrange;
Dio passa, Dio dice "Son io
che piange in ogni uomo che piange!"

This conception is no mere passing thought, for Pascoli continually
represents God and the Virgin Mary watching helplessly at the bedside of
the dying with no power to bring them back to life. 1)

This doctrine sounds strange on the lips of the Pascoli whose
innate optimism always made him inclined to bring good out of evil, but
his early contact with the wickedness of men would inevitably drive his
thoughts in this direction. He would find moreover that his burning
indignation against tyranny, corruption and injustice 2) was shared by
Shelley and the English romantic poets, and above all by Hugo whose sense
of outrage equals his own, as we see from the following passage where he
tells how -

".....le mal m'est apparu
puissant, joyeux, robuste, Triomphant" and the poet asks:

1) Cf. Ceppe (Myricae, Creature, II).

2) Cf. Pace; Alle Kursistki; Pope, (Inni).

".....Pourquoi le fiel, l'envie,
La haine? Et j'ai vidé les poches de la vie.
Et je n'ai trouvé dedans que deuil, misère, ennui.
J'ai vu le loup mangeant l'agneau,
Le vrai boitant: l'erreur haute de cent coudées;
Tous les erreurs cailloux jétés à toutes les idées.

La géante douleur, spectre incommensurable.
Océans faits des pleurs de tout le genre humain." K)

We see from the last two lines of this passage that Hugo shared Pascoli's pity for poor, oppressed humanity, 2) and it is typical of Pascoli that, whereas he could discipline himself to pardon his own enemy, he cannot forgive the indifference and cruelty of the world towards the beggar and the outcast, so that his sense of injustice sometimes lends him a power of invective whose biting sarcasm is equalled only by that of Hugo in Les Châtiments. The best example of this vein which seems almost out of character in Pascoli, and many, therefore, have been inspired by Hugo, is the stupendous speech addressed to Fate by Il Mendico K):

"Ti lodo, Fortuna,
Nel mondo a te piacque gettare
tuo figlio.....

.... tutto m'ahi dato a ch'io viva:
la mano, che regge la croce,
il piede, che mai non arriva,
la voce,
cui niuno risponde.

.....
Ho errato nel mondo sì bello,
seguito da un cupo latrato
tendendo all'oblio del fratello
mutato
le simili mani."

1) Contemplations, L. V, III, Ecrit en 1846: Cf. also: Te Deum du 1er janvier; Expiation (Les Châtiments).

2) Cf. also: Châtiments: L.I., X; XII; XIII; L.II: II; III. L.III: IV; L.VI: III; Feuilles d'automne, XXXII; Contemplations, III, II; XIV;
3- Canti di Castelvecchio.

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and in the hour of death he thanks her for giving so little to leave:

"ti lodo perx ciò che non ebbi;
che non abbandono.
.....
discendo laggiù tra le grame
mie genti, nel mondo che tace,
tra gli umili morti di fame
che dormono in pace - "

Pascoli's obsession with death found in Poe, Hugo, Baudelaire,
Carducci and Maeterlinck - "romantic" atmosphere in Pascoli -
mystic awe in poetry - Wordsworth.

To Il Mendico and those to whom life brings only misery, death seems the only thing to hope for. Pascoli would find that others longed for this happy release and he may have known the beautiful lines of Baudelaire:

"O Mort, vieux capitaine, il est temps! levons l'ancre!
Ce pays nous ennuie, ô mort! Appareillons!
Va.....
Verse-nous ton poison pour qu'il nous reconforte!" 1)

Pascoli too often longed to die and he once dreamed that death had relieved him of all his sorrow:

".....Ero guarito.
Era spirato il nembo del mio male
In un alito. Un muovere di ciglia
e vidi la mia madre al capezzale
io la guardava senza meraviglia.

Libero!" 2)

1) Fleurs du mal, CXXVI, La mort, Le voyage, viii.

2) Ultimo sogno (Myricae): Cf. also L'ora di Barga (Canti di Castelvecchio)

Although this poem is generally supposed to have been suggested by Le dernier souvenir of Leconte de Lisle 1), it may be a reminiscence of Poe' s For Annie:

"Thank Heaven ! The crisis -
The danger is past,
.....
And the fever called "Living"
Is conquered at last."

This peaceful resignation is not Pascoli' s usual attitude. We know that he shared Poe' s preoccupation with decay 2), and he would find this element also in Hugo 3) and in Baudelaire 4). Pascoli' s obsession with putrefaction certainly aggravates his preoccupation with death, but he would not need any encouragement from foreign poets, to give it a predominant place in his poetry for he would have already found this element in Carducci' s pagan conception of death. 5). Pascoli, however, would not be able to agree with the elder poet' s/acceptance of death as the end of the spirit, for this decision was in direct opposition to his temperament which made him abhor any definite conclusion. We have seen that, like Hugo, he cannot attain to a lasting belief in immortality, but he cannot accept the fact that the dead are quite extinguished; he feels their invisible presence everywhere 6) and especially is he

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- 1) Cf. Arullani, V.A.C Pei regni dell' arte e della critica, cited by Cucinotta, p. 11 La poesia del dolore e del focolare nell' opera di Giovanni Pascoli.
 - 2) See p. 50: Cf. also Mamma e bimba (poesie varie)
 - 3) Cf. Prière pour tous, Feuilles d' automne, iii.
 - 4) Cf. Le charogne, Le voyage á Cythère.
 - 5) Cf. Levia gravia VIII, etc
 - 6) Cf. La tovaglia (Canti di Castelvecchio). Il giorno dei morti (Myricae) et

conscious of his mother always near him. He would find that Hugo had the same feeling, but it is interesting to note that whereas Pascoli describes her as: "una voce nella mia vita" 1), Hugo sees only her eyes:

"..... j'aperçois toujours
..... l'oeil de ma mère morte." 2)

In Pascoli the audible, in Hugo the visual sense reacts first. Even when these poets visualise the dead in the grave, they believe them to be still conscious of the living. Hugo writes:

"Les morts gisent couchés sous nos pieds dans la terre.....
..... Comme é travers un rêve, ils entendent nos voix." 3)

Both poets feel that the dead are forever chained to the earth even when they conceive a faint hope that perhaps after all they may be reunited in a life beyond the grave. This hope never reaches a conviction, however, and when Pascoli cries in anguish to the shade of his mother:

....."Ma dimmi, o madre, dimmi almeno,
se nel tramonto del suo giorno
tuo figlio si deve sereno
preparare per un ritorno! "4)

-
- 1) La Voce (Canti di Castelvecchio)
 - 2) Contemplations, vol V, En marche, VI Cf. also: Toute la lyre, V, Le moi, XXI; Les rayons et les ombres, XIV
 - 3) Contemplations, Vol. IV, Pauca meae, XXI. Cf. Pascoli: Giorno dei morti, I due cugini (Myricae) etc.
 - 4) Commiato (Canti di Castelvecchio)

she never replies. It would seem that both poets were too much obsessed by material death to believe that anything human could rise above it; in his poem In morte di Alessandro Morri 1)

Pascoli writes:

"Ditemi: i morti infradician sotterra,
o qualche cosa evapora al cielo?
Ovver, mio amico, ora é destino
che putre fango e cenere sii tu?"....

and the same kind of terrified speculations are often found in Hugo, who, like Pascoli, 2) seems to think that the ^{may}dying man/perhaps catch a glimpse of what lies beyond:

"Que voit-il? ...O terreur! de ténébreuses routes,
Un chaos composé de spectres et de doutes,
La terre vision, le ver réalité,
Un jour oblique et noir qui, troublant l'âme errante,
Mêle au dernier rayon de la vie épirante
Ta première lueur, sinistre éternité" 3)

This conception of death as a wierd and terrifying region filled with a wild chaos of formless shapes half-revealed by an unearthly light is found also in Il brivido 4) where Pascoli imagines death as

1) Poesie varie

2) Cf. Mistero (Myricae)

3) Contemplations, Vol. II - Les luttes et Le rêves, XXVI

4) Canti di Castelvecchio

"Veduta vanità
con'ombra di mosca:
ma ombra infinita,
di nuvola fosca
che tutto fa sera:
.....
Tremenda e veloce
come un uragano"

It is this sinister atmosphere which Pascoli would find in the poets - especially in Hugo - and would recognise as the perfect expression of his own characteristic attitude to life - terror mingled with fascination. This element is almost entirely absent from Italian poetry: it played no part in Carducci's reactions, and it is interesting to read that La civetta 1) was probably inspired by Mors 2) for the difference in tone is all the more apparent because of the similarity of subject:

"Quando a le nostre case la diva severa discende,
da lungi il rombo de la volante s'ode.

e l'ombra de l' aia che gelida gelida avanza
diffonde intorno lugubre silenzio.

.....
Immobili quasi per brivido gli alberi stanno,
e solo il rivo roco s'ode gemere.

Entra ella, e passa, e tocca; e senza pur volgersi atteri
gli arbusti lieti di lor rame giovani;

.....
invecchiano ivi ne l'ombra i superstiti, al rombo
del ritorno teso l' orecchie, e dea."

-
- 1) Myricae
2) Odi barbare

hint of witch-craft in the fourth verse, transports us into a spell-bound northern twilight. The unearthly effect is heightened by the very imprecision of the apparition whose sudden appearance is admirably suggested by the mingling of sense-impressions which it evokes:

"Orma sognata d' un volar di piume,
orma d' un soffio molle di velluto,"

Pascoli usually portrays Death not as an image - however indistinct - but as a sound 1) or just as a silent and invisible Presence of which we are made aware by the feeling of vague terror which it arouses:

"Mi scosse, e mi corse
le vene il ribrezzo.
Passata m'è forse
rasente, col raso
dell' ombra sua nera,
la morte....
Com'era?"

Chi vede lei, serra
né apre piú gli occhi.
Lo metton sotterra
che niuno lo tocchi,
gli chiedo - Com'era?
rispondi.....
Com'era? 2)

Even when Death is not directly mentioned we feel it is always there - waiting silently in the shadows - , and no poet

1) In Ultimo Galoppo he hears it as "un fruscio sottile, assiduo, quasi di cipressi;" in Speranze e memorie as "un galoppo lontano"; in Il Nunzio as "Un murmure, un lugubre reate". (All in *Myricae*).
2) Il brivido (Canti di Castelvechio)

has ever given this element a more prominent place in his work, as he was himself aware, for in the preface to the Canti di Castelvecchio he asks: "Troppo? Troppa questa morte?" He would find, however, that in Poe, in Baudelaire, in Hugo, it is this unseen Power which influences every turn of the poet's imagination, and if he knew the plays of Maeterlinck he would see that their puppet-characters are as helpless as the little birds of La Civetta - paralysed with fear. 1)

Pascoli's ability to feel and portray this emotion is one of his deepest affinities with the mystical foreign poets of romanticism and Symbolism. Romagnoli calls the Poemi di Ate 2) "pitture d' incubi.. che si figgono nell' animo con la suggestione terribile delle scene di Edgardo Poe". 3). This is one of the traits which removes Pascoli farthest from Carducci and his contemporaries who, would probably regard fear as a craven sentiment unworthy of their stoic creed. Mystic awe, dread of the unseen, the supernatural, is however, far above mere physical terror: the hopeless panic of Mecisteo fleeing before the avenging pursuit of Fate 4) is in the same category as the unearthly impression recorded in "The Prelude" 5)

1) cf. L' intruse; Les sept princesses; L' Interieur; La mort de Tintagiles; La princesse Malaine.

2) Poemi conviviali.

in Nuova antologia

3) Romagnoli, E. Poemi conviviali di G. P. 16^a settembre 1904

4) Ate: (Poemi conviviali): Valentin suggests that this poem may have inspired by Hugo's Conscience: Cf. Op. cit., p. 196

5) Still

"I heard among the solitary hills
Low breathings coming after me, and sounds
Of indistinguishable motion, steps silent
almost as the turf they trod."

Wordsworth realised that his spiritual fear is a necessary element in the formation of the poet. Pascoli also knew this for he calls Il Fanciullino "quello... che ha paura al buio, perché al buio vede o crede di vedere; quello che alla luce sogna o sembra sognare, ricordando cose non vedute mai;..... che popola l'ombra di fantasmi e il cielo di dei."1)

1) P. 8

Poetry as objectified dreams in Pascoli as in German romantic philosophers and poets, and English and French poets.

These words prove that Pascoli was conscious of the link between poetry and dreaming. He knew also of the "fantasmi" - the perils and phantoms which the dreamer may encounter "per le ignorate lunghe viottole del sonno" 1), and although he did not pierce as far into the terrifying world of dreams as some of the great romantic dreamers, he continually drew upon the hidden sources of this strange and beautiful region to enrich his poetry. Every tendency of his temperament led him inevitably to that preoccupation with his subconscious self which is one of his most important affinities with the romantic mystics, not only of England and France, but also of Germany. We may observe already in Lichtenberg and in all the precursors of European romanticism the same continual curiosity and investigation of their feelings and reactions which make the works of Pascoli the complete and intimate revelation of one of the most complex personalities of romanticism. As Galletti says - "l'estetica del Pascoli ha certa somiglianza con quella del piu' genuino romanticismo germanico col panteismo estetico dello Schelling e dei suoi discepoli. Anche per il Pascoli la vita incosciente non è già' una fase embrionale ed oscura dell'attivita' spirituale; e' la sorgente stessa della poesia." 2)

1) Cane notturno (Odi)

2) Op. cit., p. 199: and Cf. Psiche (Poemi conviviali).

Hamann and Novalis attach the same importance to imagination and to spontaneous feeling as Pascoli and the English and French romantic poets, for they realised the power of deep emotion to plunge the poet back into his essential self, and the German poets and philosophers had already arrived at the inevitable revival of the sublime conception of the socratic genius long before Hugo and Rimbaud. Pascoli's description of the poet in his dreams "ricordando cose non vedute mai" coincides with Moritz's idea of the dream as the guardian of ancestral memories retained only by the subconscious self. The aspiration towards the infinite which makes Moritz see the dream as the agent which could ~~make~~ put him again in touch with his original spirit when it was part of the spiritual essence at the source of the universe manifests itself in Pascoli's self-abandonment to the poetical ecstasy which lifts him above his ordinary existence to that ideal harmony where he achieves for a moment the illusion of being in the presence of the soul of all life. His natural craving for mystical liberty and the belief he felt in the philosophy of Hartmann 1) would draw him nearer to this conception of all Being united in one spirit while his intense love and sympathy for all creatures strengthened this intuition of a universal brotherhood, but his

1) Cf. Morabito, Op. cit., pp 75-81: Cf. also Poe: Eureka on the "Oneness" of the originally created Matter forced into the "abnormal condition of Many."

acceptance of these ideas is not the result of a conscious train of logical reasoning, nor does he receive absolute certainty from a mystical vision. The rapture which makes his spirit vibrate in unison with nature so that he loses all consciousness of reality and of his own individuality is usually a pure sense-reaction often produced by those sounds which always filled him with voluptuous delight - sea 1), wind, rain 2), the rustling of leaves, the croaking of frogs, distant bells, the hum of grasshoppers 3). A certain perfume, even an atmosphere have power to evoke in him memories and dreams as in Il lauro 4)

"sottil;.....Intorno era un odore
sottile, di vecchio, e forse di viole.

Io sognava; una corsa lungo il puro
Frigido, l'oro di capelli sparsi,
una fanciulla... Ancora al vecchio muro
tremava il lauro che pareva slanciarsi.

.....
tu più' non c'eri, o vergine fugace
netto il pedale era tagliato: v'era
quel vecchio odore e quella vecchia pace;
il lauro, no."

Often Pascoli's extreme susceptibility produces in him the state where "les sons, les parfums se repondent" - the mingling of sensations described by Baudelaire which was experienced

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- 1) Cf. La sirena (I tramonti, Myricae)
 - 2) Rio Salto (Myricae)
 - 3) Patria (Myricae) Cf. also p.119.
 - 4) Myricae: Cf. also La calandra (Primi poemetti)

also by Shelley, Jean Paul and Hoffmann. The transition from present reality to dream may be observed in Conte Ugolino 1) where the poet, transported into a world of phantoms by the voice of the sea and by the dazzling shimmer of the sun upon the waves, sees before him Dante and the two islands - Capraia and Gorgona - changing their shape at his will, and he hears a voice saying "Conte Ugolino della Gherardesca...."

The poet is himself conscious of his mind hovering on the brink of dream in Isola dei poeti 2) where the regular motion of the train lulls him into a trance and when "il sonno avea spinto sui molli cardini l'uscio," he lives again in pre-historic Sicily -

".....udii...
tra un vocio di larve
 del tetracordo:

di là' del sonno, alcuno udii narrare
 la due Sirene e il loro incantamento,
 e la lor voce aerea di mare
 fatta e di vento:

gli udii narrare l'isola del Sole,
 là' dove mandre e greggie solitarie
 pascono, e vanno dietro lor due sole
 grandi armentarie,

.....
 Io ero giunto dove
 giunge chi sogna;

chi sogna, ed apre bianche vele ai venti
 nel tempo oscuro, in dubbio se all'aurora
 l'ospite lui ravvisi, dopo venti
 secoli ancora."

1) Primi poemetti

2) Odi

This sense of reunion with a timeless unity and the intuition of a spiritual essence continually being renewed was experienced also by Gerard de Nerval 1), by Shelley-

".....I knew
That I had felt the freshness of that dawn
Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair,
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn

Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains and the ocean..." 2)

and by Rossetti:

"I have been here before,
But when or how I cannot tell:
I know the grass beyond the door,
The sweet keen smell,
The sighing sound, the lights around the shore.

You have been mine before -
How long ago I may not know:
But just when at that swallow's soar
Your neck turned so,
Some veil did fall, - I knew it all of yore." 3)

The same idea of spiritual transmigration is seen in Hugo's vision of Dante who tells how his spirit had been imprisoned first in a mountain, then, rising by progressive stages, took the form of an oak and of a lion before reaching the highest point of human achievement. 4)

1) Cf. Fantaisie (Odelettes) and Artemis (Les chimères).

2) Triumph of Time.

3) Sudden light: Cf. also: Birth bond.

4) Écrit sur un exemplaire de la Divina commedia:

(Contemplations, III, I.

For Pascoli also:

".....il veloce
immobilmente fiume della vita
è nella fonte, sempre, e nella foce" 1)

and Turolla observes in his poetry the "disfarsi della realtà
in una penombra misteriosa in cui la vicenda presente si
proietta e si compone con vicende trascorse effonda in infinità
di spazi e di tempi...realtà scomposta nei suoi elementi
e nei suoi momenti successivi - sfondo d'infinito d'ignoto.
Sono processi d'arte che fanno pensare a poeti moderni, a
Baudelaire.....In Les sept vieillards ci sono elementi che
s'accordano con quanto ho esposto....." 2)

The same kind of phenomenon is seen in Giovannino 1)
which may have been suggested by Musset's Nuit de decembre.
For him, as for Wordsworth:

"Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence:" 3)

and in his poetry all life is seen against the background of
an eternal present.

Thus Pascoli imagines the spirit of Mazzini alive
in the dim ages before the birth of the human race:

"Tu, quando niuno ancor vivea, vivevi.
L'Italia era vulcani, era deserti.
Non c'erano i pensosi uomini aneli.
.....
In alto eri, per tutto eri, ma eri
invisibile.
.....
E tu scotevi quella fronda, O Messo
di Dio, chiamando un Popolo non sorto
ancor di terra, all'avvenir promesso." 4)

1) Il ciocco (Canti di Castelvecchio) 2) Turolla, Op.cit., p.27
3) Ode on intimations of immortality. 4) Inno secolare a
Mazzini (Inni). Cf. also: Giorgio navarco ellenico; Al duca
degli Abruzzi and Ad Antonio Fratti (Inni).

All Pascoli's historical themes are permeated with this atmosphere of dream. He lifts events out of their historical sequence to a plane where the limitations of time and space are transcended so that everything is seen in a vast panorama and mysterious analogies appear which possess an apocalyptic significance. Thus in Il corbezzolo, Inno a Torino and Antica madre myth is mingled with history and the future casts a shadow over pre-historic ages:

"Roma, o fratelli, non era.
Era un ondosa valle.
Solo una lupa errabonda
latrava dall'arce Tarpea;
l'ombra vagava su l'onda
d'un aquila." 2)

The continual juxtaposition of the images and the vertiginous kaleidoscopic effects of the Odi e inni recall the dreams of Gerard de Nerval, as in the following passage where it seemed "comme si les murs de la salle se fussent ouverts sur des perspectives infinies, il me semblait voir une chaîne non interrompue d'hommes et de femmes en qui j'étais et qui étaient moi-même; les costumes de tous les peuples, les images de tous les pays apparaissaient distinctement à la fois, comme si mes facultés d'attention s'étaient multipliées sans se confondre, par un phénomène d'espace analogue à celui du temps qui concentre un siècle d'action dans une minute de rêve..... j'avais vu les images se diviser et se combiner en mille aspects fugitifs." 2)

1) Antica madre (Inni).
2) Aurelia IV.

It is this longing to escape from historical time so as to achieve, if only momentarily a sense of union with the Infinite, which is at the root of Pascoli's unconcern for outward reality; and which partly accounts for the constant desire for rest, quiet and solitude with which he has sometimes been reproached. 1) In him is the same nostalgia for eternity which haunts Baudelaire who feels that his spirit is continually being recalled from its exile in this world to its true home. In L'orloge there is the same concern with the passing of time which Pascoli expresses in L'ora di

Barga 2) "suono che uguale, che blando cade,
come una voce che persuade.

Tu dici, E l'ora; tu dici, E tardi,
voce che cade blanda dal cielo.

.....
Tu vuoi che pensi dunque al ritorno,"

At first the poet is overwhelmed by dread of the unknown, and begs to be allowed to stay awhile with the dear familiar things he knows, but in the end he lets himself be persuaded that he will welcome death:

Sì; torniamo
adove son quelli ch' amano ed amo".

for in the spirit-world dwell the dead whom Pascoli

1) Cf. Bianconi Op cit.

2) Canti di Castelvecchio.

sees only in dreams where they appear to him "avec l'air qu'ils avaient quand il vivaient" 1) for we find in Hugo and Pascoli the same idea that Wordsworth expresses in "We are seven" 2) where the dead seem, as it were, arrested in time and remain the same age as at their death so that their spiritual existence continues as an invisible accompaniment to that of the living.

When Pascoli feels himself in communication with his mother he tries to obtain from her some reassurance of life beyond the grave, but he does not try to penetrate so far into the dream-world as the most intrepid dreamers of romanticism. Hugo, Nerval, Baudelaire and Rimbaud sometimes risked their sanity in an endeavour to wrest the secret of life from dreams, which they regarded as the key to the ultimate Truth 3). As Maritain truly observes: "Le rôle capital de Baudelaire et de Rimbaud, c'est d'avoir fait passer à l'art moderne les frontières de l'esprit. Mais ces régions sont celles des suprêmes périls, les plus lourds problèmes métaphysiques y tombent sur la poésie, c'est là que se livrent combats les bons et les mauvais anges, et ceux-ci se déguisent en messagers de lumière." 4) It was well for Pascoli, however, that he retained contact with reality for, like

1) La pente de la rêverie (Feuilles d'automne)

2) Translated by Pascoli

3) Cf. Baudelaire: Paradis artificiels, pp. 16-17

4) Maritain, Jacques: Les frontières de la poésie.

Nerval, Pascoli was "an unsystematic mystic...Wavering among intuitions, ignorances, half-truths, shadows of falsehood, now audacious, now hesitating...blown hither and thither by conflicting winds, a prey to the indefinite." He too was prevented by the "weakness of his visionary quality...the insufficiency of his imaginative energy, and... his lack of spiritual discipline" 1) from ever attaining to a clear vision of that light which appears to some mystics as a ray of the universal light, and which has the power to unite their spirit with eternity. Sometimes, however, Pascoli seems to have an inkling that in dreams he has drawn near to the solution of the mystery of life.

Thus L'eremita 2) says:

"Nel cuore sono due vanità nere.
L'ombra del sogno e l'ombra della cosa;
ma questa è il buio a chi desia vedere,
.....
Ed ecco gli fluisce per i precordi
Il dolce sonno della stanca vita;

quando riscosso (egli scendeva a fior di
grandi acque mute su labile nave)
gridò: "Signore, fa ch'io mi ricordi!
Dio fa che sogni!"....."

While Pascoli is actually dreaming he is convinced he has pierced to the Truth: when he awakes he loses this conviction:

".....m'addormii; sognai:
vedevo in sogno che vedevo il vero:
desto, più non lo so, nè saprò mai....." 3)

1) Symons, Arthur: The symbolist movement in literature, p.25-26

2) Primi Poemetti.

3) Il cieco (Primi poemetti)

but we sense continually at the back of his mind the same intuition which made Shelley exclaim:

"He hath awakened from the dream of life." 1)

and expression which is echoed by Pascoli in Il giorno dei morti 2):

"La pia fanciulla che sotterra, al verno,
si risvegliò del sogno della vita."

Is our real existence the one to which we belonged before birth and to which we may return after death? "Il fine è questo, è questo il cominciar d'un rito?" 2)

Pascoli's sense of the hidden realities of life, his consciousness of a half-contained region of unearthly beauty beyond that attainable by the senses leads him towards Shelley's conception of life as a painted veil on which are pictured unreal shapes "with colours idly spread" which "mimic all we would believe" 4) and it is significant that, as we have seen, Pascoli admired Shelley above all other English poets because he felt in his poetry "oltre lo splendore alato della immagine, il commosso anelito al Bene." 5). Shelley also ~~writes~~

".....knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eye can view" 6)

and he writes:

"Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep" 7)

1) Adonais.

2) Myricae.

3) Vagito (Myricae). Cf. also L'anima (Odi)

4) Cf. Sonnet: Cf. also Genci, A.V. Sc.I, ll. 77-78, etc.

5) Cf. Briganti, Op. cit., loc. cit., p.26

6) Marianne's dream, ll. 145-147.

7) Mont Blanc.

but like Pascoli he does not deliberately seek to pierce to the heart of life in his dreams -

"Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call life:" 1)

He prefers to forget the pain and ugliness of life in the imaginary region whose beauty is so much greater than anything he has seen in the ~~this~~ world around him. There he sees -

".....flowers azure, black and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold," 2)

and many of the most beautiful descriptions in his poetry give the impression of being dream-landscapes like Kubla Khan and many of the scenes in Rossetti's House of life. The material for the following verses from The triumph of life was obviously drawn from this ideal world:

"Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common sun
Sheds on the common earth, and all the place

Was filled with magic sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;

And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
there stood

A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
And the invisible rain did ever sing

A silver music on the mossy lawn;"

1) Sonnet
2)

".....upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist,
To wondrous music." 1)

In this state the poet revives also the ideal world of his childhood which as he looks back upon it seems to have possessed "the glory and the freshness of a dream. We have seen 2) that Pascoli shares the romantic poets' reverence for the divine age before the awakening of reason - "Il fanciullino... è quello che piange e ride senza perchè, di cose che sfuggono ai nostri sensi e alla nostra ragione." 3) and in the importance which he attaches to the instinct as well as in his quest for a timeless absolute and in his intuition of a spiritual unity taking various forms throughout the ages he unconsciously realises the ideas of the German romantic philosophers as they are expounded by Karl-Philipp Moritz in whom we see the same conflict as in Pascoli between rationalism and mysticism, and who sees in childhood 4) the link which attaches us 5) to past incarnations and to the memories ("ricordando cose non vedute mai") which have been forgotten by our conscious self, leading us ever backwards until we are freed from ourselves and become reunited with the soul of the universe. Pascoli does not consciously pursue this train of reasoning but, as we have seen 6), he betrays continually his evident desire to become in every possible way a child again. We find in his dreams, as in those of Lichtenberg, Jean-Paul and Tieck, the scenes which he inhabited ~~as a child~~ as a child, and many of Pascoli's poems, like the Illuminations of Rimbaud, are a medley of dream-fragments and memories of childhood.

1) Triumph of life, ll. 367-369

2) Cf. pp. 71-94.

3) Fanciullino, p.9.

4) Fanciullino, p.8.

5) In Hartknopf.

6) Cf. pp.83-84.

The poet's desire to evoke in himself as much as possible the beautiful region which he has created from his own imagination results in it becoming more real and familiar to him than that in which he pursues his bodily existence. It is natural home and the criterion by which he measures the world around him. The highest praise he can give to anything upon this earth is to compare it to this other magic sphere. There colours are more vivid, and Pascoli writes that:

".....il greppo azzurro, somigliava un cielo
visto nel sogno". 1)

and similarly Hugo speaks of:

"Le pré charmant, couleur de songe." 2)

Pascoli's dreams seem to have been always accompanied by the music of the elements - rustling leaves, the sighing wind, the fitful murmur of the sea:

".....la tramontana
.....giunge come un fragoroso mare
e s'allontana

simile a sogno: quando su le strade
volano fàglie qui persegue il cuore
simili a sogno; quando tutto cade
stringesi, e muore.

Muore? Anche un sogno che sognai!" 3)

In this other existence Pascoli enjoyed the beauty and harmony for which he sought in vain amid the ugliness and discord of this world; and he must have realised how much he had in common with the poets whose rich dream-life forms, as it were, a muted accompaniment to the

1) Il castagno (Myrica)
2) Le cheval (Chansons des rues et des bois).
3) Germogliano (Myrica)

more vigorous and realistic aspects of romanticism. The poet dissolves the material for his poetry in his dream-existence, whence it emerges endowed with a new unearthly quality which fills us with wonder and delight: "Bisogna che il fatto storico, se vuol divenir poetico, filtri attraverso la meraviglia e l'ingenuità della nostra anima fanciulla, se la conserviamo ancora. Bisogna allontanare il fatto vicino allontanandocene noi." 1)

This explains why in so many of Pascoli's poems images which seem to be taken from the most concrete reality are permeated with a strange emotion which appears to have no relation to their position in the ordinary scheme of reality. In dreams things are no longer arranged in their logical order, but, guided by the inscrutable laws of the subconscious intuition, group themselves in new formations which frequently seem inconsistent to rational judgment. To those poets who have become more at home in dream-landscapes than in this world the scenes which they see with the visual eye assume an aspect as strange and new as if they were first created, and it was because Pascoli looked upon life in this way that Galletti remarks:

"L'anima del Pascoli innanzi alla vita e nell'atto di specchiare e interpretare la vita mi richiama alla mente quella del Novalis, come la rappresenta Lodovico Tieck: 'Era in lui una disposizione del tutto naturale a riguardar le cose più naturale e più vicine quasi fossero un prodigio, e le cose strane e soprannaturali come qualcosa di ordinario; la stessa vita quotidiana e comune si svolgeva intorno a lui come una favola meravigliosa e quelle regioni, di cui la più parte degli uomini fantastica e dubita come di cosa lontana e inesplicabile, erano per lui quasi una dimora familiare e diletta' 2)

1) Il fanciullino, p.33.

2) Op. cit., p.7.

Mystery and the supernatural: transcendental tendencies.

This observation shows how Pascoli realised the poetical ideal of Wordsworth and Coleridge as it is explained in a passage of the Biographia literaria 1):

"During the first year that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours our conversation turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of the imagination. The sudden charm which accidents of light and shade, which moonlight or sunset diffused over a known and familiar landscape appeared to represent the practicability of combining both....The thought suggested itself ... that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the interest aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of such emotions as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real....Mr. Wordsworth, on the other hand, was to propose to himself, as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom and directing it to the loveliness and wonders of the world before us;...."

We gather from this passage that Coleridge shared Pascoli's love for these shadowy, moonlit scenes so dear to Novalis, where the dreamer-poet's thirst for mystical liberty is assuaged by the satisfying mystery

and fluidity which the uncertain light of dawn or dusk lends to familiar objects which take on an unearthly, magical appearance. As Galletti suggests 1) Pascoli may have become acquainted with Wordsworth, Coleridge and also with Novalis and the German romantics through the writings of Poe; he may, on the other hand have been guided to the German dream-poets by Baudelaire's interest in Hoffmann; it is possible that he was not familiar with any German poet later than Goethe, whose work finds a place in his anthologies 2). It does not greatly matter who first led him into this atmosphere of faery where he could at last bathe his spirit in mystery - for "il Pascoli ed altri poeti moderni...movendo da vie lontane e talvolta apparentemente opposte," meet, as Galletti so aptly puts it "al crocivia del mistero, per rappresentare con arte non molto diversa una medesima immagine della 'vita profonda'. 3)". As in the poets of French symbolism, Pascoli's need for mystery manifests itself in his love for autumn landscapes whose vaporous outlines produce the required effect of indefiniteness. We have seen 3) that he shares Baudelaire's love for "...les grands ciels qui font rêver d'éternité." 4) and, like Shelley, his desire for the infinite finds fulfilment in the contemplation of endless plains stretching away into the unknown:

1) Op. cit. p.64. Cf. also Meozzi, Op. cit., p. 402

2)

3) Op. cit. p. 87.

4) Cf. p. 129 sq.

4) Les fleurs du mal, Tableaux Parisiens, LXXXVI: Paysage.

".....I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:" 1)

For such a temperament poetry is not merely the artistic reproduction of that side of reality which is accessible to all men: it is an attempt to seize some fragments of the hidden side of life, and it is ^{his} apprehension of the unknown, his aspiration towards the infinite which cuts him off from the spirit of his native literature, for this is his deepest affinity with the poets of northern Europe. So Baudelaire writes: "En décrivant ce qui est, le poète se dégrade et descend au rang de professeur; en racontant le possible, il reste fidèle à sa fonction; il est une âme collective qui interroge, qui pleure, qui espère et qui devine quelquefois" 2) Like Mallarmé he is convinced that "Il doit y avoir quelque chose d'obscur, signifiant, fermé et caché qui habite le commun." 3) For Pascoli, as for Hugo:

"Toute chose ici-bas par une face est ombre
Et par l'autre clarté" 4)

"L'ombre n'est qu'un atome en cette ombre infinie" 5)

In the eyes of these poets man is a weak and helpless speck set, for a moment upon the earth, but destined to be again engulfed in the dark shadows of Death and Mystery whence he came. Hugo and Pascoli feel Nature, the Universe, God, the origin of Evil, Destiny, Death, even them-

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- 1) Julian and Maddalo, ll.
 - 2) L'art romantique, p. 252.
 - 3) Divagations.
 - 4) Voix intérieures, XXX, ii.
 - 5) A. Villequier: Les contemplations, L. IV, XV.

selves, are all part of the same enigma - Mystère! Mistero! How many times does the word recur in their works! 1)

"Nous ne voyons jamais qu'un côté des choses;
L'autre est plongé en la nuit d'un mystère effrayant." 2)

These poets see for ever rising before them "l'ouverture de l'impossible" 3)

but we feel that the supernatural terror with which they contemplate the unknown is often mingled with a feeling of fascination. For them mystery lends a kind of fragrance to life. Poe supports Bacon's statement that:

"There is no exquisite beauty without some strangeness" and he adds:

"Take away this element of strangeness - of unexpectedness - of novelty - of originality - call it what we will - and all that is ethereal in loveliness is lost at once. We lose - we miss the unknown - the vague - the uncomprehended - we lose, in short all that assimilates the beauty of earth with what we dream of the beauty of heaven" 4). Likewise Pascoli writes of: "questo mondo odorato di mistero" 5) and Valentin notes: nombreux traits communs entre Pascoli et Maeterlinck. Dans l'un comme dans l'autre, même inquiétude de l'inconnu, mêmes voix mystérieuses du destin, même sile silences attentifs où les personnages regardent et écoutent marcher des êtres invisibles, mêmes pressentiments et même tourment secret. Notte,

Dolcezza, Myricae pourrait passer pour un pastiche du poète belge:" 6)

1) Cf. Pascoli: Il focolare; I due fanciulli; Mistero; Il libro, etc.
Hugo: Toute la lyre, La nature, X; Les voix intérieures, XXX, ii;
Les contemplations, L. IV, XV, etc.

2) A. Villequier

3) Le cheval: Chansons des rues et des bois.

4) Marginalia, X.

5) Colloquio (Myricae)

6) Op. cit., p.185. Cf. also Meozzi Op. cit., p.388; Calletti: Op. cit., pp. 47 and 64.

In him, as in Pascoli, we are conscious of an almost voluptuous joy in the knowledge that never will he succeed in solving the mystery which attracts him so irresistibly, for in the very fact that it is unfathomable lies its chief beauty: should he discover the secret of the universe he could no longer shiver with delight before the enchanted castle whose endless passages lead to the Infinite, but whose doors, he hopes, will never open -

".....invisibili porte
che forse non s'aprono piú?.." 1)

These are the doors at which Suor Virginia 2) hears the mysterious knocking: the same that the three blind sisters 3) find at the top of the tower, beyond which they dare not penetrate. Unlike Nerval, who tried to lift every veil which hides the truth from human eyes, Pascoli preferred to remain like the man of Il Libro 4) forever turning over the pages of the book of fate. As with Baudelaire 5) Pascoli's delight in an atmosphere of mystery shows itself in his love of the night which he much prefers to the "stridula e scialba giornata" 6) and both poets

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- 1) L' assiuolo (Myricae)
 - 2) Primi poemetti
 - 3) Maeterlinck: Douze Chansons Cf. also VI, IX and X; Palomides et Tintagile; Serres chaudes
 - 4) Primi poemetti
 - 5) Cf. Le crépuscule du soir (Petite poésie en prose: XXII Fleurs du mal; XXIV, CXXIV: La fin de la journée;
 - 6) Il sonnellino (Canti di Castelvecchio) Cf. also Cane notturno (Myricae), L' arena (Odi) etc.

find the same attraction in lighted windows shining through the darkness: "Il n' est pas d'objet plus profond, plus mystérieux, plus fécond, plus ténébreux, plus éblouissant qu'une fenêtre éclairée d'une chandelle. Ce qu'on peut voir au soleil est toujours moins intéressant que ce qui se passe derrière un vitre. Dans ce trou noir ou lumineux vit la vie, rêve la vie, souffre la vie." 1) Pascoli experienced the same pleasure in speculating upon the life which went on beyond these "openings into the unknown" and his collection of poems "Finestra illuminata 2) may have been suggested by Bandelaire's sketch.

Like all mystic writers who aim at reproducing the unseen and the unknown, Pascoli declares himself unable to give a complete account of his poetical world. Thus he says that he has within him "due poesie; una brutta che si concede al pubblico, una bella che non scrive ma solo si gode in seno." 3) This statement may be compared to Hugo's account of the inspiration which comes to him out of the silence and shadows of a dream whose setting is, moreover, almost identical with that of Pascoli's "visione... incerta e vaporosa" which has already

1) Les fenêtres (Petits poèmes en prose)

2) Myricae.

3) Cf Serra. Renato. Op. cit. , p. 16

been compared with Poe's Dremland.¹⁾ Hugo writes:

"Tout grand esprit fait dans sa vie deux œuvres: son œuvre
de vivant et son œuvre de fantôme.

Le vivant parle à son siècle la langue qu'il comprend; lui, le
génie, il nient compte de l'imbecillité; lui, le flambeau,
il tient compte de l'ombre.

Tandis que le vivant fait le premier ouvrage, le fantôme
pensif, la nuit, pendant le silence universel, s'éveille dans
le vivant, ô terreur! Quoi? dit l'être humain, ce n'est pas
tout? - Non, répond le spectre, lève-toi, debout, il fait grand
vent, les chiens et les renards aboyant, les ténèbres sont par-
tout, la nature frissonne et tremble sous la corde du fouet de
Dieu; les crapauds, les serpents, les vers, les orties, les
pierres, les grains de sable nous atteignent: debout!

Viens faire ton autre œuvre! ²⁾ Here, in an atmosphere, where
"tutto gli si vivifica intorno" the poet's ear catches for a
moment the full harmony of those unearthly voices which:

..... "cantavano come non sanno
cantare che i sogni nel cuore,
che cantano forte e non fanno
rumore." ³⁾

1) Cf. p. 46

2) Passage quoted by Beguin., *Op.cit.*, P. 370. Cf. also Shelley
Defence of poetry.

3) Il sonnellino (Myricae)

And thus Keith exclaims:

.. "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:" 1)

For the mystic poet silence is lovelier than any sound
on earth, and Coleridge writes:

... "No voice, but Oh the silence sank
Like music on my heart." 2)

The French symbolists - especially Verhearen and Roden -
bach - are fully aware of the beauty of silence, while Maeter-
linck attaches the greatest importance to it as indispensable
for full communication with the unseen powers which rule the
world. We observe in his plays an increasing lack of action,
while long pauses, pregnant with secondary meaning, tend to
take the place of dialogue. 3) He says himself: "La parole
est du temps, le silence de l' éternité... Il ne faut croire
que la parole serve jamais aux communications véritables
entre les êtres... dès que nous avons vraiment quelque
chose à nous dire, nous sommes obligés de nous taire; et si,
dans ces moments, nous résistons aux êtres invisibles et pressants
du silence, nous avons fait une perte éternelle. 4)

1) Ode on a Grecian urn.

2) Ancient Mariner ll. 498-499.

3) Cf. especially Alladine et Palomède.

4) Le silence (Le trésor des humbles)

The inspiration which the mystic poet is able to draw from silence was apparent very early in Baudelaire who was only seventeen when he wrote the following lines which could bear comparison with the greatest poetry of Wordsworth:

... "Sous mes pieds, sur ma tête et partout le silence,
Le silence qui fait qu' on voudrait se sauver,
Le silence éternel et la montagne immense,
Car l'air est immobile et tout semble rêver.

On dirait que le ciel, en cette solitude,
Se contemple dans l'onde, et que ces monts, là-bas,
Écotent, recueillis, dans leur grave attitude,
Un mystère divin que l'homme n'entend pas.

Et lorsque par hasard une nuée errante
Assombrit dans son vol le lac silencieux,
On croirait voir la robe ou l'ombre transparente
D'un esprit qui voyage et passe dans les cieux. 1)"

The mystic poet is naturally drawn towards every aspect of seen reality which suggests to him a secondary, hidden quality - he loves blurred outlines, wide spaces, darkness, silence, absence, what Roger Fry calls "otherness" but this transcendental tendency, when pushed to its extreme ends in that growing negation of reality which we may observe in Mallarmé forever seeking the 'flower' which he calls "l'absente de tous bouquets" 2) trying to capture the ideal poetry created by the "Musicienne de silence" 3) compared with which all other poetry is, according to Mallarmé:

"Un inutile gisement
Nuit, désespoir et pierrerie".

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- 1) Incompatibilité.
 - 2) Pages: Divagations
 - 3) Sainte.

Intuitions of mystery conveyed by: i) symbol; ii) music.
Symbolism in Pascoli.

The poet is not only a contemplative: he is also a creative artist whose genius cannot find fulfilment until he has found means to describe the progress which he feels he has made towards the unseen realities of life. Although his mystical aspirations seem to urge him towards a spiritual region beyond seen reality, yet his senses still derive the fullest satisfaction from the beauty of this world - indeed, as we have seen, in many poets, including Pascoli, it is the very intensity of their sensations that creates in them the state of poetical ecstasy which makes them perceive a new and mystic beauty in all things. The thirst for the unknown which tends to lead Mallarmé to a negation of reality resolves itself in Pascoli and most mystic poets into a desire to discover and portray the mysterious quality which they sense behind all things:

"Nous voulons", writes Baudelaire,
Plonger au fond du gouffre....
Au fond de l'Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau!" 1)

The believe that all great art should produce an effect of unexpectedness - that it cannot enthrall the reader if it does not induce in him a sensation of wonder and surprise. This idea is at the root of the French symbolist aesthetic: in fact Rémy de Gourmon declares this quality to be Art itself: "L'un des éléments de l'Art est le Nouveau, élément si essentiel qu'il institue presque à lui seul l'art tout entier". 2)

1) La mort, viii, Le voyage, Les fleurs du mal.
2) Le symbolisme, Revue blanche, 1892, p. 321.

For Coleridge also "genius produces the strongest impressions of novelty" 1) In his violent repudiation of the poetry from which he had hoped so much Rimbaud reveals how passionately he too had wished to discover and reproduce a fresh and magical aspect of all things: "J'ai crée toutes les fêtes, tous les triomphes, tous les drames. J'ai essayé d'inventer de nouvelles fleurs, de nouveau astres, de nouvelles chairs, de nouvelles langues. J'ai cru acquérir des pouvoirs surnaturels.....je me suis dit mage ou ange" 2). In the same way for Pascoli the poet is Il mago 3), and just as Éluard states that "la magie poétique est l'appel des choses par leur nom" 4) so Pascoli calls the poet "l'Adamo che mette il nome a tutto che vede e sente.....Chè tutto a lui pareva nuovo e bello....e nuovo e bello credeva avesse a parere agli uditori" and to the fanciullino, he says: "Tu sei ancora in presenza del mondo novello, e adopari a significarlo la novella parola. Vuoi il nuovo, ma sai che nelle cose è il nuovo, per chi sa trovarlo....Il nuovo non s'inventa: si scopre." The poet's imagination automatically animates all creation with new life and beauty for "poesia è trovare nelle cose....il loro sorriso e la loro lagrima," 5) The poetical vision, penetrating into the heart of things discovers for a moment the ideal, timeless beauty - the mysterious essence which endows them with a richness unperceived by ordinary man for, as André Gide writes:

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- 1) The Friend, Section I, Essay XV
 - 2) Adieu. Une saison en enfer.
 - 3) Myricae.
 - 4) Cf. Béguin, Op. cit., p.
 - 5) Il fanciullino, pp. 5, 14, 16 and 20

"Le poète est celui qui regarde. Et que voit-il? Le Paradis, car le paradis est partout; n'en croyons pas les apparences. Les apparences sont imparfaites. elles balbutient les vérités qu'elles récalaient; le poète à demi-mot doit comprendre, puis redire ces vérités..." The poet, unlike the pure mystic, cannot find complete fulfilment in contemplation which attempts to sever all earthly contacts. He must express his vision, and the only way in which mysticism can become articulate is through symbolism and music. "Le poète qui sait qu'il crée, devine à travers chaque chose et une seule lui suffit, symbole, pour révéler son archétype; il sait que l'apparence n'en est que le prétexte, un vêtement qui le dérobe, et où s'arrête l'œil profane, mais qui nous montre qu'elle est là. Le poète contemple; il se penche sur les symboles, et silencieux descend profondément au cœur des choses." 1)

1) Traité du Narcisse, p. 15.

"senza farci scendere a uno a uno i gradini del pensiero, ci trasporta nell'abisso della verita....Egli scopre nelle cose le somiglianze e relazioni piu ingegnose." 1)

The function of the poet is to discover in every phenomenon the particular aroma which seems to him to represent its real soul and the essence of its being and this he must do, not by means of the cold reasoning of scientific deduction, but by surrendering himself completely to the sensations which assail him on every side. The state of rapture and excitement produced by this action makes him perceive all creation as a living thing in which every object from the highest to the lowest is linked together by hidden analogies, and by reason of the poet's intense concentration upon the spectacle before him, his individuality becomes merged with it, so that it begins to feel and breathe the same life as himself. Many of Pascoli's descriptions seem to be no more than minute, realistic sketches, but as soon as they are read aloud the precise outlines take on a new and deeper significance, and the objects seem charged with some elusive, secondary meaning impossible to define, for they have become

1) Il fanciullino, pp. 11 and 10.

vehicles for the expression of his own joys, fears and apprehension and the whole world is penetrated with the poet's metaphysical anxiety:

"Nel campo mezzo grigio e mezzo nero
resta un aratro senza buoi, che pare
dimenticato, tra il vapor leggero.

E cadenzato dalla gora viene
lo sciabordare delle lavandare
con tonfi spessi e lunghe cantilene.

Il vento soffia e nevica la frasca,
e tu non torni ancora al tuo paese!
quando partisti, come son rimasta!
come l'aratro in mezzo alla maggese." 1)

This is pure impressionism. The slow, drawn-out movement reproduces to perfection the dun autumn landscape bathed in mist, but we sense also the poet's awareness of the cosmic mystery, his longing for the infinite and his consciousness of his isolation from the material preoccupations of ordinary men. Here is an example of the same almost imperceptible symbolism which is present also in *Le moulin* 2) of Verhaeren where the mill flapping in the midst of the solitary, wind-swept plain of Flanders, fills the poet with the same dismay - the same awe of eternity. Already in the *Myricae* the most common scenes of everyday life are tinged with occult, universal signi-

1) *Lavandare* (*Myricae*): The second verse may be a reminiscence of *Paulo Minora canamus* (*Chansons des rues et des bois* of Hugo:

"..... de mon grenier je me penche
Sur la faveuse qu'on entend,
Joyeuse, dans l'écume blanche,
Plonger ses coudes en chantant."

2) *Les soirs*: Cf. also: *Cri* (*Ibid.*).

cance. Thus a wayfarer sitting by the roadside rouses in him thoughts of death, destiny and far-off lands; 1) the dead swallow in X agosto 2) is a symbol of the universal sorrow as well as of his own personal tragedy; the trees communicate to him "con improvvisa melodia di fiori" their ceaseless aspiration towards ideal beauty; 3) footsteps passing through the night, 4) and those which reach him from the depths of a valley filled with mist, are those of Everyman walking in the mystery of life towards his destiny:

"certe peste.....ne lontane ne vicine;

eco di peste ne tarde ne preste,
alterne, eterne, Ed io laggiù guardai:
nulla ancora e nessuno, occhi, vedeste.

Chiesero i sogni di rovine: - Mai
non guingerà? - Gli scheletri di piante
chiesero: - E tu chi sei, che sempre vai?

Io, forse, un'ombra vidi, un'ombra errante
con sopra il capo un large fascio. Vidi,
e più non vidi, nello stesso istante.

Sentii soltanto gl'inquieti gridi
d'uccelli spersi, l'uggiolar del cane,
e, per il mar senz'onde e senza lidi,

le peste ne vicine ne lontane." 5)

- 1) In cammino (Myricae).
- 2) Myricae.
- 3) La grande aspirazione (Primi poemetti).
- 4) Il cane notturno (Odi e inni).
- 5) Nella nebbia (Primi poemetti).

In the suggestive art of this poem, where the image is indistinguishable from the idea Pascoli realises the ideal of the French symbolists for whom "Le symbole est une suite d'images successives ou accumulées qui exteriorisent une intuition lyrique" 1) The disposition which Pascoli possesses, in common with Victor Hugo, to think in images does not at once lead him to see all the world as "a forest of symbols" and both he and Hugo often employ the traditional mechanism of simile 2) as in the following short poem from the Myricae:

"Non ammirare, se in un cuor non basso,
cui tu rivolga a prova, un pungiglione
senti improvviso: c'è sott'ogni sasso
lo scorpione.

Non ammirare, se in un cuor concesso
al male, senti a quando a quando un grido
buono, un palpito santo: ogni cipresso
porta il suo nido." 3)

Occasionally allegory is used as in Convito d'ombra 4) where Italy is depicted as a lion and the poet sometimes makes nature speak to men in a didactic tone, trying to induce them to follow her good example as in Il vecchio castagno 5) which is an expansion of the simpler and purely descriptive poem in the Myricae 6). Generally, however, Pascoli leaves the reader to divine the inner meaning, and even when

1) Tancrède de Visan (Mercure de France) juillet, 1907.

2) Cf. Hugo: A Olympie (Les voix intérieures).

3) Nel cuore umano, Pensieri X: Cf. also: Speranze e memorie Myricae; La piada (Nuovi poemetti).

4) Odi.

5) Primi poemetti: Cf. also: La canzone dell'ulivo (Canti di Castelvecchio).

6) Il castagno.

it is possible to distinguish moral significance from external description the reader is usually unable to perceive the exact point when simple realism gives place to the suggestion of an abstract idea. The first three verses of Il corbezzolo 1) are no more than a word-picture of the flower which gradually takes on the form of a national emblem whose mystic presence may be traced back to legendary times. The almost imperceptible transition from reality to symbol takes place from the third verse onward:

"i bianchi fiori metti quando rosse
 hai già le bacche, e ricominci eterno,
 quasi per gli altri ma per te non fosse
 l'ozio del verno;

è verde albero italico, il tuo maggio
 è nella bruma: s'anche tutto muora,
 tu il giovanile gonfalon selvaggio
 spiegghi alla bora;

il gonfalone che dal lido etrusco
 inalberavi e per i monti enotri,
 sui sacri fonti, onde gema tra il musco
 l'acqua negli otri,

mentre sul poggio i vecchi deiformi
 stavano, immersi nel silenzio e torvi
 guardando in cielo roteare stormi
 neri di corvi."....

The delicate symbolism of this poem arises from the blending together of two of Pascoli's most typical qualities. Delight in colour and in detail combines with

1) Odi.

the capacity to perceive in the smallest and humblest objects remote analogies and endless vistas of legend and symbol. The perfectly natural and spontaneous manner in which the double meaning arises from the concrete description makes it evident that his technique owes very little, and probably nothing, to the inspiration of other poets, although the development of symbolic significance through intensely-felt images calls to mind the symbolism of Victor Hugo and of Dante Gabriel Rossetti whose Card-dealer opens in the same way with four verses of realistic word-painting, and the symbolic meaning of the noisy, colourful scene is realised only at the fifth verse when we see that it represents life with its struggle for wealth, and that she of the "secret brows" is Fate, whose moves are always unpredictable and who holds the trump card - Death.

In Il vischio 1) the ideal of symbolism is perfectly realised in that the exquisite concrete details blend so subtly with the secondary meaning that complete fusion is achieved between the two elements. A vivid picture of the beautiful tree, slowly being perverted and destroyed by the parasite, is kept before the eyes of the reader throughout, and only the poignancy of the music and the emotion with

1) Primi poemetti.

which the scene is described makes him aware that to the poet it represents the eternal problem of evil: The poem begins with a picture of the orchard in the spring:

"....Nuvole a'nostri occhi,
rosee di peschi, bianche di susini,

parvero: un'aria pendula di fiocchi,
e bianchi e rosa, e l'uno e l'altro: meli,
floridi peri, gracili albicocchi.

Tale quell'orto ci apparì tra i veli
del nostro pianto, e tenne in se riflessa
per giorni un'improvvisa alba dei cieli."

The new-born beauty seems to promise new hope of happiness -

".....ma l'ape da'suoi bugni uscita
pasceva già l'illusione; ond'essa

fa, come io faccio, il miele di sua vita."

and winter returns:

"Dove le branche pari a filigrane?
Tutti i petali a terra. E su l'aurora
noi calpestanto le memorie vane

ognuna con la sua lagrima ancora.

.....

si getta qualche cosa anche più bella

della vita: la sua lieve fiorita
d'ali. La pianta che a'suoi rami vede
i mille pomi sizzianti, addita

per terra i fiori che all'oblio già diede...."

Trees, like men, are an everlasting prey to illusions, and

must stand by helpless and see the death of all their hopes. Walking through the orchard the poet comes upon a strange and evil-looking growth which seems alien to this common destiny of joy and sorrow:

"che non ha frutti ai rami e fiori al piede."

Stava senza timore e senza festa,
e senza inverni e senza primavere,
quella; cui non avrebbe la tempesta

tolto che foglie, nate per cadere."

Malevolent forces, lurking in the shadows strike suddenly at the heart of life, twisting it into a travesty of itself, and ultimately insinuate themselves into every part of it, so that it sickens and dies:

"Albero ignoto!.....
albero strano, che nel tuo fogliame
mostri due verdi e un gialleggiar discordi;

albero tristo, ch'hai diverse rame,
foglie diverse, ottuse queste, acute
quelle, e non so che rei glomi e che trame;

albero infermo della tua salute,
albero che non hai gemme fiorite,
albero che non vedi ali cadute;

albero morto,....."

The spectacle awakens endless echoes in the poet's mind, but although in this poem a natural phenomenon seems to flower naturally and inevitably into symbol, the idea may have been

prompted by a recollection of these lines from Sagesse 1)

"Lui (l'homme) qui devait fleurir comme l'arbre choisi,
 Il n'est plus qu'un tronc vil au branchage noire,
 Que l'age deracine et que le vice effeuille,
 Dont les rameaux n'ont pas de fruit que Dieu recueille,
 Ou jamais sans peril nous ne nous appuyons,
 Ou la societe greffe les passions."

This passage, moreover, follows immediately after one in which another possible reminiscence has already been noted 2).

Here there is complete fusion between reality and symbol as also in: Il nunzio; La civetta (death) 3); Digitale purpurea; La quercia caduta (the poet's murdered father) 4); Il naufrago where the sea represents destiny - blind and indifferent 5); L'ultimo frutto; L'ederella; La rosa dei sienesi (his own poetry humble and unpretentious as the plants that grow by the wayside) 6). In the earlier poems the subjects are usually taken from nature and everyday life, but with the Odi e inni we become of a widening of the horizon, and we enter a world where present reality is, as it were, disintegrated, until it seems like a shadowy veil which lends multiple, fugitive aspects to the deeper

1) Les rayons et les ombres.

2) Cf. p. 142.

3) Myricae.

4) Primi poemetti.

5) Nuovi poemetti.

6) Odi.

reality towards which Pascoli is guided by his longing for immortality, and which he seems to see momentarily as a gleam of light, far away in the shadows. The Odi e inni, in which great spirits continue to live throughout the ages, are the expression of Pascoli's passionate hope that the power of goodness may prevail over evil and material death, but his glimpses of the divine are of short duration. Produced, as they are, by a transitory sensation, and without the foundation of a secure faith, they lead to no lasting conviction, and, although the Inni: A Chavez and Andree sound like hymns of victory over the grave, yet the final impression is, I think, that death is the sole reality:

"Allor, sott'esso, grave sonò l'inno
degl'iperborei sacri cigni: un lento
interotto, d'ignote arpe tintinno;

un rintocco lontano, ermo tra il vento
di campane; un serrarsi arduo di porte
grandi, con chiaro clangere d'argento.

Ne mai quel canto risonò più forte
e più soave. Dissero che intorno
sola, pura, infinita era la morte." 1)

La civetta in the Poemi conviviali - which has the same significance as in the Myricæ - ends on a note of optimism which is rarely found in any poem of Pascoli. Socrates dies -

1) Andrée.

"e il sacro uccello della notte in alto
 si sollevò con muto volo d'ombra.
 E i compagni del morto ed i fanciulli
 scosse un subito fremito, uno strillo
 di sopra il tetto, Kikkabau...dall'alto,
Kikkabau...di più alto, Kikkabau...
 dal cielo azzurro dove ardean le stelle.
 E disse alcuno, udendo il fausto grido
 della civetta: "Con fortuna buona!"

Similarly in Il sonno di Odisseo Pascoli disengages from the episode what he believes to be the feature which applies to all humanity throughout the ages - failure to recognise happiness when it is close at hand - the theme of L'oiseau bleu of Maeterlinck. It is this element also which interests Pascoli in his portraits of classical heroes. Thus he depicts not the conquests of Ulysses and Alexander but their memories and secret dream-life - their sense of stagnation and disillusion. Instead of the epic realism of Carducci and the traditional classicist writers we see the well-known strands of classical lore woven into a visionary, lyrical interpretation which is applicable to life at any period: 1)

"E la corrente tacita e soave
 piu sempre avanti sospingea la nave,
 E il divino Odisseo vide alla punta
 dell'isola fiorita le Sirene,
 stese tra i fiori, con il capo eretto
 su gli oziosi cubiti, guardando
 il mare calmo avanti se, guardando
 il roseo sole che sorgea di contro;
 guardando immote; la lor ombra lunga
 dietro rigava l'isola dei fiori.

1) In this way Pascoli realises the ideal of Victor Hugo: "Le poete écrit des legendes et non des fastes" - Preface to Cromwell.

Dormite? L'alba già passò. Già gli occhi
vi cerca il sole tra le ciglia molli.
Sirene, io sono ancora quel mortale
che v'ascoltò, ma non potè sostare.

E la corrente tacita e soave
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave.

E il vecchio vide che le due Sirene,
le ciglie alzate su le due pupille,
avanti sè miravano nel sole
fisse, ed in lui, nella sua nave nera.
E su la calma immobile del mare,
alta e sicura egli inalzò la voce.

Son io! Son io, che torno per sapere!
Che molto io vidi come voi vedete
me. Sì; ma tutto ch'io guardai nel mondo,
mi riguardò; mi domandò; Chi sono?

E la corrente rapida a soave,
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave.

E il vecchio vide un grande mucchio d'ossa
d'uomini, e pelli raggrinzate intorno,
presso le due Sirene, immobilmente
stese sul lido, simili a due scogli.

Vedo. Sia pure. Questo duro ossame
cresca quel mucchio. Ma, voi due, parlate!
prima dite un vero, un solo a me, tra il tutto,
prima ch'io muoia, a ciò ch'io sia vissuto!

E la corrente rapida e soave,
più sempre avanti sospingea la nave.

E s'ergean su la nave alte le fronti,
con gli occhi fissi, delle due Sirene.

Solo mi resta un attimo. Vi prego!
Ditemi almeno chi sono io! chi ero!

E tra i due scogli si spezzò la nave." 1)

Man is bewitched by the enigmatic beauty of life only to find that it is but an illusion. He is carried onward by the inexorable tide of destiny but all things - even himself - must remain forever wrapped in mystery.

The above passages from Pascoli's later works show that, although he has drawn no nearer to an intellectual solution of the problem of life, yet he has reconciled his overwhelm-

ing preoccupation with mystery by concentrating unconsciously less upon the dread which seized him in the contemplation of mystery itself as an abstract quality and more and more upon the extraction of that aspect of mystery which he feels to be most poetical. The Odi e inni, as we have seen, are a symbolic interpretation of the prophetic and occult side of history: the central pivot of each of the Poemi conviviali may be found in the obscure angle which Pascoli perceived in all the Greek myths. In these poems there are none of those anguished invocations to mystery 1) which we find continually in the earlier works, and although the unique quality of his lyricism arises directly from his spiritual disquiet, yet his inner turmoil has become appeased now that he is able to crystallise his impressions into a beautiful form. Thus his spirit, which seems to float in a mysterious, shadowy world, illuminated by brief flashes of vision, finds perfect expression in the above passage from Andree 2) where the voice of the poet, sounding, as it were, remotely in a great silence, vibrates with strange overtones echoing into infinity, and finally surges upwards in a crescendo of intensity to the sublime climax.

1) Cf. p. 174.

2) pp. 192-193.

Mystical and symbolical interpretation of reality
communicated by indeterminate musicality in poetry.

This exact reproduction of Pascoli's reactions to mystery is made possible only by consummate artistry in verse-technique - by skilful manipulation of sounds, by the use of polysyllabic words, found also in Baudelaire; by variety in the placing of the cæsura, by a masterly use of alliteration and of run-on lines and by a varied disposition of accents - all devices which help to create an unearthly atmosphere, for they amplify the rhythm into voluptuous waves of melody which transport the reader into the terrifying stillness of the unknown where the darkness is lit up by spasmodic flashes of sinister light, and by rare but exstatic glimpses of the Divine.

Pascoli had found that the ideally beautiful world which formed the real subject of his poetry could not be described plastically or realistically, but that it must be magically evoked, and so he paints his intangible, half-seen visions with sound, drawing more lavishly than had ever been done before on the rich musical resources of the Italian language. Like the French symbolist poets, and Poe, he had learned that music, with its power to stir the deepest

- 1) Cf. also the closing lines of La vertigine (Nuovi poemetti) and L'aurora boreale (Odi e inni).
- 2) Cf. L'homme et la mer and the opening line of Un fantome (Les fleurs du mal).

emotions, could create something akin to the polyphonic but indefinable melodies which were the reactions of his rich, subtle and complex temperament when it came into contact with the mystery of life. For him, as for Mallarme "La Musique et les Lettres sont la face alternative ici elargie vers l'obscur;" 1). It seemed to both these poets that only the musical evocation of symbols could convey something of that savour of the unknown which for them was the most precious element in life, but Pascoli's musical effects, like his symbols, 2) give the impression of being more spontaneously conceived than those of Mallarme which are often the realisation of a pre-ordained plan whereby the syntactical structure of the lines is completely disintegrated so that words which have been previously chosen for their qualities of richness and sonority may be rearranged so as to obtain from them the maximum power of suggestiveness. Although some of Pascoli's combinations of sounds and images are obviously the result of careful selection, I do not think that his technique owes anything directly to the example of any other poet. His fine musical ear, his extraordinary versatility, and above all his originality and his ability to infuse new life into any form

1) Les musique et les lettres.

2) Cf. p. 189.

he chose to handle gave him the power to create those sad, profound lines of which Serra says: "l'uno se ne discernerebbe in mezzo a mille, a una certa sua risonanza, che qual sia non si sa sempre dire bene, ma che non si puo mai confondere con altra" 1).

Pascoli may, however, have received some encouragement to develop his wonderful gift of poetical music from his readings in the works of Poe 2), and he may see himself in the "humbler poet" described in Longfellow's "Waif" of which Poe quotes the Proem: 3)

"Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavour;
And to-night I long for rest."

(Surely this is an exact description of Pascoli's reaction to the poetry of Carducci!).

"Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

1) Serra, R., Op. cit., p. 17.
2) Cf. pp. 55-58.
3) The poetic principle.

Who through long days of labour,
 And nights devoid of ease,
 Still heard in his soul the music
 Of wonderful melodies."

These lines may have made him more fully aware of his own poetical music, for this quality is apparent in the earliest Myricae in which the use of symbols is hardly seen, and this is another proof that he owed nothing to the theories of the French symbolists who deliberately aimed at the union of music and symbolism. Pascoli's condemnation of "letteratura strumentale" 1) and the symbolists' hatred of the Parnassian preoccupation with form has, however, a common source: It is the manifestation of the same passionate assertion of the poet's right to sing his own song in his own way, which arises from the instinctive rebellion against all rules and restrictions, and from the intense love of spiritual liberty which is found in all mystics - the deep affinity which Poe and Pascoli share with the French symbolists whom Barre calls: "une école d'esperance et de liberté, nullement un atelier de technique" - for whom "Il n'y a pas de méthodes, il n'y a pas de règles. Il y a l'Infini et le cri de ton coeur pour en dévoiler le mystere." 2).

1) Il fanciullino, p. 34: Cf. also: Ibid., p. 36.

2) Barre, A., Op. cit., p. 389.

These poets' ideal is not the metallic perfection of Heredia nor the classical grandeur of Carducci: they would agree rather with Poe when he declares: "I know that indefiniteness is an element of the true music - I mean of the true musical expression. Give to it any undue decision - imbue it with any very determinate tone - and you deprive it, at once, of its ethereal, its ideal, its intrinsic and essential character. You dispel its luxury of dream. You dissolve the atmosphere of the mystic upon which it floats. You exhaust it of its breath of faery. It now becomes a tangible and easily appreciable idea - a thing of the earth - earthy." 1)

"De la musique avant toute chose,
Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air,
Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.

.....

Car nous voulons la Nuance encor,
Pas la Couleur, rien que la nuance!
Oh! la nuance seule fiancée
Le rêve au rêve et la flûte au cor!

.....
Prends l'éloquence et tord-lui son cou!" 2)

and - "Retorica!" 3) cries Pascoli of his native poetry: Like Verlaine he found that lyricism possessed the power to free his poetry from the set forms of Italian prosody.

1) Marginalia.

2) L'art poétique (Jadis).

3) Il fanciullino, p. 17.

Poets like Pascoli, however, submit to no guidance but that of their own musical fantasy, and his fluid, dream-like melodies bear so markedly the imprint of his individuality that they could not have been composed otherwise than by abandoning himself spontaneously to his moods and impressions. In this receptive state he is able to hear what Adolphe Rette calls "le rythme personnel que le poete doit trouver lui-meme" 1) and to reproduce this inner music which is his alone he brings into play every device of verse-technique so as to dissolve the solid structure of rigid traditional metres into a translucent web of cadences whose notes, suspended between long pauses weave round each image an aura of enchantment and mystery:

"Tra cielo e mare (un rigo di carmine)
recide intorno l'acque marezzate)
parlano. E un'alba cerula d'estate
hon una randa in tutto quel turchino.

Pur voci reca il soffio del garbino
con oziose e tremule risate.
Seno i puffini: su le mute ondate
pende quel chiacchiericcio mattutino.

Sembra un vociare, per la calma, ficco
di marinai, ch'ad ora ad ora guinga
tra'l fievole sciacquo della risacca;

1) Preface: Archipel en fleurs.

quando, stagliate dentro l'oro e il fioco,
 le paranzelle in una riga lunga
 dondolano sul mar liscio di lacca." 1)

This picture, in which there is no direct suggestion of symbol, has the same quality of bewitched unearthliness as Coleridge's "painted ship upon a painted ocean." 2) and the ordinary, everyday events which usually form the subject of his early poems are often invested thus with the solemnity of a ritual, for at his touch the simplest words acquire a strange significance.

This ability to group sounds so as to draw from the the utmost evocative effect; to intensify the rhythm so that the lines are sustained beyond their apparent length by prolific echoes - this art of musical suggestion in which Pascoli is already a past-master in the first Myricae - these qualities are present also in the poetry of Victor Hugo where "les mots de tout le monde, du langage ordinaire, quotidien, familier,.. en passant par cet écho sonore...contractent des vertus et des propriétés nouvelles. Longtemps apres les avoir entendus ils continuent encore de vibrer dans l'oreille, et le retentissement s'en prolonge comme à l'infini" 3)

1) I puffini dell'Adriatico (Myricae).

2) Ancient mariner, ll.

3) Brunetiere, Ferdinand: L'évolution de la poésie lyrique en France au XIXme siècle: La première manière de Victor Hugo.

"O douleur! j'ai voulu, moi dont l'âme est troublée,
Savoir si l'urne encor conservait la liqueur,
Et voir ce qu'avait fait cette heureuse vallée
De tout ce que j'avais laissé là de mon cœur!" 1)

At first Pascoli also used his music simply to reproduce his feelings and memories - to lament with Verlaine the happy days that are no more 2), to recall "le vert paradis des amours enfantines" 3) as in Le ciaramelle; Il ritorno a San Mauro; Casa mia 4) but even at this period the typical nostalgic lilt of his poetry is fully apparent - in Romagna 5); in Addio 4) which may have been suggested by Gautier's Ce que disent les hirondelles 6) Already he has shaped for himself an instrument flexible enough to follow the most fugitive outlines of his dream-world and perfectly attuned for the reproduction of his most subtle reactions. These earlier poems contain a whole gamut of effects - from the galloping lines of Scalpitio 4) to the softly-falling petals of Il Vischio 6). How exactly the brief lines of Canzone d'aprile 4) suggest the bewildering variety of sensations aroused by the miracle of Spring!

"Fantasma tu giungi,
tu parti mistero.
Vanisti, o di lungi?
che lega già il pero,
fiorisce il cotogno
laggiù."

1) Tristesse d'Olympio (Les rayons et les ombres).

2) Cf. Quel giorno; Il passato (Myricae).

3) Baudelaire: Moesta et errabunda (Les fleurs du mal).

4) Canti di Castelvecchio.

5) Myricae.

6) Cf. also: Dialogo and In cammino (Myricae)

Pascoli believed rhythm in poetry to be the purely spontaneous expression of the poet's reaction to reality. "vecchissimo e il mondo che tu vedi nuovamente!" he tells "il fanciullino" - "E primitivo il ritmo...col quale tu, in certo modo, lo culli o lo danzi!" 1) As Galletti points out, however, "il poeta moderno non può essere un primitivo" 2) and Pascoli's poetry, like that of Verlaine, oscillates between extreme naivete and a highly self-conscious artistry which often draws near to decadence. In him Bulferetti notes "l'amor sensuale della parola forte come nel d'Annunzio" 3) - a poet who, despite Pascoli's admiration for him, would seem to be the antithesis of "il fanciullino". Therefore, although Pascoli, like Maeterlinck, is one of the simplest and least sophisticated of the modern poets, yet he is not entirely the child-like, unselfconscious poet he imagines himself to be. (Another case of a great poet's art diverging from his theory!) He fallaciously depicts primitive man as fully alive to the delicious effects of "le parole pur no nate, legate co' piu sottili nodi, segnate

1) Il fanciullino, p. 15.

2) Op. cit., p. 202.

3) Op. cit., p.

con le più vive impronte, lavorate coi più ingegnosi nielli!
 Ne vedevano essi tutti i pregi, e il peso e il timbro del loro
 metallo, e il suono col quale in principio rompevano dalle
 labbra schiudentisi, e quello col quale in fine ronzavano
 nelle orecchie aperte. Or tu, fanciullo, fai come loro,
 perchè sei come loro." 1) Pascoli, unlike Mallarmé, does
 not strain the logical construction of his poetry in order to
 obtain the perfect setting for his key-words, but he shows
 that he is as fully aware as the French poet of the rich vi-
 brations of the words he uses by his carefully-studied sound-
 combinations and by his obvious delight in exotic words - he
 shares the French romantic poets' thirst for far-off lands
 like the "misterioso Timbuctu" 2) and he reproduces the gla-
 mour of the East by his lavish use of biblical names in Gog
e Magog 3) and of African terms in La sfogliatura 4):

"Nell'Agame, sui morti che piangete,
 sono molti anni che si vanga e si ara,
 e il rosso tief si miete
 pei fitaurari e i barambara.

Le donne, là, dai denti come latte,
 cantano anch'esse, in cerchio, su lo strame.
 Una nel mezzo batte
 sul cupo negarit di rame.

.....

- 1) Il fanciullano, p. 14.
- 2) In cammino (Myricae).
- 3) Poemi conviviali.
- 4) Odi e inni.

"Cantano poi la notte lunga, e i fuochi
 accesi dal Gundapta a Gunaguna,
 e spari e grida, e ficchi
 sospiri al lume della luna;

e i Ras che avanti l'uggiolio crudele
 di iene erranti che fuggian la fiamma,
 beveano l'idromele
 rinvolti nel purpurei criamma."

His sensuous delight in sounds is as intense as that of Keats and Tennyson, and is apparent already in the first Myrica - in the wonderful lines of Romagna:

"e'l bue rumina nelle opache stalle
 la sua laboriosa lupinella."

in the concentration of "dark" sounds in Il nunzio; in the closing lines of Alba festiva, and in Il brivido 1). He made much more lavish use of alliteration than other Italian poets, who generally avoid this device, until, in many of the Canti di Castelvechio the imitation of bird-cries often becomes excessive. He would notice that the English romantic poets, too, used every device of verse-technique in order to charm the reader into a world of magic beauty, and he must have read with delight this passage where Shelley's vivid description of sun-lit sea transports us to:

"... the blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,
 Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,
 All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them!" 2)

1) Canti di Castelvechio.

2) Ode to the West Wind.

In this passage the same apparent spontaneity conceals the skilful manipulation of long syllables and run-on lines, and the sibilants, which reproduce the swish of the waves, and the repeated "l"s, have the same hypnotic effect upon the reader as the alliteration of "m" and "n" in Dalla spiaggia 1):

"C'è sopra il mare tutto abbonacciato
il tremolare quasi d'una maglia:
in fondo in fondo un ermo colonnato,
nivee colonne d'un candor che abbaglia.

una rovina bianca e solitaria
la dove azzurra è l'acqua come l'aria.

il mare della calma dell'estate
ne canta tra le sue larghe sorsate

o bianco tempio che crederi vedere
nel chiaro giorno, dove sei vanità?

.....
e piano il mare scivola alla riva
e ne sospira nella calma estiva."

In this passage - "in fondo in fondo"... "della calma dell'estate"... "nella calma estiva"... there is a hint of the subtle and varied use Pascoli was to make of repetition and refrain, and he owes some of his most striking effects to this device: the portrayal of Destiny in the above passage from L'ultimo viaggio could not be more forcibly executed than by the continual recurrence of the couplet:

"E la corrente tacita e soave
più sempre avanti sospinge la nave." 2)

1) Myrica.

2) See p. 194.

This passage is impregnated with the same bewitched atmosphere as Dalla spiaggia 1) but Pascoli can obtain many other effects by the use of repetition: In the Inno a Ciapin the reiterated "quella vendemmia" excites in the reader a feeling of dread and dire foreboding such as that produced by Rossetti in Troy town and Sister Helen; the three-fold cry of the mastman - "TERRA " in Il ritorno di Colombo bursts upon the ear with a greater effect of revelation each time it recurs. These tours de force are usually carried out with conscious artistry and Doctor Purkis notes that "Poe's remarks on the use of refrain, given in his explanation of how he composed The raven are exactly followed in Pascoli's use of refrains." 2) Pascoli may also have read The philosophy of composition where Poe writes at length on the importance of the refrain.

When a poem contains a number of different themes Pascoli shows his amazing command of technique by producing a range of contrasting harmonies comparable to those of an orchestral symphony. Similar variations in tone are found in Hugo's Tristesse d'Olympio 3) where the primary subject - memory - is accompanied by the two other great lyric themes - nature and death. Pascoli was already a master of these tone-combinations when he wrote Il giorno dei morti 4) where he hears the

1) See p. 208.

2) Op. cit., Introduction, p. 6.

3) Les rayons et les ombres; Cf. also: Prière pour tous (Les feuilles d'automne); Ode à l'Arc de Triomphe (Les voix intérieures); À Villequier (Les contemplations, IV, XV).

4) Myricas: See p. 50.

sorrowful voices of his dead family mingling with

"il sibilar di questi truci venti,
al rombar di quest'acque,"

and this atmosphere of rushing winds and sobbing waves was to provide a fitting background for the portentous events of the Odi e inni.

By this time Pascoli's technique is supple enough to contain his every mood and impression, which he transfers in imagination to the personages of history and mythology, whose voices sound the whole gamut of the Pascolian music - from the passionate hatred of Le sfogliatrici 1) to the majestic serenity of Il duca degli Abruzzi 2); from the desolation of Pace 2) to the calm contemplation in Verdi 2). All these differences of tone show his unique power of concentrating all his technical resources upon the creation of the atmosphere he desires and a study of his methods reveals that this perfect harmony between form and content is obtained by applying to language devices which are generally associated only with music. As Galletti notes 3) his mystical aspiration towards ideal beauty finds its natural expression, as with Poe and Shelley, in the upward swell of anapaestics as in the Inni: Al re Umberto, Manlio, Pa-

1) La scogliatura (Odi e inni).

2) Inni.

3) Op. cit., p. 236.

ce, Alle batterie siciliane. Not only does every one of these poems possess its own individual tone but often there is a complete contrast of metre in the same poem, and in Il ritorno di Colombo, A Fratti, and Antica madre the rise and fall of musical phrases is exactly reproduced by the antithesis between anapaestic and dactylic movements, while the jarring elements of Il Pope are rendered to perfection by the discord created by the rapid uneven sentences of the opening verses of each section and the ominous beats of each closing verse:

"L'acque son rapide e torbide,
 cupo è il fiume, il fiume è grosso,
 Fu per un ferreo diluvio
 per un uragano rosso.
 Furono lampi di sciabole,
 sibili di sferze, furia
 secca di grandine e folgori,
 come la in Mancuria.....

Ma non si trovano laceri
 sotto l'unghia dei cavalli,
 i tuoi nemici, quei piccoli
 tuoi nemici di là, gialli....
 Erano figli del piccolo
 padre; sono, o Zar, tua cosa!
 C'è qualche cosa di vergine....
 che fa tutto rosa.

Sangue! Sangue! Sangue! Sangue!
 Tu non puoi passare: e troppo!
 Quale uragano di sangue,
 i tuoi Cosacchi di galoppo!
 E poi fuma, bolle... Sciopera
 anche tu! nasconditi!
 Non puoi, no! Ma là...quel Pope
 Egli, sì."

pauses are used with the greatest dramatic effect, especially in Il ritorno di Colombo, (after the two first lines of each stroph); in Fratti and in Antica madre. The difference between these odes of Pascoli and the kind of rhetorical compositions generally associated with political themes is seen most clearly in the way in which the epode usually marks a gradual diminution of tone which resolves the music....piano....pianissimo....until it dies away into the distance:

"Astro del fato, cometa
 ch'erri nell'ombra inquieta
 cercando la fragile terra,
 astro, l'arrivi e pur, muto,
 senti che n'esce l'acuto
 bramire degli uomini in guerra:
 passi in un attimo, o face
 dell'infinito; sei lunge;
 quando nei ceruli spazi
 ti giunge
 l'ululo d'odi non sazi:
 poi.....pace!" 1)

In the Odi e inni which bear the significant motto Canamus Pascoli seems to concentrate exclusively upon the exploitation of his technical virtuosity, evolving new metres, infusing new life into old ones and constantly amazing us by the variety and richness of his music and the ease with which he handles the most exacting designs. In Le due aquile (which, although it is

1) Pace (Inni).

actuallyⁱⁿ included the Nuovi poemetti is really a Hymn - to life - the whole poem forms a metrical circle to correspond to the circle of life which is bounded by birth and death and is always beginning and ending. Thus there are seven strophs concluded by the final line, the first stroph consisting of one triplet, the second of two, the third of three and the fourth - the central one - of five. The number of triplets then diminishes until the last stroph has only one like the first. By this time it is clear that music is gaining increasing ascendancy over his art. Pietrobono notes of Il ritorno 1) that "Le parti narrative...nella intenzione del P. devono essere interpretate dell'orchestra," 2) and many sections of the Poemi conviviali take on the semblance of a sung recitative, as in the magnificent transcription of Sappho's lyric:

".....Ella sedè, reggendo
la risonante pectide; ne strinse
tacita intorno ai collabi le corde;
tento le corde fremebonde, e disse:

Splende al plenilunio l'orto; il melo
trema appena d'un tremolio d'argento...
Nei lontani monti color di cielo
sibila il vento.

Muggia il vento, strepita tra le forre,
su le quercie gettasi...il mio non sembra
che un tremore, ma è l'amore, e corre,
spossa le membra!

1) Odi e inni.

2) Pietrobono, Luigi: Poesie di Giovanni Pascoli: 5a ed., p. 163.

M'è lontano dalle ricciute chiome,
 quanto il sole; ma mi giunge al cuore,
 come il sole: bello, ma bello come
 sole che muore.

Dileguare! e altro non voglio: voglio
 farmi chiarità che da lui si effonda:
 Scoglio estremo della gran luce, scoglio
 su la grande onda,

dolce è da te scendere dove è pace:
 scende il sole nell'infinito mare;
 trema e scende la chiarità seguace
 crepuscolare.

La Morte è questa! il vecchio esclamo. Questo,
 ella rispose, e, ospite, l'Amore.
 Tento le corde fremebonde, e disse:

Togli il pianto. È colpa! Sei del poeta
 nella casa, tu. Chi dirà che fui?
 Piangi il morto atleta: beltà d'atleta
 muore con lui." 1)

An ever-recurring theme of the Poemi conviviali and the
Poemi italici is the power of music over the human soul.
 Thus Anticleo 2) almost betrays his companions and completely
 forgets all his past life - his wife and home - when he hears
 the voice of Helen

".....che sonava al cuore
 come la voce dolce piu che niuna,
 come ad ognuno suona al cuor sol una."

and the poet himself comes to rely almost entirely upon the
 current of melody to blend together the chaotic web of sym-

1) Solon: Cf. also: La cetra di Achille (Poemi conviviali).
 2) Poemi conviviali: Cf. also: Il cieco di Chio and L'ultimo
 viaggio (Ibid.).

bols with their involved cross-correspondences. Far from deliberately aiming at the combination of music and symbol, as he might have done had he been directly influenced by the symbolist theories, he lets the mysterious essence of all things sink into his being until he feels impelled to mingle his voice with the music of the spheres as in the Canto terzo of Rossini !)

".....guizzo nel cielo azzurro ed oro
il puro canto e rimbalzo rinfranto
in un immenso singulto sonoro.

Sfavillo. Si spengeva....era già spento.
No: riviveva e distendeva le bianche
ali nel cielo e palpitava al vento.

Risaliva con palpiti e sussulti
alto, più alto, per rinfrangersi anche
in un'onda, in un'ansia di singulti.

Grido. Morì. Sola le cristalline
lagrime l'arpa ora stillava; quando
risorse la dolcezza senza fine,

riprese il canto, alto tra cielo e mare,
a plorar forte, ad implorare blando,
spezzarsi, unirsi, sospirare, ansare;

un grido, e pace. Ecco le gocce d'oro
tinnir sull'arpa, dalle corde mosse
di quell'acuta gioia di martoro;

e il canto alzarsi e i palpiti argentini
piovere giù, poi risalire a scosse,
a spiri, a strida.....!"

As in the songs of the Spirits in Prometheus unbound, and
in the Romances sans paroles of Verlaine, this passage

is almost identical with pure music, for it lays such a spell upon the intellect of the reader that he is charmed into an unquestioning acceptance of the poet's words without feeling the least desire to fathom their exact meaning. In Pascoli's poetry, as Galletti observes, "il ritmo e la cadenza secondano la visione e creano nell'animo l'atmosfera spirituale che è propizia al tacito e lento fiorire del sogno. Questa è la più alta ambizione estetica della poesia simbolica, che tende, come al proprio vertice e al proprio limite, verso l'indeterminatezza musicale." 1) Although Pascoli does realise the ideals of the symbolists in this respect most critics are agreed that he owes nothing directly either to their example or to their theories of art 2), and we know that he actually disapproved of the efforts of later symbolist poets to flout all the traditional rules of metre, for Bulferetti records the following of Pascoli to a referendum of F. T. Marinetti: "Non so giudicare del vers libre presso i francesi. Essi avevano forse necessita d'uscire

1) Op. cit., p. 218.

2) Cf. pp. 42-43.

dall'eterno allessandro e dalle solite rime. Quanto a noi un terzo libero dai mille atteggiamenti, capace coi suoi accavallamenti delle più imprevedibili sorprese ritmiche, l'avevamo già un pezzo: il verso endecasillabico sciolto. Più in là, con la libertà, non andrei, prima di avere sperimentato la migliaia di metri nuovi che noi possiamo edificare sulla base dei vecchi nostri versi, più diligentemente distinti, più variamente e musicalmente accoppiati e intrecciati." 1) Thus Pascoli, like Coleridge, Keats and Victor Hugo, preferred to enrich the metrical patterns already existence with new and subtle variations rather than break right away from the established rules of prosody.

CONCLUSION

The deep spiritual affinities which Pascoli shares with many of the French symbolists he shares also with Poe who had a great influence on them. As we have seen it was almost certainly Poe who first led Pascoli into the atmosphere of genuine romanticism ¹⁾, but even if he discovered this kindred spirit through the translations of Baudelaire or Mallarmé he would feel less attracted towards these poets with their sophisticated way of life and narrow, aristocratic outlook than to the English romantic poets in whom he would find his own unaffected sincerity, broad humanity, love of nature and sane appreciation of ordinary, homely things. Pascoli lacked the adult detachment to admire poets whose views and habits differed too much from his own, but the first English and French romantic poets possessed the qualities which would arouse the whole-hearted admiration of his simple child-like nature while in their poetry he would discover the perfect expression of his most precious ideals.

¹⁾Cf. pp. 46-61.

There is, however, one side of Pascoli's temperament which is not found in any of these poets: whereas they soar on the wings of sensation towards the harmony of spiritual peace - which is the fruit of a clear and unshakeable philosophy of life - Pascoli prefers to hover in the shadows of mystery rather than make any attempt to penetrate to a distinct vision of the dim light which he sometimes senses at the heart of the universe. Lacking both the power and the inclination to attain to this happy state, he must often have felt how inferior was his mental capacity compared with the keen mind of Poe or the philosophical depth of Wordsworth or Coleridge, yet poetical genius can still bear marvellous fruit even though the mysticism of the poet be weak and his intellect of mediocre calibre, for one of the greatest poets of all time possessed, side by side with his wonderful imagery and sublime lyricism, the same puerility and lack of judgment ¹⁾ which are so conspicuous in Pascoli, and which probably retarded his spiritual development until he realised that these defects are forgotten in the intoxication produced by the magic of rhythm and beautiful images. This is the important contribution which Victor Hugo may have made to his artistic formation. It is noticeable also that this uncertain philosophy of life, this obsession with mystery and the unseen

¹⁾Cf. Galletti, *Op. cit.*, pp. 178-181 on the identical qualities of Hugo's and Pascoli's critical powers.

produced in him, as in Pascoli, another salient trait which is almost unrepresented in the first English romantic poets - except possibly in Coleridge and Scott - and is almost entirely absent from the poetry of the other French romantics: When Hugo said that Les fleurs du mal "dotent l'art d'un nouveau frisson" he could have said the same of his own poetry, and the same remark is equally applicable to that of Pascoli. They, moreover, needed no artificial stimulants to awaken in them a full realization of the occult and supernatural aspects of life. As Galletti observes: "Il Coleridge addormentava la coscienza pensante e cercava l'ipotasi dello spirito e della natura nel fumo dell'oppio, e Poe nell'alcool, l'Hoffmann nel vino, il Baudelaire nella lussuria sottile e perversa; altri in altri eccitanti. Ma vi sono anime naturalmente disposte a questa intuizione, direi, magica e sibellina della vita. Il Pascoli mi pare di queste." 1) Of such also are Victor Hugo and Maeterlinck. The many deep affinities between Pascoli and the Belgian mystic have already been noted 2) and the improbability of Pascoli having been acquainted with his work has been dismissed by Valentin 3). Moreover, so far as I know, no reminiscences from Maeterlinck have been found in Pascoli's poetry but it has echoes from

1)Op. cit., p. 200; Cf. also pp. 175-176.

2)See pp. 75, 77, 169 etc.

3)Cf. p. 41.

Victor Hugo 1) and Meozzi, who adds other reminiscences to those already found by Vischi, Croce, Pietrobono and Zacchetti, goes so far as to state that "per quanto, com'è noto, il Pascoli fosse sapiente ed eccellente traduttore delle letterature moderne non si hanno vere e proprie reminiscenze se non da Victor Hugo 2), and we know that Pascoli was one of his most fervent admirers not only because his anthologies contain many passages from his works but because he is the only poet to whom he has paid tribute in verse:

"Se vedo in alto il fiume
latteo di nebulose
in due partire il cielo;
se un rio, quaggiù, con piume
d'ala e foglie di rose
piano urtare un stelo;
penso, Victor, a te.

Odo un ruggito: io penso
a te. Un vagito, un pianto:
io penso a te. Sul lido
fuma il mare, l'incenso
sull'are, un fiore è infranto
Scheepers è ucciso... Io grido:
"Victor Hugo dov'è?" 3)

According to Pascoli this is the poet who could perfectly express every mood, every event and every aspect of the universe. In "il suo fratello spirituale di Francia"4) he would recognise not only the characteristics and ideals which he so much

1) See pp. 111, 131, 135, 136, 137, 142 and 190: Cf. also Meozzi, Op. cit., Appendice seconda.

2) Op. cit., p. 363.

3) A Victor Hugo (Poesie varie).

4) Arullani, V. A., Op. cit., p. 12.

admired in the first romantics - especially in the English poets - the simple tastes, love of family life and of children 1); sympathy for the unfortunate combined with a burning love of justice 2) which produced Utopian visions founded on the brotherhood of mankind 3) and the conception of poetry as the spontaneous expression of a divine inspiration 4), but he would perceive also in Hugo his own most dominant traits and even his defects, and he would realise that an uncertain and contradictory philosophy of life need not impede the poet from the full expression of his genius for any lack of consistency in the subject-matter is at once forgotten if he can carry the reader away upon the waves of lyric melody. Hugo himself describes how all things are transformed by rhythm and sonority:

"Si ma tête, fournaise ou mon esprit s'allume
 Jette le vers d'airain qui bouillonne et qui fume
 Dans le rythme profond, moule mystérieux
 D'où sort la strophe ouvrant ses ailes dans les cieux;
 C'est que l'amour, la tombe, et la gloire, et la vie,
 L'onde qui fuit, par l'onde incessamment suivie,
 Tout souffle, tout rayon, ou propice ou fatal,
 Fait reluire et vibrer mon âme de cristal,
 Mon âme aux mille voix, que le Dieu que j'adore
 Mit au centre de tout comme un écho sonore! 5)

and Pascoli calls the "fanciullino musico, ..seno concavo

1) Cf. pp. 95-97.

2) Cf. p. 145.

3) Cf. Shelley: Isle of Islam; Hugo: Plein ciel (La légende des siècles) and Pascoli: La piada (Nuovi poemetti).

4) Cf. pp. 68-70.

5) Ce siècle avait deux ans (Les feuilles d'automne).

da cui risonare le voci degli altri uomini;" 1)

Barre calls Lamartine, Vigny and Hugo "précurseurs du symbolisme, but Hugo, he says "résume à la fois Lamartine et Vigny. Comme Lamartine il possède éminemment l'art de transformer les choses par l'imagination et de les élever à la hauteur du symbole....la maîtrise d'exprimer l'inconnaissable et l'invisible....Lorsque la pensée et l'image ne suffisent plus à l'expression de cette inexprimable le poète recourt à la musique des mots....Vigny et Hugo ont (in common with Pascoli) l'art de penser par l'image unique." Thus La légende des siècles like the Odi e inni are "épopées symbolistes" . Victor Hugo taught the symbolists - and perhaps Pascoli also - that "l'image et le mot pouvaient être associés pour traduire par la seule puissance de leur virtualités" In Hugo the same consciousness of "les forces obscures qui rôdent dans l'infini" 2) combined with an infinite capacity for wonder and a stupendous musical virtuosity produced also in Pascoli that spontaneous musical symbolism which makes Galletti say "la sua fantasia ha rifatto per proprio conto e per uno spontaneo svolgimento interiore il cammino percorso dalle spirito romantico da un secolo e mezzo a questa parte e che la sua poesia è un raro specimen individuale in cui si riflette condensato il processo vitale di un'età poetica," 3)

1) Il fanciullino, p.7.

2) Op. cit., pp. 37-39.

3) Op. cit., pp. 157-158.

for there - as it were in miniature - we are aware of all the successive stages of romanticism, from its initial urge towards a broader and freer conception of art up to its final flowering into music and symbol. It cannot be overemphasised, however, that every aspect of the romantic ideal which is contained in his poetry is touched with the unique Pascolian fragrance, and that the most that Poe, the first romantic poets or even Hugo could have done for him was to bring to the surface the qualities already dormant in his spirit, which, initiated into its natural atmosphere, would be able to expand sufficiently to reach its fulfilment independently, and whatever Pascoli's debt to foreign literature the individuality of his genius is now generally recognised. He has given expression, as no other Italian poet has ever done, to some of the most complex reactions of the human soul before the awful mystery of the universe, and there will always be some who will listen enthralled to the delicate, haunting music of his verse:

".....non muore il canto che tra il tintinno
della pectide apre il candor dell'ale.
E il poeta fin che non muoia l'inno
vive immortale," 1)

1) Solon (Poemi conviviali).