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SOME IMAGES OF PROCESS AND REALITY IN SHELLEY

By S. R. Swaminathan
Department of English, University of Saugor

I

Tell me, thou Star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

II

Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

III

Weary Wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

(Shelley, *The World's Wanderers*)

In the *Garden of Adonis*, Time, says Spenser, is the troubler. Were it not for him

> All that in this delightful garden growes
> Should happie be, and have immortal bliss.

To apprehend the point of intersection of the timeless with time, and to fix it for our contemplation in appropriate symbol, image or myth is one of the major functions of poetry. It is this aspect of the poet's work that gives it an intimate kinship with that of a prophet. Cynthia and Mutability in Spenser, Wordsworth's vision of 'the immeasurable height of woods decaying, never to be decayed' and the 'stationary blasts of waterfalls', the world of the Nightingale in Keats's Ode, and the still point of the dance beyond arrest and movement in Eliot are all variations on the same theme of the

apprehension of the timeless in time. Mutability weighs heavily on Shelley's mind too, and through all the distractions of his social and political interests, we can watch the poet in him striving to attain a vision of life harmonising process and reality. Indeed, this vision is the central quest of Shelley, and his best work is the story of this quest, and, in moments of insight, of its fulfilment.

One of his early poems published in 1816, *On Mutability* shows his sense of the absolute sway of this power over all things:

> Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
> Nought may endure but Mutability.

Later he finds in *Intellectual Beauty* the light that guides him through life's darkness. All other 'spells' of orthodox religion are too frail to sever

> From all we hear and all we see,
> Doubt, chance, and mutability.
> (*Intellectual Beauty*, 30-31)

Intellectual Beauty alone gives fugitive glimpses of reality beyond change:

> Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
> Or music by the night-wind sent
> Through strings of some still instrument,
> Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
> Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.
> (Ibid. 32-36)

Though this hidden reality may visit us with its 'inconstant glance', still the power of mutability over all things in time remains. There is a procession of Hours which bear their Father Time to his tomb in Eternity in the final Act of *Prometheus Unbound*. Even in the golden age heralded by the redemption of Prometheus, mutability still persists, though ruled by man. Prometheus speaks of the new world of man free from evil, but not exempt,

> thought ruling them like slaves,
> From chance, and death, and mutability.
> (III, iv, 200-1)

We shall consider some of Shelley's typical images of Nature which reveal his meditations on process and reality. The saying of Archimedes—Give me a place on which to stand, and I will move the universe—is the motto he finds for his early poem, *Queen Mab*. It is in a sense the motto of his entire work. A universe in motion, in its pageantry on earth, sea and sky and in the mind of man is his theme. Readers of Shelley often find themselves lost in what seems to them a bewildering maze. But once we get some idea of the method in this movement and of the point on which Shelley himself stands as he contemplates its direction, we shall perhaps discover in the wild profusion of his images, and in its apparent lack of coherence, a fairly cogent and abiding view of reality and process which makes his images and symbols meaningful for us.

To capture the movement of the external world where it is most fleeting is the peculiar urge of Shelley's imagination from the very beginning. He turns away from what is static or passive. But he is quick to seize phenomena that elude our grasp and move with some restless energy which impels them forward. In a sense these are inexpressible in terms of clear or distinct visual imagery which our contemporary critical doctrine seems to demand of all poetry regardless of the relation of such imagery to a poet's purpose. Objects in motion or flight represented so as to give us the impression of their swiftness cannot be rendered in the same manner as still life. They can be expressed only in terms of their effect on the mind—a certain heightened subjective awareness of the observer—and not objectively. Of the modes of poetic realization of the world of sensuous experience, we can broadly distinguish three. First there is the mode which renders to us the natural magic of reposeful forms. There is another which while accurately rendering an impression of sense, nevertheless invests it with a spiritual suggestion of mysterious reality beyond the world of sense. Thirdly, there is the mode which uses the minimum physical basis in its images in its attempts to communicate the reality of the spiritual world. Broadly speaking, Keats tends towards the first, Wordsworth towards the second, and Shelley towards the third. The depth of still life in Keats is a matter of common obser-

vation; and the same stillness pervades his views of eternity. However mystical Wordsworth may be, he renders clear and precise forms and objects of Nature even while he adds his own imaginative colouring to them. With Shelley Nature is a mutable and fluid world in which objects move like phantoms in a dream:

> And form and line and solid follow
> Solid and line and form to dream
> Fantastic down the eternal stream.

The most substantial things melt into thin air. Mist, cloud, water and wind represent the elusiveness of the world of sense for him. This conviction of a moving universe is at the core of Shelley's world-view. His philosophical speculation and poetic imagination change from a somewhat early materialistic tendency to a later idealism. In a sense the change corresponds to that which came over Wordsworth's earlier view of the world which did not need any charm unborrowed from the eye or by thought supplied. This basic conviction of a universe subject to mutability, and the consequent urgency of his imagination to find an intelligible order or purpose in this process are the centre from which his images of Nature in his early and in his later work alike radiate.

His awareness of movement, and his partiality for blurred images of this movement find ample scope in the pictures of the stellar universe that are scattered throughout his work. *Queen Mab* is full of these dim and indistinct horizons of his imagination. Ianthe's soul is voyaging through space leaving the earth far behind. The path of the magic chariot lies through an *immense concave:*

> Radiant with million constellations, tinged
> With shades of infinite colour,
> And semi-circled with a belt
> Flashing incessant meteors.
>
> (I. 233-6)

The coursers gather speed as they approach their goal, and the world behind recedes and becomes an undistinguishable

shadow. Only some vast whirling movement can be perceived:

> The sea no longer was distinguished; earth
> Appeared like a vast and shadowy sphere;
> The sun's unclouded orb
> Rolled through the black concave;
> Its rays of rapid light
> Parted around the chariot's swifter course,
> And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
> Dashed from the boiling surge
> Before a vessel's prow.
>
> (I. 240-8)

The Fairy guide and the spirit of Ianthe, like Shelley's imagination, have now reached their aerial point of vantage from where they survey this prospect before them: the lines express in Shelley's early manner the idea of the stars in their courses and their eternal harmony:

> Below lay stretched the universe!
> There, far as the remotest line
> That bounds imagination's flight,
> Countless and unending orbs
> In mazy motion intermingled
> Yet still fulfilled immutably
> Eternal Nature's law.
> Above, below, around
> The circling systems formed
> A wilderness of harmony:
> Each with undeviating aim,
> In eloquent silence through the depths of space
> Pursued its wondrous way.
>
> (II. 70-82)

Queen Mab was probably written during the year 1812. Into this poem Shelley pours forth his early speculations of good and evil, his impatience with orthodox religion, and his hopes for a better world. Though from this stage to the clearer idealism of his later work is a far cry, still his conviction of this movement in the nature of things connects the earlier with the later phase. Already in *Queen Mab* he is

moving towards an answer to the riddle of this movement—an answer which Shelley finds in his later belief in a transcendental reality: somewhere behind the phenomenal world there is an informing or universal spirit:

> Spirit of Nature! here
> In this interminable wilderness
> Of worlds, at whose immensity
> Even soaring fancy staggers,
> Here is thy fitting temple.
> Yet not the lightest leaf
> That quivers to the passing breeze
> Is less instinct with thee:
> Yet not the meanest worm
> That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead
> Less shares thy eternal breath.
>
> (I. 264-77)

Here then is an early glimpse of Shelley into the nature of process and reality; between the things that move in the external world and the Spirit of Nature there is a close harmony. Indeed the movement is a manifestation of the spirit, and the intuitive glimpse of the spirit is born of the sense of this process: we have here an anticipation of the idea of one law or one spirit permeating all things:

> Spirit of Nature! thou
> Life of interminable multitudes;
> Soul of those mighty spheres
> Whose changeless paths through
> Heaven's deep silence lie;
> Soul of that smallest being
> The dwelling of whose life
> Is one faint April sun-gleam.
>
> (III. 226-32)

As his poetic imagination matures, we shall find him turning to subtler and more suggestive images of this soul of the universe apprehended in forms even more frail and momentary than the *faint April sun-gleam;* for these bring him even more intimate if fugitive glimpses of the soul of the universe. The one Spirit whose 'plastic stress' sweeps through the 'dull

dense world', 'torturing' its unwilling dross to its own likeness is already foreshadowed in *Queen Mab:*

> Throughout this varied and eternal world
> Soul is the only element; the block
> That for uncounted ages has remained
> The moveless pillar of a mountain's weight
> Is active, living spirit.
>
> (IV. 139-43)

Shelley's imagination always associates power, speed and mastery with the spiritual world. It is this that compels or forces movement on things:

> Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the tempest roars,
> Cheers in the day, breathes in the balmy groves,
> Strengthens in health and poisons in disease;
> And in the storm of change, that ceaselessly
> Rolls round the eternal universe.
>
> (VI. 156-61)

Already there is in Shelley a sense of the dream of life, and a tendency to see its forms and shapes as floating phantoms in a dream: this soul is the spring

> Of all that chequers the phantasmal scene
> That floats before our eyes in wavering light.
>
> (VI. 192-4)

To this reality from which all things emerge, they must return. The world of life and consciousness which manifests this movement most clearly is to the extent to which it is swift in its motion urged by the spirit within on its homeward journey. Thus process and change have already a spiritual meaning or direction for him, and those objects which float about in wavering light manifest this meaning or direction. Their destination is in the spiritual haven in a world of transcendence. In particular it is the portion of the eternal within man; it is the prime mover, and all things move and change from a desire for this prime mover; it is the secret behind life:

> For birth and life and death, and that strange state
> Before the naked soul has found its home,
> All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
> The restless wheels of being on their way,
> Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
> Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal.
>
> (IX. 149-54)

There is much in this early poem of Shelley that is obviously juvenalia. But this view of a world of Becoming spread out before our senses, and its ultimate relation to the world of this peculiar haunting sense of a desire for self-transcendence in all moving and changing things becomes an ever-deepening intuition of Shelley. The rest of his work is only the fulfilment of this early beginning. To meditate on this relation between process and reality, to find images and symbols that will express this relationship in poetry—this is the central theme of Shelley. Following this line of his development, it may not be difficult for us to discover a growing but not incoherent pattern of thought and symbolism.

If *Queen Mab* is the miscellany of Shelley's early ideas in their ferment, *Prometheus Unbound* is the testament of his maturer faith. A period of about six years separates the two poems. In the interval Shelley's insight into the spiritual nature of reality and process has deepened. His imagery too has a new depth of suggestion. His innate response to moving things, his perception of their spiritual kinship and unity, and his increasing faith in Love now combine to give Shelley a finer mystical vision of the universe flowing towards the infinite. By some invisible spirit of which Love is a manifestation, all things draw each other, and move to their home beyond time and individual existence. Here, as in other aspects of his maturer thought, Shelley finds appropriate symbolism in the imagery of *Prometheus Unbound*. Like Ianthe or the poet in *Alastor*, Asia and Panthea too launch on a voyage of exploration. Such journeys or voyages abound in Shelley, and they recall the symbolic journeys in older epics. Nature is one vast Odyssey. Asia and Panthea are beckoned by all the things they see around them to the throne of Demogorgon symbolising eternity. In a sense, here is a draft of the 'West Wind'. On all things fleeting they read inscribed

the words, 'O Follow! Follow!' Panthea speaks of her dream:

> Methought
> As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds
> Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond tree,
> When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
> A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
> I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
> But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
> Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
> O, FOLLOW! FOLLOW!
>
> (II, i, 133-41)

Asia too recalls a half-forgotten dream like Panthea's; the usual rapid rhythmic movement is now significantly controlled, and a fine meditative cadence harmonises with the mood:

> Methought among these lawns together
> We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
> And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
> Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
> Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
> And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
> Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
> And there was more which I remember not:
> But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
> Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
> FOLLOW! O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;
> And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
> The like was stamped, as with a withering fire;
> A wind arose among the pines; it shook
> The clinging music from their boughs, and then
> Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
> Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
>
> (II, i, 143-59)

It will be noticed that the images Shelley employs for this call of the infinite first coming to them in dreams are drawn from the changing seasons, and from the shadows of half-lit cloud, dew and wind; for these to his mind are aspects of the visible world which most clearly manifest the world of the spirit in their process of Becoming. But this call to the

infinite is to be read wherever the sisters turn. Asia looks into Panthea's eyes:

> in the depth of those beloved eyes
> Still I saw, FOLLOW! FOLLOW! (II, i, 161-2)

In their mystic progress towards the cave of Demogorgon, Asia and Panthea are significantly led by 'Echoes unseen'. In the context, these Echoes are perhaps symbols finer than cloud and wind; they are voices 'unbodied':

> Echoes we: listen!
> We cannot stay;
> As dew-stars glisten
> Then fade away. (II, i, 166-9)

These Echoes repeat the voice of dew, cloud and wind, and urge them further on their spiritual quest:

> O, follow, follow,
> As our voice recedeth
> Through the caverns hollow,
> Where the forest spreadeth;
>
> (*More distant*)
> O, follow, follow!
> Through the caverns hollow,
> As the song floats thou pursue,
> Where the wild bee never flew,
> Through the noontide darkness deep,
> By the odour-breathing sleep
> Of faint night flowers, and the waves
> At the fountain-lighted caves,
> While our music, wild and sweet,
> Mocks thy gently falling feet.
>
> (II, i, 173-86)

The Echoes call them to the 'world unknown', the path to which lies

> Through the many-folded mountains
> To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms.
>
> (II, i, 201-2)

Asia and Panthea pass into a 'Forest intermingled with Rocks and Caverns'. There, Spirits which succeed the 'Echoes' describe the onward movement of all things drawn by 'Demogorgon's mighty law'. 'Enchanted eddies' of echoes draw

> All spirits on that secret away;
> As inland boats are driven to Ocean
> Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw.
> (II, ii, 45-47)

From the vale 'in the Indian Caucasus' thus led by mystic voices they emerge on the pinnacle. Vale, forest, and pinnacle perhaps symbolise the realms of the ascending spirit. From this vantage ground they now behold the Earth nearest the Cave of Demogorgon:

> Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
> As a lake, paving in the morning sky,
> With azure waves which burst in silver light,
> Some Indian vale.
> (II, iii, 19-22)

Through this landscape of light, mist and cloud, Asia and Panthea catch glimpses of faces with beckoning smiles. Asia asks Panthea:

> Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes; my brain
> Grows dizzy; see'st thou shapes within the mist?
> (II, iii, 49-50)

Panthea replies:

> A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
> An azure fire within its golden locks!
> Another and another: hark! they speak!
> (II, iii, 51-53)

These spirits within the mist call upon Asia and Panthea to descend into the world of spiritual reality:

> To the deep, to the deep,
> Down, down!
> Through the shade of sleep,

Through the cloudy strife
Of Death and of Life;
Through the veil and the bar
Of things which seem and are
Even to the steps of the remotest throne,
Down, down!

(II, iii, 54-62)

In this home in the infinite, all the shapes of the phantom world vanish; earth's shadows are no more. The One alone remains:

Through the gray void abysm
Down, down!
Where the air is no prism,
And the moon and the stars are not,
And the cavern-crags wear not
The radiance of Heaven,
Nor the gloom to Earth given,
Where there is One pervading, One alone,
Down, down!

(II, iii, 72-79)

In following this mystic progress of Asia and Panthea, we have indeed followed the footsteps of Shelley's imagination. With the vivid sense of the constantly changing face of Nature, he combines an intuition of a process of Becoming by which all things move to the infinite; and the swift objects of Nature and her intangible shapes are those that are nearest the dim borderland of spiritual reality. This view is further strengthened by the innate Platonism of his mind which regards the visible world as a 'phantasmal' scene. His transcendentalism finds expression in the teaching of Ahasuerus to Mahmud in *Hellas* regarding

the One
The unborn and the undying. Earth and Ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them

> As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole
> Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
> With all the silent or tempestuous workings
> By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
> Is but a vision.
>
> (768-80)

This conviction of the metaphysical unity of things again finds expression in *Adonais:*

> The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly.

Reality lies beyond the shadows of the Earth:

> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Again, the call of all things vanishing into the infinite is a call to pass beyond life and death:

> Die,
> If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
> *Follow* where all is fled!

This spiritual principle creates all things, and runs through them all; it destroys the body to redeem the soul:

> That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
> That Beauty in which all things work and move,
> That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
> Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
> Which through the web of being blindly wove
> By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
> Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
> The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me
> Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

These aspects of Shelley's thought, and his interpretation of Nature find their appropriate symbolism in *The Cloud.* His imagination here weaves into the myth his ideas of the har-

mony of the universe, and the power of Love that binds all things, and of process and reality. Edmund Blunden happily calls Shelley the 'humorist of the skies'. Mystics—'healthy-minded' as William James calls them—delight in the idea of the universe as divine comedy. The game of the 'blithe spirit' is 'hide-and-seek'—*leela*, as Indian mystics describe it. The word *laugh* recurs in the poem, and the mood is that of the sport of wind and cloud, and the play of the universal process on sea, land and sky. The earth *dances* about the sun; change is reality at play:

> And then again I dissolve it in rain
> And *laugh* as I pass in thunder.
>
> And I all the while bask in *Heaven's blue smile*,
> Whilst he is dissolving in rains.
>
> The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
> While the moist earth was *laughing* below.
>
> I silently *laugh* at my cenotaph.

Alike by its imagery and its metrical effect the poem is suggestive of children at play. The picture of the moon and the stars is an example:

> That orbed maiden with white fire laden,
> Whom mortals call the Moon,
> Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
> By the midnight breezes strewn;
> And wherever the *beat of her unseen feet*,
> Which only the angels hear,
> May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
> *The stars peep behind her and peer;*
> And I *laugh* to see them whirl and flee,
> Like a swarm of golden bees,
> When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent,
> Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
> Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high
> Are each paved with the moon and these.

With such a background of habitual thought, it is no wonder that Shelley turns to the insubstantial aspects of Nature for

his imagery. Here are images that beckon to us and lead us on to the 'secret way'. Inconstant and shifting objects whose identities are blurred, and which are always mingling with others have a peculiar fascination for him. His imagination sees them

> Voyaging cloudless and unpent
> In the boundless element.

Sometimes he develops an elusive image, and follows it through its subtle changes:

> As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
> A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
> And crystalline, till it becomes a winged mist,
> And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
> Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray
> Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.
> (*Prom. Unbound*, IV, 431-6)

In a flowing universe, where all things are thus moved and impelled by a spirit within them, there can be no clear outline or form. A transcendence of form, a perpetual becoming, and the thirst of Love in its mystic import are variously indicated by his images. 'Interfluous Wood' (*Woodman and the Nightingale*, 4.), 'circumfluous waters' (Ibid. 19), 'air-dissolved star' (*Euganean Hills*, 289), 'folded lilies In which glow-worms dwell' (*Witch of Atlas*, 357), 'a glow-worm golden In a dell of dew' (*Skylark*, 46-7), 'a rose embowered in its own green leaves' (Ibid. 51-2), are some of his typical images. Love or Spirit is free, it is an 'unentangled intermixture' (*Epipsychidion*, 93), but objects moved by this spirit are all 'entangled'. A Voice in the Air singing speaks of Asia's looks where whoso gazes, faints, 'entangled in their mazes'. (*Prom. Unbound*, II, v. 53). 'Leaf-entangled beams', 'tangled boughs of Heaven and ocean', 'meeting boughs and implicated leaves', (*Alastor*, 426), 'interlaced branches which meet and mix' (*Revolt of Islam*, 14), creepers that 'twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs' (*Alastor*, 444), are expressive of the spiritual influence which flows into and unites the world.

The world of Nature is a *web*, and images associated with

the weaving of the web are recurrent in Shelley. The diversity of the world of sense is held together by some invisible hand plying the shuttle on the loom of Time. It is a Witch or a Spirit that weaves this illusory world that we see:

> Within the silent centre of the earth
> My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
> From the beginning, and around my sleep
> Have woven all the wondrous imagery
> Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
> Infinite depths of unknown elements
> Massed into one impenetrable mask;
> Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
> Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.
> And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
> I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds,
> And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
> In the dark space of interstellar air.
>
> ('Unfinished Drama', 15-27)

In *Adonais*, Shelley speaks of 'the web of being blindly wove'

> By man and beast and earth and air and sea.

'Dun beams with which inwoven darkness seems to mingle' (*Alastor*, 648), 'mists of night entwining Their dim woof' (*Revolt of Islam* 272-3) are among the images of Shelley suggestive of a view of things seen not in their separate distinctness, but in their ever-closer harmony tending towards oneness. The chorus of the Spirits of the universe in the mystic dance in the last Act of *Prometheus Unbound* employs this image of the web for a universe perpetually woven by them:

> But now, oh weave the mystic measure
> Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
> Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure
> Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.
>
> (IV, 69)

The Spirits and Hours sing again in the Chorus:

> Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
> From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth.
>
> (Ibid. 129-30)

In such a world, objects are united by their thirst for union with the ideal reality which is Love. They are all mirrors, each reflecting according to its own capacity the fire *for which all thirst*. The cloud for Shelley is a precise symbol of this nature. Leaf, seed, cloud, mist and star are all endowed in his imagination with subtle wings. This sense of intense moment is often expressed by his use of the world 'quiver'. 'A quivering moon-beam' (*Prom. Unbound*, IV, 231), 'the quivering surface of the stream' (*Evening: Pisa*), 'quivering vapours of dim noon tide' (*Sensitive Plant*, i, 90), the 'roseate sunlight' (*Prom. Unbound*, II, i, 25), 'and the crimson pulse of morning which quiver' (*Epipsychidion*, 100), 'palaces and towers Quivering within the wave's intenser day' (*West Wind*, 33-34), are a few examples. A 'mist of sense and thought' is one of his recurrent images; 'Mist on breezes curled' (*Revolt of Islam*, 1120), 'thin shapes within the mist' (*Prom. Unbound*, II, iii, 50), 'thin mist Unrolled on the morning wind' (Ibid. I, 116-17), 'wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist' (Ibid. II, iii, 27), 'mist laden with unseen showers' (*Epipsychidion*, 448) are all glimmering incarnations of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies which move

> Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

Symbols of love and surrender, Shelley's flowers are inspired by the same thirst as other objects in Nature for the ideal; such are the 'thirsting flowers' fed by the cloud, the narcissi

> Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
> Till they die of their own dear loveliness;
> (*Sensitive Plant*, I, 19-20)

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;
>
> And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed,
> Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,

Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky.
(Ibid. I, 25-36)

Bowers 'Lit by downward gazing flowers' (*Prom. Unbound*, II, v, 505), 'the radiant looks of unbewailing flowers' (Ibid. II, iv, 16), 'the light of wave-reflected flowers' (Ibid. III, ii, 32), and the 'light of laughing flowers along the grass' (*Adonais*, 441), are all born of an imagination that has mused on flowers, light, and wave till they have become intimations of spiritual reality. We can watch it at work on complicated images of delicate and suggestive movement. Here is his picture of the flowers on a stream:

And on the stream whose *inconstant* bosom
Was pranked, under *boughs of embowering blossom*,
With golden and green light, slanting through
Their heaven of many a *tangled hue*,

Broad water-lilies lay *tremulously*,
And starry river-buds *glimmered* by,
And around them the *soft stream did glide and dance*
With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.
(*Sensitive Plant*, I, 41-7)

To move constantly in thought and vision towards a world of reality unseen, one and indivisible and which unites all things and moves them, is the ideal for the poet according to Shelley. It is not by virtue of his realizing the distinctness of the objects of the visible world, and losing himself in its diversity, but by his approximation to the transcendental world that a poet's vision is distinguished:

He will watch from dawn to gloom
The *lake-reflected sun* illume
The *yellow bees in the ivy-bloom*,
Nor heed nor see, what things they be;

But from these create he can
Forms more real than living man,
Nurslings of immortality!

(*Prom. Unbound*, I, 743-9)

Out of such elements as dark tangled woods, odours of flowers, and beckoning lights, wave-reflected stars and sky, Shelley composes his landscapes. The hero of *Alastor* has surroundings which harmonise with his quest:

One *darkest glen*
Sends from its woods of *musk-rose, twined with jasmine*,
A *soul-dissolving odour*, to invite
To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep
Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
Like *vaporous shapes half-seen;* beyond, *a well*,
Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
Images all the woven boughs above,
And each depending leaf, and every speck
Of azure sky, *darting* between their chasms;
Nor aught else in the *liquid mirror laves*
Its portraiture, but *some inconstant star*
Between one foliaged lattice twinkling fair,
Or, painted bird, *sleeping beneath the moon*,
Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
Unconscious of the day, ere *yet his wings*
Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

(451-68)

In *Epipsychidion* he describes a far Eden of his imagination:

The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the *scent of lemon-flowers*,
Which *floats like mist laden with unseen showers*,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the *moss violets and jonquils peep*,
And *dart their arrowy odour through the brain*
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.

(446-51)

All things here seem like the echoes of an 'antenatal dream'.

Veil after veil falls, and the isle's beauty

like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness
Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
Yet, *like a buried lamp*, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An *atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile*
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen
Over the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.

(474-82)

We may recall Francis Thompson's eloquent praise of Shelley. He saw in Nature not a picture set for his copying, but a palette set for his brush:

> The materials for such visionary Edens have evidently been accumulated from direct experience, but they are recomposed by him into such scenes as never mortal eye beheld. 'Don't you wish you had?' as Turner said.

We can recognise in this Eden of his imagination the diverse materials he has accumulated in his own thought and observation:

The ivy and the wild-vine *interknit*
The volumes of their *many-twining* stems;
Parasite flowers *illume* with dewy gems
The *lampless halls*, and when they fade, the sky
Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star-atoms keen
Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, *the Earth and Ocean seem*
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their *smiles*, and call reality.

(500-12)

The Quarterly, reviewing Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, complained of absurdities in the poem such as a solid sphere which is as many thousand spheres, with 'inter-transpicuous'

spaces between them, and a bright brook which is transformed into an azure mist of elemental subtlety, and odour, music and light kneaded into one aerial mass. William Morris said that Shelley had no eyes. Matthew Arnold found him lacking in 'natural magic' of expression though he allowed him credit for 'natural magic of rhythm'. T. S. Eliot among recent critics charges Shelley with an incoherent view of life. It is clear that Shelley's world view is not rigidly consistent from beginning to end. Like that of any other poet, it grows and evolves. His meditations on process and reality throughout his creative period have however a unity of thought and insight. His philosophy too is not an obstruction to our appreciation of his poetry. It is no mere theory. As Clutton-Brock puts it, he is in love not with a theory but with a vision. The intense conviction of a sentient universe, and the finer atmosphere of a spiritual light that falls on all aspiring things are captured for us in moving and beautiful verse which in its music and fluency corresponds to this vision. It is in his power to reproduce the atmosphere of some ethereal hour or a visionary scene that Shelley's genius lies:

> The path through which that lovely twain
> Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew,
> And each dark tree that ever grew,
> Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
> Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,
> Can pierce its interwoven bowers.
>
> (*Prom. Unbound*, II, ii, 1-6)

In such impenetrable forests of his imagination, sometimes the light of a solitary star comes and goes:

> When some star of many a one
> That *climbs and wanders* through steep night,
> Has *found the cleft through which alone*
> *Beams fall from high those depths upon*
> Ere it is borne away, away,
> By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
> It scatters drops of golden light,
> Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:

And the gloom divine is all around,
And underneath is the mossy ground.

(Ibid. II, i, 14-22)

Critics and readers who have a preconceived theory of imagery may complain that such lines are vague and insubstantial. But this criticism misses the point of such passages. A poet's imagery is the expression of his view of reality. Shelley's inmost conviction is that of a moving and changing universe. In this tendency to reveal the movement of things, it is but inevitable that their distinctness and individuality should be deliberately blurred. The function of his imagery is to represent things in their swift flight to the infinite. Therefore to all swift things for swiftness does he sue.

CONVENTIONS OF SPEECH IN THE RESTORATION COMEDY OF MANNERS

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Alexander Pope, according to Spence, praised Dryden for always using 'proper language; lively, natural and fitted to the subject. It is scarce ever too high or too low.'[1] He seems to be alluding here to qualities which Dryden himself thought essential for a good style. Wit, according to Dryden, was nothing but 'thoughts and words elegantly adapted to the subject'.[2] And he judges 'propriety' by the standards of 'decorum' which the age had inherited from the Renaissance and accepted as the basis of its own theory of style. Dryden observes elsewhere:

> Propriety of thought is that fancy which arises naturally from the subject, or which the poet adapts to it. Propriety of words is the clogging of these thoughts with such expressions as are naturally proper to them, and from both these, if they are judiciously performed, the delight of poetry results.
>
> Preface to *Albion and Albanius*, 1685.

Earlier, Hobbes had stressed the importance of the adaptation of 'Matters and Words to Persons, Times and Places'.[3]

The writers of the Comedy of Manners, too, appear to have accepted this as the basis of their speech on the stage, and observe, in general, the 'propriety' of thoughts and words in relation to their characters. They use a language fit to portray the life and manners of Wits and Witwouds who are the most important persons in this comedy. Sir Wilful Witwoud, who has just come to the town, is struck by its distinct idiom. 'Well, well,' he says to Millamant, 'I shall understand your Lingo one of these Days, Cousin; in the meanwhile, I must answer in plain English.'[4] The speech in this comedy, no doubt, is distinct from 'plain English', and is intended to delight and entertain a society which prized its members for their wit and elegance.

Etherege and Wycherley were themselves distinguished Court Wits and moved in the highest society. Horace Walpole wrote to the Countess of Ossory in June 1787 that 'Etherege, Congreve, Vanbrugh and Cibber wrote genteel comedy because they lived in best company.'[5] This feeling is expressed by the dramatists of the period themselves in a number of dedications in language which seems to have a genuine ring about it.

The belief that this comedy reflected the polished and witty conversation of fashionable society was fairly widespread during the period. Dryden significantly observes that the wit of the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatist 'was not that of gentlemen; there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred and clownish in it, and which confessed the conversation of the authors.'[6] The distinction is important: the emphasis here is upon the polish, finish and grace which we associate with conversation in polite society. Writers of this comedy, therefore, find their standard for comic dialogue in the conversation of fashionable society round the Court, and not in the works of earlier writers, howsoever witty.

The dialogue in this comedy, however, happily combines the advantages of graces that pertain to polite conversation with the point and finish which belong to a good literary composition. It may be suggested here that complete realism in stage dialogue would be impossible, even intolerable, for human beings never speak with such sustained relevance or compactness as is necessary in stage dialogue. Congreve was perhaps keenly aware of this difficulty. 'I believe,' he says, 'if a Poet should steal a dialogue of any length from the *Extempore* Discourse of two Wittiest Men upon Earth, he would find the Scene but coldly received by the Town.'[7] It is necessary to recognize this dual aspect of the excellence of dramatic dialogue: it must have its roots in life, and at the same time it should be carefully pruned and chiselled by art.

II

At the time when the prose Comedy of Manners came to

be written, two important factors synchronized to contribute to its growth. Wit and conversation were being cultivated by the upper classes for their own sake, and an increased emphasis was being laid on the improvement and refinement of the language. And the 'talkative seventeenth century coincided with the confident and fertile youth of modern English'.[8] Burnet declares with justifiable pride, 'Our language has (now) fewer Faults, and is more natural and proper, than it was ever, at any time before.'[9] The playwrights were thus lucky to find ready at hand a prose which could serve as a supple and efficient vehicle for social comment and portrayal of manners, and a society in which 'greatness was ...easy of access...(and) conversation so free.'[10] It was a propitious moment, and the playwrights took full advantage of it and created a delightful prose comedy of wit and manners.

III

No wonder, Dryden rejected the comedy of humours on the ground that the conversation of characters like Cobb and Tib could be 'no jest' to his aristocratic audience 'on the theatre, when they would avoid it in the street'. This audience, he declares, would be 'entertained with the follies of each other',[11] and would like to hear on the stage the type of conversation which was current among them. So it was the ambition of every dramatist to write witty and smart dialogue for his characters. In fact, sometimes this desire to write wit became 'a Downright Distemper epidemic'.[12] The Earl of Mulgrave earnestly warns the writers:

> That silly thing men call sheer Wit avoid,
> With which our Age so nauseously is cloy'd.
>
> *An Essay upon Poetry*, 1682.

The Comedy of Manners perhaps gave this impression because the dramatists primarily concerned themselves with the social affectations rather than vices, and wit was certainly the most common of the contemporary affectations. Dennis complained that 'there was scarce an Empty Headed,

Wrong Headed Fellow in the Town, but who setts up for a Witt.'[13] Such individuals were naturally a proper quarry for the playwrights. Congreve chose Characters which should appear ridiculous, not so much through a natural Folly ...as through an affected Wit; a Wit which at the same time that it is affected, is also false.'[14] The dramatist would thus espouse 'true wit' and ridicule 'false wit'—a variety of speech which strives to be witty but fails through an excess of striving after effect or a feebleness of judgment or a want of social poise. The contrast between these two constitutes the distinct pattern of speech in this comedy.

IV

Of wit, repartee is the form which, according to D'Urfey, is one of the 'Obvious Rules of Comedy',[15] and is considered by Dryden to be its 'greatest grace'. 'There may be,' he adds, 'much acuteness in a thing well-said; but there is more in a quick reply.'[16] The Restoration audience was delighted by 'the chace of wit kept on both sides, and swiftly managed.'[17]

The Comedy of Manners with its new mode of courtship and sex-antagonism developed a new type of speech convention. The gay and witty heroines 'love tittle tattle and ceremony'[18] and detest the traditional romantic nonsense. They, like Belinda in Congreve's *The Old Bachelor*, demand 'variety' in conversation from the gallants. The lovers, therefore, approach each other through jesting, light banter and repartee. The two pairs of lovers in Etherege's *She Would if She Could* in their first meeting (II, i) indulge in what Gatty calls 'a little harmless Raillery'. The first meeting between Harriet and Dorimant in his *The Man of Mode* is notable for verve and animation.

Congreve is unequalled for his brilliant wit and finish of style among the Restoration dramatists. 'His personages are a kind of intellectual gladiators,' says Dr. Johnson, 'every sentence is to ward or strike; the contest of smartness is never intermitted, its wit is a meteor playing to and fro with alternate coruscation.'[19] Millamant, who affected indifference in the presence of Mirabell the previous night, thinks that

he might have felt hurt. So, at their next meeting the following conversation takes place:

Mrs. Mil: Mirabell, did you take Exceptions last Night? O ay, and went away—Now I think on't I'm angry—No, now I think on't I'm pleas'd—For I believe I gave you some Pain.

Mir: Does that please you?

Mrs. Mil: Infinitely; I love to give Pain.

Mir: You affect a Cruelty which is not in your Nature; your true Vanity is in the Power of pleasing.

Mrs. Mil: O I ask your Pardon for that—One's cruelty is one's Power; and when one parts with one's Cruelty, one parts with one's Power; and when one has parted with that, I fancy one's old and ugly.

Mir: Ay, ay, suffer your Cruelty to ruin the Object of your Power, to destroy your Lover—then how vain, how lost a Thing you 'll be? Nay, 'tis true: You are no longer handsome when you've lost your Lover; your Beauty dies upon the Instant; for Beauty is the Lover's Gift; 'tis he bestows your Charms—your Glass is all a Cheat....

Mrs. Mil: O the vanity of these Men!—Fainall, d'ye hear him? If they did not commend us, we were not handsome! Now you must know they could not commend one, if one was not handsome. Beauty the Lover's Gift—Lord, what is a Lover, and they live as long as one pleases, and they die as soon as one pleases; And then, if one pleases one makes more.

(II, iv; Dobree, pp. 371-2)

It is important to observe that the repartee of lovers in this comedy is so entirely satisfactory because it is something more then merely an intellectual exercise and implies the presence of any underlying emotion. A man and woman cannot engage themselves for long in a disinterested banter. It is the love in their hearts, though carefully concealed from each other, which makes the scenes of wit-combat between them comically significant and interesting. Where there is no love, repartee flags. We have no true pairs of lovers in Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer*, nor even in *The Country Wife*. And the result is that there is nothing in Wycherley to match

the exquisite repartee we have in Etherege and Congreve. How dry and lifeless a repartee can become without the undercurrent of love will be seen in the encounters between Widow Blackacre and Freeman who seeks her only 'out of love to her jointure'.

Without the leaven of love, repartee often develops into raillery, a mode of speech which is very congenial to the gay and cynical attitude to life which permeates this comedy. Wits as well as fops rail at each other whenever the occasion permits it. Courtall in Etherege's *She Would if She Could* reminds Lady Cockwood, who is outraged at Sir Oliver Cockwood's behaviour at the Bear: '...all this was meer Raillery, a way of talk which Sir Oliver, being well-bred, has learned among the gay people of the Town.' (III, iii). True raillery is thus but the 'fashion' and has no malice in it. Witwoud in Congreve's *The Way of the World* indicates the spirit underlying raillery:

> We hit off a little wit now and then but no Animosity—The falling out of Wits is like the falling out of Lovers—We agree in the main.
>
> (III, xiii, Dobree, p. 390)

Raillery in order to be truly comic should be conducted with infinite skill and inflict no pain. Raillery, therefore, serves as well to distinguish wits and fops from each other. The Earl of Shaftesbury once observed, 'In a Gentleman we allow of Pleasantry and Raillery, as being managed always with good Breeding, and never gross and clownish.'[20] We have some fine examples of raillery in the clashes between the gay and wild couples, and gallants like Vincent and Ranger when they tease each other. The characters outside the charmed circle of wits, however, as they lack judgment and social poise rail to hurt and insult each other. Too often their raillery degenerates into sheer abuse and insolent bickering. '(These) satirical gentlemen,' says Vincent in Wycherley's *Love in a Wood*, 'cannot distinguish a friend from a fop.' They, in fact, fail to understand the true nature of raillery. Novel, a habitual railer of this class, while trying to enlighten Manly in Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer* says:

'...railling, roaring and making of noise (is) a mark of wit, (for) railling is satire...and making a noise humour.' No wonder, the raillery of persons like him is malicious and ill-bred.

V

Another common characteristic of comic speech in this comedy is licentiousness. Shadwell strongly protests against the lewdness of language on the stage and 'bawdry and Profaneness, which they call brisk writing'.[21] Jeremy Collier with his characteristic vehemence declares that 'goats and monkeys, if they could speak, would express their brutality in such language as this.'[22] Ever since, the charge of licentiousness has been repeated against this comedy.

But whereas this may be conceded that the charge is largely true, two things need be mentioned here. One, the fashionable audience which witnessed these plays did not find them as nauseating as is made out by some critics. In fact, perhaps they liked them all the better for their bawdry. Sparkish, the fashionable fop in Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, seems to represent fairly the attitude of these spectators.

> And the reason why we are so often louder than the players is, because we think we speak more wit, and so become the poet's rival in his audience: For to tell you the truth, we hate the silly rogues; nay, so much, that we find fault even with their bawdy upon the stage, whilst we talk nothing else in the pit as loud.
>
> (Ward, p. 290)

Orrery appears to be of the same view as Sparkish. He fears one of his plays may be damned for not having enough bawdry:

> This play I'm horribly afraid, can't last;
> Allow it pretty, 'tis confounded chaste,
> And contradicts too much the present taste.
>
> (R. Garnett, *The Age of Dryden*, p. 128)

The Marquis of Halifax says in his *Character of King Charles II*

that there was at the Court 'Unbounded liberty of talking, without the restraints of decency which were before observed'. Obviously bawdry could not shock such an audience: it only afforded them innocent mirth and occasion for laughter.

Another thing that need be borne in mind is that all characters in these plays are not guilty of lewdness to the same degree. Wits speak of even the unspeakable things with a certain amount of grace and their wit redeems, partly at least, their sexual jokes and allusions from obscenity. 'If there are vulgar scenes and sexual jokes,' as Professor Allardyce Nicoll points out, 'they are dragged in not for the sake of vulgarity or the sensuality, but because they are witty and amusing.' (*The Restoration Drama*, 1952 edn., p. 199).

This, however, is not true of the jokes of the fops and grotesques. In their case it may be justly said that 'obscenity was wit'. The speech of the wits is thus once again distinguished from that of the fops in this important respect. Whereas the fops indulge in 'bare-faced ribaldry', which, as Dryden points out, 'is the poorest pretence to wit', and is 'both unmannerly in itself and fulsome to the readers',[23] ladies and gentlemen hide the grossness of their thoughts under the cloak of refinement. The speech of wits is 'frank and free' but that of the fops is mostly gross and licentious.

Licentiousness on the stage was in fact so common that Sir Richard Blackmore in his *Preface to Prince Arthur* (1695) bemoans that the heroines of 'our Modern Comedies' entertain the 'Audience with confident Discourses, immodest Repartees, and Prophane Raillery'. The complaint is, however, exaggerated. Strictly speaking it is not true of the heroines of the comedy under discussion, though there are women in these plays who are sometimes lewd enough to deserve the above censure. Such would be Margery Pinchwife in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* when she describes Horner's 'beastliness' or in the same play Lady Fidget and her 'whole knot of the virtuous gang' visiting the lodgings of Horner in masquerade. Such is what passes between Lady Touchwood and her gallant Maskwell in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*. The conversation between Mrs. Foresight and Mrs. Frail in Congreve's *Love for Love* (II, xi), in which

they rail at Mr. Tattle for his attention to Miss Prue, may also disgust some delicate palates. But none of these women who are so indelicate in their speech is a heroine. Their speech is immoderate because their life itself has no poise. The difference between their speech and that of the gay and witty heroines will become clear if we compare what young Hippolita in Wycherley's *The Gentleman Dancing Master* says on her being kept 'shut up' by her father, and what Lady Flippant in the same play says on a similar subject. Again, when Angelica teases Foresight, the musty astrologer in Congreve's *Love for Love* (II, iii.), by making a reference to his wife when he prevents her from going abroad, there is nothing indelicate in her speech. It is 'pert' rather than lewd and its entire tone and content are essentially comic.

VI

In fact, a process for the refinement of language had set in and there was a desire to make the bawdy less offensive by throwing over it a veneer of refinement. Dryden says with pride in his Epilogue to the *Second Part of the Conquest of Granada* (1672) that now 'the language is become more courtly, and our thoughts are better dressed' and that 'the discourse and raillery of our comedies excel what has been written' by the poets of the earlier ages. Burnet, too, reminds the reader that the language of 'the present Masters of the Stage' is 'now certainly properer, and more natural than it was formerly.'[24] Even Shadwell, pays a tribute to the comedy of manners for its emphasis on refinement of language and polish of style:

> This Play is not well-bred, nor well-drest
> Such Plays the Women's Poets can write best:
> But know good-Breeding shows it excellence,
> Not in small trifling Forms, but in Good Sense.
>
> (Preface to *The Virtuoso*)

This effect of refinement is mostly achieved by the use of an epigrammatic style and by employing seemingly inno-

cent words for gross notions and ideas. What Engine, Arabella's waiting woman in Ravenscraft's *The London Cuckolds*, says reveals perhaps the most important aspect of this process of refinement:

> This imployment was formerly stil'd Bawding and Pimping, but our Age is more Civilis'd—and our language much refin'd—it is now a modish piece of service only, and said, being Complaisant, or doing a friend kind office. Whore—(oh filthy word!) is now prettily call'd Mistress, Pimp, Friend, Cuckold-maker, Gallant: thus the terms being civiliz'd the thing becomes more practicable,—what Clowns they were in former Ages! (III, i)

The refinement, no doubt, chiefly relates to the appearance of things and not so much to the nature and meaning of things. Freeman, in Etherege's *She Would if She Could* calls bawding—'Trade and Industry', and Sir Joslin speaks of Rakehell, a pimp, as 'a knight of the Industry'. Lady Fidget in Wycherley's *The Country Wife* rebukes her husband for using the expression 'the naked truth' in her presence.

To avoid speaking of the 'naked truth' is the major concern of the man of the world. 'Refinement frequently comes into conflict with expressiveness,' says Professor Sutherland, 'you must avoid some statements and some expressions because they are too crude, too forthright, because they rouse sensations of disgust.'[25] The gallants in these comedies frequently try to avoid rousing 'sensations of disgust' by resorting to indirect statement, irony, double *entendre*, or some other such device. They possess something of the art for which Rochester had praised his friend Sedley:

> Sedley has that prevailing gentle art,
> That can with a resistless charm impart
> The loosest wishes to the chastest heart.
> (*An Allusion to the Tenth Satire of the First Book of Horace*)

The gay and wild couples of this comedy, as Mirabell says of Fainall, have 'a Taste extremely delicate' and 'are for refining their Pleasures'. They refine their carnality into the pleasure of the sex-chase, and the gross and loose

use of language, so common in that age, into a 'facetious and civil way of jesting'.[26] They study and render everything more becoming. What Dryden says of Lucian's wit is equally true of the wit of the best characters in these plays:

> His wit says Ablancourt, was full of urbanity, that Attick salt, which the French call fine raillery, not obscene, not gross, not rude but facetious, well-mannered and well-bred.[27]

VII

The contrast between the speeches of Truewits and Witwouds exhibits itself in several other ways. It is essentially a difference of judgment and poise. Whereas the gay and wild couples avoid too much of everything (except perhaps of pointed, epigrammatic wit) and maintain the fine mean, remaining always the true masters of the words they use and the thoughts they want to express, the fops and Witwouds are generally guilty of prolixity of expression or paucity of proper words or lack of a sense of proportion and the failure to know when to stop. Thus even when a mode of expression is common to both wits and others, their speeches are distinguished by the presence or otherwise of judgment, restraint and propriety.

The use of similitudes, for example, is common to all types of characters in this comedy. But the similitudes which the fops employ are often insipid, far-fetched and too numerous and cumbersome for the purpose of illustrating an idea. They are less an ornament than a burden. As Dryden once observed in his Dedication to the *Aeneis* (1697), 'similitudes and descriptions, when drawn into an unreasonable length, must needs nauseate the reader.' Wits and gallants naturally have a peculiar horror of a person addicted to the use of similitudes. 'A Pox confound your Similitudes, Sir,' says Sir Sampson in Congreve's *Love for Love* (IV, v), interrupting Jeremy, 'speak to be understood and tell...in plain Terms what the Matter is.' Dapperwit in Wycherley's *Love in a Wood* and Witwoud in Congreve's *The Way of the World* are the worst offenders in this respect.

Repetition of a word or part of a sentence in a speech has also been used by these playwrights to suggest qualities

of character. Wits who know their minds and do not suffer from any unnecessary inhibitions or social handicaps possess the gift of witty and fluent speech. But the characters who are hypocritical and so seek to hide their feelings, or those who are too eager and thus cannot hide them, or those who are old and do not possess the confidence and self-assurance which accompany youth, are often given to repetitious speech. Wycherley's Lady Flippant (in *Love in a Wood*) and Lady Fidget (in *The Country Wife*) betray their sex-obsession through repetition. Similarly the parsimony and hypocrisy of Gripe (in *Love in a Wood*) and the repressed sexuality of Alderman Smuggler (Farquahar, *The Constant Couple*) betray themselves in repetitious speech.

Verbosity is also characteristic of persons of poor wit and feeble judgment. Extravagance of speech is generally a sign of lack of breeding and social incompetence of one type or another. Often it goes with a muddled head and an insincere heart. Sir Wittol in Congreve's *The Old Bachelor* is a coward and a fool. He offers his excuses to Sharper, his supposed saviour from the ruffians, for his earlier ingratitude, in a pompous, inflated and, therefore, obviously insincere language:

> Hem, hem, Sir, I most submissively implore your pardon for my Transgression of Ingratitude and Omission; having my entire Dependence, Sir, upon the superfluity of your Goodness, which, like an Innundation will, I hope, totally immerge the recollection of my Error, and leave me floating in your Sight upon the full-blown Bladders of Repentence by the help of which, I shall once more hope to swim into your Favour.[28]

This speech is an excellent example of the 'blown puffy style'.[29] Lady Plyant in Congreve's *The Double Dealer*, who is 'insolent to her husband and easy to any pretender', is extravagant in her fancy and rambling in her speech. Though she demands 'mathemacular demonstration' of his innocence from Mellefont, she is herself extremely muddled, inconsequential and prolix in her utterance. (II, v).

VIII

In a civilized society, 'Passion' normally gives place to

'Manners', for politeness implies a constraint upon natural impulses. Can one ever speak to another one's full mind? Politeness is but a mask thrown over self-interest, a hiding of feelings when their free expression is likely to give offence. Gallants and ladies in this comedy are perfect in their manners and throw, when necessary, upon their speech a cloak of cool urbanity. But there are certain types of characters who cannot hide their feelings and so betray their want of social poise and breeding by the vehemence of their language. Such are often the women, somewhat advanced in years, who have been disappointed in their amours or the women who jilt their lovers or cuckold their husbands but want to give to others an impression of injured innocence.

In the use of abusive language the litigious Widow Blackacre in Wycherley's *The Plain Dealer* and Lady Wishfort in Congreve's *The Way of the World* are without any equal. There is a terrific vigour, as Meredith noticed,[30] about the vituperation Widow Blackacre pours upon her unwelcome suitor, Major Oldfox:

> I say for you, major, my walking hospital of an ancient foundation, thou bag of mummy, that would fall asunder, if 'twere not for thy cerecloths...thou withered, hobbling, distorted cripple...Thou senseless, impertinent, quibbling, drivelling, feeble, paralytic, impotent, fumbling, frigid, nincompoop.
>
> (II, i)

But immoderate speech was no monopoly of women. An angry father or guardian who has been deceived by his son or daughter, a jealous husband who thinks he has discovered some infidelity of his wife also bursts out into fits of vehement language. Immoderate language is invariably a signal for comic laughter. Raving on any account is not permissible in the polite world of this comedy: to betray an emotion is to betray one's want of breeding. The persons, therefore, who are given to the use of violent language are those who are, in one way or the other, misfits in this highly sophisticated society.

IX

We have seen above that the comic dramatists of the Resto-

ration period employed a variety of speech forms and fitted them to their notions of character. In their plays, the distinction between the true and false wit persists, and the speeches of wits and fops are nicely distinguished from one another. The brilliance and polish of their dialogues have generally been acknowledged, though their immorality has often been regretted.

Professor L. C. Knights, however, has recently challenged the excellence of Restoration comedy even on this score. 'The observation to start from', he says, 'is that the prose in which restoration comedy is written is poor and inexpressive in comparison with the staple non-dramatic prose.'[31] He further complains that the 'verbal pattern appears at times to be completely unrelated to a mode of perceiving.'[32] His judgment on the quality of prose style in these comedies, one suspects, is linked up with his general appraisal of the Restoration comedy which he finds to be 'trivial, gross and dull'. The comparison with the 'staple non-dramatic prose' appears to be unnecessary, for there are bound to be essential functional differences between the dramatic and non-dramatic varieties of prose. The kind of prose which might be required for a statement of scientific facts, discussion of morals or even description and narrative, may not be wholly satisfactory for the purposes of the drama. 'The phrasing may be exquisite,' rightly says Sir Walter Raleigh, 'the thought well-knit, the emotion genuine, yet all is, as it were, dumb-show, where no community of feeling exists between the speaker and his audience.'[33] A dramatist cannot thus afford to ignore the taste of his audience and must give them what he believes will please them most, and in a language which is to their best liking. The aristocratic audience of this comedy valued its witty and polished conversation and delighted in repartee and banter.

If it happens to be superficial, perhaps it could not be helped. The phenomenon of politeness, it may be mentioned, turns round the question of speech. In normal speech we should all maintain that we mean what we say, or at least that we say more or less what we mean. But the social speech, and it is the staple speech in this comedy, does almost the opposite. It conceals meaning: men have to say 'delighted'

when they are not; they have to praise those whom they do not admire. Social conversation has to be brilliant and polite, even though it be at the cost of genuineness of feeling. So, the form of this comedy, it may be claimed, perfectly fits its contents and purpose, and its 'verbal mode' is closely related to its 'mode of perceiving'. Its style is entirely adequate and leaves no impression of impoverishment on our minds.

Moreover, the contemporaries of these dramatists, and it is a significant test when discussing the style in drama, did not find any thing seriously wrong with their style. On the contrary, there is enough evidence to show that the public found their style entirely to their liking. 'I will never enter the lists in proses', says Dryden of Etherege, 'with the undoubted best author of it which our nation has produced.'[34] Dennis is equally eloquent in the praise of Etherege's prose. ''Tis my humble opinion', he says, 'that there is no Dialogue extant in any language, which has half the charms of the Terentian Dialogue; what comes nearest to it is that of Etherege in Sir Fopling Flutter.'[35] Surely Dryden and Dennis were no mean judges of prose. Similar praise has been bestowed on Wycherley, Congreve and Vanbrugh by their contemporaries.

The writers of the Restoration Comedy of Manners took special pains to refine and polish their style, hence its effeminacy and glitter are the result of deliberate cultivation. What they might have lost in vigour they gained in grace. And it was grace and brilliance rather than vigour which was the special need of this comedy. However excellent the style of Halifax or Burnet may be in itself, it would not have suited the Comedy of Manners. The witty, brilliant, easy and elegant style of Etherege and Congreve was the only style which could be a fit vehicle for this fine flowering of the comic spirit. If the Royal Society and others worked for the simplicity and precision of English prose, the comic writers of the period added to this prose the feminine qualities of wit, grace, elegance, and even vigour of a kind, and thus helped to make it a fit tool for the use of the 'civilized' eighteenth century.

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WORDSWORTH'S CONCEPT OF REASON

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Wordsworth's reaction against the mechanistic conception of the universe has sometimes been misconceived as his vehement attack upon scientific thought, or even repudiation of reason altogether.[1] That is not true. Wordsworth was not ignorant of the value of science, nor was he a contemptuous enemy of intellect.[2] He refused to regard the scientist's explanation of the universe as final, but scientific inquiry on that account was not excluded from his experience. He did not ridicule the Bentleys and Theobalds of his day, but made friends of persons like William Rowan Hamilton, Humphrey Davy, John Payne Collier, John Stuart Mill, with whom he came in contact. Mill was impressed by 'the extensive range of his thoughts...the catholic character of his ability... the extreme comprehensiveness and philosophic spirit' which he found in the poet. 'Wordsworth', he said, 'seems always to know the pros and cons of every question.'[3] No charge of general anti-intellectualism can therefore be brought against him.[4] On the contrary, his poetry in a way was conditioned by scientific inquiry, for it helped him in sifting the fiction away from the real.[5] He wrote to W. R. Hamilton advising him that

> the logical faculty has infinitely more to do with poetry than the young and the inexperienced, whether writer or critic, ever dreams of. Indeed, as the materials upon which that faculty is exercised in poetry are so subtle, so plastic, so complex, the application of it requires an adroitness which can proceed from nothing but practice; a discernment, which emotion is so far from bestowing that at first it is ever in the way of it.[6]

Wordsworth had inherited from the scientific temper of his day a good deal of analytical reasoning. During his life at Cambridge he developed a great admiration for Newton,

whose statue, with his 'prism and silent face', struck him with profound thoughts:

> The marble index of a mind for ever
> Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.
> (*Prelude*, 1850 Text, III. 61-63)

He also paid an eloquent tribute to Mathematics, and its independent world 'Created out of pure Intelligence'.[7] During the French Revolution, when involved in moral and political passions, he sought in Mathematics his intellectual salvation:

> Turn'd towards mathematics, and their clear
> And solid evidence. (*Prelude*, X. 894-5)

In fact, Wordsworth did not believe that the habit of 'analysing, decomposing, and anatomising' was inevitably inimical to other faculties of the mind:

> People are led into this mistake by over-looking the fact that such processes being to a certain extent within the reach of a limited intellect, we are apt to ascribe to them that insensibility of which they are in truth the effect and not the cause. Admiration and love, to which all knowledge truly vital must tend, are felt by men of real genius in proportion as their discoveries in natural Philosophy are enlarged; and the beauty in form of a plant or an animal is not made less but more apparent as a whole by more accurate insight into its consequent properties and powers. A *Savant* who is not also a Poet in soul and a religionist in heart is a feeble and unhappy Creature.
> (Fenwick note to *This Lawn, A Carpet All Alive*)

The habit of analysis is a great gift to human thought: it helps us in discovering the law that governs 'all visible beings'.

> Happy is he who lives to understand,
> Not human nature only, but explores
> All natures,—to the end that he may find
> The law that governs each...
> Up from the creeping plant to sovereign Man.
> (*Excursion*, IV. 332-43)

Every step in the advancement of science is a valuable gift to man: its supreme value rests on its co-ordination of human knowledge that enriches our life as a whole. Conceived thus, science is integrally related to poetry which is 'the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge; . . . the impassioned expression which is on the countenance of all Science.'[8] As Wordsworth appreciated the value of scientific knowledge in the sum-total of man's intellectual experience, he also recognized the practical benefits accruing from scientific research. He exulted to see

> An intellectual mastery exercised
> O'er the blind elements; a purpose given,
> A perseverance fed; almost a soul
> Imparted—to brute matter.
>
> (*Excursion*, VIII. 200-4)

It is clear then that Wordsworth was neither a sentimental nor a contemptuous opponent of science and analytical reasoning. He, in fact, tried to define their right domain. Analytical knowledge is useful within its premises, but it is liable to be suspect when out of place. Hence his criticism of the botanizer:

> One that would peep and botanize
> Upon his mother's grave.
>
> (*A Poet's Epitaph*, 19-20)

There are limits to mechanical processes, and man as a spiritual being cannot be reduced to an automaton. In the crisis of his life, intellect brought little consolation to him. Rather, in its processes he sacrificed

> The exactness of a comprehensive mind
> To scrupulous and microscopic views.
>
> (*Prelude*, X. 845-7)

If the analytical reasoning exceeds its limits, it may result, Wordsworth felt, even in a perversion of moral distinctions as in the case of Oswald:

> Having indulged a habit, dangerous in a man who has fallen, of dallying with moral calculations, he becomes an empiric,

and a daring and unfeeling empiric. He disguises from himself his own malignity by assuming the character of a speculator in morals, and one who has the hardihood to realise his speculations.[9]

He had therefore a certain distrust of knowledge that only pored, pried, and criticised,

> Viewing all objects unremittingly
> In disconnection dead and spiritless;
> (*Excursion*, IV. 961-2)

Analytical knowledge is a doubtful guide to truth and to the conduct of life, and needs to be supplemented by imagination and affections. 'Happy for us', Wordsworth exclaimed, 'that the imagination and the affections in our own despite mitigate the evils of that state of intellectual slavery which the calculating understanding is so apt to produce.'[10] Man is not a composition of abstraction, but lives by affections and feelings as well as thought. In his rationalistic period, Wordsworth tended to make light of them:

> Thus strangely did I war against myself;
> A Bigot to a new Idolatry
> Did like a Monk who hath forsworn the world
> Zealously labour to cut off my heart
> From all the sources of her former strength.
> (*Prelude*, XI. 74-78)

Instinct carried no meaning to him, and he even hoped 'that future times would surely see The man to come parted as by a gulf, from him who had been' nurtured upon instincts.[11] Later when Wordsworth had regained his equilibrium, he came to speak of the instincts as '*heaven-born*',[12] and even acknowledged his debt to the daisy to which he owed

> An instinct call it, a blind sense;
> A happy, genial influence,
> Coming one knows not how, nor whence,
> Nor whither going.
> (*To the Daisy*, 69-74)

The same criticism of analytical reasoning, when carried to an extreme, is implied in poems like *The Tables Turned* and *To My Sister*, which were written when Wordsworth had just got rid of his disillusionment with current 'reasonings' in ethics and psychology. He had made an eager endeavour to establish by formal proof the ground of moral obligation, and in those 'reasonings false from the beginning' was forced into yielding up all moral questions in despair.[13] He therefore exclaimed with a certain personal feeling that 'toiling reason'[14] does not take man very far, and that

> Our meddling intellect
> Mis-shapes the beauteous forms of things:
> We murder to dissect.
>
> (*The Tables Turned*, 26-28)

Wordsworth was thus led to distinguish 'analytical reason' from what he called 'the grand And simple Reason'[15]—a faculty which penetrates infallibly to truth. While the former is discursive, the latter is synthesizing. He described the first as

> that humbler power
> Which carries on its no inglorious work
> By logic and minute analysis.
>
> (*Prelude*, XI. 124-6)

Sometimes he referred to it as that

> secondary power
> By which we multiply distinctions. . . .
>
> (*Prelude*, II. 221-2)

The one he held to be a faculty of analysis, of understanding, the other of intuition—a power by which one could 'see into the life of things'.[16]

In making this distinction between analytical reason and the grand and simple reason, Wordsworth was not necessarily despising the scientist's logical analysis, but defining its limits. Consider for instance that dream allegory in the fifth book of *The Prelude* in which the poet expressed the desir-

ability of harmonising the two faculties in one's range of knowledge. In the allegory Wordsworth imagines himself to be seated in a rocky cave by the sea-side reading the adventures of Cervantes' Errant Knight. He closes the book, and muses 'on Poetry and geometric Truth, The knowledge that endures.' He falls asleep and dreams of an Arab riding towards him bearing two treasures in his hands, a stone and a shell. The poet enquires of him their significance. The Arab replies,

> the Stone,
> To give it in the language of the Dream,
> Was Euclid's Elements; 'and this', said he,
> 'This other', pointing to the Shell, 'this Book
> Is something of more worth'. (86-90)

When the poet applies the shell to his ear, he hears from it

> articulate sounds,
> A loud prophetic blast of harmony,
> An Ode, in passion utter'd, which foretold
> Destruction to the Children of the Earth,
> By deluge now at hand. (95-99)

In brief, the stone stands for analytical reason, and the shell stands for 'the grand and simple Reason' which Wordsworth sometimes equated with Imagination. The one (geometric truth) provided him with one of the 'purest' bonds of nature 'undisturbed by space or time',[17] and the other was a veritable 'joy', 'consolation', and 'hope' of his being. He explained their relationship and significance in the allegory,

> The one that held acquaintance with the stars,
> And wedded man to man by purest bond
> Of nature, undisturbed by space or time;
> Th' other that was a God, yea many Gods,
> Had voices more than all the winds, and was
> A joy, a consolation, and a hope. (104-9)

In this dream allegory, which De Quincey called 'the very

ne plus ultra of sublimity'[18], we have at least three pairs of symbols described in a sublime image:

1. First, there is the Desert, a vast expanse of wilderness, which is swept by the Sea, 'the fleeting waters of the drowning world'. 'The waters of the deep' gathering upon the wilderness are the primordial void and chaos over which the creative spirit broods, so that 'a glittering light' is diffused over the 'illimitable waste'.

2. Next, there is the Arab, half-Bedouin and half-Don Quixote, in whom the poet's personality is projected—a man with a mission to save the two treasures. There is a certain anxiety on his countenance, growing 'more disturb'd' by the sweeping chaos over human values.

3. Lastly, there are the two treasures themselves, the Stone standing for abstract thought, the 'purest bond of reason', and the Shell, an image of synthetic thought, at its highest, poetry with power to 'exhilarate the spirit' of man and raise 'the mortal structure to divine'. It is the very source of 'glory and hope, and solace to mankind'.[19]

It is the union of these two powers with which the poet is concerned, but naturally the latter expresses his greater concern. Being a poet he sees in it the way to the fulfilment of the purpose of his life. The processes of analytical reason, however, are fundamental to man, and make for the clarity of his thought in the total scheme of experience. The distinction between the two lies in as much as that one, being discursive, is concerned exclusively with quantities, qualities, and relations of particulars in time and space, while the other, not ignoring the value of the former, comprehends the unity that lies at the heart of things. We shall recall the image of the Shell in the fourth book of the *Excursion* where the poet introduced to us a 'curious child', who dwelt upon a tract of 'inland ground' and applied to his ear 'the convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell'. As he listened to its murmurings he felt a 'mysterious union' between his soul and 'its native sea'. The shell imparted

> Authentic tidings of invisible things;
> Of ebb and flow, and ever-during power;
> And central peace, subsisting at the heart
> Of endless agitation. (1133-47)

As Wordsworth reflected on the nature of 'the grand and simple reason' he saw that it is not only limited to the apprehension of unity and creativity in poetry, but is itself a counterpart of the divine *Nous* in man. 'In truth', it is but

> another name for absolute strength
> And clearest insight, amplitude of mind,
> And Reason in her most exalted mood.
> (*Prelude*, XIII. 167-70)

> a Power
> That is the very quality and shape
> And image of right reason...
> (*Prelude*, XII. 24-26)

It gives birth to 'no impatient or fallacious hopes'; it engenders 'no heat of passion or excessive zeal'; it 'provokes to no quick turns of self-applauding intellect'. On the contrary, it lifts 'the Being into magnanimity'.[20] It is a faculty of power rather than of knowledge. It is an image of the 'sovereign Intellect' which diffuses 'a soul divine' in all beings. Man is a 'paramount creature' because he participates in a deathless spirit, and can attain to truth 'in the steadiest mood of reason'.[21] Moreover, it is assigned to

> ...Reason and her pure
> Reflective acts to fix the moral law
> Deep in the conscience...
> (*Prelude*, 1850 text, III. 83-85)

'Gifts nobler are vouchsafed to all,' Wordsworth said, 'Reason ....Imagination, freedom in the will; Conscience to guide and check.' These gifts 'immutably survive' all changing opinions, and still more do the 'transcendent truths of the pure intellect' that are bound to 'reason's steadfast law'. Reason indeed leads man to his 'Being's infinite majesty'.[22] Out of its progress in himself the poet has drawn

> The feeling of life endless, the great thought
> By which we live, Infinity and God.
> (*Prelude*, XIII. 183-4)

By laying emphasis on 'right reason' Wordsworth was initiating a return to an earlier conception of Reason which was more comprehensive than the tradition of eighteenth-century rationalism. 'Right reason' was a recurring term in a long series of writers on ethics, theology, and law. As against discursive reason, it was viewed as that intuitive faculty by which the mind of man apprehended truth and moral order, and recognised the distinction between good and evil. It is defined by Hooker as 'the director of man's Will by discovering in action what is good. For the Laws of well-doing are the dictates of right Reason.' He says further,

> The general and perpetual voice of men is as the sentence of God himself...by force of the light of Reason, wherewith God illuminateth every one which cometh into the world, men being enabled to know truth from falsehood, and good from evil, do thereby learn in many things what the will of God is.[23]

Daniel Waterland, an eighteenth-century theologian, in his *Dissertation Upon the Argument a priori For Proving the Existence of a First Cause*[24] tells us of a continuous tradition, in which the term 'right reason' occurs, from St. Thomas Aquinas to his own day, including Albert Magnus, Scotus, Gregorius de Valentia, Vasquez, and a great many more who figure as authorities along with Culverwell, Bishop Barlow, Cudworth, and even Archbishop Tillotson who belongs to the school of rationalism together with Locke and Toland. As S. L. Bethell has argued, Tillotson and Locke in fact reproduce on the subject of reason and faith 'the traditional teaching of Anglican theologians, itself founded upon medieval scholasticism'.[25] Locke was certainly no obedient follower of the traditional theology, but, as Bethell points out, he was 'wary about faith and reason'. Locke asserts,

> *Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with the clear and self-evident Dictates of Reason, has a Right to be urged, or assented to, as a Matter of Faith, wherein Reason has nothing to do.*[26]

By Reason Locke means analytical reason, but he has earlier conceded that

> Whatever Proposition is revealed, of whose Truth our Mind, by its natural Faculties and Notions, cannot judge, that is purely *Matter of Faith*, and above Reason.[27]

Locke's position is not ambiguous. He believes that there may be truths above reason (rational faculty), but the validity of faith must be tested by it.

Tillotson takes the same stand:

> *Nothing ought to be received as a Revelation from God, which plainly contradicts the Principles of Natural Religion, or overthrows the certainty of them.*[28]

This proposes a rational test for Revelation, but in his treatise on *The Rule of Faith* (I, i) the possibility of truths above analytic reason is conceded.

> ...*Divine Faith*, which we are now speaking of, is an Assent to a Thing upon the Testimony or Authority of God; or, which is all one, an *Assent to a Truth upon Divine Revelation.*[29]

But it is Hooker who unequivocally declares that there are truths which may be beyond the reasoning faculty:

> Scripture indeed teacheth things above nature, things which our reason by itself could not reach unto.
>
> (Bk. III, ch. viii)

This is not to slight reason—a rational test is necessary here as well—but to reckon with that intuitive faculty in man which directly penetrates to truth. It was on this faculty of 'right reason' that the seventeenth-century divines took their stand. Their arguments may be summed up in the words of Edward Stillingfleet:

> Although...the *natural man* cannot *savingly apprehend the things of God*, yet there may be so much *rational evidence* going along with *Divine revelation*, that supposing *reason* to be *pure*, and not

> *corrupted* and *steeped* in *sense* as now it is, it would discover spiritual *evidence* to be the most *real* and *convincing* evidence.[30]

In other words,

1. Right reason does not contradict rational evidence, but transcends it.
2. Infinite truth cannot always be most clearly understood.
3. Reason, pure of sense, apprehends certain spiritual values.

It is evident, when we consider these arguments, that Wordsworth's stress on 'right reason' was a return to a more comprehensive concept of reason than is found in eighteenth-century rationalism. Right reason is a faculty of 'universal ideas'[31]: its attributes are 'clearest insight', 'absolute strength', 'amplitude of mind'. It is the basis of 'faith in life endless... eternity and God'.[32] Submission to it constitutes 'strength' and 'bliss'.[33] It is rooted deep in 'conscience'; it is the light of moral guidance.[34] It carries with it a promise of the soul's possible sublimity.

In attempting to give a philosophic account of right reason, Wordsworth was tacitly defining what Coleridge termed Reason or Practical Reason, as distinguished from Speculative Reason, and Understanding. Understanding is discursive, and concerns itself largely with the material world in relation to particulars in time and space. On the contrary, Coleridge said,

> Reason is the power of Universal and necessary Convictions, the Source and Substance of Truths above Sense, and having their evidence in themselves. Its presence is always marked by the *necessity* of the position affirmed: this necessity being *conditional*, when a truth of Reason is applied to Facts of Experience, or to the rules and maxims of the Understanding; but *absolute* when the subject matter is itself the growth or offspring of the Reason. Hence arises a distinction in the Reason itself, derived from the different mode of applying it, and from the object to which it is directed: accordingly as we consider one and the same gift, now as the ground of formal principles, and now as the origin of ideas. Contemplated distinctively in reference to *formal* (or abstract) truth, it is the *Speculative* reason; but in reference to *actual* (or moral) truth,

> as the fountain of ideas and the *light* of the conscience, we name it the *Practical* Reason. Whenever by self-subjection to this universal light, the will of the individual, the *particular* will, has become a will of reason, the man is regenerate: and reason is then the *spirit* of the regenerated man, whereby the person is capable of a quickening inter-communion with the Divine Spirit.[35]

Coleridge thus saw a distinction in the Reason itself, derived from the different modes of its application. As a ground of formal principles it is Speculative (or Theoretic) Reason; as the origin of ideas in reference to actual (or moral) truth it is Practical Reason which alone is absolute. Dropping out Speculative Reason from the discussion, we find Coleridge sharply distinguishing Understanding and 'right reason'. He made a list of their categoric differences:

Understanding	*Reason*
1. Understanding is discursive.	1. Reason is fixed.
2. The Understanding in all its judgements refers to some other Faculty as its ultimate Authority.	2. The Reason in all its decisions appeals to itself, as the ground and *substance* of their truth. (*Hebrews*, VI. 13).
3. Understanding is the Faculty of *Reflection*.	3. Reason of Contemplation. Reason indeed is much nearer to SENSE than to Understanding: for Reason (says our great Hooker) is a direct aspect of Truth, an inward Beholding, having a similar relation to the Intelligible or Spiritual, as SENSE has to the Material or Phenomenal.[36]

Coleridge's discussion of Understanding and 'right reason' points, incidentally, to a relationship between sense and reason. When we return to Wordsworth, we find in him a fundamental tension concerning the value of the senses and the trust to be placed upon them. He was aware not only

of the dominating power but also of the domineering power of the senses. In one of the passages of *The Prelude* he said,

> Something there was about me that perplex'd
> Th' authentic sight of reason, press'd too closely
> On that religious dignity of mind,
> That is the very faculty of truth;
>
> (IV. 295-8)

The tyranny of the senses reduces man, 'a creature great and good', to a 'senseless Idol',[37] but he also knew of their power to lead the mind directly into the 'Intelligible or Spiritual' intuition of Truth. He referred to this power as 'Divine indeed of Sense A blessed influence',[38] and no one paid a more eloquent tribute to them than he by calling them our 'most godlike faculties'.[39] On several occasions he felt the light of sense going out but with a flash that revealed the invisible world. He found it difficult to give a clear account of his feelings accompanying these occasions, because it was an experience that defied exact definition. All that he could say was that the soul,

> Remembering how she felt, but what she felt
> Remembering not, retains an obscure sense
> Of possible sublimity;
>
> (*Prelude*, II. 334-7)

The language of antithesis or paradox becomes almost inevitable when it is confronted with deep feelings which have a tendency to combine with an 'obscure sense' of ideas that do not precisely fall into our groups of distinct and clear notions. As Coleridge remarked, the 'intellect' is habituated to 'clear, distinct, and adequate conceptions concerning all things that are the possible objects of clear conception' but 'deep feelings' belong to those 'obscure ideas that are necessary to the moral perfection of the human being'—they are reserved for objects 'which their very sublimity renders indefinite'. Such obscure ideas are 'the ideas of being, form, life, the reason, the law of conscience, freedom, immortality, God'.[40] In the course of his lectures on Shakespeare in 1818, Coleridge contrasted the Greeks' idolization of the finite

with the moderns' reverence for the infinite, so that while the former were 'the masters of all grace, elegance, proportion,...of whatever, in short, is capable of being definitely conveyed by defined forms or thoughts', the latter had to 'affect the indefinite as a vehicle of the infinite':

> hence their passions, their obscure hopes and fears, their wandering through the unknown, their grander moral feelings, their more august conception of man as man, their future rather than their past—in a word, their sublimity.[41]

The obvious reference here is to Wordsworth, his 'obscure sense of possible sublimity', and his 'dim and undetermin'd sense of unknown modes of being'.[42] A more direct reference was made by Coleridge in his *Miscellanies, Aesthetic and Literary*, where in contrast with the Greek sense of completion and symmetry he mentioned the characteristics of 'the Northman's mind':

> ...the dark, wild imagery of Nature which surrounded him, and the freedom of his life, gave his mind a tendency to the infinite, so that he found rest in that which presented no end, and derived satisfaction from that which was so indistinct.[43]

The 'indistinct' had a powerful grip on Wordsworth's mind:

> ...in my thoughts
> There was a darkness, call it solitude,
> Or blank desertion, no familiar shapes
> Of hourly objects, images of trees,
> Of sea or sky, no colours of green fields;
> But huge and mighty Forms that do not live
> Like living men mov'd slowly through the mind...
> (*Prelude*, I. 420-6)

It is by the movement of 'mighty Forms' in the mind that, Wordsworth says, 'a grandeur in the beatings of the heart' is recognised.[44] On another occasion he told us how in such an experience the veil of the senses is put off by the soul: the soul then stands 'naked as in the presence of her God'. The

experience presses in man 'inward hopes' and 'swellings of the spirit'. The power of the mind prevails over sense, and the person has 'glimmering views',

> How Life pervades the undecaying mind,
> How the immortal Soul with God-like power
> Informs, creates, and thaws the deepest sleep
> That time can lay upon her.
>
> (*Prelude*, IV. 140-58)

We may consider here a passage in which Wordsworth recalls his crossing of the Alps: the 'awful Power' of Imagination, which he had identified at its highest with 'Reason in her most exalted mood', rises from 'mind's abyss' and like an 'unfather'd vapour' enwraps him. He is 'lost as in a cloud',

> And now recovering, to my Soul I say
> I recognise the glory; in such strength
> Of usurpation, in such visitings
> Of awful promise, when the light of sense
> Goes out in flashes that have shewn to us
> The invisible world, doth Greatness make abode,
> There harbours whether we be young or old.
> Our destiny, our nature, and our home
> Is with infinitude, and only there;
> With hope it is, hope that can never die,
> Effort, and expectation, and desire,
> And something evermore about to be.
> The mind beneath such banners militant
> Thinks not of spoils or trophies, nor of aught
> That may attest its prowess, blest in thoughts
> That are their own perfection and reward,
> Strong in itself, and in the access of joy
> Which hides it like overflowing Nile.
>
> (*Prelude*, VI. 525ff.)

The passage records an experience that is described in the language of contradictions and obscurity; nevertheless, the poet is sure of its power to exalt the human soul. It is picked out for special praise by D. G. James and Miss Darbishire. 'Indefinite expansion of the soul', observes D. G. James,

'goes along with a sense of its infinitesimal smallness.'[45] In a series of paradoxes the ceaseless aspiration of the soul is expressed. The 'unfather'd vapour' transmits 'glory'. The 'light of sense' dissolves into 'flashes' that reveal the 'invisible world'. In 'usurpation', 'strength' is felt. In 'visitings of awful promise', 'greatness' makes abode. The 'finite' seeks the 'infinitude'. The mind advances under 'militant banners', but thinks not of 'spoils or trophies'. The tremendous aspiration of the soul is stilled in peace that passeth understanding. The experience shows the following results:

1. First of all, it intensifies the poet's sense of cosmic consciousness. The soul, conscious of her power, is admitted into the life and order of the universe.

2. Secondly, there is a dawning of Reason, which seeks for the poet an opening into eternity. 'Our destiny, our nature, our home Is with infinitude.'

3. Thirdly, it results in a feeling of moral exaltation and elation which is as important as, or even more important than, the enhanced intellectual enlightenment.

4. Lastly, there is an apprehension of 'life-eternal' in the experience: the soul feels herself strong in beatitude which is the very condition of the 'possible sublimity'. In the last book of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth told us that the 'higher minds' that 'hold communion with the invisible world' 'are truly from the Deity', 'and hence the highest bliss That can be known is theirs', which includes 'sovereignty within and peace at will' and 'truth in moral judgements'.

These are high claims made for Reason, and they lead us to another aspect of the subject: the relationship between Reason and Will and Faith. J. W. Beach has defended Wordsworth against the new humanists who argue that the poet was writing in the tradition of eighteenth-century rationalism.[46] But Beach's conclusion that Wordsworth's concept of right reason was exclusively the 'intuitive moral reason' of writers like 'Grotius, Henry More, Richard Cumberland, Samuel Clarke, John Toland, William Wollstan, Lord Bolingbroke, and others' needs both amplification and qualification. Beach evades the discussion of Will and Faith in relation to Reason.[47] Though he mentions St. Thomas Aquinas and Richard Hooker, his argument inclines towards eighteenth-century

theologians. Further, by ignoring the question of Faith and its relationship with Reason, Beach falls back indirectly on Aristotle's 'right principle or right rule', and Cicero's 'true law'. In Anglican theology the issue is not only an abstract inquiry, but is linked up also with an examination of the status of Faith. Hooker's words may be recalled here, 'Scripture indeed teacheth things above nature, things which our reason by itself could not reach unto.' What is implied is the support of Faith that reason seeks. Hooker is probably referring here to analytical reason, but he has already made it clear that 'the light of Reason' is a gift of God whereby man learns 'in many things what the will of God is'.

Wordsworth, too, says the same thing. Reason is not absolute:

> Reason, best reason, is to imperfect man
> An effort only, and a noble aim;
> A crown, an attribute of sovereign power,
> Still to be courted, never to be won.
>
> (*Excursion*, V. 501-4)

Again, the poet said, there are truths

> Which unassisted reason's utmost power
> Is too infirm to reach.
>
> (*Excursion*, V. 520-2)

Wordsworth therefore associated Reason with Faith, for the 'gulf of mystery' can be crossed thereby.

> Imaginative Faith! canst overleap,
> In progress toward the fount of Love...
>
> (*Itinerary Poems*, XIV)

In fact, Reason does not contradict Faith; it is the eye of Faith. It gives us the foreknowledge of Faith,

> That life is love and immortality,
> The being one, and one the element...
> This is the genuine course, the aim, and end
> Of prescient reason;
>
> (*Excursion*, V. 1002-10)

As Coleridge said,

> Faith subsists in the *synthesis* of the Reason and the Individual Will. By virtue of the latter, therefore,...it must be exerted in each and all of his constituents or incidents, faculties and tendencies;—it must be a total, not a partial—a continuous, not a desultory or occasional—energy. And by virtue of the former, that is, Reason, Faith must be a Light, a form of knowing, a beholding of Truth.[48]

There is then no contrariety between Faith and Reason—Reason distinguished from the 'inferior Faculty'—for, these are the words for the Solitary:

> Access for you
> Is yet preserved to principles of truth,
> Which the imaginative Will upholds
> In seats of wisdom, not to be approached
> By the inferior Faculty that moulds,
> With her minute and speculative pains,
> Opinion, ever changing!
>
> (*Excursion*, IV. 1126-32)

And it is with this conviction in Reason that Wordsworth ended the record of the growth of his mind: 'sanctified By reason and by truth', poetry speaks 'a lasting inspiration' to the mind of man which

> is itself
> Of substance and of fabric more divine.
>
> (*Prelude*, XIII. 444-52)

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10. *Excursion*, IV. Argument (1814 edition).
11. *Prelude*, XI. 58-60.
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13. *Prelude*, X. 884-97.
14. *To My Sister*, 26.
15. *Tables Turned*, 26-28.
16. *Tintern Abbey*, 49. W. M. Merchant describes the faculty of 'Reason' as a subtle combination of 'understanding and insight'; *see* 'Wordworth and the Doctrine of Nature', *Die Neueren Sprachen*, Heft 4/5, 1953, Frankfurt am Main and Bonn, p. 193.
17. Also see *Prelude*, VI. 150-9. The poet regarded 'geometric truth' as a 'paramount endowment' of the mind:

    > An image not unworthy of the one
    > Surpassing Life, which out of space and time,
    > Nor touched by welterings of passion, is
    > And hath the name of God.

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48. 'Essay on Faith', *Aids to Reflection*, p. 349.

THE MOON IN COLERIDGE'S POETRY

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'In looking at objects of Nature, while I am thinking, as at yonder moon dim-glimmering through the dewy window-pane, I seem rather to be seeking, as it were *asking*, a symbolical language for something within me that already and for ever exists, than observing anything new.'[1] These words of Coleridge point to an implied meaning in the words and images which are abundant in his poems. They are symbols. The relation of the thing symbolised to the symbol is spoken of by Coleridge as *translucence*. The symbol 'partakes of the reality which it renders intelligible.'[2] It is organically related to a deeper significance since it is inseparable from the subconscious or unconscious processes of the creative imagination. Even the word translucence transmits light as the moon does; and the symbol transmits the feeling, emotion or idea that is within. But this is a light that flashes on the imagination of the artist. As Coleridge observed, the aesthetic experience gives us 'implicit knowledge—a silent communion of the spirit with the spirit in Nature, not without consciousness, though with the consciousness not successively unfolded.'[3] The discursive or analytical steps are not felt in the original intuition; and when we seek the meaning of certain symbols used by a poet, we should not forget that the poet need not necessarily be conscious of the meaning we read into them. But a passage or a poem sometimes becomes significant by virtue of our correct or adequate understanding of the symbol. Then what should we do? Speaking of Sir Thomas Browne, we find Coleridge remarking: 'So completely does he see everything in a light of his own, reading nature neither by sun, moon, nor candle light, but by the light of the faery glory around his own head.' These words, as Lowes noted, could be applied to Coleridge himself more appropriately. It is the peculiar nature or quality of Coleridge's imagination that should help us in our quest.

Coleridge gave us a valuable account of this process. We

learn that imagination works in such a way that the images of a really good poet are an integral aspect of his creative mood. Imagination is 'that reconciling and mediatory power, which incorporating the reason in images of the sense, and organising (as it were) the flux of the sense by the permanence and self-circling energies of the reason, gives birth to a system of symbols, harmonious in themselves and consubstantial with the truths of which they are conductors.'[4] Sensation and reason govern the image and imagination brings these together offering us a system of symbols. But the symbol is not an independent existent, though it is harmonious. It is the medium through which a truth is revealed.

But what are we to say of a symbol that appears in different context with apparently varied meanings or implications? There must be some broad agreement in this diversity. And the diversity owes its origin to the varied moments of experience in the life of the poet. Coleridge observes: 'Never to see or describe any interesting appearance in nature without connecting it, by dim analogies, with the moral world proves faintness of impression.... A poet's heart and intellect should be combined, intimately combined with the great appearances of nature, and not merely held in solution and loose mixture with them in the shape of formal similes.'[5] The appearances in Nature have to be integrated to the inner moral world. The different situations in which we find our moral life placed, and the varied stages in the growth of our moral life, present a variety of implications. Since these derive their being from the same self, one is justified in assuming an interrelationship amongst these significances. One such object of nature is the moon.

Coleridge's poems reveal plenty of references to the moon. His most popular poems display the symbolism and imagery of the moon most effectively. Music and moonshine go together 'on the balmy summer-night'.[6] After the waning moon in *Kubla Khan* we have the full moon in the 'damsel with a dulcimer'. Music is the most fundamental creative art and Coleridge felt that he could compose poems happily when the spell of music was on him. 'With music loud and long', he would render imaginatively the pleasure-dome. In

another passage we hear that

> the cadence dies away
> On the quiet moonlight sea.[7]

Music, moonlight and joy are indispensable for a successful activity of the creative imagination. It is quite likely that these terms are synonymous. In such an atmosphere the moon enables the poet to transcend the limitations of time and space. It might be truer to say that the poet comes to know the true nature of time and space in moonlight. Time and space are unmeaning 'as moonlight on the dial of the day'. Human time, however, by chance turns its face moonward and 'gazes the orb with moon-like countenance'.[8] The moon is symbolic of the unearthly. Alice, we find, is

> As spotless fair, as airy light
> As that moonshiny doe.[9]

When it is taken by itself, moonshine implies no sympathy on the part of the poet. The conclusion to the *Aids to Reflection* tells us that moonlight describes the natural mystic who lives within a religious framework. He illumines the scene and also interprets it to others.[10] But moonshine seems to have no reference to a religious framework; and this explains the absence of sympathy. And there is sympathy because of the religious symbolism implicit in the moon. Thus an 'unearthly white' appears

> When thro' broken clouds at night's high noon
> Peeps in fair fragments forth the full-orb'd harvest-moon.[11]

Harvest and beauty are brought together to transform the entire scene. In the *Songs of the Pixies* we find the moon fading to 'shadowy-pale' and scudding 'the cloud before the gale' when they would sip the fragrant dews or sport amid the gleams.[12] The ladies are to participate in the festivity. As he sleeps, the pixies are there round 'the spirit of the Western Gale'. Into this atmosphere the poet admits *sadness* and the 'Mother of wildly working dreams'. The storm steps in and

the pixies take us to an enchanted world of the *pensive beam:*

> the pale moon sheds a softer day
> Mellowing the woods beneath its pensive beam.[13]

The pale moon is charged with a pensive beam probably to show that the imaginative activity brings about a synthesis of deep feeling and high thinking.

Imagination and fancy give him a series of visionary experiences 'till chill and damp the moonless Night descend.'[14] This moonless tempestuous night appears later in *Dejection: An Ode,* and here he watches the fading sun. A moonless night is bound to be tempestuous since we are told that the earth is the 'guardian and friend of the moon'.[15] And the winds bind the earth and sky together 'beneath the moon, in gentle weather'.[16] The moon is a unifying, shaping spirit.

> There are wilder fancies which the moon
> Breeds in the love-sick maid who gazes at it,
> Till lost in inward vision.[17]

Love and the moon give rise to fancies, and the moon carries the individual to an introspective or meditative state. Out of this contemplation emerges the inspired mood, the mood favourable for creation. 'Like a man beloved of God', he winds his 'moonlight way over flowering weeds', inspired by each shape and sound.[18] This wildness only reveals that the moon can induce the heavenly imagination and also the wild-working fancy.[19] The latter may lead one to insanity. This ambivalent attitude is not unusual in Coleridge. As a result we come across apparent contradictions in his poetry. The visionary and the moon go together. He describes his son Hartley: 'An utter visionary! like the Moon among thin clouds, he moves in a circle of light of his own making —he alone, in a Light of his own.'[20] Though the sun is a symbol of freedom and of divinity as in 'the glorious sun uprist', the moon has strong associations with music, with the nightingale and the Aeolian Harp. 'Fancies holy' and inspiration emanate from the moon.[21] A note-book entry on Good Friday, 1802, reads:' 'A Great Man making a circle

like the Moon in a white cloud.'[22] The creativity of a living being is revealed through the moon-symbolism here.

Another phase of this symbolism refers to the idea of paradise. Suggesting the origin of evil as the subject for a poem, Lamb proceeds to remark, 'Or the description of an utopia in one of the planets (the Moon, for instance).'[23] Coleridge's favourite author Burnet mentions the 'notion or opinion amongst the ancients concerning paradise, that it was seated as high as the sphere of the moon.'[24] Burnet also refers to Paradise 'in the moon, or in Jupiter, or hung above like a cloud or a meteor.'[25] And in the Gutch Notebook, Coleridge records, after reading Darwin, 'Moon at present uninhabited owing to its little or no atmosphere but may in time—An atheistic Romance might be formed—a Theistic one too—Mem!' Here we have an authentic verdict in favour of the ideas of the creative imagination and paradise being closely linked to the moon-symbolism. Even in *Dejection* we read:

> This light, this glory, this fair luminous mist,
> This beautiful and beauty-making power.[26]

These lines take us to the *joy* that would make the creative imagination dynamic. The fair luminous mist may not refer to the moon in the poem; but luminosity at least suggests the moon. If this is accepted, then the moon becomes synonymous with the joy of the creative imagination.

The nightingale is hid within the 'mild moon-mellowed foliage.'[27] The moon becomes passive; and when we read—

> Infinite Love,
> Whose latence is the plenitude of All,
> Thou with retracted beams, and self-eclipse
> Veiling, revealest thine eternal Sun,[28]

we find that the moon stands for passive love. The veiling self-eclipse reveals the Sun. But the nightingale, the 'Minstrel of the Moon', is the symbol of the creative arts. She is the 'sister of love-lorn Poets'. The storm of creativity is relieved by the consummation of love; and so love should replace the moon since 'Peace with Sara came.'[29] It is surprising to find love as a substitute for the moon. There may

be the subconscious awareness of the grouping of the poet with the lover and the lunatic in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Only on such an assumption can we account for the 'moon-blasted madness'.[30]

There is a moon-beam of the soul, and he speaks of the spirit dressed in moon-beams.[31] The lover rolls his voice along the breeze; and with his imagination of the beloved, he will illume it as a moonbeam. The 'forms of delight' might fleet because of the tempest but the spirit of love dressed in moonbeams would remain. We also learn that the poet in the clouds needs the impact of moonlight:

> O! It is pleasant, with a heart at ease,
> Just after sunset, or by moonlight skies,
> To make the shifting clouds be what you please.[32]

The *gentle look* is to revisit his sad heart as *the lunar beam* fal s on the closing flowers.[33] The evening moon symbolises joy and sorrow; and the lunar beam is charged with love, though this love moves from glimmering hope to 'a darkling vale of tears'. The moon at least has that peace which is denied to love. Thus we learn that fancy makes many things, but they are all 'as mute as the moonlight that sleeps on the steady vanes.'[34] Elsewhere Coleridge speaks of 'flashing fancy's beam'.[35] Fancy and imagination, the spirits of love, meet his 'lonely path in moon-beams clad'.[36] Through the breeze and the moonlight he is enabled to image his absent love. 'But Poesy demands the impassioned theme'[37] which probably the moon alone can offer.

In some passages moon and love do not appear to be opposed to one another. The city may be

> Silent as the Moon
> That steeps in quiet light the steady vanes
> Of her huge temples.[38]

But the margin is 'dear to moonlight elves'.[39] 'The lunar beam sailed slowly over Tamaha's stream'; this moonbeam played bright as a rock, and it shone half-sheltered. It was 'true to love but false to rest.'[40] The moonshine steals over

the scene and gets itself 'blended with the lights of eve.'[41] This is blending love with poetry.

There is 'the vast moon-glittering bulk' of the serpent.[42] Coleridge compared the movement of poetry to 'the motion of a serpent, which the Egyptians made the emblem of intellectual power.'[43] Shakespeare's versification is similar to 'the sinuous and ever-varied lapses of a serpent, writhing in every direction, but still progressive, and in every posture beautiful.'[44] He portrays the serpentine orbit of the moon. The creative Logos is 'a bodiless Substance, an unborrowed Self-God in God immanent, the eternal Word, That goes forth yet remains, Crescent, and Full, and Wane, yet ever entire and one.'[45] The moon thus brings in its wake the serpent which in its turn becomes the emblem of poetry. Because of these rich associations, the secondary imagination and moonlight are almost fused into one in Coleridge's writing. The serpent is the secondary imagination with its 'moon-glittering bulk'. We have the glittering eyes of the Mariner and of Geraldine. There are the 'flashing eyes' of the creator of the dome; and there are also the fair eyes of the child that 'glitter in the yellow moon-beam.'[46] Through the moon the creative art is linked to the serpent, the child and the eyes.

Wordsworth's imagination which had its sway over others becomes the moon when we read that the tranquil sea is 'outspread and bright, yet swelling to the moon'.[47] A fine poem with the moon symbolism is *Frost at Midnight* in which Coleridge speaks of silence in moonlight. The secret ministry of frost hangs up the eave-drops 'in silent icicles, quietly shining to the quiet moon.'[48] The poem has an atmosphere of quiet and it is one of the finest domestic pieces, quietly wrote. The quiet moon carries something of the peace the poet felt at least once in his life.

Such an image is not very frequent in Coleridge. The moon is somehow associated with the clouds, winds, storm and the like. The various phases of the moon in different seasons and situations evoke varied emotions. The gust of autumn 'breaks the busy moonlight clouds' and then tranquillity raises the thought and attunes the heart.

'Light as the busy clouds, calm as the gliding moon'.[49] This is a tranquillity expressive of 'a mood of moral insight'.

The gliding moon with its calmness evokes a mood directed towards the consideration of morality.

Under the moonlight the earth gets charged with the spirit of divinity; and the universe appears as described by Berkeley. The ice-falls, the motionless torrents, the silent cataracts, become 'glorious as the gates of Heaven beneath the keen full moon'.[50] The word *glorious* is associated with the uprising of the sun 'like God's own head',[51] and here we have 'the gates of Heaven'. Not only the sun but the moon too is linked with paradise as we have noticed earlier. In one of his early poems we read:

> Where 'sleeps the moonlight' on yon verdant bed—
> O humbly press that consecrated ground.[52]

The rejected lover finds himself at home in the moonlight. But he could say, 'The Moon, how definite its orb!' And he finds, as he gazes at it, that

> It is suffused o'er all the sapphire Heaven,
> Trees, herbage, snake-like stream, unwrinkled Lake,
> Whose very murmur does of it partake![53]

The moon is all-pervasive and appears as the immanent spirit in the universe. The significance of such a spirit cannot be adequately explained. Even in the early sonnet addressed to the *Autumnal Moon*, the moon is associated with hope and despair. The 'mild splendour' is the 'mother of wildly-working visions', the spring of the formless creativity as such. The 'watery light', the 'weak eye', of the 'placid' moon is changeful, fair, and dim; and yet the moon sails like a meteor 'over the sorrow-clouded breast of care'. The darker significance of this sonnet has to be read with the lines:

> The moon's mild radiant edge I saw
> Peeping a black-arched cloud below
> Nor yet its faint and paly beam
> Could tinge its skirt with yellow gleam.[54]

The faint and pale beam and the black-arched cloud are

enough to take us away from the lunar paradise to an inferno released by love. Sun, moon, and darkness are associated with the grave and with bad luck in *The Three Graves*.[55] The unkind *Lewti* has a moon, 'the moonlight gleam and the shadow of a star'.[56] 'A cloud of palest hue' passes onward to the moon and becomes 'wholly bright, with a rich and amber light'.[57] Likewise, 'A cloud of whitest hue' passes onward to the moon growing brighter and brighter 'with floating colours not a few'.[58] It is 'as white as my poor cheek will be' when he is dying for love of Lewti.[59] Elsewhere we read, 'sad gleams the Moon through the cloudy veil'.[60] An eclipsed moon cannot but bring forth sadness. But if the observer is an aged mourner, he watches 'the waning moon and sorroweth not.'[61] A 'dim-seen' form descends

> like the dark and moving clouds
> That in the moonbeam change their shadowy shapes.[62]

The dark and the sinister step in when the moon and the cloud are together. But the full moon does not appear to have any malefic nature. Thus he writes:

> The new or full moon urges
> The high, large, long, unbreaking surges
> Of the Pacific main.[63]

The silent pleasures of the heart include the 'moon that meets the raptured eye.'[64] In the pantisocratic state

> dancing to the moonlight roundelay,
> The wizard passions weave a holy spell.[65]

When his ambitions, in the company of his imagination, migrate into the moonlight world, the passions become wizards and weave a holy spell similar to that we have in *Kubla Khan*. This is an ideal state in which Coleridge would realise the identity or at least the harmonious fusion of *natura naturata* with *natura naturans*.

The moon is associated with the sea, boat and cave. The sea and the cave appear in *Kubla Khan*, and the sea and

the boat are familiar in the *Ancient Mariner*. In another poem we read:

> From the far shores of the bleat-resounding island
> Oft by the moonlight a little boat came floating,
> Came to the sea-cave. . . .[66]

The moonlight brings the boat to the cave. Read in the context of the passage employing these symbols, moonlight might refer to inspiration, divine grace, charity and the like. Thus in the lines—

> E'en when a fatal cloud o'erspread
> The moonlight splendour of his sway,
> Yet still the light remain'd, and shed
> Mild radiance on the traveller's way,[67]

we have a similar idea operating in the use of the moonlight. In spite of the fatal cloud of birth and sorrow, the mild radiance does direct the sojourner on this planet. 'The moon-shine sinks down as in slumber' so that the son of the rock 'may be born in a holy twilight.'[68] This again takes us to the idea of the holy; and it can be compared with the sleep of the mariner following his redemption under the sway of the 'moving moon'. There is a more fruitful passage in this connection and it helps us restore an earlier significance. Alice has all that is needed to make her perfect save one; this 'lonely child' needs only 'the crescent sheen' when she will appear as 'a quivered Dian'.[69] Here it may be mentioned that Jacob Bryant's *Analysis of Ancient Mythology*, 1774, carried an engraving showing Noah's Ark as a crescent moon placed on the waters; and Coleridge knew this work very well. Alice is *lovely*, again an ethically and spiritually charged word. The crescent will transmute her into a Diana, a synonym of the moon. This Diana was the Noah's Ark that redeemed the living species during the deluge. It is not then surprising to find Coleridge attributing the processes of purification and redemption to the symbol of the moon. In the life of the spirit a central rôle is played by the moon, and hence does it appear frequently in the poems of Coleridge.

Life's current runs 'sparkling to the moon' or steals 'beneath

the pensive Moon'.[70] The contrast between noon and the moon refers to that between domestic felicity and visionary life. He may be trying to substitute the former in the place of the latter. But the symbolist in him was trying to realize a harmony of the two. The peace of the noon and the creative joy of the moon are not easily reconcilable. This difficulty gradually led Coleridge to seek his destination in the moon, not merely 'beneath the pensive moon'. Such a seeking is a kind of voyage into the great sea. He speaks of a person setting

> sail by silent moonlight
> Up a great river, great as any sea,
> And ne'er was heard of more.[71]

Sailing by the silent moonlight has a central importance in the life of the Mariner; and sailing at times is symbolic of one's journey into imagination or immortality. Even the Albatross is associated with the moon:

> In mist or cloud, on mast or shroud,
> It perched for vespers nine;
> Whiles all the night, through fog-smoke white,
> Glimmered the white Moon-shine.[72]

The glimmering moon-shine is that of the primitive consciousness that vainly gropes after a religious faith or framework. The Albatross was seen in a non-religious setting and this may be the crime of the crew. But it forebodes the dark night of the soul. Accordingly, we read:

> Clomb above the eastern bar
> The horned Moon, with one bright star
> Within the nether tip.[73]

This is externalisation of the darkness in the soul. The 'star-dogged Moon' witnesses the curses of the shipmates and their death. There is detachment and mystery on the part of the moon.

Enos, son of Cain, is a 'Child of nature'. He is found picking fruits 'by moonlight in a wilderness'. We have here the

open moonlight and the moonlight shadows. 'The moonlight appeared for a moment like a dazzling portal.'[74] Evidently the moonlight stands for the revelation of the spirit in and through nature.

Coleridge recorded in his notebook: 'Socianianism moonlight—Methodism a stove! O for some sun to unite heat and Light!'[75] This Swedenborgian thought refers to a sun in the spiritual world from which emanate Heat and Light. The essence of heat is love and that of light is wisdom.[76] Speaking of his love for Sarah Hutchinson, Coleridge writes: 'If Love be the genial sun of human Nature, unkindly has he divided his rays in acting on me and Asra—on her poured all his Light and splendour, and permeated my Being with his invisible Rays of Heat alone.'[77] Heat thus becomes a fanatic, passionate life. He speaks of the 'moonshine heartless Head-work' of Unitarian sermons.[78] The sun and the moon refer to the heart and the head respectively. Interpolating his own passage, he writes in *The Piccolomini*,

> And sun and moon, too, in the sextile aspect,
> The soft light with the vehement—so I love it.
> Sol is the heart, Luna the head of heaven,
> Bold be the plan, fiery the execution.[79]

Moon is the head, the intellect, the symbol of wisdom. And the Platonic Coleridge could not forget that wisdom and virtue are not opposed to one another. Rather he sought to realise their identity.

We bless the wanderer of Night', the moon, who 'endears her renovated ray', mourns awhile in darkness, and 'relumes her lovely light.'[80] This word *lovely*, as explained by Coleridge in connection with his 'lovely lady Christabel', has an ethical significance. In the earlier poem the thought of joy brought forth the moon who is symbolic of the joy he found at the core of all creative imagination. The Mariner blessed the slimy creatures in the moonlight, he 'blessed them unawares.' It is in this blessing under the moonlight that the identity of virtue and wisdom is felt.

With serene and profound detachment nature mocks the Mariner. In his spirit-haunted universe the moon deepens

the mystery and 'he yearneth towards the journeying Moon':

> The moving Moon went up the sky,
> And no where did abide:
> Softly she was going up,
> And a star or two beside—
>
> Her beams bemocked the sultry main,
> Like April hoar-frost spread.[81]

'The blue sky', says the commentary, 'belongs to them, and is their appointed rest, and their native country and their own natural homes.' They 'enter unannounced' and 'there is a silent joy at their arrival.' The crime was precipitated by 'the bloody sun, at noon' when he appeared 'in a hot and copper sky, no bigger than the Moon'. Now 'by the light of the Moon he beholdeth God's creatures of the great calm.' The Mariner's redemption begins under the aegis of the silent, morning moon. Even the 'great bright eye' of the ocean, like the glittering eye of the Mariner, is cast up to the Moon.[82] When 'the moon was high, the dead men stood together', and 'their stony eyes' glittered in the Moon. The moonlight and the shadow of the moon lay on the bay.[83]

> The moonlight steeped in silentness
> The steady weathercock.[84]

The cock is a symbol for the sun. An intuitive harmony of the sun and the moon, of the heart and the head, is felt by the Mariner. This quiet moonlight may refer to the full moon. The entire universe is pictured as being under the spell of the sun and the moon. The moon in particular fascinated Coleridge largely because the moon and the stars reveal order and joy. The blessing under moonlight is the result of an awareness of the Mariner's organic unity with the universe. As we find in the sixth part, even the ocean is under the spell of the moon. It is a spiritual light which is all-inclusive.

This leads us to the relation between the two symbols—sun and moon. There is a certain ambivalence in the use of both these; and Coleridge, the Swedenborgian, has his

own mystic intuitions regarding the sun. In his poems, however, the sun stands both for benevolence and retribution. The moon is associated not only with the redemption of the Mariner, but with the death of the crew. The sailors are dead when the star-dogged moon looks on. According to Lowes, it is early morning when the moon rises in the *Ancient Mariner*.[85] If this is true, the sailors die under the waning moon and the crescent would bring the redemption. Such a symbolism is strengthened by a passage in *Zapolya:*

> The changeful planet, now in her decay,
> Dips down at midnight, to be seen no more.
> With her shall sink the enemies of Emerick,
> Cursed by the last look of the waning moon:
> And my bright destiny, with sharpened horns,
> Shall greet me fearless in the new-born crescent.[86]

The waning moon and the star-dogged moon seem to have closely related functions. In the case of the Mariner, we have enough evidence to argue that it is not the waning moon that brought the disaster. Coleridge himself records in a notebook: 'Here vexation, which in a sailor's mind is always linked on to Reproach and Anger, makes the superstitious seek out an object of his superstition that can feel his anger. Else the star, that dogged the Crescent or my "Cursed by the last Look of the waning moon" were the better.'[87] The star-dogged moon is symbolic of gloom, of death. The redemption shows a moon 'with a star or two beside'. The star between the horns may be said to have brought the disaster. On the *star-dogged Moon*, Coleridge's manuscript note reads: 'It is a common superstition among sailors, "that something evil is about to happen, whenever a star dogs the Moon".'

There is a different approach to the symbolism of the moon in three of Coleridge's great poems. This approach reveals the association of the moon with the preternatural or with something evil. The sun appears to the Mariner as being 'no bigger than the moon' in a hot and copper sky. But in *Christabel*,

> The moon is behind and at the full;
> And yet she looks both small and dull.[88]

The hidden moon is symbolic of the helplessness of Christabel when she chances to see Geraldine

> Drest in a silken robe of white,
> That shadowy in the moonlight shone.[89]

Even the old mastiff 'lay fast asleep, in moonshine cold'.[90]

> The moon shines dim in the open air,
> And not a moonbeam enters here.[91]

It was the same Christabel who knelt 'in the moonlight to make her gentle vows'.[92] The 'small and dull' moon is symbolic of the 'snake's small eye'—that 'blinks dull and sky', and this is the eye of Geraldine.[93] Here at least we find Coleridge deliberately employing symbolism. But the association of the snake, as we have seen earlier, complicates the problem.

The hidden moon brings 'a pause of silence'; and as she emerges, she awakens the earth and sky 'with one sensation'. There arises a 'choral minstrelsy'.[94] The distressed mood of the child is dispelled as it beholds the moon and laughs most silently.[95] But there is a waning moon emerging suddenly after the 'caverns measureless to man down to a sunless sea'. This waning moon carries an atmosphere of holiness and enchantment in *Kubla Khan*. Something like 'holy dread' arises as we read the lines—

> A savage place! as holy and enchanted
> As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
> By woman wailing for her demon-lover![96]

The cave and the moon are brought together. The waning moon and the wailing woman are contrasted with the caves of ice on the full-moon night and the damsel with a dulcimer. The waning moon has given place to the full moon; and then music emerges. As a consequence we have a spell, a paradise and the will to imaginative creation.

Redemption, creative activity, music, paradise, divine grace, wisdom, mysticism and the life of the spirit are some of the ideas associated with the moon. These ideas, spread

over the entire poetical work of Coleridge, have a family likeness and are therefore capable of being suggested or implied by the moon.

There is 'the New-moon winter-bright' in *Dejection*, with its phantom light. Echoing the old ballad, he says,

> I see the old Moon in her lap, foretelling
> The coming-on of rain and squally blast.[97]

The new moon has become the herald of a 'deadly storm'. The new and the old moons are brought together to agree with the co-existence of love and fear. This co-existence is one of the factors in the mood of dejection. The full moon takes us even beyond love to a visionary realm, the realm of joy. But here we have the

> . . . crescent Moon, as fixed as if it grew
> In its own cloudless, starless lake of blue.[98]

This is again reminiscent of Noah's Ark, and it is the last refuge of the poet who was actually caught in a deluge. But in an Asra poem he speaks of a dark warm night on the balmiest day of June as his best haunt. Earlier he sees her when the crescent moon was surrounded by few, large, and bright stars.[99] There lies his survival as the species at the time of the deluge must have felt.

This rich symbolism of the moon in the poetry of Coleridge cannot be fully comprehended because of the subtle nuances involved. The significances we try to unearth may not be adequate. In the last resort all we can do is only to recall some of the finest lines and live under their spell. The setting sun is 'more changeful than the moon'.[100] The Mariner, the caves of ice, Christabel, Geraldine and the poet in dejection are all associated with the moon. So is the nightingale

> Stirring the air with such a harmony,
> . . . . . .
> . . . . . on moonlight bushes,
> Whose dewy leaflets are but half-disclosed,
> You may perchance behold them on the twigs,

Their bright, bright eyes, their eyes both bright
and full,
Glistening, while many a glow-worm in the shade
Lights up her love-torch.[101]

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DRYDEN AND THE UNITIES

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In his *Clark Lectures for 1954-5*, Robert Graves ridiculed the modern craze of paying 'homage' to Dryden. After quoting Johnson's famous appraisal of Dryden's contribution to English poetry—'he found it brick, and he left it marble'—he cruelly added, 'native brick, imported marble'. He accused Dryden of betraying the 'poetic faith of his English predecessors' in deference to current French theory and denounced Dryden's age as an 'age of obsequiousness'.[1]

Such accusations have more readily been made against Dryden the playwright and critic. Under the influence of French critical theory, it has been said, Dryden denounced the old English dramatic tradition and, as if in reaction, helped his age to evolve new kinds of plays of its own (like the heroic play and the comedy of manners), which can be described as 'imported marble' with even greater justice than his poetry. In his criticism too, he is so heavily indebted to the French critics of the period that often he gives the impression of being to the French what a lawyer is to a legislator.[2]

It is the purpose of this paper to show that such an impression, however plausible, is basically incorrect. Whatever the impact of French critical rules and principles on Dryden's mind, he never allowed himself to be swept off his feet by them, nor, in critical matters, did his age ever become an 'age of obsequiousness'. In dramatic criticism at least—his poetry is beyond the scope of the present paper—Dryden did *not* betray the 'faith of his English predecessors'. What has given people this unfortunate impression is perhaps his usually respectful attitude to authority. He conducts his arguments not 'like pedants, with violence of words', but 'like gentlemen, with candour and civility'.[3] This polite manner has almost completely gone out of fashion in modern English criticism and what his contemporaries would have regarded as his distinction as a man of ideas has now become

a handicap. A simple example may illustrate this. When his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668, was attacked by some malicious persons, he modestly claimed that in this *Essay* he had laid down propositions which were not his, 'nor were ever pretended so to be, but derived from the authority of Aristotle and Horace and from the rules and examples of Ben Jonson and Corneille.'[4] Such a claim, however, need not be taken too seriously. The propositions laid down in the *Essay* may not be altogether original—though they in fact quite often are—but Dryden fathers them on Aristotle and others merely to score a point, to make the task of his enemies more difficult and to secure for his views the sanction of authority, both ancient and modern. In his actual task as a critic, he is not willing to brook interference even from Aristotle. His famous retort to Thomas Rymer, in his *Heads of an Answer to Rymer*, is illuminating in this connexion: 'It is not enough that Aristotle has said so, for Aristotle drew his models of tragedy from Sophocles and Euripides; and, if he had seen ours, might have changed his mind.' His respect for the French critics was much more doubtful. He found it impossible to accept them as his superiors and when at one stage he had to defend himself against criticism based on the 'example' of Corneille, he merely retorted: 'But for my part, I desire to be tried by the laws of my own country; for it seems unjust to me, that the French should prescribe here, till they have conquered.'[5] Those who accuse Dryden of slavishly following the French should be reminded that his most ambitious critical piece, *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, was written 'chiefly to vindicate the honour of our English writers, from the censure of those who unjustly prefer the French before them'[6]—to vindicate, more especially, the honour of Shakespeare 'who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul.'

The finest example of this vindication is to be found in Dryden's approach to the question of the unities. It is noteworthy that for Dryden the rule of the unities never became the rule of the thumb. That explains why, unlike the rigid neo-classicists, he demanded of playwrights only the observance of the unity of action. The other two unities —those of time and place—he regarded as of quite a minor

importance. The unity of action too ceased to be a mechanical formula in his hands and indeed became a really creative principle of drama. He accepted Corneille's view that in a play there ought to be 'one complete action which leaves the mind of the audience in a full repose'[7] but most refreshingly he found it best illustrated in Shakespearean drama. Shakespeare almost consistently breaks the traditional unity of action, yet his mixed plays achieve a superb emotional unity not so much by *leaving* 'the mind of the audience in a full repose' as by actively *creating* such a 'repose'. It has not often been noted that it is this emotional unity which for Dryden is the real unity of action. Such an interpretation of the unity of action inevitably leads Dryden not only to accept Shakespeare's tragi-comedy as a proper dramatic *genre* but also to regard it as England's most original contribution to world drama—'a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation.'[9] It is noteworthy that Dryden condemns the Restoration tragi-comedy as 'wholly Gothic'[10] and 'barbarous'—'a monster with two heads'.[11] He does it precisely because, unlike the tragi-comedy of Shakespeare, this latter tragi-comedy fails to achieve emotional unity. Dryden showed a real critical insight when he recognised the sharp difference between the Shakespearean and the Restoration tragi-comedy. His pole-star, it needs to be remembered, was throughout Shakespeare and the English tradition and not the current French theory which mechanically condemned tragi-comedy without entering into the fundamental critical questions raised by this *genre*.

Dryden's stand on the question of the unities of time and place is equally revealing. The prominence that these unities acquire in neo-classical dramatic criticism has often surprised and puzzled modern readers. At least one explanation of this prominence is to be found in their association with 'verisimilitude' which the seventeenth century had inherited as a dogma from the Renaissance. 'Dramatic imitation', it came to be believed during the Renaissance, produces in the spectator 'a fancy, or a voluntary *delusion* that he is bodily present at the place and time of the supposed action.'[12] The unities of time and place are an inevitable consequence of

such a theory. Once it is believed that the spectator is *bodily* present at the place and time of the supposed action, it becomes imperative to demand that the action of drama should not take more time than that required by its representation and the scene should remain the same throughout. From this rigid position emerged the view that drama can become a faithful imitation of nature only through the observance of the unities of time and place.

This conception of imitation had dominated European criticism for over a century when Dryden came on the scene. Critics have regretted that Dryden is not able to see through this absurd and mischievous conception. What they have forgotten is that Dryden did in fact see through it though he did it rather haltingly. Moreover, the position in the seventeenth century was not so simple as it seems today. It is interesting to find even Shakespeare subscribing to the view that the audience is *bodily* present at the place of the supposed action. The Chorus in *Henry V* tacitly assumes such belief:

> The King is set from London; and the scene
> Is now transported, gentles, to Southampton;
> *There is the playhouse now, there must you sit;*
> And then to France shall we convey you safe.
>
> (Italics mine)

Rymer's complaint that since the second Act of *Othello* was to be placed in Cyprus, the 'Audience must be there too: And yet our Bays had it never in his head to make any provision of Transport Ships for them'[13] could not have been perhaps altogether unintelligible to Shakespeare. Shakespeare had, it is true, made the necessary 'provision' to transport the audience through the magic of his poetry—something utterly beyond Rymer—but the two disagree only about the means, not the end, which is to dupe the audience into believing that they are actually present at the supposed place of action.

The credit of destroying this unfortunate conception of imitation in English dramatic criticism has often been given to Dr. Johnson. In his *Preface to Shakespeare*, Johnson claimed

that 'the unities of time and place were not essential to a just drama'[14] and that drama could imitate life without observing those unities as Shakespeare had so effectively proved. Drama is not life nor does it create any 'delusion' of life. 'It is false', Johnson declared, 'that any representation is mistaken for reality, that any dramatic fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.'[15] 'The truth is', he contended, 'that the spectators are in their senses and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players.'[16] After thus exposing the mischievous doctrine of verisimilitude, Johnson triumphantly concluded: 'Perhaps, what I have here, not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination.'[17]

Johnson's debt to Dryden has never been fully realised. The fault is largely Johnson's. Though he called Dryden 'the father of English criticism', he rarely indicated the extent of his personal obligation to Dryden. It is interesting, for instance, to see that in this famous exhortation to his contemporaries to 'recall the principles of the drama to a new examination', he is forgetting that Dryden had already done what he is now claiming to do.

Dryden, it is true, had not done it with such a beating of drums. For a long time, Dryden continued showing respect to the time-honoured notion of verisimilitude, it being an essential feature of his approach to all critical questions to show respect to orthodox views whenever he could and as long as he could. He is at his best, in Ker's words, 'when he has set himself to try the value of dogmatic rules and principles; cautious, respectful, seeming to comply with them, till the time comes for the stroke that ends the encounter.'[18] Though he never felt wholly comfortable with verisimilitude, the final stroke which ended this unfortunate notion and thus destroyed the theoretical basis of the unities came in 1694 when he had retired from the stage. A few months before his retirement, Laurence Echard, in his Preface to *Terence's Comedies*, 1694, had attacked plays which broke the unity of place and reduced the spectators to the absurd proposition of supposing themselves 'now in a Street, then in a Garden, by and by in a Chamber, immediately

in the fields, then in a Street again, and never move out of their place.' Dryden denounced this absurd emphasis on verisimilitude in the Dedication to his last play, *Love Triumphant*, 1694. It may be absurd, he said, for an audience to suppose themselves 'sometimes to be in a field, sometimes in a garden, and at other times in a chamber'. But there is the greater, 'the original absurdity for the audience to suppose themselves to be in any other place than in the very theatre in which they sit, which is neither chamber, nor garden, nor yet a public place of any business, but that of the representation.' Dryden told his contemporaries, what Johnson was to do more than half a century later, that there was no absurdity in allowing the theatre 'to represent first *Athens* and then *Sicily*, which was always known to be neither *Sicily* nor *Athens*, but a modern theatre'.[19] He thus showed that the question of the unities was to be considered, if at all, from a dramatic point of view rather than from that of any rigid naturalism.

In his *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* and its *Defence*, it must be admitted, Dryden is not able to break the unhappy association of the unities with verisimilitude and often gives a wrong scent to a modern reader. But in those two essays we have to read between the lines in order to get at Dryden's real argument. Nowhere in these essays does Dryden openly attack the unities and yet subtly and quietly he undermines the whole doctrine. In *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, he silently challenges the position that only by observing the unities of time and place can a play imitate nature. Of all poets, ancient and modern, Shakespeare was the one poet who 'needed not the spectacles of books to read Nature: he looked inwards, and found her there.' 'All the images of Nature were still present to him and he drew them, not laboriously, but luckily; when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too.'[20] And yet who cared less for the unities than Shakespeare? Dryden drew from this the inevitable inference that to imitate nature what one needs is not a mechanical 'contrivance of the plot'[21] but 'the variety and greatness of characters',[22] a 'more masculine fancy and greater spirit in the writing'[23] and, above all, 'the imitation of humour and passions', 'animated with the soul of Poesy'.[24] Thus

alone could a play become a 'just and lively image of human nature'.[25]

But this line of argument merely proved that the unities were not essential and that a genuine playwright could imitate nature without worrying about them. It had yet to be proved that they were not even desirable. Eugenius, Dryden's mouthpiece in the earlier part of *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, takes it on himself to prove this. He attacks the classical drama for being too thin to be a proper representation of nature. Condemning especially the Latin comedy, he says: 'the characters are indeed the imitation of Nature, but so narrow, as if they had imitated only an eye or an hand and did not dare to venture on the lines of a face, or the proportion of a body.'[26] These characters were, in fact, Jonsonian 'humours' rather than men and women. In spite of Lisideius' boast that 'by pursuing close one argument', a regular playwright gains leisure 'to represent the passions (which we have acknowledged to be the poet's work),'[27] within twenty-four hours, there is neither time for representing the passions, nor, in Neander's phrase, 'for maturity of design'.[28] A regular writer in fact quite often observes 'mechanical' unity at the cost of 'psychological' unity. Eugenius frankly accuses such writers of 'misrepresenting Nature'.[29] This misrepresentation, Eugenius suggests, is more likely in modern times than it was in those of the ancients who 'dealt not with that soft passion',[30] love. Love was the chief if not the only theme of contemporary comedy and tragedy and it was love which made a complete nonsense of the unities. To make two persons meet—who had presumably never met before—and to make them fall in love with each other with the consequent trials and tribulations was the grossest absurdity. And what about those 'thousand other concernments of lovers, as jealousies, complaints, contrivances, and the like, where not to open their minds at large to each other, were to be wanting to their own love, and to the expectation of the audience; who watch the movements of their minds, as much as the changes of their fortunes.'[31] Whether it was the comedy of manners or the heroic play, the repartee between lovers—those scenes of 'argumentation and discourse, on the result of which the doing or not doing some considerable action

should depend'[32]—was the essence of the play and to give it a 'likelihood of truth'[33] some time was to be allowed to pass. Eugenius in fact proved that whatever the effect of the unities on classical drama, their application to contemporary drama would be disastrous.

After Eugenius had exploded the myth that a play could be a faithful representation of Nature only if it observed the unities, Neander raised the more practical question that the observance of the unities was basically against the spirit of English drama. The 'quick turns and graces of the English stage'[34] could flourish only in the midst of sufficient 'variety and copiousness'[35] which too exact a play would not permit. The French themselves felt 'bound up and constrained' by the strictness of their rules, Neander said (citing Corneille as a witness), and if English playwrights were also to observe 'the Unities of Time and Place, and integrity of scenes', they would bring on themselves 'that dearth of plot and narrowness of imagination'[36] which were the chief weaknesses of French plays. Corneille himself had come to regard the unities as enemies of the 'beauties of the stage', Neander said, and it was lucky that it was quite easy to reject them in England where there was a powerful tradition of irregular plays.

Neander's real contribution to the discussion, however, is to be found in the new meaning that he puts in the definition of a play already given by Lisideius. According to Lisideius, a play ought to be 'A just and lively image of human nature representing its passions and humours, and the changes of fortune to which it is subject, for the delight and instruction of mankind.'[37] The advocates of the unities had, however, completely by-passed the two pregnant ideas in this definition—that the 'imitation' was to be not merely 'just' but also 'lively' and that it was to be an imitation not of 'changes of fortune' so much as of 'passions and humours'. 'For the lively imitation of nature being in the definition of a play', Neander says, quietly but significantly dropping 'just', those plays 'which best fulfil that law ought to be esteemed superior to the others.'[38] This superiority, Neander claims, is not to be gained through an observance of the unities which at best could be described as the 'mechanical' beauties of

a play. Such beauties, Neander concedes, may 'raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not: they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of Poesy, which is imitation of humour and passion.'[39] Neander is here raising a very fundamental question. He is suggesting that it is not 'action' which is the 'soul' of drama, both comic and tragic, but characterization. Once such a position is taken, unities as conceived by contemporary criticism become irrelevant. After having enunciated such a position, Neander naturally claims that any critic, however biased in favour of the French, will find English plays superior 'if he will either compare the humour of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays.'[40]

Neander broadens the conception of 'imitation' still further when he comes to discuss the importance of rhyme in the heroic play. The heroic play, he claims, 'is indeed the representation of Nature, but 'tis Nature wrought up to an higher pitch.'[41] The poet, he says in effect, neither is nor can be 'tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding probable.'[42] 'A play', he contends, 'to be like Nature, is to be set above it; as statues which are placed on high are made greater than life that they may descend to the sight in their just proportion.'[43] This conception of 'imitation' naturally makes Neander impatient with the notion of verisimilitude. Those who blindly insist on verisimilitude, says Neander, are the enemies of real drama. They destroy the creative freedom of the poet for they dismount him 'from his Pegasus'.[44]

It is not possible to say with any amount of accuracy whom Neander represents, whether Dryden himself or some imaginary character. But Neander was a real spiritual experience for Dryden. After having created him, he could not go back; he had to go forward. Hence in his very next essay, *Defence of an Essay of Dramatic Poesy*, 1668, Dryden makes a confession of his real faith in imagination. The unities, however much he might still talk about them, have ceased to have any terrors for him and he quietly claims that, ' 'tis neither impossible, nor improper, for one real place to represent two or more imaginary places', since 'the imagination of

the audience, aided by the words of the poet, and painted scenes, may suppose the stage to be sometimes one place, sometimes another; now a garden, or wood, and immediately a camp: which I appeal to every man's imagination, if it not be true.'[45] Here at last was the right 'appeal' and one's only regret is that it came so late.

It is a highly important fact that Dryden as a playwright —irrespective of his achievements in that field—consistently rejected the unities in the interest of a more lively and imaginative representation of life. His very first reference to the unities is significant. In his Dedication to *The Indian Emperor*, 1667, he apologised for the play being 'an irregular piece, if compared with many of Corneille's' and yet he claimed with some amount of pride that the play had 'more flame than art' in it. The same apparent respect for, and fundamental rejection of, the unities is seen in his Prologue to *Secret Love*, 1668. After claiming that he had brought the 'exactest rules' from the French and English theatres, especially the rules of the unities and the continuity of scenes, he affirmed the utter futility of these rules in the absence of real creative power:

> But while dead colours he with care did lay,
> He fears his wit, or plot, he did not weigh,
> Which are the living beauties of a play.

The Preface to *Secret Love* also expresses a similar attitude. The play was 'regular', he said, written 'according to the strictest of dramatic laws', but 'with all that symmetry of parts, it may want an air and spirit (which consists in the writing) to set it off.'

His *Tyrannic Love*, 1670, he claimed in the Preface, was a regular play, in which the scenes were 'everywhere unbroken, and the unities of place and time [were] more exactly kept' than ever before. This, however, gave the playwright little satisfaction since in this play regularity had gone a trifle too far—farther 'than perhaps is requisite in a tragedy.' The reader is somewhat puzzled as to why such a strict observance of the unities should have been more than what was requisite in a tragedy. Dryden explains this attitude in

his Preface to *All for Love*, 1678. In *All for Love*, on the one hand, Dryden claims that 'the Unities of Time, Place, and Action', are 'more exactly observed'—the action especially being 'so much one, that it is the only of the kind without episode, or underplot',[46]—on the other, Dryden is doubtful whether the English stage should imitate so closely the ancients, since 'though their models are regular, they are too little for English tragedy; which requires to be built in a larger compass.'[47] This 'larger compass', he implied, inevitably played havoc both with time and place.

After 1680, Dryden's attitude to 'the three mechanic rules of unity'[48] became even less respectful. In his Preface to *The Spanish Friar*, 1681, he mentioned that the play had 'evidently two actions', but instead of apologising for this wilful breach of regularity, he dismissed the whole question by telling his readers that in doing so he had satisfied his 'own humour, which was to tack two plays together: and to break a rule for the pleasure of variety'. In his Preface to *Don Sebastian*, 1690, also, the question is similarly dismissed. The English audience, he said, is 'given to variety, even to a debauchery of pleasure', and hence 'too regular a play' would be out of place in England. Lest rigid critics should object to this attitude, he declared that 'to gain a greater beauty, it is lawful for a poet to supersede a less.' He takes up a similar stand in his Preface to *Cleomenes*, 1690. There too he claims that 'it is better to trespass on a rule, than leave out a beauty.' When rules come to be treated as enemies of 'beauty', 'variety' and 'pleasure', they obviously forfeit their right to exist. But perhaps it was not fair to deny them this right merely by reference to popular taste; they were to be tested and exposed by theory. As we have seen, Dryden did this in his Dedication to *Love Triumphant*, 1694, where he finally disposed of verisimilitude, the theoretical basis of the unities.

Dryden's was the typical English attitude towards the doctrine of the unities. Rules should be followed, but only so long as it is convenient to do so and they should never be allowed to destroy the effectiveness of the play on the stage. There were critics in England, it is true, who would not tolerate any transgression of the rules, but they were

a small minority and their influence on contemporary drama is negligible. The playwrights of the period do have a nodding acquaintance with them, but their real concern is with the beaux and rakes of St. James' and Covent Garden, without whose patronage no rules of drama can help. The English audience had been fed on Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher and it could not be satisfied without plenty of action and variety. The playwrights, therefore, usually exhibited a dual attitude at one and the same time. They professed a formal allegiance to the rules in order to satisfy carping critics, but offered the audience what it wanted. The whole of the English dramatic tradition was opposed to a rigid application of rules, and more than any one else, as Addison said in the *Spectator*, No. 592, 'the inimitable Shakespeare is a stumbling-block to the whole tribe of these rigid critics.' The playwrights, therefore, either modified the rules in accordance with the English practice, or treated them as of quite minor importance. The three unities, 'the Weird Sisters of dramatic criticism', as Saintsbury picturesquely calls them in his *History of Criticism*, were not allowed by the Restoration playwrights and critics to develop into 'the vampires that sucked the blood out of nearly all European tragedy.'

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REX WARNER'S POLITICAL NOVELS: AN ALLEGORICAL CRUSADE AGAINST FASCISM

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Of all the contemporary English noveltists who have graduated to fame or recognition since the Pink Decade, perhaps none describes so straight and pure a literary line as Rex Warner. He has not only kept his ideological target in view, adjusting the sights accordingly, but has also followed his peculiar technique with the unsleeping devotion of an ascetic. This has necessarily limited the scope of his readership, for the method of fantasy and allegory, which characterises nearly all his work, demands from the reader 'the additional sixpence', to use the words of E. M. Forster; it subjects him to a kind of *doublethink*, if not *doublefeel*. No wonder, the fiction-addict who likes his stuff hot and true will have none of this cold mutton dressed up in fanciful trappings. He wouldn't pay the extra levy.

It may be objected, however, that some of the most popular classics in the English language such as *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *Gulliver's Travels*, not to speak of innumerable folk-tales are cast in the allegorical form, and thus an allegory *per se* is not an exclusive or élite form of art. On the contrary, by operating at the level of myth and fantasy—forces which throw into bold relief the creative and imaginative impulses of the people—such allegories become, in reality, the most universal and democratic expression of man's sense of cosmic mystery and bewilderment. This indeed is true of the allegories which embody archetypal mores or genes, which, as in the case of Bunyan, go down into old and deep religious roots, or as in the case of Swift, are built round the primeval animal *motif* (the success of *Animal Farm* being partly due to that). They work on the overt plane, and the symbolical meaning is seldom missed for the symbols here are already a part of the Collective Unconscious. Their

popularity is the popularity of song and myth, of fable and folklore. But the allegories of Mr. Warner do not have that universal or communal bedrock, for they invite readers not into an emotional and mystic partnership, but into a *camaraderie* of ideas, and ideas, as we know, are hardly the thing which would draw a crowd. In fact, where ideas are the sole *raison d'être* of a writer's work, as in the case of Mr. Warner, the novel is hardly the form suitable for expression. There is, however, a way in which his work may be said to acquire a sort of transferred universality. His appeal to the intelligentsia is at bottom a fight on behalf of the common man, in whose revolutionary potentialities, he has, unlike H. G. Wells[1] or Aldous Huxley[2], great faith. What made him, therefore, restrict the area of his appeal is probably the belief that battles are won and lost, not in the mills and the streets, but in the minds of thinking men and women. Thus, it is they who have to be won over to the humanist ideals; the working classes have an instinctive regard for the beauty and holiness of life, and can always be salvaged through the actions of an intelligent and organised leadership.

If he is not as popular as George Orwell or Arthur Koestler, who are also *ad hoc* novelists—his understanding of contemporary politics, particularly of totalitarianism, is no less acute and penetrating, while his poetic sensibility is far richer than either's—it is because he has refused to descend to the journalistic level. He has not compromised his art and his vision. For one thing, he has no need to shout, for he has no bad conscience of a 'heretic' or a 'renegade'. He has not many skeletons in his ideological cupboard. This does not mean that his views have remained static over the years, or his political antennae have become too feeble to register changes. No creative artist—and Mr. Warner is one of the finest writers in the English language today—could sustain himself without a dynamic world-view. Only, unlike most of his contemporaries, he has ripened without the dramatics of a *volte face*.

His first novel, *The Wild Goose Chase*, 1937, is in a way perhaps the most important work of Mr. Warner, not because it is in any sense a great book or even one of his best specimens, but because it is something of a political and literary mani-

festo. It contains within its amorphous frontiers nearly all the important ideas he has developed since then. His later work, though more pleasing and powerful, is nevertheless a variation on the same theme in the same style. This is not to say that he repeats himself. It is as if he scattered with a prodigal hand all his ideological seeds at a single throw, and has since been gathering the crop in separate harvests. For there is hardly any novelist of ideas in contemporary English fiction who has followed a studied political and literary attitude with as much vigilance and purity of design as Rex Warner. His severely classical temperament (and he is a well-known Latin and Greek scholar) has imposed a rigorous discipline on his writings. He thus moves within a given, defined framework, and though this robs his work of that rotundity and multitudinousness of life which we find in great fiction, it nevertheless gives a tone of finality to what he has chosen to do.

A novelist of ideas is primarily interested in the kinetic power of thought. His interest in characters and situations is only a recognition of the fact that ideas by themselves can achieve little. This is true of Mr. Warner's novels, for he is concerned essentially, not with the jostling crowds in the streets or with the three-decker families in the homes, but with the political forces and compulsions which seize peoples and nations, and blow them about. His subject is therefore not men but man, not the abstract or metaphysical man, but the sociological and chiefly the political man. This naturally gives his books a sectional, esoteric interest. As works of fiction, these thin and spare volumes are a light-weight affair, but as political studies, they are instinct with a consuming, ideological passion. What they lose in breadth and length, these explosive, one-dimensional books gain in depth and power.

This preoccupation with politics, as we know, was a leading intellectual passion in the 'thirties. It is not a part of this study to go into the reasons for the occurrence of that phenomenon, but suffice it to say here that the two ideological extremes, Communism and Fascism, exerted between themselves a centrifugal pressure on the generation that came of age in a period of acute economic distress. The spiritual centre, which in spite of several upheavals had some-

how held intact till then, now flew apart. Of the new, crusading, bourgeois young men in England who elected to chase the Communist siren on the one hand, and to destroy the hydra-headed Fascist monster on the other (the two were facets of the same problem at that time), Rex Warner was one. More than any other contemporary writer, he realised that the fight against Fascism was a fight against a dark, medieval, obscurantist tyranny, which was infinitely more dreadful, hideous and paralysing than any tyranny man had experienced before. Few understood as well the psychological side of this fatal fascination which Fascism exercised over the minds of volatile youth as he did.

What were the emotive compulsions behind this surrender? What were the logistics of this nightmare? He did not outline the case-history of a dictator as did Wells in *The Holy Terror*, but dramatised in a symbolical manner the 'mystic' pull which dictators exerted over their victim-votaries. A dictator emerges from the social and political chaos around him chiefly due to the force of his compelling vision and personality. The bewildered world has always been only too willing to take to its bosom any Messiah who promises to bring about the awaited millennium. The bemused peoples are, in fact, too eager to transfer their worries to the ordained or revealed leader, who sucks in, as if by magic, the entire complex of mass discontent, and becomes a national symbol of release and fulfilment. And since man has always been fascinated by the spectacle of power; has indeed not only submitted to but secretly desired the violent orgasm, dictatorship in some form or other has always thrived. Caesars and Napoleons, Hitlers and Mussolinis have not been slow to cash in on this fundamental weakness in man's psychological make-up. Minor charlatans and mountebanks can be seen everyday round the street-corner, but now and then, a country or a nation throws up a mountebank of colossal proportions, who is passionately convinced of his own appointed rôle in the destiny of man. Possessed by a demon, he sets into motion a *maelstrom* of emotions, whipping up mass hysteria to a blind pitch. Once launched on this uncontrollable path, the thing shoots out of the human orbit, and the people are driven deeper and deeper into the realms of fantasy till

stark disaster overtakes them, and the malignant curse or incubus is lifted from over their heads, but not before a terrible price has been paid for it. The Messiah now makes his inglorious exit from the stage of history. He is assassinated in the Capitol by his own friends; he is lodged in a mountain fastness where he languishes like a beast in a cage; he is stood against the wall and shot like a common criminal by the partisans of peace; or he commits suicide when doom closes in on him. Such is the pattern of a dictator's career. It is the political rake's progress.

But even more important than the dictator's career or his overwhelming influence over his people is the pernicious nature of the view of life he represents. Fascism, we are told by Mr. Warner, is a completely 'integrated' philosophy of life within its own phoney framework. It denied history and tradition; violated not only human institutions, but human nature as well. It had its own grim rituals and ceremonies, its own dark dogma and mystique, its own rigid hierarchies and the 'leader-principle'. The danger lay, not in its instruments of torture—the rubber truncheon and other Gestapo weapons being only a more effective variation of the medieval wheel or rack—but in its determined bid to violate the sanctity of life, to deify brute force and create a 'brave new world' of blond, Nordic youth drunk with power. It was the dreaded prospect of this insensate hate, which appalled Mr. Warner most.

Vander, the Fascist propagandist in *The Professor*, the Air Vice-Marshal in *The Aerodrome* and the Governor in *Men of Stones* represent the ultimate in 'the cult of power':

> Why is our propaganda more successful than yours? asks Vander and replies in the same breath: 'Partly because our aims are definite, sensible and within reach instead of being vague, intellectualized and extending into infinity; but more still because, we appeal to the dark and vital and real forces in human nature...'[3]

Elaborating his credo of blood and bluster, he adds:

> Power over others is the normal flowering of personality, and women are conquered, not persuaded into lust...[4]

And this view of life and love is further explored in *The Aerodrome*, where the A. V. M. is the winged god of the new, pragmatic, cynical philosophy. Addressing the new recruits, he says:

> For good or evil, you are yourselves poised for a brief and dazzling flash of time between two annihilations. Reflect please, that 'parenthood', 'ownership', 'locality' are the words of the future. And so is 'marriage'! These words are without wings. I do not care to hear an airman use them.[5]

Continuing his peroration, he declaims that parents are

> people who are unimportant in themselves, but who have served in most cases as channels or conduits through which you have all in varying degrees been infected with the stupidity, the ugliness and the servility of historical tradition.[6]

This utterly bestial view of life is carried a step further in *Men of Stones* where the Governor, a palaeolithic figure of Satanic pride and grandeur stands for the fascist mystique of 'the *Fuehrer* principle', which when pushed to its logical extreme results in the Mumbo-Jumbo of 'man-god'. And this is his 'apocalyptic' Word:

> I model myself rather upon God the Father than upon God the Son. The actions of the Father are often unpredictable and often seem unjust to us. They are always powerful and overwhelming. His children are most happy when they are most utterly in submission to his will...[7]

and again

> that I am above and beyond the ordinary standards of morality and convention, that my power is in my chosen sphere unlimited, that I have no fear or favour that can be exactly calculated. All this has the immense importance of a myth and a legend.[8]

Justifying his own act of parricide, the Governor declares:

> In many of the ancient mythologies, as you know, the supreme being gains power after he has either destroyed or imprisoned

> his father.... Fundamentally, however, the killing of the father symbolises absolute responsibility and the ambition towards the superman.[9]

Adverting to this 'man-god' phenomenon in contemporary politics, Mr. Warner writes thus in his essay *The Cult of Power:*

> There is only one thing for it—after having rejected God to make himself God, and to cause it to be generally believed that those characteristics by which he won his first eminence —and perhaps those have been self-assertion, violence, brutality, amongst others—are the characteristics of Godhead.... Such, expressed in rather allegorical terms, seems to be the sequence of events which we have seen in Europe recently; from the intellectual sceptic to the power-addict, from the power-addict to the 'leader'...[10]

I have quoted at some length from Mr. Warner's books to prove that his crusade against Fascism was more than a fight against a political creed. It was essentially an assertion of the humanist values which were threatened with total extinction by the Fascists. No artist, if he had to keep his vision alive could prevaricate or sit on the fence. There was no neutral or midway path, for truth is always partisan. To fight against Fascism was to fight for the preservation of man's culture and heritage. A poem, a novel or a play became as much of a political act as the shouldering of a rifle, or manning a barricade. Courage was not simply a matter of the solar plexus, it was also a matter of intellectual integrity, of spiritual inviolability. Thus amongst the artists who donned the gloves and came out openly into the ring was Rex Warner.

However, unlike most others at that time, he did not strip himself naked. On the contrary, he put on a fanciful, *bizarre* garb, which instead of coming in his way, permitted him to land his blows right on the target. For the method which he applied was not one of direct, frontal, sledge-hammer blows, but that of oblique, poetic and symbolic sleight of hand. Perhaps Mr. Warner realised that any crude, straight attack on Fascism was likely to yield little results. By its very nature—its cynical pragmatism and violence—totalitarianism was bound to succeed where the adversary fought

with weapons already perfected by it. Thus the best way out at that time was to deal with the menace on the ideological or spiritual plane. A recourse to fantasy and allegory, incidentally a common feature of a great deal of contemporary political fiction, was thus something of an intellectual necessity.

This, however, did not prevent him from putting the full steam on. Only the action was transferred to a no-land and the characters became symbols. Indeed all his novels except *Escapade* are a series of long, sustained, passionate arguments worked out in a prose which is at once noble, majestic, evocative and electrifying. There is not only limpidity and clarity as in George Orwell, or power and passion as in Arthur Koestler, but also a strong poetic verve and a turn for a highly original, metaphorical language. It must not be forgotten that Mr. Warner is also a poet in his own right. Indeed I doubt, if any living writer in English can give his ideas such a broad sweep as he can do. Aldous Huxley can surely make them dance like fireflies, but his flashing wit is no substitute for the inspired, poetic vein which gives great prose speeches or expositions a tone of prophecy. In Rex Warner, ideas take wings and soar above, rushing the reader along in a frenzy or ecstasy of language. All other fictional ingredients such as character, plot, humour etc. fade away for the moment, or are subordinated to long, overwhelming dialogues, which swollen with thought, go hurtling along at a breathless speed, The reader is indeed intoxicated with the pure wine of ratiocination. No impurities are tolerated. The idea, polished and licked into a shining diamond, proceeds along its course with the certitude and grandeur of a musical *finale*.

However, it is never a one-sided political harangue. On the contrary, opposing views or ideas are marshalled out in all their intrinsic vigour and beauty. The two protagonists: George and the King in *The Wild Goose Chase*, the Professor and Vander in *The Professor*, Roy and the Air Vice-Marshal in *The Aerodrome*, Charles and his bourgeois-liberal friend in *Why Was I Killed?*, Marcus and the Governor in *Men of Stones*, look at each other from across a yawning gulf of ideas. Each is allowed the liberty of his views. Each follows

his own logical track with the precision of a clock. What 'message' he has to give is put down in the idiom of his choice. The author seems to stand outside the ring, watching the two fierce birds pluck each other's plumage in a fine frenzy. He identifies himself first with the one, and then with the other keeping the balance in the middle. This fascinating duel between ideas follows a contrapuntal pattern. Each idea is opposed by a counter-idea in order to achieve a polarity of vision. This stereoscopic method is an integral part of Mr. Warner's polemics, and proceeds, I think, from a dialectical understanding of reality. This does not mean that he follows an objective, eclectic, middle attitude, achieving synthesis between the two extremes. He certainly allows full time and space to both the sides in the manner of a presiding judge, but that does not preclude him from having his own private opinions. He is not only fully convinced of the rightness of his own views expressed through the anti-Fascist protagonist, but is also fully aware of the wrongness of the adversary's position, even though he gives him a long rope to reach the end of the tether.

This is seldom done in an ironical vein as for instance in Addison and Swift, where the absurdity of the adversary's point of view is established by means of a subtle, studied and elaborate exposition of that view, or where the element of exaggeration shows up the intrinsic weakness of that argument. Mr. Warner is, on the other hand, usually in dead earnest when he elaborates the totalitarian doctrine from the point of view of Fascism. Humour or irony here is out of place. Except in that delightful though slender mock-heroic fantasy *Escapade* where the comedy has truly Dickensian patches, he seldom permits himself the luxury of a laugh or smile. He allows both sides to hit up a tall score, but his own sympathies are never in doubt. For ultimately, doctrines are tested in action; their veracity is proved, not in the closed minds of their progenitors, but in the field of daily reality. And it is here that the Fascists prove the beastliness of their creed in the novels of Rex Warner. Not only are they usually defeated in the end in a violent, symbolic manner—the sudden dissolution of the steel city in *The Wild Goose Chase*, the explosion of the A.V.M's aircraft in *The Aerodrome*, the

blowing up of the rock castle in *Men of Stones*—they also reveal their Caliban nature in the daily doings of their life. Above all, Mr. Warner's undying faith in the humanist ideals, his essential optimism (in spite of the tragic end of *The Professor*) reveal his progressive and revolutionary *Weltanschauung*.

When asked in the Convent about the books he liked most, George, the pilgrim in search of 'the wild goose' replied, 'Shakespeare, Karl Marx, Tom Jones and Isaiah'.[11] I think, the list with a couple of additions may do for Mr. Warner himself. This was written in 1937, and he might now include Greek classics and Kafka as well, though George's selection indirectly suggests these also. His thought has apparently been moulded by three powerful influences: Marxism, Hellenism and Kafka-Dostoievsky spiritualism. It is strange and even baffling that philosophies as apart as those of Marx and Kafka should be made to yield a synthetic vision, but this is what primarily Mr. Warner has sought to achieve. Marxism is the philosophy of earth and daylight, of action and aggressive optimism; Kafka stands for the terror of the Unknown, for Existentialist *Angst*, for nightmarish visions and abysmal animal sin. One regards the present world as the only reality, the other regards it as a dream and a shadow. One professes to achieve happiness through corporate human endeavour, the other talks of the eternal restlessness of the human spirit which keeps beating its wings in a cosmic *cul-de-sac*. One seeks to establish a materialist heaven on earth, the other draws our attention to the hell that's all around us. Thus it would appear incongruous to yoke the two together in an unnatural wedlock. This cross between Marx and Kafka could scarcely be expected to yield any significant fruit.

What Mr. Warner has therefore done (at least in his earlier novels) is to cloak Marxist thought in Kafkaish robes. Gradually however, the frame turns into the picture, and though the Marxist view is not abandoned, the Kafka-Dostoievsky view of human nature is accepted as an inescapable reality. What distinguishes him from the ex-Communists is his refusal to regard Stalinist tyranny as an inevitable part of the Marxist programme. Also, there is no tendency to equate Communist violence with Fascist violence. In his critical writings, he

has questioned some aspects of Marxism, and I shall come to this a little later, but in his novels, the enemy is always totalitarianism of the Fascist brand, for insensate gratuitous hate is a characteristic not of Communism but of Fascism. He is not blind to the excesses of the Communists but their violence is regarded as a means to a higher end. This indeed is the lesson which the Professor learns towards the end. A lover of Greek art and literature, given to quiet contemplation and serene joys of life, he finally realises the futility and helplessness of neutralism or even pacifism in the face of blind and dark forces of death and destruction. When a Fascist functionary reminding him of his bourgeois-liberal, humanist traditions, poses the question:

> Think of what would have happened, if the revolution had come from the Left instead of from the Right,

the Professor, now thoroughly awakened from his scholastic, cloistered world-view, replies:

> The violence then would have been rational; it would have had an aim. But you are not aiming at more life. You are killing the spirit.[12]

Once his Communist son had asked him to arm his thoughts, and he had refused to have any truck with violence. But now he has moved from 'feathers to iron'.

> He thought again of his son's words 'I hate because I love' and seemed to see in the words a dreadful necessity and truth.[13]

While accepting Marxist views on economics and history in general, Mr. Warner does not accept Marxism as a complete philosophy of life. In his essay, 'Dostoievsky and the Collapse of Liberalism', he writes:

> Indeed on problems of morality and psychology, Marx is strangely muddled and inconsistent.[14]

With Dostoievsky, he tends to believe that 'sin is a fact of nature and not merely the result of unscientific organisation

of society.'[15] Elaborating his objections to Marxism as an integrated philosophy of life, he observes:

> Dialectical materialism, whatever its merits as a guide to the interpretation of history, is no substitute for either religion or philosophy.[16]

This is not such a sudden shift in his views as may appear at first sight. Mr. Warner's Marxism was always different from that of the commissars. A spiritual streak is visible even in his first novel, *The Wild Goose Chase* which may aptly be described as a 'Marxist *Pilgrim's Progress*'. Indeed the symbol itself is an echo of the Holy Grail *motif*, and his hero is more of a Socialist Galahad than of a militant revolutionary. This mystic *motif* is again to be found in *Men of Stones* where Marcus returns to his Fascist homeland in search of a mysterious picture which sheds tears of blood when the people are in a spiritual travail. Thus Mr. Warner, like his mystic pilgrims, is an eternal seeker after truth, which in the first novel seems to stand for beauty and strength, in the second for pity and compassion. We can see here the progress of a true humanist who has come to regard compassion as the highest virtue in the scale of human values.

In his essay on Dostoievsky, alluded to earlier, he refers to the spiritual hiatus created by Marx, and feels that the betrayal of the Socialist dream may partly be accounted for by the absence of God from the scheme of things. Man, he believes, does not live by bread alone, and a proper distribution of wealth by itself cannot solve all his problems, much less bring about universal happiness. That organised religion has nearly always played a reactionary rôle in the affairs of man, Mr. Warner would grant, though he would also say that just as Stalinism is no excuse for condemning Marxism out of hand, the abuse of religion by the priests and other vested interests is similarly no justification for its abolition or suppression. The true aim of religion as indeed of Socialism is to extend the frontiers of man's happiness, not through material goods only, but through the establishment of a moral order also.

As for the influence of Kafka, it may be noted that the

inexplicable, nightmarish inhumanity of the rulers in Kafka's novels like *The Castle* and *The Trial* is as wanton and gratuitous as the senseless tyranny of the Fascists. Thus the framework of Kafka adjusted suitably to the needs of contemporary political trends in Western Europe fitted in perfectly with Mr. Warner's design. Kafka had died in 1924, a few years before Fascism assumed power in Germany, yet the world he paints has a certain grotesque resemblance with the totalitarian state of Hitler. It is clear however that Kafka's picture did not allude to any given political power or state; his concern was almost wholly spiritual. The mysterious, unknowable hierarchy of the state with its cruelly quixotic trials, its inner corruption and decadence, its closed-circle, tortuous ways etc. are all a part of the frightful, fundamental, unchanging cosmic reality. The human soul—'K' of his novels—weak, baffled, intrigued by temptation, and soiled by experience, keeps droning like a mad bee, spinning over and over again in circles of painful void. Yet the fact that Kafka uses the symbol of the state in his spiritual allegories as the cosmic reality to be pierced and overcome, is indirectly a reflection of the actual political post-war European world in which he found himself thwarted and paralysed. The powerful, monolithic totalitarian states based on 'the leader principle' and strict hierarchy, appear to be a caricature of the mystically apprehended universe with God at the centre, and a whole ordered, stratified humanity extending outward to the periphery. The overwhelming nature of these Leviathan states where the individual soul is buffeted about in the manner of a helpless, insignificant, stricken raft finds symbolic expression in the novels of Kafka.

As I have indicated earlier, the allegorical method just answered the needs of Mr. Warner. An allegorical fantasy requires a highly inventive mind which is at once poetical and logical, a mind such as we find at work in a *Kubla Khan*, a *Don Quixote*, a *Pilgrim's Progress*, a *Moby Dick*, a *Zuleika Dobson*, a *Brothers Karamazov*, a *Bleak House* etc. It reveals a dialectical unity between dream-work and brain-work. The truth of fantasy is the truth of poetry; it is strange and irrational as Caudwell tells us in his *Illusion and Reality*.[17] It moves within the confines of its own logical orbit; its aberrations

are essentially tangential. It works within a closed circle, and spins round on its own pivot. Thus the political phantasmagoria of Warner's novels could only be conveyed effectively through a poetical and symbolic technique. For when the baffling reality of life eludes the naturalistic grasp, fantasy steps in as in Proust, Joyce, Dickens, Dostoievsky. It serves to heighten and dramatise the issue in rendering the idea. Whereas in *Animal Farm* and more particularly in *1984* this technique serves as a pragmatic and utilitarian weapon, in the case of Mr. Warner, it is the very basis of his work, and springs from an integral, organic, poetical design. For finally, the effectiveness of an allegory or a fantasy depends upon the truth of the writer's point of view.

Nor is the allegorical or fairy-story technique as simple as it may appear. To achieve 'a simultaneity of contrary effects', to work out the story at various 'receding planes',[18] to effect a fusion between dream and reality, is indeed an art which only novelists gifted with a poetic vision can explore. In other hands, it degenerates into *pastiche* and propaganda. Mr. Warner in his own brilliant essay *The Allegorical Method* makes a distinction between 'the prose truth of observation and the poetic truth of suggestion and significance',[19] and observes that 'there are occasions when poetry is "truer" than prose', though of course, the reverse is also right. As he puts it:

> The allegorist writing in prose is concerned with both truths, but particularly with what we have called the truth of poetry. For beyond statements and judgements, he aims at the extension of the understanding.[20]

And this is precisely what Mr. Warner has sought to achieve in his first six novels. Politics in our day are 'spiritual' politics, a religion of ideas. To get at the heart of this truth, he used the allegorical method, for it sharpened the meaning he wanted to convey.

By comparing his technique with the technique of such allegorists as Dickens, Dostoievsky, Melville or Kafka, I do not mean to place him in their category. For Mr. Warner's world is a very small world indeed. Not only does he operate

in a limited field, his talents as a novelist are also limited. For one thing, his characters are his ideas walking on stilts. They are mere symbols—figures that inhabit a dreamland, and seldom walk out into the noon-day of palpable reality. They do not have the universality, width and power of Dickensian or Dostoievskyan characters. Again, his melodramatic plots (a weakness he shares with Dickens), though a part of his dramatic plan, nevertheless remain a clumsy piece of machinery. Nor has he the apocalyptic genius of Dostoievsky or the comic vision of Dickens. The only time he came anywhere near achieving that Dickensian effect is in his little novelette *Escapade* which is simply a flighty piece as mockingly gay as it is delightfully irresponsible. Miss Parkinson, that doughty champion of the British Empire, is indeed a comic character that might do justice to the creator of *Cranford*. The way she drops 'subtle' hints, makes insinuations, and uses incoherent German and Russian expressions to her own obscure delight are flashes of genuine comedy. Finally, the storming of the police-station by the Amazons of the village of Average is described in a mock-heroic manner worthy almost of Fielding. But *Escapade* is only a slender tale, not a political novel as such, and it is in that *métier* where Mr. Warner's achievement lies.[21] There the comic muse is seldom in attendance, though the predicament of Mr. Goat in *Men of Stones* certainly has comic overtones. However, in novels like *The Professor*, *The Aerodrome* and *Why Was I Killed?*, there is a sepulchral seriousness, unrelieved by any light interludes. Perhaps all humour shrivels up in the dread presence of Fascism. It might even be sacrilegious to introduce it.

I finally come to the third, and perhaps the most lasting, if not vital influence in Mr. Warner's work, namely, Hellenism. One of his most lovable and human characters is the Professor who incidentally was a Greek and classical scholar. I am not sure if his love of myth, allegory and fantasy does not go much farther back than Dickens, Dostoievsky and Kafka. The archetypal Greek myths (*Men and Gods* is Mr. Warner's own account of some of these) seem to have left a permanent imprint on his mind. Again, Plato's theory of the shadow-world of ideas, and his use of the allegory to achieve *chia-*

roscuro effects have had a lasting influence on Mr. Warner's thought and technique. In *The Allegorical Method*, he refers to 'the overt and the more or less occult' types of allegory in Plato.[22] He has also been undoubtedly influenced in his language and the contrapuntal use of it by Aeschylus in whose method (as he tells us in *Notes on the Language of Aeschylus*), he finds 'the exact balance of the opposite points of view'.[23]

But perhaps more important than all these Greek influences is the essentially classical temperament of Mr. Warner. There is always a cool, quiet centre at the heart of a storm, and this is precisely the impression conveyed by his novels, where the events rush the reader along at a terrific pace. For always, there is a feeling of a calm island nestling inside. This may be due to the fact that the humanist *motif* is perpetually there in the texture of his work. Against all the violence and frenzy of the totalitarian world, there is the serene joy of living, born of an indestructible faith in the miracle of life. Violence always spends itself, but the white dream of peace lasts for ever.

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20. Ibid. p. 119.
21. Rex Warner's two recent books, *The Young Caesar*, 1958, and *Imperial Caesar*, 1960, are an ingenious cross between fiction and imaginary autobiography, and though they bring out vividly the nature of Roman politics in Julius Caesar's times, they cannot be regarded as works of political fiction as such.

    In fact, it appears to me that since *Men of Stones*, 1949, he has progressively turned to his old love—Greek and Roman themes. This was perhaps inevitable with the defeat of Fascism at the end of the Second World War. As Mr. Warner wrote to me in his letter dated Feb. 26, 1958, 'I did, and do feel, as you say, though nowadays with that particular form of Fascism a thing of the past, I suppose that one's mind might move differently and, not faced with a blind opposition, possibly more creatively.'
22. Rex Warner, *The Cult of Power*, p. 109.
23. Ibid. p. 91.

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S RÔLE IN THE ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF JAMES JOYCE

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At first James Joyce—opaque, obscure and highbrow—will seem to have little in common with the pellucid emotionalism of Sir Edwin Arnold. But strange is the chemistry of genius and its ways past finding out. The complexity of Joyce is made up of many simples: only his studied silence and a double dose of cunning have made the analysis of his complexity a herculean task. It is no surprise, therefore, that Joyce's immense debt—among others—to Sir Edwin Arnold has never even been as much as suspected. One of the latest books on *Finnegans Wake*—J. S. Atherton's *Books At The Wake*—does not list Sir Edwin even once. This is unfair not only to the bard of Buddhism but also to James Joyce in explaining whose work recourse has to be had to all manner of recondite sources. It is a sound rule of explication that whatever can be explained on a simple hypothesis need not be assigned to a more difficult and far-fetched one; on this assumption a little bit of literary sleuthing has convinced me that Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light Of Asia* is much the most important force shaping the artistic development of the great Irish expatriate.

Three years before Joyce's birth, *The Light Of Asia* took the English reading world by storm. Its mystic and lucid tone went straight to the heart. When Joyce was sixteen (1898), Fielding Hall published his *Soul Of A People*—which was an account of Burmese life and included a résumé of the Buddhist way of life. Joyce was anxious to review it, and it would be normal to suppose that in reading up Buddhism, he came across Sir Edwin's popular account of the Awakened One. This review came out in *The Daily Express* (Dublin)

on 6 February, 1903. In it Joyce gives away his source of information about the Buddha, for he refers to two episodes in the Buddha's life—'the kindly Devas strewing flowers under his horse, and the story of the meeting of the Buddha and his wife.' Now these episodes do not figure in this form in the orthodox accounts of the Buddha: they are made much of by Sir Edwin Arnold and are his specific contribution to the Buddhist legend. Thus it is a very safe bet that by 1903, Joyce had drunk deep of the Buddhist myth as purveyed by Sir Edwin.

If it was so, all the three famous books of Joyce—*A Portrait*, *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*—become explicable in a simpler and richer manner than ever: they also become more meaningful than has so far been suspected. In *A Portrait*, Stephen (or Joyce) proclaims his decision to be Buddha (*Bodhisattva*); in *Ulysses*, he serves his novitiate to the Buddha that is Leopold Bloom; and in *Finnegans Wake*, he gives his vision of the world from the vantage of his great attainment as 'the Wake'—or the Awakened One. That this is not a mere guess will be clear if we analyse the programme of Stephen at the end of *A Portrait*. It runs:

> Welcome, O life; I go to encounter for the millionth time the reality of experience and to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race.

Compare this with the opening lines of *The Light of Asia*:

> 'Yes', spake he, 'now I go to help the World
> This last of many times: for birth and death
> End hence for me and those who learn my Law.'

and it will be clear that Stephen is speaking with these words in his mind. The issue will be further clinched if we look steadily at two significant words—'millionth' and 'race'—in Stephen's speech. Why does he talk of the 'millionth' time? The answer is to be found in the Buddha's 'this last of many times'. According to the Buddhist belief, enlightenment is not to be reached in one life; it takes a series of lives successively devoted to the pursuit of virtue. The Buddha

himself had to struggle to perfection during many lives, chronicled for us in the Jātak stories. Evidently, Stephen believes that he has already had many lives, and this is his last. On the stepping stones of his dead selves, he will rise to perfection. He is in a class by himself. That will give force to his mention of the 'race'—not his ancestors in the flesh, but ancestors in the line of spiritual development. The Buddha himself had used the word in this context (in Sir Edwin Arnold). When taken to task by his earthly father for wearing the yellow dress of a mendicant, the Enlightened One had said:

> 'It is the custom of my race
> .....
> Not of mortal line', the Master said,
> 'But of descent invisible,
> The Buddhas who have been and who shall be,
> Of these am I'.

And Stephen is talking in the accents of the Buddha-to-be, not as a Celt or any other parochial group.

It is also a widespread belief in spiritual circles, specially fostered by the Theosophists with whom Joyce fraternized at this age—that for the aspirant, guidance will be given by those who have already crossed the seas of ignorance. In *Ulysses*, Stephen (the aspirant) while encountering experience, meets Leopold Bloom, the pacifist Buddhist who goes out of his way to befriend his 'spiritual son' and give him the right lead. And thus Stephen becomes the type of the Enlightened Being whose WAKE is at once a death and a birth—a dying into existence—so that he sees the world without any illusions. His vision of the world is captured in verbal medium in *Finnegans Wake*. That the entire work is the fulfilment of the inspiration from Sir Edwin Arnold will be clear from the presence of some characters from *The Light of Asia* in *Finnegans Wake*. There is, for example, Saint Asitas who has not so far been identified. He is straight from Sir Edwin's poem:

> 'Mongst the strangers came
> A grey haired saint, Asitas, one whose ears...

There are also verbal resemblances. Edwin Arnold's line:

> Ate, drank, laughed, loved and liked life well,

becomes in Joyce:

> They lived and laughed and loved and left.

Sir Edwin's 'that light, not from the Shastras, nor from fasts' becomes in Joyce 'Fastra sastra'; Sir Edwin's 'cowry shell for target', becomes the 'cowry maid M' in Joyce. Sir Edwin Arnold's version of *The Bhagwadgita* also looms large in the pages of *Finnegans Wake*. But it is best to recall the conclusion to that book and mark its resemblance with a few lines at the end of *The Light Of Asia*. Joyce's *Anna Livia* has had enough of existence and she is at the point of merging herself with the Sea. She says: 'My leaves have drifted from me, All.' Sir Edwin concludes his poem thus:

> And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave
> Om Mani Padme hum, the sunrise comes.
> The dewdrop slips into the shining sea.

These and many other resemblances cannot be accidental. The presence of the persistent water *motif* which has been so ingeniously made to mean all sorts of recondite symbolism by Professors Magalaner and Kain will, if we accept the hypothesis suggested above, boil down to nothing more than normal Buddhist terminology which Sir Edwin Arnold made familiar. And Joyce will then be seen, not as a mere experimentalist however important, but as a truly philosophical writer to be mentioned in the same breath with Lucretius and Dante.

INDIRECT STYLE IN '*TO THE LIGHTHOUSE*'

By Shahnaz Hashmi
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It is a late September day. Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay, their children and their friends are on holiday on a remote island in the Hebrides. They have planned an expedition to the lighthouse but bad weather compels them to postpone the trip. Time passes, and after a lapse of ten years the Ramsay family revisit their house on the island. But these ten summers have seen a great many changes. Mrs. Ramsay and her daughter Prue are dead. Andrew Ramsay has been killed in the First World War. The house which now sadly receives Mr. Ramsay and his remaining children, is crumbled and decayed. Only the weather is a little more cheerful this time and the long-planned trip to the lighthouse materialises. And Lily Briscoe the artist, a friend of the family, achieves her vision at last and is able to finish her painting which has been worrying her all these years.

This is the framework, on the plane of prose, upon which Virginia Woolf has built up her intricate patterns of symbols and situations, leading us on to the plane of poetry. To produce this double effect, an indefinite, misty island is more expressive than a London cocktail party. This is a symbolic setting for a novel of indirect philosophical suggestion. The use of the Indirect Style is one of the tools employed by modern novelists to produce a sense of impersonality. To see life with the eyes of those who live it was the first desire that drove Virginia Woolf to discard narration and comment altogether and to disappear from her novels. This process of the elimination of the author, started in *Jacob's Room*, found its culmination in *To the Lighthouse* which I take to be her most representative novel from this point of view. The term 'Indirect Style' covers not only the substance and presentation of the theme in an indirect manner, but also includes a deliberate use of some stylistic and linguistic devices to produce a certain effect.

The disappearance of the writer from the scene and the

absence of commentary cut down the element of curiosity and there is no place for a question like 'what next?' This allows the reader to *live* in the minds of the persons in the novel and to share their feelings and moods without the imposed guidance of the author. It is on this basis that Virginia Woolf evolves her well-known 'stream of consciousness' technique. This type of novel, initiated in English by James Joyce and Dorothy Richardson, has found its most enthusiastic and consistent exponent in Virginia Woolf. The main feature of this method is the exploitation of the element of disorder and slackness in our normal and abnormal states of mind. To concentrate whole-heartedly on a definite moment in the present requires a tremendous amount of will power and this position is achieved only by simple, straight minds with an ever-present 'sense for conduct', to borrow a phrase from Matthew Arnold. Highly sensitive minds, bewildered and tortured by a crowd of memories, sensations and conflicting emotions, lose their grip over stability the moment they relax. To relax is to be weak and to be weak is to fall a prey to the uncontrollable chaos and disorder infesting the human mind. Retrospection is a process that leaves the mind extremely exhausted and then a great solitude descends upon the soul. On such mental states Virginia Woolf has planned the action of her novels, and *To the Lighthouse* is a record of the desperate attempt of its men and women to catch and hold the present moment, the living moment, and make it perfect, eternal, worth living for.

To the Lighthouse poses some of the fundamental problems of life for our consideration. The problems parade before us in a sequence of images, indirect hints and suggestions, projected on the plane of consciousness and semi-consciousness. Is life an illusion or a reality? What is the value and significance of experience? Can the complications of love be solved by sympathy and understanding or is it something illusory, obscure and mysterious? In what sense can one personality 'know' another? When we say we know a person, does that knowledge include *all* the layers of a personality? What relation do our memories of an object bear to the 'real' object? What vision can be achieved out of that dim chamber of retrospect and anticipation which is con-

sciousness? These and many more are the problems of life and art. Some people have powers to create harmony out of the chaos of life. Mrs. Ramsay the beautiful and sympathetic, and Lily Briscoe the painter are two such people in the novel. They are sources of strength and joy to others but for their own selves the muddle and mystery of life remains incomprehensible. Mrs. Ramsay reflecting on the substance of life, feels 'this thing that she called life terrible, hostile, and quick to pounce on you if you gave it a chance. There were the eternal problems: suffering; death; the poor.' (p. 95)

Lily Briscoe tries to understand life through the magic casements of art and beauty, colour and shape; Mr. Ramsay the professor of philosophy is preoccupied with the demands of his academic life and with the lectures he is going to prepare for the young men of Cardiff on Locke, Hume, Berkeley and the causes of the French Revolution. His is the problem of too much intellectualism bordering on cynicism. Even the six year old James Ramsay has a problem: how to get to the lighthouse? Is it going to rain tomorrow or is it going to be fine enough to allow them to make the trip to the lighthouse? There are others who are worried about 'subject and object and the nature of reality'. We attend to the thoughts and words of the people in the novel and hardly realise that these may be the thoughts of the author indirectly placed for our consideration.

Within the texture of life are found both the extremes; the beauty and magnificence of life and its ugliness and intricacy. And the people in Virginia Woolf's novels feel and experience the double meaning of life and the impact of experience on their life—not only one experience in a crucial moment but a series of experiences in different circumstances. None of these theories is directly expounded by the author, but we become aware of them (or do we really?) by being one with the minds of her characters, and by catching the hints dropped either by their words, looks or gestures or by simply watching their actions on certain occasions when they are off guard.

E. M. Forster thinks that Virginia Woolf 'could seldom so portray a character that it was remembered on its own

account, as Emma is remembered, for instance, or Dorothea Casaubon, or Sophia and Constance in *The Old Wives' Tale*.' But Virginia Woolf cannot be judged on the same ground as the writers of conventional prose fiction. This 'even-handed justice' cannot be applied in her case. Her method is radically different. Her vision embraces a wide field of fluid, flexible, indefinable personality. She is concerned with the various phases of experience colouring the life of a person, the influence of one personality upon another, and the unrevealed part of human nature. She does not bother to portray accurate pictures and fix them on her readers as definite, settled characters. 'It is no use trying to sum people up. One must follow hints, not exactly what is said, nor yet entirely what is done...' (*Jacob's Room*). Virginia Woolf is not interested in the *impression* that her people create. She does not describe, as the impressionist does, the precise looks of an object. Her technique is more akin to expressionism. She tries to express and grasp the depth and the meaning of an object. She does not pretend to be realistic in her descriptions. She thinks that 'there is a dignity in people; a solitude...something priceless.' There is something within the walls of the human mind and heart which words cannot express and custom cannot define. Mrs. Ramsay reflects on the nature of the self:

> ...one after another, She, Lily, Augustus Carmichael, must feel our apparitions. The things you know us by are simply childish. Beneath it is all dark, it is all spreading, it is unfathomably deep; but now and again we rise to the surface and that is what you see us by.

Here a character of the novel has told you that she is more than what we see before us. Virginia Woolf emphasizes the unknown, the hidden side of the human personality rather than the known, the familiar, the surface impression. She chooses whatever symbol is best suited to express the inner meaning of a person's ideas. For her, unspoken words are more important than the spoken words:

> But how lovely, she said, taking his flowers. She understood; without his speaking.

We acquire an intimacy with her characters by studying the impact of individuals upon each other. We must endeavour to understand Mr. Ramsay the intellectual and philosopher in order to be intimate with his wife's thoughts who plays such a vital rôle in the novel. Mrs. Ramsay's influence upon Lily, her friends, on her own children is an important factor in our understanding of her as a person and of the rôle played by her beauty, her wisdom, her sympathy and her death. She lives in the memory of those she has left behind. Five years after her death we find Lily missing her with such a fresh longing as if she died yesterday:

> What is the meaning of life? That was all—a simple question ...herself and Charles Tansley and the breaking wave; Mrs. Ramsay bringing them together; Mrs. Ramsay saying, 'Life stands still here'; Mrs. Ramsay making of the moment something permanent (as in another sphere Lily herself tried to make of the moment something permanent)...Mrs. Ramsay! Mrs. Ramsay! She repeated. She owed this revelation to her. (p. 249)

The characters are shown in their relation to the landscape, to the sea, sand and stones; to birds, trees and leaves, and to the entire realm of Nature. Eventually this record of personal relationships and of spiritual kinships becomes such a complex pattern that it is not directly expressible at all.

In the use of soliloquy Virginia Woolf finds ample scope to interpret her vision of human beings. This takes us back to the traditions of Elizabethan drama. Her characters indulge in frequent interior monologues about themselves and about others. D. H. Lawrence expresses the sensations of his people but Virginia Woolf expresses their feelings and thoughts, their reflections and conflicts. Her characters symbolize the constant but futile efforts of the people of the world to keep some kind of lasting balance and order in human life. Mr. Ramsay's habit of murmuring 'someone had blundered' and 'we perished each alone' may sound cynical but on the symbolic level it depicts the great solitude of the human soul and the destruction of the ideal of truth or beauty to which the mind aspires. The stream of consciousness of one individual influences the thought processes of

others. Virginia Woolf excels in weaving this kind of design.

The language of the novel deserves special attention. The vocabulary and sentence-patterns are carefully chosen and employed by the author to perfect the suggestiveness of her style in the novel. For example, when Mrs. Ramsay looks through her window, the alternating light and shadow of the lighthouse beam symbolizes for her the cycle of joy and sorrow in human life:

> She looked at the steady light, the pitiless, the remorseless, which was so much her, yet so little her, which had her at its beck and call (she woke in the night and saw it bent across her bed, stroking the floor), but for all that, she thought, watching it with fascination, hypnotised, as if it were stroking with silver fingers some sealed vessel in her brain whose bursting would flood her with delight; she had known happiness, exquisite happiness, intense happiness; and it silvered the rough waves a little more brightly, as daylight faded, and the blue went out of the sea and it rolled in waves of pure lemon which curved and swelled and broke upon the beach and the ecstasy burst in her eyes and waves of pure delight raced over the floor of her mind and she felt, It is enough! It is enough. (p. 103)

This passage can be broken into five sentences of unequal length, two of which are in the simple past narrative tense; one contains the past perfect form and two are in the simple present. Now the 'simple present' expresses the state of her feelings at a definite time, the 'past perfect' suddenly ushers in a wave of retrospect and expresses her feelings about some happening in the past, and then the present tense is used to resist the onslaught of memory and to concentrate on the present moment.

Take another passage:

> She fetched herself a chair. She pitched her easel with her precise old maidish movements on the edge of the lawn, not too close to Mr. Carmichael, but close enough for his protection. Yes, it must have been precisely here that she had stood ten years ago. There was the wall; the hedge; the tree. The question was of some relation between these masses. She had borne it in her mind all these years. It seemed as if the

solution had come to her: she knew now what she wanted to do. (p. 229)

The word 'Yes' after two sentences breaks the indirect speech form, yet the past tense is continued. The word 'now' in the last sentence also refers to the present situation but the past tense sequence remains unchanged. It is interesting to note how modern English defies traditional grammar and all its rules about the transformation of the direct speech into the indirect and vice versa, with reference to events in the past and in the present. Here we have seen that the indirect style remains unaffected in spite of the changing tenses. If we tried to do some transformation exercises taking passages from Virginia Woolf and treating the sentences in the manner of conventional grammar, the results would be fantastic.

On page 42, beginning with 'How then did it work out, all this?' till 'a flock of starlines', Lily Briscoe compares the personalities of Mr. Ramsay and Mr. Bankes. There are four sentences in the manner of direct speech, beginning with 'You have greatness'. But the simple present tense is used with such absent-mindedness, such indifference that the speaker hardly seems to be aware of the present time and the sentences have almost lost their directness. And so the direct speech form has also become a part of the indirect speech which is included in the indirect style of writing.

Mrs. Ramsay whose mind is constantly looking back to the past or ahead to the future while she lives in the present focusing her attention on a certain living moment and wishing it to be perfect, helps the writer in her particular mode of writing. Mrs. Ramsay recollects and recalls, reviews and analyses the past events and when she is unable to bear the weight of her reflections any more, the writer makes her pause. The function served by 'interludes' in classical drama is served here by a phrase or sentence in the direct speech form. A change in the tense provides the necessary relief.

There is a long passage from p. 45 to p. 48, where we find our Greek-featured, blue-eyed Mrs. Ramsay day-dreaming as usual and thinking of the talents of her children, of the desirability of marriage between Lily Briscoe and William

Bankes, of the weather and the proposed picnic to the lighthouse, of her own duties and actions, of the sick father of her Swiss maid who missed her home and said time and again, 'at home the mountains are so beautiful.' Her flow of thoughts is interrupted by five sentences in the Imperative. (I am tempted to call it the Imperative of Annoyance or Fatigue or Irritation). These are addressed to her son James who is being treated as a measuring block for the stockings Mrs. Ramsay is knitting for the old lighthouse keeper's little son. These sentences are:

'My dear, stand still' (repeated three times), 'Don't be so tiresome,' and 'Let's find another picture to cut out.' This is only an attempt on the part of Mrs. Ramsay to stop thinking for a while, get out of the stream of consciousness and come back to the present. And I feel these words are addressed to her oppressive thoughts rather than to her son.

'Always, Mrs. Ramsay felt, one helped oneself out of solitude reluctantly by laying hold of some little odd or end, some sound, some sight.' (p. 103). And this is what she does when her memory and her solitude become too much for her. One day she could bear it no more and quietly left the world. Her death is reported in one sentence (on p. 200) in parenthesis.

On p. 116 there is a simple question: 'Did Nancy go with them?', and we get the answer on p. 124. These seven pages show the wide stretch but very quick movement of Mrs. Ramsay's thoughts. We get a succession of images, recollections and reactions, all in a matter of seconds. And there is a curious mixture of the past and present tenses to produce this effect. The intermingling of the present and future tenses also contributes to this mode of writing. (For reference, see pp. 93-96, first para to the last—'Oh, but she never wanted James to grow a day older or Cam either...people must have children.')

The reader of *To The Lighthouse* cannot overlook the part played by Mrs. Ramsay's knitting, Lily's painting, Mr. Ramsay's teasing of his youngest son, Mr. Bankes's watching of the workmen working and little James Ramsay's cutting of pictures from the illustrated catalogue of the Army and Navy Stores. Virginia Woolf uses these diversions, these

contacts with the day-to-day realities of life, to produce the maximum possible effect. A small incident, a mere ritual, any ordinary external happening, is enough to ring a bell somewhere in the mind and then memory starts moving back and forth. We get phrases like 'flashing her needles, confident, upright, she created drawing-room and kitchen, set them all aglow,' or a sudden movement or sound sending Mrs. Ramsay back to the past, or Lily's unfinished painting reminding her of Mr. Bankes and Mr. Ramsay, or little James cutting pictures and passing speechless judgements on his father, and so on. Virginia Woolf makes the best possible use of the linguistic apparatus at her disposal, exploring and calling to her service all the literary possibilities and structural freedom of the English language.

'SOUL-MAKING' IN '*TO A NIGHTINGALE*'

By V. S. Sethuraman
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Several critics have spoken of the logical difficulties in the *Ode to a Nightingale*. Most of these are due to certain elements which are in a state of apparent *discordia concors:* the note of melancholy towards the close—'the plaintive anthem'—as against the note of joy with which the poem begins; the desire to escape from death in stanza III as against the 'death wish' or even more positively the feeling that it is 'rich to die' in stanza VI; and lastly, the immortality of the bird in stanza VII.

To take the latest study of Keats's poetry, E. C. Pettet feels that 'an appreciation of some sort of break between the first two stanzas helps us to avoid the difficulty of those readers who feel that there is some contradiction between the general ecstatic mood of the poem and the plaintive anthem of the last stanza.' [*On the Poetry of Keats*, Cambridge, 1957, p. 261]. He would therefore take the first stanza as 'a somewhat detached prelude to which Keats returns at the end of the poem.' (Ibid.) Regarding the basic contradiction, the loving and loathing of death that underlies the central part of the Ode, he says: 'In the formal development of the Ode, there is an entirely satisfying line of continuity between the third and the sixth stanzas. But if we isolate these stanzas, they represent attitudes to death that are quite irreconcilable. Small wonder that in the confused perplexed last stanza of the Ode, Keats should describe "fancy" as a cheat. Like his own hero in *Endymion* he has been cheated "Into the bosom of a hated thing".' (*On the Poetry of Keats*, p. 274)

On the subject of the immortality of the bird the explanations so far offered are not very convincing and E. C. Pettet's own explanation is that 'recoiling from death, Keats is filled with a longing for something that is not transient and mortal; and this longing he pours into the transformed nightingale of his fancy.' (Ibid. p. 275)

A poem which has been praised so much must be a great poem, or else the poet has failed and it is no poem. It cannot be at once a flawed and a perfect ode. Is it possible that the defect is in our vision and not in the poem?

Such explanations as Pettet's are perhaps the result of a refusal to see in Keats anything more than a poet of dreams, longings, or at best a poet who shows an acute awareness of the inextricably mixed joy and sorrow of human life. Critics like Janet Spens go to the other extreme when they speak of the 'Eternal moment' in the Ode. [*The Review of English Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 11, July 1952 (New Series), pp. 234-43.] Keats is neither so simple nor so spiritually adept. He was an artist with his own achieved certitudes and intuitive perceptions. And this poem *Ode to a Nightingale* written at a crucial period in his life expresses what he but dimly perceived. He says, 'I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it....' (*Letters of J. Keats:* ed. H. E. Rollins, 1958, pp. 102-3).

The problem he was facing was the problem of death and human misery. Theology explains in a way the cause of so much misery in the world and offers its solution. Keats the poet has his solution and the poem, which is so closely related to the growth of his personality, communicates what as a poet he could achieve in the direction of converting this world into 'a vale of soul-making'. (Ibid.) The method that he suggests is 'to make the intelligence possess the sense of identity'. (Ibid.) 'How is this identity to be made?' he asks. 'Through the medium of the Heart.' 'And how is the heart to become this medium but in a world of circumstances?' (Ibid.) The letter stops there. But the poem renders unmistakably the partial success that he was able to achieve. The poem, in other words, presents the process by which this identity could be made and that short-lived 'fellowship divine', 'a fellowship with essence', realized. The identity here is a function of the creative imagination, which, as he would put it, makes the mind or intelligence possess this sense of identity and thereby become the soul. A transformation is brought about for the time being and the poet's attitude to things changes. But it is as short-lived as it is interesting.

The poem starts with a sensory experience of joy on hear-

ing a nightingale singing in full-throated ease. The poet has a flash of intuition which puts him in touch with the world of essence of which the nightingale becomes the symbol.

Then begins an attempt to *become* one with the bird and *be* the bird. What stands in the way is the senses and the dull brain. He therefore begins to think in detail of the various means by which he could seal the senses and make the mind passive and achieve self-forgetfulness. No vintage with all its associations of dance and music can give him this self-forgetfulness and identification with the bird which belongs to that order, the order of 'essence'. But in the process of describing and rejecting these devices he feels transported on 'the viewless wings of poesy' and the creative imagination does the miracle. The dull brain no longer retards and he feels the sense of identity with the bird: the poet has surmounted the difficulty.

He is no longer the hearer. He is the nightingale, the songster and the listener in one. He has, in fact, by this attempted unification of his self with the bird arrived at a moment when he would cease to be; and he sees death in general and his own death in particular in a new light. He understands it, accepts it and thereby transforms it. Death in stanza III meant agony, loss of beauty and loss of love. But now in this 'poetic state', as in similar contexts (in many a mused rhyme). [Cf. ll. 58ff. in *Sleep and Poetry*. The earlier work presents a less mature stage of his 'Voyage within'—the poet's self in abeyance: the Ode marks a farther stage when he is able to achieve 'a self-destroying oneness'.] it is not only 'easeful', which was the reason why he has been sighing for it, but it is the condition of his liberation, and of the enjoyment of a rich experience. He is no more the hearer but by identity the bird making the music. He is part of 'the bird-song' which the mortal part of him will not hear.

There are thus two kinds of 'voyages', to use the valuable distinction made by V. de Sola Pinto (*Crisis in Poetry*, 1955, p. 122). A voyage 'without', the poet trying to escape from the world which is neither living nor dead (Stanzas III and IV abound in spatial images of 'fading away', 'flying', 'charioted', 'on the wings', 'retards'), and there is a voyage within where

he attains a liberation from the limitations of his mortal self—a liberation which makes it possible for him to become one with the order where the nightingale belongs and contemplate with equanimity the death of his own self. The terms—'easeful', 'take into the air my quiet breath', 'to cease upon the midnight with no pain'—all indicate the passive act of withdrawal—and the phrase 'rich to die' is suggestive of the 'gain' accruing from the 'loss'—a kind of dying into a newer, vaster, richer order of existence, namely, the timeless order to which the bird belongs.

This stanza is most naturally followed by a description of that order. The references to the emperor and the clown, the sad heart of Ruth and magic casements opening on the perilous seas in fairy lands forlorn are significant. They are the great moments of secular life transfigured by the organizing imagination into things immortal, true and beautiful. As he is describing them he finds himself saying 'forlorn' which is a romantic attribute of fairy lands. But its ordinary denotation breaks in on him and brings him back to his 'sole self' because the experience fades. The loss of it makes the song sound 'plaintive' in his ears.

The evolution of the poem then may be figured as a convergence followed by a divergence, something like an hour-glass; the convergence of the two identities: Keats and the nightingale (the perceiver and the perceived); followed by a divergence. We start from the self of the poet yearning for identity and move to a state of self-destroying oneness and from that state of momentary identity back to his 'sole self'. The creative imagination helps Keats the poet to establish this identity. But it cannot bring him to the stable order which he calls 'the vale of soul-making'. It can give him only a glimpse of that state and a taste of that joy and that is what happens in the poem. It is then not the unity desired but a unification striven for, attained and lost.

IMAGERY IN HARDY'S '*THE DYNASTS*'

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Professor C. F. E. Spurgeon has defined the image as 'the little word-picture used by a poet to illustrate and embellish his thought'. (*Shakespeare's Imagery and What It Tells us*, p. 4). In Thomas Hardy's epic poetical play, *The Dynasts*, 1903, there are a few analogical systems which repeatedly embellish the thought-content. In the consideration of an image particularly in *The Dynasts*, the concrete object or the matter used for reference, is more significant than the implications or the subjective meaning. The latter is after all connected with the general Hardyesque view of existence, whether 'meliorist' or 'determinist'. In this note, certain dominant recurrent types of imagery are taken from *The Dynasts* and an effort is made to show how they contribute to the 'veritable tapestry of myth and purpose' (Amiya Chakravarty: *The Dynasts & the Post-War Age in Poetry*, p. 10) that the epic-play is.

In *The Dynasts*, there are three major systems of imagery building up the fabric of the epic-vision of Hardy:

1. Those images which originate from and refer to the analogy of *weaving and spinning*.
2. Images which belong to the *mechanical world*, to the allied world of *puppetry* and of *architecture*.
3. The numerous references to the world of deluded small insects and helpless animals.

These types of images are more concentrated in the frequent interludes of the Choruses of Spirits and abstract entities, the supernatural part of the epic-play. These entities represent the cosmic view, as against the earthly view of reality or 'spectacle conned closelier'. These three types of image build up by interaction this cosmic view. The 'weaving images' picture the way the various aspects of creation, the galaxies, the planets, the earth and life on it, are produced by the Immanent Will, Hardy's substitute for

the Primal Creative Power. In order of development come the next, those 'word-pictures' which bring visions of a universe organised and controlled on mechanistic basis, with wheels and cogs, and on the basis of lifeless dummies pulled by strings. It is within this universe that sentient organisms move about dreaming of a future, forgetting the 'knitter drowsed' who manipulates the show with 'skilled unmindfulness'.

The cosmic view of the universe—Hardy put himself, no doubt, in the position of the amused Spirits of the Overworld watching the drama of 'nescience' unfolding below—requires the use of expressive imagery. Humanity is referred to as 'one great net-work of tissue which quivers when one point is shaken like a spider's web if touched' (Edmund Blunden, *Thomas Hardy*, p. 109); the 'flimsy riband of Its web' which 'Time's threads so weave'. This frail fabric has designs which the Immanent Will works on it continuously:

> It works unconsciously, as heretofore,
> Eternal artistries in circumstance
> Whose patterns wrought by rapt aesthetic rote
> Seem in themselves its single listless aim
> And not their consequence.
>
> FORESCENE, p. 1

[All quotations are from *The Dynasts*, Poetical Works of Thomas Hardy, Vol. II, Macmillan, 1926]

Hardy builds up a magnificent analogy between the creative activity of the Immanent Will (the Immanent Will is Hardy's substitution for the old religious concept of a benevolent Father-God) and the weaving of senseless patterns by a 'knitter drowsed':

> Whose fingers play in skilled unmindfulness
> The Will has woven with an absent heed
> Since life first was, and ever will so weave.
>
> FORESCENE, p. 2

The activity of creation in the void of space is referred to in the concluding part of the play as the weaving of an enor-

mous cosmic web whose hem extends to galaxies and super-galaxies:

> Web Enorm
> Whose furthest hem and selvage may extend
> To where the roars and plashings of the flames
> Of earth-invisible suns swell noisily,
> And onwards into ghastly gulfs of sky,
> Where hideous presences churn through the dark—
> Monsters of magnitude without a shape,
> Hanging amid deep wells of nothingness.
> Part III, AFTERSCENE, p. 522

Whenever he contemplates his Immanent Will, Hardy's imagination instantly associates It with weaving. The following are expressions which illustrate this point:

(i) It wove Its web in that Ajaccian womb (referring to the birth of Napoleon) (FORESCENE: 2).
(ii) Will-webs of thy fearful questionings (p. 6).
(iii) The weaving will from eternity (p. 165).
(iv) Sound-artistry of the Immanent Will (p. 287).
(v) Ultra-stellar night-webs knit (p. 306).
(vi) A fabric of excitement, web of rage That permeates as one stuff the weltering whole (p. 344).
(vii) Speeds its spinnings in the Immense (p. 517).

Even in the Preface, Hardy is not free from this preoccupation with weaving and spinning, for he refers to History as a 'closely webbed development of character and motive'. He must have got this idea of Immanent Will weaving a web, from the Greek belief in the 'web of Fate', which faces dangers from Tisiphone, Megara, Alecto and Nemesis. Milton uses the same image in *Lycidas*:

> But the fair Guerdon when we hope to find,
> And think to burst out into sudden blaze
> Comes the blind Fury with th' abhorred shears
> And slits the *thin spun life.*
> (Ll. 73-76)

Next to the weaving and spinning analogies, the other

recurring picture is that of the machine moving on wheels in pre-ordained channels with its own laws. The Overworld Spirits behold the universe developed by the 'Prime-mover of the gear',—'the viewless, voiceless turner of the wheels', the universe with 'the wild dramas of the wheeling spheres', being the arena of the pitiful drama of 'frail ones':

> Hence to the precinct, then
> And count as framework to the stagery
> Yon architraves of sunbeam-smitten cloud
> So may ye judge Earth's jackaclocks to be
> Not fugled by one Will, but function-free. (p. 6)

Hardy, a professional architect in his early years, pictures the stage for human actions as supported on a beam (architrave) of clouds. *Jackaclocks* and *fugled* imply ideas of mechanics, the former of automation, and the latter the fugleman in the army who organises the mechanical movements of soldiers. There are many other references to machine-behaviour as 'clock-like laws':

> These flesh-hinged mannikins Its hand upwinds
> To click-clack off Its preadjusted laws. (p. 4)

Hardy is saturated with the idea of 'life's queer mechanics'. For him, there is somewhere a 'wheel' which drives the movements in the universe:

> That turns in some far sphere unlit
> The wheel which drives the Infinite... (p. 306)

Connected with this mechanistic view of the universe, is the idea of Puppetry. The Immanent Will is the 'rapt Determinator that neither good nor evil knows' in 'regal puppet shows':

> No less through regal puppet-shows
> The rapt Determinator throes
> That neither good nor evil knows. (p. 322)

The mighty figures of history such as Bonaparte are

marionettes who answer the pulls and not independent entities:

> You'll mark the twitchings of this Bonaparte
> As he with other figures foots his reel
> Until he, twitch him into his lonely grave. (p. 6)

The great episodes of history are merely 'unstudied piteous pantomimes':

> mechanic mimes
> These mortal minions' bootless cadences
> Played on the stops of their anatomy. (p. 253)

The Overworld view of earthly creatures is given by Hardy in terms of insects and other low creatures:

> . . . . the frail ones that his flings
> Have made gyrate like animalcula
> In tepid pools. (p. 6)

A vast army moving appears to the Overworld observer as 'this movement as of molluscs on a leaf' (p. 62), or as—

> An object like a dun-piled caterpillar
> Shuffling its length in painful heaves long. (p. 353)

Human beings are just as unimportant as 'meanest insects on obscurest leaves' and they are just 'flesh-hinged mannikins'. Napoleon himself is made to reflect on his career, almost at its peak, with the Grand Army on the banks of the Niemen on the fateful road to Moscow:

> History makes use of me to weave her web
> To her long while aforetime-figured mesh
> And contemplated charactery: no more. (p. 33)

'Weaving a web' is indeed the dominating image in *The Dynasts* of Thomas Hardy.

THE CRITICAL WRITINGS OF D. H. LAWRENCE

By H. S. Saxena
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The greatness of D. H. Lawrence as a novelist was established long ago, but there has been no serious assessment of his critical writings. [Dr. F. R. Leavis called Lawrence 'the finest literary critic of our time' (Review of *Phoenix*, *Scrutiny*, June 1937, p. 352) and recently in the introduction of his book, *D. H. Lawrence : Novelist*, remarks, 'He was a very remarkable literary critic—by far the best critic of his day,' p. 14]. This may be due to the popular belief that Lawrence suffered from violent personal prejudices and his judgement was spoiled by these. [It has been argued by some biographers that Lawrence wrote his attack on Galsworthy (1928), as the latter had once refused to help him as a struggling writer.] He had also made himself unpopular by fearlessly pointing out what he considered were the weak spots in the works of the most popular and admired novelists of his time. Much of what he said is easily acceptable today, and his acute critical intellect is being recognised. (Father William Tiverton has devoted an entire chapter to the critical writings of D. H. Lawrence in *D. H. Lawrence and Human Existence*, 1951, and Mr. Anthony Beale has edited a selection of his critical writings with an introduction, 1956) but the need of the hour is an attempt to relate Lawrence's stray critical remarks, made at different times and occasions, over a period of twenty years, in his reviews, essays and letters to his conception of a well-written novel. His attacks on his famous contemporaries, besides revealing his acute critical intellect, also throw some light on the essential qualities demanded by him in the novel, in technique as well as content.

A careful study of his essays on the novel and his adverse criticism of his contemporaries will show that these charges are not erratic, but are consistent with his attitude towards life and literature. There is a certain coherence in his statements, however crude and impolite the language

may be, which makes the charges of partisanship rather irrelevant. Part of his criticism arises from his own conception of what the novel should do, and is a defence of his deviation from the traditional form. Another important feature of his critical and creative writing is that it repeatedly affirms his faith in the importance of the novel. Even his general views on art are based mainly on the consideration of prose fiction, as he regards the novel superior to any other art form. The novel was to him 'the highest form of human expression so far attained.' (*Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, Martin Secker, 1934, p. 103). In his essay 'Why the novel matters', he declared:

> The whole is greater than the part. And therefore, I, who am man alive, am greater than my soul, or spirit, or body, or mind, or consciousness, or anything else that is merely a part of me. I am a man, and alive. I am man alive, and as long as I can, I intend to go on being man alive.
>
> For this reason I am a novelist. And being a novelist, I consider myself superior to the saint, the scientist, the philosopher, and the poet, who are all great masters of different bits of man alive, but never get the whole hog.
>
> The novel is the one bright book of life. Books are not life. They are only tremulations on the ether. But the novel as a tremulation can make the whole man alive tremble. Which is more than poetry, philosophy, science, or any other book-tremulation can do.
>
> (*Phoenix*, p. 535)

> And only in the novel are *all* things given full play, or at least, they may be given full play, when we realize that life itself, and not inert safety, is the reason for living. For out of the full play of all things emerges the only thing that is anything, the wholeness of a man, the wholeness of a woman, man alive, and live woman.
>
> (Ibid. p. 538)

> You can fool pretty nearly every other medium. You can make a poem pietistic, and still it will be a poem. You can write *Hamlet* in drama: if you wrote him in a novel, he'd be half comic, or a trifle suspicious: a suspicious character, like Dostoievsky's Idiot. Somehow, you sweep the ground a bit too

> clear in the poem or the drama, and you let the human Word fly a bit too freely. Now in a novel there's always a tom-cat that pounces on the white dove of the Word, if the dove does not watch it; and there is a banana-skin to trip on; and you know there is a water-closet on the premises. All these things help to keep the balance.
>
> (*Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, 1934, p. 106)

D. H. Lawrence was constantly asserting in his critical and creative writings that too much intellectualization is destroying the instinctual part of our nature. 'My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and bridle.' (*Letters*, p. 94) He was against the imposition of any rational pattern upon emotional inspiration and abhorred any self-conscious attempt to create a work of art. 'The touchstone is emotion not reason,' he says in the beginning of his essay on Galsworthy. 'We judge a work of art by its effect on our sincere and vital emotion, and nothing else. All the critical twiddle-twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo-scientific classifying and analysing of books in our imitation-botanical fashion, is a mere impertinence and mostly dull jargon.' (*Phoenix*, p. 539) He wrote in a letter to J. B. Pinker:

> Tell Arnold Bennett that all rules of construction hold good only for novels which are copies of other novels. A book which is not a copy of other books has its own construction, and what he calls faults, he being an old imitator, I call characteristics.
>
> (*Letters*, p. 295)

This letter was written in December 1915, and shows that from the very beginning of his literary career he had little respect for the literary fashion which in those days, was all for 'form' in the novel. He hated any kind of formula-writing and any self-conscious attempt to create a work of art was alien to his temperament. Even the artistic effects in his writings are not the result of deliberate and painful sentence and paragraph arrangements. Aldous Huxley, in a foreword

to a descriptive catalogue of Lawrence's manuscripts compiled by L. C. Powell says that 'The other significant thing, one notices, as one looks through these manuscripts, is the fact that there are practically no corrections. The script runs on, page after page, with hardly a blot or erasure.' (*The Manuscripts of D. H. Lawrence*, compiled by L. C. Powell and with a foreword by A. Huxley). Lawrence wrote by inspiration as though he 'was possessed by a daemon.' (Ibid. p. xi).

In his essay on 'The Novel', published for the first time in *The Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, Lawrence lists three essential qualities of the novel. The novel must be: 1. Quick; 2. Interrelated in all its parts, vitally, organically; 3. Honourable. In a 'quick' novel the 'purpose' or 'philosophy' of the writer is in harmony with his emotional inspiration. [Lawrence makes no difference between 'purpose' and 'philosophy', —a novelist's philosophy 'being a purpose on a higher level'. (*Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, 1934, p. 106)]. The tragedy of some modern novels is that they *die*, as the writer is untrue to 'his passional inspiration' and is dominated by a purpose, philosophy or stylistic preoccupations. In his essay on Thomas Mann, D. H. Lawrence disapproves of his craving for form in fiction:

> This craving for form is the outcome, not of artistic conscience, but of a certain attitude to life. For form is not a personal thing like style. It is impersonal like logic. And just as the school of Alexander Pope was logical in its expressions, so it seems the school of Flaubert is, as it were, logical in its aesthetic form. 'Nothing outside the definite line of the book', is a maxim.
>
> (*Phoenix*, p. 308)

Lawrence finds that Thomas Mann is worshipped in Germany as an artist rather than as a novelist. Mann was to him a disciple of Flaubert, who wrote one page in two days, working sixteen hours a day, and the result was that 'he stood away from life as from a leprosy.' (Ibid. p. 312). He is disappointed in Thomas Mann:

> Already I find Thomas Mann who, as he says, fights so hard against the banal in his work, somewhat banal. His expression may be very fine. But by now what he says is stale. I think

> we have learned our lesson, to be sufficiently aware of the fulsomeness of life. And even while he has a rhythm in style, yet his work has none of the rhythm of the living thing, the rise of a poppy, then the after uplift of the bud, the shedding of the calyx and the spreading wide of the petals, the falling of the flower and the pride of the seed-head.
>
> (Ibid. p. 313)

A self-conscious attempt by a novelist to fit his work into a conventional form might result in artificial plots and 'dead' characters. Lawrence explains this in a letter to Ernest Collins:

> These damned old stagers want to train up a child in the way it should grow, whereas if it's destined to have a snub nose, it's sheer waste of time to harass the poor brat into Roman-nosedness. They want me to have form: that means they want me to have *their* pernicious ossiferous skin-and-grief form, and I won't. (*Letters*, p. 87)

How sincerely he believed in this is evident from the fact that he repeats this in more or less the same language, while writing to J. B. Pinker, more than two years after his letter to Collins:

> You see a novel, after all this period of coming into being, has a definite organic form, just as a man has when he is grown. And we dont ask a man to cut his nose off because the public don't like it: because he must have a nose and his own nose too. (Ibid. p. 225)

In a letter to Edward Garnett, dated 1 February 1913, Lawrence made a very significant statement:

> It is time for a reaction against Shaw and Galsworthy and Barker and Irishy (except Synge) people—the rule and measure mathematical folk. But you are one of them and your sympathies are with your own generation, not with mine. I think it is inevitable. You are about the only man who is willing to let a new generation come in. It will seem a bit rough to me, when I am 45 and must see myself and my tradition supplanted .... But I don't want to write like Galsworthy nor Ibsen, nor

> Strindberg, nor any of them, not even if I could. We have to hate our immediate predecessors, to get free from their authority. (Ibid. p. 103)

A careful study of his charges against his predecessors will reveal what the nature of the new tradition was, which he so eagerly wanted to establish in the novel of his generation. The traditional novel up till the beginning of the twentieth century had depended for its development, on the external development of plot and character, but the new generation was becoming more and more interested in the plumbing of man's subconscious mind. 'Life in its undercurrents' was becoming more important than the obvious surface. It would be a mistake to think that Lawrence was the only novelist, who wanted to be free from the bonds of the conventional technique or to hate his immediate predecessors. James Joyce had also revolted against the tradition but he had broken the fetters, only to take on some more. The peculiarity of D. H. Lawrence lies in the adaptation of the plot, character, events and even description of nature to the new needs.

Lawrence was not altogether blind to the merits of Galsworthy, Thomas Hardy or E. M. Forster. In his essay on Galsworthy, he recognises that *The Man of Property* 'has the element of a very great novel', blames him for treating his characters on a purely social level, and concludes by accusing him of writing for money. Galsworthy had not the courage to be true to himself, so he 'gave in to the Forsytes.' (*Phoenix*, p. 542). Lawrence stresses courage and honesty throughout his critical writings. 'The world badly needs a few courageous artists,' he wrote to Mrs. Hamilton Eams on 15 March 1928, more or less at the end of his writing career, 'the present lot have their tails sadly between their legs.' (*Letters*, p. 712) These letters should be particularly read by those who think that Lawrence was only a writer of obscene books, who later took to painting as paint was a better pornographic material than ink. These letters also reveal his deeply religious temperament. 'One has to be so terribly religious to be an artist,' he wrote to Ernest Collins, when he was correcting the proofs of *Sons and Lovers*, and had just embarked on his writing career. In another letter he feels 'one ought to be

able to pray, before one works—and then leave it to the Lord.' (Ibid. p. 108).

D. H. Lawrence was a little more outspoken than most of his contemporaries. He sincerely believed that the novelist should be truthful and sincere to his 'passionate and emotional reactions, which are at the root of all thought.' (*Phoenix*, p. 350). *The World of William Clissold* by H. G. Wells appeared to him 'all chewed-up newspaper, and chewed-up scientific reports, like a mouse's nest' (Ibid. p. 350)—anything but not a novel. Lawrence rebukes E. M. Forster for seeing 'people, people and nothing but people'. (*Letters*, p. 606). He was also influenced by Thomas Hardy in his youth—particularly in his first novel *The White Peacock*. The influence is in the description of nature, the rural setting and in capturing 'the spirit of place'. But later, Lawrence detected his flaws and in his essay on Thomas Hardy reasoned out why Hardy's novels did not move him as a great tragedy should. Moreover, he considers Hardy a bad artist in the sense that his personal attitude interferes with the free development of his characters. In *Jude the Obscure*, he insists that Arabella is a pig-killer's daughter and it is she who drags Jude into pig-killing. In this way he adopts a false way of persuading the reader to share his contempt for Arabella, and tries to make her insignificant.

All these judgments were pronounced at different times, but the theme remains the same. Lawrence always pleads for a reassertion of 'the blood', and a denial of the intellect. 'We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true.' (Ibid. p. 94). The main concern of the novelist should not be the external development of plot and character, but the expression of feelings that keep on merging and bordering with the unconscious, and the state of awareness, that sometimes exists between two persons, having a sort of pull upon one another. Lawrence does not give us round or even flat portraits of his characters. His characters are aware of each other and 'electric currents of understanding' pass between them even when they do not speak a single word. In *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, he has been able to express these intimate, instinctive physical responses in words. His faith in the supe-

riority of the physical, instinctive and emotional life is one of the reasons for his preoccupation with sex, in which he found a gateway to something he could never clearly explain. He makes desperate efforts to restore a richer life to this Intellect-ridden world, and finds in sex a means to transport suffering humanity from the miserable ugliness of modern life—whether it will take us to Heaven or Hell, he never explains. His importance lies in the sincerity of his effort, even though the result may not be satisfying.

WHAT THEOBALD DID TO WEBSTER

By R. K. Kaul

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> Great *Tibbald* nods: the proud *Parnassian* sneer,
> The conscious simper, and the jealous leer,
> Mix on his look. All eyes direct their rays
> On him and crowds grow foolish as they gaze.
> (*The Dunciad*, 1728, II, 5-8)

In this article it is proposed to compare the verse of *The Fatal Secret* with that of its source, *The Duchess of Malfi*. My intention is not to draft a bill of indictment against Theobald. Critics from Pope to F. L. Lucas have already done that. My intention is to measure his performance by the standards of his age. That would be fairer than Clifford Leech's criticism. (*John Webster*, 1951, pp. 19-24).

It is best to concede at the outset that Theobald deserves most of the ridicule that has been poured on him over the centuries. He has been lashed, quite justifiably, for example, for such indefensible *pastiche* as Bosola's soliloquy in Act II, Scene i:

> *I'm here in double Trust;* yet, to be faithful,
> Must one way break my Faith; and leave the Path
> Of simple Virtue, which was never made
> To seem the Thing it is not—The hot Duke
> Bribes me with Gold to be his *Spy O' th' Time*;
> And I, to earn that Bribe, *Cameleon-like*,
> *Must suck in Air*, the Breath of Calumny:
> (*The Fatal Secret*, 1735, p. 12. Cf. *Macbeth*, I, vii, 12 and III, ii, 130 and *Hamlet*, III, ii, 98)

Nor is it possible to defend such lapses as:

> . . .for know, that Glory,
> Like Glow-worms seeming Fires, far off shines bright,
> But, closer viewed, has neither Heat nor Lustre.
> (*The Fatal Secret*, pp. 39-40)

Most critics however begin with the assumption that Theobald's play is a Jacobean tragedy *manqué*. In fact, of course, the composition of *The Fatal Secret* would have been gratuitous if Theobald or his audience had found Jacobean tragedy acceptable; the play is in the tradition of Restoration tragedy, which is not necessarily an undesirable form of composition. My effort is to show by means of comparison that Theobald's verse is as efficient a means of conveying his concept of tragedy as Webster's is for his.

The most obvious difference between the two plays from the point of view of the medium is that whereas Webster shifts from colloquial prose to gnomic or sententious rhyme, Theobald employs blank verse with a sprinkling of rhymes, to the exclusion of prose. The reason presumably was that Theobald did not wish to draw the attention of his audience towards the medium. It was assumed that blank verse approximated more closely to spoken language than rhymed verse and further that verse was more suitable to tragedy than prose.

Theobald's versification of Webster's prose however, is not incompetent. Consider, for example, Antonio's account of the Cardinal:

> Such Flashes of exteriour Gallantry
> May hang on him for Form; but, note him inward,
> And he's the sowr and melancholy Churchman.
> Where once he's jealous, he will lay worse Plots,
> Than Juno's Hate devis'd for Hercules
> To sink the Man his Foe;...
>
> (*The Fatal Secret*, p. 4. Cf. *The Duchess of Malfi*, I, i, 157ff., ed. F. L. Lucas, 1958. All further references are to this edition)

For such versification from prose Theobald has worthy precedents including Shakespeare.

Theobald's achievement as a versifier may be judged by the aims he set before himself. These aims may be deduced from his 'Preface'. He thus states the causes of his uneasiness with Webster's verse:

> He (i.e. Webster) has a strong and impetuous Genius, but withal a most wild, and indigested one. He sometimes con-

> ceived nobly, but did not always express with *Clearness;* and if he now and then soars handsomely, he as often rises into the Region of *Bombast:* his Conceptions were so *eccentric,* that we are not to wonder why we cannot ever trace him.

Theobald's main complaints are against the lack of clarity and the turgidity of diction in Webster's style. The lack of clarity is attributed to defects of expression and of conception. Presumably Theobald holds involved syntax, far-fetched imagery and mixed metaphors responsible for Webster's obscurity.

The point over which the modern reader must part company with Theobald is the alleged bombast of Webster. However much inflation there might be in Webster, he cannot be said to match the false heroics of Theobald. This is how the Duchess first admits her love for Antonio:

> There my throbbing Heart beats thick,
> And my distemper'd Thoughts recoil with Dread.
> What Tumult plays the Tyrant here within!
> The Conflict is too strong; it bears me down.
> My Bosom's one rough Sea, where varying Passions
> Shift, as the Clouds their momentary Form:
> Now Hope with Gleams of Sun-shine gilds the Storm:
> (*The Fatal Secret*, p. 12)

When Webster's Bosola receives gold from Ferdinand, he expresses his regret thus:

> your bounty
> (Which makes men truly noble) ere should make
> Me a villaine:
> (*The Duchess*, I, i, 295-7)

Theobald's Bosola amplifies the thought in orotund rhetoric:

> The Reflection
> Puzzles my Reason, why a Great Man's Bounty,
> That makes him truly Noble, or should do so,
> Must make the Man, on whom 'tis plac'd, a Villain.
> But there is Rhet'rick in this yellow Pleader,

To reconcile the widest Paradox;
And chain Conviction to Absurdity.
(*The Fatal Secret*, p. 8)

It will be noted, however, that this amplification is in the interests of clarity.

Theobald's attempts in the direction of clarity and cohesion are largely successful, whatever price he may have paid for them. He eliminated scenes and characters that do not carry the action forward. For example, Theobald's version does not have the scene of the pilgrims to Loretto (*The Duchess*, III, iv), or that of the mad-men (IV, ii, 65ff) or the Echo scene (V, iii). The Cardinal is not implicated with Julia. Theobald must have felt that the scenes between the Cardinal and Julia are digressions from the point of view of the main action.

This neatness is paralleled in the verse. Theobald jettisons parenthetical digressions. The movement of his thought is forward not sideways. For instance, Delio in the first scene of *The Fatal Secret* praises the French King (in Webster this speech is uttered by Antonio) because the latter:

quits first his Royal Palace
Of flatt'ring Sycophants; of such, whose Morals,
(Ibid. p. 2)

Theobald thereby weeds out a pun of dubious value:

Of flatt'ring Sicophants, of dissolute,
And infamous persons—which he sweetely termes
His Masters Master-peece (the work of Heaven)
(*The Duchess*, I, i, 9-11)

Theobald's success in achieving his aim can be studied in his version of Antonio's homage to the Duchess. Whereas in Webster the contrast between the brothers and the sister begins:

You never fix'd your eye on three faire Medalls,
(Ibid. I, i, 192)

in Theobald, the preceding line foreshadows the image of the medal:

> Ay, Delio, there's the Stamp of Heaven's Vicegerent.
> (*The Fatal Secret*, p. 5)

The involved syntax and the strained thought (*see above* 'his conceptions were so eccentric') of the following was omitted by Theobald:

> and wish (in wonder)
> She held it lesse vaine-glory, to talke much,
> Then (you) pennance, to heare her:
> (*The Duchess*, I, i. 196-8)

And who can say that Theobald was wrong? After all, if a play is intended to be immediately intelligible to the audience, it is surely justifiable to omit this conceit.

Theobald seeks consistently to reduce Webster's wildness to some kind of regularity. Not only does the action take place in a shorter time and a narrower space, the characters who perform the action are more consistent. In Webster, Bosola's character falls apart. His rôle as the commentator on the action clashes with that of the instrument of Ferdinand's cruelty. Theobald makes him more consistent. Moreover, Theobald's Bosola does not impersonate the tomb-maker and the bell-man. Ferdinand's madness is neither sudden nor unexpected; Theobald prepares us for it even if he borrows from Shakespeare's portrayal of Othello to make it seem probable.

The greater coherence in characterization is reflected in the verse. Webster's manner of portraying Ferdinand's madness is parabolic:

> Ferd. Looke, what's that, followes me?
> Mal. Nothing (my Lord).
> Ferd. Yes:
> Mal. 'Tis your shadow.
> Ferd. Stay it, let it not haunt me.
> Mal. Impossible; if you move and the Sun shine:
> Ferd. I will throttle it.

Mal. Oh, my Lord: you are angry with nothing.
Ferd. You are a foole: How is't possible I should catch my shadow unless I fall upon't?...

(*The Duchess*, V, v, 84)

Theobald interprets the symbolism of the shadow for his audience. The passage may have lost its parabolic richness but it has gained in moral emphasis:

Ferd. Why should a single Man
Be pester'd with two Shadows? Is't not enough,
The sportive Sun, in Mock'ry of our Beings,
Reflects the Image of our outward Substance;
But o'er-officious Mem'ry too within
Must light the Torch of Conscience, to present us
A Shadow of our Mind?—Blot out the Spectre:
Get me a Cloud dipt in Aegyptian Darkness,
Thro' which Reflection's Eye can find no Passage.

(*The Fatal Secret*, p. 53)

Nor is it very difficult to see the reason for changing Ferdinand's cryptic but powerful line in Webster:

Give me some wet hay, I am broken-winded—

(*The Duchess*, V, v, 84)

Theobald altered this part of Ferdinand's dying speech into:

...The keen Air
Pierces me through, and takes away my Breath.

(*The Fatal Secret*, p. 58)

thereby making it comprehensible on the first hearing or reading.

Theobald removed much of the macabre effect from Webster's play. The wax figures that Ferdinand uses to create horror in the Duchess are dispensed with. The elimination of disgusting imagery is in accordance with Theobald's general design. He obviously considered horror and revulsion out of place in tragedy. Webster's Antonio, in describing the Cardinal, compares 'the Spring in his face' with 'the

Ingendering of Toades'. (I, i, 159-60). This comparison was expurgated by Theobald. The Duchess in Theobald's play is not compared with 'a box of worm seede' or 'a salvatory of greene mummey'. (IV, ii, 123-4). Ferdinand's indictment of the world is not worded in Webster's language. Theobald thought that the following was out of key with a truly tragic atmosphere:

> I do account this world but a dog-kennell:
> (*The Duchess*, V, v, 85)

Since Theobald's intention was to alter the conclusion of the play so as to satisfy the requirements of poetic justice he must have considered such observations improper. If we consider it legitimate for a tragedy to demonstrate that:

> Thro' Means, beyond what Reason's Eye foresees,
> Wise Providence asserts its own Decrees:
> Making its Judgments, and Rewards, declare,
> That Virtue still is Heav'n's peculiar care.
> (*The Fatal Secret*, p. 59)

then it must be considered right for the dramatist to keep the stink of kennels and mummies and worm-seed out.

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The Indian Journal of English Studies is, for the present, being issued once a year but the Indian Association for English Studies, of which this Journal is the official organ, plans, in course of time, to increase the frequency of its publication.

The Editorial Committee welcomes articles on all areas and branches of English Studies of a high standard of scholarship, original investigations and independent and fresh thinking. Contributions, two copies of which are to be sent, must be neatly typewritten in double space on one side of the sheet only. References, based on standard editions of texts, must be placed at the end of the article and must be prepared in conformity with the *MLA Style Sheet*. Articles should be sent by registered post. The Editorial Committee's decision on the acceptance or rejection or modification of articles shall be final. Rejected articles will not be returned. Contributors will receive ten complimentary offprints and those who wish to buy additional copies, should inform Professor Bose at the time they send their articles. All articles intended for publication in the 1962 issue should be sent not later than the 15th July, 1962 to:

Professor A. Bose
Head of the Dept. of English
University of Calcutta
Asutosh Building
Calcutta 12

Subscriptions, advertisement enquiries and all other commercial correspondence are to be addressed to:

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To provide more space for articles than was possible last year, the Editorial Committee has been obliged to drop book-

reviews from the present issue but full-length reviews and brief notices will be accommodated in the 1962 issue. Books for review are to be sent to Professor Bose not later than the 15th July, 1962. The Editorial Committee however notes with gratification the appearance of the first number of the *Osmania Journal of English Studies*, a journal of English language, literature and philology. With Dr. Shiv K. Kumar as the editor and Dr. V. A. Shahane as the assistant editor, this journal is published by the Department of English, Osmania University. Several University Departments of English in India have in the past occasionally brought out collections of scholarly articles but the trend now is towards the publication of Departmental journals at regular intervals. The Bulletin of English Studies of the Department of English of the University of Calcutta is now a well-established journal and the current number of the Osmania Journal, rich in content and handsomely printed, testifies to the growing desire for research and original investigation in English Studies in the country.

Among the books received for review are: *Capell and Malone, and modern bibliography* by Sailendra Kumar Sen (Firma K. L. Mukhopadhya, Calcutta, 1960); *Galsworthy's Plays, a critical survey* by A. D. Choudhuri (Orient Longmans, Calcutta, 1961); *W. B. Yeats: his poetry & thought* by A. G. Stock (Cambridge University Press, 1961); *Hemingway* by Stewart Sanderson (Oliver and Boyd, 1961); *Faulkner* by Michael Millgate (Oliver and Boyd, 1961). The reviews will be published in the next number of the Journal.

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