

Lawrence Garber

**Techniques of Characterization in Strachey's  
*Elizabeth and Essex***

I

Lytton Strachey's techniques of characterization owe a debt to those Theophrastan Character-writers of the seventeenth century who so significantly pre-figure his own approach to personality as a fixed and radiating centre. Many of the elements of the Character-books of Earle, Overbury and Fuller can be detected in Strachey's portraits: social satire, exempla, the intermixture of the psychological and the dramatic to form various Humours, the fondness for aphorism and paradox and, above all, a passion for formulae which could offer an anatomy of human nature in its universal and particular aspects.

The Theophrastan strain in Strachey is particularly evident in his miniature portraits of historians in *Portraits in Miniature* (1931).<sup>1</sup> It was not Strachey's desire here to create a true-likeness of his subjects in the ordinary sense, so that objections to his "one-dimensional treatment"<sup>2</sup> of Gibbon, Hume, Macaulay, Carlyle, Froude and Creighton tend to miss the mark of his larger strategy. Indeed, the essential feature of these portraits has little to do with full representationalism or roundness of character. Strachey's first objective was to create categorical likenesses: personalities in typical relationship to each other and to their own historical methods and systems. This systemization is not meant to serve full-blown characterization, but rather to accommodate a literature of Humours in which every cause and effect of conduct is seen to evolve from one basic principle of personality. Again, because Strachey's intention is not to construct three-dimensional likenesses, the question of biographical distortion does not arise on its usual grounds. It is quite true the Characterist or writer of Humours comedy did not have to defend their fictions from charges of misrepresentation of facts.

But in his miniature portraits, and as a kind of Humours biographer, Strachey is not constructing lives so much as examining sensibilities. And on this level of examination, because it concerns itself not with facts *per se* but with such tenuous matters as personality, temperament, "pure essentials",<sup>3</sup> Strachey is able to incorporate the more generalizing aspects of these fictional conventions without damaging the integrity of biographical form.

Nowhere is the sense of a ruling passion clearer than in those four studies which comprise Strachey's *Eminent Victorians* (1918).<sup>4</sup> The image of Cardinal Manning, for instance, "gliding adroitly to the front rank"<sup>5</sup> is the *donnée* of the entire portrait; every experience or act is informed by this initial conception of character, as if each arranged segment of Manning's career were meant to verify rather than to discover the essence of his personality. This tendency to view the past as something rounded and complete in itself, as an *objet d'art* of a kind susceptible to neat, categorical examination is typical of Strachey's sense of history and character in history. If, in a work such as *Eminent Victorians*, Strachey intends to explore the features of an age through some of its principle public figures, then those figures — as specimens — must be treated in a way which allows for the most simplified expressions of inner conflicts and paradoxical sensibilities. The element of paradox in character — that state of being within which opposing qualities vie for dominance, creating vacillation, confusion, self-doubt — must always be, for Strachey, an element capable of objective analysis and resolution. It is the biographer's task, given the perplexed state of his subjects, to provide enlightenment, to illuminate the dark, obscure corners of personality, to offer to his reader the confirmation of a positive series of explorations. And it is this structuring of character into sums and units of resolvable qualities which provides the Theophrastan element in Strachey's biographies and portraits.

Exemplified uniformity of character is also evident in *Queen Victoria* (1921),<sup>6</sup> although here the presentation of his subject is a more extended one. Letters, documents, the Queen's own journals are arranged by Strachey in a manner which supplements his conception of Victoria as the bourgeois Queen; and the various factual determinants of character are, once more, imaginatively concentrated upon a single, uniform idea of personality. Thus, we are told, "the little girl . . . was naturally simple and orderly, she was pious without difficulty, and her sense of propriety was keen"<sup>7</sup> Later, as "the living symbol of the victory of the middle

classes",<sup>8</sup> she is made to appear vigorously conservative, stubborn in her adherence to dutiful principles and royal prerogatives, and devoid of "humour and imagination".<sup>9</sup> And in the final chapter, Strachey sums up those qualities of a now aged Queen which made her seem to her subjects, from the very beginning, to be the embodiment of the age:

Goodness they prized above every other human quality; and Victoria, who, at the age of twelve, had said that she would be good, had kept her word. Duty, conscience, morality — yes! in the light of those high beacons the Queen had always lived. . . . The standard of solid virtue . . . had never been lowered for an instant.<sup>10</sup>

It is by such arrangement and connection that Strachey is able to demonstrate the Queen's inflexible and constant character: at age twelve and at age eighty-three she remains typical, emblematic and, despite Strachey's coy suggestions to the contrary, not at all impenetrable to the biographer's analysis.

It is my contention that Strachey did not abandon these techniques in his final biography, but that *Elizabeth and Essex*<sup>11</sup> represents a sophistication of methods already incorporated into his earlier works. An examination of the nature and force of these methods as they reflect Strachey's conception of character in biography, will form the major part of this study.

## II

*Elizabeth and Essex* has long had the reputation of being an unsuccessful experiment in technique and point of view, a failed attempt to utilize and combine new dramatic, novelistic, psycho-analytical and painterly principles in biography. Virginia Woolf concluded that the "whole book [was] about those strange spirits and even stranger bodies of whom authentic information was lacking. On his own showing, the attempt was doomed to failure."<sup>12</sup> J.K. Johnstone agrees that many of Strachey's difficulties were caused by "a lack of intimate information", observing that "Strachey appears to be consciously experimenting in *Elizabeth and Essex*; and deliberate experiment seldom results in a highly successful work of art."<sup>13</sup> More recently, Michael Holroyd, although disagreeing that Strachey lacked sufficient information concerning the period,<sup>14</sup> states that *Elizabeth and Essex* "founded . . . no tradition. It was an original but abortive experiment, leading up a cul-de-sac where the procession quickly came to a standstill."<sup>15</sup>

Generally, then, the critical reservations concerning Strachey's last experiment are of two kinds: that the lack of or obliviousness to factual documentation concerning the Elizabethan age forced Strachey to invent atmosphere, incident and character on a scale inconsistent with and unacceptable to legitimate biographical principles; and that these inventions, being based on no valid intimate knowledge of his subject, remain tentative, unconfirmed and superficial. In keeping with these charges, Holroyd notes that Strachey's "nebulous dream-like vacancy and soundlessness" was largely due "to the peculiar quality of Lytton's temperament and his romantic attitude towards the sixteenth century . . . He was largely out of his element in those remote, half-barbarous times."<sup>16</sup> As a result, his "characters are simply exterior visions . . . monumental silhouettes."<sup>17</sup>

It is my intention to show that *Elizabeth and Essex* successfully combines art with fact, and that the truths Strachey is expounding — and chooses to expound — are both valid and acceptable, given the nature of his own conception of character in biography.

### III

One of the major objections to the book is that it attempts too much, that it tries to re-construct a likeness of the Elizabethan age in the same manner that the earlier biographies (*Eminent Victorians*, *Queen Victoria*) had attempted to transmit the essential character of the Victorian era. It is questionable whether this was Strachey's ambition at all. It is true that in the earlier biographies, individual traits and specific events were so organized as to reflect, by implication, the character of an age; but, in *Elizabeth and Essex*, an inverse process seems to be evident. That is, the nature of the Elizabethan age is immediately given and becomes the *donnée* of the actions which follow; it does not evolve from example, but operates from the very first as a static backdrop for the exploration of individual character. It is in this adjustment of focus, where the scope is progressively narrowed rather than widened, that one of the basic differences between *Elizabeth and Essex* and the previous biographies lies.

The opening paragraph, with its vast generalizations, its panoramic view of centuries of English history and its sweeping certitudes establishes the widest focal point of the biography:

The English Reformation was not merely a religious event; it was also a social one. While the spiritual mould of the Middle Ages was shattered, a corresponding revolution, no less complete and no less far-reaching, occurred in the structure of secular life and the seat of power. The knights and ecclesiastics who had ruled for ages vanished away, and their place was taken by a new class of persons, neither chivalrous nor holy, into whose competent and vigorous hands the reins, and the sweets, of government were gathered. This remarkable aristocracy, which had been created by the cunning of Henry VIII, overwhelmed at last the power that had given it being . . . For many generations they *were* England; and it is difficult to imagine an England without them, even to-day. (*EE*, 1)

The opening of the second chapter is only slightly less vast in scope, as Strachey concentrates upon the peculiarities of the Elizabethan age itself. Having dealt with the twofold structure of Elizabeth's reign, Strachey shifts to a consideration of "the contradictions of the age that baffle our imagination and perplex our intelligence." (*EE*, 8) The nature of his observations sustain the earlier sense of distance and remoteness:

Human beings, no doubt, would cease to be human beings unless they were inconsistent; but the inconsistency of the Elizabethans exceeds the limits permitted to man . . . How is it possible to give a coherent account of their subtlety and their *naivete*, their delicacy and their brutality, their piety and their lust? . . . What kind of mental fabric could that have been which had for its warp the habits of filth and savagery of sixteenth century London and for its woof an impassioned familiarity with the splendour of Tamburlaine and the exquisiteness of Venus and Adonis? . . . And the curious society which loved such fantasies and delicacies — how readily would it turn and rend a random victim with hideous cruelty! (*EE*, 9-10)

After these two introductory notes, however, the narrative becomes progressively an inverse one. The range of concentration narrows from that of an age to that of the characters within it to that of a specific relationship among them. Strachey does attempt, at times, to give to that relationship (between Elizabeth and Essex) a historical importance out of all proportion to its real significance — as when, in the final chapter, the death of the Queen is made to seem a direct emotional consequence of Essex's fate—but, generally, he writes to scale.<sup>18</sup> In this regard, the subtitle of the biography—*A Tragic History*—suggests the nature and the bounds of Strachey's intentions. The use of the indefinite article implies a specific action or relationship; further, although one could hardly describe as "Tragic" something as vast and amorphous as

the Elizabethan age, a particular incident or series of incidents within it might be interpreted as such. Also, despite the sweeping vista of the opening chapters, most of the important scenes take place at Court; even the details of the military adventures of Essex and Raleigh are often presented to the reader in the form of reports to Elizabeth in England. The idea of the play, of the world as a stage, contributes to this general feeling of constriction and particularity. And, although Holroyd's attempt to show that *Elizabeth and Essex* represents Strachey's *Antony and Cleopatra* is not wholly convincing,<sup>19</sup> the dramatic principles involved in the construction of this "Tragic History" are apparent.<sup>20</sup> But the dramatic structure of the biography is not, of course, an end in itself. Together with the novelistic, psycho-analytical and painterly features of the work, the dramatic qualities contribute to that special presentation and exploration of personality which is always the central motivating force behind Strachey's approach to biography.

Throughout *Elizabeth and Essex*, Strachey's main strategy is to present and observe character. Historical events, political situations, the very nature of the age are significant only insofar as they serve this end. Thus, the use of dramatic techniques permits Strachey to concentrate upon personality and personal relationships without continually having to bring to the fore the full historical context. Again, the narrative perspective seems almost always committed to interpretations of character; that is, Strachey as narrator, even in the wider perspective of the opening chapters, is constantly focussing upon the hidden motives of his principal subjects. The dual nature of the Elizabethan age (*EE*, 9) is merely a larger reflection of the conflicting forces operating within its individual figures. Indeed, the psycho-analytical approach was never so pronounced in Strachey's work as it is in this last biography.

For his study of personality Strachey adopted Freud's views about the unconscious and about the way in which irrational forces within the unconscious affect behaviour . . . . Strachey . . . learned how to structure personality by exhibiting its dual nature and to dramatize it by emphasizing internal conflicts. Later in his career as a biographer . . . Strachey was consciously indebted to Freud, and he was able to show in a more complicated fashion how various neurotic complexes and obsessions, formed by early sexual experiences, contribute to the forming of the adult personality.<sup>21</sup>

I shall be dealing with the psychological character of Strachey's figures in due course; what is significant at this point is to recognize that Strachey's narrative interpolations, his very role as omniscient narrator

is to suggest, and direct us towards a sense of the "complexity of character".<sup>22</sup> The narrative, in this way, supplements as well as links up the larger dramatic sequences, creating a secondary psycho-analytical pattern.

#### IV

Strachey utilizes, as well, the methods of portrait-painting in his examination of personality, attempting to infer from "exterior visions" (*EE*, 8) the emotional and intellectual life within. It is for Strachey another of the means "by which the modern mind might reach to an imaginative comprehension of those beings of three centuries ago — might move with ease among their familiar essential feelings" (*EE*, 8). The pictorial quality of the biography is fairly apparent, but Strachey's dependency upon the art of the period to aid him in the depiction of character is another matter. Holroyd mentions that "the matter of illustrations [was] . . . always a most significant and carefully chosen part of his biographies,"<sup>23</sup> and describes Strachey "fussing over illustrations" as he dealt with the proof sheets of *Elizabeth and Essex*.<sup>24</sup> Included in the first edition of *Elizabeth and Essex* are photographs of six portraits: Sir Walter Raleigh, Essex, Robert Cecil, Francis Bacon and two of Elizabeth.<sup>25</sup> Each of these figures is introduced by what seems to be a preliminary psychological reading of the representative portrait-photograph in the text. Queen Elizabeth, for instance, is first described in all of her majestic finery just as she appears in the National Portrait Gallery:

From her visible aspect to the profundities of her being, every part of her was permeated by the bewildering discordances of the real and the apparent. Under the serried complexities of her raiment — the huge hoop, the still ruff, the swollen sleeves, the powdered pearls, the spreading, gilded gauzes—the form of the woman vanished, and men saw instead an image—magnificent, portentous, self-created—an image of regality which yet by a miracle was actually alive. Posterity has suffered by a similar deceit of vision. The great Queen of its imagination, the lion-hearted heroine . . . no more resembles the Queen of fact, than the clothed Elizabeth the naked one. But, after all, posterity is privileged. Let us draw nearer; we shall do no wrong now to that majesty, if we look below the robes. (*EE*, 10-11)

In part, Strachey is working from the exterior vision inwards, looking imaginatively "below the robes" certainly, but never entirely dispensing with the available physical evidences of character. Strachey's reading of

Raleigh's portrait (in the National Portrait Gallery) is only a passing one, but again essential for Strachey's purposes:

While the Earl conversed with the Queen in her chamber, the Captain of the Guard stood outside the door on duty; and the Captain of the Guard was a gentleman with a bold face—Sir Walter Raleigh. The younger son of a West-country squire . . . he was thirty-five—a dangerous and magnificent man. His splendid bearing, his enterprising spirit, which had brought him to this unexpected grandeur—whither would they lead him in the end? (*EE*, 30)

It is, of course, this concept of an "enterprising spirit" about which Strachey's imaginative portrait of Raleigh is to revolve. Just as Elizabeth's outer raiment both revealed and concealed, reflecting the "bewildering discordances of the real and the apparent" (*EE*, 10) in her nature, Raleigh's outward appearance is made to seem representative of the inner man. Applying the same principle, Strachey speaks of Francis Bacon's "cold viper-gaze" (*EE*, 119) — an exterior feature of his portrait (at Woburn Abbey) which is made to reflect "a prohibitively inhumane intellect"<sup>26</sup> and which confirms his role as the insensitive and ruthless foil to Essex.

But the pictorial method is most revealingly applied in the case of Robert Cecil, whose misshapen physique is presented to us as the key to his mysterious inner nature. Indeed, with Cecil, Strachey is far more dependent on the matter of his subject's physiognomy in determining inner character: for in this case, "we can see only what we are shown" (*EE*, 111). Strachey's detailed reading of Cecil's character (from the portrait at Woburn Abbey) is as follows:

He sat at his writing table; and his presence was sweet and grave. There was an urbanity upon his features, some kind of explanatory gentleness, which, when he spoke, was given life and meaning by his exquisite elocution. He was all mild reasonableness—or so it appeared, until he left his chair, stood up, and unexpectedly revealed the stunted discomfort of deformity. Then another impression came upon him—the uneasiness produced by an enigma: what could the combination of that beautifully explicit countenance with that shameful, crooked posture really betoken? He returned to the table, and once more, was perspicuous serenity. And duty too—that was everywhere—in the unhurried assiduity of the writing, the consummate orderliness of the papers and arrangements, the long still hours of expeditious toil. (*EE*, 109-110)

Strachey's use of the Cecil portrait is extensive; almost every one of its visual details is accounted for in Strachey's interpretation of Cecil's



character. The Woburn Abbey portrait (facing page 110) depicts Cecil standing beside his writing desk, his right arm resting on a corner of the desk itself, his right leg extended slightly forward; the enormous hump-back, draped by a flowing dark cape, is in stark contrast to the pale, rather minute face and the mild, resigned expression in the eyes and mouth. Papers are in orderly arrangement on the desk; an ornamented, bell-shaped inkwell nearby suggests the man of "thought and pen" (*EE*, 110). It is only in such a full-length portrait as this that Cecil's deformity can be made conspicuous; and Strachey dramatizes this fact rather ingeniously by having Cecil rise mid-way through the descriptive passage to assume the posture in the Woburn Abbey portrait. Again, minor details of stance are utilized by Strachey to suggest certain inner traits of character. In the portrait proper, Cecil's right foot is, as mentioned, extended slightly forward; and in his psychological reading of Cecil's countenance, Strachey seems to be making subtle use of this visual detail:

A discerning eye might have detected melancholy and resignation in the patient face. The spectacle of the world's ineptitude and brutality made him, not cynical—he was not aloof enough for that—but sad—was he not a creature of the world himself? He could do so little, so very little, to mend matters; with all his power and all his wisdom he could but labour, and watch, and wait. What else was, in fact, anything but lunacy? . . . Yet, perhaps, in some quite different manner, something, sometimes—very rarely—almost never—might be done. At a moment of crisis, a faint, a hardly perceptible impulsion might be given. It would be nothing but a touch, unbetrayed by the flutter of an eyelid . . . not from one's hand, which would continue writing, but *from one's foot*. (*EE*, 110-111)

The cautionary strain in Cecil, coupled with a certain opportunistic zeal, has been communicated by Strachey through allusion to this almost imperceptible physical gesture. In such ways as these, does Strachey attempt to discover "the clue to the enigma", although "the detailed working-out of the solution must remain, from its very nature, almost entirely unknown to us" (*EE*, 111).

One of the results of such method is that the characters of this tragic history remain static, underdeveloped: frozen portraits, still lifes. This is not a limitation in Strachey but very much part of the larger strategy of the biography. That is, the relationship between psychological type-portraiture and the fatalistic tone of the narrative is vital to the success of the work. It is the fixed idea of character which sets the inevitable sequence of events and relationships into motion; and the fatalism at the

centre of the book stems from an overwhelming sense of the inevitable responses of the characters to any given situation: their type-responses, as it were. Characters consistently act out their primary obsessions—according to Strachey's analytical presentation of them—so that the force of an inescapable logic comes to pervade the tragedy. In isolation, the characters respond narrowly to their ruling passions; in relationship to each other, a systematic and predictable pattern of move and countermove advances the action of the story. On this level of historical interpretation, Strachey's psychological reading of the National Portrait Gallery and Woburn Abbey portraits is highly significant; for the dramatic design and narrative direction of the biography are governed by the nature of Strachey's preliminary findings. The fixed portrait poses of Elizabeth, Raleigh, Essex, Cecil and Bacon reflect certain inner states of being as well; and relationships do not evolve dramatically among these type-portrait figures, they are merely set into programmed motion. As a result, Strachey's tragic romance—as it relates to psychological Character-writing—is the romance of men and women acting out their inevitable dooms and triumphs. The biography, then, does not deal solely with the nature of the compulsion which drives each character; it is the pre-established fact of compulsion itself, as it is to relate to predestined ends and disasters, which gives to Strachey's work its particular blend of analytical method and romantic theme.

## V

In dealing with the thematic implications of Strachey's technique of characterization, we must pay close attention to the presentation of Elizabeth and Essex in the first two chapters. In chapter one, Essex is conceived as a figure born out of his time, trapped—like Lord Melbourne in *Queen Victoria*<sup>27</sup>—in an age of cultural transition and, like his father—who “had been a man of dreams”—a final embodiment of “the spirit of the ancient feudalism” (*EE*, 2). Trained in the old dispensation, but temperamentally ill-equipped to deal with “a new class of persons, neither chivalrous nor holy” (*EE*, 1) Essex's fate is assured from the first. And Strachey immediately relates the idea of inflexible personality to that of unavoidable doom:

The flame was glorious—radiant with the colours of antique knighthood and the flashing gallantries of the past; but no substance fed it; flaring

wildly, it tossed to and fro in the wind; it was suddenly put out. In the history of Essex, so perplexed in its issues, so desperate in its perturbations, so dreadful in its conclusion, the spectral agony of an abolished world is discernible through the tragic lineaments of a personal disaster. (*EE*, 2)

Foreshadowing is not merely a dramatic technique here (or elsewhere) but a confirmation of the destiny that follows from fixed modes of thought and feeling. Essex's "defiant and unsubmitive attitude towards the Queen"<sup>28</sup> was the outward manifestation of a highly romantic nature, one which was, in its obstinacy and ambitions, misunderstood by everyone except, perhaps, Elizabeth herself. In the course of the biography, Strachey suggests that Essex's tragedy was at least partly caused by the inability of those about him to comprehend the nature of his personality, to recognize the essential drives of his character. Twice, reference is made to the fact that Francis Bacon (and his mother) remained ignorant of Essex's temperament and motivations. In a letter to the Earl following the successful Cadiz expedition, Bacon had advised a policy of deference and dissimulation before the Queen. Strachey comments:

No advice could have been more brilliant or more pertinent. If Essex had followed it, how different would his history have been! But—such are the curious imperfections of the human intellect—while Bacon's understanding was absolute in some directions, in others it no less completely failed. With his wise and searching admonitions, he mingled other counsel which was exactly calculated to defeat the end he had in view. Profound in everything but psychology, the actual steps which he urged Essex to take in order to preserve the Queen's favour were totally unfitted to the temperament of the Earl. Bacon wished his patron to behave with the Machiavellian calculation that was natural to his own mind. Essex was to enter into an elaborate course of flattery, dissimulation and reserve . . . How was it possible that the frank impetuosity of Essex should even bend itself to these crooked ways? Everyone knew—every one, apparently, but Bacon—that the Earl was incapable of dissembling. (*EE*, 121, 122-123)

Later, at Essex's trial, Bacon's strategy was to show that the Earl had been guilty of a deliberate conspiracy. That a man of Essex's temperament was incapable of such calculation, "Bacon was the last man in the world to have understood" (*EE*, 254). But Essex's tragic fate is as much a result of the nature of his essential character as it is of Bacon's inability to read it properly. That character is accordingly delineated by Strachey in these familiar terms:

His mind was made up of extremes, and his temper was devoid of balance. He rushed from opposite to opposite; he allowed the strangest contradictions to take root together, and grow up side by side, in his heart. He loved and hated—he was a devoted servant and an angry rebel—all at once. For an impartial eye, it is impossible to trace in his conduct a determined intention of any kind. He was swept hither and thither by the gusts of his passions and the accidents of circumstance. He entertained treasonable thoughts, and at last treasonable projects; but fitfully, with intervals of romantic fidelity and noble remorse . . . Such were his inward workings. . . . They were utterly remote from the clear, bright ambit of that supremely positive intelligence [Bacon's]. Wish as he might, the author of the "Essays or Counsels" could never have comprehended a psychology that was dominated by emotion instead by reason. (*EE*, 253, 254)

It is Essex's "superb uncertainty" which most characterizes him, an inability to "resist the mysterious dominations of moods—intense, absorbing, and utterly at variance with one another" (*EE*, 127). Such moods usually moved him in the direction of chivalrous rather than practical action, a tendency of which Elizabeth seemed to have been aware and to have, from time to time, taken steps to control. That the Queen seemed to have understood Essex in ways that he himself was unable to understand the Queen has led Holroyd to suggest that their relationship was basically that of mother to son.<sup>29</sup> A more likely explanation for the basic incompatibility of their characters, however, lies in the larger, contrasting aspects of temperament: these leading, in turn, to a disastrous breakdown in personal relationships.

Elizabeth, for all her celebrated vacillations and eccentricities, was—as Strachey conceives of her—an essentially practical and intelligent woman, cautious in judgment and governed, ultimately, by reason. While Essex may have appealed to the more instinctual and neurotic elements in her nature, such elements were usually under the firm control of a rational self. Strachey's Essex seems to have been a totally emotional man, uncomplicated in his ambitions and incapable of pretense; "he was a simple-hearted, egocentric personality."<sup>30</sup> But Elizabeth's emotionality was almost always at the service of design and calculation. Her complex, circumspect nature gave her a decisive advantage, therefore, over the impulsive and guileless Essex. In delineating her character, Strachey is always careful to suggest a certain deliberateness and control underlying all of her decisions and delays. For instance, her diplomatic and political triumphs were

not the result of heroism. The very contrary was the case: the grand policy which dominated Elizabeth's life was the most unheroic conceivable; and her true history remains a standing lesson for melodramatists in statecraft. In reality, she succeeded by virtue of all the qualities which every hero should be without—dissimulation, pliability, indecision, procrastination, parsimony. It might also be said that the heroic element chiefly appeared in the unparalleled lengths to which she allowed those qualities to carry her . . . She found herself a sane woman in a universe of violent maniacs, between contending forces of terrific intensity . . . and she had survived because she had been able to meet the extremes around her with her own extremes of cunning and prevarication. It so happened that the subtlety of her own intellect was exactly adapted to the complexities of her environment . . . Nor was it only her intellect that served her; it was her temperament as well. That too—in its mixture of the masculine and the feminine, of vigour and sinuosity, of pertinacity and vacillation—was precisely what the case required. (*EE*, 11-12)

Such "extremes of cunning and prevarication" are made to seem deliberate aspects of policy by Strachey; even her womanly evasiveness appears to have been played as a strength in the game of international politics, and her "passion of postponement" (*EE*, 15) to have possessed direction and intent. "She understood her true nature and her true mission better than her critics" (*EE*, 14).

When Strachey comes to deal with the "complicated contrasts" (*EE*, 19) of her mind and body—a basically androgynous complex of qualities—there is the same suggestion of objectivity and self-awareness. First, there is Elizabeth's neurotic condition itself, caused by the fact that "her sexual organization was seriously warped" (*EE*, 20). Strachey offers several possible sources for her fear of normal sexuality: fear of her father, Lord Admiral Seymour's unsettling dalliances with her when she was still an adolescent, the fact that "her childlessness put a premium upon her murder" (*EE*, 22). Even Ben Jonson's tale that she had "a membrana on her, which made her incapable of man" is presented as an indication of "the gossip of the time" (*EE*, 24). Strachey sums up these possibilities in the following Freudian terms:

The crude story of a physical malformation may well have had its origin in a subtler, and yet no less vital, fact. In such matters the mind is as potent as the body. A deeply seated repugnance to the crucial act of intercourse may produce, when the possibility of it approaches, a condition of hysterical convulsion, accompanied, in certain cases, by intense pain. Everything points to the conclusion that such—the result of the profound psychological disturbances of her childhood—was the state of Elizabeth. (*EE*, 24)

But once having established the nature of the condition itself, Strachey proceeds to examine Elizabeth's accommodation of it. An irrepressible amorousness pervades much of her conduct with virile young men like Leicester, Essex, Raleigh and Blount. "Elizabeth, although neurotically frigid, did not have a wholly negative attitude towards men....A certain inhibition to love freely was compensated in a certain libidinous manner, in a desire to play at sex"<sup>31</sup> The Queen thus seems to have served, with a certain element of calculation, her own warped passions; once more, reason and design frame her most personal instincts:

Though, at the centre of her being, desire had turned to repulsion, it had not vanished altogether; on the contrary, the compensating forces of nature had redoubled its vigour elsewhere. Though the precious citadel itself was never to be violated, there were surrounding territories, there were outworks and bastions over which exciting battles might be fought, and which might even, at moments, be allowed to fall into the bold hands of an assailant . . . . She eagerly absorbed the elaborate adorations of her lovers, and in the same instant, by a final stroke of luck and cunning, converted them—like everything else she had anything to do with—into a paying concern. (*EE*, 27)

Granting the validity of this interpretation, Elizabeth's relationship with Essex would seem to have possessed a distinctly therapeutic value, and to have been consciously sought by the Queen for that reason. Holroyd describes the progress of this affair in a way that suggests a deliberate acceleration of emotional intensity on Elizabeth's part:

Elizabeth enjoyed thwarting Essex in order to provoke highly emotional scenes that led to even more highly charged reconciliations, more dangerous each time, and more delicious. Tossing him about on a violent sea of passion, she would play with him like a cat with a mouse, enjoying having her own sensations tickled by Essex's beauty, while his impetuosity and contrariness added spice to the contact . . . . Alternately caressing and chastising him, she employed a kind of primitive Pavlovian system to unhinge Essex's already unstable character, and was herself the principal architect of his final disgrace.<sup>32</sup>

Because the "classic pattern of mounting tragedy"<sup>33</sup> is formulated in such psycho-analytical terms, the melodramatic force of the relationship between Elizabeth and Essex is sharply undercut. Everywhere, the opportunity for sentiment presents itself; yet psychological type-portraiture, by the very nature of its objective approach to character, denies it. Particularly in the case of Elizabeth, the examination of personality removes us from an emotional intimacy and places us at a clinical distance from the phenomena of her passions.

In order to balance his narrative approach, Strachey attempts to create a tension between the clinical and the sentimental point of view. The dual nature of his characters is thus reflected in the heterogeneous aspects of technique. Although the melodramatic tone is never allowed to overwhelm the essential logic of the tragedy, it does emerge from time to time to soften the inexorable progress of events. In the very first chapter, the psychological examination of character gives way, momentarily, to these expressions of lament:

The new star, rising with extraordinary swiftness, was suddenly seen to be shining in the firmament. The Queen and the Earl were never far apart. She was fifty-three, and he was not yet twenty: a dangerous concatenation of ages. Yet, for the moment—it was May of 1587—all was smooth and well . . . . If only time could have stood still for a little and drawn out those halcyon weeks through vague ages of summer! The boy, in his excitement, walking home through the dawn, the smiling Queen in the darkness . . . but there is no respite for mortal creatures. When two consciousnesses come to a certain nearness the impetus of their interactions, growing ever intenser and intenser, leads on to an unescapable climax. The crescendo must rise to its topmost note; and only then is the pre-ordained solution of the theme made manifest. (*EE*, 5, 6)

As previously mentioned, such lament and foreshadowing emerge from a psychological as well as from a dramatic approach to character. Once the dimensions of character are set, once the key to personality revealed and examined, an inevitable sequence of events follows: a casual series rising out of type-responses. Strachey utilizes the melodramatic device of foreshadowing (in the above quoted passage), but only to mute, never to detract from the almost clinical certainty of what is to follow. This attempt at balance between the romantic and the scientific approach to character is evident throughout the biography. Having offered a brief analysis of Raleigh's character, for instance, Strachey concludes by, in a sense, elevating his findings: "The Fates had woven for him a skein of mingled light and darkness; fortune and misfortune, in equal measure and in strange intensity, were to be his" (*EE*, 30). And, after describing Essex's second expedition to Spain and the disastrous weather which forestalled it, Strachey melodramatically links the event to the Earl's inflexible ambitions: "His escape was less fortunate than he imagined; he was to be overwhelmed by a more terrible disaster; and the tempest was only an ominous prologue to the tragedy. With the fatal freshening of that breeze his good luck was over" (*EE*, 142). Although these omens to disaster resemble "Senecan theatrical devices",<sup>34</sup> they are also vitally

related to the programme of revelations afforded by character-writing and type-portraiture. By blending the analytical with the dramatic, Strachey achieves something akin to the ironies of existential theatre.

## VI

Strachey's celebrated style, with "its lucid outline and material strength, its innate sparkle and pervasive irony",<sup>35</sup> also served to refract the basically analytical quality of the biography. The relentlessly qualifying adjectives, the abundance and richness of clichés, the extended metaphors, the ironic disposition of tone, these add a further dramatic aspect to the essentially categorical vision they adorn. Commenting upon Strachey's use of adjectives, Srinivasa Iyengar observes that "the adjectives constitute no superficial adornment but are indeed integral with the texture of the expression. They have been chosen not haphazard but after the most careful deliberation with intent to qualify, beautify, or destroy."<sup>36</sup> Indeed, adjectives in Strachey's work have a special defining quality; they sum up, with a calculating immediacy, the total nature of their subject:

(Essex's) *restless* and *romantic* temperament urged him irresistibly to the great adventure of war. (*EE*, 70)

And now began one of these *strange* and *odious* processes which fill the *obscure* annals of the past with the *ironical* futility of human justice. (*EE*, 79)

His spirit, *wayward*, *melancholy* and *splendid*, belonged to the Renaissance. (*EE*, 126)

In each case, the adjective has been chosen for its firmly categorical meaning; despite the dramatic paradoxes and obscurities of motive with which Strachey attempts to invest many of his characters, the style itself is quite precise in its choice of descriptive terms. In this regard, the use of clichés also contributes to the categorization of character; in employing terms so familiar and commonplace that the reader is at once conditioned by them, and thus disposed to an automatic response, Strachey is able to communicate an instantaneous sense of type. The cliché, by its very nature a general rather than a particular form of reference, thus adds to the overall tone of ironic objectivity, contributing to the systematization rather than to any deepening mystery of human



personality. Merely to list a number of clichés, removed from their contexts, cannot possibly do justice to the function they serve in the work; however, such stereotyped phrases as "crowned with success" (*EE*, 104), "the obscure profundities of her being" (*EE*, 263), "with royal incifference," (*EE*, 282), have the cumulative effect of raising peculiarities of character and situation to almost universalized levels of acceptance.

Strachey's extended metaphors serve also to dramatize his analysis of character; to add a certain movement, colour and tone to what are basically fixed, unchanging natures. In discussing Francis Bacon's character and the relationship between the *Essays* and the inner man, Strachey constructs the following metaphor:

"Some books", he wrote, "are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested"; there can be no doubt to which category his own belongs. And, as one chews, one learns much, not only of the methods of politic behaviour, but of the nature of the author, and of that curious quality of mingled boldness and circumspection that was native to his mind. (*EE*, 130)

Again, in describing Elizabeth's failing but still effective powers, Strachey offers this ingeniously disproportionate construction:

But in truth the old spirit was not yet extinct, and she was still capable of producing a magnificent sensation. The veteran conjurer's hand might tremble, but it had not lost the art of bringing an incredible rabbit out of a hat. (*EE*, 278-279)

On a related level, the minor figures of the biography are often described in terms of animal-like features—a technique already used extensively in *Eminent Victorians*<sup>37</sup>—as if to suggest that Elizabeth and Essex are trapped in a primitive wilderness, their own humanity threatened at every turn by ruthless, cunning creatures. This bestiary is composed of snakes (Francis Bacon), foxes (Sir Walter Raleigh) and spiders (Philip of Spain). Strachey refers to Philip as the "spider of the Escorial . . . spinning cobwebs out of dreams" (*EE*, 149). And the Machiavellian Bacon is accorded this reptilian image:

The detachment of speculation, the intensity of personal pride, the uneasiness of nervous sensibility, the urgency of ambition, the opulence of superb taste—these qualities, blending, twisting, flashing together, gave to his secret spirit the subtle and glittering superficies of a serpent. A serpent, indeed, might well have been his chosen emblem—the wise,

sinuous, dangerous creature, offspring of mystery and the beautiful earth. The music sounds, and the great snake rises, and spreads its hood, and leans and hearkens, swaying in ecstasy. (*EE*, 44)

Such stylistic devices in *Elizabeth and Essex*, then, function in two ways: they supplement the categorization of characters into type-figures through their various forms of generalization; and, at the same time, they lend a certain dramatic quality to what is basically a psychoanalytical approach to character.

## VII

The interior monologue technique in Strachey's writings is an important feature of his conception of character; as a long meditation, a series of interior questions, or merely as speculative analysis, the monologue provides the reader with some indication of the inner thought processes or rhythms of the subjects themselves. The re-construction of interior thought patterns also allows Strachey to combine fictional, psycho-analytical and dramatic methods in his pursuit of what Virginia Woolf calls the "rainbow-like intangibility" of personality.<sup>38</sup>

There are several kinds of monologues in *Elizabeth and Essex*, each having a particular function with regard to the narrative and thematic pattern of the biography; and the tones range from the objectively ironic to the tentatively subjective. Quite early in the biography, Strachey comments upon the difficulty, perhaps the impossibility of penetrating to the depths of the Elizabethan mind:

The age . . . needs no description: everybody known its outward appearances and the literary expressions of its heart. More valuable than descriptions, but what perhaps is unattainable, would be some means by which the modern mind might reach to an imaginative comprehension of those beings of three centuries ago—might move with ease among their familiar feelings . . . . But the path seems closed to us. (*EE*, 8)

And yet through the use of such techniques as *le style indirect libre*, and modulations of view point and focus, Strachey does succeed in presenting imaginative versions of "essential feelings" within his subjects. The life of inner thought and emotion must, of course, be formulated in such a way as to be consistent with Strachey's more general and external view of character. Thus, the controlled hysteria of Elizabeth, with its ambiguous rushes of feeling and its interspersed bits of logic, is nicely caught in the narrative rhythms of the following passage:

Her heart melted with his flatteries, and, as she struck him lightly on the neck with her long fingers, her whole being was suffused with a lasciviousness that could hardly be defined. She was a woman—ah, yes! a fascinating woman!—but then, was she not also a virgin, and old? But immediately another flood of feeling swept upwards and engulfed her; she towered; she was something more—she knew it; what was it? Was she a man? She gazed at the little beings around her, and smiled to think that, though she might be their Mistress in one sense, in another it could never be so—that the very reverse might also be said to be the case. . . . Looking round, she saw that Essex had come in. He went swiftly towards her; and the Queen had forgotten everything, as he knelt at her feet. (*EE*, 28-29)

Here, the transition from outward narrative to a more direct presentation of inner thought is effected subtly and without breaking the flow of the passage. And the use of the objective third person singular throughout serves to unify and to regulate point of view. But perhaps the more spectacular accomplishment of this method can be demonstrated in Strachey's re-construction of Elizabeth's thoughts just prior to the execution of Essex where all the mingled forces of sentiment, rage and vindictive reason come to bear upon her frantic meditations. Strachey begins by qualifying the factual validity of these perceptions: "It is not difficult to guess the steps by which she reached her final conclusion," he states (*EE*, 260), and then proceeds to offer an account of her vacillating sentiments concerning Essex. As before, the indirect monologue (presented in the third person singular) represents, in concentrated form, the entire range of her psychological nature; the alternating rhythms, from dreamy, florid rhetoric to ruthless, pointed logic and from self-pitying lament to cool, calculating rage indicate an internal process of thought characteristic of the Queen generally. For—as Strachey conceives of her—in spite of the wavering emotionalism inherent in her nature, it is the more powerful force of reason combined with an instinct for self-preservation which ultimately triumphs. What follows is a sampling of the fluctuations of thought and feeling which Strachey captures in this monologue:

To abolish, in a moment, the immediate miserable past—to be reconciled once more; to regain, with a new rapture, the old happiness—what was there to prevent it? Nothing, surely. . . . It was indeed a heavenly vision, and she allowed herself to float deliciously down the stream of her desires. But not for long. She could not dwell indefinitely among imaginations; her sense of fact crept forward—insidious—paramount; with relentless fingers it picked to pieces the rosy palaces of unreality. She was standing once again on the bleak rock. . . . And yet, after all, might she not take

the risk? . . . Let him do his worst—she would be equal to it; she would wrestle with him, master him, hold him at her mercy, and pardon him—magnificently, ecstatically, pardon him—again and again! . . . Yes, truly, she and nature were akin— variable, beautiful . . . a hideous memory struck her; terrible outrageous words re-echoed in her mind. “Crooked”—“carcase”—so that was what he thought of her! While he was pouring out his sugared adorations, he loathed her, despised her, recoiled from her . . . She recognized the truth—the whole truth—at last. Her tremendous vanity—the citadel of her repressed romanticism—was shattered, and rage and hatred planted their flag upon its ruins . . . He had betrayed her in every possible way—mentally, emotionally, materially—as a Queen and as a woman—before the world and in the sweetest privacies of the heart. And he had actually imagined that he could elude the doom that awaited on such iniquity . . . Yes, indeed, she felt her father’s spirit within her . . . Manhood—the fascinating, detestable entity . . . was overthrown at last, and in the person of that traitor it should be rooted out. Literally, perhaps . . . she knew well enough the punishment for high treason. But no! She smiled sardonically . . . It would be enough if . . . she cut off his head. (*EE*, 260-264)

Through the use of *le style indirect libre*, Strachey controls the tone and pace of such monologues in an absolute manner and ensures that the narrative voice will remain consistent in its objectifying view of character. At the same time, each monologue conveys the particular qualities of the character in meditation. Francis Bacon’s inner thoughts, for example, are characterized by a certain unemotional directness, an undistracted confidence, unlike Elizabeth’s vacillating moods and indecisive rationalizations, Bacon’s ruminations are generally straightforward, infused with a sure, cumulative logic. Bacon ambitiously contemplates the office of Attorney-General:

Francis smiled; he saw a great career opening before his imagination—judgeships—high offices of state—might he not ere long be given . . . the keeping of the Great Seal of England? A peerage! . . . “My manor of Gorhambury”—the phrase rolled on his tongue; and then his chameleon mind took another colour; he knew that he possessed extraordinary administrative capacity; he would guide the destinies of his country, the world should know his worth. But those, after all, were but small considerations. Most could be politicians . . . but might there not be reserved for him alone a more magnificent fate? To use his place and his power for the dissemination of learning, for the operation of a new and mighty knowledge, for a vast beneficence, spreading in ever wider and wider circles through all humanity . . . these were glorious ends indeed! As for himself—and yet another tint came over his fancy—that office would be decidedly convenient. He was badly in need of cash. He was extravagant; he knew it—it could not be helped. (*EE*, 51-52)

The machinations of thought in Bacon, the range of his ambitions from the most exalted to the most immediate, are effectively transmitted by Strachey through the carefully arranged progress of the passage. A neat circle of possibilities presents itself as Bacon considers the office within his grasp, projects his own future with a high sense of unreality and finally returns once more—with the ironic propulsion of a Strachean dash—to the deflating immediacy of his situation.

The ironic view of King Philip's religious obsessions is similarly, if even more pointedly conveyed; for the technique of *le style indirect libre* permits Strachey to filter the King's thoughts through a narrative tone which exposes as well as presents. The objective, revealing view is never abandoned as Philip's troubled ambitions possess him:

It was the centre of his great building, half palace and half monastery, and there, operatic . . . in their vestments and their movements and their strange singings, the priests performed at the altar close below him, intent upon their holy work. Holy! But his work too was that: he too was labouring for the glory of God. Was he not God's chosen instrument? The divine inheritance was in his blood. His father, Charles the Fifth, had been welcomed into Heaven, when he died, by the Trinity; there could be no mistake about it; Titian had painted the scene. He also would be received in a similar glorious fashion; but not just yet. He must finish his earthly duties first. (*EE*, 138-139)

On his deathbed, Philip's obsessional thoughts quicken into a series of rhetorical inquiries. Everything is gathered up into one last flurry of introspection; and Strachey characteristically conveys the final ecstasies and torments of the King by the rhythmic use of colons, semi-colons, question marks and dashes:

He was dying as he had lived—in absolute piety. His conscience was clear: he had always done his duty; he had been infinitely industrious; he had existed solely for virtue and the glory of God. One thought alone troubled him: had he been remiss in the burning of heretics? He had burnt many, no doubt; but he might have burnt more. Was it because of this perhaps, that he had not been quite as successful as he might have wished? It was certainly mysterious—he could not understand it. (*EE*, 174-175)

It is significant to note that the figure whose inner thoughts remain least directly accessible to the reader is that of Essex himself. Essex's nature is conveyed almost entirely by means of narrative exposition and factual documentation, never through arranged or indirect interior monologues: and this is partly due to the fact that Essex alone among

the participating principals (with the exception of Raleigh, whose role in the biography is relatively minor)<sup>39</sup> represents the man of action. All of the others—the cautious Cecil, the ambitious Bacon, the vacillating, indecisive Elizabeth—exercise power with deliberate indirection; and theirs too is the power of reason and cunning, the power of introspection itself. But, with Essex, Strachey deals externally with the external man; Essex's character, therefore, is dramatically revealed through active, often physical participation in events. Even his quarrels with Elizabeth are presented as battles; in the Council Chamber, for instance, a scene occurs which demonstrates Essex's characteristic lack of introspection and control. A difference of opinion concerning the Irish question erupts into a scene of near violence:

Essex . . . proposed instead Sir George Carew . . . The Queen would not hear of it, but Essex persisted; each was annoyed; they pressed their candidates; their words grew high and loud; and at last the Queen roundly declared that, say what he would, Knollys should go. Essex, overcome with irritation, contemptuous in look and gesture, turned his back upon her. She instantly boxed his ears. "Go to the devil!" she cried, flaring with anger. And then the impossible happened. The mad young man completely lost his temper, and with a resounding oath, clapped his hand to his sword. "This is an outrage," he shouted in his sovereign's face . . . He was interrupted by Nottingham, who pressed him backwards. Elizabeth did not stir. There was an appalling silence; and he rushed from the room. (*EE*, 172)

There are, of course, methods of revealing inner states of mind without employing the interior monologue technique; and, in Essex's case, one does come to possess a sense of his private nature. Holroyd suggests, in this regard, another indirect method for revealing character, one which Strachey had already incorporated into *Queen Victoria*: "In portraying Raleigh . . . as the implacable enemy of Essex, Lytton was not advancing an objective historical judgement, but echoing Essex's own unbalanced opinion."<sup>40</sup> But Strachey's reluctance to reveal Essex's consciousness directly reflects his more general view that Essex lacked sufficient introspection to save himself from the fate that was to be inevitably his.

## VIII

It is misleading to speak of *Elizabeth and Essex* as a novel, a drama or a psycho-analytical study; the methods of all three certainly have been incorporated into a biographical form, but that form retains its integrity

despite the absorption of such techniques. When Virginia Woolf suggests that Strachey's "invention was checked" in this final experiment, and that "there is a sense of vacancy and effort, of a tragedy that has no crisis,"<sup>41</sup> she seems uncertain of Strachey's basic motivations. Because the ultimate fate of Essex is a historical fact, the progress of the story does lack an incipient dramatic quality; the drama of the biography therefore lies elsewhere. It lies primarily in the clash of personalities that are unyielding in their basic commitments, and in the stylistic techniques which transmit those personalities. The notion that fate resides in character rather than in events seems to be, in relation to this, an important principle in Strachey's conception of history. Further, Strachey's inventive skills are, throughout his works, directed towards a special reading of character. The very analytical nature of the character studies are, to begin with, based upon imaginative conceptions of personality; that is, the first principle is a creative rather than a scientific one. Once Strachey proceeds, however, to reduce characters to types, to categorize their emotional and intellectual natures, other means must be found to preserve the dramatic tension of his biography. A supplementary line of invention is thus brought into play, not to obscure the limitations of psychological type-portraiture, but to lend it a certain dynamic force. It is not that Strachey's inventive powers failed him in *Elizabeth and Essex*, but that the very nature of this final experiment in biography extended the imaginative perimeters established in his earlier works.

## NOTES

1. Lytton Strachey, *Portraits in Miniature and Other Essays* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1931).
2. Michael Holroyd, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Biography* (London: Heinemann, 1968), II, 665.
3. *Portraits in Miniature*, p. 28.
4. Lytton Strachey, *Eminent Victorians* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1918).
5. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
6. Lytton Strachey, *Queen Victoria* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1921).
7. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 303.
11. Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex: A Tragic History* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1928). All references are to this edition and are indicated by the abbreviation *EE*. Italics are mine unless otherwise indicated.

12. Virginia Woolf, "The Art of Biography," in her *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (London: Hogarth Press, 1942), p. 123.
13. J.K. Johnstone, *The Bloomsbury Group* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1954), pp. 301, 317.
14. Holroyd, II, 588.
15. *Ibid.*, 613.
16. *Ibid.*, 590.
17. *Ibid.*, 591.
18. See Robert Lacey, *Robert, Earl of Essex: An Elizabethan Icarus* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1971). Lacey's view of the nature and significance of the Elizabeth-Essex relationship differs considerably from Strachey's.
19. Holroyd devises an elaborate system of analogies to prove his argument: "Like Antony he [Essex] leaves and returns to his Queen; and like Antony he dies a violent death. . . . [Elizabeth's] infinite variations of temper [form] an obvious dramatic equivalent to the 'infinite variety' of the Queen of Egypt" (II, 580). Other, lesser analogies—Cecil as Octavius, for instance—seem equally as forced.
20. See Holroyd, II, 578-579.
21. Martin Kallich, *The Psychological Milieu of Lytton Strachey* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1961), p. 50.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
23. Holroyd, II, 250. Holroyd quotes at length from Strachey's letters to Frank Swinnerton at Chatto and Windus concerning the portraits to be included in *Eminent Victorians*: "'I think the portraits would be an important feature of the book,'" he wrote, "but I do not know how to obtain photographic prints of them, nor can I engage to pay for their cost. The portraits I have in mind are to be found in books which are easily procurable: would you be able to obtain reproductions of these? I should add that I think there should be five portraits, and not four, as a portrait of Newman (there is a very suitable one in Wilfrid Ward's biography) seems to be indispensable.'" (II, 250) Holroyd adds that there were, in fact, six illustrations in the first edition of *Eminent Victorians* "the last one being a photograph of Gladstone." (II, 251n). Although there is no record in Holroyd of Strachey's having chosen the illustrations for *Queen Victoria*, the first edition does contain this acknowledgement: "For facilities afforded in regard to the reproduction of certain of the above [list of 'Illustrations'] thanks are due to Mr. John Murray."
24. Holroyd, II, 570.
25. The full complement of photographic illustrations of portraits appears only in the first English and American editions of Strachey's biographies. The Phoenix Library and Collected Editions of Strachey's biographies contain no illustrations at all.
26. Holroyd, II, 606.
27. *Queen Victoria*, p. 63.
28. Kallich, p. 109.
29. See Holroyd, II, 602.
30. Kallich, p. 108.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 118. Elizabeth's "desire to play at sex" is communicated to us, for example, by Strachey's presentation of a scene involving the Queen and the French Ambassador De Maise. (See *EE*, 159.)
32. Holroyd, II, 602-603.
33. *Ibid.*, 590.
34. *Ibid.*, 579.
35. Srinivasa Iyengar, *Lytton Strachey: A Critical Study* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1939), p. 111.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
37. Strachey's use of animal motifs in "Florence Nightingale," for example, serves, in part, to facilitate the classification of characters into types and species. See *Eminent Victorians*, pp. 149, 152-153, 155.
38. Virginia Woolf, "The New Biography," in her *Granite and Rainbow* (London: Hogarth Press, 1958), p. 149.
39. Strachey presents Raleigh's character solely through external gestures. Thus: "Raleigh, with a shrug, went off to Ireland." (*EE*, 35-36).
40. Holroyd, II, 611.
41. Virginia Woolf, "The Art of Biography," p. 123.