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WRITER AND LANGUAGE

By H. V. George
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We think of our speech and writing as belonging to or at least as produced by ourselves. By analogy we conceive of Alexander Pope and Anatole France as originators of verse and fiction, doubtless superior to ours, but similarly produced. We speak of Wordsworth's *use* of the 'language of the common man' and Baudelaire's *choice* of images. Nevertheless there is a very ancient tradition of looking to the writer as a *vessel* into which a goddess breathes, or as the spirit of the State, or as even the unconscious 'mind' of the species. However, both views of the production of speech and writing imply the substance which is composed, the material which is handled; this too has an identity, which, though often disregarded when we compare X's use of it with Y's, is, perhaps, more significant than either.

This idea is not new. We cheerfully telescope countless, unnamed producers of implements into their 'ages': stone, bronze, iron. The history of civilization is, in a very real manner, a history of materials, competing, if we like to put it that way, for the maximum expression they can compel or coax men to give them.

On this view the material dominates, the language is master. So the poet[1]—'Henceforth no established form is recognized as a mould essential to the expression of poetic thought' —who 'threatens' the established, the recognized, but, successful, will himself be established, recognized; and probably with no such sense on the reader's part of drastic alteration—let alone disappearance—of form and mould.

Let us start with a statement of the obvious. Whatever the degree of freedom from established form, no Frenchman's work will be mistaken for English. *Finnegans Wake* is unmistakably English, *Saint Glinglin* French.

We can do more, however, than identify a writer's language; we can identify his 'period'. Indeed, unless we are taken in by pastiche, we shall probably be able to assign any previously

unseen piece of prose or verse to a particular period; and assuming that we do this without precise recollection, from previous reading, our assignment must be due to perception of features not under the control of the individual writer. If we have to specify what we mean by a period, I think we can be obliged to define it as a period in the history of the language. From such period-placing, neither John Milton nor Francis Quarles, neither Edward Gibbon nor Robert Orme has personal exemption. If we could set to one side our immediate conviction of an 'I' speaking and writing, we could extend our concept of the individuality of the *language* (English, not French; early, not late eighteenth century) to regard a library of English books as the record of the development of English, through *its* use of the 'vessels' whose names are on the spines of the books.

Suppose these gone, suppose all writers' names removed, suppose the books in a library completely jumbled, suppose all particular recollections disappeared from our memories. *One* kind of literary criticism might have perished but another kind would survive. We would soon start to *arrange* all our books again by *linguistic* criteria. A decade, and can one imagine that the books would not be very much in their present order?

In fact the imagined situation would merely be an exaggerated form of one we are familiar with. We have all followed accounts of the attribution of an unknown text, by elucidation of characteristic features, and inside the body of attributed works we have all come across problems of dating. Some discovered relationship, for instance, for Chaucer, the proportion of Romance to Teutonic words, changing in a regular fashion according (*a*) to length of the work, (*b*) to Chaucer's age, allows placing in a sequence, and from one or two known dates the interpolation of others.

We see then that there is no questioning the reality of our recognition of a particular language, recognition of a stage in the history of that language, recognition of particular placing of specimens of writing, within a period and within an author's work. I hope readers will agree that the individual *writers* did not deliberately assume responsibility for any of these three kinds of recognition on our part.

The three recognitions are based on statistical features of the language.

In case this statement seems a jump from what has gone previously, let us consider an immediate objection. A reader may grant that the proportion of Romance to Teutonic words is a statistical feature, to be established by counting, yet exclaim that we do not distinguish Chaucer from Coleridge by any such procedure, nor do we distinguish Dickens from Forster through the use of an adding machine: in the one case there are gross physical differences, and in the other differences of style.

However, would we not be able to define the physical differences in terms of occurrence of letter juxtapositions in contexts of letters? We could not say, for instance, that Coleridge's English is entirely free from occurrences of *yn*, but such occurrences are relatively infrequent; in Chaucer, of course frequent. Then Coleridge has *-es* as a recurring termination of words; but very infrequently compared with Chaucer. These are two of the gross physical differences. If we take the sum of all such differences, we have in fact the data for a statistical analysis, though we may not make it.

Similarly when we speak of stylistic differences, do we not mean that certain words, constructions, word-orders, sentence-lengths are more *conspicuous* in one writer's work than in the other's? That we may feel no need to make physical lists in no way disproves the statistical nature of the assessment. I may say a person is tall without taking a ruler to measure his height and the heights of the persons who are to justify this comparative statement; this does not alter the fact that measuring and averages are implicit in my estimate.

Professional linguisticians often think of a language as having its distinctive sounds, written representation, vocabulary and grammar. However, when we hear or see the language, we do not have equal experience of all the items of the sound system, the vocabulary and the grammar. For these to describe language, another distinctive feature must be taken into account, namely that the sounds, words and grammatical constructions have characteristic frequencies of occurrence: there is constant pressure—the habits of *our* experience—to use the sounds, words and constructions with more or less similar

frequencies to those with which they occur in *common* experience.

The poet's determination to have done with imposed poetic forms resulted in the placing of his work in a particular decade, and incidentally one that does not now seem outrageous or revolutionary. The control of the language over the poet would seem to be considerably stronger than that of the poet over the language.

However, an interesting side issue is raised: Could a writer having some technical knowledge of the statistical features of the language of his time *cheat*, so to say, by taking one part of the normally unconscious statistical aspects of language and establishing it consciously in his style?

An assiduous author might start by contriving short paragraphs—such as this—avoiding a particular graphic symbol; follow it up by noting various structural tricks—ways of avoiding past participial forms—and by constructing lists of synonyms; and thus build up a fairly full, practical vocabulary and syntax; but only an individual with a most unusual disposition would, I think, actually try to bring about a conscious distortion of statistical data in this way. (Do you know by now which common symbol I am proscribing and what statistical distortion I am introducing?)

It *is* possible then to cheat statistics, to one's individual satisfaction, in some small respect, and I have read somewhere of a novel without the letter 'e'! However, by the very nature of statistical data, such individual satisfactions are swallowed up or pushed to the periphery of things. In fact all statistical data include and presuppose such peripheral phenomena.

Observation of language statistics suggests that there exists a quite general statistical feature of the statistics themselves, namely, that the similarities are, at any level, and in any respect, far more numerous than the differences.

From this point of view, despite the impressions of language learners (who are trained to be conscious of the differences), European languages are strikingly similar in vocabulary, in word order, in grammatical construction, and in sound. A clever study by Gilbert Barth,[2] of the proportionate standing of the various Parts of Speech in English, French and Spanish,

shows definite tendencies for each language, but the really striking phenomenon is the amount of parallelism.

Inside a particular language too, between writer and writer, what is likely to predominate is similarity, and our training to observe contrasts and points of differentiation should not disguise this fact. We have to cross centuries before we notice striking proportionate dissimilarities. These, however, are extremely significant, and might well be primary stylistic considerations. In the 1890's an investigation showed that the average number of clauses per sentence had diminished from over five in Chaucer's day, to two; and that intermediate dates show an orderly succession of predication frequencies. During the same time, the proportion of simple sentences to the total number of sentences has increased, from 4 in every hundred to about 45 in every hundred. I think we may also state a parallel decrease in number of words per sentence, increase in the proportion of monosyllables, and increase in the number of homonymous words.

These, it must be repeated, are long-range changes. Between writer and writer at any one time we expect much less difference. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect of such differences as there are constitutes what we perceive as difference of style. How far this is perceptible against the background of general statistical uniformity we will now try to assess. Two books, close in time of writing, by 'dissimilar' novelists, will be set side by side with respect to one feature of their language, the verb-forms. They are *A Passage to India*, by E. M. Forster, and *Sons and Lovers* by D. H. Lawrence.

The estimated number of words in *A Passage to India* (hereafter PI) is 106,000 and its counted number of verb-form occurrences 14,904. The estimated number of words in *Sons and Lovers* (SL) is 164,000 and its counted number of verb-form occurrences 21,051. The proportion of verb-forms to total words is for PI 1 : 7.1, and for SL 1 : 7.8.

The counting was done following a schedule with about a hundred and sixty sections. These are grouped under four heads; plain stem (e.g. *count*), to + stem (e.g. *to count*), stem + -ed (e.g. *counted*), stem + -ing (e.g. *counting*). It is misleading to compare the actual numbers of occurrences, as the books are dissimilar in length. In the following tabulations, the total

number of occurrences in each book has been called 1,000 and the actual numbers of occurrences of particular items have been worked out as proportions of 1,000. In this way, a first direct comparison is possible. Here is the broad tabulation.

	PI	SL
plain stem . . .	380	230
to + stem . . .	86	82
stem + -ed . . .	460	584
stem + -ing . . .	69	100
Total (approx.)[3] . .	1000	1000

We see then that Forster uses more plain stem forms (15% more) and Lawrence more stem + -ed forms (12% more). Lawrence uses slightly more stem + -ing forms (3%). We will now look into the details of these main heads.

Plain Stem

There are 85 items in this section. In respect of most of these items there is no significant difference between the usage in these books. For instance, 25 in every 1000 verb-form occurrences in PI are accounted for by the Imperative; in SL 17; PI has 24 per thousand occurrences of Negative Imperative; SL 28 per thousand. There are, in fact, only four items with apparently significant differences, but two of them are among the most frequent verb forms in English. Here is a tabulation:

	PI%	SL%
Simple Present Actual .	120	52
Simple Present Neutral .	96	12
Simple Present Iterative .	11	6
'll + plain stem . .	1	12

We can make direct comparisons between these figures for PI and SL. But as the totals for plain stem items are different, 380 and 230, we may prefer to note Forster's much greater general exploitation of the Simple Present tenses, and then

express the individual items in proportion to each total Plain Stem figure. This does in fact reduce the apparent differences for all except the last item.

We will consider this first. In PI the contraction *'ll* appears in the proportion 1 : 380 and in SL in the proportion 12 : 230 or 1 : 20. We may guess that Lawrence uses the conversation form and Forster the formal one: *shall* and *will*. This guess is partly true. However, if Forster and Lawrence referred equally frequently to future happenings, then there would be correspondingly more occurrences of *will* and *shall* in Forster. There are fewer; 11% in Forster, 17% in Lawrence. Looking at the Present Progressive as an indicator of future, we see occurrences of 1% in Forster, 2% in Lawrence. We have then a significant difference. Lawrence's characters *are* more concerned with the future than Forster's.

Turning to Simple Present Iterative, we see that if the occurrences are expressed as proportions of the total plain stem occurrences, the apparent difference almost disappears: SL 11 : 380, or 1 : 38, and PI 6 : 230, or 1 : 40.

Two major items remain. Forster's use of Simple Present Actual is 32% of his total plain stem occurrences, and Lawrence's only 23%, and Forster's use of Simple Present Neutral is 25% of his total plain stem occurrences to Lawrence's 5%. These figures are significant.

A person who is accustomed to thinking that reference to *now* is through Present Progressive (Continuous) may wonder whether Lawrence makes up for the deficiency in Simple Present Actual occurrences by a larger proportion of Present Progressive occurrences. In fact the figure for this usage item is the same for both writers, five per thousand.

It seems certain then, that Forster's characters are more concerned with the present moment than Lawrence's; since the Simple Present Actual is especially frequent in references to people's actual thoughts, feelings, wishes and requirements, we might take this as evidence of more, or more decisive, conversation, more 'dramatization' of the moment, in Forster.

It is certain too that Forster's use of the Simple Present Neutral is significant, 25% of his plain stem usage compared with Lawrence's 5%. Statements using this verb form are neutral for time- statements of general observation or what are felt to

be general truths, e.g. the statements of one's likes and dislikes; let us say, statements of definite views on life, circumstances and people.

To + stem

The two writers use the form to + stem with similar frequency, Forster 86% and Lawrence 82%, so that frequencies of items in this main section may be compared directly. We notice one contrast which is probably significant: Forster's use of constructions with verbs, and Lawrence's use of constructions with verbs, and Lawrence's use of constructions with nouns.

Verb + to + stem is an item of fair frequency and wide range. Often the *to* is purposive (*Aziz came to help the guests over the rocks*). The gross occurrences represent 61% in PI and 46% in SL. The occurrence of noun + to + stem (*no need to cycle*) is: PI 2%, SL 13%, and of to + stem as a noun equivalent (*to be there was an exhilaration*) it is: PI 6% and SL 24%. One supposes that the verbal preference is the sign of preference for the dynamic; preference for the noun, a sign of the static, descriptive bent.

Stem + -ed

Lawrence's use of the stem + -ed form is 13% more than Forster's. That is to say, Forster's greater use of the Simple Present Actual and Neutral is counterbalanced in this area, and necessarily in the tense sections, since they alone could make up so large a number.

The proportion of Narrative Simple Pasts is not greatly different, PI 243%, SL 271% and viewed proportionately to the individual stem + -ed totals, the difference is reduced: in PI, the Narrative Simple Past accounts for 53% of stem + -ed occurrences; in SL for 55%.

There is, however, a great difference in the proportionate use of the Simple Past Actual: PI 42%, SL 129%. This is the use of the Simple Past form, not to push the narrative on a step, but to give contextual statement which, in point of time, is simultaneous with or overlaps a narrated happening (*Mrs Morel* took *the little girl down to the brook.... The water* ran *quickly over stones and broken pots.*) The proportion of description

to narrative is, in fact, much higher in SL. There is also a significant difference in the frequency of occurrence of the Simple Past Habitual (*He never* took *more than two slices of bread and butter to eat at the pit*): PI 4%, SL 53%. This is an indication of the extent in Lawrence, of direct description of people's customary behaviour.

On the other hand, participial stem + -ed is more frequent in PI (62%) than in (SL 33%). Participial stem + -ed is a significant stylistic feature, for a participle may express concisely what would otherwise be expressed in a clause.

Stem + -ing

The tendencies noted in the last section are borne out by the data for stem + -ing. The typical significance of stem- + ing is the aspect of duration. In PI, it accounts for 69% occurrences and in SL for 100. The constructions with verbs, (*She lay listening, People went scurrying about*) are three times as frequent in SL as in PI 31% : 10%) and distinctly more frequent as an adjective equivalent (*her moving, gleaming arms*) and as a noun equivalent (*it is hateful, their gloating*).

It is significant that the one item in this section which gives a strong lead to PI is stem + -ing as a free adjunct (... *he asked, speaking gently again, for...*), 21% : 7%. In proportion to the total stem + -ing occurrences, Forster gives five times as many as Lawrence to this construction. The significance in style is similar to that of the more frequent use of the participial stem + -ed (one in seven of Forster's stem + -ed occurrences is participial, one in 18 of Lawrence's) namely concision. Like a participial stem + -ed, a free adjunct stem+ -ing is a replacement for a clause predication.

Here, in one paragraph, are examples of adjective, stem + -ed and stem + -ing, each showing economy of conjunction and subject, and giving variety of form: *So touchy as a rule, Aziz was unassailable... Perched on his elephant, he watched... Mrs Moore slept, swaying against the rods of the howdah...*

I do not know whether one would think the statements elucidated above a sufficient acquisition of knowledge to compensate the labour of the enquiry. We have evidence for the 'presence' of Forster's writing, for its greater speed and dynamism, for Forster's greater willingness to allow general

statements to appear. We have evidence for Lawrence's greater accumulation of circumstantial detail, in description of places and the habits of people, the inclination of his characters to anticipation and retrospection, the lack of definition with respect to statements of feelings and points of view. We have reason, I believe, for judging Forster the finer exploiter of the syntactical devices giving economy and variety of expression, the more 'modern' of the two writers. All these conclusions might have been drawn impressionistically; this small essay into the statistical approach has the merit of linking the statements with the texts in a factual manner.

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1. Viélé—Griffin: Joie, 1889.
2. G. Barth: Recherches sur la fréquence et la valeur des parties du discours en français, en anglais et en espagnol. Didier, 1961.
3. There is another small section: Vicarious *do/did* etc. It is neglected in this study.

THE LANGUAGE OF POETRY

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The theme of this essay is a twofold inquiry: (1) How is the language of poetry different from the non-poetic modes? In other words, what is the differentia of poetic language? (2) And secondly, how does language function in poetry, or how do words become poetically effective? For purposes of this essay the terms 'poetry' and 'poetic' are used inclusively to apply to all imaginative literature.

The question of poetic language became an issue in the 19th century with the historic controversy centring round Wordsworth and Coleridge: Wordsworth's controversial statement that there is no essential difference between the language of prose and of metrical composition, and Coleridge's reply that both in respect of the selection of words and their order—their formal construction into sentences ('ordonnance')—there is and ought to be an essential difference between prose and poetry. Though Coleridge assumes that there is such a difference, nowhere does he clearly demonstrate how that difference may be the *necessary* condition for the existence of poetry. Even his famous definition, in Aristotelian terms, in Chapter XIV of *Biographia*: 'A poem is that species of composition' etc. offers us no explicit qualitative distinction between poetry and other 'species of composition'. The *whatness* of poetry and poetic language remains outside of Coleridge's definition.

Wordsworth's vital concern with language was shared after him by Hopkins, the Symbolists, the Imagists, Pound, Hulme, Eliot and others. On the question of poetic diction, of course, modern poetic theory and practice have supported Wordsworth's theory of common language or living speech, and moved away from the 18th-century exaggerated notion of distance between poetic language and common speech. For the contemporary poet there are no 'poetical' and 'unpoetical' words; and the distance between prose and poetry too has diminished. As Eliot has asserted: 'To have the virtues of

good prose is the first and the minimum requirement of great poetry.' Coleridge, of course, never claimed that poetic vocabulary was different from prose vocabulary, but he insisted that there was a *poetic* manner of combining words. This last notion of a special poetic mode of language seems to have prevailed with Hopkins and with modern poets in spite of their avowed aims to bring poetry closer to prose and capture in words the tones and rhythms of spoken language. Hopkins introduced into his poetry technical elements directly derived from prose usage. But his theory of 'inscape' and his definition of poetical language as 'current language heightened, *to any degree heightened*' led him to cultivate a mannerистic style. Hopkins was well aware of this and said: 'No doubt my poetry errs on the side of oddness.... Now it is the virtue of... inscape to be distinctive, and it is the vice of distinctiveness to become queer.' Since Hopkins, poets in the Symbolist-Imagist tradition have recognized that poetry is made of words, not of ideas and that the poet's problem is no less than to recreate language to make it capable of expressing an individual, personal reaction, to make it yield the maximum effectiveness. Ezra Pound thought of great literature as 'simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree.' For Hulme, the problem of the poet was to break the stiff general patterns of language, in which words tend to be used like dead counters, and bend language to express the poet's unconventional vision. 'Each word must be an image seen, not a counter,' Hulme said. Image is the very essence of the poetic language. The Image is the vortex of energy, the point of maximum concentration and expressiveness. T. S. Eliot has throughout his career been preoccupied with the poet's medium. The poet, according to him, must be able 'to force, to dislocate, if necessary, language into his meaning.'

Modern poetic theory, following in the wake of Hulme, Pound and Eliot, has set much store by poetic image, in the narrow sense of metaphor, and regarded metaphorical language as of the essence of poetry. As Cleanth Brooks has observed: 'One can sum up modern poetic technique by calling it the rediscovery of metaphor and the full commitment to metaphor.'[1] The main assumptions of New Criticism are revealed in such phrases as: 'The Language of Paradox', 'Irony as a

Principle of Structure', 'Poetics of Tension', 'Concordia Discors', 'Ambiguity', 'Implication', 'Levels of Meaning', 'Calculated Complexity', and so on. There is also the 'Archetypal' criticism which sees the meaning and function of literature as centrally present in myth and ritual. Though most of these concepts have to do with poetic perception rather than the poet's language, the language or the medium is often taken to be indistinguishable from the perception. But some of the terms like 'Ambiguity', 'Paradox' etc. are clearly linguistic modes, and are assumed to be central to the poet's language. Attention to the language of poetry and methods of analysing it were initiated by Richards and developed into a technique of semantic analysis by Empson. The modern linguistic (as distinguished from 'semantic') criticism (Russian Formalism and 'Stylistics') has 'conceived poetic language as a special language characterized by a purposeful "deformation" of ordinary speech by "organized violence" committed against it. They studied mainly the sound stratum of language—vowel-harmonies, consonant-clusters, rhyme, prose-rhythms, metre—and leaned heavily on the concept of the phoneme.'[2] Other attempts to study the structure and functioning of poetic language are represented by works like *Articulate Energy* (Donald Davie), which is a study of poetic syntax, *Poets' Grammar* (Francis Berry), and many other studies of 'poetic diction'. Works like Richards's *Philosophy of Rhetoric* and a recent book by Christine Brook-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor* assume that metaphor is the special poetic mode and they revive the ancient interest in problems of style raised by Aristotle, Demetrius, Longinus and Renaissance rhetoricians. In short, problems of poetic language have become the very hub of critical interest in our day and the evaluation of poetry is very often equated with the analysis of the language of poetry.

To the question whether there is a specifically 'poetic' use of language, both writers on aesthetics and semantics have attempted answers. There is Richards's famous distinction between 'scientific' and 'emotive' uses of language, though later modified by his theory of 'contextual meaning'; Kenneth Burke's 'semantic' and 'poetic' meanings; Allen Tate's 'extension' (denotation) and 'intension' (connotation). Owen Barfield suggests an antagonism between the poetic and the

rational principles and contrasts concrete vocabulary with the abstract. A linguistician like Whatmough (*Language*) enumerates four different uses of language: informative, dynamic, emotive, aesthetic. But this fourfold classification is really reducible to a twofold division of informative or referential and non-referential (emotive, aesthetic). Susanne Langer's distinction between 'discursive' and 'presentational' forms (*Philosophy in a New Key*) is also very helpful in describing the specific character of art in general, and of literature in particular. Literary language, being a presentational form, cares, not for the literal assertion made in the words, but rather for the way the assertion is made. The discursive use is the communicative function of the language, whereas poetic language is formulative; its product is verbal creation, not statement. But what are the distinct formal properties of this 'presentational' or non-referential language? The question is left unanswered. That there are two kinds of language, poetic and non-poetic, is also the main tenet of the Symbolist theory. Paul Valery believed that poetic language was different from prose, but what precisely is the formal character of this difference Valery did not show. He merely claimed that language in poetry had a different value: 'The poet makes use of words in a way quite different from convention or necessity. No doubt they are the same words, but they have not the same values.'

Sanskrit poeticians have grappled with the question of what is the soul or essence of poetry (kāvyātmā), and offered diverse definitions that the poetic essence consists in Rasa or relish, in Alankāra (ornaments or poetic figures), in Riti or Style understood as a special arrangement or combination of words, in Vakrokti or a striking mode of speech based on 'double entendre', in Dhvani or suggestiveness. Nearly all these theories assume that there is a special poetic use of language, and that poetic language possesses certain distinct virtues. According to Sanskrit semanticists there are three different meanings of words: (1) the expressed meaning is the word's denotation; (2) the indicated meaning; (3) the suggested meaning (Vyānjanā). The denoted meaning is what belongs to the word by convention. Indication arises where the primary meaning of the word is incompatible with the rest of the sentence. The third power of suggestion arises when the first two

functions of the word are exhausted and a further meaning is caused to be thought of. In spite of their varying emphases, the Sanskrit poeticians, on the whole, are agreed on the point that suggestion is the chief element in the arousal of the peculiar poetic delight.

In accepting this twofold distinction of language into referential, denotative (non-poetic) and non-referential, connotative or suggestive (poetic), we must ask three questions. (1) If poetic language is purely connotative or suggestive: may language not be used denotatively in (some) poetry? Is all poetry necessarily oblique, ambiguous, startling, and a deviation from ordinary patterns of expression? (2) Even granting that poetic language is very often suggestive: how does it differ 'formally', i.e. in the matter of grammar, diction and syntax from other language? (3) How do poetic figures etc. which are the stock-in-trade of most poetry everywhere function in creating poetic meaning? Or how do words 'take effect' as poetry?

To the question: Is the poetic use of language necessarily non-referential? we must answer that in poetry, at least in some good poetry, direct statements may occur and words may be used for their denotative meaning. Shakespeare and Donne are replete with generalized sententious statements, and conceptual statements played a large part in the Elizabethan and Metaphysical lyrics. A close examination of a Shakespearean sonnet or a Donne poem will reveal that its meaning is founded on a central argument, conceptually stated, and that the concept or the analogy proceeds from the argument and serves to make it luminous. The 'stated' argument is thus the basis of the meaning in the poem. Any Donne poem will bear this out. In the sonnet of Shakespeare: 'Let me not to the marriage of true minds/Admit impediments', the bulk of the poem consists of the 'stated' argument; the first and the last four lines state the argument, and the metaphors in the middle six lines illumine the idea. But the rhetorical force of the 'stated' part of the poem is unmistakable. A lot of good poetry everywhere has contained large generalizations on life; delight in the contemplation of universals has been an important element in the poetry of all ages. Such are some of the best known lines of Shakespeare, Milton and Pope.

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

(Shakespeare)

The mind is its own place and in itself
Can make a Heaven of Hell and a Hell of Heaven.

(Milton)

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan;
The proper study of Mankind is Man.

(Pope)

Let us consider a few other lines. No one will doubt the poignancy of the last line of Wordsworth's *Michael*:

And he never lifted a single stone.

Here the words are used in their bare literal sense. This is a simple, direct statement linguistically indistinguishable from common speech. Yet in its context it acquires an intensity of expression exceeding its informative character. Another such informative statement is the line in *Macbeth*: 'The queen, my lord, is dead', which despite its simple referential character, in its dramatic context becomes so powerfully emotive that it sets Macbeth on a startling outburst in the famous speech following it. But these lines are taken, the one from a narrative, the other from a play, which have a dramatic plot. How about poems which have no apparent plot-structures? Consider the simple, precise statements of this short Chinese poem:

The sound of her silk skirt has stopped,
On the marble pavement dust grows.
Her empty room is cold and still,
Fallen leaves are piled against the doors.
Longing for that lovely lady
How can I bring my aching heart to rest?

The poem is a literal statement without any Empsonian richness of implication, employs its words denotatively and is indistinguishable in grammar, diction and word-order from prose. The order is logical and the circumstances narrated are literally true. But what has charged it with its evocative force? The poem presents a picture of inner and outer dreariness and follows the movement of feeling indicated by the last line. The images of the dusty pavement, empty room and fallen leaves are not the so-called 'poetic images', nor are they symbolic in any sense, but literal events of experience. Or consider the sublime passage from *Tintern Abbey* beginning with the words 'that blessed mood', or Shelley's

> One Heaven, one Hell, one Immortality,
> And one annihilation. . . .

in which the words are used literally, but possess poetic virtue as 'value words'[3] representing concepts and feelings universally regarded as valuable. Most of the vocabulary of 'Romantic assertion' is of this type, rhetorical, affirmative and direct. And its language is best suited for its vision.

As for the question whether the language of poetry has any distinct formal structure: deliberate violation of normal grammar and syntax has been assiduously practised for stylistic purposes by poets at all times, but in modern poetry they have become a matter of cult in mannerists ('tightrope-walkers') such as Hopkins, Mallarmé, Auden, Cummings, and let us add, James Joyce in prose. Mathiessen is voicing the belief of many modern practitioners when he says that all versification 'is essentially a disturbance of the conventional language.'[4] But though this may be so, such aberrations are not necessary for poetic expression and undoubtedly much good poetry has occurred without them. On the whole, it would seem that poetry does not require a special technical diction as its medium is the living speech, nor does it require a special grammar or syntax'.[5] All the modes of meaning, features and functions of ordinary discourse are employed by poetry, and conversely certain devices considered peculiar to poetry are also found in non-poetic language.

Francis Berry, in a recent book, *Poet's Grammar*, investigates

the poetic function of certain grammatical forms and inflections. Berry's method of enquiry is indicated by some chapter-titles like 'Pronoun and Verb in Shakespeare', 'The Metaphysical Craft of the Verb', 'Shelley and the Future Tense' etc. For instance, Berry observes that Marvell's 'To His Coy Mistress' is a deliberate exercise within the limits of the Subjunctive. Berry's method can at best describe the grammatical features of a poet's language, for example, by tracing the verb movement in Keats's 'Nightingale' from an initial Indicative to a Subjunctive and to a final relapse into the Indicative. But it does not say why the grammatical forms of a poem contribute to its effectiveness. This point can be determined only by asking whether the grammatical form is appropriate to the theme. The 'Coy Mistress' is a good poem not because it is a deliberate exercise in the Subjunctive Mood, but because the Subjunctive describes faithfully the idea or feeling of the poem. Similarly, Donald Davie's study of the poetic syntax has shown that syntax can be a chief source of poetic pleasure, but it does not say that there is a special 'poetic' syntax. It must, of course, be conceded that in poetry certain orders of arrangement occur more frequently than in prose; there is a more controlled and elaborate grouping of words into formal patterns, and a greater selective process than in the comparatively mechanical and automatic vocabulary of non-literary discourse. Poetry also exploits certain stylistic devices more fully than non-poetic language and deploys the resources of meaning. But as Whatmough has observed, 'these are not poetic in the technical sense. In fact, prose constantly shows features which are commonly believed to be peculiar to poetry.' There is constant overlapping between the poetic and non-poetic uses of language.

As there is no such thing as a 'poetic' language, either as a diction or as a mode of sentential meanings, all language must be regarded as 'potentially' a poetic language. Poetry, then, makes the common forms of language function more effectively than they do in ordinary discourse, but in ways not at all foreign to common discourse. But the poetic mode of language may be differentiated from the non-poetic in the following ways:

1. *By its purpose:* Is it intended to convey information

'discursively' or 'present' something with a view to producing specific effects, to arousing attitudes, responses and so on?

2. *By its mode:* which is 'presentational',[6] that is, it presents action dramatically; it mimes or imitates action, creates an illusion or semblance of life or a 'virtual experience'. In other words, it is a fictional mode. This applies not only to the regular dramatic forms of expression, but even to those which have no recognizable fictional form, such as lyrics etc. which may seem to speak of 'actual' experience. For, in imaginative composition it is not the 'actual' experience that is presented, but a 'semblance' of it—aspects of feeling or perception, or psychological events—that are potentially experienceable. Thus Wallace Stevens's 'Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird' or Wordsworth's *Prelude* (which is non-fictional reflective verse) are as much in the 'presentational' mode or are 'imitations' of action as a play of Shakespeare.

3. How do words 'take effect' as poetry? By the purpose they are made to serve (No. 1), by their mode (No. 2) and by their Context, which makes them function in a 'presentational' way and achieve specific effects. The principle of Contextual Function[7] which is applied in explaining the operation of musical forms and words in a composition—that they tend to 'interanimate' or change each other's character in combination—may be applied to problems of stylistics. Language functions stylistically in a context, which is the style-creating context, and acquires poetic meaning and force and becomes a dramatic 'gesture'.[8] Every poem, long (such as *Paradise Lost*) or short (such as Herrick's 'Poetry of Dress'), establishes its own dramatic context or situation.

William Empson (*Structure of Complex Words, Seven Types*) has attempted elaborate and sometimes over-ingenious analyses of the structure of 'complex words' in poetry. Though he shows by descriptive analysis how meaning functions at different levels and through ambiguity and implication enriches the poem, he does not stop to inquire fully what the source of poetic meaning is. Poetic meaning is contextual, and Empson at some places in his inquiry seems merely to have assumed it, without caring to discuss its importance. The range of meaning of a word, its suggestive power as well as 'delimitation', is determined by its context, which includes

drift, tone, speaker, gesture, emphasis etc.[9] Consider a few complex words. (1) 'Red' in the context of traffic lights, in a political context, in 'red-rag', 'red light district' etc. (2) 'Honest Iago': here the irony is not in the word, but arises from the context of the drama. (3) 'Brutus is an honourable man': study the changes of tone in the successive uses of the phrase in the course of Mark Antony's speech. The shift in the context indicates the shift in the meaning—from a plain acquiescence in the statement, an ironical suggestion that Brutus is not honourable, to an outright repudiation—this in turn suggesting a tone of voice appropriate to the shifting meaning.

Similarly, all other stylistic devices become effective only in the context of the individual composition. They are valuable only as 'heighteners' of meaning and not for their own sake. For example, a pursuit of poetic figures like metaphor and antithesis for the sheer joy of it will only stultify expression: (witness some plays of Christopher Fry). Metaphor, rhetorical figures, syntactical patterns, and all devices for securing emphasis or explicitness gain their expressive value in the context of the specific expressive intentions of the work, and not as independent linguistic forms. For example, the same device or figure like irony or antithesis may be adapted to different meaning-tones: sublime, comic, tragic etc. Hence the chief concern of Stylistics should be to define the specific aesthetic character, function, and meaning of the linguistic system of a work. But in doing this a merely descriptive or statistical account of its various linguistic traits, its phonological and grammatical features will not help interpretation, for stylistic devices have specific expressive functions and can be analysed only in terms of the aesthetic aims of the work and the effects it is trying to produce.

The foregoing observations have important 'critical' consequences and suggest a set of criteria for literary appraisal. 1. Any criticism of poetry must take into account the purpose which the individual composition sets forth for itself. If the composition achieves its set purpose it must be adjudged good, and if it fails to achieve it it must be bad. For example, sticklers for dramatic method should not condemn *Tom Jones* as it breaks dramatic illusion, for Fielding's method is

eminently suited for the kind of objectives he is trying to achieve.

2. The merits of poetry depend on many factors in interrelation, such as appropriateness of tone to theme and dramatic context. Hence it is illegitimate to take any single device, such as metaphor or irony as the sole criterion of excellence in poetry. There can be no universal theory of poetic excellences and blemishes (*guna* and *dosha*, as the terms of Sanskrit Poetics go), for the sole determinant of these excellences or blemishes is their function in a given context. In the words of the author of *Sahityadarpana* ('Mirror of Composition'), a distinguisted text of Sanksrit Poetics, excellences, ornaments and styles are the causes of its (the composition's) elevation, and faults are depressors thereof. In other words, poetic merits are those that are the most appropriate in the circumstances of the poem and contribute most to its theme, and blemishes are those that do not function effectively in their context. Faults are sometimes no faults and may even be positive merits, and conversely, an excellence like a figure may be misplaced in its context and detract from, instead of contributing to, the poetic purpose.

Yet failure to recognize this principle and devotion to exclusive poetic creeds have resulted in our day in a kind of critical tyranny. Most modern practitioners of criticism merely apply cliches to their appraisal of works. There is Cleanth Brooks who must hunt for paradoxes in poems (even in the most unlikely spots, in Wordsworth, for instance) in order to find them good, and finds them good if they contain paradox; Empson for whom poetry must be ambiguous; Richards who sets an absolute value on 'dialectic or polar tension', and for whom all good poetry must bear an 'ironic contemplation'; there are the 'archetypal' maniacs who must search, even in vain, for myth, ritual, archetypal patterns and the like; last but not the least are the symbol hunters who are prone to find a bear behind every bush, who have devastated vast areas of dramatic criticism by reducing human characters and sometimes whole dramas to poetic symbols. Even Eliot is not the least guilty of those who have encouraged extreme attitudes and brought about a certain distortion of values. His impersonalist theory of art and his exaggeration of

'metaphysical' virtues in poetry has led to a large-scale denunciation of the 'Romantic Tradition' by our age. The 'continual extinction of personality' may be sometimes a virtue, and it certainly is a Christian virtue, but a poetry of personality is perfectly possible, and it attains its acme of lyrical utterance in the poetry of Walt Whitman. But to Eliot, Whitman is an anathema. New Criticism, whatever its contributions, has virtually banished genuine enjoyment of literature and substituted it by a credo built on clichés, prejudices and preconceptions.

3. Appraisals of poetry should recognize that there are different kinds of goodness in poetry and that poetry can be good in different ways. To say that all good poetry must be 'metaphysical', or that it should be a structure of tensions and resolutions, or that it has no emotions or personality to express, is to express a personal preference, and not to set up criteria of poetic excellence. The poetry of tension is not the only kind of poetry. Tension may be desirable in certain modes of expression, but not so good in others. A poetry of affirmation, like Whitman's or Wordsworth's, has little use for irony and the like; a language of 'assertion', rhetorical, declamatory, reiterative, best suits its apocalyptic visions. Metaphysical poetry, whenever it is good, represents just one kind of goodness in poetry, and is good not because it is metaphysical, but because it successfully adapts its chosen mode to its theme and purpose.

4. Another extreme attitude towards the question of the language of poetry is represented by the fallacious notion that language being the mode of its very existence, poetry is concerned with the exploration of a linguistic realm of experience. This very erratic theory, originating in anti-expressionist theories like the one represented by Eliot's statement that 'the poet has not a "personality" to express but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality', makes out that art is but an exploration of the medium (for its own sake, presumably). The fallacy of this position is perceived easily when we say that a manipulation of words as an end in itself can only produce jabberwock, witness *Finnegans Wake*, as a pursuit of colours as its own joy has resulted in some of the most imposing kind of nonsense in

some modern abstractionist painting. We assume here that the whole meaning and purpose of art is not the pursuit of a medium, but the creation of a meaningful pattern of human experience and that the medium (any medium) is what it achieves this end by. Art, of course, involves an exploration of the medium, but it is an exploration not of the medium as a mode of creation, but of its resources, its expressive capabilities.

5. As poetry, like all art, renders human experience, its success must finally depend on the fidelity with which it reflects the morphology of its experience, or follows the 'form of thought'[10] in the poet's mind. Hence the only valid criterion for its appraisal is the criterion of 'appropriateness'.[11] And as 'appropriateness' obtains relatively to the purport of the individual composition or the expressive intentions of its author, no single poetic style or mode can be set up as a model of excellence. The aim of the critic should rather be the discovery of the 'shaping principle' of the work of art—the end towards which its energies are directed—which alone must provide justification for its chosen mode. A confusion between poetic ends and poetic means is the worst kind of confusion that can overcome a literary critic, and will only result in the type of critical dogmatism that is current in our day.

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1. 'Irony as a Principle of Structure', *Literary Opinion in America* (New York 1951), ed. M. Zabel, pp. 735-7.
2. Rene Wellek, 'The Main Trends of Twentieth Century Criticism', *Yale Review*, Autumn, 1961 (102-18).
3. I borrow this very interesting concept from R. A. Foakes: *The Romantic Assertion* (London, 1958).
4. *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, p. 86.
5. See *Poetic Discourse*, I. C. Hungerland (California, 1958).
6. Here I have accepted Susanne K. Langer's theory of Art and her distinction between 'discursive' and 'presentational' forms as the most satisfactory for a theory of art. See her *Philosophy in a New Key*, *Feeling and Form*, and *A Theory of Art*.
7. Cf. Richards's theory of contextual meaning: *Philosophy of Rhetoric*. Also the Indian Nyaya theory of 'Purport'.

8. Cf. Blackmur: *Language as Gesture.*
9. The Sanskrit theorists recognize this.
10. Cf. Eliot: 'fidelity to thought and feeling', in 'Metaphysical Poets'.
11. 'Auchitya' or appropriateness is a central regulative principle in Sanskrit Poetics from Bharata through Anandavardhana to Kshemendra, who elaborated the doctrine into a system of criticism. Auchitya, as understood by the Sanskrit theorists, is the harmonious adaptation of *poetic means* (word, sentence, grammar, syntax, figure, image etc.) to the *poetic end* (conceived as the arousal of aesthetic relish—gustation or *Rasana*). Propriety or Decorum was also the basic literary desideratum during the Renaissance; it was the most pervasively influential of all critical concepts. It emphasized a decorous or efficacious relationship between language, image etc. and the poetic 'cause'. See Rosamond Tuve: *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery* (Chicago, 1947).

THE MORAL CONFUSION IN CHAUCER'S *TROILUS AND CRISEYDE*

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Troilus and Criseyde continues to defy all attempts towards a coherent understanding of its meaning. In recent times, two papers have been published—S. Nagarajan's 'The Conclusion to Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*'[1] and John P. McCall's 'The Five Book Structure in Chaucer's *Troilus*'[2] which are interesting because the conclusions reached in the two papers are diametrically opposed to each other. McCall attempts to show a structural and thematic parallelism between Boethius's *Consolation* and *Troilus and Criseyde*, and reaches the conclusion that 'the Consolation and the Troilus are companion pieces which go hand in hand'. *Troilus*, in this view, becomes a Christian poem full of philosophical import, with Troilus as the central figure and Pandarus as the Arch-Tempter. Nagarajan, on the other hand, asserts that the love described '*is* beautiful', but that since this love is impermanent the narrator concludes with the advice that we should seek celestial love. Both the commentators, from their different standpoints, decide that the concluding stanzas are an integral part of the poem. There is a third view. Subscribing to Nagarajan's thesis that from first to last the story praises love, it sees, however, in the concluding stanzas, a formal retraction which has nothing to do with the story itself—an unconcealed personal address by Chaucer.

These various approaches cannot be reconciled with each other. To understand, and accept or reject any or all of these theories, therefore, it is necessary to return to the poem. To begin, however, with the theories themselves.

The point of Nagarajan's paper is to show that the concluding stanzas are an integral part of the poem, but I am not sure whether he has approached the problem from the proper angle. He begins with an analysis of the story and then declares that the ending is a natural conclusion to what has gone before. As he himself admits, the evidence is negative.[3]

His 'positive' argument is somewhat vague. He quotes at random another passage—I, 44,301 ff. (in Root's edition which he has followed) and adds: 'I hear the same voice speaking in both passages'.[4] It would perhaps be worth while to find more 'positive' evidence first. If such evidence, by itself, convincingly establishes the last stanzas as a part of the story proper, we can then approach the whole poem from this angle and so attempt an explanation.

In the 14th century formal retractions were frequent as conclusions to poems. Of this we have ample evidence. A list of possible precedents for Chaucer's Retractions has been supplied by Tatlock.[5] To this, Tatlock later added[6] the retractions near the end of the prologue to Vincent de Beauvais's *Speculum Universale* (Strassburg, 1473?) as one of the most obvious of Chaucer's precedents. Boccaccio in his prose romance *Ameto* ends the chronicle of social scandals by sublimating the characters into theological and cardinal virtues. Most of the tales in *Canterbury Tales* have some sort of pious ending, e.g. the conclusion to the *Man of Lawe's Tale*.

> 'Now Jhesu Crist, that of his myght may sende
> Joye after wo, governe us in his grace,
> And kepe us alle that been in this place! Amen.'
> (*C. Tales* II (B), 1160-2)

And after the *Parson's Tale* comes Chaucer's own Retraction.

But all this accumulated weight of evidence does not necessarily by itself prove that the so-called epilogue in *Troilus and Criseyde* is 'outside' the poem. Tatlock himself has admitted that there is a certain artlessness in this kind of unexpected and arbitrary reversal.[7] The point is this: Are we to suppose that a writer such as Chaucer was, would accept an artistically clumsy convention without trying to create a semblance of unity? That, after all, is one of the marks of the man of genius, that he takes the conventions of his age and transmutes them into a unified creation of his own. The Fool appears on the Elizabethan stage to tickle the audience, and the scenes in which he appears invariably break the artistic unity of the play. Shakespeare retains the convention, but completely transforms it. In the case of Chaucer himself, we see his shaping genius at

work in the *Canterbury Tales*. It was a common enough device of his day to string together a number of tales. What a sense of artistic unity is revealed in the way Chaucer has welded his various tales together to create a single unified poem! More immediately relevant is the treatment by Chaucer's contemporary—the moral Gower himself—of this very same device of retraction in his *Confessio Amantis*. The dramatic revelation of the Lover's age at the end by Venus—

> 'Forthy my counseil is, that thou
> Remembre wel, how thou art old.'

—leads very naturally to the final retraction (*Confessio Amantis*, VIII, 2488-9). There is thus no break in the artistic continuity of the poem. What Gower was able to accomplish, Chaucer surely could do just as well if he so desired. We may, therefore, dispense with the argument that because many of Chaucer's contemporaries used a clumsy device, Chaucer also would use the device in the same clumsy way.

As has already been noted, most of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales* conclude their stories with a similar pious wish. But these are clearly adapted to oral delivery, not a literary convention at all, and this very popular 14th-century habit has in fact been deliberately imitated by Chaucer to heighten the realism of his presentation of the pilgrims.

There remains the final Retraction at the end of the *Tales*. This admittedly *is* outside the poem. But with what careful precision has Chaucer made its position clear! Quite unmistakably, the 'I' of the tales, i.e. Chaucer the pilgrim, and the 'I' of the Retraction are two different persons. The characters are different. The Chaucer who beseeches Christ and his blissful Mother to send him Grace to bewail his guilt is not the same Chaucer who 'semeth elvyssh by his contenaunce' and who 'lookest as thou woldest fynde an hare, /For evere upon the ground I se thee stare' (*Canterbury Tales*, VII, 703, 696-7). There is no such clear distinction in characterization in *Troilus and Criseyde* between the 'I' of the narrator in the five books, and the 'I' of the concluding stanzas. 'Go, litel bok' is the voice of Chaucer the 14th-century poet, but can we prove that an earlier passage in Bk. II—

'Forwhi to every lovere I me excuse,
That of no sentement I this endite,
But out of Latin in my tonge it write.
. . . . . .
For as myn auctour seyde, so sey I'. (II, 12-18)

—can we prove that this passage is not?

Again, in the *Canterbury Tales* the Retraction has a separate heading. There is a break at the end of the *Parson's Tale*, followed by the heading 'Here taketh the makere of this book his love'. Such a heading is not unusual in medieval poetry. One such heading, a single word such as Epilogue, Palinode or Retraction would have sufficed to separate the final stanzas of *Troilus and Criseyde* from the rest of the poem. As we read it, however, there is no break. 'Go, litel bok' comes after a general address to all his readers,

'Beth war of men, and herkneth what I seye!'
(*T. & C.* V, 1785).

Then after two stanzas Chaucer returns 'to purpos of my rather speche' (1799) and describes Troilus's death, followed by the flight of his soul (1800–34); then he turns and addresses his readers for a final admonition. How, when and where are we to draw the dividing line, the change from the narrator's voice to Chaucer's?

The break in the *Canterbury Tales* is made even more obvious by the list of the poet's works (*C. T.* X, 1085 ff.), in which even 'the tales of Caunterbury, thilke that sownen into synne' are mentioned. No such list of retractions appears in *Troilus and Criseyde*, no such reference to the poet's earlier works, which would have created the impression of detachment, the artist reviewing his work from outside.

But even if the suggestions made so far be rejected, there is another point to be considered. The renunciation of love takes place not alone in the mind of the artist, it occurs in the story itself, it occurs in the mind of Troilus. By no stretch of imagination can Troilus's abjuration of earthly happiness in ll. 1814–27 be considered as 'outside' the poem. In l. 1799 'But yet to purpos of my rather speche' the narrator

clearly tells us that the story is not finished, and that he must now hurry on with it. It is a favourite line with him, he has already used it once before in *T. & C.* III, 1337, almost the identical words—

'But now to purpos of my rather speche'.

So he returns to the story, and describes Troilus going to heaven, despising this wretched world and looking down on the spot where he was slain. The last stanza of the story proper (ll. 1828-34) begins:

'Swich fyn hath, lo, this Troilus for love'

and ends

'And thus bigan his lovying of Criseyde
As I have told, and in this wise he deyde.'

The retraction, if retraction it is, begins with the next line (1835):

'O yonge, fresshe folkes, he or she....'

The rest of the poem—1835-69—contains a general address to the readers to 'repeyreth hom fro worldly vanyte' and turn to God. But the very significant word 'vanyte' has already occurred in the account of Troilus who, once in heaven

'held al vanite
To respect of the pleyn felicite
That is in hevene above' (1817-19)

Even if we were to regard 1935-69 as a formal retraction, we would still have to contend with and explain Troilus's contempt for earthly happiness in a poem which celebrates earthly love. And if *this* can be explained as part of the story, so too can the lines that follow; for the last four stanzas bring no new attitude, they merely echo the attitude of Troilus himself. It is no accident, no inadvertent carelessness on Chaucer's

part that this final heavenly episode of Troilus's life has been described. Ll. 1807-27 were not present in the earliest versions of the poem, in the *A* Mss.—Ph, H1[2], H1[4] (Robinson's Mss. numbering). They are a deliberate later insertion, the result, no doubt, of careful revision. Chaucer, moreover, had to look around before he found the suitable lines in Boccaccio's *Teseide* where the flight of Arcite's soul is decsribed (*Tes.*, 1-3). There are possible echoes, too, from Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Paradiso, 22, 128-35. After this, can we doubt that Chaucer intended, by inserting the later passage, to link the thought of the concluding stanzas with the story itself?

If the preceding discussion may be considered as satisfactorily establishing the fact that the final renunciation of love is an integral part of the poem, we may now proceed to analyse the poem itself in the light of this conclusion.

II

Nagarajan has stated that the love of Troilus and Criseyde, 'though beautiful, contained within itself the seeds of its impermanence'[8] and that this led the narrator to conclude his poem by asking his readers to turn to a more lasting kind of love—the love of God. For this impermanence Nagarajan gives two reasons, the first of which relates to Criseyde. Criseyde is in service to the law of love which does not require faithfulness to the object of love if he becomes unavailable—what it requires is that she must remain continually in a state of love. Therefore, if through outward circumstances, she is separated from her lover and there is no possibility of their ever reuniting, then the law requires, not that she should remain faithful to the memory of her lover, but that she should immediately fall in love with someone else. 'She is miserable when she falses Troilus because the dogma that she must love, that love is obligatory is stifling her instinct for loyalty'.[9]

I find this view unsupported by anything that Chaucer or any other medieval poet ever wrote. Certainly, Courtly Love has nowhere stated such a code of behaviour. The emphasis is always on faithfulness, and the legends of *good* women are all legends of *faithful* women. This poem, *The Legends of Good Women*, is Chaucer's final offering to the God of Love before

he sets out on his pilgrimage to Canterbury, and he takes special care in it to observe scrupulously all the laws of love. He has clearly stated, not once, but *twice*—in the prologue to this poem—*where* Criseyde erred according to the canons of courtly love—

> 'And of Creseyde thou hast seyed as the lyste,
> That maketh men to wommen lasse triste,
> That ben as trewe as ever was any steel'.
> (Pr. to *L.G.W.*, [F] 332-4)

and again later

> 'No a trewe lover oght me not to blame,
> Thogh that I speke a fals lovere som shame.
> ...I of Criseyde wroot or tolde
> .....
> To forthren trouthe in love and yt cheryce
> And to ben war from falsnesse and fro vice
> By swich ensample'; (Pr. to *L.G.W.*, [F] 466-74)

Nagarajan's second explanation for the impermanence of love pertains to Troilus. Troilus has worshipped Fortune above all Gods, and Fortune's distinguishing characteristic is that it is always changing. Now Fortune certainly does loom large in the poem, but I fail to find any passage which shows Troilus's direct allegiance to Fortune as his particular Divinity. Only twice does he actually refer at any length to Fortune. Once in Bk. I, he exclaims 'For wel fynde I that Fortune is my fo' (I, 837). To which Pandarus replies that Fortune has its ups and downs and that it 'is comune/to everi manere wight in som degree' (843-4). There is nothing to indicate that Troilus has taken Fortune to be his special goddess. It may be worth while here to contrast the actual Boethius passage from which Chaucer drew his material. There, Lady Philosophy quite clearly rebukes Boethius for having sworn allegiance to Fortune. 'Thou hast bytaken thiself to the governaunce of Fortune and forthi it byhoveth the to ben obeisant to the maneris of thi lady' (II Pr. I, 120).

In the second passage, when the decree is passed, by which Criseyde will be exchanged for Antenor, Troilus admittedly says

> 'Fortune, allas the while!
> What have I don? What have I the agylt?
> .....
> Have I the naught honoured al my lyve' (IV, 260-7)

But these words are uttered in an extremity of emotional stress, and, unsupported by any similar earlier statement, need not be taken too seriously. In fact, immediately after, Pandarus says

> 'Who wolde have wend that in so litel a throwe
> Fortune oure joie wold han overthrowe?' (IV, 384-5)

implying that the temporary nature of this happiness was taken for granted, it was only a question of long it would last. Troilus's God, the God to whom he repeatedly swears allegiance, is not Fortune, but, as is so clearly obvious, the God of Love.

It may be relevant here to recall McCall's paper, for he uses the very same Fortune argument, to reach however, the very different conclusion that the poem illustrates a Boethian moral. But the pervading presence of Fortune does not necessarily prove—as I have already indicated—that Troilus is voluntarily subjecting himself to Fortune. We get rather the impression of an overhanging Fate which it is not in Troilus's power to either evade or welcome. Every time Fortune steps in, and changes the lives of the human beings despite their deliberate avowals to the contrary. Troilus stands in the Temple, mocking all lovers, but

> 'O blynde world, O blynde entencioun!
> .....
> For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde.
> (I, 211, 238)

Criseyde prepares to go home from Pandarus's supper:

'But O Fortune, executrice of wyrdes,
O influences of thise hevenes hye!
Soth is, that under God ye ben oure hierdes,
Though to us bestes ben the causes write'
(III, 617-20)

McCall's thesis, moreover, makes the temptation and fall of Troilus the central theme of the poem, and treats Criseyde as a shadowy figure, of little importance, relevant only in so far as she affects Troilus's fate. This is contrary to the impression gained from reading the poem. Criseyde arrests our mind, and we give her, if not more, certainly as much attention as we give to Troilus. This cannot be reconciled with McCall's theory that the poem is a Christian allegory with Troilus as the central figure. The title of the poem is not after all 'The Consolation of Troilus' but 'Troilus *and Criseyde*' (italics mine).

The links with Boethius, noted by McCall, are many and valuable. But to say that the entire thematic and structural plan of the story parallels Boethius, to impose on the whole poem a Boethian unity, is to give a slant to the story that we definitely do not feel when we pick the poem up and read it. If Chaucer's intention was to show Troilus succumbing to the laws of flesh and the ways of sin, he certainly has not created that impression.

The difficulty that underlies any attempt at analysing the poem is clear—how to reconcile five books apparently celebrating earthly love with the religious conclusion, where, in clear and unequivocal terms, we have an open rejection of earthly love. Scattered right through the poem are many passages in praise of love. Our emotional response to this love—as Nagarajan says—is, that it *is* beautiful. But human reactions are complex affairs and cannot always be labelled as all black or all white. Is it not possible to think that something is beautiful and at the same time, have an uneasy conscience about it? To Dante, the love of Paolo and Franscesca is beautiful; yet it is wrong, and they must dwell in Hell (*Inferno*, 5). Does not literature show us many such instances where love is described as good and yet, somehow wrong? I say 'wrong' not merely 'impermanent'. Nagarajan has maintained that the love of Troilus and Criseyde is wholly good, it is defective

only in that it is impermanent. I maintain—and hope to establish my case that our reaction to this love is far more complex, that we feel it is beautiful and at the same time immoral. In this poem, the love portrayed is both right and wrong, and the final stanzas come, not as a surprise, but as a natural conclusion to what has gone before.

III

To maintain that love in *Troilus and Criseyde* is wholly or consistently good is to maintain that Chaucer placed the whole poem in the framework of courtly-love morality. But does Christian morality *nowhere* make itself felt in the course of the story? The willing suspension of the Christian sense can be easily attained provided the narrator maintains the fiction consistently right through the poem. In the *Miller's Tale*, for example, the fiction of fabliau merry-making is so successfully maintained that Christian morality goes to sleep. Even in a more serious tale, Chaucer can, if he so wishes, establish his own morality. Thus, January, in the *Merchant's Tale*, with his attitude that marriage is legalized sex—

> 'And blessed be the yok that we been inne
> For in oure actes we mowe do no synne'.
> (*C.T.* IV, 1837-8)

fills us with loathing for the entire convention of marriage. We turn with relief to the extra-marital love of May and Damyan and applaud with full moral consent the success of their pear-tree device. Chaucer could then, if he so wished, set up any moral standards he chose, within the framework of a poem. Has he done so in *Troilus and Criseyde*?

The poem begins with a series of 'bidding' prayers to the God of Love, and we are transported straight away into the world of love morality. When the reprobate Troilus is converted to the love-religion, the narrator adds his comment and his advice to the readers—

> 'For ever it was, and evere it shal bifalle,
> That Love is he that alle thing may bynde
> For may no man fordon the lawe of kynde'. (I, 236-8);

and

> 'Now sith it may nat goodly ben withstonde,
> And is a thing so vertuous in kynde,
> Refuseth nat to Love for to ben bonde,
> Syn, as hymselven liste, he may yow bynde'.
> (I, 253-6)

This glorification of love is consistently maintained right through Bk. I. Christian morality has truly gone to sleep here. The narrator's own attitude is clearly indicated, so too the attitudes of Troilus and Pandarus. Troilus is moved by the purest and most worthy of motives, and not the slightest sense of wrongdoing troubles either him or Pandarus. This is Pandarus's comment:

> 'the firste poynt is this
> Of noble corage and wel ordayné
> A man to have pees with himself, ywis.
> So oughtest thou, for nought but good it is
> To loven wel, and in worthy place;' (I, 891-5)

And once Troilus submits himself to the sway of love, his character changes significantly for the better—

> 'And ecch of tho gan for a vertu chaunge'. (I, 1085)

We have the God of love appearing actually before us in person—

> 'At which the God of Love gan loken rowe
> Right for despit, and shop for to ben wroken.'
> (I, 206-7)

and he is constantly addressed by both men, who pay homage to his goodness and greatness. In Bk. I, then, Love is shown to be wholly good, noble and desirable.

It is with Bk. II and the entrance of Criseyde, that the complications begin. Already, in the introductory description of Criseyde in Bk. I, certain irregularities have appeared. The lady in the courtly-love setting is noble and high-born, greatly

superior to the lover in virtue and in social status. Not so here. Troilus is a king's son, but Criseyde is a mere commoner, a priest's daughter. Even the slight status that this might have given in society, is denied her. Her father has become a social outcast, branded a traitor. So helpless is Criseyde that she actually has to beg her future lover's brother to protect her. Later, we are told that what she valued most in Troilus was that 'she felte he was to hire a wal/ Of stiel, and sheld from every displesaunce' (III, 479-80). The set-up seems almost to acquire a 'King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid' colouring!

As yet, however, nothing has happened to disturb the general belief in the basic goodness of love. But as we proceed through Bk. II and on through the rest of the poem, a rift makes itself felt in our moral sense. A new type of morality emerges, not openly, but sufficiently disturbing. It is the Christian approach to the situation which harmonises ill with the tenets of love-religion. An uneasy sense of wrongdoing, sometimes lulled but never disappearing, begins to trouble our mind.

The explanation for this lies in Chaucer's treatment of Criseyde. The aura of courtly love which surrounds Troilus whatever he does, is conspicuous by its absence in Bk. II. The God of Love, whose presence pervades Bk. I, is nowhere to be seen when Criseyde approaches, and she herself speaks, behaves, argues and reasons, exactly as any Christian woman would in a similar situation. Where love for Troilus had been a religious obligation, Criseyde nowhere refers to it as her duty or her religion. She addresses God in a general way many times, but never the God of Love. In her soliloquy (II, 700-763) after Pandarus has left her alone, revealing as it does her inmost thoughts, we see a tussle between the desire to love and the Christian conscience which tells her it is wrong. We do not feel here a conflict between two duties —the duty to love and duty to religion. No—quite clearly it is a conflict between desire and duty.

> 'What shal I doon? To what fyn lyve I thus?
> Shal I nat love, in cas if that me leste?
> What, par dieux! I am naught religious.' (II, 757-9)

These are the arguments of a Christian woman, arguing away her conscience under the pressure of desire. Love, invariably referred to by Troilus with a capital 'L', is ordinary 'love' to Criseyde—an abstract noun, describing a human emotion, but very definitely, not a presiding Deity:

> 'For love is yet the mooste stormy lyf,
> Right of hymself, that evere was bigonne;' (II, 778-9).

And in the preceding stanza she complains against love in words that are heretical to Love's religion—

> 'Allas! syn I am free,
> Sholde I now love, and put in jupartie
> My sikernesse, and thrallen libertee?
> Allas! how dorst I thenken that folie?' (II, 771-4).

Immediately after, comes Antigone's song. This song is not in Boccaccio, and its deliberate insertion at this place just after Criseyde's heretical remarks against love, makes Chaucer's intention very clear. The song, as Kittredge has pointed out[10] was probably taken from Guillaume de Machaut's *Paradys d'Amour* (ed. Chichmaref, *Poesies lyriques*, Paris, 1909, 2, 345-51) where a lady sings her gratitude to Love and praises the power of Love who is the source of all virtues and the enemy of vice. In Chaucer's poem we are told that the song was composed by 'the goodlieste mayde of great estat in al the town of Troye' (II, 880-1), and it is sung by Antigone, Criseyde's niece, who has not yet felt Love's direct influence, but who looks up to the God with simple faith—

> 'Ye, wis', quod fresshe Antigone the white,
> 'For alle the folk that han or ben on lyve
> Ne konne wel the blisse of love discryve'. (II, 887-9)

We have thus a group of women who are all devout followers of Love's religion. Well may they help to swell the procession of women 'swich a traas' who follow Cupid in the *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women*. But Criseyde is not among them;

and Antigone's song has been placed here by Chaucer at such a time, in such a place, only to isolate Criseyde more deliberately than ever, and contrast her to these votaries at the Temple of Love.

Of particular interest are the arguments that Pandarus uses to persuade Criseyde to yield to Troilus. This Pandarus who 'shof ay on' and 'to and fro was sent', loves to preach and spares neither Troilus nor Criseyde. But Pandarus is no fool, and knows exactly what advice will be most effective with whom. With Troilus his arguments are always moral and philosophical—you cannot resist love, it is your duty to love, it is good to love. Interspersed are long passages adapted from Boethius particularly in the discussion of Fortune (*T & C*, I, 841 ff, and Boethius, II, Pr. I). The Fortune passage is concluded with the advice that love will lead him to tranquillity and peace of mind, which is the aim of every sage and philosopher—

> 'For certainly, the firste poynt is this
> Of noble corage and wel ordayné
> A man to have pees with himself, ywis' (I, 891-3).

There is an echo too, from Dante, the doctrine that love of good objects is good.

> While e'er it seeks
> The primal blessings or with measure due
> The inferior, no delight, that flows from it,
> Partakes of ill.
>
> (Purg., XVII, 93-96).

These are Pandarus's words

> 'for nought but good t is
> To loven wel, and in a worthy place;
> The ought nat to clepe it hap, but grace.' (I, 894-6)

These echoes and borrowings from Dante and Boethius give an added philosophical weight to Pandarus's arguments, so that we are left in no doubt as to where Troilus's duty lies.

He then rebukes Troilus for his earlier attitude and bids him repent his former sins and worship love:

> 'Now bet thi brest, and sey to God of Love,
> "Thy grace, lord, for now I me repente,
> If I mysspak, for now myself I love". (I, 932-4).

Very different are the arguments Pandarus employs with Criseyde. There is no question here of her moral or religious duty to love. He does not mention the God of Love at all. He either plies her with worldly arguments, e.g. fear of old age—'Thenk ek how elde wasteth every houre' (II, 393)—or resorts to threats of suicide. A major portion of his speech is Chaucer's own creation, not to be found in Boccaccio, and it is in these conversations with Criseyde, nowhere else, that Pandarus appears in the role of Arch-Tempter. He is arguing to break down Criseyde's resistance, but they are exactly the arguments that would be used to break down the moral scruples of a Christian woman. Criseyde too creates the same impression. Pandarus's first remark 'lat us daunce' (II, 111) brings forth from her the following statement,

> 'It sate me wel bet ay in a cave
> To bidde and rede on holy seyntes lyves'; (II, 117-18)

Then when he makes his amorous proposals on behalf of Troilus, Criseyde is shocked and full of horror.

> 'Allas, for wo! Why nere I deed?
> For of this world the feyth is al agoon'. (II, 409-10)

After this initial reaction of horror she begins to yield little by little, but her constant protestations that she will go no further—

> 'in this proces if ye depper go,
> . . .ne shal I nevere of hym han other routhe'.
> (II, 485, 489)

create the impression that she is weakening morally. The

delay itself is not contrary to the code of Courtly Love. As in *The Romaunt of the Rose*, Fear (II, 770), Shame (II, 1291) and Daunger (II, 1376) appear and hold her back. But added to all these we have also an uneasy sense of moral wrongdoing that disturbs her peace of mind 'Of harmes two, the lesse is for to chese'; (II, 470).

Chaucer has introduced later in the story two elaborately extended episodes that are not to be found in Boccaccio—the dinner at Deiphebus's house and the supper at Pandarus's. Why? Obviously because it reduces Criseyde's direct responsibility for yielding. True, this makes her moral culpability less, but the question arises—according to which code of morality? Christian or Courtly Love? Guillaume de Lorris made no similar attempt to reduce the Lady's responsibility, and Bialacoil is as much a part of her as are Shame and Chastite. Courtly Love requires no such moral excuses for the Lady's eventual surrender to Love. By reducing Criseyde's moral responsibility, therefore, Chaucer is making her, to quote C. S. Lewis, 'by Christian standards forgivable'.[11] But this pandering to the Christian sense, does it not establish the actions of Criseyde more firmly than ever in a Christian setting?

There is, again, that maddeningly ambiguous comment of the narrator when, in Bk. III, Pandarus assures Criseyde that Troilus is out of town.

> 'Nought lyst myn auctor fully to declare
> What that she thoughte when he seyde so,
> That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
> As if he seyde thereof soth or no'; (III, 575-8)

Wicked indeed of Chaucer to have inserted this stanza—but what are we to make of it? Since the entire episode is Chaucer's own invention, it is not surprising that 'myn auctor' has nothing to say here. In the words of Root, 'this seems to be merely a literary device to suggest to the reader's mind a doubt as to Criseyde's sincerity.'[12] How does this affect our conception of Criseyde? Does it not suggest a weak woman who is lulling her conscience by pretending to believe something which she knows in her heart of hearts might not be

true? It is surely a sort of moral self-deception that we ourselves might practise on certain occasions, and at moments of weakness. So wrong, yet so very human! But, and this is the point, so very alien to the behaviour of Courtly Love!

Thus, little by little, Pandarus wears away her moral resistance until she is helpless in his hands. This is Pandarus's own view of the situation, and twice he uses the image of a hunter trapping his prey—Bk. II, 964 ff. and 1534 ff.

> 'Lo, hold the at thi triste cloos, and I
> Shal wel the deer unto thi bowe dryve'. (II, 1534-5)

But soon after, a curions change comes over him. As his plot thickens, he too begins to doubt the moral rightness of his action. After the meeting at Deiphebus's house has been brought to a successful close, Pandarus tells Troilus,

> 'for shame it is to seye:
> For the have I bigonne a gamen pleye,
> Which that I nevere do shal eft for other,' (III, 249-51).

These words sound strange in Pandarus's mouth. The infection, we find, is spreading, and Criseyde is no longer the only person suffering from a sense of guilt. Pandarus's Christian conscience has begun to assert itself. He adds, soon after, that boasting and gossiping are what Troilus must avoid if Criseyde's honour is to be saved (III, 281-315). This reminds us of Wikked Tunge of the *Romaunt*, but Pandarus brings this up only at the end of his speech. His initial words have already revealed his guilty conscience. Troilus, the true Courtly Lover, untroubled by any Christian morality, sees the whole thing in a different light. Where Pandarus describes himself shamefully as

> 'Swich a meene
> As maken wommen unto men to comen;' (III, 254-5),

Troilus describes his actions as they appear from the standpoint of love-morality,

'And this that thow doost, calle it gentilesse,
Compassioun, and felawship, and trist.' (III, 402-3)

To us, however, Troilus's words come too late. Pandarus has sown the seeds of uneasiness in our minds.

Curiously enough, it is in the same book, Book III, that Criseyde's attitude begins to change in the opposite direction. For the first time in the story she thanks God that 'evere she with hym mette' (474). Admittedly, she thanks God because the relationship gives her security and a sense of safety and it is partly these practical benefits that begin to convince her that there can be nothing wrong in this love. Whatever the reason, from now on we hear very few objections from her. The supper at Pandarus's house is still to come, and a considerable amount of persuasion and deception will still be required to overcome her scruples before she yields absolutely to Troilus, but the moral resistance has become very much weaker. When Pandarus tells her that Troilus, racked by jealousy, 'is thorogh a goter, by a pryve wente' (III, 787) come, Criseyde in a long, distracted speech philosophizes on false felicity, but does not remark once on the impropriety of Troilus's presence at this hour.

Pandarus is quick to notice the change in her, and plies her with new tactics. If she does not see Troilus, that means she does not really love him (III, 864) and she is delaying from malice (III, 880). Criseyde's emergent love-morality is touched to the quick—'Hadde I hym nevere lief? by God I weene/ Ye hadde nevere thyng so lief' (III, 869-70) and rather than have her love doubted, she agrees to see him. In the scene that follows, Criseyde for the first time addresses by name one of the new Gods to whom she is now converted—'But O, thow Jove, O auctor of nature' (III, 1016). The whole of this and the succeeding passage have been placed in a highly pagan setting. Troilus's invocation to the Gods before and after his union with Criseyde (III, 712-35, and III, 1254-1274) are perhaps two of the most elaborately pagan passages in the entire poem. In this scene, Love has triumphed.

Bk. III, however, where this climax occurs, begins (III, the Proem, 1-35) and ends (Troilus's song, III, 1744-71) with two long passages borrowed from *Boethius* (II, m. 8),

where love is raised to a highly philosophical plane. 'God loveth, and to love wol nought werne' (III, 12). Love makes the world with stable faith 'diverseth so his stowndes concordynge' (III, 1752), love controls the seas (III, 1758 ff.) and with love God binds fast all hearts (III, 1766 ff.). Framed between these two passages rests the love of Troilus and Criseyde. We feel that love indeed has triumphed, but not at the cost of religion. Man, bird, beast, fish, herb (III, 10), Jove himself and Mars feel the power of love. These are all part of the Universal Scheme, so too are Troilus and Criseyde. Their love is not contrary to religion, it is contained within it. So, no doubt, is the intended effect of these two Boethian passages. It is worth noting here that Troilus's song was omitted in the *A* Mss—it is a deliberate, later insertion, so that Bk. III may begin and end on this note.

As early as Bk. I, a hint of this was given when Pandarus told Troilus that love of Kynde is one step towards Celestial Love (I, 976 ff.) and that Criseyde is well aware of both:

> 'It sit hire naught to ben celestial.
> As yet, though that hire liste bothe and kowthe;
> (I, 983-4)

It is almost the resolution effected by Dante himself. With verbal echoes from Dante scattered right through the poem, it is likely enough that Chaucer had Dante's scheme in mind. Beatrice rebukes Dante, not because he loved her body while she was on earth, but because he dallied with other loves after her death (Purg., 31, 46-57). With Dante, certainly, love of kynde is one step towards celestial love. Unfortunately, Criseyde is not Beatrice, but weak, unable to say No, being rather more like Dante's Francesca da Rimini.

And for this reason, Chaucer's compromise fails. Bk. I, the book of Troilus, was placed in the context of Love-religion, and Bk. II, full of Criseyde's misgivings and hesitations, in the setting of Christian morality. Bk. III sought to reconcile Love with Religion. But the truce turns out in the end to be a temporary one. In the very middle of this book come the guilty words of Pandarus in the passage already referred to (III, 250 ff.), and through Pandarus we too are not allowed

to forget. In the two books that follow, Love and Religion once again fall apart.

Criseyde's fidelity to her new faith is of short duration, and when the first setback occurs, she rebukes Pandarus for having converted her to a religion that offers but temporary bliss, for having 'me broughte unto servyse/ Of love, allas! that endeth in swich wise' (IV, 832-3). Yet, since this is her newly adopted creed, she promises to be true to it, and swears her allegiance by all the Gods of this religion—'And this on every god celestial....' (IV, 1541 ff.).

But all in vain. The fallen woman falls again. She who through weakness had betrayed the code of Christianity, now through the same weakness betrays the code of Love, and yields herself to Diomede. She is fully aware of her crime and pleads guilty (V, 1054 ff.). The narrator himself is moved by this distressingly painful sight, and has not the heart to condemn her (V, 1093-9). As she slips lower and lower, we find her each time pathetically trying to cling to some shreds of morality, and when she accepts Diomede as her lover, she tries in turn to be faithful to him—'To Diomede algate I wol be trewe' (V, 1071). Thus we leave Criseyde.

In her we see the slow process of moral degradation taking place, the consequences of the weakness of the flesh and will. If ever a character has been created and forgiven from the Christian point of view, it is Criseyde. Love enters her life, not as a mighty God, but as desire which she feels is morally wrong, and which she struggles and fails to control. When she finds herself succumbing to this desire she tries to persuade herself that there is no wrong in it, and when love is consummated, so great is the bliss she feels—'And now swetnesse semeth more swete' (III, 1219) that she convinces herself that she has taken the right course. But soon the test of endurance comes and her brief period of happiness ends. Remorse for accepting the new creed (IV, 828 ff.) and again remorse when later she 'falses' it (V, 1054 ff.)—such is her lot.

Through Criseyde the relation between Love and Religion has been clearly brought out: where they meet and where they differ. It is after all the same weakness that made her deflect, first from Christian morality and then from Love's. But Christ cannot be replaced by Cupid. We have seen

Criseyde slipping from one to the other, and we have seen with what tragic consequences. Nor indeed can the two gods be worshipped simultaneously, as Chaucer attempted to do in Bk. III. If reconciliation had been possible, well and good. Where there can be no reconciliation, Cupid's law must give way to Christ's. Though this thought is not exactly expressed when we leave Criseyde, her last words

'But al shal passe; and thus I take my leve'. (V, 1085)—

and our own sense of dissatisfaction over her miserable end, prepares us for the final renunciation of love and earthly happiness in the concluding stanzas of the poem.

But what of Troilus? Those who see in him a warning example against the sins of flesh forget the last incident of the tale which, as we have seen, Chaucer so carefully inserted in a later revision. Troilus dies and goes up to the hollowness of the 'eighthe spere' (V, 1809) in 'hevene above'. Is this a punishment for his moral weakness? Is this a fit ending for a man who has succumbed to the sins of passion? In that case, let us all be like Troilus, for it is a punishment we may well desire. Troilus rests in 'pleyn felicite'—what more can we hope for after death?

It is not for us to impose either our own or Boethius's morality on Troilus. It is for us to analyse Troilus's part exactly as Chaucer has presented it *within the poem*. And for Troilus there never was any conflict, no question of immorality, no slipping from the path of right into the path of wrong. He has been faithful, honest and devoted to the one creed that he knows. Even when the conversion takes place, early in Bk. I, it is not conversion from one God to another. It is the atheist's acceptance of the Divinity's power, the unbeliever's surrender to God. Troilus's rôle is never more apparent than when, in Bk. II, in the middle of Criseyde's conflict-torn thoughts, Pandarus gives his account of Troilus's prayer of repentance to the God of Love (II, 522-39), thus immediately reinstating the moral rightness of his behaviour as opposed to Criseyde's. Later in the poem he may sorrow over Criseyde's desertion (V, 1674 ff.) or even momentarily rail against Fortune (IV, 260 ff.), but his belief in the goodness

of his love, in the rightness of his own conduct and moral behaviour remains unshaken till the very end. No word of remorse over his own action escapes his lips, and the noble purity of his nature is heightened, not decreased, by his confession that he cannot within his heart find to 'unloven' Criseyde one quarter of a day (V, 1698).

Though *Criseyde* failed him, *he* did no moral wrong, and so he goes to heaven. Once in heaven, Troilus realizes the futility of all human endeavour. This is not unusual nor surprising. A good Christian too, when he goes to heaven, may well look down with new eyes on his earlier earthly life. Dante himself looked below from the eighth heaven

> 'I saw this globe
> So pitiful of semblance, that perforce
> It moved my smiles':
> (*Paradiso*, 22, 130-2)

Thus Troilus renounces his love. And still he is true to his religion. Has he deserted his pagan gods? Are they angry with him? Surely not, for Mercury himself conducts Troilus to his seat in heaven.

All that Chaucer suggests in his final exhortation merely parallels Troilus's own act. What Troilus did in his pagan context, Chaucer asks his readers now to apply in their own Christian context. And since they already have in Christ a permanent form of love, he tells them to adopt here and now, the attitude of mind Troilus reached after death.

The poem ends on a Christian note, but Christian morality has been awake all through the poem in the character of Criseyde and comes as nothing new; while the transition from Troilus's world to the Christian world is natural enough since the same conclusion is reached in both the contexts.

The aim of this paper has been two-fold: (a) to show how the renunciation passage at the end—the so-called retraction—comes as a natural conclusion to the main story, (b) to explain as real the curious conflict in the poem between the rightness and wrongness of love. The moral confusion cannot be explained away. It exists, for the simple reason that Troilus and Criseyde have been created from two different moral

standpoints, Courtly love, and Christian. Thus, love is right for Troilus and wrong for Criseyde.

Note: All textual quotations are from *The Poetical Works of Chaucer*, ed. F. N. Robinson, first edition. All quotations from Dante are from Cary's Translation, *The Vision of Dante* (Oxford, 1923).

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DONNE'S *THE PROGRESSE OF THE SOULE*

By T. P. Chitanand
Vallabh Vidyanagar

This, the most perplexing and exasperating poem of John Donne, has been maligned in terms and epithets which show the passions which it has roused in a host of critics during the last three centuries. Thus it has been called 'a curious, repulsive poem' which 'like a chasm dark, dank and unwholesome, gapingly reveals much in the divided mind of a man now nearing thirty.'[1] 'In no poem is the least attractive side of Donne's mind so clearly revealed, that aspect of his wit which to some readers is more repellent, more fatal to his claim to be a poet, than the subtle ingenuity or misplaced erudition—the vein of sheer ugliness which runs through his work, presenting details that seem merely and wantonly repulsive.'[2] 'The puerility of the central idea is extraordinary, the Soule flits from body to body without growth, without change, as a parasite leaps from one harbouring object to another.'[3] With the solitary exception of De Quincey the chorus of distaste and abuse is general and consistent.

The poem develops the idea that man is an amalgam of all beasts, and endeavours to teach moral lessons in a fable-like manner through the medium of a scathing, almost scalding satire. In a sombre fashion Donne, the perplexed humanist, describes the Soul's corruption as it wantonly inhabits different bodies,[4] (though moving in its appointed course) and goes on accumulating sin and dulling its 'other faculties'. Donne while peeping into the seething cauldron of his mind with its putrefying thoughts, asks to be pardoned as long as he is prepared to give to his critics, 'a good hold upon mee'. Conscious of the originality of his idea, he explains in the *Epistle* the 'Pithagorian doctrine' according to which the Soul may move in all the three worlds, the vegetable, animal and human without any consistency or order, only carrying with it the memories of its previous births. These adventures or mutations of the Soul are not the result of its own planning

or volition but of the decree of Fate 'which God made but doth not controule.'

Donne probably had in mind a vastly ambitious plan as he embarked upon a scheme of tracing the 'progresse of the soule' from 'the birth of this great world to his aged evening'.

> From infant morne, through manly noone I draw.
> What the gold Chaldee, or silver Persian saw;
> Greeke brasse, or Roman iron, is in this one;
> A worke t'outweare *Seths* pillars, bricke and stone,
> And (holy writt excepted) made to yeeld to none.
> (ll, 6-10)

The Soul will outlive 'the eye of heaven', the Sun, the male force and progenitor of all that we see on this earth.

> Yet hast thou not more nations seene then shee
> That before thee, one day beganne to bee,
> And thy fraile light being quench'd,
> shall long, long outlive thee
> (ll. 18-20)

These lines which are addressed to the Sun and in which the Sun is shown his own place remind us of Satan's address to the Sun in *Paradise Lost*, Book IV.

> O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
> That bring to my remembrance from what state
> I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
> Till pride and worse ambition threw me down.
> (*Paradise Lost*, Book IV, ll. 37-40)

Donne then wonders if the Soule was in the 'soveraigne boate' of holy Janus, a floating parke',

> in whose womb, Destinee
> Us and our latest nephews did install, (ll. 25-26)

In an epic fashion[5] Donne invokes the aid of Great Destiny, the Commissary of God,

O vouch thou safe to looke
And shew my story, in thy eternall booke:
That (if my prayer be fit) I may understand
.....
How, scant, or liberall this my lifes race is spand.
(ll. 36-40)

To complete his great undertaking he would need many years free from distractions like sickness and ambition.

The Soul launched in Paradise had but a low, fatal room there. On its journey downwards it passed through different countries and now its boat lies at anchor in the Thames river. It is the long story of its peregrinations which he would attempt to tell.

To heare
Whose story, with long patience you will long;
(For 'tis the crowne, and last straine of my song)
This soule to whom *Luther*, and *Mahomet* were
Prisons of flesh; this soule which oft did tears,
And mend the wracks of th'Empire, and late Rome,
And liv'd when every great change did come...
(ll. 63-69)

The history of this world, therefore, is involved in the history of this Soul which played so vital a part in shaping the long eventful career of man.

The Soul was in the 'self-same room in Calvarie',

Where first grew the forbidden learned tree,
For on that tree hung in security
This Soule, made by the Makers will from pulling free.
(ll. 78-80)

The Soul enlivened the apple which ripened as soon as it was born. But,

...the then climbing serpent, that now creeps
For that offence, for which all mankind weeps,
Tooke it, and t'her whom the first man did wive

(Whom and her race, only forbiddings drive)
He gave it, she t'her husband, both did eate;
So perished the eaters, and the meate:
And wee (for treason taints the blood) thence die and sweat.
(ll. 84-90)

Thus woman was responsible for the fall of man. In vitriolic vein Donne accuses woman of being the fountain-head of all the troubles in the world. Woman continues her dastardly mission even now.

Man all at once was there by woman slaine,
And one by one we'are here slaine o'er againe
By them.
(ll. 91-93)

Like a furious misogynist Donne accuses woman of the most insidious practices in destroying man:

The mother poison'd the well-head,
The daughters here corrupt us, Rivolets;
No smalnesse escapes, no greatnesse breaks their nets;
She thrust us out, and by them we are led
Astray, from turning to whence we are fled...
(ll. 93-97)

The torturing thought runs through the poem, disfiguring it. What is the cause of this violent, self-immolating hatred, this corrosive poison in Donne's mind? Different speculations have been made on this point. Thus Evelyn Hardy thinks that it springs from Donne's 'perverted love for his mother, a love which like Hamlet's got twisted from its natural heritage and was nourished on false diet.'[6] Clay Hunt, however, believes that Donne aimed at revealing Queen Elizabeth I 'as the shining contemporary avatar of the spirit of that forbidden tree which brought death into this world and all our woe.'[7] In support of this he points out that the words, 'crown and the last strain of my song' are an unmistakable reference to the Queen. Donne is probably the only major poet of his time

whose poetry is conspicuous by the lack of any complimentary reference to the Queen who was both feared and respected as the fountain-head of power. With Donne, Queen Elizabeth is no longer 'a fair vestal throned by the West' nor the Faerie Queene, nor Cynthia, 'Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair' but a woman who is a hateful incarnation of 'treachery, rapine, deceit, and lust'. Most critics including Grierson have asserted that the fury and bitterness of Donne's writing is due to the fact that he felt greatly embittered over Elizabeth's treatment of Essex.[8] The Imperial Moon, however, by now was sadly on the wane and Donne felt a little encouraged to throw a stone at her because the vengeful Votaress had been instrumental in making martyrs of his kith and kin.

It must be remembered of Donne in this poem that this misogyny was but a passing phase in his life and that even his cynicism was but a cloak under which he tried to hide his feelings. E. M. Simpson clinches the issue finely when she observes:[9]

> Donne's attitude towards women is characteristic of the man in its superficial inconsistency and its underlying fixity. He is a sensualist and an idealist and his poems contain some of the cynical censures and the most extravagant eulogies that have ever been offered to women... In theory Donne despised women as a sex, but in practice he loved and honoured individual women, and in return they gave him a boundless devotion.

Philosophical doubt now assails Donne and he asks: why is it that we are made to suffer for the sins of others? This is terrible injustice and is almost as bad as making 'prisoners judges'. The problem of sin as well as of free will makes him cry:

> Would God (disputes the curious Rebell) make
> A law, and would not have it kept? Or can
> His creatures will, cross his? Of every man
> For one, will God (and be just) vengeance take?
>
> (ll. 103-6)

W. A. Murray who interprets the poem as an allegory of the

development of the knowledge of good and evil in mankind thinks that 'the soul of the apple or the power of moral choice is central to the argument.'[10] Donne knew very well that it is difficult to reconcile God's foreknowledge with man's free will and that there is no justice in the fall of man and its consequent penalty. He therefore asks whether God had forbidden Eve, or even Satan, against eating the Fruit. Again, it was not Adam who 'cropt' or even as much as 'knew the apple.' In spite of all this we are made to bear the burden of the sin of our first parents. Donne also knew that to question revelation in this matter was to be drowned in what he called 'the second deluge of Heresy'.[11] The Rebel's question, therefore, remains unanswered and the anguish continues.

But why should he argue? Why ask questions at all? All arguing is heretical and wrong in times such as these for it provokes the wrath of the powers that be.

> Arguing is heretiques game, and Exercise
> As wrastlers, perfects them; Not liberties
> Of speech, but silence; hands, not tongues, end heresies.
> (ll. 118-120)

Being born and brought up as a Roman Catholic and having known the horrible persecution of his own uncle and other relatives, Donne cannot forget the mental anguish which preceded his emergence into a loyal Protestant. There is no adulation anywhere of 'this sceptred isle', 'this land of such dear souls, this dear dear land', 'this demi-paradise' and its crowned head. On the contrary, there is Achillean wrath which being tight-lipped burns within with a deadly fire, though occasionally an utterance does escape which has the heat of nuclear fission. To save his skin, Donne was now on his way to proselytization and pouring ridicule over his own kinsmen, and the suppressed wrath for this is to be seen in lines like the above.

No sooner did the Serpent loosen the 'slight veines and tender conduit-pipe' of the apple than the Soul which had made it its home flew out like lightning to a 'darke and foggie Plot' in search of 'a second Inne'. It stretched its right arm towards the East and the left towards the West and the ten

lesser strings became its fingers. But probably on account of man's fall and Eve's contamination a strange thing happened:

> Grew on his middle parts, the first day, haire,
> To show, that in loves businesse hee should still
> A dealer bee and be us'd well, or ill:
> His apples kindle, his leaves, force of conception kill
> (ll. 147-50)

Though huge and upright like 'a young *Colossus*' it was as yet a 'living buried man' for it had at this stage 'a mouth, but dumbe', 'blinde eyes, deafe eares'. The Soul had now entered the body of a 'quiet mandrake'.[12]

This plant which is not unwelcome to lustful women was, however, killed by Eve for she wanted to cool the blood of her child which on account of her sin had moist red eyes and was not able to sleep since it saw the light of day. Thus the 'unvirtuous weed' did good to others by dying an early death.

The thoughtless and 'unfettered soule' now started on its mad career of entering bodies and then leaving them. This it did with a speed greater than that of the falling stars or of the thoughts which arise in the mind of man. Lighter than the 'burnt aire' the capricious Soul now entered a small blue shell, an egg laid by some 'poore warme' bird. Soon the

> inclos'd child kickt, and pick'd it selfe a dore. (l. 180)

Thus begins the downward journey of the Soul which with every change carries with it the memories of its previous birth. It goes on accumulating sin and ultimately enters the bodies of the world's great heretics, tyrants and scourgers. The infinite variety of man's wickedness is to be traced to this accumulation of sin and the qualities which the soul inherits from the bodies which it has possessed. Thus the corruption of the world is the corruption of its soul.[13]

From the blue shell 'outcrept a sparrow'. It began to chirp as soon as it was born.

> His flesh is jelly yet, and his bones threds,
> All a new downy mantle overspreads,

A mouth he opes, which would as much containe
As his late house, and the first houre speaks plaine
(ll. 184-7)

Donne's bird lore was remarkable and his descriptions of the birds in this and the following stanzas is amazingly accurate. Izaak Walton admired him more for his humanitarian nature than for his 'earthly graces and spiritual qualities'.[14] 'As the Indian priest expressed an excellent character by building hospitals and providing surgery for birds and beasts lamed by mischance or age or labour, so must we not cut off, but cure, these afflictions.'

The sparrow's father stole meat, which was fit for men, in order to feed it but little did he know that his own would soon 'beat him from his hen'. Dealing with the sparrow's promiscuity in love, Donne asserts that the sparrow followed but the laws of Nature and used liberty in the same fashion as its mate did.

Where store is both kindes, both kindes may freely chuse.
(l. 200)

Man-made laws have made 'freedome lesse' and declared certain things ill which are common and universal in sub-human Nature.[15] The sparrow, however, misused this freedom and died through its reckless pursuit of pleasure:

freely on his she friends
He blood, and spirit, pith and marrow spends,
Ill steward of himself, himselfe in three yeares ends.
(ll. 208-10)

A straitened life brought a life span of 20 years but then he spent all that in increasing his race. As fire dies out of an over-blown and burnt-out coal the soul left the sparrow's body to enter a fish egg which was being fertilised in sand. Though the Soul enabled the half-formed fish to paddle with its own fins, its scales were like parchment and one could hardly call it a fish.

But soon an extremely white swan swooped down, caught

the fish, and swallowed it whole. The swan not only devoured this fish; it also devoured others which were equally harmless or blameless and could not match the swan's swiftness, strength and fighting capacity. Now the Soul was doubly imprisoned but soon the digestive fires of the swan melted the fish's body and out flew the Soul in the form of vapour. As Fate had not yet decreed a better or stronger body for it the Soul had again to enter a fish's body and be prey to oppression.

> For, he that can to none
> Resistance make, nor complaint, sure is gone.
> Weakness invites, but silence feasts oppression.
>
> (ll. 248-50)

These lines are very significant and I feel that Donne is alluding here to either the punishment inflicted by the Queen on Essex or the systematic persecution of the Catholics which went on at her behest.

The young fish soon learnt the tricks which were necessary for its survival. Once it was caught in a net but it escaped disaster on account of its smallness and wonderful agility. It now began to drift with the current, leaping up in the air, going under water or now turning the water 'thin' in order to suck in air. Soon it came to the spot where fresh water mingled with salt water. The simple fish was now assailed by doubt and did not know which way to turn for a place of safety. While the fish's mind was torn by doubt and it stopped at the confluence, a treacherous sea Pie who espied him from above swooped down on him, not because he was hungry but because he loved sport, and bore him away. Thus do doubters perish for they do not know what is safe for them and hesitate to swim with the current. The fish was now exalted no doubt but then it was,

> to the exalters good,
> As are by great ones, men which lowly stood.
> It's rais'd, to be the Raisers instrument and food.
>
> (ll. 278-80)

It is possible that this is a reference to Essex who was

raised very high by the Queen not because she wanted to benefit him but for reasons of her capricious pleasure. It may however be only a general comment on human life.

Donne's tirade against cruelty and injustice now takes a new and a more subtle turn. Are not the poor innocent fish, *like his kinsmen the Catholics*, killed because it is an occupation to kill them and because,

> Lawes make Fasts, and Lents for their destruction.
> (l. 290)

Thus in the name of religion poor innocent fish are killed even when they have not harmed anybody or done any wrong. But who cares? And who knows? Donne's, like poor John Clare's, is the stifled cry of suffering humanity. The Pie now flew fast and long and eventually died with the fish in its stomach. Soon the Soul flew out and was immediately in search of a new habitation and a name.

It again entered 'an embrion' fish and grew to such an enormous size that it was as big as Morea, the Grecian province. Like an 'uprooted' Morea or a severed promontory of the African coast the huge fish began to swim for he was now a whale. Donne gives a magnificent description of the whale (XXXII). His ribs were like pillars and his huge inside was like some inland sea from which he spouted rivers of water to join the seas with the firmament. The huge fish did not go out hunting but like a powerful court official stayed in and waited for suitors to enmesh themselves in his net. But why should persons with enormous power exist in the world? Or is it necessary

> That thousand guiltless smals, to make one great,
> must die? (l. 330)

Can this, again, be a reference to Queen Elizabeth? Had not thousands of Catholics paid with their lives in order to make the Queen a mighty champion of Protestantism? On the other hand, the reference may be a general one.

The huge fish grew larger and larger in size till it reached a stage when its own greatness became a menace to itself.

There's no pause at perfection;
Greatness a period hath, but hath no station. (ll. 339-40)

The wheel soon turned full circle. Two smaller fishes whom the whale had never harmed plotted against it and with the courage of desperation attacked it. The common anger which had been worked up helped them and the whale was vanquished far more quickly than was thought possible. The sluggard went down helplessly before the flail-finned Thresher and the steel-beaked Sword-fish in an amazingly feeble way. Nobody came forward to avenge its death, just as nobody comes forward to show respect to a departed Prince lest the new Prince should take offence (XXXVII).

The Soul was a little annoyed that so 'great' a creature like the whale should succumb so easily to the hammer-blows of such small creatures and out of sheer disgust entered the body of a 'wretched mouse'. Like the base men who hate the good fortune of others the Soul started on a new career.

This Soule, late taught that great things might by lesse
Be slain, to gallant mischiefe doth herselfe addresse.
(ll- 379-80)

The mouse soon came upon an elephant, 'Nature's great masterpiece', 'the giant of beasts' that does not use its strength like a giant. The elephant that 'himselfe he up-props', is self-reliant and has 'no knees to bend',[16] sleeping stood' not suspecting any enemies and at peace with the world. The wily mouse, out of sheer mischief, entered the 'sinewy Proboscis' of the elephant. Very boldly the mouse,

Walk'd, and surveid the roomes of this vast house,
And to the braine, the soule's bedchamber, went,
And gnaw'd the life cords there... (ll. 392-4)

With this the elephant died and with him his 'murtherer' the mouse.

The Soul next entered the body of 'a Wolves yet unborne whelp' which immediately after birth started killing sheep. The young wolf became such a menace that Abel, the second

son of Adam, 'as white, and milde as his sheepe', was extremely grieved at his loss. Abel's bitch defended the flock cleverly and made it well-nigh impossible for the young wolf to carry on his predatory activities. He, therefore, planned to corrupt her.

> Hee tooke a course, which since, successfully,
> Great men have often taken, to espie
> The counsels, or to breake the plots of foes. (ll. 411-13)

In the darkness of night he stole towards Abel's tent on 'whose skirts the bitch slept' and immediately attacking 'her with streight gripes' he started his 'loves worke'. Strangely enough the bitch did neither bark nor make any resistance. This gave licence to the wolf who went on with his marauding work nonchalantly. Whenever the wolf would come the bitch would make a pretence of barking but would neither bite nor drive him away. At last Abel laid a trap for the wolf, which was caught and put to death. But before he died the wolf had impregnated the bitch. To this new life the Soul flew and thus the wolf became his own son and father too! We have similar situations in both Spenser and Milton.

> Some have their wives, their sisters some begot,
> But in the lives of Emperours you shall not
> Reade of a lust the which may equall this. (ll. 431-3)

Soon after birth, the whelp started playing with the little sister of Abel, called Moaba[17] who lived in the same tent. He soon grew too rough for her and Abel therefore used him for protecting his sheep since the bitch was dead. But being a hybrid he had the qualities of both dog and wolf. Hence, while he drove away the wolves from the flock he at the same time preyed on the sheep. This perfidy continued for five years but

> Then hopelesse that his faults were hid, betraid
> Himselfe by flight, and by all followed,
> From dogges, a wolfe; from wolves, a dogge he fled;
> And, like a spie to both sides false, he perished.
> (ll. 447-50)

The Soul next quickened the body of a 'toyfull Ape'. It played with the children in the tents and was very frolicsome. But it much preferred the company of Siphatecia,[18] the fifth daughter of Adam, and gazed at her and tried to please her as much as possible. It began to tumble on the grass, gather fruits for her and do all that a devoted lover would. It was the first lover to convey love by mute signs and to please a mistress by 'hoiting gambolls'. When toys and other means of pleasing Siphatecia failed, it looked into her face with tear-reddened eyes and very subtly lifted her 'kidskinne apron', but felt no fear at all, for it knew that

> nature hath no gaole, though shee hath law. (l. 480)

The simple girl did not know what was meant by this. But soon the ape's touch created in her 'an itchie warmth' that melted her completely. Now she did not care what was done but alternately desired and repulsed the Creature. While all this was taking place Tethelmite, Siphatecia's brother, entered the tent and seeing what was happening flung a stone which instantly killed the ape.

The Soul was now free to move on in its mad career. In the meanwhile, Adam and Eve had mated and in Eve's womb an embryo was being formed into which this peregrinating Soul entered. This was Themech, whom Cain, the first murderer, afterwards married. The Soul brought with it all the qualities of the bodies which it had once possessed,

> keeping some quality
> Of every past shape, she knew treachery,
> Rapine, deceit, and lust, and ills enow
> To be a woman. (ll. 506-9)

So woman is the embodiment of all beastlike qualities and the incarnation of all the vices in the world! This is the climax of Donne's misogyny, of his erupting hatred of the Queen, of the strange daemonic spirit which appears to have possessed his mind during this period. The Queen to this young man is 'not a paragon of sagacity and mental agility which others declare her, but in truth an arch-fiend, a she-wolf, the devourer

who feeds upon favourites and drinks the blood of martyrs, rejoicing in this unholy ichor.'[19] She is the daughter of the fateful Eve, whose 'pulling of apple' has brought us all our suffering and all our woe. But the tirade against women is rather strange and bewildering in view of the fact that at this stage he was passionately in love and was going to be married in about six months' time.

The idea of man being an amalgam of all beasts is an old one and is also to be found in Donne's letter to *Sir Edward Herbert at Julyers*.

> Man is a lumpe, where all beasts kneaded bee,
> Wisdome makes him an Arke where all agree;
> The fool, in whom these beasts do live at jarre,
> Is sport to others, and a Theater,
> Nor scapes hee so, but is himselfe their prey; (ll. 1-5)

That poem, like *The Progresse of the Soule* is 'rather gritty and abstract'[20] and difficult to interpret. But the important thing for us is the torturing thought that the Soul is corrupted by the bodies which it once possessed. In this connection, Professor Mahood observes:[21]

> It was a part of the humanist disintegration that in all schools of thought a sense of harmony between body and soul was lost. The natural philosophers, taking their cue perhaps from Montaigne, dismissed the soul from their considerations; the Puritans the body....
>
> He (Donne) often speaks of the soul's corruption by the body: the Platonic theory of their relationship which was vigorously combated by St. Augustine and which Donne himself when he became second Augustine was to oppose with equal vigour.

Donne, who was interested in philosophical scepticism, the philosophy of Sextus Empericus, was greatly fascinated by the theory that infinite variety is the law of life, that the universe is in a continual flux and that, unlike Spenser, one should not be sad at the contemplation of mutability.[22] At this stage, however, he is rather bewildered, perplexed and sad at

the loss of his intellectual moorings and his bitterness and rancour are seen here.

Donne very abruptly breaks off the poem, 'this sullen Writ', in a sudden effort to 'arrest' his 'thoughts' which were just beginning to bloom in the poisonous garden of his mind. The final stroke of cynicism comes when he begins to wonder.

> Why plowing, building, ruling and the rest,
> Or most of those arts, whence our lives are blest,
> By cursed *Cains* race invented be,
> And blest *Seth* vext us with Astronomie (ll. 514-17)

This rank cynicism which shows a deadly hatred of that mean and despicable creature, Man himself, reminds us of another pathological personality, Jonathan Swift, who on account of his hatred of our perverse, petty and diabolical civilization preferred the philosophical Yahoos to that 'real' beast, Man. But Donne seems to reach the limit of cynicism here, for no wicked or self-destructive thought could go further than this. For Donne there are no Yahoos, no philosophers or kings, no Christ, no God in this dark earth, than which no worse Hell can be conceived. I have not come across any poem darker, more sinister in content and attitude than this.

Donne ends the poem with a philosophical dictum that,

> Ther's nothing simply good, nor ill alone,
> Of every quality Comparison
> The onely measure is, and judge, Opinion. (ll. 518-20)

The old philosophical idea was quite common during Elizabethan times and as everybody knows even Shakespeare echoes it in *Hamlet*. The conclusion of the poem is very significant in that it shows that Donne was in a state of mind very similar to that in which Hamlet found himself. As Evelyn Hardy has pointed out, *Hamlet* and *The Progress of the Soul* (Metempsychosis) are similar in as many as five respects, namely depression, a mood of utter hopelessness, sleeplessness, attitude towards women and the final ending.[23] Like Hamlet, Donne is angry because the very fountain of life has been

corrupted, whose purity and sacredness can never be recovered. All hope is lost to him and the embittered Donne, Samson-like, destroys the very edifice of life.

De Quincey, however, saw in this poem some of the finest things in the world's literature. 'Massy diamonds compose the very substance of his (Donne's) poem on the Metempsychosis, thoughts and descriptions which have the fervent and gloomy sublimity of Ezekiel or Aeschylus.'[24] But in neither Aeschylus nor in Ezekiel is there a want of faith in God and in man, nor is there that poisonous bitterness and rancour which we find in this repulsive poem. It has to be admitted however that Donne's lethal anger is controlled and in his coolness he reminds us of Swift. The descriptions are accurate and significant and show what a keen observer Donne was of human as well as animal life.

The poem is variously interpreted by critics. Thus Grierson thinks that the poem is in the main an outburst against the tragic fate which descended on Essex some months before the poem was written. In support of his contention, he quotes from Ben Jonson's *Cynthia's Revels*: 'some black and envious slanders breath'd against her (Diana i.e. Queen Elizabeth) for her divine justice to Actaeon.' Along with the main motive there are also other motives to be detected, namely the hatred of the Queen as the persecutor of the Catholics. This is the traditional misreading of the poem started by Ben Jonson who wrote thus to Drummond of Hawthornden:

> The conceit of Donne's transformation or Metempsychosis was that he sought the soul of the apple which Eve pulled and thereafter made it the soul of a bitch, then of a she-wolf and so of a woman: his genial purpose was to have brought in all the bodies of the Heretics from the soul of Cain and at last left it in the body of Calvin. Of this he never wrote but one sheet and now since he was made Doctor, repenteth highly, and seeketh to destroy all his poems.'[25]

Gosse concludes from this that at the rate at which Donne was going it would have taken a million verses to reach down to his times. Where many of the passages and episodes do not

fit in with the traditional interpretation, Grierson evades the difficulty by saying that they are pointless.[26] Other critics have done more or less the same thing and have declared the poem to be 'obscure' or 'perplexing' made purposely so by Donne, who wished to refer to some contemporary events or personalities without being involved in difficulties.

Recently, W. A. Murray has tried to interpret the poem by suggesting a new theory of the symbolism of the apple in the poem.[27] His hypothesis is that the Pythagorean philosophy is nothing more than a literary device and that the poem is planned as an allegory of the development of the knowledge of good and evil in mankind, the separate episodes being related to the religious or historical questions and to the circumstances of Donne's own predicament. He believes that Donne might have possibly derived the idea from *De Opificio Mundi* by Philo Judaeus, an eclectic philosopher and polymath, who was a contemporary of Christ and whom Christianity eventually adopted as its own. His books were influential in Europe during the Renaissance and the Reformation and in Donne's style of preaching can be detected the influence of Philo. Philo has symbolical imagery and states that in the 'divine park or pleasaunce all plants are endowed with soul or reason' and that the Ark is the body and the passions are the wild beasts.[28] According to him the Law of God, of Nature and of Moses entails upon 'choice' and its 'consequences'. Through the Fall the Soul is incapable of right choice, and every crucial error is followed by death. In Donne's own terms moral choice feeds upon the corrupt souls of growth and sense.

Murray's contention is that Donne was certainly not a Roman Catholic when the poem was written and that there is no evidence to show that he was so profoundly affected by the public events of the period as to write such a passionately erupting and bitter poem as this. The public events may have set going a train of thought and feelings but the poet is mainly concerned here with the problem of moral choice. However, Mr. Murray is not able to make out a convincing case in favour of his theory that what Donne attempts to suggest here is the supreme contrast between the choice of man and that of Christ. He contends that in each episode of

the poem, a crucial error is followed by death from natural causes. But what was the error of the mandrake or even of the first fish, 'whose scales seem'd yet of parchment' and who was caught and swallowed by the swan? The various animals behave according to their natural propensities and are not called upon to make any moral choice either consciously or otherwise. There is no crucial error at 'each stage' and death comes from natural causes because the animals neither go beyond their nature nor are they able to control it. They, however, transmit a part of their nature to the wandering Soul which goes on accumulating sin and corrupting itself till it becomes an embodiment of all that is sinister, wicked, tyrannical and corrupt in this world. Donne is interested in tracing all the devilishness in the world to its origin and is not obsessed by such moral questions as man's free will and his propensity to disobey God's law.

The idea of Metempsychosis was originally derived by the Greeks from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead* which asserted that the wicked soul, 'the restless vagabond between heaven and earth, seeks a human body in which to pitch its tent, in order to torment it with sickness and harry it to bloodshed and madness.'[29] The Egyptian ideas of good souls and wicked souls was accepted by the Pythagoreans to which they added later the Orphic idea of the wicked soul's chastisement in Hades as a part of the process of purification and atonement.[30] The good soul also could assume shapes of various animals and plants, 'it may display itself as the winged phoenix, as a goose. . etc..', for that was a part of its privilege. The Greek theory that man has beast-like as well as god-like attributes was derived from the legend of Dionysus Zegrus and is a concept different from that of the soul's fall due to sin and its habitation in the bodies of animals.[31]

There is a possibility that Pythagoras had sat at the feet of some Indian priests and imbibed from them the doctrine of metempsychosis.[32] The Hindus believe that the origin of the soul is enveloped in mystery which one should not try to unravel[33] and that the soul which moves through a cycle of 8,400,000 species of existence takes to higher or lower forms of life according to its 'karma' (actions) in every previous birth. Thus the idea of the rise or fall of the soul according to the

sins committed by it is an Indian idea which is likely to have travelled to Greece in those ancient days. As Gomprez points out, 'The fall of the soul by sin' is completely unknown to the texts....as it is to the writings of Pindar the poet and Empedocles the Philosopher.'[34] His speculation is that the idea might have arisen as a variation of the Orphic doctrine of punishment in Hades.

Donne seems to follow here the original Pythagorean doctrine (which, as he claims in the preface, was a 'digg'd out treasure' from 'Antiquitie') and according to which the good and the bad souls are distinct entities capable of moving on all the three grades of life, vegetable, animal or human, according to their 'indispositions'. Thus the soul which was placed by God in the apple was itself a wicked soul and there was no question of its being corrupted as it moved rather casually through different species of life. A careful reading of the preface along with lines 61-67, and 506-9, the crucial lines in the poem, shows that what the soul retains after its peregrinations is only a memory of its previous experiences, for wickedness is inherent in itself. It is for this reason that Donne gives to the poem the title *The Progresse of the Soule* which when translated into modern idiom means the 'travels' or the 'journeys' of the soul.[35]

The poem then is nothing more than a satire on the Queen for, as Donne says in the Epistle, his purpose here is to '*bite*'.

> 'I censure much and taxe. And this liberty costs mee more then others, by how much my owne things are worse then others. Yet I would not be so rebellious against myself, as not to do it, since I love it.'
>
> (Epistle to the Poem)

It is possible that Donne, angered at the fate of his kinsmen, exploded against the Queen and the words spoken unguardedly might have brought him into trouble. The words in the poem

> hands, not tongues, end heresies (l. 120)

are very significant and point to the passionate fury which seems to have possessed him at this stage.

If Donne had in mind the fall of Essex, as Grierson and most of the critics believe, the form and the tenor of the poem would have been different. Of the 'scourgers' Donne mentions only two in the poems—Mahomet and Luther—and this certainly proves that Donne's fulminations against the fiendish Queen are born of an acute religious anguish which makes him lodge in her the wicked soul 'harrying' her 'to blood-shed and madness', all this resulting in a horrible persecution of his kinsmen, the Catholics.

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1. Evelyn Hardy, *Donne—a Spirit in Conflict*, 1942, pp. 58-88.
2. H. J. C. Grierson, *The Poems of John Donne*, vol. II, 1942, p. 219.
3. Edmund Gosse, *Life & Letters of John Donne*, vol. I, 1899, pp. 131-41.
4. M. M. Mahood, *Poetry & Humanism*, 1950, p. 87.
5. The whole tenor of the poem is epic. The epic machinery is employed in such things as invocations, similes etc. Cf.

   I sing the progresse of a deathlesse soule,
   Whom Fate, which God made, but doth not controule... (ll. 1-2)

   But snatch mee heavenly Spirit from this vaine
   Reckoning their vanities, lesse in their gaine. (ll. 111-12)

6. Evelyn Hardy, op. cit. pp. 85-88.
7. Clay Hunt, *Donne's Poetry, Essays in Literary Analysis*, 1954, p. 167.
8. H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit. p. xix.
9. E. M. Simpson, *A Study of the Prose Works of John Donne*, 1948, p. 71.
10. W. A. Murray, 'What was the Soul of the Apple', *Review of English Studies*, May 1959, p. 149.
11. W. A. Murray, op. cit. p. 150.
12. This might be an oblique reference by Donne to his own condition. He is now like a living buried man. The mandrake, as Sir Thomas Browne points out in his *Vulgar Errors*, was supposed to resemble the shape of man.
13. John Heywood, *John Donne*, 1950.
14. Gosse, op. cit. vol. ii, p. 10.
15. This is one of the main ideas in the poem. Cf. the end of the poem.

16. The idea was quite common during the Middle Ages and persisted during the Renaissance. Cf. Sir Thomas Browne's remarks on the point in his *Pseudodoxia Epidemica*.
17. H. J. C. Grierson, op. cit. II, pp. 223-4, See notes on the origins of the names.
18. H, J, C. Grierson, op. cit. pp. 223-4. See notes on the origins of the names.
19. Evelyn Hardy, op. cit. pp. 85-88
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27. W. A. Murray, op. cit. pp. 141-50.
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30. Theodor Gomprez, op. cit. p. 128.
31. Theodor Gomprez, op. cit. pp. 128-9.
32. Sisirkumar Mitra, *The Vision of India*, 1949, p. 166. 'Colebrooke....says... I shall not hesitate to acknowledge an inclination to consider the Grecian to have been indebted to Indian instructors.'
33. Cf. the Greek concept of the souls strewn in the stars as well as the earth. Cornford, F. M., *Plato's Cosmology* 1956, p. 146.
34. Theodor Gomprez, op. cit. p. 130.
35. The word 'progress' still meant journey in the 17th century, Cf. Bunyan's title *The Pilgrim's Progress*. L. P. Smith, *The English Language*, 1944, p. 148.

BLAKE'S GOSPEL OF THE IMAGINATION

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Blake not only believes in a dynamic universe but in one that has been conceived in terms of dialectics; the most pronounced tension in it arises out of the opposition between Energy and Reason. 'Energy is the only life and is from the body; and Reason is the bound or outward circumference of Energy.'[1] If one were to convey Blake's idea of circular movement in Hegelian terms, one would say that Innocence represents the Thesis, Experience the Antithesis, and these lead on to the Synthesis of achieved Innocence which is more or less equivalent to life lived on the plane of the Imagination. Bare existence in the physical world is symptomatic of the fall into division and fragmentation, and the restoration to unity may be achieved only when the exercise of the Imagination becomes a habitual mode of conscious life. The word 'Eternity' —the keyword in Blake's later poetry—connotes two distinct things: it refers to the fundamental reality of things, and it also means a full and ecstatic experience on the imaginative level. It may also be indicated that in a way Eternity refers to the world above and without and the Imagination to the world below and within, and following Trismegistus and the Occultists, Blake believed that the two regions were not only contiguous but almost identical. The conflict between the Imagination and Reason has been dramatized in the Lambeth Books by the two mythological personages—Los and Urizen. The activities of Urizen in constructing the Mundane Shell and in exploring his own dens in *The Four Zoas* are an imaginative transcript of the scientific pursuits of Newton—the architect of the rational and mechanistic world of the eighteenth century, and a member of the infernal trinity for Blake. Los, who represents the expansive and life-giving ideal of the Imagination, is obviously the counter-symbol. It is worth pointing out here that by the end of *The Four Zoas*, Urizen, after being redeemed, becomes an agent in the regenerative labours and is therefore abandoned as a symbol

of constructive reason. Hence, Satan is created in *Milton* to replace Urizen and comes to symbolize not merely petrifaction but also obscurity of vision.

The opposition between the Imagination and the Selfhood (another name for the supremacy of Reason) is present in an embryonic form in 'My spectre around me night and day'[2] and in 'The Clod and the Pebble' (*Songs of Experience*). The latter poem is not merely concerned with two kinds of love—the selfless and the selfish—but also reflects two mental attitudes. The Clod represents the normal, healthy and self-denying approach to life, and the Pebble is the spokesman of the morbid, cramping and highly egoistic impulses. Foster Damon has pointed out that the Clod has the germs of higher life within it whereas the Pebble, lying in water (symbol of chaos and materialism in Blake) is completely dead. Selfhood in Blake corresponds to the concept of Proprium in Swedenborg, and in this State of being, not only the freedom and expansiveness of the life of innocence is lost, but the identity between God and Man also breaks down. Selfhood is the salient feature of the character of Satan—the Accuser of mankind—and his vindictive and spiteful ways are counter-poised to the tolerance and large-mindedness of the prophet and the seer.

In the two tractates written in refutation of the Deists, Blake makes three important statements:

> If it were not for the Poetic or Prophetic character, the Philosophic and Experimental would soon be at the Ratio of all things.
>
> (Sloss & Wallis, 'There is no natural religion.')

> That the Poetic Genius is the true man, and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. (Ibid. 'All religions are one.')

> 'That the true Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius.' (Ibid. 'All religions are one.')

Here Blake makes a number of crucial points: he establishes the primacy of the Poetic Genius over the physical body,

regards the latter as derivative and secondary, thinks that the true self is synonymous with the Poetic Genius and is also the preservative force against the onrush of rationalism on the human personality. In a later epic, after suggesting the confusion wrought in the human psyche by the imbalance of the four primal powers—Urthona, Urizen, Luvah and Tharmas—Blake underlines the importance of the Imagination which has not been petrified and is a source of sustenance for Milton:

> But when Luvah assum'd the world of Urizen
> to the South,
> And Albion was slain upon his mountains
> and in his tent,
> All fell towards the Center in dire ruin,
> sinking down.
> And in the South remains a burning fire,
> in the East a void,
> In the West a world of raging waters,
> in the North a solid,
> Unfathomable, without end. But in the midst
> of these
> Is built eternally the Universe of Los and
> Enitharmon,
> Towards which Milton went.
> (*Milton*, I, plate 18, p. 32)

As early as the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake had developed the antithesis between the Prolific and the Devourer, which symbolize Energy and Reason or the man of genius and the rationalist respectively. Broadly speaking, one may equate the Imagination with spiritual sensation experienced by the integrated man, and it is opposed to the organic sensation that is felt by the man who despairs of achieving harmony. Man in the latter State is no more than a spectre, one who is compact of sterile reason, 'a sleepwalking automaton',[3] one in whom the vision has atrophied and who is bound within the narrow confines of his selfhood. The conquest of this selfhood that is likely to lead to an imaginative release is dependent upon the practice of forgiveness and understanding or of

charity in the orthodox Christian sense. One is not probably far from the truth in upholding that the life of the Imagination in its quintessence is tantamount to right living—Langland's Do Wel—in the terrestrial conditions to which man has been doomed, and it also paves the way for the redemption of mankind.

The Satan-Palamabron episode in *Milton* lays emphasis upon the unnatural and blatant restraints imposed upon creative activity—which is imaginative activity at its highest—and does not make much sense if interpreted too literally. In this magnificent brief epic, Blake has explored the devious ways in which the assertion of selfhood has destroyed Milton's prophetic character and sadly coloured his concept of the ways of Divinity. Milton's great fault, according to Blake's valuation, was egocentricity that proved disastrous to his personal life, and the major flaw in his thinking as poet was firstly that he regarded the material world as the creation of God; secondly, that he represented this God as a metaphysical entity:

> Seek not thy heavenly father then beyond the skies.
> (*Milton*, I, plate 18, p. 23)

and thirdly, that he was too rationalistic in his intellectual attitudes:

> Thus Milton fell thro' Albion's heart, travelling
> outside of Humanity,
> Beyond the Stars in chaos, in caverns of the Mundane
> Shell.
> (Ibid. pp. 41-42)

Milton's God in *Paradise Lost*, like Blake's own Job, is a colourless abstraction, conceived, though, in very personal terms; he is a tyrant and a bully, and is actuated by a sense of self-righteousness. He is moved by spite in inflicting punishment on Adam and Eve for a hypothetical sin, and then he indulges in attitudinizing. Christ, represented as gentle and meek and acting in accordance with the dictates of the Divine Will, is a parody of the real revolutionary. In terms of Blake's my-

thology, God is Urizen—cold, calculating and malicious—and Luvah—Milton's Satan is the counterpart—is driven by energy, is interested in subverting the present order of things and substituting for it the eternal mode of existence. Jesus and Luvah—representing peace and war apparently—are in reality kindred spirits of revolt. In the Joseph-Mary episode in *Milton* the emphasis likewise falls not on orthodoxy but on the recognition of the intrinsic value of delight and the forgiveness of sins.

Blake is largely concerned in this poem with making Milton, the poet and the theologian, recant his blasphemous views, and Milton the man renounce his egocentricity. The poetic strategy used for the purpose is Milton's descent into this world and entrance into the left foot[4] of Blake (an analogy for such an act may be found in Hindu mythology) and the identification of both of them ultimately with Los—the spirit of prophecy and of the Imagination. Further, the virgin Ololon, who, according to Foster Damon, symbolizes Truth which was rejected by Milton and is the immortal counterpart of his sixfold Emanation or Shadow, divides from him and also becomes the means of regeneration. Blake chose this particular theme because he shared with Milton a number of views (particularly those about the antiquity of Britain, the freedom of the press and the establishment of the Republican form of government in the teeth of the autocracy of Charles I), and regarded him as a true prophet and seer. Unfortunately, Milton had read the Bible literally and not analogically (as Blake claimed Swedenborg and he himself did), and in his personal and domestic life he had failed to live up to the Christian ideal of charity and forgiveness. The attempt at a reorientation of his religious orthodoxy and the dethronement of his egoistic self are the two basic purposes that prompt him to forsake temporarily his place in Eternity and assume a new point of vantage.

The poem bristles with enormous difficulties, and is full of dramatic moments of great intensity and suspense. The Eternals are surprised at the journey the immortal poet should undertake to achieve his mission. The figure of Ololon is highly ambiguous because it stands for the river in Eden, for the Eternals conceived as a totality and for the agency

that brings illumination to Milton. The shadow that divides from the figure of Milton may either be interpreted as the body of errors that had accumulated in Milton's life and thinking, or as the super-ego of the poet that acted as a negative and inhibiting force and prevented him from living the life of the Imagination in its fullest blaze. Dramatically, the most stirring passage in the poem is the fight in which Milton engages himself with Urizen or Satan—the embodiment of selfhood—and out of which he emerges triumphant. It is also significant that the fight takes place on the river Arnon that divides Egypt from the Promised Land. In Blake's cosmology, Egypt is associated with the worship of Reason and Tyranny, and the Promised Land is the region where the Imagination reigns supreme. The triumph of Milton in this contest is a figurative way of representing the fact that inspired by the spirit of prophecy (Los), the poet transcends the limitations of the selfhood that had been a source of debilitation for him and becomes a denizen of the City of Light which is the realm of the Imagination. Milton thus comes to acquire a new dimension of personality. The moment of illumination that dawns upon Milton has been communicated with full imaginative exuberance by Blake probably because it throws into relief the agony from which he had been suffering so long. The Sixfold Emanation—Milton's three wives and three daughters put together—is the catalyst through which this release of energy has been achieved, and as pointed out by Northrop Fry,[5] this particular instant of time reminds us of a similar passage in Langland's *Visions of Piers Plowman*. Milton's regeneration gives Blake the looked-for opportunity to indulge in a wholesale condemnation of the art, ethics and religion of the eighteenth century—neo-classicism, empiricism and Deism—that had all been dominated by the rationalist assumptions and had thus brought about the utter degradation of the life of the Imagination. Milton, the stern and uncompromising Puritan, is turned into an Awakener; he becomes one with Blake and Los—the archetypal visionaries—and in a moment of sudden access of light, perceives and destroys the body of error that had been swelling under his aegis. Simultaneously, in his identification with Los—described in a superb dramatic manner—Blake realized

that the material universe (Udan-Adan in Blake's cosmology) could be turned into means of spiritual progress by him only when he was completely permeated by the spirit of poetry:

> While Los heard indistinct in fear, what time I
> bound my sandals
> On to walk forward thro' Eternity, Los descended
> to me;
> And Los behind me stood, a terrible flaming Sun,
> just close
> Behind my back. I turned round in terror, and behold,
> Los stood in that fierce glowing fire; and he also
> stoop'd down
> And bound my Sandals on in Udan-Adan. Trembling
> I stood
> Exceedingly with fear and terror, standing in the Vale
> Of Lambeth; but he kiss'd me and wish'd me health,
> And I became One Man with him, arising in my strength.
> 'Twas too late now to recede: Los had enter'd into
> my soul:
> His terrors now possess'd me whole. I arose in fury and
> strength.
> (*Milton*, I, plate 20, pp. 4-14)

Jerusalem is the most tenuous symbolic statement of the supremacy of the life of the Imagination and of the inhibiting conditions under which it shrivels up. Whereas *Milton* deals with these conditions in the context of the narrow and dogmatic theology of the Puritan poet and the motivations that govern his not wholly admirable personality, *Jerusalem* takes up the theme of man's fall into sleep and oblivion, and examines it in the light both of the Jewish religion and the contemporary rationalized version of Christianity. It may not be out of place here to point out that the strictures on Deism passed by Blake emanate from his condemnation of Druidism for Deism was a continuation of the earlier creed. One may further note that the culmination of rationalism in eighteenth-century Deism is the necessary preliminary for the full flowering of the Imagination as embedded in the spirit of Christianity. It is impossible to follow Blake in a

the mazes of his dramatic presentation of this theme with any degree of consistency for threads are taken up and then left hanging, and there is also an excessive and sometimes irritating duplication of themes and arguments. Still there are certain recurrent patterns, having a bearing upon the vital importance of the Imagination, that one may comment upon. What has been hinted by Blake so far is now dilated upon with prophetic vehemence and in a tone of finality that dissipates all shadow of doubt.

Blake's attitude to Judaism is characterized by ambivalence. Sometimes Blake seems to imply that the reintegrated life can be achieved by a reversion to the mode of living and feeling of the Israelites; at others, his hostility to Judaism springs from its vindictive attitude to man and its insistence on retribution. An early intimation of it is given in the Introduction to the *Songs of Experience* where the voice of the Imagination has been juxtaposed to the hypocritical posturing of Jehovah. Jehovah is for Blake a symbol of tyranny, oppression, lack of charity and understanding, and persistence in the ethics inculcated by him leads ultimately to sadism. It is an attitude of mind that reflects a certain kind of primitivism and want of sensitiveness. It makes and enforces a rigid distinction between Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, and these moral categories to which human beings are forced to surrender themselves take neither the Divine origin of man into account nor those minute particulars—the little impulses and tendernesses—of which the Human Individual is constituted and which are the essentials of personality. Evaluation of individuals in terms of rigid moral criteria requires of them approximation to a dead uniformity. The degradation thus suffered by the human personality leads Blake to the evocation of a withering sense of helplessness in *Jerusalem*. Los has been searching the interior of Albion's bosom and is unable to identify the agent (Satan) who has been making these inroads on the sanctuary of the human personality:

> And saw every Minute Particular of Albion degraded
> and murder'd,
> But saw not by whom; they were hidden within the
> minute particulars

Of which they had possess'd themselves: and there they take up
The articulations of a man's soul, and laughing throw it down
Into the frame, then knock it out upon the plank; and souls are bak'd
In bricks to build the pyramids of Heber and Terah. But Los
Search'd in vain: clos'd from the minutia he walk'd difficult.

(*Jerusalem*, II, plate 31, pp. 7-13)

The moral law conceives life's goal in terms of a static ideal of perfection, measures men in respect of mediocrity and insists upon an unequivocal obedience to the dictates of a tyrannic and unenlightened Deity. All these have the effect of turning man into a passive and mechanical entity. Blake had proclaimed quite early that 'all Deities reside in the human breast,'[6] meaning thereby that the concept of God as a remote and barren Abstraction is not likely to evoke any sympathetic response from human beings. God is not separable from man, and man shares with Him the potential of Divinity. The inexorable moral and religious law that connotes, in the last analysis, living according to the rule of thumb and in a spirit of self-righteousness and which in its utmost severity is represented by Judaism takes neither the uniqueness of the individual nor his capacity for good into cognizance. The morality of the Decalogue is a negative morality, and the Ten Commandments are commensurate with a lifeless legalism that exacts unstinted allegiance to itself and excludes all reference to love and charity. It is also the letter of the law that has been isolated from its indwelling spirit and exalted to a self-contained perfection and an absolute invulnerability. The distinction between good and evil is unreal and illusory since everything participates in the Divine order, and vengeance for sin and condemnation of the sinner to utter perdition destroys the possibility of regeneration altogether. The Mosaic law is concerned with the externals of human nature and does not touch its inmost fabric. Retribution for sin which is insisted upon by the objective and

the rationally conceived norm of ethics kills the Divine essence in man, and the growth of the spirit of self-righteousness in him leaves little scope for the exercise of the Imagination.

Prompted by a patriotic sentiment and also accepting the archaeological findings in the eighteenth century of persons like Davies, Bryant, Stukeley and others, Blake, too, became convinced that the Jews had early settled down in Britain and were the real founders of civilization. The Druids, the ancient inhabitants of Britain and the descendants of the Patriarchs, had their own share of prophetic inspiration. But in course of time and through unidentifiable causes, the Druids came to accept the cult of the knife and instituted the practice of human sacrifice. Judicial execution and human sacrifice are two sides of the same coin since both terminate in the destruction of the divine essence in man and exact heavy penalty for the negligence of the ceremonial ritual. There are so many things in common between the spirit of Judaism and that of Druidism that the latter may be regarded legitimately as the remnant of the former. The promulgation of the stony laws, the establishment of the Druid temples (the remains of which were discovered at Stonehenge), the infliction of punishment for moral offences, the practice of human sacrifice, the subjection of all impulse and spontaneity to dry formalism and the concentration of all authority in an unconcerned, unapproachable and transcendental Deity—all these sum up the attitude of Judaism and Druidism to human life and personality. All this ensues, according to Blake, upon detaching the basis of living from the reality of Forgiveness and Imagination, and subjecting all human activity and thinking to the guidance of the Spectre—the abstracting and devouring Reason.

One of the recurrent and favourite ideas of Blake is that error has a tendency to repeat itself, and error must be given a definite form before it can be cast out. The endless round of error is symbolized by Blake by the figure of a circle, and the Circle of Destiny in *The Four Zoas* and elsewhere connotes the process of recurrence with overtones of necessitarianism. In the Lambeth Books the process of recurrence and periodicity, which is the result of looking at things in their temporal aspect, is illustrated by the fortunes of Ore. Los, on the contrary,

is the unifier, is the medium of that vision which approaches phenomena from the vantage-point of Eternity and establishes the Identity persisting through interminable succession. In *Jerusalem*, in particular, Druidism and Deism are forms of error that have a tendency towards perpetual renewal, and Christianity or the life of the Imagination represents Reality which is both simultaneous and eternal. Deism is regarded by Blake as the parody of Christianity in so far as it denies the reality of the spiritual basis of life and stakes everything on a rational explanation of faith. It shows its apathy both to the inward experiences of man and to his ultimate salvation in heaven, encourages a static view of human nature, is bitterly antagonistic to the authenticity and need of revelation and its conception of Christ is vegetative rather than imaginative. The Deists have been aptly described by Paul Hazard as 'the rationalists with a nostalgia for religion' but they could stomach religion only if it were shorn of its indispensable divine sanction or postulates. Instead of regarding man as created in the Divine image, they were persuaded to construct a God after their own predilections. Religion in their hands degenerated into an algebraic formula, and the fundamental Christian virtues like pity, mercy and peace came to be conceived as negative bulwarks against the corresponding vices they were supposed to counteract. Thus the Divine Image, emptied of its revelatory content, was disfigured into the Human Abstract—a rationalization both of the form and the essence of virtue. Voltaire and Rousseau, in particular, expressing their belief in a rational and naturalistic universe, come in for scathing criticism at the hands of Blake. Rousseau conceives of human Society as originating in a state of nature —which is also a state of freedom—and the growth of man-made institutions is symptomatic of a fall from it. The stimulus offered by Rousseauism led to the creation of the Romantic image of man as initially uncorrupt and to the indictment of the tyranny exercised upon him by the social law. Far from regarding it as the ideal, Blake looks upon the State of Nature with unqualified abhorrence. He borrows only the imagery of the pastoral landscape from early or contemporary writers (as he does in the *Songs of Innocence* and the *Book of Thel*) and invests it with his own meanings. For him it is not so much

the imposition of the man-made laws as the gradual severance of relationship with the Divine source that has introduced corruption in society. The Deists who believed neither in the epiphany or Christ nor in the hierarchy of angels nor in the divine source of the human process of living, naturally joined hands with the Naturalist philosophers. Deism or Natural Religion (a term used by Rousseau for the first time) is thus tantamount to the distortion of the essence of spiritual life. Blake's animosity against the Deists derives from the fact that they mock at the life of vision or the Imagination and actively embrace the materialistic philosophy of the five senses. For Blake, vision and not the corrupted senses, is the gateway to true knowledge, and the sense-percepts are the causes of delusion.

One of the delusions created by the fallen senses is the phenomenon of sex. Sex frustration, arising out of the imposition of the Moral Law upon the free life of the spirit, is one of the major themes of the *Songs of Experience*. Fear, jealousy, secrecy and hypocrisy—all negative emotions—are concomitants of the immorality encouraged by its acceptance. Similarly chastity, prudery and bashfulness are symptoms of the erotic defence mechanism built up by woman to ensnare man. Blake was firmly opposed to the elaborate medieval apparatus of chivalry because it tended to promote the supremacy of woman in human affairs, and it was fraught with disastrous possibilities. But in the later phase of his poetry, Blake came to treat the whole woman question (and Blake was no feminist) from his distinctively metaphysical point of view. The appearance of sex in human life is an indication of the Fall for in Eternity there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage. The archetypal man was androgynous,[7] and was not aware of the distinction between the sexes. Blake regards the maternal principle as the principle of division and disunity. Moreover, the Female Will connotes the assertion of selfhood, and by implication, the loss of mutual understanding and harmony in human relationships. This reinforces the general theme of fall and separation. Thus we find that whereas in the *Songs of Experience*, Blake is merely hankering after the establishment of a secure and ideal sexual contact between man and woman through the removal of social and

religious taboos, in later poetry, he regards the whole problem as part of a larger metaphysics. It is also to be noticed that the later phase, in contradistinction to the former, betrays Blake's deep revulsion against sex. The problem of sex is bound up not only with the moral restraints but also with the seduction exercised by the senses in general, and both these are suspect in Blake's eyes. The sense of touch—the medium of sexuality—is particularly avoided in the latest phase though in the Lambeth Books it is cryptically referred to as the 'fifth window'[8] leading to the portal of infinity. Both in the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and the other poems, 'the improvement of sensual delight' is one of the surest ways of experiencing Eternity, but later on, sexuality came to be linked with the assertion of selfhood which is the opposite of the Imaginative or true being. It is further to be emphasized that the materialist philosophy based on the evidence of the sensory knowledge, the sexual life hedged in by moral restraints, the assertion of the Female Will and the rejection of a divinely inspired cosmos—all these are more or less upheld most tenaciously by the Naturalists and the Deists alike. They also oppose a man-made universe, supported by the Ratio, to the world of Eternity of which the animating principle is the Imagination.

After considerable meanderings and convolutions Blake reaches his final crystallization about this term. Imagination is to be understood with reference primarily to the homogeneous life that man lived in Eternity and has the capacity to live even here whenever he stands emancipated from the order of time and memory. Blake equates Christianity with art and Christ with the artist *par excellence*. 'I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel than the Liberty both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination—Imagination, the real and eternal world of which this vegetable universe is but a faint shadow, and in which we shall live in our eternal or Imaginative Bodies, when these Vegetable Bodies are no more.'[9] For him, as for Langland too, the Mosaic Law is to be replaced by the Law of Christ that centres in the forgiveness of sins and the growth of charity which particular virtue Langland allegorizes very vividly as 'the plant of peace'. The span of life at the end of

which man is to be reintegrated with the Divine source is roughly estimated by Blake as six thousand years. In very objective terms, it is divided in the space allotted to each of the twenty-seven Churches which, cumulatively speaking, are designated as the Covering Cherub. After having traversed this necessary track of experience man is likely, if he follows the unerring light of the Imagination, to transcend the limitations of his earth-bound existence. Deism, which represents the culmination of the rationalistic approach to religion through the centuries, had to precede the epiphany of true Christianity. The free exercise of the Imagination implies a negation of the evidence of the sense-percepts and is also opposed to the imposition of the rigid moral law. The ideas of human sacrifice, of judicial execution, of reliance on the supremacy of organic sensations, of the individual's apartness from the Divine Humanity of which he is an integral part—all these are anathema to the man of the Imagination. The life of the Imagination is the prerogative of the man who is a unified personality, who regards the Subject and the Object as participants in a cosmic harmony, whose perceptions have been cleansed and purged, who lives in hourly communication with the Divine and who treats Time as the necessary mode of the manifestation of Eternity. When Blake identifies Art or Imagination with Christianity, he is not necessarily trying to be parochial or sectarian, but is merely using the frame of reference best available to him for the articulation of a certain basic insight reached by him. He was deeply aware of the degradation to which man is reduced when his fate is weighed in the scales of strict legal justice without the admixture of charity or understanding; he also realized how the universe had been dehumanized by relying too much upon the rational and ethical criteria of naturalistic determinists and he was painfully aware of the squalor and misery that had been heaped upon man in a soulless, industrialized society.

The achievement of harmony among the fallen zoas or psychic functions in the individual's personality and the cultivation of a tolerant and humane attitude towards the other members of the body-politic are the two most important implications of the Imagination in the symbolic system of

Blake. Both these objectives can be attained by discrediting the infected senses and the superstructure of rational knowledge reared upon their foundations. In the midst of the dense atmosphere of the eighteenth-century England, created by growing materialism and an exaggerated reliance on empirical philosophy and science, Blake's gospel of the Imagination was the protest of a romantic and a visionary for the liberation of the human soul. It was an implicit indictment of the incalculable damage done both by the 'dark satanic Mills' and the 'mind-forg'd manacles' to the sensitive equipoise of the human personality which has a spark of divinity in it. Blake, whose mind was mythical and apocalyptic in its make-up and mode of operation, could not treat the problem of the Imagination as a mere classicist or a mere romanticist would do. For him it was something that stemmed from his metaphysics as a whole, and was part both of epistemology and the science of human behaviour in the mundane conditions of the fallen world. He has, no doubt, many revealing things to say about the strictly aesthetic bearings of the term 'Imagination' for he had obviously started as a painter first, but he looked on the concerns of daily human life, too, against the perspective of the eternal world. For Blake, Imagination and Eternity are synonymous terms, and the ideal towards which man has to proceed is the struggle to overcome chaos and achieve the rehabilitation of the human form by entering the eternal world of bliss:

> Thrown down from their high Station
> In the Eternal heavens of Human Imagination,
> buried beneath
> In dark Oblivion with incessant pangs ages on ages
> In enmity and war first weaken'd: then in stern
> repentance
> They must renew their brightness, and their disorganiz'd
> functions
> Again reorganize, till they resume the image of the human,
> Cooperating in the bliss of Man, obeying his will,
> Servants to the infinite and Eternal of the Human form.
> (*The Four Zoas*, Night IX, 365-72)

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FROM REASON TO IMAGINATION— A PHASE OF ENGLISH POETICS

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The old question of the use of poetry received a fresh impetus in the hands of Jeremy Bentham. Busy with schemes of social and legal reforms, Bentham yet found an occasion to concede that the fine arts (such as music, poetry, and painting), being sources of pleasure, are not devoid of 'utility' although, as he noted, the limitations of that 'utility' have to be recognized. As early as 1811, Bentham's ideas on poetry were represented in Etienne Dumont's *Theorie des peines et des recompenses*, a work based on the Master's MSs; the *Rationale of Reward*, 1825, brought those ideas within easier reach of the English-reading public. Writing of the arts and sciences of amusement, the philosopher maintains that

> It is not, however, proper to regard them as destitute of utility: on the contrary, there is nothing the utility of which is more incontestable. To what shall the character of utility be ascribed, if not to that which is a source of pleasure? All that can be alleged in diminution of their utility is that it is limited to the excitement of pleasure: they cannot disperse the clouds of grief or misfortune. They are useless to those who are not pleased with them; they are useful only to those who take pleasure in them, and only in proportion as they are pleased.
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> (*The Rationale of Reward*, III, i, p. 205, London, 1825)

After this charitable concession comes a categorical and memorable pronouncement on the value of the utility of aesthetic pleasure.

> Prejudice apart, the game of push-pin is of equal value with the arts and sciences of music and poetry. If the game of push-pin furnish more pleasure, it is more valuable than either. Everybody can play at push-pin:

> poetry and music are relished by a few. The game of push-pin is always innocent: it were well could the same be always asserted of poetry. Indeed, between poetry and truth there is a natural opposition: false morals, fictitious nature. The poet always stands in need of something false. When he pretends to lay his foundations in truth, the ornaments of his superstructure are fictitious; his business consists in stimulating our passions, and exciting our prejudices. Truth, exactitude of every kind, is fatal to poetry.
>
> (Ibid. p. 206)

The points Bentham makes are that (i) poetry, like the other fine arts, has utility because of its pleasure-giving power; (ii) the pleasure derived from a game is of the same quality and status as that derived from poetry; (iii) if a game stimulates more men to pleasure than poetry does, the game carries more utility than does poetry; and that (iv) poetry is opposed to truth.

It is not difficult to controvert Bentham's arguments and inferences. A believer in concrete experiences, perhaps he denigrated the fine arts because he had found fewer of his contemporaries responsive to music than to the puerile play of push-pin. Tastes change and today the music-hall is a draw hardly less popular than the tennis court. If numerical majority be regarded as the supreme criterion of utility and value, such majority cannot provide us with any stable measure since the tastes and predilections of the majority may and do vary according to time, place and occasion. Granting that Bentham's contemporaries did not respond to poetry as they did to a certain game, there is nothing to prevent another generation from putting poetry at the top of their list of favourite entertainments. At any rate, in spite of his use of the words truth and pleasure in this particular context, no one is likely to link up Bentham with Plato and Horace. For him, both truth and pleasure are sensationalist in character; his pleasure is not aesthetic but grounded in sensations while his truth too is truth within the apprehension of the senses. In this vigorous sensationalism lies the strength of Bentham's view of poetry. It accords well with the uncomplex,

unsubtle, direct understanding of the common man; it is in harmony with the native pragmatism of the British reader of literary works; it offered hard-worked columnists of contemporary periodicals a comforting yardstick to measure poetry with. Consequently, the Benthamist view of poetry dominated British poetics for a period when Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism stirred the minds of people. 'It may be worse,' said Macaulay, echoing the Master's dictum, 'to be angry than to be wet. But shoes have kept millions from being wet, and we doubt whether Seneca ever kept anybody from being angry.' Here is an attempt to pass off wit for wisdom but Macaulay was a powerful exponent of the Benthamist view which was widely subscribed to during the third and the fourth decades of the 19th century. An anonymous writer of the important literary weekly, the *Athenaeum*, signing himself as Beta, wrote on 23 March, 1844:[1]

> Admitting the refined beauties of Shelley, Keats, Tennyson and Milnes, and the lofty philosophy of parts of Wordsworth, do these poets move society?... With all the genius too, of our poets, why do they not attempt to refine society, and improve it...why do they not attempt a more direct and impulsive influence upon the *mass*, to whom their names even are scarcely known? ...What good then has our poetry done to our officers, soldiers, sailors, artisans, and all those whose spirit, energy, and skill, are the support of our independence and the cause of our greatness?

The most assiduous and authoritative spokesman of Benthamist poetics was the official organ of the school, the *Westminster Review*.[2] For the critics and reviewers of this journal, the measuring rod for all things including poetry was 'utility'. Thus Scott was condemned for having never written anything useful while David Hume was disparaged[3] for supposed enslavement to literature which, without regard for truth and utility, seeks only to excite emotions. After 1830, Benthamist reviewing began to tone down its hostility to poetry. The editor of the journal, John Bowring (afterwards knighted), presently proclaimed himself susceptible to the charms of

poetry and, trying ingenuously to conform poetry to utilitarian notions, held that poetry and reasoning were not incompatibles, that the law of human progress ensured improvement in poetry too and that there was nothing supernatural or mysterious in the power of either producing or enjoying poetry. In an article entitled 'Coleridge and Poetry', published in the *Westminster Review* (January 1830), Bowring was pleased to announce that 'the *poet* Coleridge is a metaphysical and ethical teacher after our own hearts.' We shall presently see that the Neo-Utilitarian's approval of Coleridge has a particular significance. The belief in the identity between poetry and reasoning comes out emphatically in a passage of the same essay:

> Nay, so far from there being any natural incongruity between the reasoning and imaginative faculties, as dunces have always been delighted to believe, it may rather be affirmed that they have a mutual affinity and rarely attain their full development but when they exist in union.... Produce who can the name of any first-rate poet who was not a sound reasoner.

The writer's challenging tone is indubitable evidence of a shift from total Benthamism to what Raymond Williams has happily called[4] 'humanized Utilitarianism'. So powerful had this mellowed concept of poetry grown around 1830 that Tennyson's friend, Arthur Hallam, wavering between 18th-century Sensationalism and Platonism, struck up a kind of synthesis between the mystical and the rationalistic concepts of poetry in his 'Essay on Cicero':

> Though poetry encourages a wrong condition of feeling with respect to the discovery of truth, its enchantments tend to keep the mind within that circle of contemplative enjoyment, which is not less indispensably necessary to the exertions of a philosophic spirit. We may be led wrong by sorcery, but that wrong is contiguous to the right.
> (*Writings of Arthur Hallam*, ed. T. H. V. Motter, p. 151)

Far more influential than the change of Bowring's attitude

was John Stuart Mill's. Writing an important essay in W. J. Fox's progressive magazine, the *Monthly Repository*, the young intellectual made a significant statement:

> The poetic laws of association are by no means incompatible with the more ordinary laws; are by no means such as *must* have their course, even though a deliberate purpose require their suspension.
>
> (October 1833, p. 722)

Significant because here is the St Paul of Benthamism refining the Master's doctrine to mean that poetry may be a rational activity. Mill's prestige was rising fast during the thirties. Apart from the fact that he was looked upon as the high-priest of Utilitarianism, his literary opinions were listened to with special respect as is evident from young Robert Browning's revulsion[5] from *Pauline* after he had read Mill's pencil notes on the poem. In after life, Mill admitted in his *Autobiography* the error of the strictly Benthamist view of poetry. He admitted that his (and the typical Utilitarian's, for the matter of that) neglect of the cultivation of feelings had led to a denigration of poetry and of imagination and thus to a blurred and confused notion of culture. His own emotional involvement and his readings in Wordsworth and Shelley turned Mill's thoughts towards the nature and power of poetry. We find him writing to Carlyle[6] for instructions in the mysteries of poetry; he is dissatisfied with the articles he has written on poetry but succeeds in stating his beliefs clearly in another letter to Carlyle. Now he believes that 'the highest truths are, to persons endowed by nature in certain ways I could state, intuitive'; he finds that 'the poet or artist is conversant chiefly with *such* truth'; he is certain that the critic's function is to persuade people to understand that the poet's intuitive truths are not 'dreaming or madness' but truths consistent with common knowledge and probabilities.

The most notable divergence of Mill's view from his Master's is in the concession of truth to poetry. His two essays on poetry, 'What is Poetry?' and 'The Two Kinds of Poetry', published in the *Monthly Repository* of 1833, embody valuable analyses of the nature and function of poetry. Mill follows

Wordsworth in opposing poetry to matter of fact or science; in the Wordsworthian fashion he refers to the poet's words as 'such as we spontaneously use only when in a state of excitement'; he believes that the progression of the poet's ideas is subordinate to his emotions. Furthermore, he differentiates between 'the poetry of a poet and the poetry of a cultivated but not naturally poetic mind', between the poet of nature and the poet of culture, and finds the great exemplars of the two types in Shelley and Wordsworth. By far the most important ideas of Mill on poetry are that 'the truth of poetry is to paint the human soul' (a statement which, I think, is a penetrating appraisement of the increasing exploration of the human psyche in English poetry that had begun with the Romantics); that 'all poetry is of the nature of soliloquy' (a description that not only fits innumerable poems of Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, but also previsions the dramatic monologue of the Victorian period); and that the poetic consciousness is creative when it is unconscious of an audience ('eloquence is *heard*, poetry is *over*-heard').

Some of Mill's ideas were developed more thoroughly and analytically by a later thinker on problems of poetics, Eneas Sweetland Dallas (whose continued neglect at the hands of literary historians is once again manifest in the unhappy omission of any reference to his works in the *Concise C. B. E. L.*). In *Poetics, An Essay*, published in 1852, nineteen years after the publication of Mill's essays on poetry in the *Monthly Repository* but seven years prior to the collection of those essays in the first series of *Dissertations and Discussions*, Dallas aims, in a manner comparable to Mill's, at isolating the distinguishing element of poetry. Like Mill, he believes in the unconsciousness of poetic feeling. In his definition of poetry, he lays stress, as do Carlyle, Mill and Ruskin, on the activity of the soul. He makes an important, and in the context of nineteenth-century poetics, an original, contribution when he separates poetry that is feeling from poesy that is the expression of the feeling in words, thus dichotomizing poetry into substance and form, differentiating between the sensibility and the artefact. Dallas's most enduring contribution, however, to English poetics lies in his examination and assessment of aesthetic pleasure. English poetics had hardly any substantial

and intelligent tradition of thinking on the nature of *dulcis* (of the phrase *dulci et utile*) and therefore when Bentham referred to the pleasure-giving value of the fine arts, some literary critics considered pleasure to be an inferior, ignominious and undesirable component of art. Carlyle indeed asserted thus, without ever understanding the meaning of pleasure: 'On all hands, there is no truce given to the hypothesis that the ultimate object of the poet is to please.'[7] For Dallas, 'Poesy, on the one hand, is the record of pleasure, and, on the other, is intended to produce pleasure in the reader's mind.'[8] Had Dallas been familiar with Indian Aesthetics, he would perhaps have taken delight in the manner in which our rhetoricians have found relish or pleasure (distressingly inadequate synonyms for the Sanskrit word *Rasa*) to be the central organising principle of the work of verbal art and, as an early English explorer of the impact of art on the recipient's psychology, he would have admired the Sanskrit analysts' distinction between the poet's creative pleasure and the disciplined reader's recreative pleasure. Dallas thus explains his approach to the subject:

> In the First Book was examined the nature of Pleasure: in the present Book has been examined the Nature of Poetic Pleasure. Poetic pleasure has been shown to differ from other pleasure by being imaginative, so that Poetry may shortly be defined to be Imaginative Pleasure; and if for the latter of these two words we substitute a definition, Poetry will then more fully be defined, *The Imaginative, harmonious and unconscious activity of the soul.*
>
> (*Poetics, An Essay*, p. 76)

Poetics, An Essay (1852) and portions of the larger and later work in two volumes, *The Gay Science* (1866), totally demolish the Benthamist misconception of poetic pleasure.

Mill's apostatical equation between poetry and truth was a sign of the literary faith of the times. However much the English people might have accepted Benthamist principles in matters of social and legislative behaviour, the poets and aesthetic

thinkers of the middle of the nineteenth century would not accept the notion of any incompatibility between truth and poetry. Out of a mass of contemporary statements asserting the identity of truth and poetry, a few may be chosen[9] to indicate the average opinion:

> He [the poet] cannot be untrue, for it is his high calling to interpret those universal truths which exist on earth only in the forms of his creation.

> All imitation,—poetry, painting, sculpture, music,—has, or ought to have, the development of truth for its sole object.

> The highest poetry approaches nearest to vital truth; and poetry is only good and beautiful, and worthy to be loved and admired, in proportion as it identifies itself with truth. No truth can be alien or inappropriate to it.

Obviously, the truth of which these writers speak is not the factual truth of Bentham's conception, their truth has a spiritual complexion. And with his gift of apprehending spiritual truth, the poet is entitled to the honour of being a teacher of mankind.[10]

> The poet knows more than others,—because he feels more and suffers more.... He is ordained to teach mankind because he has fathomed humanity.

> The amusement found in poetry is a mere accident—an extrinsic adornment only—and ... its object is to teach, exalt, and refine; to inspire, like religion, the humble with dignity, the sad with comfort, the oppressed with hope.

We are now in the centre of the Victorian belief in the moral purpose of poetry. Poetry must have a didactic significance; the poet must be a teacher, and by nobly fulfilling his high vocation, he disproves Bentham's charge of frivolity levelled against his tribe. The poet's transcendence over the

non-poet is a creed reiterated *ad infinitum* by Victorian poets and critics, perhaps as a recoil from the Benthamist refusal to discern a halo around the poet's head. In the four opening stanzas (discarded in the 1842 revision of the poem) of 'A Dream of Fair Women', Tennyson conceives of the poet as one who, like a man sailing in a balloon (the latest wonder of those days) and looking down on the earth (as did the space-travellers of recent years), is lifted high by his imagination, lets the great world flit from him, mounts higher still through secret splendours, and yet remains in a state of perfect poise. The Brownings too are convinced of the exceptional power of the poet and his duty to teach and preach.[11] Matthew Arnold is eloquent in his assertion of the poet's Parnassian altitude.

> Deeper the poet feels; but he
> Breathes, when he will, immortal air,
> Where Orpheus and where Homer are.
> In the day's life, whose iron round
> Hems us all in, he is not bound:
> He leaves his kind, o'erleaps their pen,
> And feels the common life of men.
>
> ('Resignation')

These Victorians believe that the poet, by virtue of his exceptional capacity for intuitive apprehension of truths that are beyond the ken of other men, is superior to fellow-men and their teacher. Browning indeed, in *Sordello*, modifies Plato's concept of the philosopher-king to present his eponymous hero as a poet-king.

We have seen that the Neo-Utilitarian found Coleridge's thoughts after his own heart. Scores of young men had listened to the monologues of the aging transcendental philosopher at Highgate. John Sterling and Frederick Denison Maurice made the early numbers of the *Athenaeum*—the most competent literary weekly of the times—a vehicle of Coleridgean ideas, and Coleridge's influence on that periodical continued unabated in the days of Charles Dilke. 'Close thy Byron, open thy Goethe' was the advice of Teufelsdrockh. The generation of literary aspirants who became vocal in the thirties of the

nineteenth century opened their Wordsworth and Coleridge oftener than their Goethe, and their admiration of the masters tinged their notions of poetics. In so many ways the central figure of Victorian thought, John Stuart Mill was mainly responsible for the popularization of Coleridgean ideas too. His two essays on Bentham and Coleridge[12] assess the significance of the two thinkers in precise terms.

> There are two men, recently deceased, to whom their country is indebted not only for the greater part of the important ideas which have been thrown into circulation among the thinking men in their time, but for a revolution in its general modes of thought and investigation. . . . These men are Jeremy Bentham and Samuel Taylor Coleridge—the two great seminal minds of England in their age.
>
> (Essay on Bentham)

> The name of Coleridge is one of the few English names of our time which are likely to be oftener pronounced and to become symbolical of more important things in proportion as the inward workings of the age manifest themselves more and more in outward facts. Bentham excepted, no Englishman of recent date has left his impress so deeply in the opinions and mental tendencies of those among us who attempt to enlighten their practice by philosophical meditation. . . . By Bentham, beyond all others, men have been led to ask themselves, in regard to any ancient or received opinion, Is it true? and by Coleridge, What is the meaning of it? . . . Coleridge used to say that every one is born either a Platonist or an Aristotelian: it may be similarly affirmed that every Englishman of the present day is by implication either a Benthamite or a Coleridgean, holds views of human affairs which can only be proved true on the principles either of Bentham or of Coleridge.
>
> (Essay on Coleridge)

At the first reading, these statements seem to suggest that Bentham and Coleridge, as thinkers, are complements to each other. But Mill leaves us in no doubt about the peculiar pro-

vince of Coleridge's thought—the inner world of man, the world of the mind and the imagination where the criteria of judging the phenomena of the outer world do not quite apply. The world of poetry has values other than the utilitarian.

The Victorian writer who was most unremitting in his opposition to the Benthamist view of poetry was Carlyle. Steeped in Goethe and Fichte and Herder, charged with Wordsworthian and Shelleyan ideas, employing the diction and rhythm of a prophet who happens to be in a state of perpetual frenzy, Carlyle tried to smother the Utilitarian point of view by trenchant words.

> The uses of this Dante? We will not say much about his 'uses'. A human soul who has once got into that primal element of *Song*, and sung forth fitly somewhat therefrom, has worked in the *depths* of our existence; feeding through long times the life-*roots* of all excellent human things whatsoever,—in a way that 'utilities' will not succeed well in calculating!
>
> (*Heroes and Hero-Worship*, Centenary ed., pp. 99-100)

> Art is to be loved, not because of its effect, but because of itself; not because it is useful for spiritual pleasure, or even for moral culture, but because it is Art, and the highest in Man, and the Soul of all Beauty. To inquire after its *utility* would be like inquiring after the *utility* of a God, or, what to the Germans would sound stranger than it does to us, the *utility* of Virtue and Religion.
>
> ('The State of German Literature', *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, i, Centenary ed., p. 55.)

The sentence 'Art is to be loved, not because of its effect, but because of itself' must not mislead us to placing Carlyle and those of his followers that talked in the same vein in the art-for-art's-sake camp. His corpse would turn in the grave if we did so. Leaving aside its French genesis, the phrase 'art for art's sake' was hardly used in the critical jargon of the thirties and the forties, and even when used, it did not mean what it came to mean afterwards. The earliest use of the

phrase in the English language can be found in a letter of Thackeray's[13] written to his mother on 1 December 1839, but this, as Rose Frances Egan has rightly pointed out,[14] was a private letter, not a published piece of writing. The earliest public use of the phrase that I know of (Rose Frances Egan does not mention this nor does any other scholar) occurs in Richard Henry Horne's introduction to his verse tragedy *Gregory VII* (1840). In Horne, the phrase is used within quotation marks implying that it was not unfamiliar though yet rather new. The Early Victorians were struggling to set poetry and poetic criticism free from all kinds of vested interests, particularly from the political prejudices of the powerful Reviews. Arthur Hallam, a Coleridgean, speaks of 'art free and unalloyed';[15] his poet-friend Monckton Milnes speaks of the Poet who creates 'In his own chamber and excessive spirit,/A universe of beauty, undisturbed'; in Browning's *Sordello*, the poet Aprile transmutes the dross of common life into pure poetry whereas the other poet, Eglamor, suffers from a perpetual fixation in the beautiful. It is in the context of these attempts to differentiate between poetry that is pure and free and poetry that may be called functional, rather than as a postulate analogous to the Ninetyish religion of amoral Beauty, that Carlyle's statement that 'Art is to be loved not because of its effect but because of itself' is to be appraised. Carlyle, I suggest, was a better Coleridgean than he himself knew. If, unable to follow Coleridge in his flights through rarefied regions of metaphysics and fugitive fancies, Carlyle recoiled from tutelage under the poet-philosopher, his wordy assertions did not altogether conceal his link with and his ultimate derivation from the visionary of Highgate. Consider these sentences:

> The grand question is...a question of the essence and peculiar life of poetry itself...Wherein lies that life; and how have they attained that shape and individuality? Not only who was the poet, and how did he compose; but what and how was the poem, and why was it a poem and not rhymed eloquence, creation and not figured passion?
>
> (*Critical and Miscellaneous Essays*, i, Cent. ed. pp. 51-52)

Carlyle has avoided using the term Imagination; perhaps he had found Coleridge's dichotomy between Fancy and Imagination and the theory of the Esemplastic Imagination too tenuous and abstract for his Calvinistic comprehension. But his answer to the grand question he has asked really presumes an entity that is none other than the Imaginative Faculty of the Romantic artist's conception, the same power that presides over the mind and art of Wordsworth and Coleridge, Shelley and Keats. His acceptance of Fichte's theory of the 'Divine Idea' is not far removed from Coleridge's idealistic position described thus by Mill:

> The Germano-Coleridgean doctrine...expresses the revolt of the human mind against the philosophy of the eighteenth century. It is ontological, because that was experimental; conservative, because that was innovative; religious, because so much of that was infidel; concrete and historical, because that was abstract and metaphysical; poetical, because that was matter-of-fact and prosaic.
> (Mill, *Dissertations and Discussions*, p. 330)

After all, both Carlyle and Coleridge had drunk from the same German fountain of inspiration. Both had revolted against eighteenth-century materialism and both were deeply religious—even to the extent of being comparably impressed with guilt-consciousness—although the substance of their religions differed. As Mill said, every Englishman of the day was either a Benthamite or a Coleridgean, and one who rejected Benthamism, had, by an inevitable polarity, to be a Coleridgean. Carlyle's vigorous opposition to Benthamism drew sustenance from an unacknowledged Coleridgean idealism.

By the eighteen-forties, there was hardly any writer of influence and intelligence left who could stand up to the continuous assaults against the Benthamist view of poetry. If there still remained any doubting Thomases reluctant to equate poetry and truth, the first two volumes of the 'Oxford Graduate's' *Modern Painters* should have silenced them. It was possible even in 1840, long after Blake's, Wordsworth's and Coleridge's utterances on Imagination, for a periodical reviewer to say[16] that 'Never was a more mendacious fallacy

propounded than that which has attempted to identify the poetic spirit with the imagination; the poet is essentially an autobiographer.' In the second volume of *Modern Painters* (1846), Ruskin categorically announced, 'Let it be understood once for all that imagination never deigns to touch anything but truth.'[17] After this, it was no longer possible for half-baked journalists to equate imagination with falsifying fancy. Since imagination is the vital power that enlivens a combination of words into poetry, Ruskin finds it necessary to examine its nature. He discerns three forms of the imaginative faculty: the Combining or Associative, the Analytic or the Penetrative, and the Regardant or the Contemplative. Imagination properly so called, Ruskin maintains, is imagination associative, 'the grandest mechanical power that the human intelligence possesses'. The four chapters of the second volume of *Modern Painters* (section ii, part iii) which have been devoted to a close scrutiny of the essence and variations of Imagination and Fancy, are among the most elaborate, determined and thorough discussions of that intangible and protean though primal faculty in which works of art have their being. Ruskin's theory of Imagination is a subtle variant of rather than a denial of or departure from Coleridge's definition of it as 'a tone and spirit of unity, that blends, and (as it were) fuses, each into each, by that synthesis and magical power to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination.'[18] His insistence, however, on the identity between truth and imagination and his careful and passionate construction of a high pedestal for the imaginative faculty completed the demolition of the Benthamist heresy in English poetics. Like Matthew Arnold's Oxus meeting the sea after having been foiled for a while in circuitous wastes, Imagination triumphed over Reason and attained its rightful glory. After Mill, Carlyle and Ruskin, Benthamism still continued to exercise its powerful and beneficent influence on English law-making, English political and social institutions, but it ceased to be the guiding principle of aesthetic philosophy for a long time.

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ELIOT AND THE SYMBOLIST AESTHETIC

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Montgomery Belgion once mentioned a man and a book as having exercised the most decisive and enduring influence on Eliot in his undergraduate days at Harvard. The man was Professor Irving Babbitt and the book was *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) by Arthur Symons. 'The influence', Belgion remarked, 'was beneficial to Eliot because he was content to obtain from each what each could give: the sense of tradition from the Professor, the fostering of individual talent from the Symons volume.'[1] The way Belgion defined the nature of the influences may appear a trifle oversimplified—specially the air of gratuitous finality with which he pigeon-holed them with 'tradition' and 'individual talent'—but nevertheless it underscores correctly the importance of the man and the book in the context of Eliot's development as poet and critic.

On the formative influence exercised on him by Babbitt and his friend Paul Elmer More (the two were really inseparable in his memory)[2] Eliot has written on various occasions. In Babbitt, especially, Eliot found a master who helped him to outgrow his adolescent enthusiasm for the Romantic poets and FitzGerald's *Omar*[3] and gave direction to his interests, as he himself noted in 1946, 'in such a way that marks of that direction are still evident.'[4] Babbitt laid the foundation of that attitude to art and morals which later on, in his famous 'credo' proclaimed in 1928 in *For Lancelot Andrewes* (Preface), Eliot himself was to identify with 'classicism'. But while Babbitt developed his taste and predisposition for order, lucidity and balance, the Symons volume provided his first aesthetic initiation. After the academic preparation on classical lines under the tutelage of Babbitt, Eliot acquired, independently, from Symons's book a new *insight* into the *nature* of poetry. It was, as Eliot himself said in 'The Perfect Critic', 'an introduction to a wholly new feeling, as a revelation'. As criticism, as Eliot explicitly stated in the Foreword to J.

Chiari's *Contemporary French Poetry* (1952), Symons's book was far from being discriminating or dependable. Its importance is that of a rough and incomplete chart which helped Eliot to discover the Symbolist poetry of France—at least that section of it which is represented by Laforgue and Corbière—as a part of self-discovery. Eliot was thus introduced to a body of poetry and theoretical speculations clustering round it which, after the Romantics of the first generation, sought to reconsider, with diverse aims and varying degrees of clarity, the aesthetic basis of the art of poetry. The impact of this poetry and the allied aesthetic speculations had a decisive influence on Eliot. Since Eliot's affinities with Symbolist poetry, especially the poetry of Laforgue, Corbière and Baudelaire, have already been scrutinized by Matthiessen, René Taupin, Grover Smith Jr., E. J. H. Green and Enid Starkie,[5] our present enquiry will be confined to the critical or aesthetic side of the issue.

Symbolism in France was very much of a doctrinaire movement and, although its tentacles extended in many directions, its theoretical core was such as to justify Bowra's description of it as 'a new mysticism of art'.[6] Historically, Edgar Poe was the patron saint of this movement and, in his few scattered critical pieces, he is supposed to have vaguely suggested this new doctrine. Baudelaire was the first prophet in that he proclaimed the value of symbols in his famous sonnet, 'Correspondances'. While Verlaine used them instinctively it was left to Mallarmé, both in his poetry and in his critical pronouncements collected in his *Divagations* (1897), to erect and establish a sort of metaphysic to explain and justify the doctrine.[7] Although as the 'saint' and 'martyr' of this mystical doctrine Mallarmé remained its permanent source, *the school* of the Symbolist poets may be said to have officially come into existence in 1886 when Jean Moréas, one of Mallarmé's disciples, published in *Figaro Littéraires* the first provisional 'credo' of the doctrine in an article entitled 'Un Manifeste Littéraire'.[8] With such subsidiary issues as that of 'decadence', which was a matter of attitude, and of 'vers libre', which was a matter of technique, the Symbolist ideology, announced by Moréas's article, developed and proliferated in the later decades of the 19th century and, running through

different categories of what Prof. A. M. Schmidt called 'Symbolistes fidèles' and 'Symbolistes infidèles',[9] both among poets and dramatists, came to receive the last interpretative touches from such dissimilar writers as Abbé Brémond and Paul Valéry in the present century. Thus from Poe to Valéry there ran something like an unbroken tradition which, in spite of minor divergences in emphases, represented a definite attitude to the art of poetry or, as the apologists of the doctrine would assert, constituted a definite *aesthetic*.

So far as 'decadence' and 'vers libre' are concerned,—the two subsidiary issues often erroneously regarded as co-extensive with Symbolism itself—Eliot made short work of them very early in his career as a critic. In spite of his affinities with Laforgue who is usually classed with the 'decadents', he dismissed 'decadentism', with J. .K Huysmans as its apostle, as a shoddy, pseudo-artistic pose. In an early article in the *New Statesman* (19 May, 1917), he refers to 'decadence' as a fraud permanently exploded: 'Time has left us many things, but amongst those it has taken away, we hope to count *À Rebours*.' Similarly, he found the term 'vers libre' self-contradictory: 'no *vers* is *libre* for the man who wants to do a good job' (Introduction to Ezra Pound's *Selected Poems*). Elesewhere, in an early essay entitled 'Reflections on *Vers Libre*', Eliot emphatically rejected the term and the kind of artistic freedom it proclaimed:

> '*Vers libre* does not exist...it is a battle cry of freedom, and there is no freedom in art...the division between Conservative Verse and *Vers Libre* does not exist, for there is only good verse, bad verse, and chaos.'
>
> (*The New Statesman*, 3 March, 1917)

But if 'decadence' and 'vers libre' were minor excrescences of the Symbolist doctrine, its core was the concept of 'poésie pure' or 'poésie intégral' of which the chief exponent—in a sense the high priest—was Mallarmé himself. It is with Eliot's relation to this concept of 'pure poetry' that we are primarily concerned. Eliot's attitude to this aesthetic core of Symbolism is not only more complex than his attitude to 'decadence' or 'vers libre' but it has also certain features likely to

prove misleading as to his own overall aesthetic position. The Mallarméan concept of 'purity' or 'integrity' implies a general philosophical attitude and a specific interpretation of the nature of poetic language and its creative function. Both have been expounded by Mallarmé himself. The general philosophical attitude, which developed partly as a reaction against the scientific positivism of Comte and the historical determinism of Rénan and Taine, is one of extreme romantic idealism traceable through Schopenhauer to Plato. In a well-known passage in *Divagations*, Mallarmé gives a clear exposition of this idealistic attitude:

> Je dis: une fleur! et, hors de l'oubli où ma voix relègue aucun contour, en tant que quelque chose d'autre que les calices sus, musicalement se lève, idée même et suave, l'absente de tous bouquets.
>
> ('Crise de Vers', *Divagations*, p. 255)

Mallarmé's professed concern is not with a particular flower but with (the idea of a flower) that which is absent from all bouquets. This amounted to an ascetic effort to reduce the complex fabric of immediate experience to a limited number of pure relations by means of which reality itself is to be simplified. This attitude may be summed up in Mallarmé's own significant phrase: 'simplifier le monde'.[10]

The aesthetic attitude which emerges from the foregoing remarks is one of opposition to the contemporary Parnassian poets and naturalistic novelists who concentrated on the direct transcript of everyday reality. Mallarmé's doctrine rejected everyday reality in favour of ideal beauty. The target was not a 'criticism of life' but 'l'oeuvre pure' to which the old notion of 'subject matter' is irrelevant. As Rémy de Gourmont, the ablest apologist of Symbolism, said: 'Le sujet importe peu en art'.[11] What really matters is 'la notion pure', the pure idea, abstracted from experience, out of which 'pure poetry', as opposed to impure journalism of all varieties, is to be created. It is not clear-cut contours or definitions, therefore, that will distinguish this poetry but the luminous haze of suggestions. As Mallarmé said:

> *Nommer* un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu; le *suggerer*, voila la rêve.
>
> (Michaud, p. 74)

In this suggestiveness Mallarmé found the mysterious power of poetry which reveals a 'state of the mind'. Along with romantic idealists like Blake, Shelley and Carlyle, but with far greater emphasis, Mallarmé asserts: 'C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole; évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme...' (Michaud, p. 74) Poetry, thus presented, amounts to a ritual, esoteric, even magical, so that the very idea of an 'art for all' is to be regarded as a heresy: 'Toute chose sacrée et qui veut demeurer sacrée s'enveloppe de mystère' (Michaud, p. 17).

The mystery in which poetry must envelop itself is the mystery of the creative words. The mystical theory of the content of poetry is supported, as A. G. Lehmann has demonstrated in his *Symbolist Aesthetic in France* (pp. 129-93), by a recondite and complex theory of language which began with the scattered remarks of Mallarmé but in the hands of later writers, specially Valéry, developed into an impressive, if not always consistent or satisfactory, doctrine. Mallarmé began by stressing 'le double état de la parole'. Anticipating later semanticists he distinguished in 'Crise de Vers' (*Divagations*) between language as a medium of communication or 'universal reportage' ('bruit ou immediat ici', in Mallarmé's words) and the creative language consisting of words purified into their essences ('là essentiel'). Mallarmé dissociated the creative language of poetry completely from the empirical context of everyday life and, stripping it of all utilitarian associations, presented it as a 'new' language, heightened and purified. To this language belongs the initiative for creation: 'L'oeuvre pure implique la disparition élocutorie du poète, qui cède l'initiative aux mots' ('Crise de Vers', *Divagations*, p. 255). Symbolism raises language to a mystical level where every word becomes Word or Logos. In a famous remark addressed to Degas, Mallarmé underscored this primacy given to words over everything else. 'Ce n'est point avec des idées, mon cher Degas, que l'on fait des vers. C'est avec des

mots.'[12] Thus, according to Mallarmé's concept, poetry is a musical orchestration in which words are used as tones and chords. It is a verbal structure in which 'meaning', in the usual sense of the term, is subordinated to music. When Mallarmé announced in a famous dictum in his *Divagations* (p. 249) that 'la Musique rejoint le vers pour former, depuis Wagner, la Poésie' and when Verlaine also proclaimed in his 'Art Poétique' the slogan

> De la musique avant toute chose
> (*Jadis et Naguere*)

the major task of the Symbolist poets was clearly defined—the task of purging poetry of all non-poetic alloys such as narration, description, discursive thought etc. and, thus, as Mallarmé said (in *Divagations*, p. 254), 'reclaiming from music their inheritance' ('reprendre notre bien'). This concentration on the incantatory aspect of language implies the purification which Mallarmé had in mind when in the memorial verse on Poe, 'Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe', he defined the poet's function as 'donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu'. The idea of the musical purity is for Mallarmé an aesthetic absolute which is accepted as the first article of faith by Symbolist artists and is reflected, as Valéry explained, in 'une volonté remarquable d'isoler definitivement la Poésie de tout autre essence qu'elle-même.'[13] Thus Mallarmé imposed an almost cultic rigour upon the poet's calling. In the pursuit of this absolute musical integrity the poet must depend upon his own industry and singleness of purpose rather than on the hazard of inspiration. In a letter to Françoise Coppée, Mallarmé warned poets against the deceptive facility of 'inspired art': "Le hasard n'entraîne pas un vers, c'est la grand chose.'[14] The dictum was repeated even more briefly and effectively by Valéry: 'Écrire, c'est prevoir'.[15]

The theory of 'pure poetry' that emerges, however vaguely, from the foregoing pronouncements poses the following postulates: (1) that poetry is not simple self-expression or direct communication of thought and feeling, (2) that the art of poetry is not the result of inspiration but of calculation and hard labour and (3) that the language of poetry, being a

special form of musical development, is categorically different from prose and ordinary speech. It is easy to see that these postulates, considered in isolation, have different degrees of affinity with earlier and contemporary thoughts and theories but, taken together, they constitute the Symbolist doctrine of Pure Poetry the tradition of which runs from Poe to Valéry.

How much of this doctrine did Eliot really accept and how much of it did he modify or reject and why? These questions have some critical importance because attempts have been made, notably and recently by Frank Kermode in his *Romantic Image*, to interpret Eliot's critical position entirely in terms of Symbolism just as, at the opposite pole, similar attempts have been made by critics like John Bayley to align his aesthetic ideal with the neo-classicism of Dryden and Johnson.[16] Kermode's attempt is particularly confusing because he makes an undiscriminating and unhistorical amalgam of Symbolism and Imagism with the dubious, though impressively capitalized, label of the Doctrine of the Image, and uses it as a yardstick to judge poets and critics by, including Eliot. So Eliot's specific relation to the Symbolist doctrine of 'pure poetry' requires some clarification. That Eliot did derive something positive from Symbolism is very much evident in his description of its first impact on him as a 'revelation' and it would be a gratuitous over-simplification to relate this 'revelation' only with some Symbolist poetry which Eliot came to admire, to the exclusion of all theoretical implication, because even in Symons's book, superficial and critically unfocussed as it often is, the close interdependence between doctrine and practice is tactily assumed throughout, though hardly ever clearly and adequately formulated. At a superficial level, for instance, we notice some obvious Mallarméan echoes in Eliot. His definition of poetry, half serious and half playful, in the 1928 preface to *The Sacred Wood*, 'as excellent words in excellent arrangement and excellent metre', which mystified and irritated many people, is obviously an allusion to Mallarmé's remark that 'poetry is made with words, not ideas.' In *Little Gidding* again we hear the 'familiar compound ghost' offering a free paraphrase of Mallarmé's line ('Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu') while defining the poet's function:

speech impelled us
To purify the dialect of the tribe.

But in spite of these echoes Eliot's attitude to the Symbolist doctrine of 'pure poetry' was *not* identical with that of his predecessors like Oscar Wilde, W. B. Yeats and Arthur Symons himself, the three *habitués* at Mallarmé's famous Tuesday receptions. Unlike Oscar Wilde, however, who mistook wise-cracking for criticism, Yeats was seriously impressed by the new doctrine and much of his early *Ideas of Good and Evil*, specially his essay 'Symbolism of Poetry' (1900), reflects the zeal of the converted which made him concentrate on those elements or tenets of Symbolism which he could easily assimilate into the 'Celtic Twilight' of his own temperament. Eliot's case was different; he was stimulated but *not* converted. His attitude was one of qualified assent: he was critical right from the start and later the cleavage between him and the Symbolist doctrine grew so wide on the most vital issues of art that even the term 'symboliste infidèle' (applied to later Symbolists like Valéry and others) falls far short of the mark as a correct definition of his position. Of the three postulates cited earlier, Eliot partly accepted but largely modified in his various pronouncements the first two. The third, which is of pivotal importance for the theory of 'pure poetry', Eliot categorically rejected and it is this rejection rather than the partial acceptance or modification of the other two postulates that defines Eliot's position in relation to the Symbolist aesthetic.

Eliot's partial affinity with the Symbolist doctrine is indisputably reflected in his impersonal *approach* to the art of poetry as a rigorous verbal construction. His general programme, in *The Sacred Wood* phase, of exploding romantic 'personalism' in all its forms, in poetry and criticism alike, owes an obvious debt to the Symbolist aesthetic. In this early and polemical phase when, under the stimulating guidance of Pound and Gourmont, he considered the diversion of interest from the poet to the poetry 'a laudable aim', in *The Sacred Wood* (p. 59), he concentrated almost exclusively on the integrity of poetry as an autonomous structure, independent of the poet's biography and existing by its own right.

Eliot's famous statement in 'Tradition and Individual Talent' that poetry is an 'escape' from the poet's personality as well as from his personal emotions is clarified further by his own gloss:

> We can only say that a poem, in some sense, has its own life; that its parts form something quite different from a body of neatly ordered biographical data; that the feeling or emotion or vision resulting from the poem is something different from the feeling or emotion or vision in the mind of the poet.
>
> (Preface to *The Sacred Wood*, p. x)

In a later passage Eliot extends the implication of this autonomy so as to relate it to the responses of the readers as well:

> The poem's existence is somewhere between the writer and the reader; it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to express or of his experience of writing it or of the experience of the reader or of the writer as the reader.
>
> (*Use of Poetry* etc., p. 30)

So far, Eliot's insistence that 'the difference between art and the event is always absolute',[17] is in keeping with Symbolist formulations on poetry such as those of Mallarmé. In them he may be said to have found an *aesthetic* confirmation of the impersonal integrity of art of which the early classical training of Babbitt had made him conscious, more or less, on the rationalistic and moral level. Eliot's closeness to the Symbolist aesthetic, on this issue, is perhaps even more clearly reflected in his reinterpretation of poetic communication. 'If poetry is a form of "communication", yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself.'[18] This explains his assertion, often repeated, 'that when we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing.'[19]

When, however, we pass on from Eliot's general orientation to the impersonal integrity of poetry and come to scrutinize his theory of poetry in detail we not only notice his differ-

ences from the Symbolist doctrine but also, in a sense, his more and more open opposition to it. To begin with, Eliot rejected the overworked esotericism of the Symbolist cult making so much of 'la notion pure' and concentrating on 'mystère', 'suggestion' and 'état d'âme'. The subordination of the world of common experiences to the formal autonomy of art—ultimately implying a divorce between them—tacitly assumed by Symbolism and overtly formulated in some of Mallarmé's own statements such as, 'Au fond,...le monde est fait pour aboutir à un beau livre',[20] Eliot did not and could not accept, since it amounted to the kind of deracination of art deliberately advocated by the apologists of 'art for art's sake'. Among the Symbolists, the poets whom Eliot 'discovered' and studied with profit, it is well to remember, were Laforgue and Corbière and, later, Baudelaire (not a Symbolist technically), and none of these ever made poetry out of 'pure notions' and, for that very reason, none was strictly representative of Symbolism as enunciated by Mallarmé. So far as Mallarmé's own poetry was concerned Eliot's appreciation was lukewarm as is evident in his essay 'Note sur Mallarmé et Poe' (published in *Nouvelle Révue Française*, Nov., 1926) where he acknowledged the validity of the world of Mallarmé's poetry but called it 'une monde de natures mortes'. On a more directly expository level Eliot's basic divergence from the Symbolist doctrine can be seen in the rôle he assigns to feelings and emotions in the creative process which terminates in impersonal art. The famous analogy of the catalyst and chemical elements in section II of 'Tradition and Individual Talent' is really meant to underscore two things: the *impersonal art* as well as its purely *personal origin*. The creative process as presented by Eliot is one which transforms feelings and emotions (which cannot originally be other than personal) into objective and impersonal art. The term 'objective correlative' which occurs in a rather controversial context in 'Hamlet and his Problems', is meant to suggest (though not strictly to *define*) how a personal emotion, at some unspecifiable middle stage of the creative process, is detached from the 'self' of the artist and acquires a sort of impersonal concreteness, 'outside him', so to speak, by being identified with 'a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events,

which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion' before it can turn into tractable material to be manipulated into art. 'What every poet starts from', Eliot wrote afterwards in 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca', 'is his personal emotions.' But he must end with something as definite and objective as 'a jug or a table-leg'.[21] The catalyst of Eliot's chemical analogy does not operate in a vacuum or, for that matter, on sublimated essences or 'notions pure' in place of real chemicals. Thus, so far from considering what Henry James called 'felt life' as inconsistent with the formal autonomy of art, Eliot repeatedly stressed them both as necessary conditions: 'On the one hand actual life is always the material, and on the other hand an *abstraction* from actual life is a necessary condition to the creation of the work of art.'[22] By 'abstraction' Eliot means that 'distance between art and the event' which is 'absolute', and since art, as presented by Eliot, is as impersonal and *concrete* as 'a jug or a table-leg', the term is likely to be somewhat misleading unless it is connected, as it is meant to be, with the idea of 'ordering' and 'integration' stressed by Eliot in his interpretation of the creative process:

> When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate experiences; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always making new wholes.
>
> ('The Metaphysical Poets', *Selected Essays*, p. 28)

Thus, by asserting simultaneously the personal origin of the creative process and the essential impersonality of the end-product, Eliot posed the basic paradox of artistic creation, thereby recognizing art as much more complex than the Symbolist doctrine had made it out. By insisting on definition and objectivity and by asserting, at the same time, that poetry is essentially rooted in life, Eliot broadened the basis of art, and ascribed to it values and significances which, while dissociating him from the Symbolist tradition from Poe to

Valéry, point unmistakably to his close affinity with Flaubert, Henry James and Pound. In his very first book of literary criticism, *Ezra Pound: his Metric and Poetry*, published anonymously in 1917, Eliot wrote: 'For poetry to approach the condition of music (Pound quotes approvingly the dictum of Pater) it is not necessary that poetry should be devoid of meaning.'[23] This insistence on 'meaning' offers us a helpful clue to Eliot's fundamental opposition to the Symbolist aesthetic. Poetry has a semantic content and is, therefore, much more than an arrangement of sounds. It is an autonomous verbal structure (autonomous in relation to the artist's personality) but it also constitutes a meaning—a meaning which is not just a literal, paraphrasable idea that can be detached from the poem itself. Such a paraphrasable content may often exist as a secondary or ancillary meaning to satisfy a certain psychological need of the reader, compared by Eliot with 'the nice bit of meat' with which burglars silence the house dog, 'while the poem does its work upon him.'[24] What poetry 'means' amounts to the total communication that takes place between the poem and the perceptive reader. A poem thus incarnates its meaning and communicates *itself*. It is what I. A. Richards called 'the total meaning' of a poem with which Eliot came to concern himself more persistently in his later criticism than with its integrity. As early as 1928 Eliot gave us the clue to his 'expansion or development of interests' when he asserted that without disowning what he had said about the integrity of poetry in *The Sacred Wood* (p. viii) he had 'passed on to another problem . . . that of the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its time and of other times.' This cryptic formula, constituting in itself an incisive criticism of the exclusiveness of the Symbolist doctrine, has been expanded and elucidated in different aesthetic contexts in almost all his major critical pieces from 'Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca' (1927) to 'The Three Voices of Poetry' (1953). The questions raised by the formula, 'the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life', are numerous but Eliot, so far from dismissing them as irrelevant or heretical as the Symbolists did, considered them valid and important and his answers to them, scattered over a host of essays, lectures and prefaces, involve such

related issues as (1) thought in poetry and its relation to emotion and feeling, (2) the question of belief and attitude, both for poets and readers, (3) the overall moral awareness focused by the whole poem and finally (4) the question of 'range' and 'maturity' as practical tests of the relative importance of artists and works of art.

Mallarmé banished both thought and emotion from poetry so that it was neither intellectual formulation nor emotive effusion. Valéry dropped emotion but concentrated on thought when he described poetry as 'un fête de l'intelligence'.[25] Eliot, however, recognized the validity of thought in poetry but not simply as thought but as thought merged into and identified with feeling and emotion. For Eliot, poetry is neither pure cerebration nor pure sensation or emotion but an integration of both. That is why he rejects the facile division of poets into those who 'think' and those who do not: 'The poet who thinks is merely the poet who can express the emotional equivalent of thought.'[26] With a poet thinking and feeling are a single function: he thinks, to use Eliot's own words, 'at the tip of his senses.' This is what he meant by 'unified sensibility' when he cited Donne as an illustration to it: 'A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility.'

The question of belief in poetry, as Eliot said, is an insoluble one, being the special preserve of phenomenologists like Husserl and Meinong. His own approach, however, is purely aesthetic and what he has to say on this issue has important bearings on his general conception of poetry. Belief of some sort is certainly involved in poetry but it is 'belief as felt' rather than 'belief as held'. Then again the belief implicit in poetry need not necessarily be identical with the belief of the poet in actual life. The poet makes use of beliefs, as he makes use of ideas, whatever their intrinsic character or worth, as Shakespeare did, 'to express the greatest emotional intensity of his time'[27] in poetry. Dante created great poetry by making use of the most substantial body of the Catholic philosophy of the Middle Ages, that of St. Thomas Aquinas, while Shakespeare made his poetry, equally great, from 'the mixed and muddled scepticism of the Renaissance'. Belief in poetry does not necessarily mean personal commit-

ment on the part of the poet, far less deliberate partisanship. Poetry, as Eliot said, 'is not the assertion that something is true, but the making that truth more fully real to us.'[28] So far as the reader is concerned, he cannot ignore the belief implicit in poetry just as he is not called upon to share it. Eliot makes a further distinction in the 'Dante' essay between 'poetic assent' and 'philosophical belief'—comparable to Richards's distinction between 'intellectual belief' and 'emotional belief'—and uses the term 'poetic assent' to describe the right response of the reader. What 'poetic assent' means is 'understanding' and, as the 'Dante' essay (pp. 269-70) shows, although Eliot is aware of the ambiguity of the term 'understanding' itself, he finds it helpful in clarifying his point:

> When I speak of understanding, I do not mean merely knowledge of books or words, any more than I mean belief: I mean a state of mind in which one sees certain beliefs, as the order of the deadly sins, in which treachery and pride are greater than lust, and despair the greatest, as *possible*, so that we suspend our judgment altogether.
> ('Dante', *Selected Essays*, p. 259)

Eliot's recognition of this relevance of belief, although defined and limited both from the point of view of the poet and that of the readers, explains his objection to Richards's notion of 'pseudo-statement' in poetry.[29] A statement which is to be taken as nothing but a '*pseudo*-statement', either from the author's or from the readers' standpoint or from both, can exist, according to Eliot's formulation on the issue, only in 'pseudo-poetry' since it disrupts at its very source what Henry James called 'the power to be finely aware and richly responsible.'[30] Thus the place of thought and belief in poetry, as defined by Eliot, calls attention to what he describes as the 'illusion of a view of life' verbally embodied in poetry:

> All great poetry gives the illusion of a view of life. When we enter into the world of Homer, or Sophocles, or Virgil, or Dante, or Shakespeare, we incline to believe that we are apprehending something that can be ex-

> pressed intellectually; for every precise emotion tends towards intellectual formulation.
>
> ('Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca', *Selected Essays*, p. 135)

The intellectual formulation itself is *not* poetry but an obvious, though legitimate, derivation from poetry. Poetry does not *formulate;* it *embodies*. The concrete verbal *embodiment* of what we apprehend as 'an illusion of a view of life' is poetry. That is what Eliot means by 'meaning'.

This leads us to a specific implication of the words, 'the relation of poetry to the spiritual and social life of its time and of other times'. It is the moral content of the 'view of life' embodied by poetry—not as doctrine, or code, or even statement but as awareness, as a complex nexus of related values and insights which clarify and sustain that 'view of life'. In the Preface to the 1928 edition to *The Sacred Wood*, Eliot broached the subject tentatively: 'poetry has certainly something to do with morals, and with religion, and even with politics, though we cannot say what.' But in his later formulations, for example, in the 'Heywood' essay, the emphasis which he lays on 'moral reality' as distinguished from 'sentimental' or 'emotional' reality brings the whole issue to a focus. For Eliot moral integrity is a condition of aesthetic integrity. On this issue his close affinity with such dissimilar artists and theorists as Baudelaire, Matthew Arnold and Henry James is about as clear as his opposition to the Symbolist aesthetic. The moral integrity, however, upon which Eliot insists has nothing to do with the simple pietism of Ruskin or Tolstoy, which seeks to purge life of its ugliness and concentrate edifyingly on the beautiful and the good. It consists rather in the artist's ability to 'see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror, and the glory'.[31] Eliot is, on this issue, closer to Henry James than even to Arnold whose formulations often fail to isolate the moral issue of art from that of conduct. Moral awareness, as embodied in art, is, for Eliot as much as for Henry James,

> a part of the essential richness of inspiration—it has nothing to do with the artistic process and everything to

> do with the artistic effect. The more a work of art feels it at its source, the richer it is; the less it feels the poorer it is.
>
> (Henry James, *French Poets and Novelists*, 1878, p. 82)

This point of view has been variously focused in various contexts in Eliot's studies on the Elizabethan dramatists, in his brochure on Dante, in such of his later essays as those on Pascal, Baudelaire and 'The Social Function of Poetry' and, although in *After Strange Gods* and 'Literature and Religion' in *Essays Ancient and Modern* it led to some skirmishings on the borderland between literature and theology on the issue of 'orthodoxy', the purely aesthetic relevance of the moral significance of art was never lost sight of. It is on the basis of this moral awareness as 'a part of the essential richness of 'inspiration' that Eliot found the Greek tragedians superior to Seneca, Baudelaire to Tennyson, Byron and Swinburne, Middleton and Tourneur to Heywood and Massinger. Although Eliot constantly cited Dante and Shakespeare as the two greatest European poets, he *preferred* Dante's poetry to Shakespeare's because, as he said, in the Preface to *The Sacred Wood*, 'it seems to me to illustrate a saner attitude to the mystery of life.'

Thus, by recognizing the valid content of poetry, and by defining its 'meaning', Eliot calls attention to those important dimensions of poetry which are ignored by Symbolism. Poetry is a musical structure, but the nature of the structure is complex, organic and multi-dimensional, integrating and holding in poise the personal and the impersonal, the particular and the universal, thought and emotion, belief and scepticism, order and vitality, formal autonomy and moral awareness. Originally rooted in life, poetry, thus, becomes a verbal means to *insight*, which constitutes its social relevance or 'function'. In a later essay entitled 'The Social Function of Poetry', Eliot noted that in poetry which 'has something to give us besides pleasure',

> there is always the communication of some new experience, or some fresh understanding of the familiar, or the expression of something we have experienced but have

no words for, which enlarges our consciousness or refines our sensibility.

(*On Poetry and Poets*, p. 18)

It is on the basis of the 'range' or the total area of experience creatively explored and, thus, made accessible to the readers, that Eliot made the tentative distinction in the essay on 'What is Minor Poetry?' between 'majors' and 'minors' among poets who are otherwise equally genuine. In his address of 1944 to the Virgil Society, published under the title *What is a Classic?* Eliot's chief concern was to reformulate, in simpler and less contentious terms, the nature of poetry as an *integration*, using 'maturity' as his key-word. In his early essay 'The Function of Criticism' Eliot defined the classic as 'the complete, the adult and the orderly' as opposed to whatever is 'fragmentary, immature and chaotic' to which he applied the label 'romantic'. In his Virgil Society lecture he summed up all the qualities of the classic in a single word 'maturity', by which he meant the full exploitation of the total genius of the race, at all the levels of manners, ethical values, language, literary forms, and social life,—in short, the whole matrix of civilization out of which it emerges. Virgil who has been cited as the great exemplar of the maturity of the classic nourished by an entire civilization, also helps to clarify the relation of poetry to what Eliot called 'tradition', first in 'Tradition and Individual Talent' in the literary context, and, later, in *After Strange Gods*, in the wider context of man's conscious participation in the complex fabric of social life. Tradition is that principle of growth and integration which makes art, like manners, morals, religion or political institutions, flourish from roots going deep down into history, the collective life of the race as it has evolved through centuries, and gives it the maturity and completeness of the classic.[32] A work of art, thus, is a 'growth' rather than an 'invention', for, as Eliot said, 'true originality is merely development'.[33] This art is achieved, as Eliot said in the *Dial* review (Nov. 1923) of Joyce's *Ulysses*, not 'by turning away from nine-tenths of the materials' offered by life, but by assimilating and integrating them into an organic, multi-dimensional form, embodying the full maturity of the contemporary civilization and yet remaining ordered,

self-poised and serene.' A poet's concern therefore is much more than the esoteric pursuit of musical purity:

> Surely the great poet is, among other things, one who not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but one who in his poetry re-twines as many straying strands of tradition as possible.
>
> (*Use of Poetry* etc., p. 85)

The result of this integration is that final maturity of poetry which gives to it, to quote Henry James again, 'the fine awareness and the rich responsibility', establishing an inalienable moral relation between art and the social being. In Eliot's own words:

> it is ultimately the function of art, in imposing a credible order upon ordinary reality, and thereby eliciting some perception of order *in* reality; to bring us to a condition of serenity, stillness and reconciliation.
>
> (*Poetry and Drama*, p. 35)

Eliot's conception of poetry rests, as we have found, squarely on the idea of integration. It is natural, therefore, that language, as a medium as well as an instrument of integration, should be his life-long preoccupation. This concern for 'the question of our speech' he shared with Mallarmé, Henry James and Ezra Pound, but the nature of his exploration and the kind of importance and function he assigned to the language of poetry give, on the one hand, the final definition to his conception of poetry and clearly indicate, on the other hand, the ground of his final rejection of the Symbolist aesthetic. The Symbolist interpretation of the nature of poetic language has already been discussed. The Mallarméan point of view is well represented in the statement of Abbé Brémond: 'Le poète n'est qu'un musicien entre les autres. Poésie, musique, c'est même chose.'[34] Valéry sometimes replaced the mystical interpretation of Mallarmé's musical theory by a mathematical one but insisted on the same abstract ideal as, for instance, when he said: 'la Musique est calcul: elle offre à l'intelligence une immense domaine de combinaisons pures—autre sujet

d'envie pour le poète.'[35] This concentration on the music of poetry, whether from Mallarmé's mystical point of view or from Valéry's mathematical point of view, leads to the isolation of poetic language from all other forms of speech. In his Zaharoff lecture of 1939 at Oxford, entitled 'Poésie et Pensée Abstraite', Valéry made the most systematic attempt at establishing the purity of poetic language on the basis of an absolute specialization of function. Prose, representing the normal linguistic function of social communication, is compared with walking to some specific destination, while the language of poetry, independent of that function, is compared with dancing which is an end in itself. Thus, Valéry argues, language in becoming the medium of poetry begins with being 'non-language', i.e., by dropping all significative associations indispensable for social communication. The language of poetry, thus, becomes a special language within the language: 'En somme, c'est *un langage dans un langage*'.[36] This specialization of language revives in a much more extreme form the old neo-classical idea of 'poetic diction' but, by its emphasis on the musical properties of words to the exclusion of all others, it voids poetry of all content and significance. Poetry is thus reduced, as Eliot points out in 'The Music of Poetry', to 'merely an imitation of instrumental music'. Valéry, less categorical than Mallarmé, does not eliminate 'content' or 'meaning' but his formulations on the relation between music and discourse in terms of 'hesitation' or 'ambiguity' are in themselves hesitant and ambiguous: 'Le Poème—cette *hesitation* prolongée entre le son et le sens,'[37] or, as elsewhere, 'La poésie n'est pas la musique, elle est encore moins le discours. C'est peut-être cet *ambigu* qui fait sa delicatesse.'[38] By limiting the function of language Mallarmé and Valéry, in different ways, aimed at purity and intensity. But for Eliot who, like Pound, regards poetry as 'language charged with meaning', this purity and intensity are *not* necessarily *poetic*. Poetry being an essentially complex organization for Eliot, the function of language *in* and *through* which it is achieved, must also have a corresponding complexity and inclusiveness: it is the function of integration. What Eliot calls 'the auditory imagination' is the full exploitation of that mysterious power of language by means of which it absorbs, assimilates and embodies

concretely *all* the properties of tone, suggestion and expression, from the most primitive and obscure to the most sophisticated and articulate. In the following passage, the key-word 'fuses' underscores this integrative function of language:

> What I call the 'auditory imagination' is the feeling for syllables and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word: sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing back, seeking the beginning and end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings, in the ordinary sense, and *fuses* the old and the obliterated and the trite, the most ancient and the most civilized mentality.
>
> (*Use of Poetry* etc., pp. 18-19; emphasis mine)

In almost all his major critical writings, from his early study of Elizabethan 'rhetoric' in *The Sacred Wood* to such later essays and lectures as 'Poetry and Drama' (1951) and 'The Three Voices of Poetry' (1953), Eliot is persistently concerned, either directly or indirectly, with this essential complexity of the nature of poetic language and the multiplicity of planes on which it operates simultaneously. The language of poetry which transforms 'the slimy mud of words' into 'the perfect order of speech and the beauty of incantation', as the phrases go in chorus IX of *The Rock*, organically unites 'order' with 'vitality'. It is this which makes language such a difficult tool for whoever seeks to handle it creatively, thus making the whole duty of the poet, as Eliot repeated in different contexts, a lifelong struggle to 'learn to use words' (*East Coker*, V). Eliot studied the complex phenomenon of poetic language, its function and behaviour, its periods of growth and decay, the roots of its vitality as well as the symptoms of its ossification or atrophy in the diverse practices of the Elizabethan dramatists, the Metaphysical poets, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, Kipling, Swinburne, and Byron—to mention only those poets to whom Eliot devoted detailed or full-length studies. What he learnt from these explorations, and duly emphasised, is the close and inalienable relationship between the language of poetry and two other modes of

verbal organisation—prose and colloquial speech. Eliot, like Pound, rejected such terms as 'poetic prose' and 'prosaic verse', in both laudatory and pejorative senses, for which Matthew Arnold, as much as any other nineteenth-century critic, was responsible, and insisted that 'the *minimal quality* of poetry' is the same as that of good prose, quoting with approval Pound's assertion that 'verse must be at least as well written as prose.'[39] The minimal quality referred to is that of order and stability, and, according to Eliot the language of poetry gains by assimilating it from prose: 'poetry has as much to learn from prose as from other poetry; and I think that an interaction between prose and verse, like the interaction between language and language, is a condition of vitality in literature.'[40] Thus the old debate between Wordsworth and Coleridge is resumed and resolved by Eliot when he interposes the term 'verse' between prose and poetry in the following statement:

> Poetry may occur, within a definite limit on one side, at any point along a line of which the formal limits are 'verse' and 'prose'.... As a matter of fact, much bad prose is poetic prose; and only a very small part of bad verse is bad because it is prosaic.
>
> (Preface to Eliot's translation of St. John Perse's *Anabasis*, pp. 10-11)

For Eliot the relation of the language of poetry to colloquial speech is even closer: 'the *norm* for a poet's language is the way his contemporaries talk.'[41] By assimilating both prose and the contemporary colloquial speech, the language of poetry unites the order and stability of the one with the vitality and resilience of the other. It is on the basis of the degree of closeness to, or remoteness from, prose and colloquial idiom that Eliot scrutinized the languages of poets with the purpose of finding an approximate formulation of a limit. As Eliot himself said in 'The Music of Poetry':

> We may think that Milton, in exploring the orchestral music of language, sometimes ceases to talk a social idiom at all; we may think that Wordsworth, in attempting to

recover the social idiom, sometimes oversteps the mark and becomes pedestrian: but it is often true that only by going too far can we find out how far we can go; though one has to be a very great poet to justify such perilous adventures.

(*On Poetry and Poets*, p. 36)

The language which mediates between music and the social idiom and effects a delicate and undefinable balance between fixity and flux, is Eliot's ideal language. In 'Little Gidding' Eliot describes it as one

> where every word is at home
> Taking its place to support the others,
> The word neither diffident nor ostentatious,
> An easy commerce of the old and the new,
> The common word exact without vulgarity,
> The formal word precise but not pedantic,
> The complete consort dancing together.

Hence the task of 'purifying the dialect of the tribe' which Eliot assigned to the poet, involves much more than the musical purity which was Mallarmé's preoccupation. It involves the very life of language—its vigour, sensitivity and resilience, on the one hand, and clarity, stability and order, on the other. The objection that Eliot raised to Valéry's theory of poetic diction may be extended to cover all varieties of Symbolist formulation on the question of language: 'In assimilating poetry to music, Valéry, it seems to me, failed to insist upon its relation to speech.'[42]

The 'auditory imagination' of the poet that manipulates speech so as to integrate music with the social idiom has a function which is neither one of pure automation nor of deliberate calculation. It is, as Eliot's own description implies, much more elastic and vital, mediating between spontaneity and rigid control. When Eliot said in his broadcast talk on Dante (1950) that the poet as a '*conscious* practitioner of his craft'... 'should be the servant of his language rather than the master of it',[43] he underscored the poet's undefinable, and therefore insuperably difficult, compromise between

total surrender to language and a reasoned and rigorous interference with it. That makes the poet's 'calling' a life-long struggle, 'a raid on the inarticulate', as Eliot said in East Coker, V, with 'deteriorating equipment,' in which 'there is only the fight to recover what has been lost/And found and lost again and again.' As Donald Davie observes:

> That is the paradox of poetic composition, to which Mr Eliot draws attention. According to Mr Eliot...the poet's traffic with words he uses induces in him a state of mind that is *neither active nor passive, but both, and both at once.*
>
> (*Articulate Energy*, 1955, p. 141, my emphasis)

That gives us the right formula, not merely for the issue of language, but also for a larger aesthetic issue, viz. the degree of conscious control exercised by the poet on the creative process itself. The creative process, for Eliot, is an organic process which is both conscious and unconscious, both spontaneous and controlled and both, as Donald Davie said, *at once*. This conception is implicit in the second section of Eliot's 'Tradition and Individual Talent' but it has been presented in more explicit terms in his later lecture, 'The Three Voices of Poetry'. The process begins with an 'obscure impulse' or 'creative germ,' which has 'no face, no name, nothing'. The entire process amounts to an attempt on the part of the poet to fix and define it by means of language, 'the resources of words at the poet's command': 'When you have the words for it, the "thing" for which words had to be found has disappeared, replaced by the poem.'[44] The process in between the initial impulse and the finished poem is obscure and, perhaps, never to be completely analysed, but the process cannot be called truly 'creative', in Eliot's sense, unless at a certain unspecifiable point it passes under the conscious control of reason which selects and discriminates between alternative possibilities and resources of language, form and technique for the purpose of finding the appropriate verbal shape for the impulse. That in fact is the creative labour of the artist. Valéry distinguished between two kinds of verse, 'vers données' and 'vers calculés' (Tel Quel I, p. 150). For

Eliot, however, poetry is both 'donnée *and* 'calculé', being the product of what Henry James called 'the method at the heart of the madness'.[45] Eliot's own formula is: 'Organization is necessary as well as "inspiration".'[46] The right adjustment between conscious organization and that complex and unpredictable impulse known as 'inspiration' (which Eliot does *not* reject) is the test of maturity. As Eliot said:

> There is a great deal, in the writing of poetry, which must be conscious and deliberate. In fact, the bad poet is usually unconscious where he ought to be conscious, and conscious where he ought to be unconscious. Both errors tend to make him personal.
>
> ('Tradition and Individual Talent', *The Sacred Wood*, p. 58)

The foregoing review of Eliot's conception of poetry and of the poetic language may well serve as a gloss on his own statement, made in his essay on 'Dante' (1929), that 'pure poetry' is a 'phantom'. In a later essay 'From Poe to Valéry' (1949) in which Eliot makes a mature and retrospective assessment of his relationship to the entire Symbolist tradition, he points out that by the very attitude to life implicit in it, and the rigorous restrictions in purpose, material and medium it accepts as its fundamental aesthetic principles, the Symbolist aesthetic inevitably 'refines itself out of existence', as Joyce said in a different context, leaving only a 'purity' without a content. As Eliot said:

> I believe it (poésie pure) to be a goal that can never be reached, because I think that poetry is only poetry so long as it preserves some impurity in this sense: that is to say, so long as the subject matter is valued for its own sake.
>
> ('From Poe to Valéry', *Hudson Review Anthology*, ed. F. Morgan, 1961, p. 331)

The subject matter is *not* poetry, as Eliot explained in the same context, but it is 'important as *means*: the *end* is the poem'. The basic mistake of Symbolism was that it wanted

the *end* without the *means*. Eliot's theoretical writings, therefore, constitute a vigorous criticism of the essentially *negative* character of the doctrine of 'pure poetry'. That Mallarmé himself was aware of it is clearly indicated in his almost obsessive references, in his letters, to the 'void' ('le Néant') to which his esoteric cult of 'pure poetry' inevitably led him.[47] Valéry's confession that his interests are focused on the poetic process rather than on the poet or poetry implies a metaphysical evasion of the aesthetic impasse: 'Ce qui m'interesse. . . ce n'est pas l'oeuvre. . ce n'est pas l'auteur—c'est ce qui fait l'oeuvre.'[48] To Eliot, the Symbolist aesthetic is a dead end and his final summing up of his attitude to the Symbolist tradition offers a helpful clue to his overall critical position: 'We should have to have an aesthetic which somehow comprehended and transcended that of Poe and Valéry.'[49] This programme, as we have already seen, has been amply fulfilled by his own theory of poetry. Furthermore, in the light of the foregoing remark, the influences on Eliot in his undergraduate days of Babbitt and of Symbolism as presented by Symons, to which Montgomery Belgion called attention, appear in a new light. For Belgion, Babbitt and Symbolism were two isolated influences: from the one Eliot is supposed to have acquired his 'sense of tradition' while the other fostered his 'individual talent' as a poet. But in the light of Eliot's ideas and emphases reviewed earlier and, specially, of the remark quoted, we should be able to see a deeper and more significant connection between the two influences than Belgion saw or cared to notice. The rationalistic-cum-moralistic classicism of Babbitt and the esoteric and magical cult of poetry as pure music, upon which the Symbolist aesthetic is based, may be interpreted as the thesis and anti-thesis of the inner dialectic of Eliot's growing aesthetic insight. By their very contradiction these two opposed outlooks affected and 'modified' Eliot's sensibility, leading to a synthesis which enabled him to 'comprehend and transcend' both. If, in spite of the classicism which he professed and the stimulus he unquestionably received from Symbolism, Eliot was neither tied to the apron-strings of seventeenth-and-eighteenth century French and English classicists, nor was a permanent dweller of Axel's Castle (in spite of the unauthorised accommodation made

for him there by Edmund Wilson), it was because he evolved a more complex and comprehensive aesthetic than either Babbitt's teaching or Symons's initiation could have suggested. How far this aesthetic, in which order, vitality and moral significance are one, comprehends and transcends both Babbitt and the Symbolist aesthetic can be seen in Eliot's own résumé of it in the following lines:[50]

> the abstract conception
> Of private experience at its greatest intensity,
> Becoming universal, which we call 'poetry',
> May be affirmed in verse.

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33. Eliot's introduction to Ezra Pound's *Selected Poems*, 1928, pp. x-xi.
34. *La Poésie Pure*, 1926, p. 23.
35. Letter to Robert Bernard, 15 Feb., 1944, quoted in *Paul Valéry Vivant*, 1946, p. 494.
36. 'Poésie et Pensée Abstraite', *Variété V*, p. 142.
37. *Tel Quel II*, p. 73; emphasis mine.
38. *Piéces Sur L'Art*, new ed., 1936, p. 41; emphasis mine.
39. 'Johnson's "London" and "The Vanity of Human Wishes"' *English Critical Essays*: XXth Century, ed. P. Jones, p. 309.
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42. Eliot's introduction to Valéry's *The Art of Poetry*, pp. xvi-xvii.
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45. 'Preface to "The Spoils of Poynton" ', *The Art of the Novel: Critical Prefaces by Henry James*, ed. R. P. Blackmur, p. 120.
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47. Letters to Henri Cazali, March 1866 and Eugène Lefébure, 17 May 1867, etc. Mallarmé, *Propos Sur La Poésie*, ed. Henri Mondor, 1953, pp. 65-66, 90-91, et. passim.
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49. 'From Poe to Valéry', *Hudson Review Anthology*, p. 335.
50. 'A Note on War Poetry', *London Calling*, ed. Storm Jameson, 1942, pp. 237-8

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ENGLISH POETRY IN THE FIFTIES

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Mr Alvarez in his introduction to the Penguin anthology, *New Poetry* (1962), argues that what English poetry (as distinct from American poetry, etc.) suffers from most of all is 'gentility' which he defines as 'a belief that life is always more or less orderly, always more or less polite, their emotions and habits more or less decent and more or less controllable; that God, in short, is more or less good.' He suggests that the root of this 'gentility' lies in the insularity of Britain from Europe, the public-school code, the old imperial tradition, the 'stiff upper-lip' idea, and so on. It is a survival of a world that has passed away—the Victorian and Edwardian world in fact with their comparative orderliness and peacefulness, with England as a rich 'top' nation. Now the macrocosm and microcosm present a much more sinister picture after the upheavals of two world wars, the rise of many new nations, the shift of power from Europe to America and Russia—all this together with the shattering intellectual impact of Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud, and other modern prophets. The twentieth century it is true can scarcely be matched in world history for the insane destructiveness of its wars, its revolutions, its rootlessness, its gross worship of stark power represented by class, state or race, its materialsim and hedonism, its adoration of the Child, Fool and Madman. No one can deny the accuracy of Yeats's picture in *The Second Coming:*

> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

Indeed there may be strong justification for reversing Mr Alvarez's thesis while keeping his premises; in praising English writers for clinging to 'gentility' in face of barbarism. Like Scott-King in Waugh's novel, they may feel that it is wicked to prepare people for the modern world.

The real enemy of modern English poetry since about 1930

has not been what Mr Alvarez calls the cult of gentility but rather the danger of triviality and what may be called—the recoil from passion. Here we must first distinguish the function of the poet from that of the novelist or journalist. The poet stands to some extent apart from society, not to ignore or avoid its problems, but to meditate, to brood upon them until his spirit becomes 'big with child' and he is impelled to yield up his poem in blood, sweat and tears. It is impossible for a real poet to do this without passion, without feeling deeply and exploring feelings more searchingly than is usual. One of the distressing features of modern poetry has been the desiccation of spiritual emotion bound up to some extent with the cleverness and cynicism which have come to be the hallmarks of highbrow art and literature. This accounts to some extent—it is not the only reason—for the decline of poetry as a major cultural force. The Victorian public devoured the long poems of Tennyson with the same eagerness that is displayed in our time over meretricious best-sellers. Of course, the taste of the Victorians was not always critical enough—and we could no longer put up with the long-windedness and slow pace of a lot of Victorian poetry. But the Victorians were not ashamed of strong passion and considered it proper that poets should deal with problems now reserved for novelists and psychologists (like the problems tackled by Tennyson in *Maud* and *In Memoriam*, to take two examples). Our own age has completed what Eliot has rather dangerously called 'the dissociation of sensibility' by carrying it a stage further into the social sphere. We have created a caste system of literature. Since the late nineteenth-century literature has split threeways into lowbrow, middlebrow and highbrow—and this fissiparation has had a most unfortunate effect on poetry by tending to remove it (because it is classed as 'highbrow') from the larger impulses of everyday life. So the poet cuts himself off from his own blood supply and rapidly dies of emotional anaemia.

It has often been remarked that the great names of the poetry of the twenties were not English but American—Eliot and Pound. They were among the founders of *modern* English poetry but in fact were aliens to the mainstream of English life and literature. Americans are more susceptible to experi-

ment and innovation because they are not burdened with a past. They are also much more susceptible to Continental as opposed to English influences. To young Americans after the First World War the literary Mecca was Paris not London (as it still is to the 'Beatniks' of our own day). Eliot's earliest inspiration came from the French Symbolists, and Pound has completely identified himself with Latin Europe. In some ways, the Eliot-Pound type of revolutionary poetry, though tremendously exciting and a seminal influence, still jarred on the English poetry-reading public; it was felt to be unEnglish. And the history of English poetry in the thirties, forties and fifties is partly the history of escape from Eliot, and of the search for the 'Englishness of English poetry'. This does not mean that Eliot's influence was a bad one. Obviously too many modern poets owe their imaginative awakening to Eliot for this ever to be true. But it does show that there is a tension between European-American influence on the one hand and native English influence on the other hand. This recoil from Eliot led to all sorts of dangers and pitfalls for the poets—the most serious of them being the temptation to turn aside from the 'big' subject, to use poetry as a means of cultivating the domestic garden, to dissolve into triviality and irrelevancy.

We see this cultivation of Englishness in the poetry of W. H. Auden in the thirties. Though it was the reading of *The Waste Land* which made Auden a 'modern' poet, his own development was in a direction away from Eliot. One of the most English of poets, Auden deliberately sought models and inspirations in Anglo-Saxon and Middle English and the poems published in the early thirties are littered with quotations from *Beowulf*, *The Battle of Maldon* and from medieval writers. Another thing which had the effect of counterbalancing Eliot's influence at this time was the belated 'discovery' of a Victorian poet, Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889), a Jesuit priest who had published nothing in his lifetime. His poems were published posthumously by his friend Robert Bridges; and by the time Auden and his contemporaries came on the scene Hopkins had become a popular poet among patrons of the new modern style of verse. Hopkins was an extraordinary innovator in metrics and vocabulary, but he

built his experiments on the linguistic resources of the English language emphasizing in fact the Germanic side of English against its Romance side (see, for example, the diction of *Felix Randal*, *Pied Beauty*, etc.). There is no doubt that Hopkins encouraged Auden's predilection for the Germanic (Saxon) elements in the language of poetry and revulsion against the multilingual cosmopolitanism of Eliot and Pound. But this does not mean that Auden's poetry became thereby trivial, insular or inbred. On the contrary, the poets of the thirties were abnormally sensitive to the stresses and challenges of their world—a world of screaming headlines and long dole queues. In fact the thirties-writers accused the writers of the twenties of locking themselves up in an Ivory Tower. They on the other hand were determined to come to grips with the real problems of the age—economic, political, social. Auden and his friends did for a while believe that the function of the poet was to throw himself into the maelstrom of politics. The situation in the thirties was abnormal with unemployment on a catastrophic level, bourgeois society in a mess, and Fascism and Nazism triumphing in Europe. Auden looked out on the scene through Marxist spectacles and saw England as a fossilized dinosaur trapped in a new ice age. But what gave depth to Auden's criticism was not his Marxism but his adoption of the clinical attitude of psychiatry. Freud, Groddeck, Adler, Homer Lane—these 'healers' taught Auden to see the *malaise* of his time in psychological terms. To the Marxist myths of the class war and the inevitability of revolution Auden added the death-wish and the 'intolerable neural itch'—sexual inhibition—'the distortions of ingrown virginity'. Adopting Hopkins's style, Auden ends his most famous sonnet ('Sir, No Man's Enemy') with the prayer:

> Harrow the house of the dead, look shining at
> New styles of architecture, a change of heart.

Clearly in the thirties, poets were far from abandoning the 'big' subject. Nothing seemed more important at that time than the Spanish Civil War, the rise of Nazism, the decline of liberal democracy. There were lots of dangers in this attitude. There was the danger that poetry would turn into journalism.

Many poets succumbed to the danger and even Auden's poems suffer from the slick newsiness and headline complex of the newspaper age. There was the further danger that the poet might turn himself into a propagandist; and this danger was particularly acute in the Marxist-dominated atmosphere of the thirties. Stephen Spender in his autobiography draws a ludicrous but horrifying picture of the way writers were used by the Republican government in Spain during the Civil War. Behind everything was the graver pitfall of regarding politics as the be-all and end-all. Auden avoided this pitfall or rather was saved from it by his own boredom with political propaganda, and his interest in psychoanalysis, perhaps too by the residual Christianity of his High Church childhood—soon to emerge as a major force in his poetry. But poets like C. Day Lewis and Stephen Spender were confused and side-tracked from their genuine feelings and preoccupations by the aggressively political pressure of Leftist groups. Both Communism and Psychoanalysis which could be stimulating to writers like Auden were depressing and inhibiting influences upon others. There was an aridity and a mechanical inhumanity about the commissar and the analyst. It is not surprising that the dominating ideas of the first half of the twentieth century have been the offspring of mechanistic determinism. It was this mechanistic determinism and aridity of spirit which provoked the reaction of the 'Apocalyptic' poets of the forties and provided a backcloth for the personal revolt of Dylan Thomas.

The new psychology of Freud and the offshoots—Jung, Adler, Prinzhorn—had done something to encourage the irrational tendencies in art. Joyce had explored consciousness and even attempted to chart the unconscious in *Finnegans Wake*. There was the movement known as Surrealism. Even Auden had flirted briefly with it—only to reject it finally in favour of rational statement and commentary almost Augustan in its cool witty way. Now, to some extent, the poets of the forties who went under the banner of *New Apocalypse* were Surrealists or at least had Surrealistic tendencies. This is true of the early verse and prose of Dylan Thomas who was a fellow-traveller of the Apocalypse. Henry Treece, Vernon Watkins and Norman MacCaig were all loosely connected with the Apocalyptic movement. Like many literary movements it was

a reaction: a reaction against the poetry associated with W. H. Auden and his 'disciples'. The Apocalyptics did not take issue with the thirties poets on the issue of their politics *per se*. This was not the quarrel. But they felt that the political preoccuptions and the tendentiousness of the poets of the thirties had dried up the roots of their imagination, had produced a feeling of deadness and sameness. Auden's laconic throwaway style compounded of toughness and cleverness was all right in its way but it had fostered a poetry of narrow range, and Auden's imitators lacked the genius of the master and unconsciously parodied his style. The Apocalyptics cried out that the poetry-reading public was starved of passion and sick of the tight-lipped buttoned-up style, longing for the poet to speak out—to roar like a lion, to be vividly alive and to bring the reader to life as well. Primarily, the Apocalypse was motivated by a desire to be free of the inhibition of passion. It was a romantic movement against the Augustanism of Auden. Dylan Thomas's incoherency, verbosity, his self-hypnotizing chantings—which mar his earlier work in particular—demonstrate the unhealthy side of a romantic reaction. He seemed to construct his poems on the principle of free association (a Surrealistic technique). He wrote to Henry Treece: 'I let an image be "made" emotionally in me, and then apply to it what intellectual and critical forces I possess—let it breed another, let that image contradict the first, make out of this image bred out of the other two together a fourth contradictory image, and let them all, within my imposed formal limits, conflict.' Actually Thomas was already aware in this letter that poetry was a highly conscious process of selection and arrangement (even the subconscious mind selects and shapes material; witness Coleridge's *Kubla Khan* as analysed by J. L. Lowes in *The Road to Xanadu*) and his mature style shows a high degree of craftsmanship. Yet it is by ebullience and rhetorical power that Thomas's poetry gains its greatest effects. When these are combined with a 'story' line or a well-defined scene, you have poems like *Over Sir John's Hill*, *The Ballad of the Long-Legged Bait* and *Fern Hill*. In *Fern Hill* passion and meditation go hand in hand. The harvest scenes of the poet's boyhood become the symbols of the creation of the world and innocent Eden before the Fall:

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer
white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder:
it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first spinning place, the spellbound horses
walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On the fields of praise.

Read this poem immediately after the colder intellectual poetry of Auden and you will see why the Apocalyptic reaction was both necessary and inevitable.

It was too successful. In the years that followed the Second World War, Britain was a bleak and dreary place and perhaps one reason for the amazing popularity of Dylan Thomas was not merely his broadcasting personality but that his verse was a direct challenge to the austerity of the English scene. His death in New York gave an extra fillip to his reputation. There was even something in common between the Thomas cult and the James Dean cult. In both cases the public was hungry to canonize figures who had captivated the imagination of their fans. So the hagiographers began on the lives, loves and deaths of Thomas and Dean. It was even alleged that Dean was immortal, that he had not died at all (though the evidence was incontrovertible that the young actor had died in a road accident); and Thomas was seen as a martyr dying in a New York hospital, the victim not so much of drink as of a gigantic struggle with Philistinism and commercialism (a sentimental view!). Thomas's death in 1953 coincided with Britain's belated emergence into affluence. There was a lot of money about; clothes were brighter and more continental in style; foreign travel became popular once again. The problem of delinquency was now concentrated not on products of the slums but on expensively clad 'Teddy Boys'. Here was a new, more comfortable world and yet in many ways much more frightening, a world under the monstrous shadow of

the H-bomb, a world of senseless violence and despair, and vague anxiety. It is significant that in this new brighter and stranger Britain, the younger writers began to turn away from the gay and ebullient Thomas and the remnants of the Apocalypse. The pendulum was swinging back from hagiography to revulsion. Just as the Apocalypse had flourished on the exhaustion of the Auden group, so the writers of the fifties began by destroying the image of the Welsh Roaring Boy, the 'Rimbaud of Cwmdonkin Park'.

It is also a period of iconoclasm and satire. Novels are appearing which poke outrageous fun at some of the prominent features of English life and culture. Kingsley Amis presents in *Lucky Jim* his anti-hero who refuses to conform to culture snobbery and won't kow-tow to his Professor (he is a History lecturer), although in the end he cynically—but very amusingly—plumps for money and a good job offered by a genial capitalist. Amis is of course anti-romantic, anti-pretension, anti-authority, anti-'gush', and in his books adopts an attitude of amused pessimism in the face of causes and 'great moral issues'. Amis's hero is the sort of man who blows raspberries at the speeches of leading public figures—pillars of the Establishment. *Lucky Jim*, though its hero was far from angry, was connected in the public mind with the so-called 'Angry Young Man' movement. John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* dropped like a bomb in the West End theatre and created a cult of its own—projecting the image of an anguished bitter young man not fighting poverty any longer (after all we have a Welfare State now!) but the more powerful shadowy enemies—snobbery, the Establishment, tradition, even women shown by Osborne as the enemies of man's freedom. Both Amis (comically) and Osborne (seriously) present literature of cynical rejection, of 'cocking a snook' at authority and dignity. It is rather a juvenile attitude, based on no profound reassessment of values, based on no new philosophy or religion (although Colin Wilson who was associated with the movement has gone in for philosophising—he is a dissident element), and yet it has a dramatic impact and a strategy of shock which enlivens and illuminates the literary world of the fifties in England. Some of the ideas and attitudes typical of the Angry Young Men found their way into poetry.

The anthology *New Lines* edited by Robert Conquest appeared in 1956—a significant year for Britain for it saw the collapse of British power in the Middle East with the withdrawal from Suez, and the most tragic episode to occur in Europe since the war—the Soviet crushing of the Hungarian revolt. These events though they are rarely mentioned directly (the Suez intervention is a background element in Osborne's *The Entertainer*) had a great deal of indirect influence on the development of the Angry Young Man cult and therefore on the emergence of a new kind of poetry. *New Lines* presented nine poets: Philip Larkin, John Wain, Kingsley Amis, Thom Gunn, Elizabeth Jennings, D. J. Enright, John Holloway, Donald Davie, and Robert Conquest. Conquest claimed that the poetry of *New Lines* was 'free from mystical and logical compulsions and—like modern philosophy—is empirical in its attitude to all that comes. This reverence for the real person or event is, indeed, a part of the general intellectual ambience.' Conquest stresses the need for honesty recognized by his fellow poets of the fifties, and the characteristic refusal to surrender to ideologies. There is otherwise little in common between these nine poets. Gunn and Larkin are poles apart. Amis and Wain were both successful novelists often classed with the Angry Young Men—but there the resemblance ends. It is possible too to find echoes among many of the *New Lines* poets of the crisp clever style of W. H. Auden without his recondite references to Freud and Marx. What of the subject-matter? There is a recognition of common enemies of honesty and a hatred of cant and rant. Their dislike of the exciting rhetoric of Dylan Thomas is perhaps natural in a new and younger group of writers who have become tired of the excessive adulation poured upon him after his sensational death. But they are also against the thirties poets' obsession with politics, and are no longer interested in producing the learned 'cosmopolitan' poetry of the Eliot-Pound vintage. They feel that most modern poets are too inbred, too concerned with literature instead of life, too concerned with books and writers. They want to restore poetry to everyday life—even at the cost of identifying the poet with the 'ordinary chap' in the pub and tube, or sitting in front of his television set in his council house. Part of this attitude is the deliberate iconoclasm

of the Angry Young Men—a hatred of posing, a suspicion of ecentricity. It can unfortunately lead to the dismissal of passion from poetry, and a refusal to make statements about anything without qualification—a combination of diffidence and cynicism. It is difficult to become passionately sceptical; only in the eighteenth century could you have a Voltaire getting excited over the rejection of belief. In the twentieth century, scepticism has extended to scepticism itself. Belief may be impossible for many people but positive unbelief is equally a dogma to be examined by the sceptical intelligence. It is the dilemma of modern philosophy, the attack on metaphysics, the refusal to build up philosophical systems.

Philip Larkin represents the quiet scepticism of *New Lines* in his now famous piece *Church Going*—the *locus classicus* of what came to be known facetiously as 'The Movement'. The poem, excellent in so many ways, suffers from a failure of nerve. The poet's visit to the Church beautifully and amusingly described in the first part of the poem, the attitude of 'awkward reverence', does not seem to issue in anything positive in the second part. True, the Church will always be needed if only to remind us of the dead, but we feel that Larkin does not even take his own agnosticism seriously. But the poem has great merits; Larkin as a poet prefers the lukewarm to the ebullient. His grip on reality, his ability to make you sensuously aware of our modern world is shared by Kingsley Amis. He too has a technical mastery of form and a witty colloquial style which links 'The Movement' with the Augustans. Amis adds his own spice of impertinence. *Dirty Story* has wit and economy:

> Today a butcher, you cuckolded the grocer,
> Fouling his sugar, in thirty seconds only,
> All the while tickling a pretty customer...

but Amis can also extend the experience of the poem to the archetypes of literature and history so that the scabrous hero of dirty jokes becomes

> Hero of single action, epic expert,
> Beggar prince and bandit chief of the sexy,
> Spry Juan, lifter of the lifted skirt...

Almost as soon as *New Lines* came out there was a counter-movement started—to correct what was felt to be the excessively cerebral and intellectual element in *New Lines*. The reaction like that of the Apocalypse took the form of a romantic rehabilitation of myth and passionate intensity. In 1957, the anthology *Mavericks* (edited by Danny Abse and Howard Sergeant) proclaimed poetry as a struggle between the 'Dionysian' subject-matter and the craftsman-poet. *New Lines*, it was alleged, lacked this tension. *Mavericks* included David Wright, Michael Hamburger, Jon Silkin and Vernon Scannell. One poem by Jon Silkin has the deeply-felt emotional intensity absent from *New Lines* (in the main), expressed without the least mawkishness or sentimentality *Death of a son* (*who died in a mental hospital aged one*) ends

> And then slowly the eye stopped looking
> Inward. The silence rose and became still.
> The look turned to the outer place and stopped,
> With the bird still shrilling around him.
> And as if he could speak
>
> He turned over on his side with his one year
> Red as a wound
> He turned over as if he could be sorry for this
> And out of his eyes two great tears rolled, like stones,
> and he died.

It is interesting that Thom Gunn should be associated with *New Lines*. He might equally well have aligned himself with *Mavericks*. Thom Gunn is a classical poet with a highly romantic imagination. He deviates totally from the quietism of Larkin, but his wit is more metaphysical than the leg-pulling of Kingsley Amis. Gunn has matured steadily from the publication of *Fighting Terms* (1954) to *My Sad Captains* (1961). Like the Angry Young Men, he reacts sensitively to the contemporary scene. The world of the fifties comes vividly alive, for example, in *On the Move* with its evocation of the black-jacketed motor-cyclists of the James Dean generation:

On motorcycles, up the road, they come:
Small, black, as flies hanging in heat, the Boys,
Until the distance throws them forth, their hum
Bulges to thunder held by calf and thigh.
In goggles, donned impersonality,
In gleaming jackets trophied with the dust,
They strap in doubt—by hiding it, robust—
And almost hear a meaning in their noise.

Here Thom Gun has caught the paradox of the teenage 'rebel' of our age: the taste for speed and violence that conceals the uncertainty, the fear, the feeling of inferiority. 'They strap in doubt.' But when you examine Gunn's poems more closely you see how far he is from the 'Angries' or indeed from most of the other *New Lines* poets. Gunn describes the world of the fifties in all its graphic reality, but he is essentially a philosophical poet; he is intensely curious—intellectually curious about human behaviour. A poem like *The Corridor*, for example, is a Metaphysical poem in the psychological and spiritual issues it raises. Writing of the 'rock 'n' roll' singer in *Elvis Presley*, Gunn achieves an epigrammatic style which is reminiscent of the later Auden (of *Another Time*). Someone puts a coin in a juke-box and out comes Presley's song:

We keep ourselves in touch with a mere dime:
Distorted hackneyed words in hackneyed songs
He turns revolt into a style, prolongs
The impulse to a habit of the time.

'He turns revolt into a style' is beautifully terse and memorable.

Thom Gunn's insight into the mentality of the young especially in the great cities is considerable. *Black Jackets* is a sympathetic exploration of the character of a young gang-member for whom even defeat is acceptable if it increases his sense of identification with the gang:

It was only loss he wore,
He wore it to assert, with fierce devotion,
Complicity and nothing more.
He recollected his initiation,

And one especially of the rites.
For on his shoulders they had put tattoos:
The group's name on the left, The Knights,
And on the right the slogan Born To Lose.

Where Gunn shows himself to be independent of 'The Movement' is in the range of his material and his willingness to come to grips with religious subjects, myth, and the problem of evil. There is a deep strain of pessimism which comes out in his love poetry—the belief that human beings cannot really communicate with one another (*The Monster*, *The Feel of Hands*, *Lofty in the Palais de Danse*). With this pessimism which again links him with John Donne and the Metaphysicals is the sense of the strangeness of human experience. In *Jesus and his Mother*, Gunn imagines the Virgin's confused recollections of Christ's conception and the angelic visitation:

He seemed much like another man
That silent foreigner who trod
Outside my door with lily rod:
How could I know what I began
Meeting the eyes more furious than
The eyes of Joseph, those of God?
I was my own and not my own.

There is a strongly intellectual bent in Gunn's poetry which reminds us of the effects modern poetry has derived from Eliot and Auden and the rediscovery of Metaphysical poetry. Gunn's poetry suffers to some extent from this Metaphysicalness; he can overdo the intellectual content. It is gratifying to note the mellower emotional note of the poems in *My Sad Captains*. Compare *Lines for a Book* (from *The Sense of Movement*) with its irony and cruelty with the title poem of *My Sad Captains* with its rather similar subject.

They were men
who, I thought, lived only to
renew the wasteful force they
spent with each hot convulsion.
They remind me, distant now.

True, they are not at rest yet,
but now that they are indeed
apart, winnowed from failures,
they withdraw to an orbit
and turn with disinterested
hard energy, like the stars.

But an even better example of maturity of poetic imagination is *Claus Von Stauffenberg* a poem about the aristocratic German officer who attempted to assassinate Hitler by planting a time bomb in his bunker in 1944. Von Stauffenberg had fought loyally for his country suffering mutilating wounds which removed him from the front line to the Staff. He early became disgusted with Nazism and was the leading spirit in the resistance movement in Germany. The bomb blew up the bunker killing several of Hitler's aides but Hitler though wounded was not killed. The planned *coup d'état* therefore failed and Von Stauffenberg was shot. Gunn pictures the heroic Von Stauffenberg as a second Brutus:

The maimed young Colonel who can calculate
On two remaining fingers and a will,
Takes lessons from the past, to detonate
A bomb that Brutus rendered possible.

The scene in the East Prussian bunker where Hitler reviews the war with his Staff just before the bomb explodes comes alive:

Over the maps a moment, face to face:
Across from Hitler, whose grey eyes have filled
A nation with the illogic of their gaze,
The rational man is poised, to break, to build.

Here we reach the core of the poem, the contrast between the mad Fuehrer and the rational would-be assassin. In the last stanza, Gunn pronounces his valediction on the dying Colonel in the grim winter of 1944, a failure but like Brutus (though without irony) an honourable failure:

And though he fails, honour personified
In a cold time where honour cannot grow,
He stiffens, like a statue, in mid-stride
—Falling towards history, and under snow.

Poetry, it has been said, is saying many things all at the same time. This is certainly true of the masterly irony and depth of Gunn's images in *Claus Von Stauffenberg*. The landscape of East Prussia in winter, the figures of the protagonists (Hitler's 'grey eyes', Von Stauffenberg's 'two fingers'), the atmosphere of fear in the police-state, and Gunn's comments upon the experience (his admiration for the failed hero and for his heroic free gesture in a time of tyranny)—all are united in the succession of sensuous images which make up the poem. Above all, the poem springs from the winter landscape—the snow, ice and frost—the cold time where honour cannot grow.

Thom Gunn illustrates in conclusion certain marked and general tendencies in the poetry of the fifties. He shows a return to regularity of metre, rhyme and formal structure. There is no 'vers libre'. Gunn's poetry exhibits a high degree of craftsmanship together with the intellectual emphasis reminiscent of Donne and the Metaphysicals which the *New Lines* poets took pride in as part of their recoil from wordy romantic effusiveness. And finally it shows an alert awareness of the contemporary world and a 'tough reasonableness' in facing the facts of human existence.

The intellect is not the chief target of the poetry of Ted Hughes born in 1930, a year after Gunn. Hughes's poems have a richly sensuous texture which aims primarily at affecting us through the senses. Once he has gained your attention however, Hughes can be as philosophical as any of the *New Lines* poets. I suppose Hughes could be classed as a belated Maverick. The Dionysian quality is there. He is fascinated with animals. In *A Dream of Horses* the grooms dream of a stampede of wild horses:

We crouched at our lantern, our bodies drank the din,
And we longed for a death trampled by such horses
As every grain of the earth had hooves and mane.

In the morning the grooms wake shaken to find their horses lying in their straw, 'in a hag-sweat, listless and wretched.' On a first reading we suspect Hughes of an elaborate but serious pun on the word 'nightmare'. But the poem is an excursion into mythology and into the human unconscious in which the death-wish takes on allegorical and archetypal form. After all the horse is a well-known symbol of maleness (compare Roy Campbell's treatment of horses in *Horses on the Camargue* and *The Sisters*) and D. H. Lawrence makes notable use of the stallion as a sexual symbol in *Sons and Lovers*, *St Mawr*, and *The Rainbow*. Hughes's poetry is thus not so much a rational meditation as an excited and exciting exploration through the nerve-ends. It is more Romantic than Augustan. It is passionate and ebullient and even boisterous—a poetry of exclamation, not of quiet statement or ironical interrogation. In place of the spare rather terse diction which the *New Lines* policy had encouraged, Hughes employs a rich and highly sensuous vocabulary. There is something of Dylan Thomas again, something too of Hopkins, in the sheer joy he takes in words. Turn to *Famous Poet* which might well be about Dylan Thomas:

> Is it his dreg-boozed inner demon
> Still tankarding from tissue and follicle
> The vital fire, the spirit electrical
> That puts the gloss on a normal hearty male?
> Or is it women?'

Hughes exploits the devices of onomatopoeia and alliteration in a vigorous and uninhibited way. *Wind* is full of sounds. The woods 'crash', the hills 'boom', and the sounds are wedded to sharply visual images:

> . . . then under an orange sky
> The hills had new places, and wind wielded
> Blade-like, luminous black and emerald,
> Flexing like the lens of a mad eye. . . .
> I dared once to look up—
> Through the brunt wind that dented the balls of my eyes
> The tent of the hills drummed and strained its
> guyrope. . .

The whole description of the storm—with its violent images—is like *A Dream of Horses* shot through fear—fear of the elemental forces of Nature and fear of the forces within man. Animals are for Hughes the living symbols of these irrational and dreadful forces. The hawk recurs as an image of terror. In *Hawk Roosting* Hughes makes his hawk say

> I kill where I please because it is all mind.
> There is no sophistry in my body:
> My manners are tearing off heads.

One of the most refreshing things about Hughes's poetry is that it is rural rather than urban. We feel that Philip Larkin and Thom Gunn are essentially town poets (note again the Augustan connection) but Hughes's poetic universe is full of creatures of wood, field and farm—birds, fish, a bull, horses, a dead pig, and Hughes is eager to convey the sight and sounds of these animals—and to explore their mysterious associations with the emotions and instincts of men who tame, train, hunt, kill, observe and eat them. Hughes is as romantic as Emily Brontë or Thomas Hardy, but he has little in common with Rousseau or even Wordsworth. Nature is fallen not innocent. Even the poet's darling, the much-celebrated thrush is a terrifying monster to worms!

> Nothing but bounce and stab
> And a ravening second.

To Hughes life is fascinating and puzzling, an interweaving of beauty and pain, violence and tenderness. The pain is relieved by colour, vitality, passion and a kind of splendid viciousness. The hawk with its patient controlled lethalness is yet a figure of beauty. The girl in another poem (*Secretary*) is seen as beautiful, lonely, life-denying, self-crucifying, pathetically locking her thighs against the very thought of sex—Nature is dreadful. The martyrdom of the Protestant Bishop Farrar by Bloody Mary's men in Carmarthen becomes a terrible but wildly fascinating orgy of bursting organs and steaming blood and yet Hughes implies that all this

horror is a sermon of God's love for fallen man and of man's passionate adherence to truth:

> The sullen-jowled watching Welsh townspeople
> Hear him crack in the fire's mouth; they see what
> Black oozing twist of stuff bubbles the smell
> That tars and retches their lungs: no pulpit
> Of his ever held their eyes so still,
> Never, as now his agony, his wit. . . .
>
> Gave all he had, and yet the bargain struck
> To a merest farthing his whole agony,
> His body's cold-kept miserdom of shrieks
> He gave uncounted, while out of his eyes,
> Out of his mouth, fire like a glory broke,
> And smoke burned his sermons into the skies.

A critic once complained that everybody was giving prescriptions for poetry but nobody was producing any! At least Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes offer poems not manifestos. Gunn is more important than the 'policy' of *New Lines*, and no one, as far as I know, has placed Hughes in any group. Yet these two are the most important and promising poets now writing. They offer a link between English and American poetry, for Gunn now lectures in an American University and Hughes is greatly admired and widely read in the United States. We may say very loosely that they represent the classical (Gunn) and the romantic (Hughes) sides of the poetry of the fifties. Ted Hughes will perhaps have a wider appeal—particularly as the Angry Young Man movement dies away—and will develop in a more interesting way, because he has that very passion, that emotional intensity, that controlled ebullience and sheer *excess* which as we have seen has been conspicuously absent from modern English poetry with the exception of the explosive career of Dylan Thomas. Yet his is a furious delight in words which never deserts sense, and there is a fresh earthiness in his imagination which prevents his poetry from dissolving into rant.

Books used:
The New Poetry (ed. A. Alvarez) Penguin.
The Hawk in the Rain by Ted Hughes.
Lupercal by Ted Hughes.
The Sense of Movement by Thom Gunn.
My Sad Captains by Thom Gunn.
Selected Poems by Thom Gunn and Ted Hughes.

WHITHER 'LITERARY' RESEARCH?

By V. Y. Kantak
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The word 'research' has acquired a sort of talismanic power in recent years though there does not seem to be any certainty that what is called research would represent an intellectual effort of a high order. Often, a little off-the-record chat with a Doctor of Philosophy convinces us that intellectual excellence or mental refinement is not perhaps a criterion. One's claim to that somewhat medieval-sounding title is established by writing a thesis which presumably embodies original research. The solemn declaration that generally accompanies such a thesis informs us that the research in question constitutes an original contribution to knowledge. Now that is a conveniently comprehensive phrase and the onus of proving that a certain piece of writing does not constitute a contribution to knowledge will be on the objector. Nevertheless, it is true that a great deal of this work is often found to be extremely derivative. Being about books about books about books, it is of the nature of what may be called 'hearsay' knowledge or knowledge at third, fourth or fifth hand. Far from illuminating what hitherto was dark it may actually deepen the obscurity and increase the confusion however slightly and, perhaps, however unwittingly.

Some credit should be conceded, surely, where factual matter has been industriously gathered and set forth; but then, the merit we recognize in such a case is largely the physical stamina to do hard work as well as a sort of 'smartness' and practical skill rather than the power to make valid generalizations from facts or the power to respond sensitively to poetry in the broadest sense. The setting forth of the facts in itself may hardly be called a virtue, particularly in literary study, if the facts are perversely employed or if the conclusions drawn are jejune, platitudinous or misleading. One would

readily concede, of course, that there are individual theses that deserve to be called original contributions to knowledge; I am only talking of the general trend reflected in the large bulk of the so-called research which can make little claim to the kind of intellectual eminence we expect.

This raises an interesting question: Do we regard research simply as a special category of work which may or may not demand a high degree of intellectual ability? Or do we regard it as a kind of work which, in addition to being of a highly specialized character—and to some extent because of it—requires a higher order of intellectual effort than is implied in the common usage of the words, 'study', 'learning' and 'teaching'?

There can be no doubt that it is the second and not the first of these alternatives that we should accept unless we seek to interpret the term 'research' in a highly untenable way. There is perhaps a difference here between the Sciences and the Humanities. In the Sciences, specialization in any narrow field can only be by its very nature very advanced work; it is simply unthinkable without a sound knowledge of the subject as a whole and a high competence in its techniques. In the field of the Humanities and particularly in literature studies, one often comes across a young aspirant who takes a narrow theme and confining his attention to a very small segment of a subject is able to bring forth what is generally regarded as research. The value of such research would depend precisely upon the extent of the researcher's grasp of the subject as a whole and his maturity of judgment in that field. In order to deal meaningfully with his particular theme he would need the light that the surrounding areas of knowledge cast upon it. He needs a prolonged contact with the subject and a mature understanding before he could hope to contribute anything significant, however narrow and limited the theme may be. For this reason there is something to be said for the excellent British practice of not encouraging the very young to engage in research. Not that the gifted young should suffer neglect. So far as literature is concerned, at any rate, the exceptional gifts of the young are likely to be those that tend to creative writing. Whereas it is the slowly maturing qualities of detachment, balance and critical judg-

ment that are the very stuff of the kind of research we have in mind.*

There is, of course, no blue-print to define for us the proper field for 'literary' research, the methods that may be employed and the means of securing high quality in the work produced. The nature of the theme itself would decide for us the most suitable approach. One can, for the sake of convenience, divide the entire field of research as far as literature is concerned under two broad heads. Firstly, there is the kind of theme which though connected with literature has a strong historical, linguistic or sociological side to it and hence would require to some extent a scientific approach and the employment of techniques appropriate to the social sciences. The emphasis in such an inquiry would not be on literary appreciation and the power of responding sensitively to artistic work. Though this may be necessary in some measure, the issues that are raised would require a predominantly scientific treatment. Secondly, there are themes which depend chiefly on literary appreciation and critical judgment of a high order. The mode of inquiry here would be properly speaking 'literary criticism' as commonly understood, one in which literature is valued primarily for those artistic qualities it has in common with the fine arts.

The first category of work would correspond roughly to the traditional definition of research as an attempt to 'write fair what Time hath blurred.' In the literary field this takes the form of discovery of hitherto unknown or neglected literature and the effort to present it in terms of modern scholarship. This type of work is of special importance in classical languages where there is a great body of ancient literature whose meaning and worth are in no way exhausted by its own time; it needs to be presented in the light of new facts or new avenues of interpretation that may have emerged. This is important also in the modern languages where a study of older literature may yield valuable linguistic and other information. This is chiefly the task of editing; and expert editing is an exacting job, demands a high scholarship besides that rare rectitude of judgment which is necessary in the handling of conflicting claims of evidence. One of the basic problems is the fixing of the canon, the decision as to the authenticity of the

text. A classic example of the magnitude of that task is the enormous scholarship that clusters round the Shakespearean canon or the original corpus of the *Mahabharata*. No less absorbing are questions like those of 'the date', the 'sources' and related matters. In all these cases, the qualities that are called for in the researcher are not those of the appreciator, a spontaneous responsiveness to poetic stimuli, but rather those of the judge coolly deciding an intricate issue faced with a confused array of facts that bear upon it. The entire work is bound to have a scientific side to it and scientific disciplines such as a full and careful documentation of data and a clear grasp of the principles which should govern emendation or disposal of textual apocrypha are essential for success. In the absence of these disciplines this kind of research dwindles into a very harmful form of speculation or special pleading.

What we too often find being palmed off as 'editorial' research lacks these intellectual disciplines that give it value. Some obscure little composition, often a few verse fragments, is rescued from the dust of the ages; some correspondingly obscure little author's bones are disturbed; an attempt is made to reconstruct his original puny likeness from its otherwise well-deserved restful oblivion...whereupon the 'discoverer-editor' makes a valiant effort to show that he has, in fact, lighted upon the scoop of the century. An unconscionable amount of literary excellence is wrung out of the dry bit of composition, if the editor is clever, and our puny author is duly installed as one of 'the foremost', 'the most significant', 'the most representative' (and so forth) of the literary men of the time. In the place of the just and balanced perspective of the editor we have partisanship, senseless use of superlatives and sheer sentimentalism.

Often this kind of research has only the remotest connection with literature. Most of the effort lies in linking discreet pieces of historical evidence together to the end that we may claim to know something of the quondam author or of the why and the wherefore of the literary piffle in question. The common foible of this editorship is illustrated by the fact that these inquiries take the form of 'the-life-and-work' and the times of such and such a person. The whole approach puts

a high premium on mere memory work and on the ability to bring about a more or less superficial linking of information. This is not to deny that good work may result from really worthwhile discoveries; all would depend on the literary merit of the discovered material, the nature of the task it sets before the editor and the scrupulous care and probity with which the editor accomplishes it. In other words, here if anywhere, we have good reason to insist on the importance of the subject in research—even greater reason, perhaps, than had Matthew Arnold for insisting on the importance of subject in poetry!

Of linguistic studies on literary themes those which deal with the poetic use of language demand a more than ordinary finesse in the appraisal of the verbal and the symbolical elements involved in creative writing and for that reason very few think themselves qualified to handle them successfully. To that extent, that particular field may be said to be free from the inroads of incompetence and charlatanry. On the other hand, there is a new kind of highly specialized work that modern Linguistics has opened up. This new kind of linguistic study claims to give us clues to a poem's meaning and power, or at any rate, to help us in that direction by making a close analysis of the poem in accordance with the principles of Descriptive Linguistics. This remains still a highly technical job, not immediately in danger of being misused. One also feels that as the new science of Linguistics is more widely understood, its usefulness in the appreciation of poetry may not seem to be as material as the Linguists had thought in the first flush of their discovery.

And then there are, to add to these, all sorts of studies which are partly or wholly sociological in character and only nominally literary. To relate the literary work to the age, to show how it illustrates the history of ideas or merely to use it is so much evidence in the construction of the biography of its author—these and similar efforts treat literature more or less as a socio-historical document. There is nothing against research that takes this line; but the canons of excellence to which that research must conform would be those that pertain to socio-historical reconstructions. There is a strict logic that must govern the study of facts and ideas in our reconstruction

of the past; the 'literary' researcher tends to ignore that logic and tries to make up for that lack by a spurious kind of enthusiastic writing which may do justice to his sentimental regard for his chosen literary hero but none at all to the nature of the research he has undertaken.

And lastly there is that second group of themes which was described as literary criticism proper. The most obvious and the most popular of these is the critical study of an individual author. This is very like the 'life-and-work' type of theme referred to earlier, and often hovers uncomfortably between two poles of interest, the purely literary and the purely biographical, the latter of which was particularly fashionable in the 19th century. The discussion generally follows the chronological sequence in which the works have appeared; and this further strengthens the biographical character of the whole inquiry. There is also the great temptation to talk of the 'development of the author's art' as a process which, it is natural to suppose, takes the curve of his life, showing him 'in the work-shop', 'on the heights' followed by decline or fulfilment as the case may be, much in the manner Edward Dowden dealt with Shakespeare. In itself, this scheme cannot be said to be basically unsound or ill-conceived except for the fact that it tends to become a trifle too mechanical and wooden when applied to all and sundry. Some corrective, some countervailing factor, seems necessary.

For instance, we could put a check upon any such unseasonable incursion of the chronological by insisting on a close analysis of individual literary products carried out from the strictly artistic point of view. This mode of criticism has been very much favoured in recent years. Such an analysis would mean that we pay adequate attention to form and to the artistic activity that takes place within a poem, a play, a novel and so on. As a matter of fact, the quality of intellectual effort that has gone into any piece of 'literary' research could be measured by the soundness and subtlety with which the researcher has handled such analyses in the course of his thesis. This is true whether the theme is a critical study of an individual author or takes an extended form. It may be a consideration of a certain literary movement or trend or of certain forms that have been prominently practised or of

such effects as the influence one thing wields over another. In all these, and in fact in most literary studies, there is always a possibility of treating the subject chronologically or on the other hand from the point of view of form and technique considering the literary work as a kind of intricate sculpture to be carefully examined. Both these lines of treatment are legitimate and are perhaps productive of the best when judiciously mixed.

Another field in which research may be undertaken is Principles of Criticism. This is a highly abstract and theoretical field of research where only those who have the necessary background of philosophical training need venture. Here too, much mediocre work can and has been done under the plea of bringing to light some forgotten critic who happened to have spun out certain theories in his day. Indian researchers have similarly done research work on the ancient Indian theories of art and rhetoric. The value of such research has been great in proportion to the Indian researcher's ability to look beyond the specifically Indian point of view in rhetorics. Whatever is done in this field without an adequate grasp of the main traditions of critical thought Eastern and Western is worth very little. The criteria that must be decisive of merit here are those that apply to Aesthetics as a branch of Philosophy and the technique is the technique of logical thinking which is not exactly the strong point of the 'literary' researcher. At the same time, any research in the principles of literary criticism needs must proceed in some relationship with concrete products of literature. The researcher must first feel the force of a poem before he can see a certain critical principle exemplified in one's appreciation of it. To analyse a concept philosophically while all the time remaining fully attuned to poetry is a difficult requirement to fulfil. No wonder that successful research of this kind is very rare.

Talking of research and the need to keep up standards, it should be said that there is nothing inherently high or low in the type of theme one may choose. There can be an excellence appropriate to each kind which we may try to achieve. But none of it can be achieved without keenness of mind, devoted effort and intellectual integrity. What we need above all is a consensus among the academic fraternity which de-

mands the first-rate and is not willing to pass as 'research' work that is palpably of an inferior quality judged by the best academic standards. Given that we could make the most of all the varieties of research referred to above and many more.

In conclusion, I would like to mention a species of literary work which though it does not strictly fall in the category of research is fully as important and can be intellectually as taxing as the best research in the field of literature. I mean the work of translating a classic into another language, something that is of special interest in our country which has a multiplicity of languages to cope with. Successful translation is by no means easy to achieve; and if a research thesis entitles one to the Ph.D. degree there is no reason why a really good translation of an English classic into Hindi or, for the matter of that, of a Tamil classic into Bengali should not deserve that award. Apart from a certain amount of initial scholarship it would require the capacity thoroughly to absorb the spirit of the original and, what is more, a mastery of word-craft which is next only to that of the creative poet. There is no standard to measure all this; but a good translation will easily be recognized and a bad one even more quickly detected by the discerning. This is also true of good and bad research. The whole question is, will our academic men insist on that distinction and not allow a poor piece of work to pass as good from a mistaken sense of kindness to the aspirant?

**Note:* The whole question serves to show, once again, how teaching and research may be fruitfully related. The objection to 'the early thesis' is that the researcher has still to achieve that comprehensive experience of literature and of critical techniques which alone would have made his concentration on any one theme really worthwhile in the way of research. A vigorous interest in teaching sustained through a number of years would have given him precisely this kind of competence. A teacher of our 'special' courses has the best chance of deepening and widening his knowledge of the subject by judiciously shifting his area of concentration from time to time. This is about the only chance many of us have ever had of filling those numerous (alas, how numerous!) gaps in our knowledge which graduation had left unfilled. Often we have really learnt only when we have sincerely attempted to teach. And that process is never quite complete. It seems wise then to regard 'the thesis' as the natural product of a teacher's ripened experience rather than as a sort of 'Password' for entry into the profession. V. Y. K.

A HOPE FOR CRITICISM

By V. N. Dhavale

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Mr George Watson, in *The Literary Critics*,[1] remarks that 'the second half of the twentieth century marks, in a rather negative sense, a revolutionary phase in the evolution of English criticism, a pause imposed by an access of doubt. The 1950s brought with them a flood of warnings against critical arrogance and a series of demarcation-disputes, following upon half a century of unparalleled activity.' Has English criticism gained by this access of doubt? Or has the doubt merely impeded the spread of revolutionary ideas which the first half of the century had introduced?' If we agree with Mr Watson that the record of English criticism 'is rather one of great revolutionary individuals' who have 'attacked established complacency' and 'struck out in new directions', the criticism of the 1950s will appear, in a sense, anti-revolutionary or reactionary. Yet this counter-revolution is, I believe, a very healthy and sobering influence on criticism in England and America, and will help rather than hinder, the acceptance of some of the useful tenets in the criticism of the revolutionary leaders.

Mr T. S. Eliot and Dr I. A. Richards are obviously the leaders of the revolution in the first half of the century. The influence of their writings was no doubt considerable—particularly during the 1920s and 1930s. The effect of a 'critical' revolution can best be seen in the general tone and idiom of criticism in any particular period. When some of the ideas (and more frequently, the phrases) made popular by Mr Eliot and Dr Richards found their way even into casual reviews, it was clear that they had won the day. Why, then, is a counter-revolution inevitable now? The revolution has already lost much of its prestige. Several able practitioners of the art of criticism are now dissatisfied with the 'new' criticism and are reiterating the very principles discredited by the 'revolutionaries'. That a reaction soon sets in against almost any striking achievement or point of view is—fortu-

nately or unfortunately—true. But sometimes the reaction is not merely the result of our general tendency to 'debunk' or to retaliate; it is the result of a sincerely felt dissatisfaction with the point of view which has enjoyed prestige and popuarity for some time. In the field of literary criticism, especially in England, the dissatisfaction appears to be quite genuine.

The reasons, of course, are many. But an important reason, I think, is the attitude of the two leaders of the revolution—Mr Eliot and Dr Richards. They have gradually surrendered their original positions. They do not seem to be very anxious to defend their revolutionary doctrines. They have naturally made the task of their followers rather unenviable, for the followers must often find it difficult to defend positions which the leaders seem to have abandoned.[2] The revolution, in short, appears to have been a half-hearted revolution.

In spite of the obvious differences between their attitudes towards literature, their main assumptions and their conclusions, the two critics show a strikingly similar development. They began with an uncompromising demolition of a good deal of earlier criticism; for some years they continued to modify and revise earlier statements, occasionally contradicting themselves; and recently both seem to have given up their dogmatism and intolerance. How these two critics have retraced their steps and disappointed their devout followers is indeed an interesting story. But Mr Eliot has taken the wind out of his critics' sails by admitting that he does not mind if he occasionally contradicts himself or defends different points of view at different times. The following passage, written as early as 1942, can be taken as typical of his attitude:

> I can never re-read any of my own prose writings without acute embarrassment: I shirk the task, and consequently may not take account of all the assertions to which I have at one time or another committed myself; I may often repeat what I have said before, and I may often contradict myself. But I believe that the critical writings of poets, of which in the past there have been some very distinguished examples, owe a great deal of their interest to the fact that the poet, at the back of

> his mind, if not as his ostensible purpose, is always trying to defend the kind of poetry he is writing, or to formulate the kind that he wants to write.... What he writes about poetry, in short, must be assessed in relation to the poetry he writes.[3]

Mr Eliot's lecture, *The Frontiers of Criticism*, in which he even disclaims any special responsibility for the New Criticism,[4] is a frank admission that criticism of literature can be of various kinds, all more or less useful, but the primary interest of a *literary* critic should be 'to help his readers to *understand and enjoy*'. That Mr Eliot has a good word to say about all types of criticism shows how tolerant his own criticism has become; it also shows that he has no desire to lead any kind of revolution in criticism. He cannot even 'recall a single book or essay, or the name of a single critic, as representative of the kind of impressionistic criticism which aroused' his ire 'thirty-three years ago'.[5] But it is not even necessary to cite such passages. Mr Eliot's criticism has generally suffered from so many reservations, so many qualifications and asides, that with the exception of some of his earliest essays, the main body of his criticism is merely tentative. The mild or strong, direct or indirect, attacks[6] on his critical theory and practice appear, therefore, to be irrelevant. He is always ready with his disarming humility—humility which also seems to be a part of his irony.

Dr I. A. Richards presents a striking parallel. He was much more confident than Mr Eliot that a revolution in critical theory and practice would soon be inevitable: for he based his earlier theories on psychology—a fast-developing science. But the system of objective or scientific criticism that he wanted to build has not yet been built. And he has modified his attitude to such an extent that any serious student of his books will see that he has himself contributed a great deal to the counter-revolution. Dr Richards, however, does not admit that he has contradicted or considerably modified his theories. He blames his critics who do not read and interpret his books as they ought to be read and interpreted. In 1948—nearly twenty-five years after the publication of his *The Principles of Literary Criticism*—he announced:

> I would like to defend my early writings from the charge of scientism, but there are more important things to do. That they have been read as supporting scientism I admit. But in sum their burden is sufficiently against 'the vain attempt to orient the mind by belief of the scientific kind alone'.[7]

Dr Richards's interest in Coleridge's writings and his own attempts to develop some of Coleridge's hints have no doubt been very valuable to modern criticism. But the influence of Coleridge has also changed the tone and method of his criticism. In fact, we can even detect many passages in his writings which remind us of the Bradleyan type of criticism which he had condemned in his *Principles*.[8] He seems to have withdrawn his opposition to 'impressionistic' criticism—even to the discussion of 'characters', 'philosophy', and similar features of a play or poem. In his essay on Troilus and Cressida, for example, he writes:[9]

> How we see Troilus here depends in a measure upon how we conceive Cressida. I like to make her very young —almost with her little finger hooked in her mouth still— an actress through and through....
>
> Our conception of Troilus himself will, of course, be the key to the rest of the argument....
>
> What is exceptional, to my mind, is the degree to which its central thought seems to accord with Plato's....

About forty years have elapsed since the first indication or promise of a possible revolution. And as the leaders themselves have given up their initial enthusiasm, it is not surprising that other critics have exposed the limitations of their views, and have revived earlier and more fruitful approaches to literature. Several books published in England and America during the last two or three decades can be mentioned in this connexion. I propose to refer here only to two books, published recently, which clearly indicate the present attitude towards problems in literary criticism—*The Business of Criti-*

cism by Miss Gardner, and *An Experiment in Criticism* by Prof. C. S. Lewis.[10] These two books seem to me to be among the most important books on criticism during the last several years. Both the books are by well-known scholar-critics and will naturally influence the younger generation a great deal.

Announcing that the 'torch rather than the sceptre' would be her symbol for the critic, Miss Gardner adds that

> Elucidation, or illumination, is the critic's primary task as I conceive it.[11]

The critic should not claim to be the sole arbiter of 'taste' or 'value'. For 'good taste is not an absolute'.[12] The critic's function 'is to assist his readers to find the value which he believes the work to have.' How far we have travelled from the intolerant criticism of the 1920s can be seen from the following passage:

> To attempt to measure the amount of value, to declare or attempt to demonstrate that this poem is more valuable than that, or to range writers in an order of merit does not seem to me to be the true purpose of criticism. Such attempts ignore the nature of taste and the nature of values.[13]

Miss Gardner has convincingly shown how some of the methods adopted by the New Critics are certainly not as useful or valid as they are claimed to be. Speaking about the critic's responsibility (when he wants to offer his 'interpretation' of a passage), she remarks:

> It is a part of the game of 'explication', as it has developed, to begin by expressing complete bafflement, as if the critic had never met a metaphor in his life. Then after every kind of obtuseness has been exhibited and all possible interpretations and misinterpretations have been considered, the true explication rises like the sun out of foggy mists.[14]

And though she is 'fundamentally on the side of the new

critics'[15] she does not endorse all their 'heresies'. About the doctrine of 'impersonality' which has enjoyed a great deal of popularity, she says:

> Insistence on the impersonality of the poet or the poem seems to me to be a heresy which has arisen, as most heresies have, from a reaction against imperfect and vulgarized notions of the truth.[16]

There are innumerable passages in Miss Gardner's book which show that she wants to place criticism once again on the pedestal of 'common sense and uncommon sensibility'.

Prof. Lewis also can be described as a leader of the common-sense point of view in criticism. With his vast learning, he can illustrate any point with great skill and can conduct his argument in a very simple, delightful style. He argues in favour of an 'experiment,' which, if really conducted in a systematic way, may lead to some startling conclusions about the reading habits of different types of readers. The subtle and persuasive argument in his book cannot be easily summarized. The important point in his book which concerns us here is his bold attack on some of the assumptions inherent in the New Criticism. Thus he expresses a fundamental doubt about the use of what is commonly called 'criticism':

> But when I consider those (I exclude the living) who have ranked as the great critics I come to a standstill. Can I, honestly and strictly speaking, say with any confidence that my appreciation of any scene, chapter, stanza or line has been improved by my reading of Aristotle, Dryden, Johnson, Lessing, Coleridge, Arnold himself (as a practising critic), Pater, or Bradley? I am not sure that I can.[17]

Mr Lewis is not merely sceptical about the necessity or utility of evaluative criticism; he even suggests:

> I suggest that a ten or twenty years' abstinence both from the reading and from the writing of evaluative criticism might do us all a great deal of good.[18]

This may even sound like a plea for the abolition of all criticism. But in the context in which Prof. Lewis writes the above passage, we are tempted to agree with him. For he is emphasizing a very obvious fact which is sometimes ignored by critics and commentators, viz. that literature must take precedence over literary criticism.

> Criticism normally casts a retrospective light on what we have already read.[19]

Though very few readers are as 'mature and thoroughgoing' as Prof. Lewis wants them to be, and so cannot dispense with all criticism, every serious student of literature will benefit if the emphasis on criticism is reduced and the response of the individual is encouraged and respected. The insistence on the 'all-important conjunction—Reader Meets Text'[20] cannot be objected to by any critic—whatever be his own school of criticism. Prof. Lewis gives greater freedom to the reader and frees him from the fear which certain critics have instilled into his mind.

Miss Gardner and Prof. Lewis agree on many points. Miss Gardner cites a well-known passage from Dryden which, she says, 'sums up for me the purpose which any research I may undertake subserves.' The passage begins:

> They wholly mistake the nature of criticism who think its business is principally to find fault. . . .[21]

Prof. Lewis remarks:

> I want to convince people that adverse judgements are always the most hazardous, because I believe this is the truth. . . . A negative proposition is harder to establish than a positive. . . .[22]

And we naturally remember Coleridge's admonition:

> He who tells me that there are *defects* in a new work, tells me nothing which I should not have taken for granted without his information. But he who points out and elu-

cidates the *beauties* of an original work, does indeed give me interesting information, such as experience would not have authorized me in anticipating.[23]

It is in such utterances that we can find a hope for criticism. For humility may succeed where arrogance fails. The realization that literary criticism has its limits (and limitations) will no doubt make the modern critic cautious and tolerant in his judgments.

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A NOTE ON *AS YOU LIKE IT*

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In Pettet's book on *Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition*, there occurs a statement about *As You Like It* which needs to be challenged. Pettet thinks that 'as we listen to Rosalind's witty raillery, we are transported from romance into the world of Restoration Comedy' (p. 129). What Pettet seems to have completely ignored is the nature and purpose of Rosalind's raillery. Rosalind is not Millamant and the basis of her raillery is not coquetry. However brilliant may be the wit of a Restoration comic heroine, it should always be remembered that it is essentially sceptical, cynical, sexual and, therefore, largely negative. In order to understand the nature of this wit we have not merely to go to contemporary materialistic philosophy but also to the social conditions of the period. Such a wit is the sole defence of woman in a society which is intelligent and sophisticated as also cruel and ruthless. It is a society in which there is no sense of security for a woman—however gallantly she may pretend to 'chase' man. She has always to be on the defensive, not merely because the man she is dealing with is a rake, but more fundamentally because it is the very nature of man to demand variety which he seeks and finds at the cost of woman. She neither is, nor can be, his equal partner. In no society where sex occupies such a predominant place can a woman be man's equal partner. It is often not recognized that however hierarchical may be the conception of society in Shakespeare, such a society not merely permits but in fact guarantees equality between man and woman. In Restoration Comedy, on the other hand, there is a lot of talk about equality between the sexes but in actual effect there is no equality at all. Woman is man's victim in this comedy unless she is clever enough to protect herself. Often she is not able to do so and Restoration Comedy is littered with illegitimate children and discarded mistresses. Miss Wedgwood's contention that 'the capacity to meet a man on equal terms' was 'open to any woman of quick wits' in Restoration

society may be correct enough and yet it is certainly too much to say that in this society 'neither Hero nor Imogen could be scandalously mistreated by their lovers with the full approval of 'society' (*Seventeenth-Century English Literature*, Home University Library, p. 153). For one thing no evil action ever gets the full approval of 'society' in Shakespeare: Beatrice's reaction ('Kill Claudio') is symbolic of Shakespeare's approach in such matters. Moreover, Shakespeare fully recognizes (the cases of Hero and Imogen more than confirm this opinion) that equality between man and woman is a spiritual condition and not a temporary sexual or social adjustment as it is in Restoration Comedy. The Restoration Comedy's is a callous, cynical and self-centred world: here everybody is suspicious of everybody. Love between man and woman in such a world becomes a real battle between the sexes. Consequently in such a world eternal vigilance is the price of virginity. Shakespeare's is a different world altogether. There is something final and irrevocable about the love that exists between Rosalind and Orlando. It is an experience which is at once both real and mystical. Such an experience alone can give the kind of spiritual fulfilment to a woman which is the chief distinction of a character like Rosalind. 'Come, woo me,' shouts Rosalind to Orlando in a spirit of perfect abandon. The assumptions in this attitude are simple, confident and positive: that life is good and beautiful and that love is the solvent of all problems. Orlando's world, in a sense, is dark and threatening: it gravitates 'From tyrant Duke unto a tyrant brother.' But how does it matter? The mere thought of 'heavenly Rosalind' is enough. For Rosalind too, 'this working-day world' is 'full of briars'. And yet nothing need matter as long as 'there is such a man as Orlando' in the world.

In a song in *The Old Bachelor*, Congreve gives the following expert advice to contemporary women:

> Would you long preserve your lover?
> Would you still his goddess reign?
> Never let him all discover,
> Never let him much obtain.

Such an advice, however, is totally useless for a girl like Rosalind. She insists that before she accepts Orlando as a husband, he must know everything about her, not merely about her as an individual, but also about the normal infirmities and frailties of woman. Her demand in fact is that love is a voyage of discovery for both man and woman. That way alone can a healthy and beautiful relationship come to exist between them. But such an attitude is possible only in the case of a woman who is confident of herself and of her future. It is such confidence alone which gives her a natural and unquestioning faith in the constancy of her lover. Millamant unhappily lacks any such confidence altogether. It is not that she is necessarily a person of inferior calibre, but that she is placed in a different kind of a situation and is confronted with a different set of moral and social values. She is desperate about exercising her 'power': '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.' It is not without significance that 'there's no clock in the forest' of Arden and even though men like Jaques will always 'ripe and ripe' and then 'rot and rot' wherever they are, the lovers can never be touched by time: they represent eternal youth. In the world of Millamant, however, time is the most devastating enemy of woman. It is no wonder that Millamant creates for herself the pathetic illusion of an everlasting 'chase': 'I'll fly and be followed to the last moment, tho' I am upon the very verge of Matrimony.... I'll be solicited to the very last, nay and afterwards.' It is only a part of this illusion that she should turn to Mirabel with superb archness and say: 'Well—I think—I'll endure you.... Well, you ridiculous thing, you, I'll have you.' And yet only a minute later she exposes her real state of mind to Mrs Fainall: 'Well, If Mirabel should not make a good Husband, I am a lost thing—for I find I love him violently.' That she loves him violently is in fact the crux of the problem. Love is dangerous in Restoration Comedy. To fall in love is to be destroyed, more especially in the case of a woman. What Restoration Comedy demands is a kind of attitude where one is never totally committed. And yet Rosalind is more than totally committed: 'O, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst

know how many fathoms deep I am in love!... I'll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando.' It is a state of mind in which she can continue chattering about one thing or another and what is more natural and delightful than to laugh at the follies of lovers? In the very beginning of the play she had described 'falling in love' as a pleasant 'sport' and it is as well that this sport continues at the expense of her own lover. Her love for Orlando is so genuine and powerful that no comment, howsoever cynical, can ever touch it. Such a comment would only enrich it by showing its superiority to any other kind of love. This love has depth and understanding enough to face all onslaughts both from without and from within. Jaques and Touchstone cannot blast it and Silvius and Phoebe cannot make it look ridiculous; similarly the 'witty raillery' between the lovers will only serve the purpose of a hilarious joke. Rosalind may remind Orlando in a mock-serious tone: 'men are April when they woo, December when they wed; maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives.' But she knows, as does Orlando, that they are not covered by this universal law of change. They are different and unique —as are all genuine lovers. The world may call love a folly or a madness, but Orlando's retort to such a view is an affirmation of faith: 'I would not be cured, youth.' Worldly wisdom and caution in the guise of Jaques may sneer: 'The worst fault you have is to be in love.' But in the sphere of youth, youth knows better: 'It is a fault I will not change for your best virtue.' Jaques gracefully withdraws from the contest and the play very appropriately ends with his blessing for Orlando: 'You to a love that your *true faith* doth merit.' (Italics mine).

If we *must* search for a character in *As You Like It* who may give us a temporary illusion that we are in the world of Restoration Comedy, it is Touchstone. It has not often been noticed that Touchstone raises a problem which was to become, in a sense, the real theme of Restoration Comedy: 'marriage binds and blood breaks.' Shakespearean Comedy does not resolve this problem—an eternal problem both in life and literature. This Comedy is too innocent to accept this problem as real. The problem does, however, exist and even though

Shakespeare may not grapple with it, he is surely conscious of it. And it is highly appropriate that he should raise it through Touchstone.

There is another aspect of Touchstone which needs to be noticed. It will, of course, be wrong to treat him altogether as the Fop of Restoration Comedy—he is too subtle for that—but amongst the many roles that he is capable of playing, that of a Fop is certainly one. It is not for nothing that he claims to have 'trod a measure,...flattered a lady... been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy;... undone three tailors;...had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.' His chief infirmity, like that of many Fops in Restoration Comedy, is lechery. He would certainly have preferred a Lady-Fop as his mistress but in the Forest of Arden there are no Lady-Fops—not even Phoebe is available. So he picks up Audrey, 'ill-favoured, sir, but mine own.' She is good enough for sex and Touchstone (unlike a Restoration Fop) is honest enough to confess that he is interested in nothing more. But for Shakespeare, the countryside can never become a mere foraging ground for lecherous courtiers. It is of the highest importance that Touchstone should be trounced first by Corin (in argument) and then by William (in his wedding sheets). It is perhaps Shakespeare's intention that we look on Touchstone as a cuckold—a typical husband of Restoration Comedy. The sole purpose of introducing William seems to be to drive home this point. On the very verge of matrimony, Touchstone is made to speak a language which is that of a typical Restoration would-be cuckold: 'Courage! As horns are odious, they are necessary ...the forehead of a married man (is) more honourable than the bare brow of a bachelor.' He does not realize that Audrey, that 'foul slut', is going to be more than even with him. To make this plain the playwright brings William on the stage. He meets Audrey and Touchstone and the following revealing conversation takes place:

Will. Good even, Audrey.
Aud. God ye good even, William
Will. And good even to you, Sir.

Touch. Good even gentl friend...
...How old are you, friend?
Will. Five and twenty, Sir.
....
Touch. Wast born i' the forest here?
Will. Ay, Sir; I thank God.
....
Touch. You do love this maid?
Will. I do, Sir.

After this Touchstone tries to browbeat William through courtly rhetoric but William is not afraid. He leaves only when Audrey pleads with him. The playwright leaves the reader in no doubt as to what is going to happen to this marriage in future.

For Shakespeare, marriage is a sacred thing and it is never allowed to be wrecked. But the case of Touchstone is a special one. *He* does not believe in the sanctity of marriage and he must be punished. It is surprising that even some of Shakespeare's acutest critics have failed to notice the importance of William in *As You Like It*. Professor Nevill Coghill offers the astonishing comment: 'Jaques never made a worse guess than when he hazards that their (Touchstone's and Audrey's) leaving voyage "is but for two months vitual". An audience may well imagine it will outlast that of Rosalind and Orlando, even in that romantic world.' (*More talking of Shakespeare*, p. 12). Professor Coghill seems to forget that Jaques had the advantage of overhearing Touchstone and in any case he had much greater knowledge about the working of Touchstone's mind than any modern critic is ever likely to have. If an audience imagines that the marriage of Touchstone and Audrey will outlast that of Orlando and Rosalind, then all that one may say is that this audience is misunderstanding Shakespeare's real purpose. Touchstone's marriage cannot and will not last: Audrey is marrying him to become 'a woman of the world' (Touchstone's reasons are much less honourable) but in Shakespeare she is bound to go where she belongs—to 'good William'. The situation is different from a typical one in Restoration Comedy in one illuminating respect: here the husband belongs to 'high' society and the

woman to 'low' society. Why does Shakespeare do it? Is it his way of showing that he believes in human beings and not in social classes? At any rate, it does show how fundamentally different is Shakespearean Comedy from the 'high' comedy of the Restoration period.

'HAPPY MEDIOCRITY'—AN AUGUSTAN VIRTUE

By A. D. Choudhuri

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The bliss of man (could pride that blessing find)
Is not to act or think beyond mankind;
No pow'rs of body, or of soul to share,
But what his nature and his state can bear
Why has not man a microscopic eye?
For this plain reason, man is not a fly.

(*Essay on Man*, I, 189-94)

The faith of the eighteenth century in reason was also the starting point of its distrust in logic and its growing concern with impulses and emotions. One suspects that prose was the dominant vehicle of expression not so much because of contemporary admiration of logic as for the love of orderliness, urbanity, and common-sense.

Reasonableness found expression in a simplification of ideas. Complex and grandiose ideas and expansive emotions are pretentious; therefore man should take delight in simple thoughts and neat habits of reasoning. This intellectual modesty formed an element in the popular outlook of that time represented eloquently by Pope and Locke.

Presumptuous man! the reason wouldst thou find
Why form'd so weak, so little, and so blind?
First, if thou canst, the harder reason guess,
Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no less?
Ask of thy mother earth, why oaks are made
Taller or stronger than the weeds they shade?

(*Ibid.* I, 35-40)

Man was no longer the centre of the universe. The universe was not created for him, as was believed in the Middle Ages. Bolingbroke, from whom Pope derived his ideas of man and the universe, was of the opinion that the difference

between man and other creatures 'appears, in many instances, small, and would probably appear still less, if we had the means of knowing their motives, as we have of observing their actions.' (*Works*, 1809, VIII, 231). Poets and scholars of the age sought to determine man's position in the universe. Man was relegated to a middle position in the Great Chain of Being, preceded by Angels and followed by lower animals. Bacon could confidently declare, 'Man, if we look to final causes, may be regarded as the centre of the world; insomuch that if man were taken away from the world, the rest would seem to be all astray, without aim or purpose.' (*Works*, Ellis and Spedding, VI, 747). That confident pride in the superiority of man was replaced by prudent consideration of his limited excellences. One could no longer exult like Hamlet over the glory of man. Pope had no hesitation in ridiculing man for his intellectual pretension:

> In pride, in reas'ning pride, our error lies:
> Ask for what end the heavenly bodies shine,
> Earth for whose use? pride answers, 'Tis for mine:
> For me kind nature wakes her genial pow'r
> Suckles each herb, and spreads out every flow'r:
>
> (*Ibid.* I, 131-4)

Man should confine himself to modest aims and practicable ideas; in other words, he must be a sensible, sagacious, mediocre person with approved habits and measured cheerfulness, and the image of the product, a balanced human personality seems to have captured the Augustan imagination. We do not associate Shaftesbury with utilitarian thinking but even he thinks that 'Whoever therefore, by any strong Persuasion or settled Judgment, thinks in the main, *that Virtue causes Happiness, Vice Misery*, carrys with him that Security and Assistance to Virtue which is required.' (*Characteristics*, 1727, p. 67). A fairly well-known poet of the time, Matthew Green, expresses his idea of 'Contentment, parent of delight' in these definite terms:

> I feel the deity inspire,
> And thus she models my desire.

Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid,
Annuity securely made;
A farm some twenty miles from town,
Small, tight, salubrious, and my own;
Two maids, that never saw the town;
A serving-man not quite a clown;
A boy to help to tread the mow,
And drive, while t'other holds the plough
A chief of temper form'd to please,
Fit to converse, and keep the keys,
And better to preserve the peace,
Commission'd by the name of niece;
With understandings of a size
To think their master very wise.

(*A Cure for the Spleen*)

A poet, even in his poetic ecstasy, could not forget, and did indeed write, of an annuity of 'Two hundred pounds half-yearly paid' and of 'A serving-man not quite a clown'!

The Countess of Winchilsea, another minor Augustan poet, wanted an 'absolute Retreat, 'mongst paths so lost, and Trees so high, That the world may ne'er invade.' But she did not forget to ask for a 'Partner suited to my mind. . .since Heaven has shown, it was not good to be alone' and

Courteous Fate, then give me there
Only plain and wholesome Fare
Fruits indeed (wou'd Heaven bestow)
All, that did in *Eden* grow,
All, but the *Forbidden Tree*
Wou'd be coveted by me:
Grapes, with juice so crouded up,
As breaking thro' the native cup,
Figs (yet growing) candy'd o'er,
By the Sun's attracting pow'r;
Cherries, with the downy Peach,
All within my easic Reach...

(*The Petition for an Absolute Retreat*)

Moral virtues and even religious sentiments are valued for utilitarian purposes. Lord Chesterfield's letters to his son reflect the temper of the Augustan period, its worldly nature and prudent habits of thought, its concern for keeping up appearances and conforming to the accepted code of conduct. In a Polonius-like style the venerable Lord advises his natural son: 'A certain degree of exterior seriousness in looks and motions, gives dignity, without excluding wit and decent cheerfulness, which are always serious themselves.' (*Letters*, 10 August, 1749). In all moral writings of the age the virtues of a Temperate, Discreet, cheerful person are extolled. Pomfret's *Choice* (1700) is representative of the 'settled desires and tempered ambitions' of a bucolic life:

> If Heav'n the Grateful Liberty wou'd give,
> That I might Chuse my Method how to Live,
> And all those Hours, propitious Fate should lend
> In blissful Ease, and Satisfaction spend:

This appreciation of ordered security and tranquil enjoyment valued above all a reasonable approach towards life. The question of happiness occupied the minds of thoughtful people and popular writers. Locke criticized the theory of innate ideas but also thus asserted:

> Nature, I confess, has put into man, a desire of happiness and an aversion to misery: these indeed are innate practical principles which (as practical principles ought) do continue constantly to operate and influence all our actions without ceasing: these may be observed in all persons and all ages, steady and universal;...these are *inclinations of the appetite to good*,...I deny not that there are natural tendencies imprinted on the minds of men; and that from the very first instances of sense and perception, there are some things that are grateful and others unwelcome to them; some things that they incline to others that they fly.'
>
> (*An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* I, ii, 3)

A glance through the articles of the *Spectator* would con-

vince a reader how much preoccupied the journal was with details of contemporary manners and customs. Addison and Steele wanted to educate public morality and civilize popular taste through their periodicals. Addison declares, in no. 58, 7 May, 1711,

> 'I shall endeavour to make what I say intelligible to ordinary capacities; but if my Readers meet with any Paper that in some Parts of it may be a little out of their Reach, I would not have them discouraged, for they may assure themselves the next shall be much clearer. As the great and only End of these my speculations is to banish Vice and Ignorance out of the Territories of *Great Britain*, I shall endeavour as much as possible to establish among us a Taste of polite Writing.'

Not knowledge or realization of some lofty moral ideas is the aim of life. 'Oh happiness! our being's end and aim!', as Pope says in his *Essay on Man* IV, i. Moral virtues are necessary for they contribute to our happiness. Like the eighteenth-century garden, virtue, however, is shorn of its rugged elements, 'virtue in general is of an amiable and lovely Nature'. 'The two Ornaments of virtue which show her in the most advantageous views, and make her altogether lovely, are Cheerfulness and Good-nature.' (*Spectator*, no. 243, 8 Dec., 1711). The age appreciates stirling qualities of head and heart no less than any other age. But the essentially pragmatic attitude dwarfs everything to mediocrity and the commonplace. Its sole concern is with the comforts and happiness of a peaceful life. 'Usefulness' is the first criterion of judgment. Addison is only swimming with the current of the time when he says in the *Spectator* paper no. 225, 17 Nov., 1711, 'There are many more shining Qualities in the Mind of Man, but there is none so useful as Discretion; it is this indeed which gives a Value to all the rest, which sets them at work in their proper Times and Places, and turns them to the Advantage of the Person who is possessed of them.' Virtue is identified with pleasure. As Hume says (*Treatise*, II, i, 7), 'The very essence of virtue. . . is to produce pleasure, and that of vice to give pain.' Human nature, says Basil Willey (*Eighteenth Century Background*, iii), has

'a secret sympathy with virtue and honesty' and 'tends to unite itself with the good, and to avoid the evil' (Hume, *Treatise*, II, iii, 9). This easy optimistic appraisal of human nature is associated with a craving for smooth and untroubled life and denotes a mind inclined to accept the world as it is. What Henry Baker asked at the opening of his *Original Poems* (1795) does, in a large measure, reflect the dominating temper of the century—

> Grant me, You Gods! before I die
> An happy Mediocrity.

LAWRENCE'S VIEWS ON CHARACTER

By H. S. Saxena
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Jane Austen wrote to her sister Cassandra (24 May, 1831) that she went round picture galleries, hoping to find portraits of Jane and Elizabeth, when she had completed *Pride and Prejudice*. This suggests that she might have had a clear and complete picture of her characters in her mind and might have known them if she saw their likes in the galleries. Readers of Jane Austen's novels know her characters as they know their friends and neighbours, but they can hope to know Lawrence's characters only if they know themselves or are mature enough to be familiar with their emotional feelings, as they exist far beneath the surface of gesture. Lawrence himself explains this new level of experience:

> Allons! the road is before us. Know thyself! Which means, *really*, know thine own *unknown self*. It's no good knowing something you know already. The thing is to discover the tracts as yet unknown. And as the only unknown now lies deep in the passional soul, allons! the road is before us. We write a novel or two, we are called erotic or depraved or idiotic or boring. What does it matter, we go the road just the same. If you see the point of the great old commandment, *Know thyself*, then you see the point of all art.[1]

> As a novelist, I feel it is the change inside the individual which is my real concern. The great social change interests me and troubles me, but it is not my field. I know a change is coming—and I know we must have a more generous, more human system based on the life values and not on the money values. . . .
>
> My field is to know the feelings inside a man, and to make new feelings conscious. What really torments civilised people is that they are full of feelings they know nothing about; they can't realise them, they can't fulfil them, they can't live them. And so they are tortured.[2]

Lawrence does not portray his characters as though describing the behaviour of actors on the stage. 'Character' to him did not mean a bundle of permanent tendencies, habits, or idiosyncrasies. His main concern is not the external development of plot and character, but the expression of feelings, that surge beneath and border with the unconscious and 'the natural flow of common sympathy between men and men, and men and women'.[3] A comparison between two passages—one from Jane Austen and the other from D. H. Lawrence—will help bring out the essential difference in attitudes. Here is a passage from *Pride and Prejudice:*

> Mr. Darcy, who was leaning against the mantle-piece with his eyes fixed on her face, seemed to catch her words with no less resentment than surprise. His complexion became pale with anger, and the disturbance of his mind was visible in every feature. He was struggling for the appearance of composure, and would not open his lips, till he believed himself to have attained it. The pause was to Elizabeth's feelings dreadful. At length, in a voice of forced calmness, he said....[4]

Lawrence would have dwelt on 'the disturbance of his mind' and the 'struggle for the appearance of composure'. There is more or less a similar situation in *The Rainbow* where Tom Brangwen asks the Polish lady to marry him:

> 'No', she said, not of herself. 'No, I don't know.'
>
> He felt the tension breaking up in him, his fists slackened, he was unable to move. He stood looking at her, helpless in his vague collapse. For the moment she had become unreal to him. Then she saw her come to him, curiously direct and as if without movement, in a sudden flow. She put her hand to his coat.
>
> 'Yes, I want to,' she said, impersonally, looking at him with wide, candid, newly-opened eyes, opened now with supreme truth. He went very white as he stood, and did not move, only his eyes were held by hers, and he suffered. She seemed to see him with her newly-opened wide eyes, almost of a child, and with a strange movement, that was

> agony to him, she reached slowly forward her dark face and her breast to him, with a slow insinuation of a kiss that made something break in his brain, and it was darkness over him for a few moments.[5]

Lawrence's most distinctive gift was his insight into the obscure origins of human relationships. His novels are, in one sense, the studies of the least articulate movements of sympathy and antipathy between the people, or as Lawrence puts it, 'the low, calling cries of the characters, as they wander in the dark woods of their destiny.'[6] The traditional technique is to put an individual in the story and make the characters emerge by arranging the chain of events. Sometimes there is an accurate descriptive portrait in the very beginning and the reader knows what to expect. Henry James mentions that Turgeniev wrote a sort of biography of each of his characters and everything they had done.[7] But one finds a certain unexpectedness about the motives of Lawrence's characters. Lawrence was interested in the real person beneath the conventional pattern of thought, and his characters sometimes love and hate, not knowing why they do either. In a letter to Edward Garnett, he describes his method thus:

> You must not look in my novel for the old stable *ego* of the character. There is another *ego*, according to whose action the individual is unrecognisable, and passes through, as it were, allotropic states which it needs a deeper sense than any other we've been used to exercise, to discover are states of the same single radically unchanged element.....Again I say, don't look for the development of the novel to follow the lines of certain characters: the characters fall into the form of some other rhythmic form, as when one draws a fiddle-bow across a fine tray delicately sanded, the sand takes lines unknown.[8]

It has not been generally observed that in spite of his enthusiasm for instinctive life and for the possibilities of psycho-analysis,[9] Lawrence recognized the necessity of some sort of outer envelope for his tales. Lawrence could draw unforgettable characters with almost Dickensian facility.

There are many minor characters in his novels and short stories, who represent the English lower-middle class society of the Edwardian era. In spite of Stephen Potter's reference to the old gibe that Lawrence's 'men are all thighs and his women all hip,'[10] many of his biographers have mentioned that he had a very keen eye for the eccentricities of men and women among whom he grew up and could effectively describe their idiosyncrasies. If he had liked 'he might have been a new kind of Dickens of the Midlands.'[11] E.T. records a very significant incident in *D. H. Lawrence: A Personal Record:*

> Lawrence now began to talk definitely of writing. He said he thought he should try a novel, and wanted me to try to write one too, so that we could compare notes.
>
> 'The usual plan is to take two couples and develop their relationships,' he said. 'Most of George Eliot's are on that plan. Anyhow, I don't want a plot, I should be bored with it. I shall try two couples for a start.'
>
> 'You see, it was really George Eliot who started it all;' Lawrence was saying in the deliberate way he had of speaking when he was trying to work something out in his own mind. 'And how wild they all were for doing it. It was she who started putting all the action inside. Before, you know, with Fielding and the others, it had been outside. Now I wonder which is right?'
>
> I always found myself most interested in what people thought and experienced within themselves, so I ventured the opinion—that George Eliot had been right.
>
> 'I wonder if she was;' Lawrence replied, thoughtfully. 'You know I can't help thinking there ought to be a bit of both.'[12]

There ought to be a bit of both is a very significant statement. Lawrence took most of his characters from life and he did not hesitate to put even unflattering portraits of his friends in his novels, but he has treated them as if he did not know them, that is, he has described the interplay of their inner feelings and the state of awareness that sometimes exists between two persons even when they do not speak a single word. Lawrence's peculiarity lies in the adaptation of plot

and character to his needs. He revolted against the older generations,[13] but did not break the fetters to put on some more. The final version of *Sons and Lovers* was written under the influence of Freud,[14] but later Lawrence saw in psycho-analysis another attempt at mechanization and came to regard Freud as the symbol of the scientist, logical, bound by the laws of cause and effect, and ignorant of mystery. The value of people, for Lawrence, consisted in a mysterious presence behind character, and in how far they were conscious of it. He describes this mysterious presence in his essay 'The Novel':

> Character is a curious thing. It is the flame of man which burns brighter or dimmer, bluer or yellower or redder, rising or sinking or flaring according to the draughts of circumstances and the changing air of life, changing itself, continually, yet remaining one single, separate flame, flickering in a strange world: unless it be blown out by too much adversity.[15]

Psycho-analysis and the Unconscious was published in 1921. In this book, Lawrence attacks the stream of consciousness technique describing it as 'the stream of hell'.[16] An analysis of his major novels will show that he not only turned from his predecessors, but from his contemporaries as well.[17]

In his 'Study of Thomas Hardy', Lawrence admires the way Hardy shows his people in their relation to the moon and sky. Egdon Heath plays a vital role in the novel. According to Lawrence, 'the real sense of tragedy is got from the setting. What is the great tragic power in the book? It is Egdon Heath.'[18] The characters of this novel can only be understood in their relation to the heath. 'Take all the varying hates felt by Eustacia Vye towards the heath, and translate them into loves, and you will have the heart of Clym.'[19] Similarly, there is never a divorce between the setting and the people in D. H. Lawrence. On the contrary, his characters are illuminated by the description of the non-human world. Anthony West refers to the beginning of the short story 'Sun', where the character of Juliet's husband is depicted by contrasting his colloquial speech with a rich descriptive texture:

> The ship sailed at midnight. And for two hours her husband stayed with her, while the child was put to bed, and the passengers came on board. It was a black night, the Hudson swayed with heavy blackness, shaken over with spilled dribbles of light. She leaned on the rail, and looking down thought: This is the sea; it is deeper than one imagines, and full of memories. At that moment the sea seemed to heave like the serpent of chaos that has lived for ever.
>
> 'These partings are no good, you know,' her husband was saying, at her side. 'They are no good. I don't like them.'[20]

There is a slight difference between Lawrence and Hardy in the use of the description of the non-human world. Lawrence himself refers to Hardy's Egdon Heath as 'a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it. Against the background of the dark, passionate Egdon; of the leafy, sappy passion and sentiments of the woodlands; of the unfathomed stars, is drawn the lesser scheme of lives.'[21] 'The heath holds the action of the novel and its characters as though in the hollow of the hand.'[22] In Lawrence the descriptive scene does not override the actions of human characters, although his characters have a 'quick relatedness to all the other things in the novel: snow, bed-bugs, sunshine, the phallus, trains, silk-hats, cats, sorrow, people, food, diphtheria, fuchsias, stars, ideas, God, tooth-paste, lightning, and toilet paper.'[23] 'The man in the novel', says Lawrence, 'must be in quick relation to all these things. What he says and does must be relative to them all.'[24]

Instead of merely creating social and mental personalities, the novelist should, according to Lawrence, 'restore into life the natural warm flow of common sympathy between man and man, man and woman.'[25] He accused Galsworthy and E. M. Forster of treating their charactars on a purely social level. In *A Propos of Lady Chatterley's Lover*, one finds him attacking Jane Austen for the creation of social personalities instead of character:

> In the old England, the curious blood-connection held the classes together. The squires might be arrogant,

violent, bullying and unjust, yet in some ways they were *at one* with the people, part of the same blood-stream. We feel it in Defoe and Fielding. And then in the mean Jane Austen, it is gone. Already this old maid typifies 'personality' instead of character, that sharp knowing in apartness instead of knowing in togetherness, and she is, to my feelings, thoroughly unpleasant, English, in the bad, mean, snobbish, sense of the word, just as Fielding is English in the good generous sense.[26]

Lawrence's constant desire was to change the quality of human relationship, which in a commercial and intellect-ridden society, he saw based on wrong values. He wanted to revive and re-establish a living contact between man and nature, man and his circumambient universe, 'for the relatedness and unrelatedness of all things flows and changes and trembles like a stream, the characters in the novel swim and drift and turn belly-up when they're dead.'[27]

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5. *The Rainbow*, Penguin, pp. 45-46.
6. *Phoenix*, p. 760.
7. *Partial Portraits*, 1888, p. 314.
8. *Letters*, pp. 198-9.
9. In 1913, Lawrence wrote, 'I never did read Freud, but I have heard about him since I was in Germany.' (Letters, p. 142).

   In 1900, *The Interpretation of Dreams* was first published though not translated into English until 1913. (After the writing of *Sons and Lovers*) But in 1910, Freud published an account of the development of psycho-analysis in *The American Journal of Psychology*.

   —(J. Isaacs, *An Assessment of Twentieth-century Literature*, p. 28.)
10. Stephen Potter, *D. H. Lawrence, A First Study*, Jonathan Cape, 1930, p. 104.
11. Catherine Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage*, Martin Secker, 1932, p. 69.
12. E. T., *D. H. Lawrence—A Personal Record*, Jonathan Cape, 1935, p. 103.
13. 'Never let it be said I was a Bennett'—*Letters*, p. 717.
    'It is time for a reaction against Shaw and Galsworthy.'—*Letters*, p. 103.

14. The final draft of *Sons and Lovers* was written under Frieda's influence as the earlier ones had been under Jessie Chambers', the Miriam of the novel. Frieda Lawrence says, 'I had just met a remarkable disciple of Freud and was full of undigested theories.... I could not accept society. And then Lawrence came. It was an April day in 1912. He came for lunch.... We talked about Oedipus and understanding leaped through our words.'

—*Not I, But the Wind*, Heinemann, 1935, pp. 3-4.

Reinald Hoops in *Der Einfluss der Psychoanalyse auf die englische Literature* (Heidelberg, 1934) points out that, although the Oedipus complex in Paul is the central motive, it is not the only one which affiliates Lawrence with the psycho-analysts. There is also the conflict between man and woman, the 'duel of sex', and there is the human tendency to consign personal defects and anything disagreeable to the realm of unconsciousness. Hoops illustrates all this from passages in the novel. Miriam suffers from the inferiority complex; and is even supposed to be infected with the incest motive, in her ecstatic love for her little brother Hubert.

'Es ergibt sich somit, dass Sons and Lovers der erste psychanaltisch beeinflusste Roman in der englischen Literatur ist.'

—Hoops. R, *Der Einfluss der Psychanalyse auf die englische Literatur*, Heidelberg, 1934, p. 73.

15. *Reflections on the Death of a Porcupine*, Martin Secker, 1934, p. 116.
16. *Psychoanalysis and the Unconscious*, Thomas Seltzer, NY. 1921, p. 13.
17. 'Lawrence exists at the opposite pole of the creative impulse to Joyce; he is a great romantic poet, who used the form of the novel, short stories, verse, travel books, and essays to express his criticism of modern civilization and his vision of good life.'

—Walter Allen, *The English Novel*, Pelican, p. 357.

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T. E. HULME ON FANCY AND IMAGINATION

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Going to Hulme in search of a coherent aesthetic is an exacting experience. His notes and essays are mostly fragmentary; he writes in a rapid, elliptical style and the manner in which he tosses about well-established critical terms is almost disconcerting. Language, Hulme says in his *Notes on Language and Style*, is a large, clumsy instrument. Hence his aphorism: 'Always seek the hard, definite, personal word.'[1] When he is obliged to use a counter word he bends it to convey a meaning different from the conventional. The object of this paper is to examine what he does with the terms 'fancy' and 'imagination' in his essay on *Romanticism and Classicism*.

To underline the distinction between romanticism and classicism Hulme cast about for two terms and he went back, reluctantly it appears, to the overworked critical terms 'fancy' and 'imagination'. He is aware of the danger of using these terms. Words current in critical vocabulary are so vague 'that you can never be sure when you use them that you are conveying over at all the meaning you intended to.' Hulme begins by saying that the history of fancy and imagination as two different faculties is recent. Indeed neo-classic writers used them as interchangeable terms. Coleridge discovered in the process of analysing the peculiar excellence of Wordsworth's poetry that fancy and imagination are 'two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being the lower and higher degree of one and the same power.' Hulme reverses Coleridge's value-distinction by saying that fancy is superior to imagination. He, however, presently concedes that this superiority is not general or absolute. The age demands a new kind of verse, a dry and hard classical verse for which fancy alone can serve as an effective tool. Fancy is better fitted for the specific task of reviving the classical spirit; hence its contemporary superiority. In Hulme's preference for fancy one detects his deep-seated distaste for the vocabulary of romantic aesthetics. He quotes Ruskin on imagination.

'Imagination cannot but be serious; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at. . .'[2] The term 'imagination' is, according to Hulme, messed up with a bad metaphysical aesthetic. The kind of verse that he is looking forward to 'will be cheerful, dry and sophisticated'. If imagination gives us solemn poetry, then classicism would have none of it. This is how he rationalizes his distrust of imagination.

After going round the terms for the greater part of the essay he at last offers in an antithetical form a definition of the two faculties. 'Where you get this quality exhibited in the realm of the emotions you get imagination, and [that] where you get this quality exhibited in the contemplation of finite things you get fancy.'[3] 'This quality' had been defined earlier. 'To see things as they really are' and 'to get the exact curve of what he sees' are the two things which distinguish good art and 'the fundamental quality' of verse lies in this sincerity. To return to the definition of imagination. 'Where you get this quality exhibited in the realm of the emotions you get imagination'. The antithesis—'realm of the emotions and finite things'—would no doubt suggest that emotions are generally vague and indefinable. When he says that 'this quality' may be exhibited in the realm of emotions he makes a grudging admission that emotions too may be amenable to precise description and this difficult task is accomplished by imagination. Emotions in romantic poetry are generally 'escapes into the infinite', hence Hulme cannot get over his distrust of emotions. He insists on the physical basis of poetry. 'All poetry is an affair of the body—that is, to be real it must affect body.'[4] His aphorism that 'beauty may be in small, dry things'[5] is a plea for an avoidance of vague, abstract emotions and a return to dry precision and concrete visual images. Fancy, he says, operates on finite things and imagination on emotions which tend to stray into the infinite. But he concedes indirectly that imagination too may achieve an 'accurate, precise and definite description.'

Hulme further elaborates the task of fancy which is, according to him, the necessary weapon of the revived classical

school. He said earlier that a classical revival does not mean a return to Pope. The particular verse that he is looking forward to will be 'cheerful, dry and sophisticated'. The epithets are carefully chosen. He had earlier analysed one of the paradoxes of romanticism. While it is grounded in the optimistic assumption that man is inherently good and perfectible, the poetry that it inspires tends to be gloomy. Hulme traces it to the first sentence of Rousseau's *Social Contract*. 'Man is born free, and he finds himself everywhere in chains.' The classical view, on the other hand, holds that man is intrinsically limited; hence there is no moaning or whining in classical verse. A classical mind rescued from the sentimental assumption that human nature is potentially infinite will find zest in finite things and here fancy (which contemplates finite things) will come to its aid. Hulme rejects the current assumption that certain subjects are better fitted for poetry. 'Wherever you get an extraordinary interest in a thing, a great zest in its contemplation...there you have sufficient justification for poetry.'[6] When he says, 'Subject doesn't matter.... It doesn't matter if it were a lady's shoe or the starry heavens',[7] he expresses with an implied relish his preference for a lady's shoe. 'The old poetry dealt essentially with big things', he says in *A Lecture on Modern Poetry*. The new classical verse will come back to small, dry things. Hulme's preference for fancy is directly related to his belief that a lady's shoe may be good enough for poetry.

Hulme, it should be noted, is completely unaffected by the influence of neo-classic aesthetics, although he pleads for a revival of classicism. Dryden, for instance, uses fancy and imagination as interchangeable terms. Fancy, according to him, is a wild and lawless faculty, a high-ranging spaniel. According to Hobbes, the function of fancy is merely decorative. One recalls his dictum, 'Fancy begets the ornaments of a Poem'. The belief that poetry works through visual images and analogies is central to Hulme's aesthetics and fancy, he says, is the faculty which a poet discovers new metaphors.' Fancy is not mere decoration added on to plain speech.'[8] Plain language, he says over and over again, is communal and abstract which can never express exactly what the poet sees. So a poet must continually create new images to con-

vey a distinct visual meaning. 'It is only by new metaphors, that is, by fancy, that it can be made precise.'[9] Hulme overstates the element of deliberateness in creative activity. Here is an aphorism from his *Notes on Language and Style*. 'This is the direct opposite of literature, which is never an absorption and meditation. But a deliberate choosing and working-up of analogies. The continued, close, compressed effort.'[10] Fancy, as he defines it, fits into this aesthetics.

Hulme distinguishes different levels of intensity in the operation of fancy. 'When the analogy has not enough connection with the thing described to be quite parallel with it, where it overlays the thing it describes and there is a certain excess, there you have the play of fancy.'[11] Here is fancy working at a lower level of intensity. The analogy and the object are juxtaposed and, to borrow a phrase from Hulme, there is no 'fire struck between stones', no flame leaping from analogy to object giving them a new visual meaning. When fancy operates at a higher level of intensity it effects a fusion of the object and the image; the analogy may appear amusing but it is necessary to get the 'exact curve of what the poet sees'. Hulme cites an example. In Herrick's 'tempestuous petticoat' the analogy does not overlay the object; it is an exact image of a woman's skirt billowing and flapping round her shapely legs as she walks down the street.

It is too often taken for granted that Hulme's aesthetics is anti-Romantic and that his plea for geometric art and a dry classical verse means a total rejection of romantic tradition. Frank Kermode has argued in his *Romantic Image* that Hulme is very much in the romantic tradition. His theory that intellect is a discursive and expository faculty which gives us 'mechanical complexities' while intuition gives us 'vital complexities' and a poetic image is an intuited truth places him firmly in the organicist, anti-positivist stream of romantic tradition. The fancy-imagination distinction made by Hulme shows the ambiguity of his anti-Romantic position. When he says that fancy is better fitted for the task of reviving classicism he does not state clearly why he regards imagination as an inferior faculty. He cites Ruskin on imagination and there is an oblique reference to Coleridge too. Hulme seems to think that the term 'imagination' has been debased by romantic

aesthetics. Sloppiness, imprecision and the habit of straying into the infinite are, according to Hulme, the marks of romantic poetry. Does he imply that the faculty of imagination does not make for precision? Imagination, he says, belongs primarily to the realm of emotions. The ability to see things freshly and to communicate them in clear visual images—this is the positive quality he values and he says rather airily that this quality has 'nothing to do with infinity, with mystery or with emotions'. Here he seems to imply that emotions are not amenable to precise description. But his definition of imagination recognizes that emotions can be precisely organised. Hulme's 'play of fancy' is not very far from Coleridge's fancy. The faculty of fancy, as Coleridge defines it, yokes together images but does not fuse them into one single intensity. And the activity of putting together the images is an affair of choice, 'an empirical phenomenon of the will'. The conceits of Cowley are in this sense fanciful. In the 'play of fancy', Hulme observes, the image and the object stay separate. This, he says, is inferior to imagination. In the intenser operation of fancy the analogy and the object become one. Coleridge too recognizes in the operation of secondary imagination this 'shaping' and unifying power. It is significant that Hulme uses another Coleridgean word 'vital' to describe how fancy realizes an object by visual metaphors. He says rather quaintly that Coleridge used the word 'vital' 'in a perfectly definite and what I call dry sense.'[12] It denotes a new kind of complexity 'in which the parts cannot be said to be elements as each one is modified by the other's presence.'[13] This is precisely what Coleridge says about the esemplastic power of imagination. Hulme's distinction between the 'play of fancy' and the intenser operation of fancy is thus analogous to Coleridge's distinction between fancy and imagination. Hulme recognizes the nature of imagination as defined by Coleridge but he rejects this term (the rejection is not however absolute) as the symbol of a dying tradition. When he relates the exercise of fancy to the 'contemplation of finite things' he is unconsciously echoing Coleridge. 'Fancy . . . has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites.' He may also have remembered Wordsworth who said in the Preface to the Poems of 1815 that the imagination recoils from

everything 'but the plastic, the pliant and the indefinite'. Hulme, however, invests the faculty of fancy with one of the attributes of Coleridgean imagination, viz. the unifying power which balances opposites and fuses the idea and the image.

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REMY DE GOURMONT & ELIOT'S CRITICISM OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

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Eliot's debt to Gourmont in his critical essays on metaphysical poetry has not received sufficient careful consideration by critics so far, though attention was drawn to it by F. W. Bateson[1] in 1951. Before undertaking a study of this aspect of Eliot's criticism of metaphysical poetry, it would be desirable to consider some of the principal critical ideas in Gourmont, particularly those in 'Dissociation of Ideas' (1899), an essay which was considered by Gourmont himself as being more important than his other essays. In this essay, Gourmont observes:

> There are two ways of thinking. One can either accept current ideas and association of ideas, just as they are, or else undertake, on his own account, new associations or, what is rarer, original dissociations. The intelligence capable of such efforts is, more or less, according to the degree, or according to the abundance and variety of its other gifts, a creative intelligence. It is a question either of inventing new relations between old ideas, old images, or of separating old ideas, old images united by tradition, of considering them one by one, free to work them over and arrange an infinite number of new couples which a fresh operation will disunite once more, and so on till new ties, always fragile and doubtful, are formed. (*Decadence and other Essays*, translated by W. Bradley, 1922, new edn. 1930, p. 3).

It is with the second mode of thinking which undertakes 'new associations, or what is rarer, original dissociations' that Gourmont is concerned in his essay. This mode of thinking involves the artist's capacity to (i) establish new associations, and (ii) undertake the dissociation of old ideas. As regards new associations, he says, 'there are no ideas so remote,

no images so ill-assorted, that an easy habit of association cannot bring them together, at least momentarily.' He cites the example of Victor Hugo who 'seeing a cable wrapped with rags at a point where it crossed a sharp ridge, saw at the same time, the knees of tragic actresses padded to break the dramatic fall in the fifth act.' Gourmont then passes on to what he calls the dissociation of ideas. He uses 'dissociation' as a term analogous to what, in chemistry, is called analysis. As chemical analysis separates the elements of a substance which by combining with other elements may form entirely new substances, similarly 'dissociation' separates images and ideas within a concept so as to leave them free to combine with others, thus forming entirely new concepts. As an example, Gourmont refers to the idea of beauty traditionally associated, because of its pleasure-evoking power, with woman but now found to exist independently of sex attraction.

These ways of thinking are precisely what Eliot finds in metaphysical poets. 'Remote ideas' and 'ill-assorted images' are brought together in their poetry by association. Johnson's objection is that in metaphysical poetry heterogeneous ideas are yoked by violence together; Eliot says that though the ideas are heterogeneous, they are, in the best metaphysical writing, fused so as to produce a single effect. He says that disparate experiences are always forming new wholes in the poet's mind. Eliot affirms that 'a degree of heterogeneity of material compelled into unity by the operation of the poet's mind is omnipresent in poetry.' He thus seems to repeat what Gourmont said about the invention of new relations as the work of a creative writer.

The other concept of Gourmont, 'dissociation of ideas', also finds its place in Eliot's criticism of metaphysical poets:

> Johnson has hit, perhaps by accident, on one of their peculiarities, when he observes that 'their attempts were always analytic', he would not agree that, after the dissociation, they put the material together again in a new unity. (*Selected Essays*, 1953, 'The Metaphysical Poets', p. 286.)

This is clearly what Gourmont says when he speaks of the

breaking-up of 'old ideas' and 'old images' united by tradition into simpler elements, and the formation of 'new couples'. Eliot has not elaborated this point but the difference which he makes between the intellectual poet (Donne) and the reflective poet (Tennyson) is the difference between the way of thinking which undertakes new associations and original dissociations and the way of thinking which accepts current ideas and commonplace associations. Donne broke away from the poetic conventions of his times by establishing new correspondences and analogies in his poetry.

The recognition of the poet's capability to establish new relations between altogether dissimilar elements is at the back of Eliot's statement that in the writings of a creative genius like Donne or Chapman there is 'a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling'. A creative writer is able to move with considerable agility from the world of thoughts to that of sensations, and *vice versa*, a capacity which, Eliot thinks, Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists and also metaphysical poets possessed but not their successors: 'with the end of Chapman, Middleton, Webster, Tourneur, Donne we end a period when the intellect was immediately at the tips of the senses', says Eliot in his essay on Massinger. This leads Eliot to the statement that whereas Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists and metaphysical poets possessed unified sensibility, their successors suffered from a dissociation of sensibility. As Bateson has pointed out, this 'sensibility' concept was borrowed by Eliot from Gourmont though it occurs there in a different context.[2] But one wonders whether there can be any sense in saying that a poet can possess unified or integrated sensibility by virtue of having the capability of establishing new relations, or that of blending disparate experiences into new wholes. For instance, to say that the ability to use one's reading in writing a poem on the theme of passionate love presupposes unified sensibility would be meaningless indeed. Eliot seemed to have realised his mistake when ten years later in his essay on Donne contributed to *A Garland of John Donne* (1931) he said:

> In Donne there is a manifest fissure of thought and sensibility... there is in his poetry hardly any attempt at

organization; rather a puzzled and humorous shuffling of the pieces.'

It, therefore, astonished Eliot to note that his phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' had acquired so much success in the world. ('Milton II', 1947). But, at the same time, he once again affirmed his faith in his theory of 'sensibility' with, of course, some modifications. He said:

> I believe that the general affirmation represented by that phrase 'dissociation of sensibility'. . . retains some validity; but I now incline to agree with Dr Tillyard that to lay the burden on the shoulders of Milton and Dryden was a mistake. If such a dissociation did take place, I suspect that the causes are too complex and too profound to justify our accounting for the change in terms of literary criticism. All we can say is, that something like this did happen; that it had something to do with the Civil War; that we must seek the causes in Europe, not in England alone; and for what these causes were we may dig and dig until we get to a depth at which words and concepts fail us. ('Milton, II', 1947).

This, however, is not a sufficient justification for what Eliot said in 1921; it does not say that the dissociation *definitely* took place, and only states that something like this happened under causes too complex to be analysed.

H. W. Smith, in his essay 'Dissociation of Sensibility' (*Scrutiny*, xvii, Winter, 1951-52), seems to take the clue from Eliot's statement that we must seek the causes in Europe, not in England alone, when he says that the schism was caused by the break-up of the Elizabethan world-picture. Shakespeare, he says, was a defender of the stable social organism:

> The ethos which sundered mind and body, spirit from matter, intellect from emotions. . . he could not but react against. . . half a century later the Restoration society saw the Protestant spirit in triumph and poetry as Shakespeare understood it completely vanished.
>
> (*Scrutiny*, xviii, 1951-52, p. 175)

He further observes:

> the two realms of abstract and sensible had already been divided; it was in the distance which separated them that the metaphysicals worked between them
>
> (*Scrutiny*, xviii, 1951-52, p. 178)

Smith attributes this schism to the rise of Puritanism and bourgeois mercantile culture dating from the Civil War. But this does not throw light on Eliot's term 'unified sensibility' as applied to Donne in his essay 'The Metaphysical Poets' (1921). Smith clearly states that in Donne we do not have in the real sense a unity of the two worlds of thought and sense, but only an *attempt* at unification. If this be so, then this dissociation of sensibility should be pushed back to the pre-metaphysical period of English poetry, and Donne should be regarded as the first poet of importance in whom this schism took place. This is certainly not what Eliot meant in the year 1921.

It may, therefore, be stated that whereas the ideas underlying Gourmont's essay 'Dissociation of Ideas' helped Eliot very much in his critical evaluation of metaphysical poetry, the 'sensibility' concept, in the way he applied it to the development of English poetry, could not be of any real use. The phrase 'dissociation of sensibility' was certainly irrelevant. Eliot had most probably in mind Gourmont's phrase 'dissociation of ideas' while coining this phrase 'dissociation of sensibility'. The road from 'dissociation of ideas' to 'dissociation of sensibility' is not a long one especially when one finds that the term 'la sensibilite' occurs frequently in Gourment's essay 'Le Probleme du Style' (1902).

One more aspect of Gourmont's influence on Eliot is concerned with the question of obscurity in poetry. Eliot says that some amount of obscurity is natural to an intellectual poet, and the metaphysicals are no more ('quaint', 'witty' and 'obscure', than other serious poets ('The Metaphysical Poets'). Eliot, one may safely guess, might have been familiar with Gourmont's essay 'Stephane Mallarmé and the Idea of Decadence' (1898) towards the end of which is discussed the alleged obscurity of Mallarmé's style. This essay seems to

me important in so far as it shaped Eliot's criticism of the metaphysical poets. Gourmont says:

> Stephane Mallarmé wrote relatively much, and the greater part of his work is stained by no obscurity; but, if later and towards the last, beginning with the *Prose pour des Esseintes*, there are doubtful phrases or irritating verses, it is only an inattentive and vulgar mind that dreads to undertake the delicious quest. (*Decadence*, p. 154)

He further observes: 'When the brain is rich in sensations and in ideas, there is a constant eddy, and the smooth surface is troubled at the moment of spouting.' He is thus led to conclude:

> If, then, one undertook a definite study of Stephane Mallarmé, the question of obscurity would have to be treated exclusively from the psychological standpoint, for the reason that there is never absolute, literal obscurity in an honestly written work. A sensible interpretation is always possible. (*Decadence*, p. 155).

This is exactly the position of Eliot on obscurity in metaphysical poetry. He praises Donne and the French poets, Racine and Baudelaire, for being great psychologists, the 'most curious explorers of the soul'. He states that the poets of the metaphysical school were engaged in the task of finding verbal equivalents for states of mind and feeling.

It may, therefore, be concluded that Gourmont's critical ideas were quite influential in shaping Eliot's criticism of metaphysical poetry.

REFERENCES

1. 'Dissociation of Sensibilty', *Essays in Criticism*, i. (1951), pp. 302-12.
2. In his essay 'Dissociation of Sensibility', Bateson points out that the term 'la sensibilite' occurs frequently in Gourmont's 'Le Probleme du Style' (1902). He says that Eliot's view that in the earlier part of the seventeenth century, poetry was characterized by unified sensibility but in the later half of the century dissociation set in, has its parallel in Gourmont's essay on Laforgue in which it is stated that Laforgue's intelligence was closely connected with his sensibility, and that Laforgue died before he could acquire the scepticism which would have dissociated them.

BOOK REVIEWS

On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy, by John Jones, Chatto and Windus, London, 1962, 25*s*.

STEP by step, it should be safe to say, we are getting nearer the essential meaning of what Aristotle really said. We all know about the three unities and various other distortions that constituted the staple of critical thinking during the neoclassical period. Lest however it be thought that with the triumph of Romanticism we overcame all traces of misinterpretation, John Jones in this new and important book shows that this is not so.

With Romanticism becoming the new orthodoxy, the tendency to discover rules of art in Aristotle fell into disfavour. Instead, the *Poetics* came to be scrutinised as a document which could throw light on the human and psychological aspects of literature. Thus after centuries of relative neglect, the concepts of *Katharsis* and *Hamartia* came to be discussed in an active, polemical way. The concept of the tragic hero also emerged about this time. Butcher's book, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts*, written at the end of the last century, might be regarded as representative of this trend of thinking. To illustrate his argument Jones quotes the opening words of Butcher's chapter, 'The Ideal Tragic Hero', in this connection:

> With the exception of the definition of tragedy itself, probably no passage in the *Poetics* has given rise to so much criticism as the description of the ideal tragic hero in Ch. xiii.

And having done so, Jones proceeds to show that there is no evidence at all that Aristotle entertained this concept. In fact, the first part of this book which deals with Aristotle's *Poetics* is in the nature of a polemical attack upon the Romantic notion of a tragic hero who is destroyed by his *hamartia*.

Butcher's words reflect, speaking generally, the nineteenth-

century emphasis on character in preference to plot. That this point of view had a bearing on the study of Shakespeare will be readily recognized. Perhaps this will to some extent also explain why the concept of an ideal tragic hero has persisted so long. Of the recent attempts to correct the perspective, I regard Humphry House's attempt to be the most perceptive and balanced. But that is done without the polemical fervour which Jones brings to bear on this question.

According to Jones, the concept of a tragic hero has been imported into the *Poetics*: there is no warrant for it in the text. What Aristotle repeatedly insists upon is that 'Tragedy is an imitation of an action.' Equally obviously it is not an imitation of human beings, though human beings are necessary to the action: 'Being the imitation of an action Tragedy involves a plurality of stage figures who do the acting .' However, 'Tragedy is an imitation not of human beings but of action and life, of happiness and misery.' Put in this way, nobody is likely to misunderstand Aristotle today.

But that Aristotle has been misunderstood in the recent past is strikingly illustrated by Jones. By quoting a passage from chapter xiii, he points out three important discrepancies between Bywater's translation (perhaps the most commonly used translation) and the Greek original. Where Bywater uses 'a good man', the Greek has 'good men', where he uses 'a bad man', the Greek has 'bad men'. That the plural gets converted into the singular is not an accident. Nor is it a slip on the part of Bywater, a scrupulous translator otherwise. This change comes about, as Jones shows with a wealth of critical data, because of the nineteenth-century notion that in a tragedy what Aristotle has in mind is a single dominant figure who comes to grief because of a fatal flaw in his character. Both the changes mentioned above lead to the third crucial change, where instead of 'the change of fortune' as in the Greek original, Bywater renders it as 'the change in the hero's fortunes'.

According to Jones's reading of Aristotle, what is really tragic is the fact of change, not its direction. Therefore the change of fortune should be 'situational', not personal. 'That is why', Jones adds, Aristotle is 'so careless and unemphatic in recommending whether the change should be downward

or upward. As we shall see, he contradicts himself, once preferring the happy ending and once the unhappy. Which remains hard to understand so long as we suppose that the tragic change evoked in him, as it does in us, an image of the hero and his individual fortune.'

As sometimes happens in such cases, Jones is overstating his case. Change of fortune is of course the *sine qua non* of drama: how can there be any drama without change of fortune? So in emphasizing the 'situational' change, Aristotle is stating something fundamental and obvious. But this does not prove that Aristotle is indifferent to the elements of pity and fear in tragedy. That being so, Jones's argument can become finally persuasive only when it gives due weightage to Aristotle's appreciation of the pleasure of tragedy. As the argument stands at present, there is something emotionally anaemic about it.

The value of this book lies primarily in the challenge it offers to some of the accepted notions about Aristotle. This is as much true of Jones's analysis of the *Poetics* (which we have been discussing so far) as of the remaining three-fourths of the book where Jones applies his interpretation of the *Poetics* to the three Greek tragic poets. This section of the book is uneven in quality. At times he is brilliant; for instance in his pages on Sophocles and the *Poetics*. But at times he tries to fit evidence to his particular theory about a play, as for instance in his discussion of the legend of the *Oresteia* as handled by Aeschylus. My own feeling in the matter is that this part of his book will not meet with such ready acceptance as the one dealing with the *Poetics*.

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The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism, by Richard Fogle, pp. 185, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1962, $ 6.00.

COLERIDGE's significance as critic has been the subject of controversy since the beginning of this century, and more

particularly during the last decade or so. If, earlier, Saintsbury had ranked him with Aristotle and Longinus, Herbert Read considers him 'head and shoulders above every other English critic', and I. A. Richards presents him as the pioneer of semantics in literary criticism. It is, however, René Wellek who, in his provocative chapter on Coleridge (*A History of Modern Criticism*, 1955, pp. 151-87), has charged him with indiscriminate borrowings from the German critics and transcendentalists, particularly Schelling, Schiller and Kant. No wonder, Wellek's own reputation in England has recently waned on account of his unsympathetic pronouncements on an established British genius.

Where, then, can one place Richard Fogle's essay in the vast body of expository and critical material that has appeared to date on Coleridge's criticism? Let it be said at the very outset that *The Idea of Coleridge's Criticism* remains at best an engagingly lucid, occasionally perceptive and palpably adulatory exposition of Coleridge's critical theories. Although Fogle refers in his prefatory note to René Wellek's evaluation of Coleridge's critical theory as 'only eclecticism roving amid the ideas of transcendental Germans', to Raysor's dismissal of the theory of imagination as 'unfortunate', to the New Critics' charge that he always over-psychologizes, over-philosophizes, sentimentalizes, to Tate that he never satisfactorily resolves the conflict between subject and object, Fogle does not undertake to examine any of these adverse criticisms with any appreciable degree of thoroughness and plausibility. Coleridge emerges from these pages (incidentally, the book might have been subtitled—'In Defence of Coleridge') as 'an inevitable synthesizer or syncretist', but once again Fogle does not care to look critically enough into the precise nature and implications of this process of synthesis, this reconciliation of opposites. The reader does expect, certainly at this stage, some conclusive evidence to show that this central idea in Coleridge's critical pantheon was not a direct borrowing from Schelling's famous oration *On the Relation of the Formative Arts to Nature* (1807). In fact, Fogle hardly makes any contribution to the vexed question of Coleridge's heavy borrowings from the Germans.

All this should not, however, detract from the merit of this

refreshing commentary on a great English critic. Fogle seems to be concerned rather with a few central tenets of Coleridge's criticism (regardless of 'influences' or 'sources')—his concepts of Life, Beauty and Poetry, and particularly his evaluations of Wordsworth and Shakespeare. And here he has undoubtedly made a few very significant points. For instance, he does discuss at some length how *genre* in Coleridge is always motivated, how likeness should not be mistaken for complete identity, and how organic unity is a means of describing both the imaginative work and the imaginative mind that creates it. Fogle's chapter 'Coleridge's Criticism of Wordsworth's Poetry' reproduces, rather lamely at places, some of the main points from the relevant parts of *Biographia Literaria*—the defects and excellences of Wordsworth's poetry. But, once again, the controversial points remain unsettled. For instance, how does Coleridge's analysis of the Immortality Ode fail to carry conviction? Fogle's statement that 'Rightly or wrongly he considers Wordsworth's child-philosopher a baseless metaphor, which he consequently rejects', raises a host of questions. Besides, if it is 'rightly or wrongly'—then how and why? The chapter on Coleridge's assessment of Shakespeare seems to be more satisfactorily worked out. Here he rightly observes that Coleridge's attempt 'to establish a chronology of the plays upon a psychological theory of Shakespeare's development... tries to stretch criticism beyond its bounds, for under the circumstances all theoretical inference must supplement fact rather than try to supplant it'. (p. 111). The central fact about Shakespeare's mode of character-portrayal is also brought out very effectively. 'All the characters of a Shakespeare play are related to its central idea and to one another, by contrast, balance, likeness, modification, and subordination. Each character has his own being and individuality; as in the law of bicentrality he is subordinate but not enslaved to the purposes of the whole' (p. 113). Again, the distinction between the Aristotelean and the Coleridgean concepts of drama is established incisively: for Aristotle, it is the human action, for Coleridge, it is human character in action. And, of course, none would question Fogle's impassioned homage to Coleridge's 'snail-horn delicacy', especially in his treatment

of the first scene of *Hamlet*; indeed it would be difficult to imagine any contemporary *explication du texte* going any further.

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T. S. Eliot: His Mind and Personality, by S. S. Hoskot, pp. 298, University of Bombay, 1961, Rs. 15.00.

THE book under review is a typical doctoral dissertation, laboriously and monotonously compiling passage after passage on all the issues concerning T. S. Eliot that the author has chosen to consider. Quotations are certainly desirable for substantiating the critical discussion of a point, but very often, I suspect, there are more quotations than the argument strictly demands. For instance, there are on pages 29 and 30, as many as seven quotations (V. W. Brooks, F. O. Matthiessen, Edmund Wilson) presented in support of Dr Hoskot's point that the tone of Eliot's early poems is determined by his peculiar outlook—an odd mixture of superior contempt and personal frustration and regret. If Dr Hoskot has drawn his conclusion from the poetry of T. S. Eliot, he has every right to hold and express it, and it is not at all necessary to give a formidable list of critics who are of the same opinion. The fact that some others have expressed the same view is not an argument. On page 34, after having dwelt on his point that Eliot had to ransack the history and literature of the world to find words for his feelings, he quotes Ferner Nuhn suggesting the same point. The excerpt from Leonard Unger's book on T. S. Eliot, used for rounding off the second paragraph on page 36, is another example of the author's habit of quoting others who share his view. The long quotation on pages 83-84 from Granville Hicks's *The Great Tradition* is similarly uncalled-for. It is to such redundant quotations, presented in chunks, that I object; they distract the reader's attention and serve no purpose except of padding. Dr Hoskot could have presented his matter more concisely and with greater effect.

It seems to me that an important aspect of Eliot's poetry,

the close relationship between the form and the content of his poetry, has been passed over by Dr Hoskot. It is a serious gap. Although the book is intended primarily to trace the stages of Eliot's spiritual evolution, there is scope in it for discussing the changes in the manner of his poetic practice. Eliot's spiritual journey from complete scepticism to religious faith, on which he lays stress, brought about changes not only in the matter but also in the manner of his poetic practice. The fact is that Eliot's approach to different ideas is intensely emotional, not merely intellectual or didactic. The process of Eliot's evolution which Dr Hoskot analyses worked at a deeper level of the poet's consciousness, at the level from which poetry springs. An account of the transformation of Eliot, if it is to be adequate, should trace this transformation, both in point of form and substance. Dr Hoskot has however concentrated entirely on the second element and so leaves a sense of lacuna.

In spite of the defects I have mentioned, the book on the whole reads well, offering a clear exposition of the author's views. It has the quality of perspicuity. Dr Hoskot presents a selection from Eliot's poetry and prose works in support of his theory that the contradictions in his writings are connected the contradictions and conflicts inherent in his mind. An expatriate with an international vision, Eliot seeks, in his opinion, the security and stability of a life rooted in an ancient, 'unconsciously accepted', localised tradition.

Dr Hoskot makes a painstaking analysis of the inner development of Eliot from his young days when he lived against a puritan background till his entry into the Church of England, with consequent changes in the tone of his literary composition. He seeks to disprove the prevalent idea, shared by such critics as Granville Hicks and Edmund Wilson, that Eliot's surrender to the Anglo-Catholic faith is merely a consequence of his aristocratic predilections, his love of literature and art and his need of a subtle system of values transcending those of material existence. The urge came in Eliot's case, according to Dr Hoskot, from a realization that the Church offered a structure of beliefs enabling him to meet his personal experience in a spirit of detachment, to interpret it as having more

than a personal significance, and thus helping him to conquer the agony and doubt that flowed from that experience.

In his discussion of the prose writings of Eliot, Dr Hoskot refers to some of his 'downright self-contradictions'. A fairly long paragraph has been devoted to the point that Eliot's convictions are largely responsible for his narrow outlook. Here one is naturally inclined to ask how much was Eliot's poetry affected by his convictions. Normally it is not possible for a poet to dissociate his feelings and impulses from his belief and attitude. His convictions are part and parcel of his personality and so are bound to be reflected in his poetry. If Eliot is, as Dr Hoskot holds, contradicting himself in his prose writings, he is likely to be guilty of the same offence in his poetry also. In that case, how is one to account for the profound impression made by Eliot on our time? Does one remember Eliot only for the technical facet of his poetry? Or is it possible for Eliot to write in two altogether different moods as poet and prose writer? Can he temporarily forget his convictions while writing poetry? These are some of the questions which should have been discussed at length in the book.

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The Revival of English Poetic Drama, by H. H. Anniah Gowda, pp. xvi+322, (Publisher not named, 1963), Rs. 20·75.

POETIC drama in England at present is a puzzling phenomenon. While interest in it is steadily increasing, the output of poetic plays is sluggish. If poetic plays are a slow and tenuous flow, books on poetic plays are a mere trickle. Mr Anniah Gowda's study therefore has the immediate distinction of being a welcome venture in good time. It has a special distinction in as much as it is the first contribution to criticism in book form on the contemporary English poetic theatre by an Indian scholar.

The author states that his hope in undertaking this study

is to benefit verse dramatists and dramatic critics in India by introducing them to the modern poetic theatre in England. In the context of the resurgence of the theatre in India at present, this is a praiseworthy aim. But while this slant may alienate foreign readers, it is doubtful whether it can really benefit Indian writers except as a warning and a negative example, because it is no more than a saga of defeated aims and lost battles. Limited to a study of the verse-play writers in the Edwardian and Georgian periods, it stops short of living playwrights like Eliot or Fry.

The ground which Mr. Anniah Gowda treads is not virgin soil. Priscilla Thouless was the first to set foot on it when she wrote *Modern Poetic Drama* about two decades ago. There are aspects of the present writer's work, which are larger, fresher and more interesting. The area of his investigation is much wider, for though it is defined as the ages of Edward and George, it goes further back and forth. In analysing the factors which made the poetic play of this period a failure, Mr. Anniah Gowda considers, and very rightly, the failure of their language. What is still more creditable is that in considering the language of the plays, instead of echoing opinions or making haphazard assessments, he has earnestly endeavoured to fortify his conclusions by quoting from the texts, though his quotations are not always well chosen or happy, and the principles by which he dubs some passages dramatic and some others undramatic are rather arbitrary.

The study is sprinkled with certain heresies which are likely to lead to critical asides. Admirers and advocates of pure drama will gasp at the author's vague and amorphous view of it, for he holds that a good prose play is essentially poetic and cites Shaw's major plays as examples. His long and enthusiastic advocacy of Hardy's *Dynasts* as a stage play is difficult to understand, except as a piece of critical eccentricity. Besides paying a customary tribute to Yeats's *Purgatory*, the author has not made any effort to explain the supreme significance of its language. Serious students of Eliot can only be amused by his statement that Eliot has fashioned his later plays after the Nōh theatre of Japan.

Mr. Anniah Gowda's work is patently the product of a long and painstaking study of more than a score of playwrights

and a hundred-odd plays. A work of this kind is apt to deteriorate into a dry record of dates and names, but by careful marshalling of facts, judicious grouping of trends and writers, apt quotations and suitable anecdotes, the author has been able to bring to focus the ebullient enthusiasm and pious determination of the dramatists of the period to reinstate poetic drama on the stage.

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An Introduction to the Pronunciation of English, by A. C. Gimson, pp. xv+294, Edward Arnold, London, 1962, 30*s*.

THE author of this book, an experienced teacher of phonetics at University College, London, calls it an 'introduction' to the pronunciation of English, but it is actually a book for advanced students. Besides dealing with phonetic theory, the sound system of modern English, and features of connected speech, it covers the historical background of English sounds, their acoustic nature, and spelling forms, and offers general advice to the foreign learner.

The phonetic symbols used in the book are based on the system adopted by the International Phonetic Association, but are in some cases different from those used in Daniel Jones's *Outline of English Phonetics*. It would be a good thing if phoneticians could agree on a uniform system of notation, at least for transcribing British English.

The book has three main divisions: 'Speech and Language'; 'Sounds of English'; and 'Word and Connected Speech'. The first section begins with an exposition of the theory of communication, after which the author goes on to describe the production of speech. The speech chain is described as a series of psychological, physiological and physical activities. The speech mechanism is described in detail and the action of the lungs, the vocal cords, and the resonating cavities is explained clearly. This information is necessary for an articulatory description of speech sounds, but the acoustic aspect is not neglected. The author discusses the nature of the speech

wave, the acoustic spectrum for vowels and consonants, the relation between pitch and the fundamental frequency and that between loudness and intensity. He suggests a basis for the description and classification of Speech Sounds and recognizes two broad categories—sounds of the consonantal type, which can easily be described in articulatory terms, and sounds of the vowel type, which can be described mainly on the basis of 'auditory judgments of sound relationships', while some articulatory information can also be given. Daniel Jones's Cardinal Vowel Scale is clearly described. This scale is useful because 'the vowel qualities are unrelated to particular values in languages' and because the set is recorded. Moreover the chart used for a visual representation of vowel relationships is based on the cardinal vowel tongue positions. Having provided a basis for the phonetic description of speech sounds, the author distinguishes them from linguistic units and brings in the concept of the phoneme. He also discusses the 'syllable' and mentions both 'the prominence theory' and 'the pulse theory', but recommends a linguistic approach to the question, which means that the syllable should be defined 'with reference to the structure of one particular language rather than in general, phonetic terms.'

The second part of the book, its major section, deals with the sounds of English in great detail. The author first gives the historical background and gives an account of phonetic studies in England during the last four hundred years. He discusses the types of sound change, and emphasizes the fact that sound changes do not necessarily change the linguistic system which usually remains stable. The evidence available for a reconstruction of the older forms of English is described briefly and an attempt is made to reconstruct the sound system of Old English (A.D. 700—A.D. 1100), Middle English (A.D. 1100—A.D. 1450) and Early Modern English (A.D. 1450—A.D. 1600) While it is true that historical studies are not of much help to a student of modern English pronunciation, the historical portion of the book will be of special interest to scholars in Indian universities where language courses have so far concentrated on the historical aspect.

There is a brief discussion in the book on standards of pronunciation and the emergence of a social standard. The

author feels that 'great prestige is still attached to the implicitly accepted social standard of pronunciation' often called Received Pronunciation (RP), but RP is no longer 'the exclusive property of a particular social stratum'. 'Certain types of regional pronunciation are, indeed, firmly established.' R.P. is 'basically educated Southern British English'; it is the 'form of pronunciation most commonly described in books on the phonetics of British English and traditionally taught to foreigners.'

The author gives a list of the 'distinctive vowels' in English, including glides, and describes these twenty vocalic phonemes in great detail. The treatment of each vowel includes:

(i) 'Illustrations of the spelling forms, of variations of length of long vowels and diphthongs, and comparative examples for practising variation of length or differentiation from neighbouring phonemes.'
(ii) 'Articulatory description and an assessment of quality in relation to the Cardinal Vowels.'
(iii) 'Indications of some of the chief variants—regional and social.'
(iv) 'Remarks on the principal historical sources of the vowel.'
(v) 'Difficulties encountered by foreign learners, with appropriate advice.'

Of these, (iii) and (iv) will not be of much interest to a foreign student of modern Spoken English.

The acoustic features in terms of 'formant regions' have been given for the twelve pure vowels.

The descriptions given by Mr. Gimson are in some cases slightly different from those given in Daniel Jones's *Outline of English Phonetics*. This is mainly due to the time-lag between D. J.'s generation and Mr. Gimson's. For example, Mr. Gimson's /e/ and /æ/ are closer than D.J.'s; his /ʌ/ is more open and more advanced, his /ɔ:/ is closer; his /əu/ begins at a central position, and his /au/ at a point nearer the back than the front open position. In connection with the diphthongal vowel glides, Mr. Gimson makes the important point that 'most of the length and stress associated with the glide

is concentrated on the 1st element, the 2nd element being only lightly sounded.' While examining the vowels in relatively weakly accented syllables Mr. Gimson shows that 'totally unaccented syllables are associated particularly with vowels of a central or centralized quality (or a syllabic consonant), i.e. /ə/, /I/, and /u/', though other vowel phonemes may occur in syllables not carrying the primary accent. He also gives the frequency of occurrence of R. P. Vowels based on D.B. Fry's investigations which show that in colloquial R.P., /ə/ (10.74%) and /I/ (8.33%) have the highest count. A recent count made at the Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, showed that the frequency of /ə/ was as high as 25%.

The longest chapter in the book is on 'the English Consonants.' The author gives a list of twenty-four distinctive English consonants—'consonantal phonemes'—and classifies them in two general categories—those involving closure or stricture, and the voiced non-fricative or glide consonants that 'share many phonetic characteristics with vowels.' In the first category are the plosives /p, b, t, d, k, g/, the affricates /tʃ, dʒ/ and the fricatives /f, v, θ, ð, s, z, ʃ, ʒ, h/; in the second category are nasals /m, n, ŋ/, the lateral /l/, the post-alveolar frictionless continuant /r/ and the semivowels (j, w/. Each of these consonants is described in great detail, and useful advice offered to foreign learners, for example, that the Indian labio-dental frictionless continuant [ʋ] will not do for English /v/ or /w/ and that the Indian dental /t/ and /d/ will not do for English /θ/ and /ð/.

The last section of the book deals with connected speech. The author discusses the various factors—stress, pitch, quality and quantity—that may render a syllable more prominent than its neighbours. He deals with word accentual patterns, the 'weak forms' of unaccented words, the different roles of intonation, the different types of nuclei in intonation, and features of assimilation.

The book ends with an exhaustive bibliography and a chart of the International Phonetic Alphabet.

Mr. Gimson's is not only the latest book on the subject it is also the most up-to-date and the most comprehensive. It is the only book on English pronunciation easily available in India. Mr. Gimson's book should be compulsory reading for

M.A. and M.Ed. students specializing in English Language, as also for teachers of English in universities and teacher-training institutions.

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The Use of English, by Randolph Quirk, with supplements by A. C. Gimson and Jeremy Warburg, London, 1962.

IN Professor Quirk's own words, this book was written 'to stimulate a mature and informed approach to our language, so that we can understand the nature of English, be encouraged to use it more intelligently, respond to it more sensitively, and acknowledge more fully the implications of its international use today' (p. v). All these aims, except perhaps the last, might have applied to any school course on how to use English —the writer does in fact give question and discussion points at the end of each chapter—but the book is otherwise. It is a gay and intelligent survey of a number of aspects of the language in use; there are chapters or shorter passages on those who use English and the uses to which it is put, on the relationship between language and thought, on speech, class and regional styles of English, grammar (i.e. structure), words, 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' usage, and the more exalted modes which are associated with poetry and the drama. Gimson's supplement, called 'The Transmission of Language' is, for the most part, a conventional presentation of the phonetics of English, but (p. 304) adds something new and valuable on the question of how much the context of an utterance can neutralize the absence of phonemic contrasts, which are often taken to be essential for intelligibility. Warburg's supplement, 'Notions of Correctness', is a light-hearted trifle endorsing Quirk's thesis at some points.

The body of the book is full of good things rather than a good thing in itself. To the interested amateur much will be new, or will appear in a new light. He will scrutinize for the first time things he has been saying practically all his life, and

see in them significances he has never before been aware of; he will be able to investigate at various levels of analysis the structure of typical utterances; he may for the first time try his hand at recognizing different styles and registers of English. The reader who comes to the book already initiated into some of the mysteries, and into current thinking about them, is likely to be less satisfied. This is not because there is much in the book which is untrue or inexplicit, but because one looks in vain for any 'thin red line' running through it; there is nothing which is led up to by close argument or the mustering and juxtaposing of illuminating examples, no very conscious movement from one proposition to another. Rather the contrary, the writer frequently reverts to facets of the subject which are evidently of deep interest to him—style and linguistic appropriateness, 'correctness', standards in English, etc.—always profitably, it is true, because always with more illumination to support his contentions, but the reader finds himself constantly wishing that the particular subject had been treated in full when it first appeared, and that he had then definitely moved on to something else. This rather haphazard approach betrays the provenance of the various chapters: they are versions of a series of talks broadcast by the BBC in 1961, and there is a good deal of evidence to suggest that the revision was not as far-reaching as it should have been. The book will, it seems to me, be valuable wherever students of English at college courses want or need background reading on the nature and use of the English language as revealed by the techniques of modern linguistics. Students whose main concern is with literature should read and enjoy all Quirk has to say about the 'wrestle with words' that goes on in the poet's brain, and about the linguistic bases upon which any work of literature depends for its special effects. But the unevennesses, e.g. the placing next to one another of the rather facile, easy-going Chapter 10 ('Looking at English in Use') and the tougher Chapter 11 ('Grouping Words into Structures') will encourage the professional to skip and the amateur to give up. I do not think that any amateur, pinning his hopes entirely on the explanations in this book, could leave with a clear conception of the contrast endocentric—exocentric (p. 193), or, indeed, of the

difference between second and third-stage analysis in units (p. 189), which wind up a whole section of the argument. Nor would he understand the purpose of introducing some special terminology only to snatch it away again before it can be properly savoured, and go back to the conventional categories of sentence analysis (as on p. 190).

The liberality of the book sparks off many talking points, just as the author wishes, and one hopes that readers' criticism will go beyond the vigorous and searching questions at the end of each chapter, on to some of the fundamental issues. There are many. One issue which disturbed me constantly as I read was the suggestion that the 'ordinary' use of language is the 'phatic', i.e. the conventional, the pointless, the futile; the 'extraordinary' use is for the precise communication of information, as in law and the natural sciences. Of course, I know some of the reasons for this attitude to language. In the old days, purposeful conversation in well-rounded sentences was about the greatest concession which linguists felt able to make to the study of spoken language in actual use. Anything pitched at an intellectual level below that, e.g. the exchange of conventional greetings, comments on the weather, corroborative synonyms to give the person you are listening to the satisfaction of being agreed with, and the rest, was considered not to justify serious study. Then came a school of sociologists who suggested that this 'phatic communion' was also worth consideration and study, particularly from their own point of view, since such talk, at least superficially, appeared to be more 'behaviouristic' in character than, say, that heard in a senior common room or read in one of the novels of Peacock. Quirk's thinking represents the extreme of this position. To him everything except the social pleasantries tends to be extraordinary, and much that he says about this matter shows that he has fallen over backwards to be fair to the opinions of the sociologists. But I do not think that Malinowski anywhere postulated a bifurcation so extreme as 'ordinary—extraordinary' to the pattern of speech behaviour as he saw it. He and Quirk are unquestionably right to draw our attention to 'phatic' utterances in oral communication and to show how, in their role as instruments for the achievement of 'togetherness', they are important but in danger of being

ignored; yet to treat them as the normal use of language is myopic. We spend a comparatively small part of our talking time using them, and awareness, sensitivity and efficiency in the use of language cannot lie in their direction; it is the precise and careful modes which need attention in the ordinary world, whatever sociologists may make of the process. At widely separated points in the book (pp. 171 and 207), Quirk presents some testimony in an effort to prove and illustrate his point about the uncertainty and lack of control in 'ordinary' spoken English usage. Both the passages he gives purport to be true to life, the first 'a transcript of a piece of conversation, recorded from life', the second the beginning of an imaginary conversation. The first piece is evidently a monologue (does it not take two to make a conversation?), and it is so profusely sprinkled with um's and er's that the speaker must surely be under considerable strain, committing himself only with great reluctance—or perhaps he is a professional philosopher. [A hint on the nature and origin of this passage is given in Question 7(a) on p. 174]. Could the speaker have been an interviewee facing the lights and cameras of a television studio? If so, or if the stretch of speech comes from an analogous situation, what is its value as testimony here? As for the fictionally contextualized but fabricated passage on p. 207, if an acquaintance of mine spoke to me in this way I should assume that either he was covering up some criminal activity or had gone mad. How far ends lag behind means is well shown at this point: for years recorders have been readily available to take down the speech of ordinary people in everyday situations; there are repeaters which will play and replay the material so that it can be accurately transcribed; most linguists pay at least lip-service to the 'primacy of speech' in their research. Yet a serious work on the use of English has recourse to a stretch of speech which, although unexplained, appears quite exceptional, and another which is avowedly fabricated, in order to bring home a critical point in its argument. Better evidence than this suggests that in 'Normal' speech as it is manifested in educated conversation there is in fact some underlying purpose, that sentences are not usually left dangling in the air, neglected and unfinished, and that, however much may be lost in inattention,

little goes because it is audially not discrete at the phonemic or morphemic level of analysis. Just how much is lost through audial indiscreteness, in proportion to the utterance as a whole, is something which compels serious study. Overmuch bias towards speech as phatic behaviour has perhaps led the writer of this book to look for obscurities when they are not there, even in written English. It would be interesting to know what ambiguity in the following sentence (quoted on p. 209) gives the impression that 'British destroyers are massing in Algiers' (as suggested on p. 222):

> A British destroyer and a cargo steamer, which had been making for Algiers, spent hours searching the area.

The book contains a number of inaccuracies which might be rectified in a second edition. The notes on the use of English in India (p. 12) are out of date: Hindi, not English, is the normal medium of instruction in the armed forces; not all universities in India conduct their examinations in English; Kannada (p. 11) is incorrectly spelt. Early in the book various comparisons with other languages are drawn, though some are far-fetched. One wonders, for instance, how far the uninitiated would think that English *cries* [krai(:)z] 'sounds like' the German *Kreis* [krais]—'circle'. The difference between the terms *class* and *group* (introduced in connection with linguistic features which mark or do not mark these things, pp. 67-8) is not clear, and I do not think it in the least 'beyond question' that 'linguistic features which can be identified as the markers of real or fancied social classes are few in number, and that what we have are sharply declining in importance.' Is the implication that social 'groups' *are* differentiated in this way? If so, what is the distinction between a class and a group? It is only recently that speech schools have been opened in Britain for business executives on promotion who need to 'improve' their pronunciation to bring it up to 'boardroom standards'. On p. 73, word-order must be included as a requirement in English which replaces the inflectional system of Latin in the given sentence, since 'grammatical words' are not enough; cf. 'The girl said that the man...' and 'The man said that the girl...'. And it is interesting to see that

word-order plays its part in the Latin sentences too. Horne Tooke's name is spelt wrongly on p. 150. On the question of term-substitution within structures, the statement about *odd* on p. 239 needs further consideration. The matter arises from a discussion of the simple utterance, 'He's an odd sort of man'. It is evident that, as Quirk says, the possible replacements for *sort* in this structure are few, and likely to be restricted semantically, too; *type* would do, for instance. The 'grammatical word' *of* is the principal limiting factor here. It is not clear on what basis *odd* is alleged to be semantically restricted to a similar extent, to words such as *queer*; I imagine that any number of adjectives qualifying human physique or character, e.g. *pleasant, agreeable, thick-set, shifty, arrogant,* would fit as well grammatically.

I have touched upon only a small number of the points raised in Quirk's enquiry. To say that there are many more places where further thought and discussion would be profitable is to acknowledge the stimulus which his work affords; he hopes for deliberation on the part of his readers, and this he will certainly inspire. There is, however, a deep-rooted objection to the book: its title, *The Use of English,* is misleading. I expected a detailed account of where English is used, how, in what styles and for what purposes, how written and spoken forms compare, in the world today. Instead, the bulk of the book gives (as I judge from what I understand of its structure) an account of how English works at various levels and in various styles—urbanely and intelligently, it is true, with a carefully balanced background knowledge of modern trends in linguistic thought, a warm understanding of the state of English language and literature today, but very little on the 'users and uses', as one chapter heading leads us to expect. To illustrate how language works, with, as in this and many other cases, examples almost entirely from English, and to show how we can use English to better effect by pondering on its workings, is a perfectly worthy aim; this Quirk has, with some reservations, achieved. But the use of English is not equivalent to the way it works; every car-driver knows the *use* of the internal combustion engine, but far fewer know how it works. The late Professor Firth, who strongly advocated studies in the *usage* of language (in the way in which I understand the

term), left sadly little to show us how such studies should be carried cut. Elsewhere there are some pointers, e.g. in R. A. Hall Jr.'s *Hands off Pidgin English*, (1955) where structure and vocabulary are indeed dealt with, but where both are subordinated to a detailed account of the uses to which Pidgin is put, and where and in what ways it might be considered adequate or inadequate as a medium. Value judgements in such work are not necessarily out of place; they are more *in* place there than in works on structural linguistics, for instance, since some types of communication in a given context are going to be more effective than others, and this position Quirk plainly concedes. But it is more than likely that he has gone too far in this matter: words, 'vocabulary' (which, in his terminology, tends to be restricted to 'names') will, as he is at pains to remind us, fit particular contexts but not others, and are not therefore to be judged as right or wrong on other counts. But on style he concedes less. For instance, he quotes a news item about a cricketer named Craig (p. 165), and reproves the news-man who wrote it because it contains a good deal of 'premodifying'—one of the stylistic features I associate with Time Magazine. He gives as an instance, 'the modest 17-year-old Craig', 'which', he goes on, 'surely very few people would in fact be heard saying'. True the remark quoted is in what appears to be a very loose form of reported speech, a kind of *erlebte Rede*, and may very well have been recast in order to heighten its journalistic effect. But that is not the point. All that really matters is that a vast number of readers of English *read* structures of this type on innumerable occasions, so frequently that there is no oddity at all about them. They communicate efficiently what they are meant to do, and, *pace* the 'speech primacy' supporters, need not reflect speech usages any more closely than some of the literary extracts do which Quirk quotes with approval in his last chapter. At one time, I have no doubt, they were an innovation,—they came into the language, as it were, through the back door—but that is a matter for the linguistic historiographer, and is interesting only incidentally to the linguist investigating the use of the language. The same could be said, *mutatis mutandis*, for the lexicon of the language. Such words as *probe* (in 'police probe') and *bride-to-be* occur densely

in popular newspapers on both sides of the Atlantic, but I do not think they have ever played an important part in English speech. Nor (what is more interesting) do they appear likely to play an important part in the future, despite many years of active written usage.

—And talking, or rather writing, of disapproved styles, it is worth noticing that Quirk's own usage in this very matter of premodification is sometimes eccentric:

> John is patting a flattered-looking mongrel. (p. 177)
>
> [This purports to be one way of *telling* someone about the little boy and the dog.]
>
> The head of the college's book of quotations.
>
> The Bishop of Durham's mitre of beautiful workmanship.

(Both on p. 182). On p. 166, structures of this sort are called 'atypical'. There is also the eccentricity of a Saxon genitive for inanimate objects, e.g. 'a particular area's pronuncination' (p. 85), 'a word's value' (p. 131) 'the language's own licence' (p. 239).

The need for statistical evidence as to what is typical and what atypical is evident, and will have the closest relevance to the accounts which remain to be written of the ways in which English is used today and where these usages may be heard, read, and studied.

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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, hopes, in course of time, to increase the frequency of its publication.

The Editorial Committee welcomes articles on all areas and branches of English Studies; the articles should be of a high standard of scholarship embodying the results of original investigations and independent and fresh thinking. 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*. Contributions, two copies of which are to be sent, must be neatly typewritten in double space on one side of the paper only. 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; those wishing to buy additional copies, should inform Professor Bose at the time they send their articles. All articles should be sent to:

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