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Aligarh Muslim University

Editor :
ASLOOB AHMAD ANSARI

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The Aligarh Journal of English Studies is edited by A.A. Ansari and published by him on behalf of the Department of English, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh. The *Journal* aims at bringing out twice a year (April and October), critical and research articles dealing with subjects in all the main areas of English studies (but with special attention to Shakespeare) together with detailed and careful reviews. Contributions should be addressed to the Editor. They should be neatly typed, double-spaced, and with notes and references at the end. Stylistic and other conventions as recommended in *MHRA Syle Book* should be strictly adhered to.

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G. R. Wilson

THE POISONED CHALICE AND THE BLASPHEMED BABE : MACBETH'S BLACK MASS

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The strongly Christian flavour of *Macbeth* in particular, as of Shakespeare's plays in general, has by now been widely discussed, thoroughly detailed, and nearly universally accepted and the view that the Christian colouring is one of sin and damnation and one that casts Macbeth himself, to some degree, into a Satanic mould seems to be nearly as widespread. In 1930, G. Wilson Knight identified the atmosphere of the play as 'the murk and nightmare torment of a conscious hell... inhuman and supernatural' (140); a few years later, W. C. Curry devoted a chapter of a book-length study of Shakespeare to what he called 'the demonic metaphysics of Macbeth' (53-93); and much more recently, J.A. Bryant, Jr., has asserted that Macbeth, 'having dared to do more than becomes man... found himself qualified for only one angelic role, that of the apostate black angel' (172). Additionally, at least one commentator has suggested that the Satanism of the play involves a symbolic investment of Macbeth's body by a demonic spirit (Morris). If one looks at the play with this in mind, the events of the first two Acts of *Macbeth*, on close reading, seem to parallel the events of a Christian Mass with a Satanic twist—in other words, to suggest the ritual commonly known as the Black Mass.

Certainly Shakespeare was familiar with the supposed practices of demonolatry, as was the Elizabethan audience in general Also, the extent of his knowledge of the Bible and of Christian liturgical practices and the uses to which he put that knowledge in his plays have been documented by too

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many investigators to come seriously into doubt at this late date. In addition, Jane H. Jack has thoroughly and convincingly explored the apparent relationship between *Macbeth* and the writings of James I, including his *Daemonologie* (173-193), so that we can be reasonably certain that the concept of Satanism and some awareness of the details of its practices were present in Shakespeare's symbolic tool kit.[1] Nor can we have much doubt that, in Macbeth, the playwright was attempting the personification of a consummate and absolute evil. As Knight points out,

> *Macbeth* shows us an evil not to be accounted for in terms of 'will' and 'causality';... it expresses its vision not to a criticel intellect, but to the responsive imagination; and working in terms not of 'character' or any ethical code, but of the abysmal deeps of a spirit-world untuned to human reality, withdraws the veil from the black streams which mill that cnosciousness of fear symbolized in actions of blood. *Macbeth* is the apocalypse of evil. (158)

What better way to plumb those dark deeps, to tear away the merciful veil, and to dramatize the extent of Macbeth's iniquity than by revealing him not only as an egregious sinner—a regicide and tyrant—but also as a celebrant of the Devil's Mass through which he partakes of the foul sacrament of Hell?[2]

At this point, it might be helpful to consider the black Mass itself in some of its details. Contrary to present popular belief the liturgy performed is not—or, at least, was not in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries—a Christian Mass said backwards or otherwise inverted. As Montague Summers

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1. James, for example, asserts : 'As God had Churches sanctified to his seruice, with Altars, Priests, Sacrifices, Ceremonies and Prayers, had he [the devil] not the like polluted to his seruice?' (36).

2. I am not, of course asserting that a Black Mass literally takes place in the play; rather, I am trying to show that many of the elements of a perverted Mass are suggested by the language and actions of the early scenes and that the suggestions carry emotional connotations of Satanism that Shakespeare could reasonably expect his audience to understand and to which he could expect them to react.

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points out in one description of the rite, 'No *Confiteor* was said and *Alleluia* was strictly avoided, but the officiant who held in his hand a book of which he frequently turned the leaves began to mutter in a low voice prayers, epistle and gospel, so that it was hardly in this respect to be distinguished from the Mass itself' (166-167). Elsewhere Summers suggests that the actual words of the Mass are spoken but with a sneering, sardonic intonation placed on them by the Grand Master of the Sabbat. This idea of perverting the true elements of Christianity to an evil purpose rather than simply turning them topsy—turvy is important. The practitioners of the Black Art were as fully devout in their evil ways as any medieval churchman. The difference lay in the fact that the Christian communicant approached the Mass in a spirit of contrition hoping to partake of God's grace, while the witch or warlock, approaching in a spirit of defiant blasphemy, desired and fully expected to be infused with a Satanic evil. It was thought helpful to the success of a Black Mass, for example, to employ Eucharistic materials that had been properly consecrated to God and then defiled by some mark of the Devil—usually in blood. While the blood could, and did, come from animals—toads, goats, and chickens seem to have been popular—the most desirable source was a new-born infant, and the killing of a child at the high point of the ritual, sometimes followed by a cannibalistic feast, is frequently encountered in the literature of Satanism. All of the infinitely varied practices of witchcraft could be, of course, incorporated in the ritual. Poisons were brewed in the chalice and consecrated to Satan; ingenious sexual couplings were performed, sometimes on the altar; a wide variety of excremental defilements were practised and, all in all, the whole procedure was made as loathsome as possib'e. The ritual, appropriately enough, was conducted in an atmosphere of darkest night relieved only by the red of fire and of blood (Summers, *passim*).

This atmosphere brings us immediately back to *Macbeth*. As Bradley, among others, has pointed out about the play,

> It is really the impression of a black night broken by flashes of light and

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> colour sometimes vivid and even glaring. They are the lights and colours of the thunderstorm in the first scene; of the dagger hanging before Macbeth's eyes and glittering alone in the midnight air; of the torch borne by the servant when he and his lord come upon Banquo crossing the castle-court to his room; of the torch, again, which Fleance carried to light his father to death, and which was dashed out by one of the murderers; of the torches that flared in the hall on the face of the Ghost and the blanched cheeks of Macbeth; of the flames beneath the boiling cauldron from which the apparitions in the cavern arose; of the taper which showed to the Doctor and the Gentlewoman the wasted face and blank eyes of Lady Macbeth. And, above all, the colour is the colour of blood (280).

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Fire and blood—flickering, flowing, and sometimes thundering through an oppressive blackness—this is the background of most of *Macbeth*. What I hope to show is that this atmosphere, so appropriate for a Black Mass, is utilized to the fullest extent by Shakespeare in the opening of the play. As I have noted, I do not mean to suggest that the Mass is presented literally, but rather that certain correspondences exist between the events of the Mass and the events of the first two Acts of the play. Shakespeare seems subtly to have woven the elements of the ritual into a symbolic background for the delineation of Macbeth's acceptance of evil—a background that makes it clear that the evil accepted is the profound, absolute evil of Satanism.

It might be objected at this point that the Mass proper is a Roman Catholic ceremony that was strictly prohibited (by the Act of Persuasions passed in 1581) in Elizabeth's Protestant England; how then can we expect the Anglican playwright to have used it? Three answers suggest themselves. One is that the Satanic ritual was originally based on Roman Catholic ritual, and the Reformation could have had little effect on this fact; the more symbolic the orthodoxy blasphemed, the better it should have been for the Satanists' dark purposes. Another is that Shakespeare himself would probably not have worried about projecting into eleventh-century Scotland a pre-Anglican heresy that was widely known historically in that country, as witnessed by James's *Newes from Scotland* (1521), so long as the material projected would have meaning for his English

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audience. W. C. Curry also suggests this when he says, 'But whatever may be the Protestant view regarding evil spirits, it seems to be [the] mediaeval system of metaphysics which manifests itself everywhere in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*'(77). The third is that the Anglican Eucharist Service and the Roman Catholic Mass differ very little in performance. One was in English, the other (until recently) in Latin, but the order of events and the symbolic meaning of those events were, and still are, almost identical. In both cases, the ritual is intended to celebrate Christ's Passion and to allow the communicants to share in the redemptive quality of His sacrifice; it is the perversion of this intent that informs the Black Mass. Because the Mass is perverted by the intention of the Satanist, by his state of mind, rather than inverted by his performance of it, if a Black Mass underlies the first two Acts of Macbeth, as I am suggesting, it should parallel the order of the Christian Euch–rist, Roman or Anglican. I hope to show that this is, in fact, the case.

The Mass opens for each communicant with the sprinkling of Holy water and a personal invocation of the Trinity.[3] *Macbeth* opens with a demonic trinity—the three witches—amid thunder, lightning, and a sprinkling of rain (I, 1, 2).[4] In its natural manifestation as water from heaven, of course, rain is a kind of holy water. Here, however, like the fog into which the witches vanish, the rain is the product of their evil machinations and can be seen as water consecrated to their own dark purposes. Furthermore, at this point, Macbeth, like the priest, has not yet appeared, although the weird sisters are here planning a meeting with him, suggesting the convocation of practitioners necessary for a Black Mass.

A second preliminary of the Mass on the part of both communicant and celebrant, before the priest ascends to the

3. My information on the Roman Catholic Mass is derived from Lefebvre and Ulenberg.

4. All references to *Macbeth* are to the edition by Eugene M. Waith in the Yale Shakespeare Series.

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altar, is the Sign of the Cross. In the second scene of *Macbeth* we find the Captain saying of Macbeth and Banquo,

> Except they meant to bathe in reeking wounds,
> Or memorize another Golgotha,
> I cannot tell .. (1, 2, 8, 40-42).

Memorizing, i. e., memorializing, another Golgotha is certainly calling to mind the Cross; in addition, it is describing the intent of the Mass—commemorating the Passion of Christ—but it does so with reference to a different, 'another,' Golgotha, and it does so in unusual terms. We usually think about the site of the central event of Christianity as Calvary, at least when we are concerned with the Resurrection and its accompanying Glory. The term Golgotha, by costrast, refers to the 'place of skulls,' and to so refer to the place of the Crucifixion is to suggest a morbid mortality that does not accord comfortably with the ultimate joy of the Eucharist.[5] Thus is the second element of the Mass perverted. Even further, the Captain is describing precisely what Macbeth is going to do—he is going to celebrate Golgotha by bathing in the reeking wounds of Duncan at the height of the ritual that is now unfolding.

These two preparatory actions are followed by the Introit, in which the character of the particular Mass to be celebrated is announced so that the faithful may attune their hearts to the thought it expresses, This function is served in the play by the scene in which Macbeth first encounters the demonic sisters (I, 3, 47-61). Although, Macbeth speaks only one line here, his reaction to the witches' announcement of the mystery that will be played out is made clear by Banquo's 'Good sir, why do you start, and seem to fear/Things that do sound so fair? (I,3.51-52) Clearly, in revelaing his guilt and fear, Macbeth can be seen attuning his heart to the three-fold prophecy but also to the evil that he recognizes in himself—an evil that has apparently

5. Golgotha does, of course, denote in its manifestation of the skull image a kind of *memento mori*, a symbol that implies recognition of the redemptive value of Christ's sacrifice, but I am stressing here the unquestionably different *connotations* of Golgotha and Calvary.

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been present in his thinking for some time. The progress of the Mass from this point on is toward a revelation of the communicant's participation in the Grace of God, a participation of which he is aware but of which he must be regularly reminded. Similarly, the progress of Macbeth henceforward will be toward a growing recognition of the degree of his involvement with evil, an involvement of which he, too, is aware.

Immediately on the heels of the Introit comes the Kyrie, in which, 'Overcome by the announcement of the great mystery expressed in the Introit, we again recognize our unworthiness; hence we beg the three Divine Persons for mercy' (Ulenberg 41). Similarly, Macbeth reacts to the witches' announced mystery by begging of the Satanic trinity,

> Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.
> By Sinel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis;
> But how of Cawdor? the Thane of Cawdor lives,
> A prosperous gentleman; and to be king
> Stands not within the prospect of belief
> No more than to be Cawdor. (1, 3. 70-75)

Missing from this speech are, of course, the ideas of unworthiness and of the corresponding need for mercy. The prospect of gaining the throne is here arrogantly equated by Macbeth with the possibility of being a thane, which he already is. Furthermore, the only reason he cannot be Thane of Cawdor is because 'Cawdor lives'. The implication is clear that, just as the death of Cawdor would permit Macbeth's assumption of that title, so the death of the King would make that title Macbeth's also. In other words, Macbeth is considering only the practical problems inherent in fulfilling the prophecy rather than thinking of the ethical question of his worthiness to rule—a worthiness that, as later events reveal, he is completely lacking.

I do not see that much can be made of the next element of the Mass, the Gloria, which is a hymn of praise and thanks. This prayer is suggested in the passage beginning with Ross's report of the praises that have been heaped upon Macbeth as

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a result of his military victory and Angus's relaying of the King's thanks, concluding with Macbeth's aside :

> Glamis, and Thane of Cawdor :
> The greatest is behind.
> [To Ross and Angus.] Thanks for your pains. (1, 3, 119-121)

Inasmuch as the stage direction does not appear in the Folio, we could take the object of Macbeth's thanks to be the witches, or even, combining it with Banquo's 'Can the devil speak true?' (1, 3, 108), to be Satan himself. It is not, however, essential to my purpose to insist on these readings.

Something more can be made of the Collect, in which the intentions of the communicants are gathered in one common prayer. This is precisely what Macbeth does in the series of asides that begin with

> Two truths are told,
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme. (1, 3, 130-132)

In his subsequent musings about that 'swelling act', Macbeth strips off another layer of camouflage, thus allowing him, and us, to see more deeply into the nature of his soul and to understand more fully his intentions. He wavers briefly here between good and evil :

> If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
> Against the use of nature?...
> My thought, whose murther yet is but fantastical,
> Shakes so my single state of man
> That function is smother'd in surmise,
> And nothing is but what is not. (1, 3. 137-144)

But the wavering is only momentary; he concludes the Collect by summing up his intentions: 'Let us toward the king' (I, 3, 157). Clearly, he intends to pursue the kingship no matter what the cost.

The first instructional element of the Mass, the Epistle, is quite clearly paralleled in the play; here we should 'now read

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the word of God from the Prophets...and should be instructed in the doctrine or mystery announced in the Introit' (Ulenberg 41). Scene 5 opens with Lady Macbeth reading a letter from her husband that instructs her in the mystery of the weird sisters' prophecy of Macbeth's kingship, a prophecy that we have already identified as the Introit, and she is, of course, not reading the words of God's prophets but of Satan's. The Gradual, 'in which the thought or lesson of the Epistle resounds' (Ulenberg 42), follows immediately in the form of Lady Macbeth's reaction both to the letter and to the news that Duncan is to spend the night as her guest (I, 5, 39-55). This passage, in which she invokes demonic spirits to fill her with 'direst cruelty,' is remarkable both in its extreme violence and in the fact that Lady Macbeth seems to understand immediately the nature of the forces with which she and Macbeth are dealing. Her outburst is a much more explicit recognition of the Satanic impulse than anything heretofore uttered by her husband, and the suggestion seems strong that, while he is just coming to an awareness of his evil, Lady Macbeth has known the depths of her dark nature for some time. It also seems significant that this speech contains the first implication of the nursing-babe imagery, 'Come to my woman's breasts,/And take my milk for gall, you murth'ring ministers, (1, 5, 48-49) about which I hope to make a later point, as well as about *her* keen knife inflicting a wound (I, 5, 53).

The Alleluia,[6] which is structurally the concluding portion of the Gradual and not an element in itself, is represented in the play as Lady Macbeth greets her husband: 'Great Glamis, worthy Cawdor/Greater than both by the all-hail hereafter (I, 5, 55-56). An interesting gloss provided by Richmond Noble suggests a reading of these lines that I find persuasive. Noble asserts,

6. The inclusion of the Alleluia seems to contradict the earlier quotation from Summers, but, then, Shakespeare had not read Summers.

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> Every time Shakespeare alludes to Judas's greeting of betrayal he quotes him as saying 'All Hail'. (See 3 *King Henry VI*, V. vii. 33-4, *King RichardII*, IV. i. 169) .. Shakespeare evidently overlooked the actual form of Judas's greeting and had it firmly fixed in his head that it was 'All Hail' (103).

Lady Macbeth's 'all-hail' echoes Macbeth's 'all-hail' of his letter, which in turn echoes the 'All hail' with which he was greeted by the witches in the Introit, all of which combine to foreshadow, through the image of Judas, the enormity of Macbeth's ultimate sin. In addition, Lady Macbeth directs her 'song of praise' here to an implied trinity—to Glamis, her husband; to Cawdor, a traitor to king and country, and to Judas the betrayer of Christ. But, since she actually addresses only her husband, the Satanic trinity thus invoked becomes identified with Macbeth and suggests the tripartite sin that he is soon to commit—the murder of king, of country, and ultimately, of God.

The next element of the Mass is the reading of the Gospel, in which 'we hear from the lips of our Divine Teacher a more perfect explanation of the truth expressed in the Introit' (Ulenberg 42), and which Macbeth perverts to his purpose in the soliloquy that opens Scene 7 (I, 7,1-28). It is in this speech that we find the first overt reference to the ritual that is being symbolically pursued:

> This even-handed justice
> Commends th' ingredients of our poison'd chalice
> To our own lips. (1, 7, 10-12)

I have mentioned that the defiled contents of the chalice at a Black Mass were often thought to be poisonous. In addition, it was compulsory for all the communicants to partake; Summers points out in description of one ritual,

> '... and they drank twice of the chalice, a brew so infect, so stinking, so cold that it seemed to freeze the very marrow of their bones. None, theless each one was compelled to swallow the nauseous draught however ill they might stomach it. (167)[7]

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7. Strangely enough, Noble did not apply this insight to Macbeth.

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I do not want to make too much of this coincidence; still, this passage does seem to describe Macbeth's image and his situation rather well. After proceeding to supply 'a more perfect explanation of the three-fold relationship between himself and Duncan, a relationship that clearly exposes the proposed murder as the most heinous possible crime, he admits his inability to halt in his pursuit of the throne:

> I have no spur
> To prick the sides of my intent, but only
> Vaulting ambition, which o'er-leaps itself
> And falls on th'other. (1, 7, 25-28)

He has sniffed the contents of his poisoned chalice, for which he has no stomach, but he is nevertheless compelled to drink.

In addition to identifying Duncan in this passage as kinsman, king, and guest, Macbeth strongly suggests here the identification of the King with the forces of Heaven[8] by describing him as 'meek' and as having 'virtues that will plead like angels' (I, 7, 17-19). Macbeth also, with the lines

> And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
> Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubin, hors'd
> Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
> Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye, (1, 7, 21-24)

continues the celestial imagery and implies some relationship between the King, about whom he is talking, and the new-born babe. Cleanth Brooks has noted and explored the paradoxical nature of this passage, but I do not think it contradictory to his basically sound views to take a slightly different line of approach. My view is that the passage tends to identify Duncan with the babe. or at the very least, to bring to mind the ways in which Duncan is like a new-born babe. Literally, of course, the babe, as well as the cherubim, are similes for Pity. Yet one cannot escape the feeling that the Pity is a

8. It should be noted that, with one very minor exception (the Sign of the Cross in Scene 2), Duncan is not present in any incident identified with the Black Mass. The Satanic ritual cannot, of course, be conducted in the presence of a Godly force.

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personification of the murdered King and that what will, in fact, 'blow the horrid deed in every eye' is the sight of the King foully murdered in his sleep when he is as helpless as an infant. Toward the end of his essay (and admittedly with a different point in mind), Brooks concludes,

> The babe signifies the future which Macbeth would control and cannot control. It is the unpredictable thing itself—as Yeats has put it so magnificently, 'The uncontrollable mystery on the bestial floor'.... It is the babe that betrays Macbeth. (45)

I find particularly apt the quotation from 'The Magi' as a gloss on this passage because it suggests both the Christ Child, the Babe in tha manger, and the foul murder toward which Macbeth is hurtling, the 'uncontrollable mystery' of the perverted Eucharist that will be consummated in Duncan's chamber. The assassination of kinsman, king, guest, and God—this then is the Satanic Gospel according to Macbeth.

It is at this point in the Mass that the Sermon, instructions and exhortations to the communcants, is preached. In the play, that office devolves onto Lady Macbeth who, in three separate speeches (I, 7, 35-72), exhorts Macbeth to fulfil his foul duty. I shall have more to say about this passage later, but, for the moment, we can simply observe that it proceeds smoothly into the statement of the Creed by Macbeth, with which the Act ends:

> I am settled and bend up
> Each corporal agent to this terrible feat.
> Away, and mock the time with fairest show:
> False face must hide what the false heart doth know. (1, 7, 79-82)

The most important part of this speech for my purposes is the word 'corporal', which apparently here carries a double meaning. On the literal level, it refers, of course, to Macbeth's physical faculties, but the word also has a symbolic meaning in terms of the Mass. The linen napkin on which all the Eucharistic materials—chalice, paten, bread and wine—are placed is called the corporal. The word is derived from the Latin 'corpus', and it is here applied because on it symbolically rests the 'Body' of Christ. In this latter sense, if Macbeth turns

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'each corporal agent' to his evil purpose, he is perverting all the materials of the Mass, which should be consecrated to God, to the worship of the Devil, that is, to the Black Mass. It may be of interest that the same word has occurred only once before in the play, when Macbeth says of the weird sisters '...and what seemed corporal/Melted, as breath into the wind' (1, 3, 81-82). In this passage, not only is the word connected with the forces of evil, but it is also linked to the theme of false appearances with which Macbeth concludes his creed.

In the progress of the Mass, the Creed is the final element both of the instructional section and of the entire first section, the Mass of the Catechumens— those not yet admitted to Communion. Likewise, as Macbeth utters his creed to end the Act, his period of initiation and instruction is ended; from this point on, he will be a full participant in the Satanic mystery. It is also important to note that, of the six elements composing the instruction, three – the Collect, the Gospel, and the Creed — are voiced by Macbeth while the remaining three — the Epistle, the Gradual, and the Sermon — are put into the mouth of Lady Macbeth. The implication seems clear that, at this point, both conspirators are equally involved and are equally guilty.

The second, and much longer, section of the Christian ritual, the Mass of the Faithful, consists of four sub-sections — the Offertory, the Consecration, the Communion, and the Thanksgiving — each composed of a number of elements. The pace of the play, however, now becomes headlong, and the action proceeds, as it must, dramatically and symbolically, almost immediately to the consummation of Macbeth's dark communion. Nevertheless, the overall pattern can still be discerned.

The Mass of the Faithful opens with the Offering of Bread and Wine to God for His later consecration. Similarly, Macbeth, after Act I has ended, returns to the banquet then in progress to 'mock... with fairest show' (1, 7, 81) the offering of food and drink to Duncan, his king and the temporal representative

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of God on earth. Here again we have a perversion, by the hypocritical intent of the celebrant, of the material of the Mass – bread and wine—to the evil purposes of Satan. As mentioned, the progress of the Mass has now become tremendously telescoped, and most of the individual elements are omitted, only one element being used to represent each of the four sub-sections. One omission, however, from the Offertory may be significant. Nothing suggesting the Washing of the Hands (the Lavabo), symbolizing the communicants' unworthiness and their desire to be cleansed of sin (Ulenberg 43), occurs. While it is negative evidence, this omission may indicate that Macbeth does not feel himself unworthy, nor does he seek forgiveness; he is completely in the power of evil. Additionally, in the Roman Mass, this washing prepares the celebrant to touch the Body of Christ, which he will do after the Consecration (Lefebvre 967). Macbeth is preparing to touch the body of Duncan, but, unlike the Priest, he will do so with foul and murderous hands.

As Act II opens, we move directly to the Sanctus, representing the Consecration. The passage of the play paralleling this part of the Mass begins with Macbeth's instructions to a servant. 'Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready/She strike upon the bell' (II, i, 31). It continues through Macbeth's soliloquy involving the apparition of the bloody dagger and concludes with the end of the first scene. The moment of Sanctus toward which the scene builds is the most solemn moment of the Mass, as it is of the play. It is the moment of transubstantiation in which the bread and wine, with which the Mass began, actually become the Body and Blood of Christ. It is during the passage just preceding this moment that Macbeth comes to know fully the extent of his evil and the nature of the forces with which he has allied himself. In the course of his soliloquy, Macbeth says,...'Witchcraft celebrates/ Pale Hecate's off'rings' (II, i, 51-52). The collocation of witchcraft, Hecate, and the words 'celebrate' and 'offering' at this point in the poem does not seem to be an accident. A Mass is celebrated with offerings, and Hecate is the goddess

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most closely associated in the medieval mind with witch-craft. In recognizing this conjunction, Macbeth has become aware of the awful, blasphemous ritual, that he is about to consummate, and, if he recognizes the ritual, he must also know that he is now in league with the Prince of Darkness.[9] Summing up one of the doctrines espoused by King James in *Daemonologie*, R. H. West reports,

> The magician is culpable so soon as he acts in full knowledge that his ceremonies are strengthless except by pact, and that it is the devil he deals with. If he persists after he has sure knowledge of his means and his confederate, doom encloses him. (137)

It is only after this recognition that the unholy Sanctus bell tolls,[10] and, with rich irony, Macbeth states his fate after he has stated Duncan's:

> I go and it is done; the bell invites me.
> Hear it not, Duncan, for it is a knell
> That summons thee to heaven or to hell. (II, 1, 62-64)

The poisoned chalice, the preparation of which was being awaited at the scene's opening, is now ready, the evil of Satan has been distilled into it, and Macbeth's doom is to partake of its contents.

Partake he does in the murder of Duncan. This action, which corresponds to the Communion of the Mass, occurs in the play offstage between the first and second scenes of Act II, as is made perfectly clear by the speech with which Lady Macbeth opens scene, 2'That which hath made them drunk hath made me bold :/What hath quench'd them hath given me fire', (II, 2, 1-2). The wine that should have been transmuted into Christ's blood has been made gall, and Lady Macbeth, as a communicant in the Black Mass, has sipped the devil's chilling potion along with her evil lord. 'The fatal bellman' (II,2,4), who should have sounded the holy transubstantiation, becomes

9. I am aware of the problem that this interpretation raises *vis-a-vis* Macbeth's amazingly naive puzzlement over his inability to say 'Amen' in the next scene (II, 2, 29). Unfortunately, I have no solution to offer

10. This stage direction is, indeed, in the Folio.

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only the demonic owl hooting out the 'stern'st good night' of all — the knell of eternal damnation. That Lady Macbeth is an equally culpable communicant can hardly be doubted in the light of her earlier invocation, in the Gradual, to the forces of darkness :

> Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
> Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,
> Stop up th'access and passage to remorse
> That no compunctious visitings of nature
> Shake my fell purpose... (1, 5, 41-47)

Imbibing the poisoned chalice has had exactly the effect she prayed for. Macbeth, himself, finally realizes this whne he speaks of her in her final illness :

> Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd
> Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
> Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
> And with some sweet oblivious antidote
> Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
> Which weighs upon the heart? (V, 3, 40-45)

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She prayed to be filled with evil, the poisoned cup has done so, and yet Macbeth wants her bosom, and his, purged of its vile stuffing.

Very little of the Mass remains. We have seen Offertory, Consecration, and Communion; only Thanksgiving is left. This last section of the Mass is represented by the Ablutions, during which the celebrant washes his hands a second time saying,

> May Thy Body, O Lord, which I have received, and Thy Blood which I have drunk, cleave to my inmost parts, and grant that no stain of sin remain in me, whom these pure and holy sacraments have refreshed. (Lefebvre 995-996)

The final section of the Black Mass is, by contrast, played out in futility as Macbeth attempts to rid his hands of the witness to his sin (II, 2, 44-46). The impure and unholy sacraments have not refreshed his soul but have damned it; his fingers can never be rinsed out but can only incarnadine the multitudinous

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seas. As an equally guilty partner, Lady Macbeth also admits here, 'My hands are of your color' (II, 2, 62). And, finally, with the crowing of the cock mentioned in the Porter scene (II, 3, 24-25), the sound that traditionally sends witches scurrying for their dens, the Satanic ritual is concluded.

I have commented on the Mass imagery inherent in the term 'corporal', but this imagery also seems to be present in two other terms, the more important of which is 'host'. This word occurs a number of times in the first nine scenes, always to refer to Macbeth. In terms of the Mass, however, 'Host' refers to the bread that is consecrated to become the Body of Christ. As I mentioned in my general comments on the Black Mass, the Eucharistic materials were often those that had been consecrated to God before being defiled by the Devil's mark. If we keep in mind, then, the heavenly mantle that Shakespeare has cast over Duncan, the murder constitutes the defilement of the Divine Body and Blood by the evil touch of Macbeth, and, in a much larger sense, when Macbeth replaces Duncan by succeeding to the throne, he is, both literally and symbolically, a defiled host. As king, he should be God's earthly representative, but by supping at his unholy communion he has instead become the tyrannical agent of Satan. It is significant that Morris sees in Macbeth's violation of the guest—host relationship the commission of the greatest possible sin; similarly, the defilement of the Host, its dedication to the forces of evil is the greatest possible blasphemy.

The other term suggesting the Eucharist serves to underline this complex symbolic pun. In her invocation to the dark spirits, Lady Macbeth commands, 'Come, thick night, /And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of Hell' (I, 5, 51-52). The word 'pall' has been accurately identified by Brooks as 'the clothing of death' (37), but it is also the name of the stiffened square of linen used in the Mass to cover the Host. This act of concealment is precisely what Lady Macbeth prays for in her invocation; she wants night to cover and hide Macbeth, who is Duncan's host as well as Satan's.

One aspect of the play's symbolism on which the concept of the Black Mass may shed some light remains to be explo-

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red— that of the 'blasphemed babe'. Child images abound in *Macbeth*, and, as I have indicated, an infant often figures importantly in the practices of Satanism. Two chains of meaning in the play involving child symbolism seem susceptible to illumination by the theory I have so far explored. One is exemplified by the apparent inconsistency of Macbeth's reaction when finally face to face with his nemesis, Macduff:

> But get thee back, my soul is too much charg'd
> With blood of thine already. (V. 7, 34-35)

The remorse that Macbeth seems to exhibit here for his treatment of Macduff's family is unique in the action of the play following the murder of Duncan. Nowhere else does Macbeth show any such feeling for his bloody deeds. Why, then, should he here? The effect of this scene, from Macduff's entrance (V, 7, 32) to Macbeth's death (V, 7, 62) is to catch up and bring to a close focus the three apparitions by which Macbeth has been warned of his fate. The scene proceeds from the Armed Head, Macduff, to the Bloody Child, Macduff's babes, to the Crowned Child, Malcolm. Recalling Macbeth's identification of Duncan with the new-born babe and, in a way, with the Christ Child, it may be helpful to think of the three apparitions coming together in Macbeth's mind, at the moment he faces Macduff, into an image of the murdered king; he sees a vision of 'His silver skin lac'd with his golden blood' (II, 3, 115), of the 'babe' he has blasphemed by sacrificing it to Satan and whose defiled blood has so foully charged Macbeth's soul. It is, then, this vision of the original crime binding him to the hellish pact he made at the consummation of the Black Mass that so repels Macbeth here and not a feeling of remorse for any one subsequent crime demanded by that pact[11].

11. The concept that a compact with the Devil has been consummated by the murder of Duncan may shed some light on the puzzle of the Third Murderer. Macbeth may have enlisted demonic assistance to try to insure the success of the Banquo-Fleance assassination. Note that the Third Murderer hears things before the other two (III, 3, 8), that he can apparently see in the dark (III, 3, 20), and that he refers to men as though he were not a man, i. e., not human (III, 3, 13).

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The other symbolic aspect that seems to benefit from the gloss provided by the Black Mass involves Lady Macbeth. Her precise role in influencing the activities of her husband has long been controversial, and a factual crux about whether or not she has children and, if so, where those children are has never beem satisfactorily resolved. The crux itself is, of course, of little moment to our understanding of the play, but if, as I am suggesting, Shakespeare used his knowledge of witchcraft as an ordering device in *Macbeth*, this apparent difficulty may well be significant. Thus, while my reading at this point becomes rather speculative, it may be worth consideration. Two references to a suckliug child, in addition to Macbeth's 'naked new-born babe', occur early in the play, and both are voiced by Lady Macbeth. The first comes during her invocation to the fiends of Hell, in which she offers her breasts to suckle the 'murth'ring ministers', and in which she suggests that her milk has been turned to gall (1,5, 48-49). The second comes during her exhortation to her husband, in which she says,

> I have given suck and know
> How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me—
> I would, while it was smiling in my face,
> Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums,
> And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn... (1, 7, 54-58)

In this clear statement lies the crux. May we suppose that not only is her motherhood factual but also that she knows she would commit the atrocity here described because she has 'so sworn' and has, in fact, done it? This interpretation seems further supported by the reference to *her* 'keen knife' (1, 5, 53), which can have no pertinence to Duncan's murder and could well refer to the implement used to spill the child's blood into the Satanic chalice. This would suggest that she has blasphemed her own babe in ritual consecration to the Devil in exchange for the satisfaction of her outrageous ambitions, and it is by this deed that her milk has turned to gall suitable only for suckling fiends. This reading would not only explain

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her extremely knowledgeable reaction to Macbeth's letter, on which I have already commented, but would suggest that it was she who first proposed Macbeth as a likely recruit to the Satanic forces with which she was already in league. Throughout the early part of the play, Lady Macbeth seems to be aware that her husband is evil without altogether understanding the extent of his evil, as evidenced by the 'milk of human kindness' speech (1, 5, 17-31), among others. It is by exposing him to the face of evil, in the form of the weird sisters, that she hopes to plumb the depths of his depravity, and this, of course, she does. I do not mean to suggest that she is the source of his evil or even its instigator, but only that she is the agent by which he himself comes to recognize the full foulness of his nature—a foulness that has been lurking undiscovered in his soul from the very beginning.

The world of *Macbeth* is a world in which the disease of evil is endemic and contagious. It is a world in which the basic moral problem is not one involving the individual's choice of good or evil but is rather the problem of stripping away the veil of false appearances so that the disease can be diagnosed as what it truly is. Macbeth's Black Mass, like Lady Macbeth's before him, tore away his veil to let him view his own diseased and curdled soul. It was not until the forces of good had finally unveiled their own eyes that his Satanic evil could be recognized and defeated to restore order to a suffering universe.

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THE PROTAGONIST'S DILEMMA IN *TIMON OF ATHENS*

Both bitter and baffling as it is *Timon of Athens* is conspicuously lacking in psychological consistency : in fact characterizatoin in it suffers at the expense of a sort of conceptual schematism. At best it may be regarded as a camouflage for reflecting the protagonist's obsessions and frustrations and highlighting the aberrations of some of those who surround him. The latter seem to play their almost folkloristic roles assigned to them in the bizarre drama and hence fail to create the impression of either manifoldness or even coherence. Whatever minimum action there is in the play really centres on crystallizing the 'ruin of a frank and generous soul' shattered by the onslaught of ingratitude, for Timon is, on all accounts, a kindly benefactor, 'the very soul of bounty' which presupposes the presence of a grain of nobility embedded in him. He is possessed, though, at the same time, of an unmistakable naivety, waywardness and unpredictability. The play opens with a sort of significant prologue, for in the dialogue between the Poet and Painter, specifically, are sketched in the contours of Timon's personality with a certain indirection. The portraiture done by the poet runs to this effect :

> his large fortune,
> Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
> Subdues and properties to his love and tendence
> All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-fac'd flatterer
> To Apemantus, that few things loves better
> Than to abhor himself [1] (I,i, 56-61)

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And the Painter, elaborating the fable of Fortune's hill, complements it thus :

> This throne, this Fortune, and this hill, methinks,
> With one man beckon'd from the rest below,
> Bowing his head against the steepy mount
> To climb his happiness, would be well express'd
> In our condition. (I. i. 75-79)

No less intriguing is the fact that the words of both of them are ominously anticipatory of Timon's later decline and desertion by his friends. Employing the medieval emblem of Fortune's 'shift and change of mood' the Poet is led to speculate that :

> all his dependants
> Which labour'd after him to the mountain's top
> Even on their knees and hands, let him sit down,
> Not one accompanying his declining foot. (I, i, 87-90)

And the Painter, offering an adequate technical riposte, and establishing the supremacy of the visual art of painting over the verbal configurations of the Poet as an instrument of insight into the vagaries of Fortune, speaks of its status in the intellectual economy of society thus :

> A thousand moral paintings I can show
> That shall demonstrate these quick blows of Fortune's
> More pregnantly than words. (I, i, 92-94)

'More pregnantly than words' reflects on this theme which was commonly treated in Renaissance paintings and miniatures. The playwright's strategy in making use of this fable is both cunning and deliberate, for it provides us with an inkling of the vicissitudes in Timon's life to follow.

Timon's attitude to the dispensing of his wealth is that of an uncritical spendthrift; he squanders it right and left indiscriminately, in 'motion of raging waste'; he gets Ventidius ransomed by paying the prisoner's debt on his behalf when he goes bankrupt and also 'strains' to provide part of the marriage portion of the old Athenian's daughter who has been wooed and won by one of his personal servants. The best way of

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wringing money from him is to heap lavish praises on his generosity or open-handedness. Though gift-giving was fairly common in Elizabethan and Jacobean Courts and Shakespeare, as ably demonstrated by Wallace',[2] may have been indebted for his awareness of it to Seneca's moral treatise, *De beneficiis*, yet Timon's largesse is characterized by love of ostentation and vainglory. His liberality proves self-destructive ultimately, for it tends to be reduced to the level of an abstraction by him. To the old Athenian he says : 'To build his fortune *I* will strain alittle/For 'tis a bond in men' (I, i, 146–47), and when Ventidius, consequent on his father's death, comes into patrimony and hence offers to pay back the money he had been lent by him and Timon replies : 'I gave it freely ever, and there's none/Can truly say he gives, if he receives' (I,ii, 10–11) one is struck by the moral flourish in the speaker's tone and gestrure. The emphasis on 'bond in men' and 'none can truly say he gives, if he receives' may be in conformity with the Jacobean cult of courtesy and may sound innocuous apparently but it also betrays an unconscious effort to build up some sort of self—image to be sustained by others' praises and indifference to or belittlement of the notion of reciprocity. 'Giving' in his case need not entail any 'receiving' and this constitutes his frame of values. The three flattering lords, Lucullus, Lucius and Sempronius — emblems of clumsy jocularity and sordidness – have been beneficiaries of his munificence all along as is evident from their own unabashed confession of it. Timon formulates his own credo thus : 'Methinks I could deal kingdoms to my friends,/And n'ever be weary' (I, ii, 219-20). Supplementing the observation of the first Lord: 'He out-goes the very heart of kindness' the second Lord maintains :

> Plutus the god of gold
> Is but his steward. No meed but he repays
> Seven-fold above itself : no gift to him
> But breeds the giver a return exceeding
> All use of quittance, (I, i, 275-79)

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And the Lords and the Strangers, it is worth adding, have the status of choric commentators in the play.

There is undoubtedly a narcissstic element in Timon's bounty as well as a sort of recklessness which is self-defeating. His predicament is of his own making : squandering of money in excess of the available resources, taking cognizance of only the Steward's integrity in his system of accounts but thwarting all his attempts at acquainting him with the actual position. He is so vitiated by his ingrained prodigality that, do what you will, he cannot be weaned away from it at all. The intolerable paradox involved in this situation amounts to the fact that the seeming opulence on which the parasitic lords and the hangers-on batten like cormorants partly subsists on what Timon had been borrowing from the usurers of Athens—the city of Iniquity, 'the coward and licentious town'—which luxuriates on what Karl Marx calls the cash-nexus. What brings this acquisitive and usurous city into disrepute is that here money becomes the prime object of adoration and human relationships are subordinated to it and thus grow vulgarized. When he is hedged in by Varro, Isidore and Lucius — servants of the money-lenders and of Timon's creditors — he feels strangulated and turns helplessly for succour to the beneficiaries of his largesse and thus creates a noozle for his own neck. His own comment, which is not disingenuous, on this practice of largesse, is that 'unwisely, not ignobly, have I given'. The impulse behind all this trafficking may be some kind of altruism but it is in no way unmixed with folly, generates self-complacency and involves bad economics. Possessed of a far less jaundiced view Apemantus is rightly aware of the exploitative nature of the relation which the sycophant lords bear to Timon and comments on it thus :

> '...What a number of men eats Timon, and he sees 'em not ! It grieves me to see so many dip their meat in one man's blood; ... the fellow that sits next him, now parts bread with him, pledges the breath of him in a divided draught, is the readiest man to kill him'. (I. ii. 39-49)

The images of eating and 'dipping meat in blood' are repellent and nauseous and have ironic overtones, unconsciously

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conjuring up the biblical vision of the disciples of Christ. Alongside this is the 'yellow, glittering, precious gold'-symbol of alienation in an acquisitive society — which makes 'Black, white; foul, fair; wrong, right; / Base, noble; old, young; coward, valiant' (IV, iii, 29-30) and

> Will knit and break religions, bless th'accurs'd
> Make the hoar leprosy ador'd, place thieves,
> And give them title, knee and approbation
> With senators on the bench. (IV, iii, 35-38)

That is, it is capable of subverting the nature of things and places an altogether different complexion on them from what they usually bear. It also tends to change the natural powers into mere qualities of objects and the latter are hence denuded of their real worth. Corruption and defilement of what is sacred and harmonious is integral to this process and gold standards by which everything is weighed and evaluated in Athens enjoy unimpeded currency there :

> thou bright defiler,
> Of Hymen's purest bed, ...
> Thou invisible god,
> That sold'rest close impossibilities,
> And mak'st them kiss; that speak'st with every tongue,
> To every purpose ! (IV, iii, 385-92)

Timon's diatribe against gold's serviceability and functioning underlines the confusion that reigns supreme in the Athenian society and it is subversive of order. It is also the leveller of social distinctions and its power of metamorphosis turns objects and living processes into mere ciphers. Timon's fulminations against gold as an externalizing force reminds us strongly of what the Bastard has to say about Commodity in *King John*. Timon himself tried to buy love with gold and thus developed for himself 'the tormenting phantoms' and self-delusions or what Blake calls 'the reptiles of the mind'.

Timon doubtless looks from the beginning as one who is bound to go bankrupt, for he can in no way control his excesses and tends to be swayed easily by empty adulations

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of his generosity. In his case the borders between nobility and stupidity constantly get blurred and become almost indistinguishable. His bounty knows no limits and his extravagance assumes grotesque forms. He is also neurotic and extremely self-regarding and feels nettled and exasperated when things turn awry and he is pestered by his creditors. He is scandalously credulous and his trust is more often than not betrayed by those who have basked in the sunshine of his favours. The Steward, supposed to hold his purse-strings in his hands, is one who not only proves himself worthy of the trust reposed in him but remains steadfast and unswerving in his loyalty to Timon: his heart in fact bleeds over the ruin Timon has brought on himself owing to his own impetuosity and lack of discretion. Towards the very end Timon pays him an eloquent and ungrudging tribute thus:

> Surely this man
> Was born of woman.
> Forgive my general and exceptless rashness,
> You perpetual-sober gods! I do proclaim
> One honest man. (IV, iii, 497-501)

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Hedged in by the messengers of his creditors and explicitly told by the Steward that whatever he owned was no longer his since it had been mortgaged Timon felt himelf unnerved and at sea. In sheer desperation he therefore turns to his erstwhile friends and admirers of his gifts and favours, for, ironically enough, he had persuaded himself earlier, 'O what a precious comfort 'tis to have so many like brothers commanding one another's fortunes' (I, ii, 101-103). The three of them, Luculius, Lucius and Sempronius, invariably prove themselves perfect and unconscionable hypocrites; they are almost like Judas's children, bent upon betraying Timon while simultaneously acknowledging, with oily tongues, both their indebtedness to him in the past and showing feigned concern and solicitude for his present financial embarrassments. The first to expose himself is Lucullus, who, after parading his fake sympathy for him and on being belied in his

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expectations of receiving some fresh gift from Timon and experiencing consequent disillusionment, refuses, pointblank, to lend him any money 'upon mere friendship and without any security'. Then Lucius, pretending surprise at Lucullus's obduracy, asserts that had Timon 'mistook him' for Lucullus in the first instance, he 'should never have denied his occasion so many talents'. He ends up by indulging in pure falsehood to the effect that he had lately invested his money in some undertaking and could, therefore, not spare any for Timon to help him retrieve himself in the face of this crisis. Lastly, Sempronius, sheltering himself under the same pretext that his own regard for Timon had been gratuiously scanted and undervalued, voices forth his resentment laconically thus: 'who bates mine honour shall not know my coin'. His pose of self–injury provides him a cover for concealing his blatant sense of ingratitude. 'How fairly this Lord strives to appear foul' : this scathing comment made by one of the servants is not applicable to Sempronius alone but amounts to a shrewd measuring up of the chicanery of all these hypocrites who look like ludicrous figures pacing up and down this world of fantasy. 'The three scenes, 'says Gomme, 'in which Timon's servants are repulsed by his false friends have a monstrous comedy in which the lords are caricatured'.[3] What is most annoying is their effrontery in rejecting Timon's request in a joint and corporate voice', freezing his messengers into opacity and cloaking their evasions and subterfuges under the cover of what W.H. Auden terms 'a set mask of rectitude'. Timon's judgment of them rests on the perception of an icy coldness which cleaves to their hearts:

These old fellows
Have their ingratitude in them hereditary;
Their blood is cak'd, 'tis cold, it seldom flows;
'Tis lack of kindly warmth they are not kind;

(II, ii, 218-221)

One of Timon's quirks visible in this context is ordering another feast immediately after this and to which all these ungrateful persons are invited. And as if to underline their

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lurid monstrosity they are made to offer ignoble apologies for not coming to his rescue when they were urgently required to do so.

To Timon is counterpoised Alcibiades; with the former's wilful introversion is contrasted the precise and sophisticated argumentativeness of the latter. Timon's hysterical frothiness looks all the more ridiculous when judged in the perspective of the Aristotelian 'mean' as practised by Alcibiades. He is seen at his best in his defence of Timon who, we are told, overcome by blind fury, 'stepp'd into the law' and therefore rendered himself vulnerable to the strictest punishment : he just cannot escape persecution. Timon is condemned by the Senators for lacking forbearance and thus over-reacting to the fact that his 'honour'had been traduced. In a neat and sustained chain of argument which is supported by examples culled from the various levels of experience Alcibiades establishes with irrefragable logic, that forbearance or 'suffering' is both inadequate and indefensible when one's fundamental loyalties, convictions or commitments are contravened: Timon, it may be inferred, is a victim of his own code of chivalrous honour. In upholding the validity of the sway of passion and thus 'disqualifying' the orthodoxy of Stoic resignation and yet insisting on the plea for reprieve on behalf of his friend Alcibiades is not playing the sophist, for he represents what Maxwell calls 'balanced humanity'.[4] He concedes that 'to be in anger' is impiety, but then to endure threats to one's 'honour' is no less so, and 'pity is the virtue of the law'. He advocates, as a last resort, that his own deserts be thrown as an additional weight into the scale for purposes of getting Timon's pardon for the crime committed only impulsively. But the Senators are in no way inclined to give leeway to one who, according to their judgment, wants 'to bring man-slaughter into form'. It appears that whereas the Senators are preoccupied with the abstract notion of equity—the mere husk of the law—Alcibiades insists on the validity of the spontaneous human reaction in a critical situation. When both logic and rhetoric fail to make any impact

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and the first Senator says categorically that 'He forfeits his own blood that spills another's' and Alcibiades maintains no less firmly and doggedly 'It must not be so', the latter, despite all the eminence and prestige he had so long enjoyed, is banished from Athens for ever. Although it looks as if this episode is a sudden eruption, with nothing that prepares for it and nothing that comes in its wake, yet it is validated by the fact that through it the character of Alcibiades is allowed to establish a norm and a point of reference for placing the vehemence and recklessness of Timon. Alcibiades emerges from this skirmish in this play-within-play as one who is dispassionate, clear-eyed and has the courage of his convictions and can stick to his guns to the last.

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The climactic point is reached when close on heels of Alcibiades's punishment Timon invites the bunch of treacherous and self-seeking flatterers to a mock banquet where covered dishes containing only luckewarm water are served and this water is wantonly thrown into their faces. One may well surmise that the dishes are covered presumably because they are to be served to those who manipulate to cover up their inner filth and sordidness under the veil of hypocritical attitudinizing : the guests are like 'pensil'd figures' presented as deeply engaged souls. It is a kind of macabre entertainment which serves as an instrument of retaliation against those 'trencher-friends', those 'time's flies' who quickly dissociate themselves from Timon, and with a degree of brazenness and perversity, when he had arrived at the nadir of his fortunes. His chagrin and disillusionment is betrayed by this withering, unequivocal utterance : 'Henceforth hated be/Of Timon, man and all humanity' (III, vi, 100-101). The scene ends up with throwing, pell-mell, 'jewel', 'cap' and 'gown' – symbols of utter confusion in the convivial world which is but a reflection and a symptom of the imbalance in Timon's own distraught mind. The play has many points of contact with *King Lear*: in both the protagonist is an unintegrated self but whereas Lear is only a victim of ingratitude maximized to the level of

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animal ferocity by Goneril and Regan, Timon has been subjected to the ghoulish experience of hypocrisy and fraud as well. Lear is also invested with tragic splendour and a depth of inwardness both of which are sadly lacking in Timon. The latter decides alittle later to turn his back, not unlike Coriolanus, upon Athens, abjure all human company and lead a life of ostracism and withdrawal : 'Timon will to the woods, where he shall find / Th'unkindest beast more kinder than mankind' (iv, i, 35-36).

It is, however, intriguing to observe that, inspite of his having been driven to the brink of disaster, the Steward and some of Timon's personal servants —'implements of a ruin'd house' — persevere in their initial allegiance to him very much like Antony's friends, particularly Eros who was overwhelmed by vibrant emotions, when their master was on the verge of committing suicide. The Third Servant speaks to the following effect :

> Leak'd is our bark,
> And we, poor mates, stand on the dying deck,
> Hearing the surges threat; we must all part
> Into this sea of air. (IV, ii, 19-22)

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And the Steward, inspired by genuine feelings and speaking with dignified simplicity and candour, strikes the note of human fellowship thus: '... for Timon's sake, / Let's yet be fellows'. His telling words are loaded with significance when he says : 'Who would be so mocked with glory, or to live, / But in a dream of friendship' (Iv, ii, 33–34), and passes his verdict on the vicissitudes of Timon's life in a pithy statement thus : '... thy great fortunes / Are made thy chief afflictions' (Iv, ii, 43-44). The Steward's first utterance reflects upon the ambivalence between appearance and reality in which Timon has been unwittingly involved and the latter one is equivalent to the vision of transparent sympathy and affection which contrasts strikingly and compellingly with the pose of perfidious hypocrisy and hollowness put up by the fawning lords not unlike that of some of the disciples of Christ.

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Removing the distorting mirror placed by the flatterers, Apemantus puts another one before Timon in which he may catch a fleeting glimpse of himself unobtrusively: the former is capable of looking through all shams, communicating his perceptions with a carping tongue and never misses any opportunity of touching Timon's raw wounds. Apemantus can afford to stand apart from the immediate scene of action and develop that degree of detachment which has the effect of depersonalizing his own identity. Very much like the fool in *King Lear*, perhaps with even greater incisiveness, he tends to bandy arguments with Timon with a view to moderating his imperiousness as well as jolting him out of his black melancholy and breaking his mental cobwebs. He is not just a snarler as Kenneth Muir[5] would have us believe, and despite the ruggedness of his exterior represents the muted undertone of sanity in the play. To the cynical and nihilistic mood pervasive in Timon, Apemantus continues to add a sharp edge. And yet one cannot deny his uncanny insight and his capacity to seize upon the tacit implications of a given situation or utterance. His comment on the masque of Ladies as Amazons is shot through with penetrating insight :

> What a sweep of vanity comes this way.
> They dance? They are madwomen.
> Like madness is the glory of this life,
> As this pomp shows to a little oil and root. (I. ii. 128-31)

His favourite weapon for disconcerting others is the use of the language of paradox and he gives a wholly unexpected twist to whatever is the focus of concentration in a particular context. His comments are far from being an expression of personal petulance; on the contrary, they are cast in a philosophical mould and are characterized by an epigrammatic terseness and lucidity. Unlike the Fool in *King Lear*, Apemantus does not use bawdy language but he does employ quicK and snappy wit and rebounding retorts which always go home and his verbal thrusts are lethal and irresistible. His assesment of Timon : 'The middle of humanity thou ne'er

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knew'st but the extremity of both ends' is a very fair and objective estimate of the latter's line of approach. His mental alertness is amazing and his responses are almost always indeterminate. His whole endeavour is directed towards making Timon see the nakedness of Truth and making him re-draw, if he possibly can, the world on the perilous edge of which he has been standing so long. *Apropos of* Timon, Apemantus's role is that of a stern warner or moralizer who would in no way relent or equivocate. He himself refers to his own role thus : 'If I should be brib'd, too, there would be none left to rail upon thee, and then thou wouldst sin the faster' (I,ii,240-242). One can hardly ignore the fact that this is an oblique way of calling his generosity 'wicked prodigality'.

In his state of voluntarily chosen isolation Timon turns outrageous in his rising hatred of the world and humankind; his ingrown discontent now becomes crystallized and staggering. It is some indication of his corrosive self-pity as well as dignified pathos that when Apemantus, in a bid to relieving the burden of his misery, offers to soothe him he counters by 'I had rather be alone' (IV,iii,99). Earlier, the second Servant, moved by genuine compassion, had commented wfth remarkable perspicacity thus :

> and his poor self,
> A dedicated beggar to the air,
> With his disease of all-shunn'd poverty,
> Walks like contempt, alone. (IV, ii, 12-15)

The channels of communication and mutual sympathy between him and the outside world are completely disrupted and he has not a soul to turn to for purposes of unpacking his heart. He gives a tangible form to his sense of desertion by the former servile flatterers and opportunists thus :

> The mouths, the tongues, the eyes and hearts of men...
> That numberless upon me stuck, as leaves
> Do on the oak, have wifh one winter's brush
> Fell from their boughs and left me open, bare,
> For every storm that blows — (IV, iii, 263-68)

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The basic image used here is evocative of a wintry landscape, the process of decadence and falling-off is at the centre of it and it very well accords with Timon's acute feeling that he now stands bereft of all that sustained and boosted up his self-image.

When Alcibiades's effort to obtain reprieve for Timon fails the latter is shaken to the base and feels cauterized so much so that he renounces Athens, and the iron of hatred, however irrational it many seem, penetrates his inmost heart. Like Lear in an identical situation he flings large and deep curses on it and invokes the powers and potencies of Nature to operate against it. He formalizes his sense of violent indignation thus :

> Plagues incident to men,
> Your potent and infectious fevers keep
> On Athens ripe for stroke! (IV, i, 21-23)

His retreat into the woods is a symptom of deepening cynicism: an impulse to cut himself adrift from all human contact and which feeds itself on utter negation is no less evident. To it is also added an apocalyptic fear for the doomed Athens. Seized bv a mood of frenzy and even in the initial stage of disillusionment Lear had called upon the powers of Nature to strike his two pernicious daughters, Goneril and Regan, with sterility, for a more sinister imprecation cannot be poured upon a woman. Likewise, on his first entrance into the woods, Timon invokes the Sun — universal symbol of fertility and gestation — to contaminate the sublunary world with infection so that it is rendered irredeemiably barren and unfrutuous :

> O blessed breeding sun, draw from the earth
> Rotten humidity; below thy sister's orb
> Infect the air ! (IV, iii,1-3)

Timon's bounty was marred, as pointed out earlier, by his inordinate susceptibility to flattery and this contributed in no small measure to the growth of a bloated self-hood in him. Disdainful of any restraining influence or forethought as he is, his love of extravagance is carried to its farthest length and borders

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upon utter stupidity. He seems to be as ineradicably prodigal in hurling curses as he was moved by his 'high-souled' generosity in giving away large sums of money on the slightest pretext earlier. His loathing and hatred of mankind is in inverse proportion to the love he had bought and mistakenly enjoyed in the past. It may be gauged in terms of his having rather the companionship of beasts than that of human beings, and this preference is both disgraceful and putrifying: 'Timon will to the woods, where he shall find / Th'unkindest beast more kinder than mankind' (IV.i, 35-36). Timon's mentor, Apemantus, communicates a similar perception which is both incisive and penetrating: 'The Commonwealth of Athens is become a forest of beasts'. But the real beasts are anyway preferred by Timon to man turned bestial - emblems of rapacity, greed and ravenousness. His misanthropy reaches acme when, overpowered by the fury of blind passion, he perceives nothing but radical evil which has pulverised the very roots of being. He is completely swamped by negative emotions, sees nothing but unrelieved darkness around him and wishes humankind, gone morally bankrupt, to be annihilated beyond any hope of redemption :

> all's obliquy;
> There's nothing level in our cursed natures
> But direct villainy. Therefore be abhorr'd
> All feasts, societies, and throngs of men!
> His semlable, yea, himself, Timon disdains,
> Destruction fang mankind! (IV, iii, 18-23)

In such a state of total gloom, brought on so devastatingly by awareness of the falsity of his erstwhile friends, Timon becomes maddeningly enraged and makes a further appeal to nature thus :

> Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb;
> Let it no more bring out ingrateful man,
> Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves and bears;
> Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face
> Hath to the marbled mansion all above
> Never presented, (IV, iii, 189-94)

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Timon's revulsion is partly rooted in his reaction to the Athenian society which is an acquisitive society and in which the power of money is responsible for the dissolution of all bonds of sympathy and solidarity among men. Here money regulates human relationships and in it the organic rhythms of life are atrophied and everything is swallowed by the dull round of sameness. In such a society cash-nexus becomes, as suggested earlier, too, the ultimate criterion of Value, and all personal loyalties and allegiances stand suspect, 'Gold' in *Timon of Athens* is therefore the symbol of destructive materialiam and necessitates a fundamental change in the accepted patterns of behaviour. It may very well alter the complexion and proportion of things by destabilizing them and is more often than not the symptom of the decay of civilization. 'Root', on the contrary, being symbolic of elemental nature, may facilitate the process of renewal and reintegration. It may be of some interest to keep spotlit in mind the fact that the Poet and the Painter reappear to exploit Timon now that he has suddenly discovered gold while he was engaged in digging the root. From Timon's malevolent treatmant of them — they are rejected as 'naturals', — follows the deduction that art may be prostituted for mercenary ends, for grabbing gold in this case. Both these characters are also emblems of hypocrisy, and the exposure of hypocrisy, dramatized through them and the three Lords, seems to be a crucial subsidiary theme in the play.

With the sense of festering corruption generated by the power of money also goes the wrench which is caused by sex-nausea; it seems to me that it enjoys pride of place among the various constituents of Timon's psychic make-up. He is made aware of it pointedly by the presence of Phrynia and Timandra — 'the brace of harlots' kept by Alcibiades and who are part of his personal retinue. The far-reaching implications of the worship of 'gold' or money and the sway of 'blood' get interwoven in Timon's subconscious mind. As his trial in absentia for committing man-slaughter, intensifyinghis hatred of Athens, comes to an end, and as he enters at the opening

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of Act Iv he calls upon Nature to spread infectious diseases in the world of man. This invocation has now become part of the comprehensive sweep of indictment which he relishes to invoke :

> Matrons, turn incontinent!...
> To general filths
> Convert, o'th' instant, green virginity!...
> Maid, to thy master's bed;
> Thy mistress is o'th' brothel; ...
> Thou cold sciatica,
> Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
> As lamely as their manners!...
> Itches, blains,
> Sow all th'Athenian bosoms, and their crop
> Be general leprosy! (IV, i, 3-30)

And to Timandra he blurts out in such caustic terms as these :

> Be a whore still. They love thee not that use thee.
> Give them diseases, leaving with thee their lust.
> Make use of thy salt hours; season the slaves
> For tubs and baths; bring down rose-cheek'd youth
> To the tub-fast and the diet, (IV, iii, 84-88)

The corrupting power of money and the monstrous hypocrisy displayed by its shallow adulators —'these pensil'd figures' as they are dubbed by Timon quite early–set up morbid reactions in the reader. Sex-aberration is the main component in the general comlex of corruption and Timon feels so incensed against humanity that he wishes it to be pushed into the darkest region of degradation. His horrified imagination finds a sort of satisfaction in visualizing that humankind may let itself be preyed upon by all that is filthy, sordid and atrocious. Lear, sharing a similar psychic predicament, observes, with in the implicit approbation, the fact of promiscuity which is rampant whole of creation :

> What was thy cause?
> Adultery?
> Thou shalt not die: die for adultery! No:
> The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
> Does lecher in my sight.

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> Let copulation thrive; for Gloucester's bastard son
> Was kinder to his father than my daughters
> Got 'tween the lawful sheets. To't, luxury, pell-mell!
> (IV, vi, 112-119)

And borne on the same swelling tide of disgust he adds alittle later :

> there's hell, there's darkness,
> There is the sulphurous pit — burning; scalding,
> Stench, consumption; fie, fie, fie! pah, pah!
> Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary,
> To sweeten my imagination. (IV, vi, 129-33)

Both the passages from *Timon* and *Lear* reflect the deepening cynicism and intensification of nausea and loathing but they are qualitatively different from each other both in accent and intention. Timon wishes that anarchic sexuality, resulting from unbridled libidinal indulgence, may be unleashed and disintegrate the very fabric of ordered, social life. Lear concedes it as an ineluctable experience–a phenomenon which is unquestionably universal. Timon derives masochistic pleasure from it and it validates his whole-sale condemnation of humankind. Lear, on the contrary, ridicules and castigates the moral sqeamishness at having to observe and undermine it, for rooted in human instincts, sexuality is practised at all levels of the created universe. In another instance, his pathetic plea for the sweetening of imagination is uttered from the depths of tragic experience and makes us envision a state of existence which is cankered, dungy and mortally offensive and therefore stands in need of being changed into its polar opposite. Further, whereas Timon's utterance amounts to a hysterical outburst, Lear's expression of his sense of sacrilege, comparatively speaking, is artistically controlled and is characterized by a tautness of organization.

It may be worth mentioning that the man beast-juxtaposition assumes another dimension in a bit of colloquy between Timon and Apemantus, both being living embodiments of 'poor, unmanly melancholy' :

> Tim. What wouldst thou do with the world,
> Apemantus, if it lay in thine power?

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Apem. Give it the beasts, to be rid of the men,
Tim. Wouldst thou have thyself fall in the confusion of men, and remain a beast with the beasts?
Apem. Ay, Timon.
Tim. A lovely ambition, which the gods grant thee t' attain to.
(IV, iii. 321-29)

Timon's tenacious and implacable hatred of mankind makes him betray his awareness of the fact of predatoriness visible in the animal kingdom. In other words, even animals, preferred to men earlier (like horses in Swift's *Gulliver's Fourth Voyage)* themselves become degraded, engaged as they are in a cut-throat competition and the stronger ones are urged on instinctively to bring about the annihilation of those who are below or weaker than themselves (Cf. Iv,iii, 328-43). Thus the choice of the beasts as against dehumanized fellow beings becomes a dubious option and likely to be withdrawn.

Timon's besetting sin is self-exaltation rather than self-exculpation, and he has become incapacitated to outgrow his failings and entertain a wider vision of humankind at large, to travel back from hatred and misanthropy into the domain of love and compassion despite the scars which the maimed self has left behind it. Timon's brusque treatment of the cringing lords, the Senators, the Poet, the Painter and the bandits is alike dictated by misanthropy which is born of his deeply bruised egotism and his arbitrariness and eccentricity. He is never prompted by the impulse towads those gropings after self-knowledge which Lear ultimately achieves, never develops that kind of wisdom and humility which is indistinguishable from charity. Timon never wholly recovers from the shock of being abandoned by the ignominous knot of 'mouth-friends' and the state of Athens which is rotten to the core and which holds them in its firm grip. He therefore continues to remain estranged and embittered and for ever haunted by the ghost of dereliction :

It is vain that you would speak with Timon;
For he is set so only to himself,
That nothing but himself, which looks like man,
Is friendly with him. (V, i. 115-118)

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While informing the Steward about his proposed epitaph Timon speaks to the following effect :

> My long sickness
> Of health and living now begins to mend,
> And nothing brings me all things. (V, i, 185-87)

This awareness of 'nothing' or Infinitude in the existential sense—not unlike Cordelia's 'Nothing, my Lord'—to which all aspects of contingent being are juxtaposed or which represents 'the all-embracing finality crowning existence' may insinuate what G. Wilson Knight designates as 'a gradual unfurling towards maturity'[6]. One may, however, venture to enter the caveat in hot haste that this 'over-balance of the positive' remains hardly more than a momentary impulse, a fugitive and isolated incident in the wider spectrum, for it is swamped very soon by the gathering clouds of pessimism, the absolute, non-perceptual, unrelieved chaos against which nothing really holds together. His choice of 'his everlasting mansion/ Upon the beach'd verge of the salt flood' — acceptance of solitude shadowed with darker tones, and his taking the Steward into his confidence by adding : 'Lips, let sour words go by and language end : /What is amiss, plague and infection mend' (V, i, 219-220) are pointers that he has failed to bring his fragmented psyche to a state ef wholeness and equilibrium–extinction of words being symbolic of the dissolution of all entanglements. 'Language', as Agostino Lombardo puts it, 'has built another illusion, and Timon's rebellion extinguishes itself with the extinction of words'[7]. It is the Steward Flavius who speaks so feelingly about this broken pyramid of a man :

> O you gods!
> Is yond despis'd and ruinous man my lord?
> Full of decay and failing! O monument
> And wonder of good deeds evilly bestow'd! (IV, iii. 461-64)

This may be paralleled with the vision of the identical collapse of Lear as eloquently and perceptively phrased by Gloucester : 'O ruin'd piece of Nature' — collapse of a potentially tremend-

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ous power in both which yet contained within itself the seeds of death and destruction.

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M. M. Reese

MASTERS AND MEN

Some Reflections on *The Tempest*

When Prospero first came to the island his relationship with Caliban was cordial, even constructive. Instead of just exploiting him as cheap labour, Prospero taught him to name the sun and the moon, 'took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour One thing or other... endowed thy purposes with words'. (The Folio gives I ii 351-62 to Miranda but sentiments and diction are Prospero's.) Caliban responded by showing him 'all the qualities of the isle', for 'then I lov'd thee'.

Harmony was broken by his attempt to rape Miranda and people the isle with Calibans. (He assumes his own genetic superiority and is confident that his offspring would take after himself rather than their mother.) For this he is confined to a solitary cave, and his profit from learning human speech is that he knows how to curse. So close is Shakespeare's identification with the character that Caliban is only able to wish on Prospero things that are abhorrent to himself: the rancid dew his mother brushed from unwholesome fen, the blistering wind, toads, beetles, bats.

'I have us'd thee—Filth as thou art—with human care', but Prospero's experiment in authoritarian benevolence has foundered on the obdurate wretchedness of the material. We needs must love the highest when we see it and Camelot falls if we do not. Although Caliban has been shown the way to better things, he remains a savage 'which any print of goodness will not take,' a pitiable object stirred to greater resentment by the kindness and scraps of knowledge he has received. Where Ariel finally teaches compassion and responds to the challenge of freedom, Caliban remains enslaved by his appetites.

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His vision of Camelot is revealed when he meets Trinculo and Stephano and tastes celestial liquor. 'I' ll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject, for that liquor is not earthly' and its bearer must have dropped from heaven: 'I prithee be my god'. To this 'wondrous man' he will disclose the treasures of the island, things precious to himself but lacking in appeal to Stephano:

> I prithee, let me bring you where crabs grow;
> And I with my long nails will dig thee pig-nuts;
> Show thee a jay's nest, and instruct thee how
> To snare the nimble marmoset; I'll bring thee
> To clust'ring filberts, and sometimes I'll get thee
> Young scamels from the rock.

In consecutive sentences Caliban 'has a new master' and proclaims the high-day of freedom. Already he has forgotten that until Prospero took the island from him he was 'mine own king'. Nor does it occur to his bemused senses that when the butt of wine on which Stephano has floated from shipwreck is exhausted, there will be no more celestial liquor.

He has not forgotten, however, that Prospero's art is more potent than the charms of Sycorax and the god Setebos, and he realises that this must be overcome before his new master may possess the island.

> Do that good mischief which may make this island
> Thine own for ever and I, thy Caliban,
> For aye thy foot-licker.

In his crude determination to be avenged on Prospero, who once treated him kindly, he will surrender his own supposed rights in Miranda to Stephano, whose bed she will become 'and bring thee forth brave brood'. Prospero is vulnerable because, as with Hamlet's father, 'tis a custom with him I' th'afternnon to sleep'. Caliban does not intend to do the killing personally but he offers advice from his own ways of exterminating lesser creatures on the island where formerly he was king : brain him, batter his skull with a log, paunch him with a stake or 'cut his wezand with thy knife'.

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'Let me be jocund,' he says when the enterprise is agreed, but the first requirement, even before the wezand is split, is

> First to possess his books; for without them
> He's but a sot, as I am.

Specifically Caliban means the books from which Prospero has learned his magic, but to people like Caliban, as to the followers of Jack Cade, 'books' are the weapons educated men use to keep honest labourers in thrall. In to-day's divided world this is perhaps the most tragic conflict. Education is agreed to be everyone's right, but beware the man or woman who shows talent above the average. The 'priviledged' have to be reducad to mediocrity. Ironically the plotters are turned from their fell purpose when Prospero bids Ariel fetch some 'trumpery' from his cave to decoy them from their path. The clowns turn aside to seize the tinsel trash, leaving Caliban to his last lament :

> I will have none on't : we shall lose our time,
> And all be turned to barnacles, or to apes
> With foreheads villainous low.

At least he has learned something.

The Tempest is a complex play that defies full interpretation either in literary appraisal or in stage performance. Directors in the theatre tend to reduce Caliban to the level of comic knockabout and extract what laughter they can from his scenes with the two clowns. When likewise Prospero's severity mellows as he promises to forswear his magic, the connection between the two characters may be forgotten : which is regrettable because here, as in nearly all his plays, Shakespeare has reflected on the duties of authority, responsibility and obedience.

Prospero had not been a successful ruler in Milan and he is a failure also on the island. Even with Ariel he is ungracious, demanding repeated services in return for deliverance from the cloven pine and showing some reluctance to set him free. The attempt to educate Caliban is commendable but has lacked understanding. In his language and his limited perception

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of 'the qualities o' th' isle' Caliban has shown what sort of creature he is and Prospero reacts unreasonably to the attempted violation of Miranda. In lodging Caliban in their own cell, what did he expect?

For this instinctive act Caliban is dismissed from sympathetic consideration. He is at once the poisonous slave 'capable of all ill', 'a born devil on whose nature Nurture can never stick'. These denunciations imply a racial and genetic exclusiveness that would deny to thousands of human beings any prospest of education and civilised self-improvement.

By offering hope and then withdrawing it Prospero has left Caliban unhappier and more degraded than he found him: a terrible warning against 'enlightenment' based on bookish theory rather than genuine human sympathy. Caliban becomes a symbol of all disadvantaged people to whom reformers and politicians offer doles and promises. Stephano is not consciously offering anything when he asks Caliban to share a drink and he is surprised by the response. Caliban will follow him for ever, licking his feet with every stride. switching his allegiance and supposing this to be freedom. He learns better when the drink runs out and Prospero has destroyed the conspiracy. He is sorry to have been taken in by a drunken fool (but who really was the fool?) and he will be wise hereafter 'and seek for grace': Shakespeare is cuttingly ironical here because whatever wisdom Caliban may achieve hereafter, he has as yet no perception of the spiritual 'grace' that had acquired diverse and sophisticated meanings in the Elizabethan world. Even in his search for future wisdom he meant no more, in modern terms, than that he would change his vote at the next election.

This is the sad fate of Calibans who are led towards 'improvement' but denied understanding and the opportunity for full development. In modern societies they are dangerous. Their grievance starts with people like Prospero who offer benefits but despise the recipient. Against this even Caliban will mutiny in time, and attach himself to the supposedly uninterrupted flow of celestial liquor. In the scenes with Stephano

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we may see the chattering impotence to which the acceptance of doles may reduce a man, or one who is less than a man : whether the dispenser be a guiltless Stephano, a 'philosophic' Prospero or a political bandit a great deal more sinister than either of these.

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Maqbool H. Khan

E. E. STOLL AND THE BRADLEIAN TRAGEDIES

Error in Shakespearian criticism, said Stoll, is never killed, and lessons, it might be added, are seldom learnt. Stoll was speaking about[1] the nineteenth century German craze for tracking down unifying central ideas in each one of Shakespeare's plays. He believed the generalisation to be universally valid though he made an exception in this case and hopefully thought that the British critic R. G. White of an earlier generation had successfully disposed of the aberration. Writing this in1933 he little realized that soon the Shakespearian scene was going to be swamped by perhaps the still more rigorously schematising and unity-hunting thematic studies of the late'thirties. The early work of Wilson Knight had already appeared and had been taken note of by Stoll in his major Shakespearian book.[2] (Whether he had cared to absorb the import of Knight's criticism and made an effort to synthesize it with his own complex approach is a different story and may be touched upon later). The abstracting, dramatically reductive though poetically sensitive 'thematic' criticism of L.C. Knights and Derek Traversi had yet to appear and dominate the scene for a couple of decades. The thematic studies of the middle years of the twentieth century were no doubt a far cry from whatever might be found to have resembled them in earlier criticism; in fact, they were a necessary extension to the field of Shakespearian appreciation of the modernist poetic[3] and hence a phenomenon without precedence. In effect, however, such studies did encourage an excessively solemn concern with imagistically and symbolically apprehended ethical patterns in particular plays or groups of plays. It is possible, within limits, even to say that the 'new'

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It is also a fact that some of his theories, the ones that got him particular recognition, are related to his emphasis on Shakespeare's use of *Elizabethan* conventions—for example, the one about motivating the delay or another about the caluminator credited. There is throughout marked stress laid on what Shakespeare's audience would have appreciated in his plays or how they would have reacted to a particular element in his art. Stoll also draws our attention again and again to the partial validity of Robert Bridges' criticism of Shakespeare[7], partial in that he does not seem to agree with Bridges, contention that the factors circumscribing and limiting Shakespeare's imaginative freedom—the influence of the audience—bring us to the verge of exasperation and were responsible for imperfections and inconsistencies in Shakespeare's art. The reservation notwithstanding, there are throughout in Stoll's writings approving references to Bridges' 'realistic' criticism of Shakespeare. Besides the evidence cited above giving a 'historicist' touch to Stoll's criticism there is also the additional fact of his early studies of Elizabethan dramatic conventions in monographs like 'Shakespeare, Marston and the Malcontent Type' (1905), There are, no doubt, more references to lesser Elizabethan and Jacobean drama in his criticism than in *Shakespearian Tragedy*. Stoll's continued insistence on an approach to the poet's intention in the study of literature goes to create the same historicist impression though (as we shall soon see) the real import of this doctrine in Stoll is of a different order and rests on other than historicist foundations. The impression nevertheless persists that the injunction to 'read each work of Wit/With the same spirit that its author writ' (Pope) or to study 'in everything the end aimed at' (Aristotle) or '*determiner ce qu'un auteur a voulu faire, et comment il l'a faire*' (Sainte-Beauve) is an exhortation to come to terms with the historical background or environment of a work of art and not to introduce anachronistic considerations (latter-day philosophies, insights or techniques) into the study of literature. Historicism in most cases may be found to be a logical corollary of the 'intentional' doctrine:

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Shakespeare must have been, for example, all the time conscious of the audience for whon he was writing his plays and he must have been deliberately intending to cater to their taste. He might even have taken care to accommodate his art to the varying tastes of the public and private playhouses. If such indeed be the case it would be essential for us to learn as much as we can about his theatre, the varied composition of his audience, their expectations, mental outlook and taste in other related arts. As a consequence of all this the critic will have to assume the role of a literary researcher. The fact that much has already been written about the doctrine relating to the poet's intention (or the intentional fallacy, as some would have it) and the issue is settled now (in the way all such issues are generally settled) goes without saying. That in Stoll's critical writings the stress on the poet's intention is part of a comprehensive doctrine of objectivity, the attempt to come to terms with the reality of Shakespeare's art as 'in itself it really is,' an expression of the commendable critical desire to divest one's critical self of personal and contemporary preocccupations, is something we shall presently see in considerable detail. What we are concerned with here is the fact that Stoll's reiteration of the intentional doctrine (brought into focus in the 'Dogmata Critica' put together at the opening chapter in *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* gives the impression that Stoll pleaded for the adoption of a historical approach to Shakespeare in contradistinction to the purely analytical approach adopted by Bradley in *Shakespearian Tragedy* and elsewhere.

There is no denying the fact that Stoll did react against Bradley and was quite in sympathy with those who did the same and somehow, and in varying degrees, felt that the very perfection of the Bradleian scheme for the major tragedies failed in some significant ways to conform to the facts of Shakespearian drama, that Bradley had discovered for Shakespeare greater psychological and philosophical coherence than Shakespeare would have cared to acknowledge as his own. Stoll's reaction against Bradley, however, was not mainly motivated by

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considerations of the adequacy or otherwise of the historical background in Bradley; it was primarily concerned with the question of an objective approach to Shakespeare, an approach that would take into account the nature of the art it had set about to analyse and elucidate. Bradley had not, Stoll would seem to say, concerned himself enough with the basic questions involved in a study of Shakespearian drama : the exigencies of the theatre, the requirements of the dramatic mode, the elements of the art of fiction both narrative as well as dramatic, the artifices in which great art is always rooted and through which alone it achieves its characteristic effects (artifices that are universal and not confined only to the Elizabethan age). Stoll's own criticism is both analytical and comparative. In his earlier essays, no doubt, he lays stress on an analysis of Elizabethan dramatic conventions, particulary those relating to the Malcontent and Revenger types, the presentation of the supernatural or the Jew in Elizabethan drama and the apparent lack of motivation in the villains. The range of reference, however, is never, not even in the early essays, confined merely to Elizabethan drama. The scope of his comparative studies, particularly in his later, more characteristic work, is wide enough to include both ancient and modern drama and the narrative mode of fiction.

Moreover, Stoll is not at all concerned with the intellectual background of the Elizabethan age, the *forte* of the historical critics like Hardin Craig, Theodore Spencer and E. M. W. Tillyard. He was, in fact, totally out of sympathy with Theodore Spencer's distinguished attempt to place Shakespeare's mind in the context of the basic intellectual conflict of the Elizabethan age. Here is what he says about one of the finest examples of the application of the historical method :

In the eagerness of the critic to match the art or poetry with the period he is often liable to being taken in by his own words. Like Professor Matthiessen's 'debate' is Professor Theodore Spencer's 'conflict'. The latter scholar, finding in Shakespeare's time...both faith and doubt, optimism and pessimism, a school of poetry that reflects the joy of livfng and also one that, like Marston's and Webster's, reflects gloom and cynicism, declares that 'when Shakespeare's development as a craftsman reached

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its climax, this conflict also reached its climax'; and thereupon adds, 'we shall soon attempt to discover how Shakespeare, practising the type of writing which relies on conflict, was able to use it. 'The time was ripe for tragedy'; but how does Professor Spencer, at this late day, know so much about the chronology?

The attempt 'to match the art or poetry with the period', to trace the lineaments of the age—its failings and its excellence — in the work of the artist, is what the historical method is about in the Shakespeare criticism of Dryden and Johnson, Taine and Dowden; to study Shakespeare against the background of Elizabethan psychology and pneumatology, popular folk-lore and communal festivities, literary and theatrical trends, the sources, analogues and prototypes of the plays, the late medieval *Weltanchauung* and its shocking disintegration, is what the historical approach has come to mean in the more sophisticated and scholarly criticism of the twentieth century. Out of the items listed above and associated with historicism the only one in which Stoll could be said to be interested in the earlier phase of his career was that relating to the theatrical conventions of Elizabethan drama – the presentation of the ghosts, criminals and other fictional types. Right from the beginning the scope of his study was wide enough to go beyond mere enumeration and definition of Elizabethan dramatic and theatrical conventions to include in its purview more general issues relating to aesthetic problems. It is indeed quite possible to include him among the major contributors to the debate on the nature of drama between the proponents and opponents of realism. If an attempt is made to find in his work any trends or tendencies linking him thus with the over-all design of twentieth century Shakespearian criticism, then he has to be placed, not among the realistic and scholarly historical critics, but among the early modernists. If the symbolist, imagery-oriented criticism of the 'thirties is to be regarded – and it may rightly be done so – as an offshoot of the modernist revolution in poetry, then the anti-realism Shakespearian criticism of Stoll, artifice and convention oriented and opposed to simplistic notions of verisimilitude,

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may legitimately be approached as an analogue and ally of the modern, sophisticated, self-conscious, symbolic and poetic drama. It is not fortuitous that the Dogmata Critica in Stoll's major book include passages from Aristotle and Coleridge as well as Percy Lubbock and T. S. Eliot. The clue to Stoll's approach to Shakespeare is to be found not in his manifest anti-Bradleianism nor in the 'realism' of Robert Bridges' well-known essay (which, incidentally, he had not read till after he had completed his study of *Hamlet* in 1919[12]) nor even in the proximity of his position to Schuking's equally distinguished (though a litte negative) Shakespearian criticism, but in his opposition to a realistic dramatic theory, to all that William Archer's naturalistic approach to drama came later to symbolise and signify. Stoll had insisted again and again that his criticism was not negative but 'positive and constructive' (his favourite words), the implication being that he held a well considered view of dramatic art and that he approached Shakespeare in that context. Commentators who evisage Stoll as pleading the case of an Eiizabethan Shakespeare merely because he focuses attntion on some of the theatrical conventions of the Elizabethan age do him an injustice since he was engaged in a critical activity of wider scope. If a clue is to be found anywhere as to what Stoll's aim was, it is to be found in a passage such as the follwoing included in his Dogmata Critica:

> L'art dramatique est 1'ensemble des conventions universelles ou locales, eternelles ou temporaires, a l' aide desquelles en representant la vie humaine sur un theatre, on donne a un public l'illusion de la verite.
>
> Francisque Sarcey, *Essai d'une Esthtique de Theatre.*

The illusion of reality rather than reality itself, the transcript of his sense of fact rather than the fact (as Pater put it) is what the great artist's work is concerned with, and this objective it achieves by keeping the gap between life and art as wide as possible. The mediation between the two, between art and life, takes place through conventions, universal or local, long-lasting or short-lived. Conventions are the medium of drama-

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tic art through which a sense of life transpires; they help in creating irony and conflict, and therefore contrast or parallel, accumulation and compression. 'And for that effect at its simplest, in mere poetry', says Stoll, 'there must be metaphor'. The function of poetry is, says Stoll, echoing Dame Sitwell, to heighten consciousness. The aim of dramatic art is 'to imitate life, not truly and faithfully, but, as with all art, in such a fashion — within the limits of medium and tradition, of the *mores* and the imagination — as to force us to think and feel' (*Art and Artifice*, p. 162). This, the positive core in Stoll's thought — present from the beginning though brought into sharper focus in the later book—is in keeping with the developments in modernist critical theory, with the view of drama as myth and ritual and with that relating to the 'interpretative' and 'metaphoric' status of art.

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II

Some of Stoll's critical essays that might help us to appreciate his Shakepearian criticism are concerned with the relationship between art and life and the emotional effect of poetry. One of the recurring themes in his criticism is his categorical denial of any link between art and life, specially contemporary life. Such a position is only partly Aristotelian though elsewhere, and at a later stage of his argument, he makes ample use of Aristotle. In denying the mimetic function of art he does not totally repudiate the possibility that in characterisation a sense of life and a causal link between character and action may be found to exist though life-like psychological consistency is not essential to fine characterisation which may indeed be found to co-exist in great art with a good deal of psychological improbability. In his essay, 'Literature and Life' (1924) he does not raise theoretical issues but, operating on a more matter of fact historical level, seeks to demolish the historicist argument. The popular view since the days of Herder and the late seventeenth century empiricists had been that literature was deeply and pervasively linked

with life and with the age in which it was produced. Taine in the nineteenth century had presented the view of the bicgraphical, the contemporary and the national character of literature in an extreme form. To the empiricist metaphor of mind as a *tabula rasa* the nineteenth century had added its post-Darwinian botanical model of a plant determined morphologically by its environment; Dowden's opening chapter in *Shakespeare : A Study of His Mind and Art* seeks to discover the roots of Shakespeare's mind in the Elizabethan age. Bradley did not use a historical model in his Shakespearian criticism but the thoroughgoing causality and psychological consistency of his approach bespeak a constant reference to real life and a denial, so to say, of the autonomy of the world of the play. In opposition to all this Stoll repudiates all external reference in literature; art is self-contained and self-cosistent, creating through its artifices of distortion, compression and accumulation an illusion of life and aiming at a profound emotional, hortative effect on the reader or the spectator. 'Literature is ... not life, neither history nor material for history, but a scroll whereon are traced and charactered the unfettered thoughts of writer and reader, — a life within a life, fancy somewhat at odds with fact' (*Shakespeare Studies*, pp. 39-40). In *Art and Artifice* he is more categorical : 'Drama ... is no 'document''. Not a social document, of course—that question has not here arisen — but not even a ''human' one' (p. 167). The only concession Stoll is willing to make is with regard to literature reflecting the artistic taste of the contemporary society: 'Literature reflects the taste of the time rather than time itself, and often the two are widely different' *(Shakespeare Studies, p.39)*. The remarkable reasonableness and self-control of the heroes of classical French tragedy and the totally contrasted elements of passion and violence in the protagonists of seventeenth century heroic tragedy in England do not reflect the differences in social mores of the two countries; the difference is indicative of the striking divergence of the taste for tragedy in the two communities. The crucial case that Stoll mentions again

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and again is that of Restoration Comedy. He quotes Lamb's judgment with approval that 'they (the seventeenth century comedies of Manner) are a world of themselves almost as much as fairyland'. It is not romantic literature alone that perverts and distorts social or contemporary reality, but even in art created under realistic and naturalistic auspices, artifice and convention play an important role. It is at this stage that Stoll reverts to Aristotle, making a fine distinction between verisimilitude and actual reality. Quoting Dryden he says:

> 'The spirit of man cannot be satisfied but with truth, or at least verisimility' says Dryden, echoing Aristotle; but only verisimility is what, art drama and more specially, among great drama, that of Shakespeare, bestow. It is not reality, or even perfect consistency, but an illusion, and, above all, an illusion whereby the spirit of man shall be moved. (*Art and Artifice*, p.168)

'Literature and Life Again' (1932) is a later, and better documented, essay on the same subject and helpful in an understanding of Stoll's general theoretical framework. In this essay (included in *From Shakespeare to Joyce)* Stoll makes a distinction between 'copy' and 'imitation' in a further attempt, perhaps, to be on the right side of Aristotle. Keeping the hortative nature of art in mind, as in the quotation above, Stoll says: 'Like other art the dramatic art is not a copy but an imitation. It is intent upon effect; and that, as Coleridge rightly says, is illusion, not delusion' (p.20). Stoll relies on the element of selectiveness in Aristotelian mimesis, and in his insistence on the importance for the artist of the appearance of things rather than things themselves moves away from simplistic empiricism—the basis of realistic doctrine. And in moving away from the doctrine of art as a direct transcript of life, from empiricism and Taine's determinism ('Taine's theory explains too much, too little'—p. 21), Stoll also moves away from causality, the basis of the Bradleian doctrine of psychological verisimilitude. Drama for Stoll is no more anchored in life, breatning—unlike the novel—the freer air of convention, stylisation and artifice, and all for the sake of specific and intensive emotional effect.

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Emotional excitement of the audience is what matters in great dramatic art, particularly in the ancients and in the Elizabethan age. Stoll has Shakespeare in mind when he makes the following generalisation: 'Writing hastily, but impetuously, to be played, not read, he seizes upon almost every means of imitation and opportunity for excitement which this large liberty affords' (*Art and Artifice, p.* 168). Throughout his criticism Stoll constantly makes a distinction between the ancients and the Elizabethans, on the one hand, and the seventeenth century French classicists, on the other. Though all dramatic art, indeed, all art has a hortatoy character for Stoll, he finds this effect weakened in classical French tragedy owing to its greater attempt at psychological verisimilitude. Shakespeare is the great dramatist *per se* who used his entire resourcefulness in achievrng dramatic and theatrical effectiveness, and in his opportunism cared little for the purity or exclusiveness of dramatic mode. With a strong faith in the authority of great critics, Stoll justifies this state of affairs with reference to Aristotle and Longinus. The great Stagirite (Stoll is always happy to quote A ristotle, and uses a variety of commendatory phrases for him) thought that in a tragedy 'the impossibilities are justifiable... if they serve the end of poetry... if they make the effect of some portion of the work more striking'. Longinus, in this context, of course needs no apology: 'the effect of genius is not to persuade (or convince) the audience but rather to transport them out of themselves;... and the object of poetry is to enthral'.

The importance of the emotional effect of poetry has always been recognised, and, for the Neo-classicists and the Romantic critics, there was no contradiction between this and what was variously designated as verisimilitude, Nature or the life-likeness of characterisation and situations. Dryden praised both Chaucer and Shakespeare for their truth to nature (life as we ordinarily know it). Johnson showered his best, most pithy and epigrammatic praises on Shakespeare's faithful portrayal of life. Coleridge, Hazlitt and the other Romantic critics wrote some of the best character criticism of Shakespeare and spent

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a good deal of ingenuity in revealing the inner, psychological consistency of characters, the link between motive and action and the characters' general truth to life. It was this trend that had reached its acme in Bradley. Stoll was therefore going against the trend of critical thought in three centuries in his insistence that there was an essential opposition or dichotomy between the emotional effect of art and its truth to life, that the latter was not an essential ingredient of art and that the former could be had only at the expense of the latter. It is interesting to note that in all such theoretical formulations Stoll's constant reference was Shakespeare and the question if the Bradleian diagnosis of psychological verisimilitude and consistency in Shakespeare's work, specially the great tragedies, was really correct.

The way Stoll poses the problem, effectiveness and verisimilitude acquire the characteristics of irreconcilable entities. In opposition to the psychological critics who felt uneasy with Aristotelian preference for plot over character, Stoll finds in it a justification of his own argument that plot—the manipulation of situations—is the main source of the emotional effect in dramatic art. The opening sentence of the first chapter in *Art and Artifice* is deliberately constructed to pose a challenge to the Bradleian standpoint: 'The core of tragedy (and of comedy too, for that matter) is situation; and a situation is a character in contrast, and perhaps also in conflict, with other characters or with circumstances' (p. 1). It is a total reversal of the view that the plot consists in character issuing in action. There is also a subtle distorting of the Aristotelian view in the substitution of 'plot' by 'situation'—not the causally linked interaction between character and situation but situation alone. Situation is 'the centre of energy in a play' (p.l), and anterior to, and more important than, character. What really matters in a play, Shakespearian or other, is the emotional impact of a situation, the impression on the audience in pragmatic terms, not the intellectually apprehended co-relation between motive and action nor the philosophically

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conceived pattern of character, will, deed and catastrophe as in Bradley.

The situation that the greatest dramatists 'have deemed the best is that in which the contrast or coflict is sharpest and most striking' (p.2). They have preferred such a situation to one that was probable or reasonable. 'Indeed, in the greatest tragedies (and comedies and epics too) the situation has been fundamentally improbable, unreasonable' (p.2). 'The sharper conflict provokes the bigger passion; the more striking contrast produces the bigger effect: and to genius the improbability is only a challenge' (p.2). Conventions—and Stoll gives an extensive list (p.3)—are the traditional means of achieving significant fictional contrasts and parallels. Such artificial devicas are taboo in modern literature though, as Stoll elsewhere points out, they have been replaced by others, equally artificial. The movement towards naturalism was a blind alley the way out of which lay only through Joyce's mythic patterning of everyday reality. Shakespeare, on the other hand, is the traditional dramatist *par excellence*, and we have no right to transform into psychology what are only simple, unmistakable stage conventions.

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III

The Bradleian synthesis represents the culmination of the psychologising trends in the nineteenth century. Bradley's contemporary success, however, depended a good deal also on what was taken to be his ability to discover in Shakespeare a comprehensive scheme of ultimate significances, a profound moral concern and a credible philosophical design. Apart from the design to find psychological coherence in Shakespeare, the urge to 'meaphysicise' him, to turn him into a prototype of the Victorian sage, was equally strong.[13] In his attempt to do so Bradley transforms simple dramaturgical issues, sometimes even what may be regarded as lapses of technique, into details of moral and philosophical significance. The deterministic link between will and deed

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leads him into Moral Necessity; the element of chance—the staple Elizabethan solution to the difficulties of plotting—is schematised into Fatality. The residue of scepticism is silenced by a reference to the ultimate that surrounds everything The denigration involved in such a summary of 'The Substance of Shakespearian Tragedy' is no doubt an exaggeraticn but the fact is undeniable that in the process of philosophising and psychologising of Shakespeare, the dramaturgy is not only ignored but inappropriately and unjustifiably transformed into vision.

Contrary to the general impression, Stoll, too, concerns himself with questions of ultimate significance in Shakespeare. He had perforce to come to Shakespeare's art after showing where the earlier criticism had mistaken artifice for the nobler entity. His life-long critical endeavour had been to prove that great tragedy was always rooted in melodrama, and the dividing line between the two lay in the former's greatness as poetry and the intensity of its emotional effect—not in its supposedly greater verisimilitude. It would be worthwhile to pay some attention to what Stoll has to say on questions of the ultimate significance in Shakespeare, and more importantly, in what way the manner of his arriving at them differs from that of critics like Bradley.

The penultimate chapter of *Art and Artifice* takes up, towards the close, the question of Shakespeare's 'meaning'. Having earlier disposed of the problems relating to the unpsychological presentation of character and the 'transposition and transformation' (as Proust called it) necessitated by the creation of the autonomous worlds of comedy and tragedy, Stoll returns to the issue of the illusion of reality in art and concedes that, improbabilities and transmutations notwithstanding, the colours in the world of the play are still those of reality and of truth. The play-world is not the world of reality but very like it : 'In fine, the poetically and dramatically transmuted and transformed material of life still retains life's proportions and values; and Shakespeare's tragedy wears the steadying, though not comforting, aspects of truth' (p. 166).

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Before coming to Stoll's apprehension of 'the colours of truth and reality' in Shakepeare, it has to be recognised that such apprehension as may be found in a few succinct passages of *Art and Artifice* is entirely in keeping with the main contentions in the book. The ultimate significances are 'no matters of inference' such as the will-deed-catastrophe nexus in Bradley but a result 'of direct imaginative or emotional effect' (p. 165). It may indeed be claimed that Stoll is perhaps the first major modern Shakespearian critic who seeks to base his synthesis of Shakespeare on a recognition of the proper artistic mode of Shakespeare's work—its traditional, poetic and dramatic character. Bradley's attempt to deal with technical, dramaturgical issues—constituting the weakest part of *Shakespearian Tragedy*—is anachronistic, and is in any case not radical enough to tackle the real issues. The same may be said of Raleigh and Quiller-Couch, the 'exquisites' of the early twentieth century Shakespeare criticism. Stoll goes neither to characters in relation to their fate and in isolation from other factors nor to the inferred design from plot mechanism alone but to the total imaginative form of the play, the 'appearance' as it impinges on the audience consciousness since it is in this 'appearance' that the play may really be said to exist. The form may comprise many and divergent elements—striking situations, parallels and contrasts, ironic reversals, ulterior correspondences, poetry (most important of all—though Stoll nowhere suggests the tools necessary for its analysis), a powerful illusion of life and everyday reality (a variety of Auerbachian[16] *mimesis*) and (not to be totally excluded) character partly conceived in terms of causality. Approached thus in the totality of its impression *King Lear* (or the other great tragedies) nowhere reveals that neat Hegelian pattern of reconciliation which, according to Dowden or Bradley, shows character as superior to the fate that befalls it — 'in some distant reverberate intimation that what happens to Cordelia does not matter, all that matters is what she is' (p. 164). This, however, is an inference, an imposition from outside, contradicted by the intensity of the poetry ('Why

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should a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and thou no breath at all'?) and also by the fact that the beauty of the sufferer's nature makes the tragic fate 'only the more lamentable, not irreelvant' (p. 164). Among the 'intended' effects, 'objectively' apprehended, Stoll can find no religious intimations, no mystical insights, 'no piercing of the veil', 'no theology or theodicy, no philosophy or message' in Shakespeare, nothing but patience, acquiescence 'in the presence of the bitter mystery' (p. 163). What we do get out of the total imaginative reality of a Shakespearian tragedy is the intensification or heightening of our consciousness: 'We are made (and all along, as well as at the close) to feel deeply, and rightly, and to think sanely, if not to any definite ultimate purpose or upshot' (p. 166). Stoll rejects all schematisation of Shakespearian tragedy, Bradleian and others, when he concludes: 'All that I can discover to alleviate our dismay when for the last time the curtain falls, is, apart from the life-giving spirit of poetry, moving and hovering over the stage, the breadth and fairness, the exaltation and pity, in the presentation' (p. 164).

The reason why a reference to Stoll's 'objective' and deshematising patterning of Shakespearian tragedy should have preceded a discussion of his most important and valuable contribution to Shakespeare criticism — his exposition of the traditional nature of Shakespeare's art — was to show how by extending the scope of what is only a matter of technique the area of fruitless subjective specualtion can be reduced— apart, of course, from the fact that Stoll's contribuiion in the field is already widely recognised. What has generally been neglected is the fact that Stoll's treatment of the great tragedies is not anti-Bradleian in the historicist way; as shown earlier, Stoll is not a historical critic in the ordinary sense. What has also not been taken note of is the contention, argued above, that Stoll, unlike Bradley and others, has a well-considered poetics and knows how not to transform dramaturgy into ideology.

It is thus against the background of Stoll's attempt to reclaim for technique what was mistakenly regarded as part of

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the overt meaning that his criticism of the major tragedies should be approached. That the plays lose much of their psychological and philosophical coherence as we move from Bradley to Stoll goes without saying but they become a much more exciting affair the moment we realize how challenging a task Shakespeare's imagination must have faced as it improvised, adjusted the dramatic mode to suit the matter in hand and created through poetry forms of life that were autonomous and self-subsistent and yet very much like the life we know. Moreover, the loss of coherence is adequately compensated by the knowledge of Shakespeare's extraordinary skill in manipulating situations—improbable, unlifelike, strange—made credible for the moment by 'the life—giving spirit of poetry'. Stoll's self-proclaimed objectivity and regard for the poet's intention may have failings as critical dogma but the developments in Shakespeare criticism during the last four decades or so have borne out the truth of his contention that there is more of artifice — deliberate and traditional — in Shakespeare's works than caught the eye of the Romantic critics in the nineteenth century. Granville-Barker, without much of a heterodoxy as a critic of Shakespeare, wondered what Lear's partition of the kingdom was if not an unquestionable postulate without psychological significance. Hamlet is now much more readily accepted in his roles of the Revenger and the Malcontent than as the weak-willed intellectual that he was for Goethe or Coleridge. The melancholy envisaged by Bradley was real and psychological; what is assumed now and highlighted is the tension generated by the conflict between the role and the reality. Few would now describe Macbeth as a poet, (Iago has one of the finest poetic passages in Shakespeare.) It is equally doubtful if a simpe psychological explanation of Othello's metamorphosis would be acceptable to most critics of the play. Studies of particular plays are much more common now than in the past; in most such studies the stress is on the hinterland of what are patently dramaturgical issues—type, role, dramatic convention, problems of theatrical presentation, audience participation,

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stylization, actors' contribution, scenic juxtaposition, characters' self-description, subtle modulations of the dramatic mode and many other similar problems.

It is possible to say that Stoll exaggerated the significance of the traditional element in Shakespeare or that he was wrong in the interpretation of particuiar problems. J.I.M. Stewart made a spirited defence of the psychological approach to Shakespearian tragedy by highlighting what he thought was Shakespeare's interest in the intractable and the unconscious in human behaviour. The transformation of Leontes or Othello, for example, is amenable to psychological interpretation if we approach it as suggestive of human proneness to abrupt disintegration under the pressure of inner, intractable and destructive energies. Such symbolic readings, however, do in no way go against Stoll's recognition of the phenomenon as primarily conventional and not a naturalistic or direct transcript of life.

The beginning of the twentieth century was marked by the splendid Bradleian synthesis of the philosophical Shakespeare with the great delineator of character who touched our imagination with the history-like truth of real life. Soon, however, the extra-ordinary complexity and multifariousness of Shakespeare's works impinged on the critical consciousness, and the Great Scheme appeared to be what in fact it was — a subjective structure derived from many aesthetic, ethical and philosophical sources. Stoll's contribution to this process of disintegration and a possible reconstruction cannot be minimised. If Shakespeare criticism cannot easily unlearn the value and power of lingustiic suggestion— the contribution made by the New Criticism poetics — it cannot also ignore the force of the argument that in Shakespearian drama impression is the fact and that impression may have, not surprisingly, humble artificial roots.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. E. E. Stoll, *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare* (London, 1963), p. 172
2. Almost all the books written by Stoll are collections of essays directly or indirectly relating to problems in Shakespearian study. His books are remarkable for the fact that certain themes turn up again and again — almost obsessively – whatever the ostensible topic, and this leads one to suggest that anyone of them could have been called Art and Artifice in Shakespeare. However, the book so called does gather up the recurring themes in a salient and succinct manner. See 'Preface and Prelude', *From Shakespeare to Joyce* (New York, 1944), p. X
3. See S. Viswanathan, *The Shakespeare Play as Poem* (Cambridge, 1980)
4. See the present author's 'Shakespeare's Self-Revelation : A Critical Theme in the Nineteenth Century', *Aligarh Journal of English Studies*, 2 (1977), 247-66
5. The character criticism of Bradley, specially his characterisation of the four major tragic heroes, is highly schematic. It is also ethical in that the basic postulate of hamartia has moral as well as philosophical implications.
6. John Holloway (in *The Story of the Night*) was among the first to react against the poetic school. Incidentally, he is also among those who have drawn attention to the value of Stoll's criticism.
7. Robert Bridges, 'The Influence of the Audience on Shakespeare's Drama' (1907); reprinted in *Collected Essays*, Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1927).
8. See *Art and Artifice in Shakespeare*, p 47
9. Apart from the Bradleian tragedies, Stoll's contribution to two other critical issues — those relating to the interpretation of the characters of Shylock and Falstaff — are patently historical. His conception of the Elizabethan significance of these two characters — purely comic and hence precluding sympathy — was presented in two of his essays in *Shakespeare Studies* (New York, 1927). The evidence in support of his comic interpretation included reference to the theatrical tradition relating to the two characters. Very greatly indebted to Stoll was the monograph on the early criticism of *Hamlet* by Paul S. Conklin : *A History of 'Hamlet' Criticism, 1601-1821* (London, 1957). Conklin presents evidence in support of the thesis that the seventeenth and eighteenth century Hamlets were noble revengers without the weakness of the will attributed in the Romantic age. A 'historical' approach to the theatrical tradition would bring us close to the *Hamlet* intended by Shakespeare. Conklin's book had originally been presented as a Ph.D. thesis at the University of Minnesota (1937) — Stoll's university.

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10. 'Literature and Life once More', *From Shakespeare to Joyce*, pp. 91-2
11. See Kenneth Muir, 'Fifty Years of Shakespearian Criticism, 1900-1950', *Shakespeare Survey*, 4 (1951), pp. 1-25. The section in Professor Muir's essay dealing with Stoll is appropriately entitled 'Realism and Convention'.
12. *Art and Artifice*, p. 77n.
13. This is best seen in minor criticism. See, for example, David Masson 'Shakespeare and Goethe', *Essays Biographical and Critical* (Cambridge, 1856)
14. To some extent Raleigh anticipates Stoll in believing that Shakespeare's characters are shaped by the story and not *vice versa*. See *Shakespeare* (London, 1907), p. 133
15. Stoll's word for Bonamy Dobree.
16. E. Auerbach, *Mimesis : The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by W. Trask (Princeton, 1953)
17. The causal connection is observed and recognised;... once the situation is attained, character becomes its own destiny' (*Art and Artifice*, p. 165).
18. The suggestion here is not that the sophistication in Shakespeare studies is in any way due to the influence as such of Stoll but simply that these later developments do not contradict his position. Bibliographical guidance on the subject is misleading from our present point of view. Professor Norman Rabkin's anthology, *Approaches to Shakespeare* (New York, 1964), concentrates mainly on the poetic and historical approaches while the survey by Patrick Murray, *The Shakespearian Scene* (London, 1969), appears unduly to limit the significance of Stoll's criticism by placing him among the historical scholars and the detractors like Tolstoy and Bridges.
19. J. I. M. Stewart, *Character and Motive in Shakespeare* (London, 1949)

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Kathleen Raine

THE SLEEP OF ALBION

There is, in the treasury of every nation, a body of mythology, legend and folk-lore, interwoven with history and pre-history, associated with certain places and the names of kings and heroes, with events natural and supernatural, preserved by tradition both oral and recorded. These legends and records belong to the whole people, lending to each brief, unremarkable life a larger identity and participation, as if in some sense these stories were our own. They give us a place in history — and not merely in history but in a story whose imaginative meaning goes beyond history, lending a sense of glory and cosmic significance, and a beauty special to our own people and place on earth. Therefore we are considering a mass of material which, although it may have its basis in actual events, in real men and women who lived and loved and battled and quested, and who may very well be buried in the sites associated with them, eludes the kind of factual proof or disproof nowadays so popular with the excavators and researchers, all the error-proof techniques which modern fact – finding demands. That the stories have been told and retold is the only certain fact about them.

Such is what is known as the 'Matter of Britain', the corpus of British history and pre-history, as it has been handed down, and so designated in distinction from the 'Matter of Rome', established in the legends of the founding of the city by Romulus and Remus, fostered by the she-wolf, fit nurse of Rome's military genius; and the story of the conquest of Aeneas, refugee from Troy. France's 'matter' centres round Charlemagne and his knights; and the Teutonic nations likewise have their legendary history interwoven with myth and miracle-all those themes of Odin and Asgard, Seigfried and Parsifal Wagner has recreated in his opera.

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The Matter of Britain too traces our origin back to Troy through the legendary Brut, who is said to have founded his kingdom in these isles; but also has roots in the prehistory and myths of the most ancient indigenous Celtic peoples, a marvellous mingling of Christian and pre-Christian themes. Above all the Matter of Britain centres about a fifth-century Romanized British king or war-leader, king Arthur, his chivalry, his court at Camelot, his round table, and the mysterious sanctity, neither wholly Christian nor wholly pagan, of the Holy Grail and its Quest. Doubtless there was a historical personage, a leader of cavalry as introduced and used by the Romans, at a time when the Saxon invaders fought on foot. Perhaps there was a Battle of Badon Hill in which the Saxons on foot were routed by a smaller number of mounted cavalry. There may even have been a Round Table, whether at Glastonbury or elsewhere, long turned to dust. But Arthur, the 'once and future king' of Britain is far greater than any historical personage who may once have borne that name. Indeed the disentangling of the basis of historical fact from the whole tradition and literature of Arthur, his knights and his round table, would be an exercise in reductionism which could serve only to make him less 'real' as a presence, an archetype of kingship within the national imagination of the British nation. Rather than what remains when legend has been stripped away, King Arthur is the sum of all that has been recorded and imagined, written, told, sung and believed. He is a creation of, and a presence in, the national imagination of the British people, which has from century to century — even to the present day continued to adorn Arthur and his court with all those attributes we would most wish to find in the person and circumstances of the perfect king. Arthur embodies the virtues of justice, fortitude, prudence and magnanimity as the British have conceived them; he commands the loyalty of knights of prowess, and establishes peace in his regions. Arthur's court, moving from place to place, confers its half-rustic splendour on these places where its joyous contests in arms and festivals shed a kind of beauty still somehow recognizably and specifi-

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cally English, where good manners go hand in hand with good cheer. The Arthurian cycle, for all the confusion and treachery of the king's overthrow by his nephew or son Mordred is a joyous one, not tragic like the story of Roland, nor bloodthirsty like the barbaric heroic Irish epic of Buchulain and Queen Maeve. There is something of Shakespeare's Forest of Arden about Arthur's court. As for the 'round table' there are scholars who associate it with Near-Eastern legends of the King of the World whose Round Table is the zodiac and signifies spiritual world-rulership. Arthur's association with the constellation Arcturus, the Great Bear, casts his image as far as the stars, those enduring records of human dreams. There is something humane, pleasant, something of the English countryside in early summer (he held his court at the Feast of Whitsuntide) in Arthur's civilized yet rural kingdom. The British imagination has, in Arthur's kingdom of peace and justice, from Malory to Tennyson to the present day, perfected an image of a ruler finely balanced between strength and mildness; an epitome, one might say, of the image of kingship latent in every Englishman.

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The Matter of Britain remains very much alive in this country, one may cite John Cowper Powys's strange fantasy novel, *Porius*, T.E. White's *The Sword in the Stone* and its continuation in *The Once and Future king:* John Heath Stubbs's *Arthuriad* which some years ago won the Queen's Medal for poetry; and a recently published *Matter of Britain* by Harold Morland, not to mention the film *Camelot*. Towering among these are the writings of David Jones, whose *The Sleeping Lord* we are to hear, as it was produced for radio on the BBC by Peter Orr.

But myths and legends do not embody merely high ideals and things as moralists think they should be; the imagination of a race is much richer than that, and more mysterious. Arthur's marriage with Guinivere was flawed by the Queen's love for Launcelot du Lac, and by this knight's divided loyalty. Love, as is usually so in mythological stories, obeys laws of its own— Guinivere with her feminine un-law-abidingness is queen by

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right of that very independence of the moral law which she shares with Ireland's Queen Maeve, and Isolde queen of Cornwall, and with many a goddess. The Eternal Feminine is above, or beneath, or at all events outside all those laws, however admirable, that kings and law-makers establish. Indeed the figures constellated about Arthur are scarcely less potent than the king himself—Gawain and Perceval and the other knights of the Grail quest;and Merlin the magician, type of the magical knowledge of the pre-Christian world, educator and adviser of the king. Merlin too is outside human law and order, reminding that human rule is only relative and itself comprehended within a mystery which the magician may mediate but which neither he nor any human power can control. That kingship is itself decreed and bestowed by higher powers is implicit in that other familiar Arthurian story of the sword in the stone which could only be withdrawn by the divinely appointed heir to the kingdom.

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And finally there is the legend of Arthur's death—sleep, somewhere in a secret cave where, with his knights around him, he awaits the time when he will return to restore just rule to his kingdom and to repel its enemies. It is above all this tradition of the sleeper who will awake at the time of need which lives on in the English imagination. Those of us who remember the second World War remember how this myth was 'in the air' and cast its glamour on our great war-leader Winston Churchill. Indeed this legend is never far below the surface in the national imagination; it is whispered that this or that royal prince may be Arthur returned to restore the kingdom to its golden age. Do people really believe this? Belief is probably the wrong word; not, certainly, as fact, but the archetype is a fact of the imagination and as such very real. Many are the places in England and Wales that claim to be the king's burial -place. The sword Excalibur is said to have been thrown into Lake Ullswater (once within the boundaries of the British-Welsh kingdom) to summon the Three Queens in their boat. Also told in Cumbria is a story, recently re-told in his poem on the Matter of 'Britain by Harold Morland which sites the cave

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where Arthur sleeps at Howsteads on Hadrian's Wall from Newcasle to Carlisle. It is said that a shepherd knitting a scarf as he tended his flock dropped his ball of wool, which ran away under the brambles and disappeared. The shepherd followed, and making his way through the tangled thicket came to a cleft in the rock through which he descended into a cave. There he saw the sleeping form of the king, and nearby a table on which was a sword and a horn. The shepherd took up the sword and struck the table. At this the king opened his eyes, and half rose, only, to say 'You should have blown the horn' before falling back into his long sleep.

One recalls other legends of sleepers; there were the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus; the German Barbarossa the God Saturn himself sleeps in 'the Fortunate Isles' – Great Britain— the God of the Golden Age which was once and will be again. Sometimes the Sleeper is a figure of spiritual wisdom – Christian Rosencreuz, who sleeps in the sacred shrine of Fama Fraternitatis, the Rosicrucians. Always there are the same stories, from the Cheviots to the Catskills, of some simple man who has come unawares upon the sleeper; and never is it certain where he lies. How different from the tomb of Napoleon, or of the Medicis, or of any of the great and illustrious figures of this world. The truly archetypal kings are not to be found in tombs like these, and about them always is an aura of the supernatural.

Both W. B. Yeats and his early friend the Irish mystic, AE, attached great importance to the sacred sites and holy places of Ireland; to 'marrying', as Yeats put it, the imagination of the people to lake and mountain and rock and river—to the land itself. The Holy Land of Christianity is elsewhere, in the Near East; for the Jews the land of Israel is their own land, the places of their ancestors; but for the Christian world Jerusalem and Sinai and Zion and Canaan are in effect – or were until this century for most untravelled human beings — imaginary places. Perhaps the persistence of the Arthurian legends we owe in part to the necessity for holy places in the very land we inhabit. The vision of the house of the Virgin

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Mary at Walsingham gave rise to the most famous place of pilgrimage of the late Middle ages; a protest, by popular imagination, as it were, against the distancing of sacred sites from our own earth. When the Greeks sent out colonies the colonists would carry with them sacred fire, and would give the name of 'Mount Olympus' (where the Gods live) to the nearest mountain worthy of the name. Blake writes of 'the council of God' meeting on 'Snowdon sublime', the highest peak in Wales and therefore fittest habitation for the spiritual guardians of Britain. This wedding of the imagination of a people to the earth itself serves not only to commemorate historic events and persons but also to give realities of the Imagination (in Shakespeare's words) 'a local habitation and a name'. It does more — it makes a country, a landscape, a 'holy land', giving to mountains and rivers and springs and forests a dimension of the sacred — or shall we say, to put it at its lowest, a dimension of poetry?

Seen in this light some may regret that Milton abandoned his first intent of writing his great epic poem on the theme of King Arthur and chose instead *Paradise Lost*, imaginatively situated in regions remote from earth. Poetry cannot fulfil its task of giving to 'airy nothing a local habitation and a name' if the poet chooses to make theology his theme and all his characters save two disembodied spirits. Italy, France and other Catholic countries have succeeded to some extent in localizing the Christian mysteries in their own towns and villages through painting and architecture, but in iconoclastic Protestant countries this has long ceased to be so; and since the Reformation Arthur and his Round Table, Merlin and the Holy Grail have remained our sole national heritage comparable with, for example, the Ramayana or the Mahabharata in India where real princes and charioteers merge with the world of the gods without losing their roots in history. The forests of Broceliande and of Brindavan are still real forests, to which the names of Merlin and Vivian, of the Lord Krishna and the Gopis, impart a mystery, a sacredness to the real forests of Brittany and of Orissa. When I saw in Delhi a wall said to have been

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built by the Pandavas, I had the awesome sense of myself entering the realm of myth.

I have long been struck by the fact that while the English and the Germanic nations have superficially so much in common there are deep differences in the archetypal figures that move under the surface, conditioning national character and national history. The figure of Faust, it is true, was the subject of Marlowe's play before Goethe gave to Faust and Mephistopheles that vitality Milton gave to Satan; but it is German writers and psychologists who are for ever composing variations on the theme of the pursuit of profane or forbidden knowledge. This restless activity of the godless mind of the human ego symbolized by Faust seems native and congenial to the German genius but has never in the same way (Marlowe notwithstanding) 'taken on' in England. It seems that our determining national archetype is that of the Sleeping King. It is not, it seems, the pursuit of forbidden knowledge but the tendency (like the dormouse in *Alice in Wonderland)* to fall asleep that besets the English. Perhaps Faust will one day be sarved; and one day the sleeper of the ancient British kingdom will awaken. It is such themes as these which have been woven about the British king whose legends have been preserved chiefly in Wales, custodian of the most ancient cultural deposits of the Celtic race which formerly occupied large areas of Great Britain.

William Blake, who called himself 'English Blake', emulated Milton in attempting a national epic on the theme not of history but of the spiritual destiny of the English nation in the group of so-called Prophetic Books of which one is entitled *Milton* and the last and most comprehensive, *Jerusalem*. Long incomprehensible because of their unfamiliar mythology whose action takes place not in history but in the inner worlds, Blake's mythological epics are none the less firmly rooted in national events — far more so than is *Paradise Lost*. The unfamiliar supernatural figures are those 'gods' or archetypal energies Blake discerned within the national collective life; and the central figure, whose inner drama is the theme of the whole action, is 'the Giant Albion', the nation. Within his 'giant'

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body are comprehended all the cities and villages and mountains and regions of the British Isles, a national being of the many-in-one and one-in many, and— perhaps this is not so much strange as inevitable — Blake, for all his admiration for Milton and his Christian faith, has reverted to the national myth of the Sleeping King; Albion is the sleeping giant (not a king, for Blake was a democrat) for whose re-awakening the 'four Zoas' and the other persons of the myth, labour. The Four Zoas are themselves extremely modern 'gods', corresponding as they do to the psychic functions of reason, feeling, sensation and intuition, made familiar in our century by C.G. Jung; but even these, as we shall see, have deep roots in 'matter of Britain' as Blake knew it.

Blake was versed in the Arthurian literature and traditions and it is plain that the Sleeping Arthur is the model of the majestic sleeping form of the Giant Albion. Indeed among Blake's paintings exhibited in his exhibition in 1809 is one entitled *The Ancient Britons* which in his catalogue he describes at length:

> In the last Battle of King Arthur only three Britons escaped; these were the Strongest Man, the Beautifullest Man, and the Ugliest Man. These three marched through the field unsubdued, as Gods, and the Sun of Britain set, but shall arise again with tenfold splendour when Arthur shall awake from sleep, and resume dominion over earth and ocean.

There is no question but Blake's Albion is imagined in the similitude of Arthur; for in the same description Blake goes on to write:

> The British Antiquities are now in the Artist's hands; all his visionary contemplations, relating to his own country and its ancient glory, when it was, as it again shall be, the source of learning and inspiration. Arthur was a name for the constellation Arcturus, or Bootes, the keeper of the North Pole. And all the fables of Arthur and his round table; of the warlike naked Britons; of Merlin; of Arthur's conquest of the whole world; of his death, or sleep, and promise to return again; of the Druid monuments or temples; of the pavement of Watling -street; of London stone; of the caverns in Cornwall, Wales, Derbyshire and Scotland; of the Giants of Ireland and Britain; of the elemental beings called by us by the general name of fairies; and of these three who escaped, namely Beauty, Strength, and Ugliness. (K. 577–8)

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Thus at the time when he was already at work on his last Prophetic Book, *Jerusalem*, whose plot, so to say, is the sleep and awaking of Albion, the whole Arthurian 'matter' was uppermost in his mind. He goes on to write :

> The Giant Albion was Patriarch of the Atlantic; he is the Atlas of the Greeks, one of those the Greeks called Titans. The stories of Arthur are the acts of Albion, applied to a Prince of the fifth century, who conquered Europe, and held the Empire of the world in the dark age, which the Romans never again recovered. (K. 578)

To the historian it might seem that Blake is here putting things the wrong way round because the historical Arthur is 'real' and the Giant Albion 'imaginary'. But Blake was neither ignorant of history nor simple-minded; as he understood the matter the Giant Albion has the enduring reality of the collective identity and continuing life or the soul of the nation; whereas Arthur was only one individual in whom that soul once expressed itself and around whom the enduring reality of the national life crystallized, so to say. For Blake the Imagination is by no means 'imaginary'; a truth forcefully brought home to us in this century by the psychologists, and especially by C. G. Jung who himself wrote of the 'transpersonal' or 'collective' mind which is shared by some family, tribe or nation, and is, finally, shared by the whole human race. Henry Corbin the Ismaili scholar and metaphysician (and a member, with Jung, of the Eranos circle) employed the term 'imaginal' to avoid any ambiguity in the word 'imaginary' with the popular implication of somthing unreal. On the contrary, all these believed, — and Yeats too stated his own belief (in *A Vision*) in the 'angels' who preside over nations — the archetypes of the Imaginal world are human reality itself, the stamp or imprint of human nature in us all. Therefore Blake, in seeing 'the Giant Albion' as the greater and more enduring reality, of whom Arthur was an embodiment and agent, about whose name the idea and ideal of English kingship gathered, is taking the deeper and truer view. The ever-popular reductionist methods of our excavators and researchers, in sifting out the few grains of material fact (which

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can of course be found in any body of myth and legend) will have lost the reality of that which they set out to discover somewhere along the way. The Holy Grail is not some bronze-age cooking-pot in a museum, nor a gold or silver chalice in church or shrine, but a reality that inspired the imagination of many at a certain period of history; and which continues to do so to this day. Wagner's Parsifal is no less living than the Perceval of the Mabinogion legends. Nor can the kingship of Arthur be dated : it is timeless in the imagination of the race. These legendary 'deposits' (to use a favourite word of their most recent bard, David Jones) are sacred stories of the British nation. Blake wrote :

> The antiquities of every Nation under Heaven, is no less sacred than that of the Jews, they are the same thing, as Jacob Bryant and all antiquaries have proved. How other antiquities came to be neglected, and disbelieved, while those of the Jews are collected and arranged, is an enquiry worthy both of the Antiquarian and the Divine. All had originally one language and one religion... (K 579)

Thus Blake in recounting 'the acts of Albion' considered himself to be recounting the sacred history — the inner history of the British nation from ancient times, with prophetic foresight of that future when Albion, like Arthur, is to wake from sleep. For all his great admiration for Milton — who becomes one of Blake's mythological persons—he himself departs from his model precisely in re-situating sacred history in England's green and pleasant land.

In his poem *Milton* Blake includes one of those passages which have so bewildered readers of a literal-minded kind in its combination of real places with mythological persons and events. So we see Albion 'on his Couch/Of dread repose seen by the visionary eye'.

> ... his face is toward
> The east, toward Jerusalem's Gates; groaning he sat above
> His rocks, London & Bath & Legions & Edinburgh
> Are the four pillars of his Throne; his left foot near London
> Covers the shades of Tyburn; his instep from Windsor
> To Primrose Hill stretching to Highgate & Holloway.

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London is between his knee, its basements fourfold;
His right foot stretches to the sea on Dover cliffs, his heel
On Canterbury's ruins; his right hand covers lofty Wales,
His left Scotland, his bosom girt with gold involves
York, Edinburgh, Durham & Carlisle, & on the front
Bath, Oxford, Cambridge, Norwhich; his right elbow
Leans on the Rocks of Erin's Land, Ireland, ancient nation.
(M. 39. K. 531)

Thus England's Sleeping Lord covers all the isles and includes in his giant body all their inhabitants.

There are many places in the British Isles which claim the tomb of the sleeping Arthur; for Blake's Giant Albion the whole island is his tomb, the 'rock' of Britain in the Atlantic Ocean washed by 'the Sea of time and space'.

... Albion upon the Rock of Ages,
Deadly pale outstretch'd and snowy cold, storm cover'd,
A Giant form of perfect beauty outstretch'd on the rock
In solem death... (M. 15. 36. K 497)

Sometimes the tomb is called 'the Sick Couch', for Albion's 'death' is a spiritual malady, not a state of non-existence. Blake names the poet Milton 'the awakener', for it is the poets who speak to the nation with the voice of the Imagination:

... Albion's sleeping Humanity began to turn upon his Couch,
Feeling the electric flame of Milton's awful precipitate descent.
(M. 20. 25. K. 502)

Blake himself was an Awakener at a time he saw as the beginnig of a New Age—as witnessed by the American and French Revolutions; England, as always, was slow to respond:

The trumpet of Judgment hath twice sounded: all Nations are awake,
But thou art still heavy and dull, Awake, Albion, Awake!
(M. 23. 3. K. 506)

But Albion's time has not come; he 'turns upon his couch' then sinks back 'in dismal dreams/Unawaken'd'.

The sleep of Arthur has not in itself any positive significence, and is but the passing of time until the need of his nation summons him to return. But the 'sleep' of the Giant

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Albion is conceived by Blake not as the mere passage of time but as a state of apathy, of lowering of consciousness, of forgetfulness of higher things. This element in Blake's myth of the sleeping Albion does not come from the traditional 'deposits' of the Matter of Britain; it has another source, in the writings of the Neoplatonic philosophers, and especially of Plotinus, in the translation made by his contemporary and one-time friend Thomas Taylor the Platonist. Blake's theme of the sleep and awakening of the soul of the nation embraces far more than the mere return of the Once and Future King at the hour of need: Blake tells the story of how the nation has come to lapse into spiritual ignorance and forgetfulness, of the 'deadly dreams' of the deluded nation—all the cruelties of war and the injustices of peace that result from this alienation—and how the final awakening may come about not at the mere blowing of a horn but through the spiritual labours of the 'awakeners'.

This is not the occasion for describing the involved mythological happenings of the Giant Albion's long 'dream' in the course of the 'deadly sleep' of his wanderings from eternal life. Blake's first version of the theme — *Vala or the Four Zoas*, announces the theme as Albion's

> ... fall into Division & his Resurrection to Unity:
> His fall into the Generation of decay & death, & his
> Regeneration by the Resurrection from the dead
> (FZ. 1. 21-23. K. 264)

His last Prophetic Book, *Jerusalem*, he introduces in a similar way :

> Of the Sleep of Ulro; and of the passage through
> Eternal Death, and of the awaking to Eternal Life.
> (J. 4. 1-2. K. 622)

For Blake the 'fall' is not, as for Milton, a fall into sin through disobedience; but a fall into 'sleep' through a closing of consciousness and loss of the 'divine vision':

> Refusing to behold the Divine Image which all behold
> And live thereby, he is sunk down into a deadly sleep.
> (FZ. 1. 290. K. 272)

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The 'divine image' is the archetype of human nature imprinted in every soul, as described in the first chapter of *Genesis*. Blake nowhere writes of the 'Fall' in terms of Christian theology (as Milton does) through man's disobedience and sin; rather he adopts the Platonic view of the human condition as one of forgetfulness of eternal things. All know Plato's myth, (in the Tenth Book of the *Republic*) of the souls who, as they approach generation, reach a river — the river of forgetfulness, where all must drink. Some drink deeply and their forgetfulness of eternity is complete. Ohers, who wisely refrain from drinking so deeply, retain some memory of eternal things. These are the philosophers, the lovers and the musical souls who retain the vision of eternal things. For Plato held that the soul knows everything, and needs only to remember what it already and for ever knows — a view, besides, more in keeping with modern psychology which also sees unconsciousness rather than 'original sin'.

Blake's own Prophetic task—as of all poets of the Imagination — he saw as that of the Awakener; he summons Albion :

> Awake ! awake O sleeper of the land of shadows, wake ! expand !
> (J. 4. 6. K. 622)

—and he announces his own prophetic task:

> ... I rest not from my great task;
> To open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes
> Of Man inwards into the worlds of Thought, into Eternity
> Ever expanding in the Bosom of God, the Human Imagination
> (J. 5. 17. K. 623)

Albion's sleep is the 'deadly sleep' of a narrowed and closed vision; the awakening of the Sleeping Lord is a stirring into life of the soul of the nation; it concerns us all.

II

Albion's 'deadly sleep' is a dire reality of national life, troubled with 'dreams'. It is a state of illusion, a loss of the 'divine vision' in which the nation falls under the power of 'the

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mind of the natural frame', of the empirical ego, called by Blake the 'selfhood' or Satan. Blake is quite specific in his diagnosis of England's national disease: it is precisely that secular materialists(which Blake associated with the honoured names of Bacon, Newton and Locke) upon which modern Western civilization is founded; and has foundered, some would now say, Blake's Prophetic vision having proved truer than his contemporaries could have foreseen. When natural reason usurps the place of imaginative vision and announces 'Now I am God from eternity to eternity' and the 'divine vision 'innate in every soul fades from consciousness, the rest follows. This *hybris* of natural reason in its pursuit of natural knowledge outside the context of spiritual wisdom has brought consequences which may appal us. This Blake had understood at a time when triumphant mechanistic science was still in its infancy. Again, readers of Blake are shocked when from the charmed regions of mythology we are suddenly jolted into awareness that Blake is talking about realities–ideologies – well known to us and propounded daily on the media with all the assurance of received majority opinion. The 'mind of the natural frame', Urizen, — Satan as he is named in the later Prophetic Books– is called 'Newton's antocrator, weaving the woof of Locke'. He is opaque to spiritual knowledge, recognizing only natural fact, and is the very spirit of modern reductionism. Have we not all heard the voice which for Blake is the very voice of Satan, denying the innate divine humanity?:

> I am your Rational Power, O Albion, & that Human Form
> You call Divine is but a Worm seventy inches long
> That creeps forth in a night & is dried in the morning sun,
> In fortuitous concourse of memorys accumulated & lost.
> It plows the Earth in its own conceit, it overwhelms the Hills
> Beneath its winding labyrinths; till a stone of the brook
> Stops it in midst of its pride... (J. 33. 5. K. 659)

Blake thought otherwise: it is vision, not scepticism, which is wise. 'This', he wrote, 'was spoke by My Spectre to Voltaire, Bacon.

> Did Jesus teach doubt? or did he
> Give any lessons of Philosophy,

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> Charge Visionaries with decieving,
> Or call Men wise for not Believing? (Everlasting Gospel h.K. 756)

However, it is as dangerous now as then to challenge trendy reductionism in the name of that vision which is able

> To see a World in a Grain of Sand
> And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
> Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
> And Eternity in an hour. (Auguries of Innocence, K. 431)

The sleep of Albion is in a word the materialist mentality of the modern west; it is this mentality which has taught the Children of Albion 'To converse concerning Weight & Distance in the Wilds of Newton & Locke' (K.661) in a world of quantity outside 'existence', for, Blake asks, 'where is the existence outside mind and thought'? The quantification of nature, as something existing outside mind and thought, is literally soul-destroying, a 'wrenching apart' of outer and inner worlds in which nature becomes a lifeless mechanism and the soul Descartes' 'folle du logis' — the madman in the house. We have in our own time witnessed the logical outcome of this mechanization of nature in the mechanization of humanity itself, while at the same time we attribute to pieces of mechanism the human attributes of mind and thought. Could any idolatry be more abject than the present-day idolatry of the machine? All this, in its deadly ramifications, Blake has mythologized in his account of the 'sickness of Albion'.

In thus making humanity passive before a mechanized nature (so Yeats puts it) the original unity of being, of man and his universe, inner and outer, has been destroyed; and it is this restoration which will awaken Albion — and his 'sickness' has by now infected the whole of the modern world — from his deadly sleep, his oblivion which has turned his paradise into a desert,

> The corn is turn'd to thistles, the apples into poison,
> The birds of song to murderous crows, his joys to bitter groans,
> The voices of children in his tents to cries of helpless infants,
> And self-exiled from the face of light & shine of morning,
> In the dark world, a narrow house ! He wanders up and down
> Seeking for rest and finding none!... (J. 1910. K. 641)

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Before this externalization of nature by the Post-Cartesian objectivity whose English equivalents were Bacon, Newton and Locke the universe was one with humanity. In his address 'To the Jews' with which he introduces the Second Book of *Jerusalem* Blake again alludes to the one universal tradition claiming that Britain was the original seat of that 'everlasting Gospel'.

> Jerusalem the Emanation of the Giant Albion! Can it be? Is it a truth that the Learned have explored? Was Britain the Primitive Seat of the Patriarchal Religion? If it is true... Ye are united, O ye Inhabitants of Earth, in One Religion, The Religion of Jesus, the most Ancient, Eternal & the Everlasting Gospel... 'All things Begin & End in Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore'. (K. 149)

Blake then goes on to declare that the Hebrew patriarchs learned 'from the Druids', -who were priests of this universal religion, and he equates the Adam Kadmon of the Jewish mystical tradition with the Giant Albion, the two symbols having the same significance of the primordial universal humanity :

> You have a tradition, that Man anciently contain'd in his mighty limbsall things in Heaven & Earth; this you recieved from the Druids. 'But now the Starry Heavens are fled from the mighty limbs of Albion'. (K. 149)

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This externalization of the natural universe is illustrated in *Jerusalem* where Albion is depicted with sun, moon and stars in his 'mighty limbs' from which they are being separated by females representing the agents of natural generation. Now the post-Cartesian phase of Western thought has run its course, and science itself is confronted, in many fields, with the realization (so plain to Blake) that the object of knowledge cannot be separated from the mind that knows. Can it be that Albion is stirring in his 'sleep' of materialist oblivion? Blake prayed the divine Spirit for inspiration :

> That I may awake Albion from his long & cold repose;
> For Bacon & Newton, sheath'd in dismal steel, their terrors hang
> Like iron scourges over Albion... (J. 15. 10. K. 635)

and—he indicts the 'schools and universities of Europe':

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> I turn my eyes to the Schools & Universities of Europe
> And there behold the Loom of Locke, whose woof rages dire,
> Wash'd by the water-wheels of Newton: black the cloth
> In heavy wreathes folds over every Nation: cruel works
> Of many Wheels I view, Wheel without Wheel with cogs tyrannic
> Moving by compulsion each other, not as those in Eden, which,
> Wheel within Wheel, in freedom revolve in harmony & peace.
> (J. 15. 14. K. 636)

Let us not forget that Blake's phrase, the 'dark Satanic mills' refers not to the landscape of the Industrial Revolution but to the machanistic ideology which created that landscape. Here he contrasts the opaque 'black cloth' turned out by the Universities with the 'wheel within wheel' of Ezekiel's vision of the 'living creatures'. He would see the same black cloth coming from the looms of the Universities to this day and not only those of Europe. But need I say more? These things are well known to us all.

Albion's state of 'eternal death' therefore is seen not in terms of some comfortably remote generalization but clearly and precisely identified as the materialist ideology to which the West has succumbed.

III

There is of course only one sleeping King Arthur; but Blake writes of many 'sleepers' who are the individual lives within the national being; and here again he is close to Plotinus, who is concerned with individual souls, who as they descend into generation lose their consciousness of eternal things and bcome 'sleepers'. Plotinus writes of those who transmigrate from one incarnation to another, passing 'as it were from bed to bed, from sleep to sleep'; and Blake too writes of these 'sleepers' who enter the world of generation, whom he calls 'the spectres of the dead'. He describes in *Milton*, in terms rather Platonic than Christian, how the souls' descend' into this world,

> ... being piteous Passions & Desirse
> With neither lineament nor form, but like to wat'ry clouds
> The Passions & Desires descend upon the hungry winds,

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For such alone Sleepers remain, meer passion & appetite.
(M. 26. 26. K. 512)

The Sons of Los, Blake's time-spirit, take charge of these pathetic spectres, 'clothe them, and give them gardens and fields' – not of the kind that can he bought from the estate agent, but works of art, paintings, poetry and music they can 'inhabit'; for poetry, as I.A. Richards somewhere says, is the house of the soul. Blake describes how Milton himself, for Blake the supreme poet, whom he calls 'the awakener', takes on a human body and the reby enters thestate of 'sleep'. But in his sleep he is fed by the angels with 'food of Eden', visions of eternal things—

As when a man dreams he reflects not that his body sleeps,
Else he would wake, so seem'd he entering his Shadow; but
With him the Spirits of the Seven Angels of the Presence
Entering, they gave him still perceptions of his Sleeping Body
Which now arose and walk'd with them in Eden ...

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Milton's 'real and immortal Self' appeared to 'those who dwell in immortality', Blake writes,

... as one sleeping on a couch
Of gold, and those in immortality (that is the Seven Angels) gave forth their Emanations
Like Females of sweet beauty to guard round him & to feed
His lips with food of Eden in his cold and dim repose:
But to himself he seem'd a wanderer lost in dreary night.
(M. 151 1-1 15. 12-16. K. 496)

The poet, inspired as he may be by the Muses, can see in his imagination lost Eden, but is none the less an exile in this world, in his natural humanity. But it is Milton and the other poets and visionaries who still in dreams behold eternity, who labour to clothe and build houses, for the 'spectres of the dead' whose sleep is absolute; until 'a vast family, wondrous in beauty and love' is created on earth. So through the infinite labours of love the dead are awakened to life through recollection of eternal things, depicted in works of art. For 'what', Blake asks,

What is Mortatity but the things relating to the Body which Dies?
What is

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> Immortality but the things relating to the Spirit which Lives Eternally?
> What is the Joy of Heaven but Improvement in the things of the Spirit?
> What are the Pains of Hell but Ignorance, Bodily Lust, Idleness & devastation of the things of the Spirit? (J. 77. K. 717)

Blake believed that 'Albion shall rise again' because our human nature and its innate potentiality is what it is, no matter what we believe or disbelieve. Things are as they are and we need only–in Platonic terms–remember what we already and for ever know. It is not because of what materialist science contains, but because of what it excludes that Blake attacks the materialist view; which takes a part of knowledge for the whole, oblivious, in its 'deadly sleep', of those 'worlds of thought' which it was Blake's prophetic task to open. Blake calls upon the nation to listen to its poets, painters and musicians—and also to its religious visionaries, like Whitfield and Wesley—who bring news from lost Paradise. It is these who are 'awake' to the regions of the human imagination which for the materialist mentality are a lost and forgotten country. By deifying natural reason, 'the true man', who is much greater and more comprehensive than the empirical ego whose only source of knowledge is through the senses ('fortuitous concourse of memorys accumulated and lost') is excluded from consciousness. The only knowledge of the empirical ego is what the senses bring from an externalised and lifeless material universe. Our humanity, Blake understood, is far greater than we know.

The awakening of the sleeper, therefore, calls for no change in outer circumstances, in the 'conditions' of our work or the size of our income, better roads, housing and the like, still less any of those products of the machine offered in such profusion by their manufacturers. No, what is called for is a change in our consciousness itself, that will make us aware of what is daily before our eyes — the rising and setting sun, the clouds, the moon and stars, the tree outside the window. Blake knew that 'A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees'. In a letter to a patron who had complained that his work was too 'visionary' Blake replied :

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> I feel that a Man may be happy in This World. And I know that This World is a World of Imagination & vision. I see Every thing I paint in This World, but Everybody does not see alike. To the eyes of a Miser a Guinea is more beautiful than the Sun, & a bag worn with the use of Money has more beautiful proportions than a vine filled with Grapes. The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the Eyes of others only a Green thing that stands in the way. Some see Nature all Ridicule & Deformity, & by these I shall not regulate my proportions; & Some Scarce see nature at all. But to the Eyes of the Man of Imagination, Nautre is Imagination itself. As a man is, so he sees. As the Eye is formed, such are its Powers. You certainly Mistake, when you say that the Visions of Fancy are not to be found in This World. To Me This World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination...
>
> (23 August 1799. K 793)

Our society is for ever thinking in terms of changing outer circumstances; Blake's revolution will come about when we change ourselves. From inner awakening outer changes will follow; for we cannot treat a living and holy earth as we would a lifeless mechanism, nor human beings in whom the divine humanity is manifested in all its myriad forms as the 'mortal worm' born in a night to perish in a night. We have created our nightmare world in the image of our ideologies; but with the awakening of our humanity we will see a different world and create a different world. Do we not all see the same objects, then, however we interpret them? By no means, Blake says:

> 'What', it will be Question'd, when the Sun rises, do you not see a round disk of fire somewhat like a Guinea?' O no, no, I see an Innumerable company of the Heavenly host crying 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty'.

When Albion awakens he will find himself in his lost kingdom, restored to its former glory, for the kingdom is in ourselvss.
In this awakening it is for the poets painters and musicians to remind Albion — remind the nation — of those higher things he has forgotten. For Blake the arts are something far other than 'entertainment' or self-expression' : they bring news from lost Paradise, which the poets continue to see afar off while the 'sleepers' have forgotton:

> ... Poetry, Painting & Music, the three Powers in Man of conversing with Paradise, which the flood did not sweep away. (Notebook p. 80-81. K. 609)

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Paradise in not a place but a state of being to which the myriad sleepers of Albion must someday awake.

Blake was himself a poor and obscure man but he possesed the secret of being happy in this world; no special privileges are needed, for sun and moon, wild flower and grain of sand, are here for us all. But many find it easier to demand better 'conditions' in the outer world than to make the effort neces-ary to see the 'innumerable company of the heavenly host'. And the awakening of the sleepers does call for effort. When Blake asks for 'the liberty both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination' he is really laying the onus on ourselves to exercise those divine arts; no easy task, he is asking a great deal of us. And he summons each of us, 'as much as in him lies' to 'engage himself openly & publicly before all the World in some Mental pursuit for the Building up of Jerusalem'. (J.77. K.717). We ourselves are the sleeping Albion, and it is for us to bring back the nation to that lost kingdom. For Blake that kingdom is the New Jerusalem itself, the kingdom of the human Imagination. Therefore it follows:

> A poet, a Painter, a Musician, an Architect: the Man Or Woman who is not one of these in not a Christian,' (Laocoon, k. 776)

Blake's simplicities, we may feel, are more disconcerting and more demanding than his obscurities.

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Desiree Hirst

THE THEOSOPHICAL PREOCCUPATIONS OF BLAKE AND YEATS

It is well known that as poets Blake and Yeats shared many preoccupations. Yeats, with the artist Edwin Ellis, was one of Blake's earliest editors. One of the main preoccupations they held in common was for what is sometimes known as 'Theosophy'. But what do we *mean* by 'Theosophy'? Its technical literal meaning is 'the knowledge of the wisdom of God'. The derivation is from *The Mystical Theology* in the Greek of psuedo Dionysius and the Latin of Scotus Irigena.[1] According to the Oxford Dictionary it is said to apply to any system of speculation which bases the knowledge of nature upon that of divine nature and to be often used in reference to such authors as the German philosophical writers Cornelius Aggripa, Paracelsus and particularly Jacob Boehme. Dame Frances Yates, who has exhaustively studied the speculation of such thinkers, states that 'Theosophy deals with the service of Angels' and this is correct when applied to the Renaissance Magic which was concerned with the manipulation of Angels, as used by Valentin Andreas in his *Christianopolis* or Campanella in his City of the Sun[2].

The whole area has traditionally been regarded as suspect in many ways. For if angels are seen as personifications of the attributes of God, as they sometimes are, surely their manipulation is unacceptable. Though if they represent the higher powers of man this may be perfectly proper. But if they are regarded as individual spiritual beings, are these to be expected to lend themselves to this process? In any case can the finite mind ever be capable of comprehending the Divine? Theology is the study of the *word* of God on the other hand. The idea

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that Divine Wisdom could in some way be tapped came into prominence, however, in the nineteenth century with the Theosophical Society and its leading members, Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, A. P. Sinnett and Colonel Olcott. This was a movement,of course, which Yeats briefly entered before passing on to the more exacting discipline of the Order of the Golden Dawn.

But in what way did Blake and Yeats use speculation which could be called 'Theosophical' and where are the differences between their uses? Blake worked out a world view for himself reflected in his designs and writings, which covered God and Man, Creation and Fall—or rather a creation which is really a fall into flesh—and possible redemption or reintegration; all depending on a conviction of powerful insight into the nature of the Divine. One clue into his theosophical sources may be followed out by examining the use of the concept 'Emanation' which he uses so often. Apart from the German figures he cites among the major influences on his work, Paracelsus, the medicalphilosopher and Jacob Boehme, the Lutheran visionary. Blake clearly drew on Robert Fludd; both on his elaborate illustrations to his seventeenth century Latin works, and on his *Mosaicall Philosophy* in English which widely uses the term 'emanation'[3]. The best definition of this expression may be found in the work of a later seventeenth century figure, Anne, Viscountess Conway, the pupil of Henry More the Cambridge Platonist and enthusiast for the literature of the Jewish Tradition known as the Kabbalah, and friend of Francois Mercure Van Helmont, alchemist, scientist, likewise learned in the Kabbalah. Her posthumous study, *The Principles of the Most Ancient and Modern Philosophy, Concerning God, Christ, and the Creatures viz. of Spirit and Matter in General* ..expands on the extension of the Godhead into the Lower World and the emanations of creatures themselves.

...'all Creatures from the highest to the lowest are inseparably united with one another, by means of Subtiler Parts intereroding or coming between, which are the Emanation of one Creature into another at the greatest distance; and this is the Foundation of all Sympathy and Anti-

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pathy which happens in Creatures : and if these things be well understood of any one, he may easily see into the most secret and hidden Causes of things, which ignorant Men call occult Qualities'.[4]

It is interesting to note her scorn for the term 'occult', but this came to be more and more the description of this sort of thought and material, and by the time W.B. Yeats came to investigate this field it was the conventional usage. In the meantime, of course, the whole mental climate had changed. There had been a revulsion from 'Organised Religion', regarded as sectarian, and an increasing scepticism with Darwinism and the rise of experimental science. This gave way in its turn to a protest against increasing materialism. The situation was different in Blake's day. In fact, in his reaction from contemporary rationalism and the effects of the Industrial Revolution, Blake returned in spirit to the seventeenth century in many ways. It is in that era that many of his sources are to be found, Even in the late eighteenth century the great Religious Revival led by Wesley and Whitfield, the Evangelical Movement, combated the effects of the 'Enlightenment', and one can only insist that William Blake himself was a Christian; if a very unorthodox one. The same certainly cannot be said ot Yeats, who could not accept the faith of his Church of Ireland forbears and came to practise a type of eclecticism which became increasingly common in his period. He rejected Christian mysticism when he insisted

> 'get thee gone Von Hugel
> Though with blessings on thy head',

even if in poems like 'Ribh rejects Christian Love' he showed an accurate understanding of that mysticism. Instead he pursued a magical path and experimented with spiritualism and the type of experience recorded In his prose work, *A Vision.*

However, one must point out that even in Blake's own lifetime thought had been moving in this direction and Blake's own symbolism shows signs of its presence. Though internal and external evidence in Blake's work shows that he followed the theosophy of Jacob Boehme and Paracelsus, using the Neo

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-Platonic revised Greek mythology of the mathematician and philosopher, Thomas Taylor, to express this in his art and poetry, his early struggles with the problem of evil and injustice brought him into contact with the Swedenborgian movement. Emanuel Swedenborg drew upon the theosophical doctrines of Boehme through the influence of Gichtel, though he never admitted this openly. But he came to such speculation from a much more materialist position; beginning his career as an expert on mining engineering, for which he was ennobled by the Swedish monarchy, continuing with an interest in Astronomy where he raised the earliest notion of nebulae and progressing to the study of Anatomy. He became preoccupied with the nervous system and the brain, and finally, in his efforts to locate the seat of the spirit, turned, as the son of a Swedish bishop, to his own brand of religious system. Yeats was deeply influenced later on by Swedenborg; taking from him, as from the mythology of the Japanese Noh play, the concept of 'Dreaming back'. But Blake was far more critical. He quickly saw defects in Swedenborg's outlook and underlined these in his comments on those of Swedenborg's writings he possessed[5]. And as he shows in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* he realised how derivative was Swedenborg's system and exactely where it came from. This is where Blake's essential Christianity appears, for of course Boehme had been a pious Lutheran and Blake was clearly influenced by the Evangelical Movement, and according to his young disciple, Samuel Palmer, by the Catholic mysticism of St. Teresa of Avila too.[6] The self-sacrifice of Jesus, and especially the Forgiveness of Sins, is held up at the conclusion of his last epic *Jerusalem* as the key to salvation, or the re-integration of the psyche. It is only when Albion, Blake's cosmic humanity, follows Christ's example that this is achieved.

> 'So Albion spoke and threw himself into the furnaces of affliction
> All was a Vision, All a dream : tha Furnace became
> Fountains of living waters flowing from the Humanity Divine,
> And all the Cities of Albion rose from their Slumbers, and All

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> The Sons and Daughters of Albion on soft clouds, waking from Sleep.' *Jerusalem*, Ch. 4, pl. 96

Then the fourfold Gate of Los in *Jerusalem*, Ch. 3, pl.72, is guarded by those around the winepress of Love,

> 'Fenelon, Guion, Teresa
> Whitfield & Hervey guard that gate, with all the gentle Souls
> Who guide the great Wine-press of Love'.

The verses in his notebook of 1803, 'Mock on, Mock on Voltaire Rousseau' show his contempt for rationalism and romantic rejection of religious discipline. But at the same time Blake did incorporate certain central tenets of Swedenborg's system into his own thought; notably the idea of God as 'the Grand Man', the notion that there was no essential distinction between God and Man. Blake praises the 'Eternal Great Humanity Divine'[7]. Also the idea of different dimensions of Being so elaborately worked out by Swedenborg. There seems to be an attempt to overcome the distinction between Creator and creature and at times an approach to a degree of Gnosticism in Blake's reaction to materialism. In the same way Yeats was obsessed with a desire to move away from any kind of Dualism. Since Swedenborg spent the last years of his life in London, known there as 'the New Jerusalem gentleman', he left many followers there behind him and Blake seems to have mixed by choice in Swedenborgian circles; with John Flaxman, Ozias Humphrey, and Thomas Butts, for instance. Swedenborg's followers not only transformed his movement into an institution they called 'The New Church', but, impressed with Swedenborg's many paranormal experiences and visitations from figures of the past, soon began to dabble in spiritualist seances[8].

Undoubtedly the mental climate *was* changing. The interest by those of Blake's friends like John Varley in Astrology is another symptom of this. But nevertheless in the artistic circles round John Linnell in which Blake moved towards the end of his life there was a strongly pietistic atmosphere. Not only had he produced the extended series of Bible illustrations for Thomas Butts, the War Office clerk, but he was encouraged

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to produce his Job series and later the illustrations to Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Samuel Palmer was a very High Church Anglican and it appears from his accounts that Blake seems to have had much sympathy with this position. He certainly demanded to be buried with the Anglican service, if in the Non-conformist Bunhill cemetery[9]. However, as the nineteenth century advanced, elements which can only be labelled 'occult' begin to become evident and the atmosphere that caused Yeats to be attracted first to the Theosophical Society, then the Order of the Golden Dawn, afterwards to attend seances, to interest himself in automatic handwriting and continually to learn from the Japanese Noh plays comes gradually into being.

This development is highlighted by an interesting document included in the work of a late disciple of the eighteenth century Behmenist Anglican divine William Law, Christopher Walton. It is all the more impressive because clearly Walton is a devoted follower of Law's Christian spirituality, but he seems to have swallowed whole doctrines which would have appalled Law himself. He genuinely saw no difference between the beliefs of Law and his immediate disciples, whose papers he had carefully collected, and the material incorporated into what he called a 'Magical Intersection'. He settled in London in 1830, at Ludgate, as a goldsmith and as an enthusiastic Methodist, donated to Dr. Williams' library in Gordon Square, the library of Non-Conformity, the material he had gathered of letters and documents concerned with William Law, his doctrines and the exchanges of his followers, and earlier enthusiasts for Behmenism in England. He then produced an extraordinary compilation in print in 1854 which he entitled *Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of the celebrated Divine and Theosopher, William Law. Comprising an Elucidation of the* scope and *Contents of The Writings of Jacob Boehme, and of his Great Commentaror, Dionysius Andreas Freher; with a Notice of the Mystical Divinity and Most Cuious and Solid Science of all Ages of the world. Also an Induction of the Intellectual 'Heathen', Jewish, and Mohammedan Nation into the Christian Faith...* Printed for Private Circulation. Five

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Hundred Copies. London. A. D. 1854.

Walton's purpose, as he explains, was to promote the foundation of an institution or movement which would carry on the work of

> 'the college of the Prophets among the Jews... the Priestly Colleges of the Eastern Magi, and the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Arabians; and the *Pythagorean* and *Platonic* schools...'

He remarks that, 'were it accurately and judiciously done' this would be a considerable work'. But though Walton my appear an unrealistic crank, the fact remains that we owe him a considerable debt for his industry in gathering together the material on eighteenth century Behmenism and the circle round William Law; and there is no doubt that in certain directions he was a remarkably well-informed mam, not without reservations on the practice of Magic, and that his interests give a clue to the way the wind was blowing in the mental climate of the mid-nineteenth century[10].

In considering the means by which ideas, symbolising networks of traditions, descend from one period to another - what we see here is the re-appearance in another form of major preoccupation from the Renaissance, first into the eighteenth and then the mid-nineteenth century - we would still do well to recall the judgments of one of the earlier modern interpreters of the History of Ideas, Professor Denis Saurat. Especially over the question of the atmosphere into which Yeats moved in London as a youg poet, the nature of his interests and the direction of his developing preoccupation. Saurat insists,

> 'Ideas do not run from great man to great man, nor from small man to great man, nor again from great man to small man. Milton or Blake or Hugo have had practically no influence on subsequent thought. [sic.] But the ideas which they expressed, to which they bore witness in their time, contiuue to evolve apart from them, in many ways that might be strange to them. Ideas really evolve in the masses. in unknown people. Some great man at one point in the evolution of ideas expresses and also distorts a part of what he has adopted, or as he sometimes thinks originated. (This is an accurate description of what happened in connection with Swedenborg's system, for instance.) Then centuries later, perhaps,

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> another great man gives a new shape again to the descendants of those thoughts which Milton or Blake gave a very partial expression : not to the ideas of Milton or Blake, but to the descendants of thoee ideas among which Blake or Milton chose afew to express or distort'.[11]

This process of descent is often ignored by scholars in tracing the sources of 'writers' or 'thinkers' thoughts and it is essential to bear it in mind in connection with the various experiments Yeats undertook when evolving his own symbolism. Altogether then, it is not surprising that he embarked with such enthusiasm on the task of editing Blake's writings with Edwin Ellis at such an early age considering the many preoccupations they shared. But one of his early experiments was his contact with Mme. Blavatsky's Theosophical Society. Again, Saurat has an accurate observation to make on what 'Theosophy' meant in her movement.

> It is to Fludd, d'Espagnet, Count de Gebelin, Bailly, Fabre d'Olivet, Eliphas Levi that the ideas expressed by Madame Blavatsky belong, and their origin further back lies in the occultism of the Renaissance. Her infatuation with India is only a fashion, which had doubtless persisted in Russia from the end of the eighteenth century : it is the premature knowledge of Gebelin, Bailly and Voltaire, it is the same inclination towards great theories of civilization and races.... A certain amount of travelling in the East must have enabled her to convince herself of this doctrine of visionary encyclopaedists wlth Indian ideas; and if one is looking for them the resemblances are striking, and we shall see our poets from Blake to Whitman following the same path.[12]

One has to recall in this context, for instance, that Voltaire was a great enthusiast for the Atlantis myth, used by Blake in his own system, and that apart from the elements Walton has traced out in his 'Magical Intersection', the whole magical movement associated with the name of Eliphas Levi, (the Abbe Benjamin Constant), in Paris, has to be taken into account. It was much of this kind of lore that lay behind the doctrines and rituals of the Order of the Golden Dawn. It was not an accident that Samuel Liddel McGregor Mathers, its one-time chief, moved to Paris, where he married the philosopher Henri Bergson's sister, and became the centre of a cult there. But since

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Mme. Blavatsky's work was 'a kind of modern summary of occultism' it was natural for Yeats to turn in this direction in his search for a spirituality which was not associated with the kind of conventional 'organised religion', Protestant or Catholic, which he knew and could not accept. But also one which took into account modern scientific thought to some extent. And this alternative was what Theosophical thought and symbolism offered. Richard Ellmann has well summed up its attraction for the whole age,

> 'Combining novelty and antiquity, the movement gathered force because it attacked atheism and at the same time supported anti-clericalism; because it attacked science, yet was careful to use the weapons of scientific language and confirmation whenever possible, and to fight only on carefully chosen battle-grounds; because it upheld fatalism, yet offered hope of progress; because it denounced modern man... but at the same time offered him the opportunity of becoming like a god. Spiritual evolution restored the hope which natural evolution had removed, and materialism was utterly condemned'.[13]

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It was on the question of the danger of materialism that Yeats at this time was so much attracted to Blake. So that when Yeats' school fellow, Claude Falls, was ordered by Mme. Blavatsky, 'Go back to your native Dublin and found a lodge there !', it is not surprising that Yeats gravitated in this direction, especially when he had been so much impressed by Sinnett's second book, *Esoteric Buddhism*, which he had picked up at the home of Edward Dowden. Yeats had already been attending the Dublin Hermetic Society founded in 1885.

Mme. Blavatsky pioneered the Theosophical movement in the States, together with Colonel Henry Steele Olcott. The basic tenets of the Theosophical movement have been set out by Ellmann as:

> '1. The idea that God is an inaccessible power and yet also the universal matter of which the world is made.
> 2. The conception of the sexual law according to which all in existence is both male and female.
> 3. The idea that in God and in every category of beings there is an evil side. (This belief also figures in the psychology of C.G. Jung).
> 4. Theories of reincarnation'.[14]

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There is no doubt that Yeats accepted these tenets and they are the key to his whole philosophy; they shine through all his work, becoming stronger as time went by and being expressed in his poems, prose works and plays; particularly, of course in *A Vision*.

The Golden Dawn sprung out of a group associated with higher Freemasonary and was deeply influenced by a revived version of the Rosicrucian Movement so current in the seventeenth century and surveyed in detail by Dame Frances Yates in her *The Rosicrucian Enlightenment.*[15] The eccentric figure who soon took over the leadership of the Order, Samuel Liddell Macgregor Mathers, was well versed in such learning and showed genuine capacity for scholarship; demonstrated, for instance, by his English translation of the most ancient section of Knorr von Rosenroth's seventeenth century Latin compendium, the *Kabbalah Denudata*, as *The Kabbalah Unveiled*, 1887[16]. Undoubtedly Yeats gained much from the rigorous training and intellectual discipline supplied by the Order and particularly, as a poet, from practice in the manipulation of rhythm, and it is thought that he may have helped to devise some of its rituals. But he became embroiled in disputes which took place within the Order towards the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries. These problems have been well traced out in the studies by Francis King, *Ritual Magic in England*, 1970, Ellic Howe, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, 1972, and George Mills Harper, *Yeats' Golden Dawn'* 1974, *Yeats and the Occult*, 1975. Yeats took a leading part in the expulsion of the sinister Alistair Crowley, one-time secretary to Macgregor Mathers. However, the curse laid upon the recalcitrant members of the London Isis Urania Temple who refused to hand over power to Crowley as Mather's emissary was, as Francis King points out, extraordinarily effective and the movement splintered in the early years of the twentieth century. Yeats was temporarily Imperator of the Isis Urania Temple and later a rather dormant member of a splinter group which stressed the magical rather than the mystical aspects of the Order's tradition.[17]

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The essential point, at the same time, is that the tenets and characteristic symbolism of the Theosophical Movement and the Order of the Golden Dawn itself were clearly reflected in Yeats' writing. It is only necessary to give afew examples of this. Reincarnation is often accepted perfectly naturally by Yeats. Yet in his discussion of this theme Yeats introduces an attitude in direct conflict with the anti-materialism so prominent in Blake's work; — his suspicion of the state of Generation, the process of vegetating, 'reptilization' or 'stonification' as he sometimes calls it, despite his admission on occasion of Generation as 'Holy ... image of Regeneration'[18]. Yeats rejects the Plotinian ethos of the *Enneads* which he had been studying, and welcomes the idea of rebirth in the last verses of 'A Dialogue of Self and Soul', in the same collection.

> 'I am content to live it all again
> And yet again, if it be life to pitch
> Into the frog-spawn of a blind man's ditch,
> A blind man battering blind men;

He ends,

> 'We must laugh and we must sing,
> We are blest by everything
> Everything we look upon is blest'.

This is much more life-affirmative. He goes on to declare in 'The Tower',

> 'I mock Plotinus' thought
> And cry in Plato's teeth
> Death and life were not
> Till man made up the whole
> Made lock, stock and barrel
> Out of his bitter soul...'

And while 'Sailing to Byzantium' expresses the Plotinian ideal of 'Sages standing in God's holy fire' as does 'The Delphic Oracle Upon Plotinus', 'Byzantium', a poem written after Yeats had recovered from a serious illness, uses, as F.A.C. Wilson has pointed out, 'a rebirth symbol' indicating 'that the soul, even when it has reached the summit of existence, even

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during its temporary sojourn in heaven, accepts the necessity of rebirth in the world'[19].

A 'Theosophical' characteristic Yeats shared with Blake, though, was his preoccupation with visionary experience. Few people realise that from the time that Swedenborg recorded his 'Memorable Relations', his paranormal encounters with figures from the past, his clairvoyance of events at a distance, his followers made strenuous efforts to follow his example. Their letters and diaries are full of accounts of dreams and strange visions. Blake simply followed suit; this had become a kind of convention in these circles. The same is true of Yeats and his colleagues. His Pollexfen uncle had the same attitude. It may seem odd that otherwise well-balanced people should produce such incredible evidence but psychologists are more ready to accept that a 'visionary faculty', the ability to project pictures in the mind as in an internal cinema screen, is not necessarily abnormal. Yeats incorporated one vision of which he gives a detailed account into 'Parnell's Funeral' from *A Full Moon in March:* that of a woman and a bow,

> 'A beautiful seated boy's a sacred bow;
> A woman and an aroow on a string;
> A pierced boy, image of a star laid low
> That woman, the Great Mother imaging,
> Cut out his heart ...'

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This comes from the incident of the invocation of lunar power, which he performed while staying at Edward Martyn's Tulira Castle and which provoked a dream, later interpreted on the lines of the Kabbalah by his Golden Dawn colleague Dr. Wynn Westcott, 'They were the symbolism of a kabbalistic grade I had not yet attained to, a secret imagery'[20]. 'The Apparitions' is another obvious example, from 'Last Poems' and the famous vision of 'The Second Coming'. The 'shape with lion body and the head of a man, a gaze blank and pitiless as the sun' is very like Mme. Blavatsky's concept of 'The Old Dragon' in her symbolism, recorded in *The Secret Doctrine*, for instance. The ambivalent nature of the second comlng in the poem surely

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belongs to the Theosophical concept of God as containing good and evil; transcending both. Macgreger Mather's group, too, were convinced of an impending holocaust through which it was their duty, as an *elite*, to preserve the essence of civilization.

In all this, it is important to insist that Yeats did not explore in these directions simply to quarry impressive imagery for his poems. No. Just as much as Blake, he was in search of a faith, and willing to create out of a mixture of ingredients, an eclectic vision of his own. Indeed the documents of the Golden Dawn betray' on Yeats' part an attitude rather like that of a devoted member of a traditional religious order, anxious to safeguard its integrity. As Imperator of the Isis Urania Temple he evidetly provoked conflict, or took part in the dissensions which inevitably arose in it once Macgregor Mathers had shaken the dust of it off his feet. The immediate bone of contention was an argument between two female members, both close friends of Yeats; Annie Horniman, the Horniman's tea hieress who later funded the Abbey Theatre, and Florence Farr, Mrs. Emery, whose acting career at the Abbey was also spectacular, but who ended her days as a Buddhist, working in a school in Ceylon. The two factions within the Order disagreed on the question of whether independent groups should specialize in magical experiments; Yeats as Imperator in this case taking the same line as had Mme. Blavatsky in his younger days. His passionate plea for order and discipline, proper training and supervision reads like the judgment of some monastic abbot. But his stand met with unrestrained criticism. Following the tenet of the Kabbalah that what is Above is reflected Below, Yeats had taken as his name in the Order the motto 'Demon est Deus Inversus'.

Yeats's experiences in the Golden Dawn are the subject of his reminiscences in 'All Souls Night' from *The Tower*

> 'And I call up MacGregor from the grave,
> For in my first hard springtime we were friends,
> Although of late estranged,
> I thought him half a lunatic, half knave,

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> And told him so, but friendship never ends;
> And what if mind semed changed,
> And it seemed changed with the mind,
> When thoughts rise up unbid
> On generous things that he did
> And I grow helf contented to be blind'.

He meditates on the problems involved in magical practices,

> 'He had much industry at setting out,
> Much boisterous courage, before loneliness
> Had driven him crazed;
> For meditations upon unknown thought,
> Make human intercourse grow less and less.

The history of the Golden Dawn and its offshoots, as traced out by Francis King, Ellic Howe and George Mills Harper, does appear to confirm the views expressed by Gerald Yorke, who speaks from much experience, in his foreword to Howe's book,

> '*The Magicians of the Golden Dawn* is a fascinating cautionary tale for all who try to develop their latent magical powers without using the protective techniques still taught in all major religions. From it we see how the majority of those who attempt to tread the occult path of power become victims of their creative imagination, inflate their egos and fall'.[21]

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Yeats was quite open in his prose works on his opinions about the nature of Magic as such. He posits a kind of creed in his *Essays and Introductions*,

> 'I believe in three doctrines, which have, as I think, been handed down from early times ...
> 1. That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that many minds can flow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal, a single mind.
> 2. That the borders of our mind are ever shifting, and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.
> 3. That this great mind and memory can be evoked by symbols'.[22]

His borrowings from Swedenborg are likewise stated clearly in *A Vision*. His acceptance of Swedenborg's state of 'Dreaming Back', a sort of Purgatory, also posited in Buddhist doctrine reflected in the Noh Plays he used so brilliantly in *Plays for Dancers*, reminds us that the theories of 'one great

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memory' have been put forward in another form by C.G. Jung in his concept of the Collective Unconscious. While Yeats' development of interloking cones in his gyre symbolism derives from Swedenborg; his early scientific work, as from his Theosophical speculations,

> 'Gyres are alluded to, but left unexplored, in Swedenborg's mystical writings. In the *Principia*, a vast scientific work written before his mystical life, he describes the double cone. All physical reality, the universe as a whole, every solar system, every atom, is a double cone; where there are 'two poles opposite one to the other, these two poles have the form of cones'.[23]

However, from the situation he found himself in as the result of his young wife's experiences of automatic handwriting he declares that his former investigations were no longer any use.

> 'I had once known Blake as thoroughly as his unfinished confused Prophetic Books permitted, and I had read Swedenborg and Boehme, and my initiation into the 'Hermetic Students' had filled my head with Cabalistic Imagery, but there was nothing in Blake, Swedenborg, Boehme or the Cabala to help me now'.[24]

On the subject of the states between sleeping and waking, Yeats reflects,

> 'One remembers the six wings of Daniel's angels, the pythagorean numbers, a venerated book of the Cabala where the beard of God winds in and out among the stars, its hairs all numbered, those complicated mathematical tables that Kelly saw in Dr. Dee's black scrying-stone, the diagrams in Law's *Boehme*, where one lifts a flap of paper to discover both the human entrails and the starry heavens'.

Yeats goes on to remark,

> 'William Blake thought those diagrams worthy of MichelAngelo, but remains himself almost unintelligible because he never draw the like'.[25]

In passing, it must be said that Yeats did much towards rendering Blake's prophetic work intelligible. The edition he published with Edwin Ellis and which has been re-issued, is still very illuminating in many ways.[26]

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However, there still remains the question of how Yeats used the material he so clearly gained from Renaissance Theosophical speculation, from Swedenborg and from Blake, and how that use compares with Blake's own. Among his plays *Purgatory* most explicitly deals with the condition of 'Dreaming Back'. It is brilliantly used, but the 'message' conveyed by the play is disturbing. It seems to be the necessity of avoiding 'bad' blood in a family, and appears to confirm the view that Yeats accepted the Hindu belief in caste as part of his idea of karma in reincarnation and that he applied it to Ireland. He might have remembered that more Irish 'Great Houses' have been ruined by 'Fast women and Slow horses', as the saying goes, than by marriages into 'low' blood. This helps to support the case sometims brought against him of 'Fascist' leanings. More disturbing still is his treatment in *Calvary* of the episode which forms the heart of Christian faith. The attitude to Lazarus, who holds a central place in the action of the play, highlights his positlon here. Speaking of Christ,

> 'We may say that his sacrifice was voluntary that He was love itself, and yet that part of Him which made Christendom was not love but pity, and not pity for intellectual despair, though the Man in Him, being *anti-thetical* like His age, knew it in the Garden, but primary pity, that for the common lot, man's death, seeing that He raised Lazarus, sickness, seeing that he healed many, sin, seeing that He died... the Good Samaritan discovers himself in the likeness of another, covered with sores and abandoned by thieves upon the roadside, and in that other serves himself. The opposites are gone; he does not need Lazarus; they do not die this other's life, live the other's death'.[27]

A strange way indeed to speak of the man who was Christ's friend; and over whose death He shed bitter tears. This episode has nothing to do with pity. And Yeats dismisses, too, that apect of Love - the counterpart to the marriage of Need and Plenty in the *Symposium*, as he does that revealed in the old Persian tale. Here the lady would not admit her lover when he gave his name, or insisted that he was her beloved. But, when, to the question, 'who are you?' he answered 'I am thyself', then she opened to him. There is also the indifference

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to the doctrine of death and suffering as the consequence of Original Sin and therefore blasphemous and to be fought. Then, we are reminded that the gyre symbolizes the all-sufficiency of Nature. God, in the Theosophical scheme, one must remember, is both an inaccessible power but also the material out of which everything is made. Terry Eagleton, the critic, has demonstrafed in an article on 'Hopkins and Nature', that Hopkins regarded 'the coil or spiral as a type of the Devil, seeing it as symbolic 'of motion lessening and at last ceasing', of Nature as caught up in a process of sickeningly entropic self-sufficient unravelling'. There is, unfortunately, much truth in this observation. One has to say that in the sequence, 'Supernatural Songs', there is a certain arrogant ruthlessness in Yeats's promotion of a Druidic ideology.

> 'Natural and supernatural with the self-same ring are wed.
> As man, as beast, as an ephemeral fly begets, Godhead begets
> Godhead,
> For things below are copies, the Great Smaragdine Tablet said'.

Typically, here is a reference to a major Hermetic text. Ironically, although, despite his disclaimer, 'Homer is my example and his unchristened heart', and his outbutst in 'The Dialogue of Self and Soul', 'So get you gone, Von Hugel, though with blessings on your head' ... his poem 'Ribb considers Christian Love insufficient', with its closing echoes of George Herbert, defines the very essence of the Negative Way in Christian Mysticism.

> 'Then my delivered soul herself shall learn
> A darker knowledge and hatred turn
> From every thought of God mankind has had.
> Thought is a garment and the soul's a bride.
> That cannot in that trash and tinsel hide:
> Hatred of God may bring the soul to God'.

How, then, does Yeats' Theosophy, his preoccupations in this direction compare with the use of the same elements in Blake? Despite Blake's portrait of his highest state, Eden, where, in *Milton*, Book the Second, pl. 30,

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> ...'Lo, the Eternal Great Humanity,
> To whom be Glory and Dominion Evermore, Amen,
> Walks among all his awful Family seen in every face,
> As the breath of the Almighty such are the words of man to man
> In the great Wars of Eternity, in fury of Poetic Inspiration,
> To build the Universe stupendous, Mental forms Creating...'

there is still a far more devotional atmosphere in Blake's writings, much nearer to a Christian tone. 'The Grey Monk' in the Pickering manuscript, reflects not only the pacifist convictions on actual war which Blake had come to develop. But it also teaches a deeply spiritual doctrine relying on the practice of patience and humility; a turning of the other cheek.

> 'But vain is the Sword and vain the Bow,
> They never can work War's overthrow.
> The Hermit's prayer and the Widow's tear
> Alone can free the World from fear.
>
> For a tear is an Intellectual Thing,
> And a Sigh is the Sword of an Angel King,
> And the bitter groan of the Martyr's woe
> Is an Arrow from the Almighty's Bow.
>
> The hand of Vengeance found the Bed
> To which the purple Tyrant fled;
> The iron hand crush'd the Tyrant's head
> And became a Tyrant in his stead'.

There is nothing of this sort in Yeats' ethos, though he may at times reproach himself for provoking violence or giving in to the Irish vice of hatred. Blake's insistence on the Forgivenses of Sins as the key to salvation, his great design at the end of the epic of Jerusalem in the arms of God points to a spirit much in keeping with the Metaphysical poetry and prose of the seventeenth century, despite the extent fo which in a struggle with the problem of Evil he adopted Theosophical doctrines in some directions, including those of that period, rather than accepting the orthodox creed in its entirety.

Here we come, perhaps, to the distinction between Mysticism and Magic made by Evelyn Underhill; one-time member

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of an offshoot of the Golden Dawn and with a mind deeply steeped in the learning shared by Blake and Yeats, in her classic study *Mysticism*. Her chapter on 'Mysticism and Magic' explains that though magic may never be dismissed since the time of the journey of the Magi to the Incarnate Lord, even 'at its best and surest, even on these levels, it is dogged by the defects which so decisively separate the occultist from the mystic. The chief of these is the peculiar temper of mind, the cold intellectual arrogance, the intensely individual point of view which occult studies seem to induce by their conscious quest of exclusive power and knowledge, their implicit neglect of love'[28]. Does not some of this reflect upon W.B. Yeats' life and work? Many readers have sensed a certain coldness in Yeats' attitude. His poems and plays, with all their perfection, have a *cold* passion it is said, and perhaps because of a certain detachment, an attempt at objectivity, do not convey the warmth that can be presented by much of Blake's work, for instance. Even in his criticism Yeats does credit Blake with this quality himself; in comparing Blake's work with the skill and poise of Botticelli in his illustrations to Dante he remarked, 'The flames of Botticelli give one no emotion, and his car of Beatrice is no symbolic chariot of the Church ... but a fragment of some Medieval pageant.' And, 'though Blake had not such mastery over figure and drapery as had Botticelli ... he could sympathize with persons and delight in the scenery of the *Inferno* and the *Purgatorio* as Botticelli could not, and could fill them with a mysterious and spiritual significance born perhaps of mystical pantheism'. In this last remark I believe Yeats to be correct. There is a particular kind of pantheism which all Theosophists tend towards, but Blake can render this with delight.

That there can be a certain element of arrogance in Yeats's approach I imagine is something that even he would hardly have denied himself. And what are we to think of his treatment of Love in poetry and drama? From the time when he wrote 'Down by the Sally Gardens' to the Crazy Jane poems Yeats produced a series of impressive love poems dealing with

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all aspects of love, whether romantic or realistic. Moreover, he was very interested in women, surrounding himself with them as friends. He did not show the Gnostic unease at Generation which caused Blake to have very ambivalent feelings about the Feminine. But the acid test of true love is whether the lover can wish the beloved to be *herself*, to fulfil what she has in her most effectively. Not simply to possess her. And by that test, in his relations with his great love, Maud Gonne, that strange and dedicated figure, Yeats failed. The cold temper of the magician had not given Yeats the power for the essential sacrifice necessary. And so, though a magnificent love poet, could it be that Yeats showed himself in real life to know little of loving?

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    The Magical Intersection is inserted in different parts of the various copies of this compilation. In the edition quoted here it is on pp. xx-xxi in an additional section bound up with it as a,

    Guide to the Peculiar Sciential and Experimental knowledge of Theology, Needful to Compose an Adequate and Suitable Biography of the Accomplished English sage and Christian Philosopher, William Law (The Author of the 'Serious Call to a Devout and Holy life & C.) ... London, Theosophian Library, Ludgate St. Free. First iss*u*e 5000, Christmas, 1856

    It is preceded by a section on Law's sources and 'Collateral Studies on p. xviii, and followed by further sources and an 'interscript, pp. xxi-xxiii

    After listing sources, Walton continues,

    Note. — After having gone through the present division of study, (referring likewise again to the Notes of pp. 522-524, 550, 553, 556, 559 and of 467-9, 445 and to the text of pp. 320 etc.) ... [Walton's notes take up a large proportion of the text and the whole is prinred in such minute print that a magnifying glass is desirable to follow it.]

    '... the student will perceive its scope and object; as opening out to him a whole field of the *natural* and *divine magic,* and of the accidental entrances therein made by the astral spirit and by faith

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up to the present time; besides enabling him to advocate with superlative force of reason and earnestness of zeal, the necessity of the establishment of *Theosophic Colleges* in regard to the perfect triumphs of the Gospel. Which should be, not merely elementary schools of the prophets, not yet on the ancient *philosophical academics*; but brilliant evangelical seminaries, worthy of the age, for the rearing and training of the children of God, up to the highest perfection of sanctity and wisdom, according to the lights of this work—even to the matured apprehension — and exercise of those *angelical arts* and *powers* which are the prerogative of the regenerate humanity'.

Among the works cited are those of 18th. century Behmenists and Evangelicals like Dr. Francis Lee, author of the *History of Montanism*, translator of *Boehme's Dialogue of the Supersensual Life* and Hebraist; an authority on Neoplatonism, Gnosticism and the Kabbalah. Also Bramwell, a prominent Methodist, and another impressive Hebraist and Behmenist Rev. Richard Clarke, as well as a long list of Catholic mystics. Similar material is to be found on pp. 1-8 of *An outline of the Qualifications etc. for the Biography of the Late Rev. William Law A. M. in Notes and Materials.*

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BOOK REVIEW

Shakespeare's Rome by Robert S. Miola, Cambridge University Press, 1983, pp. 244

Several critical evaluations, including the one by J. A. K. Thompson, *Shakespeare and the Classics*, have been offered to refute the inaccuracy of Jonson's malicious and derogatory fling at Shakespeare's 'small Latine, and lesse Greeke'. In an incisive and provocative study, *The Unnatural Scene*, Michael Long devotes a whole chapter to *Coriolanus* in which he focuses on Rome as the creative milieu which has thrown out a figure like the protagonist with all his points of strength and multiple weaknesses. In still another acute, persuasive, and indepth study, *Shakespeare's Rome*, Robert Miola has minutely examined what Shakespeare owes to the classics and to Rome in six of his plays, beginning with *The Rape of Lucrece* and ending up with a late play like *Cymbeline*? Miola seems to have had a twofold objective; to show parallelisms, in point of themes, incidents, and images, between Shakespeare on the one hand and Ovid, Virgil, Plutarch and Homer on the other, and to indicate how Rome as an invigorating force moulds both the structure and physiognomy of these plays. Rome insinuates several things for Shakespeare simultaneously: its physical contours like city walls, the Capitol, the outlying fields, the market-place and the theatre; ethnic values like 'honour', 'fame' and 'endurance' and concepts like the Republic and the Empire with attendant and correeponding *motifs* like 'thumos' or public-spiritedness and eros or love. Miola has followed a composite method: pointing out the significant variations and modifications in the material borrowed by Shakespeare from

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his sources and evoking the image of Rome itself as a live, hovering and tangible presence in the plays he has tackled with. Both these are equally alluring foci of interest for him all along.

Miola begins with a scrutiny of *The Rape of Lucrece,* the principal source for which is Ovid's *Fasti.* Collatia is a town outside Rome where Lucrece and her husband Collatine live and her rape by Tarquin is equivalent to the siege of the town, and this is the central image employed in the play through out. Also images of animal predation cluster around the act of rape, and these turn the well-ordered city into a wilderness. *Metamorphoses* XIII and *Aeneid* I & II are, as pointed out by Miola, close approximations of Shakespeare's debt to the classics. Lucrece regards herself as moulded after the pattern of the archetypal Hecuba and thus becomes an objective onlooker of the entire scene. She commits suicide in order to exonerate herself before the only judgement-seat which really matters, and thus her decision to do so may be regarded as an exercise in *pietas.* During the course of action in the play Brutus emerges as the avenger of the crime committed by Tarquin and as the heralder of the revolution. Though primarily relying on Ovid for inspiration Shakespeare is not so much interested in the transformation of the woman into a bird or a stream as into a deathless symbol of chastity and endurance and thus conferring upon her the status of a legendary figure. In *Titus Andronicus* Shakespeare attempts to create a 'recognizably Roman world' and also depict the struggle for political power. As in *Lucrece* here, too, the family is treated as the basic unit of the social structure. Titus is presented as the embodiment of *Romanitas,* the code of military decorum and discipline and encompassing virtues like constancy, courage, fortitude and honour. Raped by Demetrius and Chiron—the nefarious and ignoble brood of Tamora—Lavinia, the symbol of ravished innocence, makes an ineffectual appeal for mercy. Her appearance as one whose body was bruised, whose tongue had been cut out and whose arms had been lopped

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off, is the means of evoking the image of utter depravity and senseless destruction rife in the Roman world and which sends a shudder of horror down one's spine. It also amounts to signalling the collapse of the Roman civilization under the pressure of Gothic barbarism. At the heart of the play lies the analogue of Tereus—the shameless rapist of Philomela, and the figures of Philomela, Hecuba, Lucrece and Lavinia—all these co-exist in Shakespeare's unifying, fecund and syncretic imagination. The myth of the four ages provides the context for the action of the play. Lavinia's mutilation not only reflects disgusting savagery but also the replacement of the idyllic peace and security under Satrun by the ruthlessness and monstrosity of the dispensation of Saturninus and Tamora. *Titus* also shares with *Lucrece* pervasive animal imagery which suggests the ubiquity of *impietas* and indulgence in the bestial instincts of man.

In *Julius Caesar* Rome comes to acquire a distinct identity of its own: it becomes, as Miola succinctly points out, 'the central protagonist in the play'. Caesar participates in the feast of Lupercalia which was believed to commemorate the founding of Rome and the establishment of the Roman monarchy. It has been suggested that the fact of Romulus (the builder of Rome) and Caesar being associated together both by Ovid and Virgil could not have escaped Shakespeare's vigilant and hawk-like gaze. The Virgilian echoes in the play have been woven into 'powerful dramatic symbols', and this despite Plutarch being the primary creative stimulus for Shakespeare. Rome suffers divisoin against itself owing to political dissensions and rivalries. Miola rightly obseves thar after the murder the *impietas* which had been associated with Caesar becomes an inalienable attribute of Brutus's personality. No less true is his observation that 'as Brutus becomes more like Caesar, so Antony becomes more like Brutus' (1p. 02). Both Portia and Calphurnia are embodiments of Roman Virtues in their own distinctive ways: the former's accusation levelled against Brutus that she was allowed to live only in the suburbs of his affection ends up with nervous distraction, and Calphur-

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nia's premonitory dreams, scornfully pooh-poohed by Caesar, only lead to his disastrous death. Miola's summing up of the issues seems to be very judicious : 'Tyrants often start out as rebels, and rebels often end up as tyrants. The slaying of Caesar only brings out the Caesar in other men' (p. 114). The whole play is steeped in images of bloodshed and destruction-the ideals are upheld only for the time being to be smashed into nothingness eventually—as a direct consequence of the practice of *impietas*.

As hinted at briefly earlier we move from the idea of the Republic in *Julius Caesar* to that of Empire in *Antony and Cleopatra*. Here, as Miola points out, Shakespeare again brings into play his 'eclectic syncretism', that is, picking up scraps of information from Plutarch, Virgil and Ovid he skilfully welds them into new wholes. Moreover, Rome as symbolic of 'order, measure and self-control' is juxtaposed to Egypt which represents fecundity, excess and over-ripeness. Two details, among many, arrest attention all at once: first, Antony's leave-taking of Cleopatra is modelled upon Aeneas's leave-taking of Dido; besides, there is also a lot in common between Cleopatra and Dido as both of them cast their deadly spell upon and ensnare two reputable soldiers in 'nets of luxury and concupiscence'. Secondly, through Scarus's lines on Cleopatra: 'The breeze upon her like a cow in June/Hoists sail and flies' is mediated the contrast between frenzied, aggressive female sexuality represented by mares on the one hand, and the quiet, receptive and passive one represented by the cow in June on the other. Miola comments on it perceptively to this effect: 'Scarus's description of Cleopatra as a mare and as a cow in June depicts her as a paradoxical creature who unites the active and passive principles of female sexuality' (p. 141). Miola is also very correct in his judgment that in Shakespeare's vision Roman history moves in cyclical fashion: 'The struggles of Pompey and Caesar at Pharsalia; of Brutus, Cassius and Caesar in the Capitol; of Burtus, Cassius, Octavius and Antony at Phillippi are to be reenacted by members of the next generation'

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(p.134). It must, however, be admitted that Shakespeare has transmuted his source material in an incredibly fantastic way. The monument scene which initiates the process of apotheosis in respect of both Antony and Cleopatra also derives from his sources but transcends them amazingly. The twofold technique of deflation and exaltation: deflating the lovers to the level of mere beasts and elevating them to the pedestal of the gods betrays cunning exploitation of material from both *Georgics* and *Life*. The highly allusive language used by Antony has the effect of increasing both his stature and his military feats in the reader's estimation. One may very well agree with Miola that considered along with *Julius Caesar* history in *Antony and Cleopatra* is 'undular' and 'cyclical' rather than 'teleological'. One may add that though, generally speaking, Rome may evoke associations of *gravitas*, Egypt is linked up with *voluptas*, yet as pointed out by the present reviewer, neither of them has any fixed boundaries but each has a tendency to shade off and melt into its opposite.*

With *Coriolanus* we leave the spacious world of *Antony and Cleopatra far* behind: in fact *Julius Caesar*, as made clear by Miola, provides 'the deep source' for the later play. There is something patently narrow and circumscribed about its universe, something which catches one's throat and makes one pause in bewilderment and uneasiness. We are back again to face grim political realities and the two *motifs* of the Roman canon which coexist here are: invasion and rebellion, But interestingly enough, as Miola takes care to observe, the proposed Roman invasion ef Corioles is prevented by the Volscian invasion of Rome. Once again Shakespeare goes to Virgil for some of the analogues; for the portraiture of Coriolanus, in all its awesomeness or oddity Shakespeare seems to draw inspiration from Virgil's Turnus in *Aeneid IX*. Through the belly fable Shakespeare manages to articulute certain political truths and highlight the nature

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* A. A. Ansari : *Antony and Cleopatra;* an image of liquifaction in Aligarh Journal of English Studies, vol. vIII No. 1, 1983, p. 79

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of the internecine clash between the patricians and the plebeians. Volumnia is the Roman matron with an iron soul, and the metallic regidity and intransigency which charactercize Coriolanus he may have owed to his being brought up under the aegis of his mother. Virgilia, on the contrary, is a pattern of self-effacement and moth-like devotion and is responsive to the soulful but silent poetry of acceptance. Besides Virgil, Shakespeare reaches back to Homer as well: Coriolanus's return to Antium reenacts Ulysses's disguised return to Ithaca and he is repelled by the servingmen from joining the feast of Aufidius as rudely as Ulysses had been repelled and prevented from reaching the banquet. In Coriolanus's being asked to put tongues in his wounds for obtaining the approbation of the plebeians Shakespeare exploits the Roman rhetoricians like Cicero and Quintillian for purposes of achieving the effects of *eloquentia*. In his stubbornness and inevitability Coriolanus very much resembles a cosmic force, a kind of malevolent planet and an impregnable rock against which the waves strike and are swept back. Both *Aeneid* & *Lives* serve for Shakespeare as the quarry for image, idea and *motif* which he uses for creating a figure of stupendous dimensions but with an irksome and distasteful narrowness. *Cymbeline* dramatizes the Roman elements being superseded by the British ones or, in other words, the liberation achieved by Britain from Roman domination. Here, too, Shakespeare seems to combine his borrowings from Virgil with what he owes to Ovid and thus providing evidence of a synthetic approach. *The Rape of Lucrece* serves as 'the deep source' for *Cymbeline*, for whereas Lucrece tries to save the honour of her husband, Collatine, Imogen is intent upon demonstrating her steadfastness to Posthumus. The play also offers a combination of the Roman and non-Roman, that is, conventional, romantic elements. Similarly, the values of court life seem to alternate with the depiction of the pastoral world and the norms of behaviour relevant to that. We might uphold that Rome and its citizens are no longer at the centre of the play as they are in *Julius Caesar* but that a new nation, conscious

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of its potential and identity is coming into its own. Miola has justifiably maintained that the values of the Roman civilization like self-assertiveness, revenge, bloodshed and suicide are yielding place in this play to the British ones like compassion, humility and forgiveness.

The book is very well documented and is a notable piece of scholarship in the sense that its underlying thesis has been corroborated with a wealth of textual evidence. It is obvious that Rome has had its multifacetedness exposed in the various plays belonging to the canon. Towards the end Miola has judiciously pointed out that Virgil is only one of the many classical sources of Shakespeare with the implication that other equally legitimate sources may be tapped in the same thorough-going and meticulous manner by the oncoming researchers. But it needs be said, however, that the author, despite full and painstaking documentation, has refrained from making any value-judgments. Some comments on how Shakespeare's *esemplastic* imagination becomes ignited by his contact with the classics and issues forth in making available to the reader unsuspected riches would have been very well in order, and satisfying.

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