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CONTENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

Pierre Sahel

HISTORY IN SHAKESPEARE'S HISTORIES

In his history plays, Shakespeare attempts to adapt vast periods of the recent history of his country to the conditions and necessities of his theatre. The prologue of *Henry V*, probably with both seriousness and irony, refers to the difficulties he met with when dealing with events which were sometimes (to use the words of a much later drama) 'more than history can pattern' when 'devis'd and play'd to take spectators'.[1] Such difficulties in rendering chronicle matters into speeches spoken from the stage were probably Shakespeare's main preoccupations. The preoccupations of Shakespearian critics are of course different. Their problem is often to delineate the direction, or conception, or philosophy, of history in Shakespeare. To Lily B. Campbell, Shakespearian history is clearly cyclical and goes 'from the seizing of the crown from Henry VI by Edward IV to its loss by the "third heir", Richard III'—and the second tetralogy develops the same circular pattern from usurpation to usurpation[2]. To E. M. W. Tillyard, Shakespearian history is—just as clearly—linear and goes from the deposition and assassination of the Lord's anointed, Richard II, through civil disorders, the effects of a *Vindicta Dei*, to the ultimate reconciliation of God with his blessed—and once accursed—England at the end of *Richard III*[3]. As Arnold Toynbee has shown, there is no fundamental contradiction between the time-honoured theses of cyclical history and linear history. Indeed Lily B. Campbell's and E. M. W. Tillyard's ideas often converge, *e.g.* in their belief that Shakespeare gave a providential and Tudorian impulse to his dramatization of past events. There

is a critical continuum in the perception that Shakespeare's histories are not 'merely' separate dramatic units but (a) vast fresco(es), since the idea can be traced back to A. W. Schlegel[4] and up to Jan Kott's unconventional book[5] where the ten histories are as many 'chapters' of a vast epic. Nor are the two critics isolated in their interpretations that the Henry and Richard plays describe England's galleon providentially circumnavigating the dangerous reefs of history and sailing into the Tudorian harbour of peace and prosperity[6]. Yet, more recent commentators[7] have been dubious about such views and have prevented them from becoming critical commonplaces. The debate on Shakespeare's conception of history is then fairly open, and it is the purpose of this paper to offer a fresh analysis of the proofs of the existence or absence of a Tudor-supporting and history-making God in Shakespeare's history plays.

Shakespeare does not always present the titular possessor of crown and sceptre as being the most effective doer of historical deeds. He found, on the contrary, a potentially valid dramatic recipe in the association of actual weakness with theoretical power[8]. Few readers would indeed regard Henry VI as one of the makers of history. Through the filter of the protagonist's piety, the world is transformed into a universe where even the pettiest incidents emanate from God. Assigning any sublunar phenomenon to the divine will naturally leads Henry to credulity. Before Duke Humphrey proves the pretended miracle of the shrine of Saint Albans to be a mere comedy, the king shows all his naivety in proclaiming the divine origin of the pseudo-blindman's recovery :

> Poor soul, God's goodness hath been great to thee :
> Let never day nor night unhallowed pass,
> But still remember what the Lord hath done.
>
> (*2 Henry VI*, II, I, 84-6)

Such naivety applied to the political field is pregnant with threats since it leads Henry to behave like the appointed

interpreter of God's ways and wills. That he thanks heaven for the defeat of Jack Cade (*2 Henry VI*, IV, ix, 13-14) is neither surprising nor original since the victors of Shakespeare's histories never forget to praise God for their victories[9]. His exclamation when he is presented with the freshly severed head of the 'monstrous rebel'—'Great God, how just art Thou !' (V, i, 68)—is more unexpected and somewhat jarring In such an usually meek and mild monarch, yet it agrees with his belief in God's omnipresence. But when the king sentences the Duchess of Gloucester—'In sight of God and us, your guilt is great' (II, iii, 2)—he is far from seeing through the conspiracy whose object is the duke more than the duchess and will indeed succeed in making Humphrey give up his staff of office (II, iii, 23). Henry may well then proclaim that 'God will be [his] hope, [his] stay, [his] guide, and lantern to [his] feet' (II, iii, 24-5), and Margaret proclaim that 'God and King Henry govern England's realm' (II, iii, 30) : it is not long before their Yorkist enemies tear away the crown from the too credulous king's hands. Henry's amorphous and fatalistic piety is assuredly responsible for the rapid spread of civil disorder. On the battlefield, he wants neither to fight nor, when his followers are defeatad—a sign, to him, that God is not on his side—to flee, since no man can 'outrun the heavens' (V, ii, 73).

There is no reason for the spectator or reader of *2 Henry VI* to admire or pity this misfit. His dramatization sometimes verges on satire especially because this protagonist constantly cherishing illusions of goodness is in the centre of a *ronde* of ruthless politicians, schemers, and murderers. There is consequently no reason why we, too, should perceive the hand of God behind the political, military, or other events in the plays that bear his name.

In other histories, the Shakespearian kings are better equipped to master the data of history. From a survey of *I Henry IV* we see that the ruler is the source of most of the events of the drama.[10] He it is who takes the initiative and

demands that Hotspur should surrender his Scottish prisoners. He subsequently faces Hotspur's thundering rejoinder : the rebellion of the Northern and Western powers. But nothing in the disputes of the capital third scene of Act I indicates that Henry can be taken aback by *any* rejoinder. The words of the future confederates are then as respectful (Worcester : 'my sovereign liege', 10; Northumberland : 'my good Lord', 22; Hotspur : 'And I beseech you, let not this report/Come current for an accusation/Between my love and your high Majesty', 67-9) as their persons seem to be tractable (Northumberland : 'Those prisoners . . . / Were . . . not with such strength denied', 23-5; Hotspur : 'I did deny no prisoners', 29). Even Sir Walter Blunt, the king's minister, feels inclined to vindicate Hotspur's viewpoint :

> The circumstance considered, good my Lord,
> Whate'er Lord Harry Percy then had said . . .
> May reasonably die, and never rise
> To do him wrong, or any way impeach
> What then he said, so he unsay it now. (70-6)

But the king is inflexible. His very first words ('My blood hath been too cold and temperate', 1), his implicit threats ('Be sure/I will from henceforth rather be myself,/Mighty and to be fear'd', 4-6), and his imperious dismissal of Worcester ('Get thee gone', 15) all indicate that he is prepared for, and is even going so far as to provoke, an open conflict with the men who feel entitled to question the power which they once helped him to seize—'that same greatness . . . which [their] own hands/Have holp to make so portly' (12-13). Challenging rather than challenged by those who remind him that he reached the crown only thanks to their armed support, he probably wants to push them towards open revolt. But why safeguard a throne for a debauched heir with a distinct lack of interest in public affairs, as I, i demonstrates ? Throughout the play, Henry's energy will be focused on this one objective : the preservation of the crown on behalf of a worthy prince. He must succeed in encouraging his son's awareness

of his duties as heir-apparent to the throne and join him in his efforts to crush the rebellion. In a long interview with his son (III, ii 2), he compares Hal to Richard II who, he says,

> Mingled his royalty with cap'ring fools ;
> Had his great name profaned with their scorns,
> And gave his countenance, against his name,
> To laugh at gibing boys and stand the push
> Of every beardless vain comparative ;
> Grew a companion to the common streets,
> Enfeoff'd himself to popularity. (62-9)

The portrait of the king's predecessor is perhaps not true to reality; it probably does not agree with our idea of the monarch of *Richard II*. Henry IV is content to draw a caricature that bears some resemblance to his son as he imagines him in Eastcheap or at the tavern, which enables him to declare forcefully that Hal is a new Richard II (85) while Hotspur is a new Bolingbroke (96). Eventually he hurts his son's pride by heaping praises on the young rebel (98-107). The king's strategy pays off and the prince is convinced; he will 'make this northern youth exchange/His glorious deeds for [his] indignities.' (145-6) That indeed is what he does at Shrewsbury where the king brings to a successful conclusion the plan he had initiated. History, activated by his will, has moved towards absolutism and royalty away from its dependence on feudal lords. The inference to be drawn from the example that in *1 Henry IV* the sovereign's superior will prevails is that history belongs to free- and strong-willed men.

The prevalence of a single devouring will is also what *Richard III* dramatizes—up to the fourth Act. Richard of Gloucester is the villainous demiurge of the dreadful world which he wants to dominate. At the close of *3 Henry VI*, he that had 'neither pity, love, nor fear' V, vi, 68) had achieved a task of elimination and had exterminated the House of Lancaster. Now, in the complete moral neutrality of his mind, he finds an equation of what remains of

his problem : he will be king if he suppresses those who, within his own Yorkist clan, possess better rights to the throne : his elder brothers and their children. This he does methodically, systematically, and with mathematical coldness. Clarence is arrested (*Richard III*, I, i), then put to death (I, iv). Edward has the advantage of dying a natural death (II, iii). Clarence's son is 'pent up close' (IV, iii, 36), his daughter 'meanly' 'match'd in marriage' (IV, iii, 37), Edward's sons are assassinated (IV, iii, 1), Richard III reigns. Yet if Act IV shows the villain's zenith, V shows his decline and death. His conquering will has done no more than allow him to master the progress of history for a short period. From Act IV onwards, a force opposes and eventually overcomes him. Richard's error was to stake on a passive politicai world of which he was to prove not only the prime mover but the sole energizing power. Admittedly, taking the odds, he, the youngest claimant of one of the rival Houses, won the dazzling wager and seized the throne. To achieve his aim, he had to create a political vacuum; a vacuum he could later offer to fill. An antagonistic will, however, may now take advantage of the task of elimination Richard has achieved for himself. Richmond, his exiled competitor, may fill the vacuum if he eliminates Richard in the same way as Richard had eliminated his rivals. His marriage with King Edward's daughter, the tyrant knows, would allow him to lay claim to dynastic legitimacy :

> Now, for I know the Breton Richmond aims
> At young Elizabeth, my brother's daughter,
> And, by this knot, looks proudly o'er the crown,
> To her I go, a jolly thriving wooer. (IV, iii, 40-3)

A race starts between the two men. Richard is already married—a kind of handicap that would not last should his wife have the good luck to die. This soon happens, and Anne, we learn, 'hath bid this world good night' (IV, iii, 39). Richard rushes to sue for Elizabeth's hand (IV, iv). But Richmond outruns him. The king has hardly made his

proposal of marriage when the exiled earl lands on the Welsh coast (IV, iv, 534-5).

Shakespeare gives us hints of the various stages of the plot Richmond has been weaving from Brittany. Stanley, a character whose role has never been sufficiently recognized, is Richmond's principal confederate on English soil. A skilful politician, he pretends to serve the king—and indeed does so when his services are inconsequential, i. e. when they do not prevent him from helping the opposition and preparing the rebellion. In the manner of an adept at Machiavelli's political realism[11], he calculates, equivocates, and understands that seeming is not necessarily in agreement with being (III, iv, 56-7; IV, iv, 492-4; V, iii, 91-3). He attends the Protector's councils (III, iv) and Richard's coronation (IV, i). He warns the king of Dorset's desertion (IV, ii, 47-9) which, nevertheless, he has secretly favoured (IV, i, 48-52). In IV, v, he appears to be the rebels' informer and their leader in England. Above all, he arranges the match between Elizabeth and Richmond (IV, ii, 7-8). The end of the play thus dramatizes a conflict between the boar and the fox. The outcome of the battle of Bosworth depends no less on human data. There is no divine intervention, there is no miracle. If Richard has threefold as many soldiers as Richmond (V, iii, 11), his men, he knows, are not reliable and have followed him out of fear (V, iii, 221-2; 243-4). The royal army, moreover, is prey to what might be termed psychological warfare—one of the king's followers finds a demoralizing note just before the beginning of the battle, 'a thing devised by the enemy' (V, iii, 306). Last but not least, Stanley brings his regiment to the invader. The skill, intelligence, and might of Richmond and Stanley have triumphed over the intelligence, the cruelty, and the power of Richard.

The inference is an easy one. It is a confirmation that history belongs to the strong man—to the stronger man.

Yet one of these very men happens to question his own ability to shape the course of history. Henry IV, whom I

described as the most powerful man of the first 'Part' of the play that bears his name, distressfully fancies in the second that he has *not* written the pages of the book of history which he now is unable even to decipher :

> O God I that one might read the book of fate,
> And see the revolution of the times . . . (III, i 45-6)

The king meditates on the relativity of human hopes, glories, and achievements. Northumberland is now his arch-enemy;

> 'Tis not ten years gone
> Since Richard and Northumberland, great friends,
> Did feast together, and in two years after
> Were they at wars. It is but eight years since
> This Percy was the man nearest my soul. (III, i, 57-61)

What is the good of human actions ? Is not submissiveness to some higher Will, that apparently mocks human effort, preferable ? Does not some History obliterate the history written by men ? Considering that writing the book of history is a deceptive endeavour, a man might despair—'would shut the book and sit him down and die' (III, i, 56). King Richard, Henry muses, seems to have predicted that a higher Will would indeed bring the ex-confederates face to face. Perhaps his was the voice of God; perhaps he was the interpreter of Fate when he spoke those words, now quoted by his successor :

> Northumberland, thou ladder by the which
> My cousin Bolingbroke ascends my throne . . .
> The time will come that foul sin, gathering head,
> Shall break into corruption. (III, i 70-7)

Richard, Bolingbroke is now thinking, was right. The consequence of the past deeds—the opposition to Richard—went beyond the deeds[12]. Henry IV is struck by the apparently magical realization of Richard's prophecy—'So went on,/Foretelling this same time's condition' (III, i, 78-9). Warwick, the king's confidant, is however able to demonstrate that the dead king was simply announcing what could rationally be guessed :

King Richard might create a perfect guess
That great Northumberland, then false to him,
Would of that seed grow to a greater falseness ;
Which should not find a ground to root upon,
Unless on you. (III, i, 88-92)

Indeed, if we turn to *Richard II* and read the words spoken to Northumberland by the fallen monarch (some of them are *not* reported by his successor), we discover that Richard had been more explicit and had realistically rationalized the situation of his then united enemies :

Thou shalt think,
Though he divide the realm and give thee half,
It is too little, helping him to all;
He shall think that thou, which knowest the way
To plant unrightful kings, wilt know again,
Being ne'er so little urg'd, another way
To pluck him headlong from the usurped throne.
(v, i, 59-65)

To Henry IV, Warwick thus maintains that men are responsible for their history. Northumberland's action during the struggle against Richard II, motivated as it was by ambitions and interests which differed from Bolingbroke's, was simply, after a point, in conflict with that of the new king; each man henceforth wanted to write history in his own way. So, the opposition Henry has now to face is that of a man, not of an invulnerable Power—the necessary outcome, perhaps, of a latent conflict. The king, convinced by Warwick's demonstration, wonders : 'Are these things then necessities ?' and concludes : 'Then let us meet them like necessities' *(2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 92-3). In spite of Henry IV's fear of being struck by divine vengeance, divine vengeance does not materialize. After these inner vacillations, he will once more be victorious over his enemies. History is thus built by, though it does not obey, his will which is antagonized by adverse determinations and necessities.

In practically all of Shakespeare's histories, God's favour or wrath is mentioned by one protagonist or another. In the

Henry VI plays and in *Richard III*, divine power is included in the verbal combats of characters who do not necessarily hold any genuine belief in Providence. In one scene (*Richard III*, I, iii) members of the Yorkist clan affirm that Margaret's misfortunes are of divine origin (174-86), yet mock the very notion of providential revenge when it is Margaret who brandishes the supernatural weapons (212-14; 217-27). The old queen echoes her enemies' irony when *they* curse her (191-5) before she too utters maledictions and imprecations (196; 287-8). Richard of Gloucester is the supreme ironist and the best player of the games of cursing and wielding metaphysical threats. At the end of the reconciliation scene (*Richard III*, II, i) so abruptly cooled by the news of Clarence's death, he who had ordered his brother's assassination sarcastically remarks :

> Marked you not
> How that the guilty kindred of the queen
> Looked pale when they did hear of Clarence's death ?
> O they did urge it still to the king !
> God will revenge it. (135-9)

One is blind to the protagonist's irony, and takes him in earnest, if one judges that these or other of his words present him as the divinely appointed executor in charge of the extermination of criminals until he too is removed from this world[13]. If this were so, we should not feel any pity for Richard's victims[14], and the maledictions cast upon the tyrant by the ghosts in Act V (a criminal cursed by the spirits of other hardly pitiable criminals !) would be either psychologically incomprehensible or dramatically disastrous. In *Richard II*, another play in which numerous assertions are also made about heavenly punishments, a providential moral would be extremely hazardous. The beginning of the drama seems to stress Richard's guilt and his possible chastisement by God (I. i, 104-106; I, ii, 37-41). But from the moment the king's throne totters, affirmations of divine castigation to come are uttered against his enemies (III, iii, 85-100; IV, i,

136-44). The characters, it is safe to conclude, when in turn they threateningly prophesy the realization of God's wrath, depending upon whether they are in power or powerless, are merely using the prestige of things sacred to further their respective causes—presumably for lack of a more concrete support. Contrary to the *Iliad* where the gods pursued their own quarrels by taking the part of either the Trojans or the Greeks, Shakespeare's histories present characters who claim to enlist supernatural forces, retaining God's protection for themselves or inflicting His wrath on their foes. Nor is the theme of collective reprisals made by God against England, for having accepted the deposition of Richard II, an issue in the history plays. Richard's ghost does not haunt the *Henry VI* plays[15], where England suffers most, the less so since, when the *Henry VI* plays were first performed, *Richard II* was still to be written. The epilogue of *Henry V*, the sole explicit link between the so-called tetralogies, does not foretell that a form of *Vindicta Dei*, having merely grazed the realm of Henry IV and spared that of Henry V, was to destroy that of Henry VI.

Voluntary acts, necessities, and accidents weave the texture of Shakespearian history. In part, it is made by men—whose actions can have no hold on chance—but it is autonomous and free from the authority of theology. This conception is bold and goes counter to the main philosophical currents in Elizabeth's time. What Machiavelli's critics found most shocking was precisely the fact that to him human history was autonomous and that 'moral judgments were as irrelevant as hypothetical divine interventions'[16]. But it is not a complex philosophy since Shakespeare's sole 'system' is the realities he has to render into acts and scenes of dramas. The history of the history plays is not cyclical though its track may revert towards familiar places; nor is it a linear way trodden by fifteenth century mankind, because men's wills are contradictory and often antagonistic. Those who understand Shakespeare's historical work as a vast

fresco of the past (*e.g.* the passing of the Middle Ages into Modern Times) overlook the hesitations of his history which are naturally a part of the essence of theatre. They tend to elaborate a sort of applied neo-Hegelianism where Tudor messianism replaces Hegel's Spirit of the World. Only, let us note, Hegel would have paid scant attention to the English civil wars of the fifteenth century, hardly perceptible boils in the great Stream of his History.

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[6] See M. B. Mroz, *Divine Vengeance : A Study in the Philosophical Backgrounds of the Revenge Motif* (Washington, 1941) ; Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Princeton, 1957), Tom F. Driver, *The Sense of History in Greek and Shakespearian Drama* (New York, 1960) ; M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty : A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays* (London, 1961).

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The Dramatist and the Received Idea (Cambridge, 1968); Pierre Sahel, 'Les voies des hommes dans *Richard III*', *Etudes Anglaises*, XXV (1, 1972), pp. 91-103; Robert Ornstein, *A Kingdom for a Stage* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972).

The notion of 'more recent' criticism is, of course, relative. Sometimes critics die and their views do not; at other times, the warning that a critic still lives reads like an obituary notice. See Paul N. Siegel, 'Tillyard Lives : Historicism and Shakespeare s *History* Plays', *Clio*, IX (1, 1979), pp. 5-23.

[8] See Michael Manheim. *The Weak King Dilemma in Shakespeare's History Plays* (Syracuse, N. Y., 1973).

[9] After his victory against the French, Henry V proclaims :

> O God, thy arm was here !
> And not to us, but to thy arm alone
> Ascribe we all. (*Henry V*, IV, viii, 104-106)

After his treachery in the forest of Gaultree, John of Lancaster proclaims : 'God, and not we, hath safely fought to-day. (*2 Henry IV*, IV, ii, 121)

[10] See Anne Marrie McNamara, '*Henry IV* : The King as Protagonist', *Shakespeare Quarterly*. X, (3, 1959), pp. 423-31.

[11] While Richard of Gloucester is only a machiavel.

[12] Ronald Berman, 'The Nature of Guilt in the *Henry IV* Plays', *Shakespeare Studies* (I, 1965), p. 19.

[13] See, for instance, M. M. Reese, *The Cease of Majesty*, p. 211.

[14] Ibid., p. 210 : 'We do not have to feel much sympathy for the victims'.

[15] J. P. Brockbank, 'The Frame of Disorder', pp. 97-8.

[16] F. Smith Fussner, *The Historical Revolution* (London, 1962), p. 12.

A. A. Ansari

CORIOLANUS—THE ROOTS OF ALIENATION*

On the face of it *Coriolanus* is built up around the conflicting attitudes of the two major political factions, each of which is wedded unflinchingly to its own ideals and has evolved its own strategy of operation. These may be identified as the patricians, including Coriolanus—sullen and aristocratic by temperament, a mighty and peerless soldier by training, one who had received seven wounds in the repulse of Tarquin—and the plebeians. The latter are represented by the two Roman tribunes—Brutus and Sicinius —who stand out conspicuously in the hierarchical polity of Rome, uphold the popular cause and are entirely unscrupulous in their manoeuvrings. The rivalry between the two factions and the clash of interests generated on that account is paralleled with the larger and more deeply ingrained antagonism between the Romans and the Volscians. The ancient and implacable hatred between citizens of the two states had been brewing for long and Coriolanus who had distinguished himself by imposing a crushing defeat upon the Volscians earned for himself the enviable title which signified both the skill and the prowess displayed by him on the battlefield. What may be termed 'Romanness' is more or less to be equated with the rigidity and consequential incommunicability that characterises the dynamics of the model of the Roman State. The grievance that is voiced by the plebeians relates to their not getting corn gratis to which they lay a perfectly legitimate claim according to their own lights. This reflects, as openly alleged by them, not only

*Text of one of the three Naag Memorial lectures delivered in Banaras Hindu University on 30 March 1981.

cupidity and selfishness but also heartless apathy exhibited by the patricians, and it is not drought but they who are responsible for their miserable plight. 'What authority surfeits on would relieve us. If they would yield us but the superfluity, while it were wholesome, we might guess they relieved us humanely; but they think we are too dear : the leanness that afflicts us, the object of our misery, is an inventory to particularize their abundance; our sufferance is a gain to them.' (I, i, 15-21).[1] The logic appears to be seamless : everything is made to turn upon yielding the superfluity and the denial of it is the source of abundance for the already prosperous class.

Though unlettered and volatile the plebeians do have some dim awareness of the nexus of relationship that binds them to the body-politic. And yet they are likely to be swayed by whoever is able to exploit and mislead them for achieving his own objectives. In the fable of the belly, derived from Plutarch and serving as an archetype for the 1607 Midlands riots over food and prices, she is accused of being cormorant and therefore rapacious. This is calculated to demonstrate the fact that its functioning as a concordant organic whole depends largely upon the self-discipline and harmony that obtains among its constituent elements. The belly enjoys a privileged position indeed but only to the extent of safeguarding the well-being of its component parts and this obviously entails a heavy responsibility upon it. Menenius, who worships his own god, and is astute and garrulous at the same time, puts the whole thing shrewdly and with enough good grace thus :

> The senators of Rome are this good belly,
> And you the mutinous members : for, examine—
> Their counsels and their cares digest things rightly
> Touching the weal o' the common : You shall find
> No public benefit which you receive
> But it proceeds or comes from them to you,
> And no way from yourselves ! (I, i, 147-53)

The curiosity of the listeners is at long last satisfied when Menenius offers them the explicit and unambiguous equation between the belly and the senators on the one hand and the 'mutinous members' and the common people on the other. Here not only is the principle of 'creative mutuality' underlined but also the macrocosm-microcosm correspondence hinted at, and the fact of the plebeians' utter dependence upon their superiors is accepted as incontrovertible. But this does not seem to cut much ice with the plebeians, for they are engrossed in their own petty interests and their minds are made to circle round the same point over and over again.

Coriolanus's besetting sins are presumed to comprise 'iron-hearted' pride, bragging, self-willed isolation. and an inflexibility of attitude which verges on intransigence. His is the integrity of a natural leader to a self-constructed ethic which excludes participation of and responsibility to the common people. To Menenius's query : 'In what enormity is Marcius poor in that you two have not in abundance ?' the two tribunes respond thus :

> Brutus He's poor in no one fault, but stored with all.
> Sicinius. Especially in pride.
> Brutus. And topping all others in boasting. (II, i, 17-19)

An earlier interchange between the two of them puts the matter more vividly though not so succintly :

> Brutus. Being mov'd, he will not spare to gird the gods.
> Sicinius. Bemock the modest moon.
> Brutus. The present wars devour him; he is grown too proud to be so valiant.
> Sicinius. Such a nature,
> Tickled with good success, disdains the shadow
> Which he treads on at noon. But I do wonder
> His insolence can brook to be commanded
> Under Cominius (I, i, 255-62)

Coriolanus is referred to invariably as 'noble' in different contexts, and this is very well borne out by the facts of the

situation, but this nobility becomes shadowed and slurred over. He has grown up under the impact of the towering personality of Volumnia who is more or less a monster : she is characterised by a ruthlessness of will, a rapacity of the ego. She loves her son intensely and therefore wishes to cast him into the iron mould of her own making and choice. It may however be conceded that though Coriolanus is contemptuous of the common people, is repelled by their untidiness, their 'stinking breaths' and their anarchic and unstable temper—he calls them 'wollen vassals' and 'multiplying spawm'—yet he is not altogether devoid of the spirit of comraderie which he shares with them. When he is about to undertake the onslaught on the Volscians he addresses them in this ambivalent manner :

> If any such be here—
> As it were sin to doubt—that love this painting
> Wherein you see me smear'd; if any fear
> Lesser his pesron than an ill report;
> If any think brave death outweighs bad life,
> And that his country's dearer than himself;
> Let him, alone, or so many so minded,
> Wave thus, to express his disposition,
> And follow Martius. (I, vi, 68-75)

The undertone of self-righteousness is carried further when he speaks to Lartius in this largely flaunting way :

> I have done as you have done; that's what I can;
> Induc'd as you have been; that's for my country:
> He that has but effected his good will
> Hath overta'en mine act. (I, ix, 16-19)

On the contrary, the attempt at self-depreciation in another context is forced to our view in a rather brusque manner thus :

> I had rather have one scratch my head i' the sun
> When the alarum were struck than idly sit
> To hear my nothings monster'd. (II, ii, 74-6)

The very fact that Coriolanus fought her wars for Rome against the Volscians—their inveterate enemies—and gave

them absolutely no quarter is enough to prove his credentials beyond any legitimacy of doubt. The tremendous ovation he receives from his own people provides on the one hand the testimony to his intrinsic worth and, on the other, it helps us measure the depth and intensity of the popular upsurge in his behalf. Reporting the common speculation that Coriolanus might be rewarded for his military exploits by being elected consul one of the messengers cannot help commenting on it to this effect :

> I have seen the dumb men throng to see him, and
> The blind to hear him speak : matrons flung gloves,
> Ladies and maids their scarfs and handkerchers
> Upon him as he pass'd; the nobles bended,
> As to Jove's statue, and the commons made
> A shower and thunder with their caps and shouts:
> I never saw the like. (II, i, 256-62)

The fervour of the beholders for this supposed demi-god is conveyed in terms of the amalgamation of the contradictory impacts of the various sense-organs. At a later stage when Coriolanus is in the midst of the Volscians and is bent upon wreaking vengeance against Rome and his countrymen by attacking them because they had banished him disgracefully he is reported by Cominius to be acclaimed with no less enthusiasm conveyed through the medium of a violent physical impact :

> He is their god : he leads them like a thing
> Made by some other deity than Nature,
> That shapes man better; and they follow him,
> Against us brats, with no less confidence
> Than boys pursuing summer butterflies,
> Or butchers killing flies. (IV, vi, 90-6)

These two pictures set side by side emphasize the hypnotic appeal that Coriolanus had for the common people because of his dauntless courage, his capacity for taking risks (as evidenced by his entrance into the enemy's gates and being shut up unexpectedly) and his unswerving attachment to whatever cause he espoused.

Coriolanus, like Othello, wears the garland of war as his most distinctive insignia. Throughout the play he is visualized in the image of the epic heroes of antiquity, and Mars is the chief emblematic figure used for highlighting his indomitable strength, his fighting manhood and his stern defiance of 'shunless destiny'. After his military campaigns are temporarily suspended he is painted thus in retrospect by Menenius :

> as weeds before
> A vessel under sail, 'so men obey'd,
> And fell below his stem : his sword, death's stamp,
> Where it did mark, it took; from face to foot
> He was a thing of blood, whose every motion
> Was tim'd with dying cries : alone he enter'd
> The mortal gate of the city, which he painted
> With shunless destiny; aidless came off,
> And with a sudden re-enforcement struck
> Corioli like a planet. (II, ii, 104-13)

Here Coriolanus, the 'flower of warriors' is identified with 'Death that dark spirit, that in's nervy arm doth lie'—a terrible nihilistic power that mows down everything that crosses his path. All the images used in this description are loaded with articulate energy and Coriolanus seems to oppose all that obstructs him with an irresistible thrust. A sense of apocalyptic doom appears to overhang the earth on which he treads and which he commands. It should however not be forgotten that Coriolanus is what Volumnia has made of him : she is the only source of power which he understands and obeys instinctively. The two motifs of war and honour were implanted early in him by his mother, and glory and danger were twinned together into the pattern of his mind. 'When yet he was but tender-bodied and the only son of my womb, when youth with comeliness plucked all gaze his way, when for a day of kings' entreaties a mother should not sell him an hour from her beholding, I, considering how honour would become such a person, that it was no better than picture-like to hang by the wall, if renown made it not stir,

was pleased to let him seek danger where he was like to find fame. To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned, his brows bound with an oak' (I, iii, 5-15). To her he is the flamboyant hero, the quintessential man of iron, the embodiment of virility (the sexual innuendos of this passage are too apparent to be missed), and to this ideal of fashioning him she had dedicated herself relentlessly. He is her creature in all respects : it is Volumnia who turned him into a demonic force, nourished the roots of his arrogance on the one hand and prevented him from attaining independent manhood on the other. This is borne witness to by the First Citizen who makes a very perceptive comment in this respect thus : 'I say unto you, what he hath done famously, he did it to that end : though soft-conscienced men can be content to say it was for his country, he did it to please his mother, and to be partly proud; which he is, even to the altitude of his virtue'. (I, i, 34-9). It would be delightful to keep spotlit in mind Valeria's vignette of Coriolanus's son which may be juxtaposed with what Volumnia had said about her own son : 'O' my troth, I looked upon him o' Wednesday half an hour together : he has such a confirmed countenance. I saw him run after a gilded butterfly; and when he caught it, he let it go again; and after it again; and over and over he comes, and up again; catched it again : or whether his fall enraged him, or how 't was, he did so set his teeth and tear it; O ! I warrant, how he mammocked it.' (I, iii, 59-66). In this violent and sadistic butterfly chase are reflected the attitudes and disposition of Coriolanus with such transparency as if the son is only a 'miniature variant' of the bloodthirsty father. It offers a revelation of the father in all his pertinacity, his grim pursuit of power and his unmitigated infliction of pain on the object of his anger. 'This little incident', says Wilson Knight, 'reflects well Coriolanus's merciless power, his unpitying condemnation of the weak, his violent selfwill : above all, his quality of strength misused.'[2]

One marginal aspect of Coriolanus's selflessness is evidenced by the fact that he is prepared to share the booty acquired after the victory over the Volscians with everybody else and not withholding anything for himself alone. His oddity or his characteristic self-assertiveness is however brought out when he says : 'I had rather be their servant in my way/Than sway with them in theirs'. (II, i, 198-9). Coriolanus's attitudes are not complex but contradictory and far from being indeterminate : the people around him, especially the tribunes, know how he would respond to certain critical stimuli. He is an odd mixture of liberality and narrowness, of an exaggerated sense of honour and of puerility. His aristocratic and sullen pride, his priggishness and his bloated self-importance prevent him from parading his merits before the common people. He very much covets the office inwardly and yet he is most likely to flame into revolt if he is asked to prostrate himself before them. When the fit of passion is on him he overlooks the necessity of restraining himself even if the prospect of winning the consulship were dangling in front of him. He is very much averse to standing in the market-place and coaxing the plebeians to confer honour and distinction upon him. He therefore insists that the ritual of advertizing his wounds in public might be done away with and he be allowed to escape this opprobrium. His ironical response to what is expected of him is formulated thus : 'I will, sir, flatter my sworn brother the people, to earn a dearer estimation of them; 'tis a condition they account gentle : and since the wisdom of their choice is rather to have my hat than my heart, I will practise the insinuating nod, and be off to them most counterfeitly; that is, sir, I will counterfeit the bewitchment of some popular man, and give it bountifully to the desirers (II, iii, 94-101). This Falstaffian notion of 'counterfeiting' with which Coriolanus's mind is dizzied is symptomatic of his psychological incoherence at the moment. He ridicules the temptation to falsify himself and would like to

transfer it to any popular pedagogue who may play the second fiddle to a blindly indulgent and credulous audience. His own incapacity for striking such a posture is dwelt upon again and again. He continues in almost the same vein when, with the entrance of three more citizens, the chain of his monologue is broken thus :

> Here come more voices.
> Your voices : for your voices I have fought;
> Watch'd for your voices; for your voices bear
> Of wounds two dozen odd; battles thrice six
> I have seen and heard of; for your voices have
> Done many things, some less, some more; your voices ?
> Indeed, I would be consul. (II, iii, 124-30)

For purposes of getting the proposal for consulship confirmed in his favour Coriolanus has of necessity to secure the full consent of the plebeians passing through the market-place in twos and threes. Hence this sort of harping on the word 'voices' (synonymous with votes in the Elizabethan usage), gradually modulating itself into a terrible crescendo, betrays the inner revulsion he has been feeling all along against any canon which required him to humiliate himself in the presence of the commoners. This crescendo is reminiscent, in an earlier context, of the exercise of the arithmetic of wounds done by Volumnia with remarkable felicity and hardly concealed gusto. To cap it all is the concentrated irony which explodes towards the very end with the simple, unadorned and yet effective utterance : 'Indeed, I would be consul.'

Apparently, the play is centred round the polemics pertaining to the rights and privileges of the common people; the nature of sovereignty and the rule of thumb allegedly exercised by the patricians. Tensions are naturally built up when opposite forces collide against one another and result in a sterile and unresolved conflict. The plebeians had been persuaded by the tribunes to the effect that all their special privileges had been withdrawn and violently curbed by Coriolanus and the patricians who were in league with

him. They had thus been deprived of their paramount importance in the oligarchy established by their oppressors and reduced to mere impotence. Coriolanus's counter logic—free corn could be offered to the plebeians only as a reward for military service—however rests on the following premises :

> Being press'd to the war,
> Even when the navel of the state was touch'd,
> They would not thread the gates : this kind of service
> Did not deserve corn gratis. Being i' the war,
> Their mutinies and revolts, wherein they show'd
> Most valour, spoke not for them. (III, i, 121-6)

The obvious and well-defined polarization between the plebeians and the patricians—and Coriolanus's sympathies are doubtlessly tilted towards the latter—is formulated by him in this laconic manner :

> This double worship,
> Where one part does disdain with cause, the other
> Insult without all reason; where gentry, title, wisdom,
> Cannot conclude, but by the yea and no
> Of general ignorance—it must omit
> Real necessities, and give way the while
> To unstable slightness : purpose so barr'd, it follows
> Nothing is done to purpose. (III, i, 141-8)

This reflects an honest and objective evaluation of the party positions on the one hand and of the processes involving, what L. C. Knights calls, 'thwarting and stultification'[3] on the other; and the body-politic is engulfed into an utter chaos as an ineluctable consequence of it. While the tribunes are motivated by deep-seated animosity and political crookedness and opportunism, the plebeians are voracious, fickle-minded and untrustworthy. They are neither capable of a precise and accurate understanding of the tangle of issues involved nor do they possess any sagacity or stability of approach. The Third Citizen paints their mercurial temper with great urbanity and sense of humour, though not necessarily with full awareness of the implications of his com-

ment : 'not that our heads are some brown, some black, some abram, some bald, but that our wits are so diversely coloured : and truly I think, if all our wits were to issue out of one skull, they would fly east, west, north, south; and their consent of one direct way should be at once to all the points o' the compass' (II, iii, 17-23). They are likely to be led by their noses and follow their superiors blindfold because left to themselves they may go off the tangent altogether. In this context Brutus and Sicinius play a very sinister role in inciting them against Coriolanus for whom the plebeians feel an animal hatred. The tribunes make capital out of it and they are also shrewd enough to anticipate what his reflex action in a particular situation would be if he were provoked on a sensitive point. Attention is focused by them not only on his over-weening pride but also on the nausea Coriolanus feels for the common people, and the fact of his combining in himself both generosity and hard inflexibility in varying proportions is also exploited fully. The plebeians are pitiably lacking in discrimination and critical judgment; they are coarse-grained and offensive and have an itch for irrationality which may be sparked off on the slightest pretext. They are likely to applaud and revile Coriolanus at the same time and their reactions against him oscillate between the two poles of adoration and attack. They don't seem to have any scruples either and swing in different directions in accordance with the change in the political weather.

Inspite of the obvious political overtones, *Coriolanus* may, with greater adequacy, be approached not in terms of the stakes run into by the two factions in a constricted and abrasive society but in those of the tragic experience involved in the very structure of the play. The protagonist lives both in a repressive society and in familial bonds which have a tendency towards the freezing of sympathies. He keeps himself disdainfully aloof and barricaded from the common people and relishes the cultivation of his egotism. Despite indul-

ging in occasional bouts of frenzy he was initially generous and well-meaning but he found it progressively embarrassing to communicate with the outside world and thus became alienated. His inherent instinct for domination, his bias towards self-righteousness and his love for absoluteness leave no areas of tolerance. Volumnia feeds his child-like petulance and it is further accentuated by Menenius who functions as a father figure. Coriolanus must have things engineered and executed according to his own whim and calculation and need on no account be opposed or resistad. Between him and the plebeians there seems to have occurred a complete breakdown of communication and a 'sense of frigidity' surrounds the universe inhabited by the shadowy and melancholy figure of Virgilia and himself. Coriolanus is both generous and petty, affectionate and bitter and little by little he is driven to stiffness and inflexibility as the gulf between him and the masses is made to widen by the machinations and sophistry of the two demagogic tribunes. It may be added that the plebeians, as individuals, behave not only sensibly but allow him enough latitude and recognize Coriolanus's merit with spontaneous and genuine exuberance. Their minimum requirement is that they be treated with considerateness so that when Coriolanus enquires rather condescendingly and shabbily about 'the price o' the consulship' the First Citizen is quick to respond : 'The price is, to ask it kindly'. (II, iii, 74). As a group however their psychology undergoes a radical change; they are deflected from the usual norm and begin to behave as a real 'hydra-headed' multitude; they become pugnacious, short-sighted and vindictive and feel like descending upon Coriolanus with a hawk-like ferocity. Coriolanus's incapacity for using measured and judicious language is accounted for by Menenius thus :

> Consider this; he has been bred i' the wars
> Since he could draw a sword, and is ill-school'd
> In bolted language; meal and bran together
> He throws without distinction. (III, i, 318-21)

There is some grain of truth in what Brutus says regarding him : 'You speak o' the people,/ As if you were a god to punish, not/A man of their infirmity' (III, i, 79-81). Nevertheless his frightful honesty is not something to be trifled with; it is above board and he is absolutely incorruptible. In the hadsome tribute paid him by Menenius every single virtue is given its rightful place in the broad spectrum of his personality :

> His nature is too noble for the world :
> He would not flatter Neptune for his trident,
> Or Jove for's power to thunder. His heart's his mouth :
> What his breast forges, that his tongue must vent;
> And, being angry, does forget that ever
> He heard the name of death. (III, i, 254-9)

Coriolanus, like Timon, does fall into a violent spasm of wrath but only when his impeccable integrity is maliciously and wantonly questioned, and this opens a wound that continues to fester in his heart unabated. To effect this the plebeians are hoodwinked by the casuistry and the forensic power of Brutus and Sicinius. Both of them incite the plebeians against him, persuade them to take back their approbation of his consulship and make them insinuate to Coriolanus that they had been prompted in their choice not voluntarily but by the considered and mature judgment of the tribunes which had been foisted upon them. Sicinius very cunningly and surreptitiously formulates for them the premises of their argument thus :

> Say, you chose him
> More after our commandment than as guided
> By your own true affections: and that, your minds,
> Pre-occupied with what you rather must do
> Than what you should, made you against the grain
> To voice him consul : lay the fault on us. (II, iii, 228-33)

It is a very clever strategy employed not so much for making his own opposition to Coriolanus crystal clear as also for emphasizing the fact that the plebeians had supported him unthinkingly and more or less under duress. Hence the

withdrawal of their support of him and the radical revision of their stand later are made to look amply plausible.

To begin with, Coriolanus had for Rome and the Romans a kind of lukewarm love allied with a certain degree of incalcitrance, but the facade of love and tolerance ultimately comes crashing to the ground. Though he could never persuade himself to adopt vulgar methods of ingratiating himself into the favour of the people yet he was not altogether impervious to appeals for softness and clemency. He is brought round by Volumnia and the patricians to put on the 'napless vesture of humility' and humour up the people for the customary approval of consulship for himself. Before he is treacherously betrayed he gives expression to his large-heartedness and his positive notion of the wholesomeness of the state thus :

> The honour'd gods
> Keep Rome in safety, and the chairs of justice
> Supplied with worthy men! plant love among's!
> Throng our large temples with the shows of peace.
> And not our streets with war! (III, iii, 33-7)

This undoubtedly betrays the vision of ordered and stable relationships which might obtain between the individual and the social organism—the wished-for sense of harmony which remains only a possibility to be explored and actualized. We know that Rome is, on the contrary, a city which, like Langland's or Blake's Babylon, is only a city of darkness and reflects the repressive ethos of the Roman State. When the outrageous conspiracy hatched against him by Brutus and Sicinius reaches the boiling-point and Coriolanus is pilloried mercilessly in the market-place by being accused of treason to his very face the flood-gates of his impetuosity are thrown open. He indulges in unrestrained vituperation and his own countrymen are subjected to a devastating torrent of abuse. This is climaxed, as a reaction, by his being banished from Rome for his apostasy or by his turning his back upon it and seeking the world elsewhere. After

his banishment materializes no less a person than Sicinius—one of the two arch-conspirators—offers, in an unanticipated moment of illumination, this eloquent though left-handed tribute to Coriolanus whom he had consistently and unequivocally hated from the bottom of his heart :

> I would he had continu'd to his country
> As he began, and not unknit himself
> The noble knot he made. (IV, II, 30-2)

The 'noble knot' is doubtless 'the intrinsicate' knot of love with which Coriolanus was bound to Rome but which was snapped under the unbearable strain of being branded a 'traitor'. In such a situation the subtle distinction between love for one's country and hatred for the fellow citizens becomes blurred and is wiped off in the violent swirl of passion. Coriolanus's journey from love to hate was precipitated partly because of his characteristically soldierly taciturnity and partly owing to his utter disregard to compromise his integrity. He can neither put up with flattery and double-dealing nor practise that sort of expediency which often helps one tide over a crisis without any qualms of conscience. Volumnia provides us with a rare insight into the springs of his motivation when she chides Coriolanus by saying: 'You are too absolute;' (III, ii, 39).

It should not be an idle surmise to suggest that the fugitive moment falling between the ostracism of Coriolanus and his final and irrevocable resolution to destroy Rome—a moment which by its very nature could not be exteriorized—was nevertheless invested with deep significance. He did not receive any message of hope, any hint of reprieve, any gesture of grace either from the tribunes or the patricians, and his life remained a total vacancy all this while. This moment, separated from the flux of time, impinged upon him the solitariness of a homeless exile, his heart hardened and his nerves became corrugated. The blind, intolerable chaos to which his entire universe was reduced assumed large and uncanny proportions. This is brought out in the following

dialogue Coriolanus holds with the third servingman before he stumbled upon Aufidiue in his palace :

> Third Servingman. Where dwell'st thou ?
> Coriolanus. Under the canopy.
> Third Servingman. 'Under the canopy' ?
> Coriolanus. Ay.
> Third Servingman. Where's that ?
> Coriolanus. I' the city of kites and crows. (IV, v, 40-5)

This is a sort of prism through which is radiated a subdued grotesquerie of vision, not unlike that of a Lear or a Timon, at a time when the business of life is about to be wound up and nothing worthwhile is left in the sublunary world to contemplate over. For a victim of ingratitude like Coriolanus refuge from his harrowing experiences may be sought in the naked, elemental world where the little birds may prove very much less predatory and callous than human beings. Later, when he is still smarting under the obsessive pain of personal injury and is acutely sensitive to the disheartening phenomenon of betrayal Coriolanus's mind is gripped by his proposed destruction of Rome as a means of revenging himself against her. In Antium he aligns himself with Aufidius whose armies enter the Roman territories in one direction and those led by himself in another. While still obdurately unresponsive to all appeals made by Volumnia and Virgilia to spare his countrymen he throws into relief his own sense of lonellness and his self-reliant endurance thus :

> Let the Volsces
> Plough Rome, and harrow Italy; I'll never
> Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
> As if a man were author of himself
> And knew no other kin. (V, iii, 33-7)

In other words he renounces his instinctual behaviour and along with it the familial bonds and now comes to pride himself on his being wilfully calculating though nothing fruitful or constructive may emerge out of it.

Coriolanus hardly outgrows his obstinacy and pride; he is isolated and his universe is curtained off on all sides. And the irony of it is that the more he abides by his inviolable integrity the more is he held in condemnation by those who imagine it to be a grave defect in him. His basic impulses of generosity and tender shyness are thwarted at every step and he is subject to occasional blazes of brutality. It has been pointed out that Coriolanus is wanting in that variety of inwardness which Shakspeare's tragic haroes usually possess. There is no 'elusive heart to [his] mystery which we are defied to pluck out'.[4] This may be accounted for by the fact, though only tentatively, that more than Macbeth or Othello or Antony, he is really 'Belladona's bridegroom'. Hence while Macbeth's sense of alienation is mediated through the deeply philosophical 'Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow' soliloquy, Coriolanus's is articulated through an outward, physical gesture of impatience or stubbornness. His alienation is therefore situational and belongs to its own distinctive order. Being lured by Volumnia into meeting the plebeians in a restrained and softened way and avoid bursting forth into his usual fury of indignation he is addressed by her to the following effect :

> Go to them, with this bonnet in thy hand;
> And thus far having stretch'd it—here be with them,—
> Thy knee bussing the stones,—for in such business
> Action is eloquence, and the eyes of the ignorant
> More learned than the ears,—waving thy head,
> Which, often, thus, correcting thy stout heart,
> Now humble as the ripest mulberry
> That will not hold the handling.— (III. ii, 73-80)

This amounts to persuading him to do a little bit of play-acting and, thus, inferentially, also accept the state of fragmentation which he feels suspicious of and abhors. Coriolanus believes that he is surrounded by people who are disembodied and grotesque figures and lack the wholeness of self. He would like to preserve his own integrity and

wholeness of vision though Volumnia is imperceptibly inviting him to abandon this effort. 'Action is eloquence' is the key-phrase here : action may legitimately be replaced by speech or articulation, and this Coriolanus seems to lack to all intents and purposes. But the fact is that in his case language functions not through a symbolic medium but on the literal plane, for he lives habitually in a legalistic or militant world. With him therefore the use of language is disjunctive and not purely or essentially communicative. It is objectified in behavioural gestures of bodily action and he uses language emphatically for hurling curses, like Caliban, upon his opponents—'the dissentious rogues'—as he calls them.

All this is supplemented with the frightening description of him as given by Menenius thus : 'and he no more remembers his mother now than an eight-year-old horse. The tartness of his face sours ripe grapes : when he walks, he moves like an engine, and the ground shrinks before his treading, he is able to pierce a corslet with his eye; talks like a knell, and his hum is a battery. He sits in his state, as a thing made for Alexander. What he bids be done is finished with his bidding. He wants nothing of a god but eternity and a heaven to throne in'. (V, iv, 16-24). This description links up with the 'thing of blood' passage earlier in as much as both these evoke the image of brute, repugnant and irredeemable horror. Coriolanus strikes us not as a sentient human being but as a 'huge clanking machine, terrific and monstrous'. This is reinforced by and reflected in the hard metallic imagery which is pervasive in the play and this picture also indicates a complete warping of the fibre of which Coriolanus was perhaps originally constituted. It is however significant that despite Menenius's scepticism : 'If it be possible for you to displace it [yond coign o' the Capitol, yond cornerstone] with your little finger, there is some hope that the ladies of Rome, especially his mother, may prevail with him' (V, iv, 4-6), it is the 'mole-hill' that does bow

down before 'Olympus', that is, Coriolanus unfreezes and grants reprieve to Rome. This is tantamount to the fact that his inner integrity is sacrificed at the altar of the pressure exercised upon him vicariously by the caste-iron mechanism of the Roman State through Volumnia. She has absorbed into her very marrow a certain variety of 'ethnocentrism' which is being transferred from the mother to the son. This has also been interpreted as the triumph of love over self-consuming egotism and Wilson Knight, in particular, waxes very rhapsodic over it.[5] The common man's response, for whom 'the natural wakeful life of the Ego is a perceiving' (Cf. Eliot's 'The Triumphal March') is reflected in images of unusual felicity, resonance and magic—something which is at variance with the emotional blockade of the preceding passages—that mark the ecstatic tone of the Second Messenger thus :

> Ne'er through an arch so hurried the blown tide,
> As the recomforted through the gates. Why, hark you !
> *[Trumpets and hautboys sounded, and drums beaten all together]*
> The trumpets, sackbuts, psalteries and fifes,
> Tabors, and cymbals, and the shouting Romans,
> Make the sun dance. (V, iv, 46-9)

This may be identified with what Eliot calls 'A still moment, repose of noon, set under the upper/Branches of noon's widest tree, ('Difficulties of a Statesman')—the achievement of the Light Invisible. But true consciousness implies absorption, through sensory experience, of 'the multiple changing views of the object of perception', and hence the moment of anguish, following the fugitive and momentary flicker of hope, caused by the crumbling of the idealistic self of Coriolanus, and which leaves him an empty husk, may also be taken into cognizance :

> O, my mother! mother! O !
> You have won a happy victory to Rome;
> But for your son, believe it, O ! believe it,
> Most dangerously you have with him prevail'd.
> If not most mortal to him. (V, iii, 185-9)

This is an outburst which betrays both nobility and pathos whose mainsprings lie deep down in Coriolanus' inward being. It records a moment which is lengthened to include the anguish of being called a 'twist of rotten silk' and 'thou boy of tears' by Aufidius. This last phrase ironically implies a sense of insufficiency which contradicts the notion of wholeness upon which Coriolanus has prided himself all along. This in his view has been developed and maintained in the state of isolation while for those outside the pale of his influence it is allied with the 'shallow chaotic flux of rotten existence'. It registers a shock of bewilderment to him and causes the biggest flare-up in the course of the action of the play.

When Eliot, towards the conclusion of *The Waste Land*, says cryptically : 'We think of the key, each in his prison/ Thinking of the key, each confirm a prison', he is obliquely focusing on the solitary identity which is locked in pride and can be released only by the exercise of self-surrender and sympathy. Later, in the two parts of *Coriolan*, for which the cue was indubitably provided by Shakespeare's play, Coriolan's self-absorption—an inevitable constituent of his sense of alienation—is brought out thus :

> O hidden under the dove's wing, hidden in the turtle's breast,
> Under the palm-tree at noon, under the running water
> At the still point of the turning world. O hidden.

The Light Invisible is hidden in the temple of Vesta and is associated with the retention of the sausage or the Eucharist. In the later poem, the haunting invocation of the 'mother' figure helps establish two things : first, Coriolan's, and likewise, Coriolanus's agonizing cry over his shattered integrity, and secondly, the implied insistence on the achievement of a degree of transcendence or emergence into the half-glimpsed world of 'the still point'. It is this dilemma or *agon* of the man round whom Aufidius's soldiers form a cordon and eventually kill him which has not been sufficisntly taken care of by the critics of the play.

It may be intriguing to note that Coriolanus offers in a way the warped parody of Christ who was betrayed, during the last moments of his life, thrice—by Judas, Peter and Pilate successively—for Coriolanus also passes through three similar phases of a crisis. First, he is betrayed by the leaders of the plebeians, and here the conflict is generated between two forms of intransigence; secondly, by the Romans in general who throw him out of his nativeland; and thirdly, by Aufidius who could not brook his immense popularity with his own compatriots. He therefore undergoes the experience of Passion and emerges from his state of childish irascibility into the dignity of a psuedo-martyr. His failure, when assessed in its relevant context, is not so much a failure of sensitivity as is generally assumed but the one forced upon him by his persistent, and uncomproming commitment to his own monolithic integrity. This is also the genesis of his sense of alienation which is an ineluctable fact about this extaordinary protagonist of Shakespeare who is at once so firm and so brittle.

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[5] G. Wilson Knight, op. cit., p. 196.

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THE 'LONG NIGHTS FESTIVAL' DIALECTIC IN DONNE'S 'NOCTURNALL'

Discussing the well-known conflict between sacred and profane tones in Donne's poetry, Louis Martz points out that in some of the Holy Sonnets 'images of profane love are deliberately used in love sonnets of sacred parody.'[1] Martz classifies the 'Nocturnall' among the love poems, though he finds in it an example of an interesting situation where 'human love is exalted to the religious level', and feels that the poem 'vividly illustrates the way in which Donne's poetry, throughout his career, moves along the Great Divide between sacred and profane, now facing one way, now another, but always remaining intensely aware of both sides' (p 216).

Going somewhat further than Martz, I suggest that 'Nocturnall' represents more than merely an 'awareness of both sides', and that it is, in effect, record of a profoundly religious experience. The poem demonstrates the dynamics of an unmistakably mystical aspiration: there is a strong tendency towards the polarization of opposites, followed by their consistent dialectical interaction, revealing the poet's aspiration to bridge the 'Great Divide', to achieve the ultimate fusion of opposites in the mystical experience.

There is no doubt that Martz is right in pointing out that 'Nocturnall' exalts human love to the religious level, but the poem also reveals a tendency for bringing religious love down to the human level, a tendency for the humanization or even profanation of the sacred. It is precisely in the dialectical interaction of these two contradictory tendencies that I found Donne's aspiration to reach an experience in which the contraries will coincide, where the sacred will

appear the vital essence of the profane, and the profane the fundamental mode for the existence of the sacred. The vehemence behind the polarization and interaction of these opposites reads as a vivid dramatization of Donne's aspiration to achieve a sense of communion between Self and Absolute, Time and Timelessness, profane and sacred, his aspiration to reach acceptance as the resolution to be found at the final stages of the meditative experience, in contemplation.

As for the effect of this dialectical movement, it is characterized by the violent contrast of ups and downs and the clash of opposites. It is this quality of Donne's poetry which C.S. Lewis describes with mild puzzlement : 'As if Donne performed in deepest depression those gymnastics which are usually a sign of intellecual high spirits.[2]

The complexity of the poem seems to be the result of the multiple levels of meaning implied by its key symbol, the Sun, and the ambiguous connotations of the Time imagery that supports this key symbol. The underlying number symbolism appears to be closely associated with solar symbolism, and forms its very substance.

The setting of the poem is zero hour : 'the Sunne is spente', it is the 'yeares midnight and it is the dayes', and, by analogy, the midnight of despair in the mourner's life. The very last line of the poem repeats tha first line with a small but significant difference : the image of mid-night turns into 'deep midnight' in the end.

Centred around the contradiction between the unrisen Sun of Eternal Life and the 'spent' Sun of Temporal existence, the structure of the imagery reveals a significant connection between the zero of non-being and its opposite, the number of unity and perfection : twelve. By the last stanza, the totality of profane existence is reduced to 'None'. Yet the stanza and the poem end with a repetition and thereby with an affirmation of the 'deep midnight' of annihilation that reaches towards the high noon of salvation.

Such dynamics of growth, in spite, or perhaps, because

of the very process of the diminishing of all existence, is a movement consistently supported on the various levels of the poem.

The first metaphor that relates to the mourner identifies him as an Epitaph; the superlative of cosmic desolation :

> The worlds whole sap is sunke:
> The generall balme th' hydroptique earth hath drunk,
> Whither, as to the beds-feet, life is shrunke,
> Dead and enterr'd; yet all these seeme to laugh
> Compar'd with me, who am their Epitaph,

The dynamics of despair accelerate as the superlative gives place to an image of negation in the 'quintessence of nothingnesse.'

> For I am every dead thing,
> In whom love wrought new Alchimie.
> For his art did expresse
> A quintessence even from nothingnesse,

The acceleration continues in a double negation in the 'grave of all that's nothing'. This is followed by the superlative of all negations, as the mourner is 'of the first nothing the elixer grown'. Finally, the last stanza re-states the original simple negation and also gives the cause that brought forth reduction and the impossibility of renewal : 'But I am None : nor will my Sunne renew.' The rhetorical movement goes from Superlative (Epitaph); through the witty acceleration of reduction in terms of negatives, to the solemn re-statement in a simple but powerful negation which leads finally to a kind of affirmation : 'Let me prepare towards her, and let me call/This hour her Vigill'.

The analysis of the sensuous qualities of the imagery reveals the same movement, the same 'hourglass'-like structure. The acceleration of negation is carried by the movement of gradual and total annihilation of all spatial and temporal images, up to the point of 'None' in the last stenza. Here, as if having affirmed the Nadir of the progression, the

movement of shrinking and reduction suddenly changes to a movement of reaching out, a movement of expansion.

The waning, shrinking, contracting movement toward the point of 'None', is expressed in terms of a cosmic process; 'the world's whole sap is sunke', the 'balme' of the World's living body 'whither', life, like a dead body is 'shrunke', until all corporeality is reduced to a 'quintessence of nothingnesse'. The following stanza elaborates on the waning of physical existence, and on the sinisterly negative development of non-Being in the images of the 'grave of all that's nothing', 'chaosses' and 'carcasses'. The fourth stanza contains the negation of Creation, implied by the diminutive order in which the images of the 'Chain of Beings' are examined one by one—and then dismissed by the mourner. He cannot consider himself a human being : 'Were I a man, that I were one, I needs must know'. He must be lower than beast, plants, even stones :

> I should preferre
> If I were any beast
> Some ends some means: Yea plants, yea stones detest
> And love: All, all some properties invest;
> If I an ordinary nothing were
> A shadow, a light, and body must be here.

Lacking in the substance of the lowest being, he cannot even consider himself a shadow, because this would presuppose the existence both of corporeality and of light. Having already denied his own physical existence—because of the loss of the Beloved, the source of light—the process of his physical and spiritual annihilation now reaches ultimate completion.

The last stanza opens with the emphatic absence of any visually realized image, except the symbol of zero, the point of final annihilation: 'But I am None'. Being spatially reduced to nothingness, the concentric circle of his Sun cannot renew either ('But I am None, nor will my Sunne renew'). Yet, the arrangement of the two images—the point of nil in zero

and the circle of the renewing Sun—already foreshadow a kind of expansion, a growth from this nothingness into some new dimension.

Throughout the poem the mourner is full of contempt for the natural world, for objective, external reality. Natural life is given the unpleasant image of a corpse 'shrunke to the beds feet'. He bitterly dismisses regeneration as provided by the natural life cycle : 'You lovers . . . enjoy your summer all.'

The love that once existed between the mourner and the Beloved is described as a subjective universe, which, because of its intensity, had far superseded the significance of the cosmos. The lovers' tears were 'floods' that 'drowned the whole world', and totally sufficient for each other, they 'oft did grow to be two chaosses, when (they) did show care to ought else'. Having contracted the essence of the whole world in the subjective grasp of this private universe, the mourner's world is shattered by the departure of his Sun. He dismisses with contempt the whole world of outsiders who are contented with the regeneration of the natural life cycle and the 'lesser Sunne' of the Universe. The profane tone of cynicism regarding the merely physical aspects of love carries the same contempt towards the whole world of Nature : 'You lovers, for whose sake the lesser Sunne/At this time to tha Goat is runne . . . enjoy your summer all.'

In line with his contempt towards the natuaral world of objective reality, he definitely refuses to participate in the regeneration of the natural cycle. In this context, the image which describes his intention to join his Beloved, contains bitter resignation : 'Since she enjoys her long nights festival, let me prepare towards her'. In line with the bitterness of the jeering tone which dismissed the summer of the 'dull sublunary lovers', the image of 'preparation' carries the bitterness over physical destruction even further. In this sense, when he calls this very hour of savage despair a 'Vigill', the image of worship comes to be charged with sacrilegious undertones.

At the same time there is a constant movement from the objective towards the subjective and internal; from the natural and cosmic toward the private. This movement indicates that the image of natural destruction cannot contain the final answer. Because of his mourning over the loss of his 'own Sunne', the lover rejects the Sun of the Cosmos, the 'lesser Sunne'. Yet the movement cannot lead from the subjective to the objective and stop there. Heving refused the world of Nature, he recalls his private world again, and through this evocation, reaches out towards the universal.

One should by no means disregard the sacrilegious connotation of death as total and final destruction in the image of the 'long night's festival.' These connotations of the metaphor are particularly relevant because of their close proximity to ths image of crude sensual delights in the 'new lust' of natural regeneration. Yet, when examining the sensuous qualities of the mataphor, it is inevitable to recognize thet the 'long night's festival' also contains associations with light. Simultaneously with the undeniable darkness of the 'long night.' the image also suggests the splendour of 'festival', or a splendour the whole festival is in preparation of : there is an indication of light below or beyond the texture of darkness.

This hidden light becomes apparent as we refer back to the first stanza in which St. Lucy, the symbolic representative of the Beloved and of Light, had 'unmasked herself' for the scarce seven hours of the day. The implications are that Night is like a 'mask' worn by the phvsical universe. It also implies that the 'long night festival' should be seen as amerely temporal 'mask' worn by the Beloved whose true face, 'unmasked' light, points toward Eternity.

The movement of the light imagery seems to support the interpretation whereby the 'long night festival' has a close association with light. The poem starts with a tension between darkness and light. It is the mid-night of Lucy's day, the Saint of Light who unmasked herself for the seven hours the soul demands for preparation towards death. The

light of day is 'masked', the stars send forth only light 'squibs', instead of 'constant rays'. Instead of the certitude radiated by the Eternal light of the stars, the poet complains of the oscillation of temporary, hesitant 'light squibs'.

From this flickering, masked, hesistant light, we move to absolute darkness, suggested by the 'dull privations' and by the shadowy substance of Being 're-begot of absence, darkness, death : things which are not.' The associations of the 'grave', the 'flood' 'chaosses' and 'carcasses' point at the total extinction of light throughout the second, third and fourth stanzas. The very last line of the fourth stanza, however, introduces 'light' again : 'If I an ordinary nothing were, a shadow, a light and body must be here.' Although this 'light' is introduced only to deny its own existence, the last stanza re-introduces images of the 'renewed Sun' and of the 'lesser Sunne' of the lover's 'Summer.'

The flickering light at the beginning, the total darkness and blankness in the middle, and the re-introduction of the tension between darkness and light at the end all describe a movement indicating that the poem of despair has reached a resolution. Supported by this structure of the light imagery, it may not be too eye-straining to detect in the last stanza a sunken image of a third Sun, which follows the re-introduction of 'my Sunne' and of the 'lesser Sunne.'

The suggestion that the preparation toward the Beloved implies an affirmation of a Divine Sun beyond the 'long nights festival' will probably be supplemented by examining the last three lines of the poem as they exist today. Due to ambiguities in the syntax and punctuation of the seventeenth century text, we might take the liberty of considering a number of various readings for the last three lines. The suggestion of the mourner's progression towards the Eternity of the Divine Sun could be greatly supported if we change the reading from 'the year's and day's deep midnight' to the 'years' and days' deep midnight'. Such a reading connects the time of the Vigill and the particular time in the mourner's

life with the mid-night of the whole universe, and the mid-night of human history. The mid-night of the days' and years' is re-enacted in the particular hour of mourning : the Vigil re-enacts the deepest point in universal history—a hint in this case, to the Crucifixion. Making the mourner a participant in this deepest midnight, the Vigill would, through the implications of the sacramental framework, reaffirm the rising of the Divine Sun, and with it, redemption and resurrection.

There is in these last three lines a suggestion which extends the significance of this particular hour of private grief into a midnight of universal significance. There is no doubt that 'Eve' here may be read as a synonym for the hour of the Vigill Yet the lines read :

> Let me prepare towards her. and let me call
> This hour her Vigill, and her Eve, since this
> Both the yeares. and the dayes deep midnight is.

Hence in addition to the commonly recognized reading, one may also recognize another suggestion which may be paraphrased in the following way : 'I do perpare towards her by calling this hour her Vigill, and by calling her, or recgnizing her as Eve'. The possible connotations of universal mourning over the Beloved as Eve, mother of humanity and the mate of Man, would extend the signlficance of the lover's private grief and mourning. It would also remind the mourner of the justifying cause of her departure, the commonly carried burden of original sin. At the same time, an allusion to Eve also evokes in its wake the whole framework of futurity and the redemption of the original sln, thereby supporting the motivating purpose of the whole poem; the reaching towards the certainty of light beyond the 'long nights festival.'

The possibility that 'Eve' conld be read as 'evening' and also as a pun on 'Eve' is supported by William Empson's view on the function of the pun[8] as planted ambiguity expressive of basic vacillations in the poet's convictions. By alluding

to Eve, the poet would diminish the significance of the Catholic element implied in the celebration of a Vigil for a saint : in this context the term 'Vigill' itself would only be taken as an illustration, metaphorically, and not literally.

Whether or not we decide to keep all the possible connotations of the last three lines in mind, the image of the Vigil seems to open a wider, sacramental or Biblical framework, which expands the mourner's consciousness to see his hour of personal, private grief in the context of the midnight of 'both the years and the dayes.' The hint to such a wider, universal framework can be seen as an evocation of a certitude radiated by the 'unmasked ligh,' no longer through hesitant light 'squibs,' but by 'constant rays.'

If, in one sense, the poem indeed represents the 'elevation of human love to the religious level'[4] this tendency is savagely undercut by the poet's bitter negation of the Creation, a negation which often approaches not only the profane but also the blasphemous. The poem, like most of Donne's major works, shows a great tension between these two elements, in search for a final synthesis in the mystical experience of enlightenment and certitude.

The handling of the traditional symbols of mysticism is particularly revealing. The imagery of Spiritual Alchemy is a public symbol of the mystic's way leading to God. The second stanza evokes this symbol of Spiritual Alchemy, but only to present it as a process of annihilation: it extracts all living substance from the mourner, it is a sinister process leading to the total collapse of his Being :

> For I am every dead teing,
> In whom love wrought new Alchimie
> For his art did expresse
> A quintessence even from nothingness,

Instead of preparing the lover towards the final union with Divine Love, this 'new Alchimie' performs a sinister reversal of the spiritual progress: the lover is destroyed and daemoni-

cally 're-begot / Of absence, darkness, death: things which are not.' Love as the great alchemist is a mataphor which in the final analysis, points to God himself, and acts here as a powerful expression of despair, and therefore, blasphemy.

The reversal of the traditional meaning of Spiritual Alchemy, as well as the reversal of the progression on the ladder of love seem to be indicative of the mourner's blasphemy, the deliberate profanation of the sacred by the implication that the Beloved had been worshipped as a Saint. The particular dynamism of the poem can be understood only in terms of the dialectical interaction between the two tendencies: an attempt at bridging the 'Great Divide' between sacred and profane.

Adding to the tensions between sacred and profane in Donne's poetry, there is also a conflict between Catholic views on 'carnal resurrection' and the Protestant stress on 'spiritual rebirth,' a tension between Protestant subjectivism and introversion as contrasted with an attraction towards Catholic sacramentalism. Examining the language of the devotional poets according to the Protestant tendency toward metaphor and the Catholic predilection for symbolism, M. Ross points out, that 'differentiation is by no means clear cut between different poets or even between the different poems of the same poet. Thus, due to the Anglican dilemma a single poem may contain clashing Catholic and Protestant biasas.[5]

Donne's 'Nocturnall' seems to be a relevant example of the tension between the poet's impulse towards highly individualized metaphor and the traditional use of the insight symbol. Even when using the central insight sombol that had been at the core of medieval mysticism. Donne is compelled to make explicit equations to explain it in the context of his private, subjective universe. Throughout the Middle Ages the central insight symbol had been the Divine Sun, 'in whom darkness and light, being and non-being, existence and non-existence are one.' One also has to add that 'the use of one symbol in many senses was natural to the medieval

or mysitic mind ever conscious as it was of an underlying unity of all things '[6] Thus, the Sun was symbol of God, as the giver of light and heat, as well as of any human being sharing to some degree in God's function.

Though Donne refers to the Sun several times during the poem, he reveals a strong desire to explain and clarify, to draw the distinction between the different meanings of the insight symbol : He draws a sharp distinction between the cosmic Sun, (the lesser Sunne), and the Sun of his own universe. ('my Sunne'), by no means taking for granted the carrespondence between their various manifestations. Although built around the Sun as the unlversal symbol, the poem expresses the indivdual's effort to reach towards the Divine Sun through the experience of contemplation.

In line with all these tensions caused by 'clashing Catholic and Protestant. biases' there is a fairly consistent, though ulterior number symbolism, suggestive in the context of a poem structued around the confrontation of Temporal and Eternal.

The dynamics of the number symbolism seem to be expressed by the connection between 12 and 12: 12 and zero; and 12 and 7. The day of Saint Lucy's is the 13th of December, and 13 is the number of birth and death, rebirth and regeneration. As such, it is a particularly suggestive setting for a poem which describes the vacuity of being rebegot of absence, darkness, death,' refuses the regeneration offered by the natural life cycle, and makes a final resolution to prepare towards death as a 'long nights festival.'

Thers is a significant connection between the 'None' and the 'twelve.' The 'None' of annihilation follows tha 'twelve' of midnight in the first line, as if making a reversal from despair towards the high noon of salvation which is to follow the deepest midnight. The symbolic twelve, the mystical number for salvation, is significantly emphasized by the poet, when he is stressing 'midnight' twice within the first line, and repeats it over again in the last line of the poem.

Another significant symbot is the 'seven', the number of the seven vices, the seven virtues, the seven terraces of Purgatory, and the seven ways of Truth. The statement that Saint Lucy 'scarce seven hours herself unmasked' is based on the observation of natural phenomena, and fits in as a concrete detail in the descriptive elements of the first stanza. At the same time it also draws attention to the long night that follows the day of Saint Lucy. The saint of light, a surrogate for the Beloved, and in the long run, a surrogate for the Divine Sun, St. Lucy 'unmasked' her light for 'seven hours' to give a forestate of the light of Eternity.

Following the pattern of the number symbolism we find that the twelve of 'midnight' was followed by 'seven', then it became reduced to 'None'. After this reduction, 'None' reaches out again towards the twelve of 'deep midnight'. This movement of gradual contraction and annihilation which is turning, by a reversal, into a sudden expansion, happens to describe the diagram of the hourglass'—and this diagram of reversal is also characteristic of the imagery pattern throughout the poem.

If one would describe the poem in terms of the mystical experience it is in search of, the achievement could be described as the process leading to the crisis of the dillemma—a progression leading up to the point of a 'mystic reversal', the 'crisis of inner experience consisting of a point of inversion, followed by the reorganization of personality around a new centre'.

Beginning with the midnight of despair and mourning in the first line, the poem leads to a point of final annihilation. This is followed by a set of powerful suggestions that such a Nadir could be but the beginning of a new growth, a 'preparation' that will reach out and penetrate into the 'long night' of the Beloved. By the last line, which is an almost word-for-word repetition of the first one, the connotations of despair finally turn into affirmation and, through this process, to hope.

The death of the Beloved as the 'long nights festival' is a metaphor that connects polar opposites and it reveals an oscillation between the desirable and undesirable, spiritual and physical aspects of death. Expressive of the darkness and the negative aspects of the 'long night', it also denotes the brightness of celebration, the 'festival'. The two contraries are being held together in a momentary state of equilibrium after the mourner had reached the climax of his experience which might be considered a mystic reversal. After his crucial decision to prepare towards the Beloved, the poet evokes this image of double vision, as if related to the psychological oscillation after the mind had reached the climax in its progression. The various possible connotations of the metaphor and its position within the whole structure seems to be crucial to the understanding of the whole poem as an attempt at the integration of sacred and profane, Eternal and Temporal.

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G. Singh

POUND'S CRITICAL CREDO

More than that of any other poet in this century—and not merely in the English language—Pound's influence on twentieth century literature has Inextricably been that of a critic who was also a major poet. Another poet who can, in this respect, be classed along with Pound—but only after him—is T. S. Elitot. And Eliot himself owed a great deal to Pound—certainly as a critic if not so much as a poet. This is what Eliot has to say apropos of Pound as a critic : 'Pound's literary criticism is the most important contemporary criticism of its kind . . . [and] the *least dispensible* body of critical writing in our time;. 'Much of the *permanence* of Mr Pound's criticism is due simply to his having seen so clearly what needed to be said at a particular time . . . Mr Pound is more rssponsible for the XXth century revolution in poetry than is any other individual'.[1]

Pound's first four publications were all in the field of poetry and they all came out within a space of two years : *A Lume Spento* (1908), *A Quinzaine for this Yule* (1908), *Personae* (1909) and *Exultations* (1909). They were followed by the publication of the *The Spirit of Romance* (1910). a book of critical essays which was an attempt to define the charm of the Pre-Renaissance Literature of Latin Europe. Apart from revealing his warn appreciation of and his deep insight into Provencal, Troubadour, Medieval and Pre-Renaissance poetry, this book also brought out Pound's incomparable critical acumen, as a result of which no less than as a result of his own poetic achievement he has been widely regarded as the chief artifact of poetic modernity in the twentieth century.

In *The Spirit of Romance* as well as in his notes 'A Few Don'ts' (1913), later on to be included in his essay 'A Retrospect' (1918), Pound was to work out and define the ethos and the objective of his criticism as it developed in such subsequent works as *How to Read* (1931), *ABC of Reading* (1934), *Guide to Kulchur* (1938), *Letters of Ezra Pound* (1953), *Literary Essays* (1954), *Pound/Joyce Letters* (1965) and *Selected Prose* (1973).

In the preface to *The Spirit of Romance* ('Prefatio Ad Lectorem Electum'), while disclaiming the book to be a philological work, Pound observes : 'I am interested in poetry. I have attempted to examine certain forces, elements or qualities which were potent in the medieval literature of the Latin tongues, and are, I believe, still potent in our own'. The deliberate emphasis on the purely creative aspects of poetry meant that Pound was not going to burden himself with what he calls 'the rags of morphology, epigraphy, *privatlaben* and the kindred delights of the archaeological or "scholarly" mind'; nor had he much interest in anything but the very best in literature and art in a given epoch. 'The history of an art', he would say, 'is the history of masterwork, not of failures, or mediocrity'. Thus what may be called Pound's eclectic historicism and the causes governing it are an indistinguishable part of his critical outlook and procedure. In fact if what Pound offers in *The Spirit of Romance* may be called a study in comparative literature 'only by courtesy', so also his criticism may be called historical only by courtesy, since for Pound 'all ages are contemporaneous' and, in literature, 'the real time is independent of the apparent'. Such considerations and the spirit behind them became part of the critical credo which Pound practised first and preached afterwards. Thus, for example, he undertakes to weigh Theocritus and Yeats 'with one balance', judge 'dull dead men as inexorably as dull writers of today', and 'with equity, give praise to beauty before referring to an almanack'.[2]

But if the history of an art is the history of masterwork,

the history of literary criticism, according to Pound, 'is largely the history of a vain struggle to find a terminology which will define something. The triumph of literary criticism is that certain of its terms—chiefly those defined by Aristotle—still retain some shreds of meaning.[3] Hence Pound's constant endeavour to define, and to present in concrete, objective and factual terms whatever he has to say, so that while one may not always agree with it, the manner no less then the content of Pound's criticism is thought-provoking and some of the qualities Pound sought to achieve in his poetry he realized in his criticism no less.

However, what we have in Pound's critical credo is not so much theoretical, conceptual or doctrinaire, as empirical and pragmatic—something which results from a free play of intelligence that is at once creative and critical, interpretative and evaluative. Pound's critical perceptions and insights—whether he is dealing with a poem or a novel, the form, ethos or style of a particular writer, the question of technique or diction, of metre or cadence—are not hampered by any *a priori* theory or dogma; nor do they tend towards the formulation or establishment of such. He defines rather than explains—pinpointing the essential rather than elaborating upon the non-essential. His critical tools include satire and irony, for he is not so much concerned with persuading us to appreciate as to make us think—so that what he says about art being didactic, because 'a revelation is always didactic',[4] also applies to literary criticism. Hence Pound's frequent use of the world *Paideuma* to indicate the range, scope and *raison d'etre* of his critical thought and writing.

If Pound has frequent recourse to wit and epigram, it is not so much for stylistic as for moral and psychological reasons. Having intuitively grasped somthing and being utterly convinced about its validity he doesn't feel the need to argue about it elaborately. This accounts for what he not altogether facetiously calls his 'high and final Ezthority'. Like most of his personal judgments and evaluations, Pound's

critical credo is its own justification, has no theoretical, philosophical or aesthetic framework to fall back on, and consumes itself after it has made its point. It is guided by a personal conviction and based on a judgment that cannot but be personal too. For, Pound argues, any sincere criticism of the highest poetry must resolve itself into a sort of profession of faith. The critic must begin with a "credo", and his opinion will be received in part for the intelligence he may seem to possess, and in part for his earnestness'.[5] Throughout his long literary career, Pound was possessed of this earnestness, or as he himself calls it, 'my apostolic fury', which comes out, among other things, from the tone and substance of 'A Few Don'ts' (1913), and often accompanies his critical pronouncements. For instance, when, while making claim for what amounts to being the exclusive prerogative of the practising artist to be a critic, he exhorts not to pay any attention to the criticism 'of men who have never themselves written a notable work'; or when he cautions us to 'go in fear of abstractions', or to be 'influenced by as many great artists as you can, but have the decency either to acknowledge the debt outright, or to try to conceal it'.[6] Pound himself chose to follow the former course, as one can see from his letter to Felix E. Schelling (8 July 1922), where he outlines the nature and extent of his debt to other critics :

> Criticism, I take it, is written in the hope of better things. With all my legendary cantankerousness, I think I have tried to learn from critics ... Sum total of debts to date :
>
> One caution against homophones, recd. from Robt. Bridges.
>
> Considerable encouragement to tell people to go to hell, and to maintain absolute intransigence, recd. from Mr. W. B. Yeats.
>
> Any amount of good criticism, chiefly in form of attacks on dead language, dialects of books, dialects of Lionel Johnson, etc., recd from F. Madox Hueffer.
>
> One impractical and infinitely valuable suggestion recd. from Thomas Hardy.
>
> (This latter a suggestion re change of title of *Homage to Propertius*, Don't know that T. H. realized how much he was revealing of the gap

between himself and the '90s. But he woke one to the extent of his own absorption in *Subject* as contrasted with aesthetes' preoccupation with 'treatment').[7]

There are other 'don'ts' in the from of cautions and instigations to poets or would-be poets that would apply equally well to literary critics For instance : 'Consider the way of the scientists rather than the way of an advertising agent for a new soap'; or 'Don't mess up the perception of one sense by trying to define it in terms of another'.[8] But if Pound himself at times indulges in defining the perception of one sense in terms of another, he does so in a manner at once spontaneous and impressive, convincing and memorable. As for instance when he compares Dante with Villon. Dante, he tells us, 'anticipates the Renaissance only as ons year's harvest foreshadows the next year's Spring. He is the culmination of one age rather than the beginning of the next; he is like certain buildings in Verona, which display the splendor of the Middle Ages, untouched by any influence of the classic revival.'[9] Similarly, while dwelling upon the comparison between the Gothic and the Renaissance he observes how 'the Gothic architect envied the spider his cobweb. The Renaissance architect sought to rival the mountain. They raised successively the temple of the spirit and the temple of the body'. But then Pound himself is the first to realize that this analogy is inexact so for as literature is concerned in that 'the Renaissance is not a time, but a temperament'. Again while characterizing Dante's poetry, Pound observes how Dante 'sought to hang his song from the absolute, the centre and source of light', whereas since Dante's time art 'has for the most part built from the ground'. In concluding his essay on Villon, too, Pound compares Villon with Dante—a comparison at least partly based on a metaphor that defines the percepiton of one sense in terms of anofher. 'Dante's vision is real, because he saw it Villon's verse is real, because he lived it; as Bertran de Born, as Arnaut Marvoil, as that mad poseur Vidal, he lived it. For

these men life is in the press. No brew of books, no distillation of sources will match the tang of them.'[10] However, Pound's 'Don'ts' as well as his own occasional departures from them, serve to differentiate him from what he calls 'the explaining critic', and the difference between such a critic and Pound may be said to resemble that between the art of Arnaut Daniel and Cavalcanti on the one hand and that of the Victorian poets on the other. For while the testimony of a Dante or a Cavalcanti is the testimony of 'the eyewitness' and 'their symptons are first hand',[11] the Victorian poets are on the whole lacking in precision. Pound's own criticism of contemporary writers—Yeats, Joyce, Henry James, Eliot, Wyndham Lewis and D. H. Lawrence—may be said to partake of the nature of an eyewitness testimony, and hence it is characterized by an essentiality of purpose, a pragmatic approach and a clear and concrete style which have few parallels in this century.

Another factor that distinguishes Pound's criticism is that he never professes it for its own sake—but only in view of a literary, artistic or cultural goal or in order to promote a particular author or artist whose work he considered to be original and which he wanted to be recognized as such—for instance Joyce, Wyndham Lewis and Brzeska. Apropos of his efforts on their behalf Pound would say :

> I would rather that people would look at Brzeska's sculpture and Lewis's drawings, and that they would read Joyce, Jules Romains, Eliot, than that they should read what I have said of these men, or that I should be asked to republish argumentative essays and reviews.
>
> All that the critic can do for the reader or audience or spectator is to focus his gaze or audition. Rightly or wrongly I think my blasts and essays have done their work, and that more people are now likely to go to the sources than are likely to read this book.

With his downright practical approach to the nature and function of criticism—focusing the gaze or audition of the reader or the spectator—Pound, for all his dogmatism and self-assurance, always substantiated what he argued about

through concrete examples. 'It is difficult at all times to write of the fine arts', he would say, 'it is almost impossible unless one can accompany one's prose with many reproductions'. Thus he found it much more profitable 'to name over the few beautiful poems that still ring in my head than for me to search my flat for back numbers of periodicals and rearrange all that I have said about friendly and hostile writers' His insistence on the concrete was to become a key criterion for subsequent critics. In his preface to *Revaluation* (1936), for instance, F. R. Leavis would say that 'no treatment of poetry is worth much that does not keep very close to the concrete', and that 'in dealing with individual poets the rule of the critic is, or should (I think) be, to work as much as possible in terms of particular analysis—analysis of poems as passages, and to say nothing that cannot be related immediately to judgments about producible texts'.

Pound's criticism is not only about such producible texts, but also about the nature and quality of critical thought as such. Hence he would argue that 'the clarity and vigour of "any and every" thought and opinion' depended on one's ability to maintain 'the very cleanliness of the tools, the health of the very matter of thought itself,' whereas verbose, abstract or rhetorical expression tended to be detrimental not only to poetry, but also to criticism. That is why, so far as the exact use of terms is concerned, Pound considered the medieval mind superior to the Renaissance mind. And this because.

> what the renaissance gained in direct examination of natural phenomenon, it in part lost in losing the feel and desire for exact descriptive terms. I mean that the medieval mind had little but words to deal with, and it was more careful in its definitions and verbiage. It did not define a gun in terms that would just as well define an explosion, nor explosions that would define triggers.[12]

Thus for the purpose of thought—and for critical thought in particular—it is as important 'to keep language efficient as it is in surgery to keep tetanus bacilli out of one's bandages'.

But the way to achieve this is certainly not through a study of philology which Pound considered as a system 'designed to inhibit thought'. The right way is to examine literary works in which language is efficiently used—that is, charged with meaning to the maximum. And the critic's job is 'to devise a system for getting directly and expeditiously at such works, despite the smokescreens erected by half-knowing and half-thinking critics. To get at them, despite the mass of dead matter that these people have heaped up and conserved round about them in the proportion : one barrel of sawdust to each half-bunch of grapes.' While performing this job the critic will implicitly ascertain the 'several clearly definable sorts of people' who—great literature being simply 'language charged with meaning to the utmost possible degree'—can be divided into six categories : (1) the inventors (discoverers of a particular process or of more than one mode or process'); (2) the masters ('very few real ones', that is, inventors who, 'apart from their own inventions, are able to assimilate and co-ordinate a large number of preceding inventions'); (3) the diluters ('who follow either the inventors or the "great writers", and who produce something of lower intensity, some flabbier variant, some diffuseness or tumidity in the wake of the valid'); (4) the class of men who do 'more or less good work in the more or less good style of a period... [who] add but some slight personal flavour, some minor variant of a mode, without affecting the main course of the story... [and who] when they are most prolific... produce dubioue cases like Virgil and Petrarch, who probably pass, among the less exigent, for colossi'; (5) writers of *Belles Lettres* ('who can hardly be said to have originated a form, but who have nevertheless brought some mode to a very high development'); and (6) 'the starters of crazes, the Ossianic McPhersons, the Gangoras whose wave of fashion flows over writing for a few centuries or a few decades, and then subsides, leaving things as they were'.

Pound's awareness of these categories plays a crucial

role in his critical credo as well as in his critical appraisals and evaluations. In fact these categories may be regarded as the Poundian equivalent of Arnold's touchstones. 'If a man knows the facts about the first two categories', Pound would say, 'he can evaluate almost any unfamiliar book at first sight. I mean he can form a just estimate of its worth, and see how and where it belongs in this scheme'. A bad critic, on the other hand, is not only unaware or not sufficiently aware of these categories and of the reason why the reading of work in the other categories will not greatly change his opinion about those in the first two'; but he also uses 'demoded terminology, usually a terminology originally invented to describe what had been done before 300 B. C., and to describe it in a rather exterior fashion'.

But a new terminology presupposes a new perception and a new insight—qualities by virtue of which Pound can see for example, how Catullus, Ovid, Propertius, 'all give us something we cannot find now in Greek authors', how in Italy 'around the year 1300 there were new values established, things said that had not been said in Greece, or in Rome or elsewhere', and how, even in Marlowe and Shakespeare, 'there is this embroidery of language, this talk about the matter, rather than presentation'. That is why Pound doubts if anyone ever acquired discrimination while studying 'the Elizabethans'. For in them, he tells us, 'you have grace, richness of language, abundance, but you have probably nothing that isn't replaceable by something else, no ornament that wouldn't have done just as well in some other connection, or for which some other figure of rhetoric couldn't have served, or which couldn't have been distilled from literary antecedents' It is through one's own critical perception rather than one's knowledge of the theory or history of language, literature or poetics that one can grasp that point in time and history where, for instance, 'verse-writing can or could no longer be clearly understood without the study of prose writing'. That in poetry—and particularly

In modern poetry—verse and prose are inextricably linked is an important tenet of Pound's critical credo. He comments on the way in which prose asserts its claim to be regarded as on a par with poetry and to some extent even indispensable to it, and he does so in his characteristically forthright and striking manner. 'From the beginning of literature up to A D. 1850', Pound tells us, 'poetry was the superior art, and was so considered to be', but after that date

> the '*fioritura* business' set in. And one morning Monsieur Stendhal, not thinking of Homer, or Villon, or Catullus, but having a very keen sense of actuality, noticed that 'poetry', *la poesie*, as the term was then understood, the stuff written by his French contemporaries, or sonorously rolled at him from the French stage, was a damn nuisance. And he remarked that poetry, with its bagwigs and its bogwigs, and its paddcd calves and its periwigs, its 'fustian a la Louis XIV', was greatly inferior to prose for conveying a clear idea of the diverse states of our consciousness ('les mouvements du coeur').
>
> And at that moment the serious art of writing 'went over to prose', and for some time the important developments of language as means of expression were the developments of prose. And a man cannot clearly understand or justly judge the value of verse, modern verse, any verse, unless he has grasped this.

Thus isolating, with a dramatic effect, individual names or examples with the idea of combining a bird's-eye view of certain aspects of literary history with specific evaluations is Pound's way of measuring an historical sense in terms of contemporary relevance and *vice versa*. The dogmatic certainty with which he expounds his views is both a measure and a proof of his personal conviction which in turn derives from Pound's own critical response and judgment. This, for example, leads Pound to assert that 'no man can write really good verse unless he knows Stendhal and Flaubert'; that 'he will learn more about the art of charging words from Flaubert than he will from the floribund sixteenth century dramatists'; or that 'the main expression of nineteenth-century consciousness is in prose'.

Hence a sense of personal involvement and directness of approach go side by side in Pound with his critical perception

on the one hand and with his moral conviction on the other. Hence he can well ask us, as in effect he does in the last section of *How to Read* (subtitled 'Vaccine'), to 'throw out all critics who use vague general terms' which either don't mean anything, or conceal the critics' meaning. The reader, says Pound, 'thinks he agrees with them or assents to their statement when he doesn't'. He then proceeds to postulate what may be regarded as the basic requirements or credentials of a good critic.

> The first credential we should demand of a critic is *his* ideograph of the good; of what he considers valid writing, and indeed of all his general terms. Then we know where he is. He cannot simply stay in London writing of French pictures that his readers have not seen. He must begin by stating that such and such *particular* works seem to him 'good', 'best', 'indifferent', 'valid', non-valid'.

Pound then goes on to lay down 'a definite curriculum in place of the present *'emiettements'*–a curriculum that includes Confucius, Homer, Ovid, a Provencal Song Book, Cavalcanti, Villon, Voltaire's critical writings, Stendhal, Flaubert, Gautier, Corbiere and Rimbaud and that is the result of 'twenty-seven years' thought on the subject and a resume of conclusions'. Though by no means a comprehensive, still less an exhaustive, curriculum, it nevertheless offers the minimum without which 'the critic has almost no chance of sound judgment', and without sound judgment he won't be able to tell us what writers he thinks are good writers'.

ABC of Reading which came out in 1934, goes a long way towards elaborating the ideas Pound expounded in *How to Read*, and in elaborating them he performs the role of the weeder who, he says, is 'supremely needed if the Garden of the Muses is to persist as a garden'. And to his role as gardener, Pound adds that of a contemorary biologist who undertakes a 'careful first-hand examination of the matter, and continual COMPARISION of one 'slide' or specimen with another'[18]. For, Pound observes, a critic can

learn 'more about poetry by really knowing and examining a few of the best poems than by meandering about among a great many'.

Such a critic, then, is bound to be, to some extent at any rate, a comparatist—comparing and even contrasting not merely two authors, tendencies or achievements in the same epoch and literature, but those of different epochs and different literatures as well. Thus, for instance, while discussing metre, rhyme scheme, melody, or the perfection of the verse movement Pound goes to the poetry of Provence as a measuring rod for evaluating Elizabethan poetry. 'if you are to know the dimensions of English verse melody a few centuries later, you must find your measures or standards in Provence. The Minnesingers were contemporary; you can contrast the finesse of the south Latin, with the thicker pigment of Heinrich von Morungen or Von der Vogelweide.' Similarly, the way to study Shakespeare's language is to study it side by side 'with something different and of equal extent' as, for example, Dante, 'who is of equal size and DIFFERENT.' For, Pound adds, 'to study Shakespeare's language merely in comparison with the DECADENCE of the same thing doesn't give one's mind any leverage.' However, if, for lack of the knowledge of Dante's Italian, the critic is not in a position to measure Shakespeare against Dante, he can at least measure Shakespeare's language 'against the prose manifestations of Voltaire, Stendhal, or of Fielding—if you cannot read French'. For, Pound tells us, 'You can't judge any chemical's action merely by putting it with more of itself. To know it, you have got to know its limits, both what it is and what it is not. What substances are harder or softer, what more resilient, what more compact.' This is Pound's way of epitomising what he considers the business of comparative literature to be and its relevance to a literary critic. Comparative literature, he tells us, 'sometimes figures in university curricula, but very few people know what they mean by the term, or approach it with a considered cons-

cious method'. Pound himself not only knew what he meant by 'comparative literature', but a significant body of his criticism is 'comparative' in the best sense of the term.

However, this doesn't mean that Pound is unaware of the risks involved in comparison; and his awareness of the risks makes him institute whatever comparisons he does with a particularly heigntened sense of relevance and responsibility. 'You can *prove* nothing by analogy. The analogy is either range finding or fumble . . . BUT a man whose wit teems with analogies will often "twig" that something is wrong long before he knows why. Aristotle had something of this sort in mind when he wrote "apt use of metaphor indicating a swift perception of relations".' But metaphors, analogies or comparisons, though of great value to a critic, are not enough to enable him to judge 'the attained maxima of certain kinds of writing'. So that apart from being a good comparatist, a critic should also be good reader, knowing 'microscopically' what he is comparing as well as what he is comparing it with. What Pound says of an ideal teacher applies as much to an ideal critic; namely, that he would 'approach any masterpiece that he was presenting to his class *almost* as if he had never seen it before', inspite of his long familiarity with it. For, Pound observes, 'it is only after long experience that most men are able to define a thing in terms of its own genus, painting as painting. writing as writing'. But even then, Pound admits, 'our faculties or memories or perceptions are all too "spotty" to permit anything save mutual curiosity'. Moreover, different kinds of writing require different kinds of critical standards, and Pound divides them broadly into two categories: 1) 'books a man reads to develop his capacities : in order to know more and to perceive more, and more quickly, than he did before he read them'; 2) books that are intended and that serve as REPOSE, dope, opiates, mental beds'. For a critic to confuse the two categories is tantamount to his measuring 'the work of a present DECADE against the best work of a

past century or even of a whole group of centuries'. In any case the honest critic, according to Pound, must be content to find 'VERY LITTLE contemporary work worth serious attention; but he must also be ready to RECOGNIZE that little, and to demote work of the past when a new work surpasses it'—an exercise that would entail his discriminating between what is traditional and what is modern, between original contribution as such and a mere addition to what is already there. To extol the past may not be all that bad, but to extol it at the expense of the present is—and it is especially so in the realm of criticism. Pound attributes what he calls 'a deformation of criticism and a distorted glorification of the past' to the 'jealousy of vigorous-living men' on the part of the 'glorifiers of the past'.

In *Guide to Kulchur* too, while diagnosing and making searching comments on the various aspects of what, borrowing a term used by Frobenius, he calls *Paideuma*, Pound returns to his life-long concern with the question of terminology in the interest of a precise and definite language to be used in criticism. If the terminology be not exact, he tells us apropos of governmental instructions, 'if it fit not the thing, the governmental instructions will not be explicit, if the instructions aren't clear and the names don't fit, you can not conduct business properly.' Hence for Pound, an intelligent man 'cares for terminology'. And so far as a literary critic is concerned it is not so much the extent of his knowledge, or the varied nature of what he knows, that is relevant to him, as the degree of precision and clarity with which he can express his *own* thinking concerning it. Precision and clarity are not merely stylistic virtues; they are indicative of the depth and intensity of awareness in a critic. 'Certain kinds of awareness', Pound tells us, 'mark the live books in our time, in the decade 1930 to 40. Lack of awareness shows in the mass of dead matter printed'. The critic's job is to identify and discriminate the various shades and degrees of different kinds of awareness, and, in so doing, to use

language 'with greater precision and to distinguish knowledge from not-knowledge'. In fact Pound rates awareness and understanding even higher than knowledge. For knowledge.

> 'is or may be necessary to understanding, but it weighs as nothing against understanding, and there is not the least use or need of retaining it in the form of dead catalogues once you understand process.
>
> Yet, once the process is understood it is quite likely rhat the knowledge will stay by a man, weightless, held without effort.

It is only when a critic can do so that he will be, as Pound claimed for himself he was, in a position 'to tell a Goya from a Velasquez, a Velasquez, a Velasquez from an Ambrogio Praedis, a Praedis from an Ingress or a Moreau'.

But just as there are two kinds of knowledge—real knowledge and not-knowledge—so there are also two kinds of 'ideas'—'ideas which exist and/or are discussed in a species of vacuum, which are as it were toys of the intellect, or to guide action and serve us as rules (and/or measures) of conduct.' Some ideas exist passively and inertly, others possess us vitally and are vitally possessed, so that we don't have to remember them:

> People find ideas a bore because they do not distinguish between live ones and stuffed ones on a shelf. I mean there are ideas, facts, notions that you can look up in a phone book or library and there are others which are in one as one's stomach or liver, one doesn't have to remember them, though they now and again make themselves felt.

The latter category of ideas and the way they are mastered and utilised represent something utterly different from what the 'romantic term' *Zeitgeist* suggests—'the atmospheres, the tints of mental air and the idees recues, the notions that a great mass of people still hold or half hold from habit, from waning custom'. In criticism the equivalent of such ideas is what the practitioners of various arts tell us when they describe their experiences as opposed to what the critics, who have never produced anything creative themselves, tell us. Hence, for Pound, what we know from practitioners,

usually from their work, occasionally from their comments. Our knowledge is sometimes second hand, and becomes more wafty with each remove'. In fact for a critic certain kinds of knowledge and ideas are not worth having, and there is no sense in his maintaining 'a pretence of omniscience'. What is more important for a critic is not to lose his grip on reality nor mistake it for facts piled upon facts or data added to data. For 'a mass of nomenclature completely unstuck from reality' is of no more value to a critic then it is to a philosopher. Nor is there any use in loading up one's memory :

> with the chronological sequence of what has happened, or the names of protagonists, or authors of books, or generals and leading political spouters, so long as you understand the process now going on, enveloping you as an individual, in a social order, and quite unlikely to be very 'new' in themselves however fresh or stale to the participant.

As to the relation between form and technique on the one hand, and substance or significance on the other, Pound always regarded significance to be far more important than technique. There is, he tells us, 'a distinct decadence when interest passes from significance—meaning the total significance of a work—into DETAILS of technique'. Hence technical or aesthetic criticism is only one of many aspects—and not even the most important—of what constitutes the business of a critic. One of the manifestations of significance in literary criticism is the way moral criteria merge with technical considerations as they do in Pound's own critical thinking and evaluation. For instance, he defines technique as 'the test of a writer's sincerity', and genius as 'an inevitable swiftness and rightness in a given field. The trouvaille. The direct simplicity in seizing the effective means'. And greatness itself—any form of greatness—is described in terms of 'an unusual energy coupled with straightness, the direct shooting mind'.

Thus a good many of Pound's critical precepts are rooted in what he calls—apropos of Binyon's dictum 'Slowness is

beauty'—'a very profound intuition of verity'—an intuition that informs his moral, psychological and critical epigrams—and few writers in this century have given us so many literary epigrams as Pound. As for instance : 'knowledge is NOT culture. The domain of culture begins when one HAS "forgotten-what-book"', which throws light not only on Pound's poetry but also on his criticism. For however arbitrarily a-historical or dogmatically personal his critical dictums or appraisals may, at times, appear to be, the 'assemblage of detail' they are based on embodies the perceptions of a whole age, 'of a whole congeries and sequence of causes'. In Pound critical perception goes with intelligence which is both literary and non-literary, specific and general. 'Great intelligence', Pound would say, 'attains again and again to great verity', and his own criticism is an illustration of this. 'Even roughnecks like Kipling and Hemingway', he observes, 'have, in their obscure way, paid tribute to intelligence, I admit they don't keep that flag up much of the time. But you cd. at least in Hemingway's case get him to admit that mind has its uses. The careful and alert reader will find admission in Hemingway's writing.' And the kind of intelligence Pound is talking about—being different, as it is, from expertise or authority—is not only a measure of a critic's 'civility', but it also saves him from dullness. So that, for example, if Pater is 'infinitely more civil than Addington Symonds', it is because 'he is less DULL'. And Pound adds :

> In fact he is not dull in the least. He is adolescent reading, and very excellent bait. The supreme crime in a critic is dullness. The supreme evil committable by a critic is to turn men away from the bright and the living. The ignominious failure of ANY critic (however low) is to fail to find something to arouse the appetite of his audience, to read, to see, to experience.
>
> It is the critic's BUSINESS *adescare* to lure the reader. Caviar, vodka, any hodge-podge of oddities that arouses hunger or thirst is pardonable to the critic.
>
> He is not there to satiate. A desire on his part to point out his own superiority over Homer, Dante, Catullus and Velasquez, is simple proof that he has missed his vocation. Any ass knows that Dante was not a

a better racing driver than Barney Oldfied, and that he knew less of gramophones than the late Mr Edision.

When, however, a critic is wrong, it is, Pound suggests, 'sound in 99% of cases' not to answer him. With a touch of Johnsonian commonsense and logic he continues :

If one has writfen a poem or painted a picture one's critic is either right or wrong. If right in blaming a fault, it is up to the artist to correct it, or do his next work without it. If wrong, the critic is possibly an ass, in any case the work outlasts him, and he is not worth a reply.

Such an attitude presupposes a kind of intelligence which is both moral and critical—an intelligence that Pound himself admires, for instance, in Pope and Johnson, when he talks of 'the value of intelligence' in their poetry, 'the right to be impatient with fools, the value of being undazzled'. But Pound distinguishes Intelligence from thought, so that even though he praises Johnson's poems, he finds them 'facile', because 'they are not raally thought at all, or are thought only in reflection [using the term as of a reflection in a mirror], thought remembered in a moment of lassitude'. And while commenting on Johnson's line—'And pause a while from letters to be wise'—he observes : 'Saml. quite right if this means that the culture (damned word if ever there was one) ought NOT to be a lighted haystack of knowledge so heavy it crushes or smothers'.

Hence, whether Pound is discussing his terminology or his notion of culture his attitude is essentially that of a critic—a critic of literature as well as of the values of contemporary civilization. And if his tone and approach are often those of a satirist and a polemic rather than those of a moralist or a philosopher, it is because his concern with and involvement in what he is discussing and analysing is itself of a militant nature rather than of an academic one. And this because for Pound both the history of culture and the history of criticism mean 'the history of ideas going into action'.

An indefatigable search for right terminology together with the endless process of exploring, analysing and defining

that such a search entails as well as a fastidious and insatiable curiosity characterises Pound's criticism from first to last. If a man hasn't worked an idea out to his own satisfaction it is, Pound tells us, 'very difficult for him to hold reader's attention while shifting about from one snap at it, to another'. Hence for all its complexity and contradictoriness the phrase 'a cultural vortex' is a quintessentially apt description of what Pound undertook to do in his criticism. And if in *How to Read* and *ABC of Reading* he tried to establish what he calls 'a series or set of measures, standards, voltometers', in *Guide to Kulchur* he set out to deal with 'a heteroclite set of impressions, I trust human, without their being too bleatingly human'. Discriminating between the genuine from the spurious in art and culture is, for Pound, a necessery step towards observing distinction in life itself. That is why Pound's criticism of literature is inseparably linked with his criticism of life, as one can see. for example, from his trying to dissociate two mystic states as he calls them :

> the ecstatic–beneficent and benevolent, contemplation of the divine love, the divine splendour with goodwill toward others.
>
> And the bestial, namely the fanatical, the man on fire with God and anxious to stick his snotty nose into other men's business or reprove his neighbour for having a set of tropisms different from that of the fanatic's, or for having the courage to live more greatly and openly.

Representing, as it does, a rare kind of dynamism, the first state, Pound observes

> has time and again, driven men to great living, it has given them courage to go on for decades in the face of public stupidity. It is paradisical and a reward in itself seeking naught further . . . perhaps because a feeling of certitude inheres in the state of feeling itself. The glory of life exists without further proof for this mystic.

This feeling of certitude, which Pound himself possessd in abundance, inheres in his critical thought at its most discriminating, without petrifying that thought. Those who petrify thought, 'that is, *KILL* it', Pound calls them 'the enemies of mankind', as for example Marxism or Fieudianism.

That a critic's sense or feeling of certitude should not blunt his perception or deflect his power of discrimination is illustrated by Pound's own criticism of Hardy's poetry—the first significant critical appraisal of Hardy by a modern poet. A conscientious critic, Pound notes, 'might be hard put to it to find just praise for Hardy's poems. When a writer's matter is stated with such entirety and with such clarity there is no place left for the explaining critic. When the matter is of so stark a nature and so clamped to reality, the eulogist looks an ass'. In admiring Hardy's poetry Pound himself finds in it 'expression coterminous with the matter', so that poem after poem leaves him with 'nowt more to say'. That Hardy's poetry offers 'nothing for disciples' exploitation illustrates and corroborates another critical principle of Pound's—that 'the *work* is more criticism than any talk around and about a work'—a truth which 'flashes in reading Hardy. In the clean wording. No thoughtful writer can read this book of Hardy's (collected poems) without throwing his own work (in imagination) into the test-tube and hunting it for fustian, for the foolish word, for the word upholstered'. But expression is not the only factor which engages the critic's admiring attention; he has to be equally vigilant in determining the way the forces of history and civilization act on the literary work in question, whether it is Hardy's novels or Dante's poetry. Thus, while commenting on Hardy's disgust, like Swinburne's or Henry James's, with 'the social estimates of their era', as well as on his rebellion against 'the sordid matrimonial customs of England', Pound goes on to show how Hardy stood. 'For the joie de vivre (Ralph Blossom). He declined (persistently) a stage-set joie de vivre. He declined (persistently) to blink anything or to take sand for sugar or to go through any of the polite motions implicit in accepting sand in one's tea'. Instead of accepting the code of his time', namely monetary pressure, Hardy chose in the main 'sex tangles that do not depend directly on the money factor, and that wd. usually remain after it had been settled;'

that is 'a permanent *enredo*'. And it is a critic's business to disentangle that from what was both dependent on and determined by monetary pressure. It is by doing that that he would be able to 'talk with augmented clarity of t'other instead of confounding them together'.

Also, while dealing with a poem like Dante's *Paradiso*, the particular nature of Pound's critical preoccupation manifests itself in the way he argues how an explaining or exegetical critic's hands are tied by the absence of an adequate critical criterian and vocabulary. 'There is nothing', Pound says, 'in modern critical mechanism to deal with, and I doubt if there is anything handy in our poetic vocabulary even to translate' the matter of Dante's *Paradiso*. 'Sober minds have agreed that the arcanum is the arcanum. No man can provide his neighbour with a Cook's ticket thereto'.

Impatience with elaborate, analytical exegesis characterises Pound's criticism from first to last, and it is his way of pinpointing what is essential in a work of art, whether from the formal or technical point of view or from the point of view of its moral drift and substance. Thus, what Pound says about the craft of poetical or metrical composition in general and about Hopkins in particular is equally valid for literary criticism as a whole. A craft, we are told, 'that occupies itself solely with imitating Gerard Hopkins or in any other metrical experiment is a craft misdirected. We engage in technical exercise faute de mieux, a necessary defensive activity'.

Such an attitude to criticism would underline, as Pound's always does, clarity and succinctness of thought and expression, as fundamental requisites: 'Only in the high air and the great clarity can there be a just estimation of values'; or 'A REAL book is one whose words grow ever more luminous as one's own experience increases or as one is led or edged over Into cosidering them with greater attention'. As an illustration of this Pound relates how, when first read, the phrase, 'maestro di coloro che sanno' (from Dante's *Inferno*), seems' a general

and generous compliment. The beauty of the twilit scene takes full possession of the reader. Limbo is divested of its defects. Only today do I stop to take count of the *sanno* as the mot juste, a graded and measured word, not merely two handy syllables fitting the metre, conveniently rhyming with fanno and stanno (which it precedes).

Thus both in its aim and approach Pound's criticism is at bottom governed by practical or pragmatic considerations—considerations that are meant to help 'the next man to a few of the summits, with less fatigue than one's own'. But in order to be able to do this a critic must be impartial, whether he bestows praise or challenges reputations however consecrated by time. That is why while undertaking to deal with Arlstotle, Pound takes the 'oath of impartiality' and goes on to explain what is involved in doing so. 'One's measuring book', he tells us 'shd. not be of an author in whom one has specialized, that wd. mean a fixed attitude, possibly an unconscious sense af proprietorship in the work'. In conformity with this principle he suggests that: 'gt. works and works of gt. reputation shd. be looked at from time to time, as from other works of equal height, or of approximately similar magnitude, not, that is, always inspected as it were from within themselves, or from the points of view of authors or works parasite on them'. Pound thus chooses *Novum Organum* by Bacon, who also 'found Aristotle unsatisfactory', even though when Pound started writing his ideogram of culture, nothing was further from his mind than this work. However, Pound's critique on Aristotle's *Ethics* tells us as much about Pound himself and the spirit and temper behind his criticism as about Aristotle. 'It must however be admitted', Pound observes, 'that I had not read half a page of the text of the N. E. *[Nichomachean Ethics]* before I had again the old feeling to wit (as on reading Aquinas that the author of the words there shown was not a wise man, and that we have here a second-rate book'. And before he finished reading four pages of the book Pound realized that 'Aristo-

tle's hedging, backing and filling, if you compare it with a true work like *Ta Hio*, is a give away. This bloke, were he alive today, wd. be writing crap for the "Utilities". He has lasted because 'like to like'. He is not a man with the truth in him'. Applying what he calls Schopenhauer's 'acid test for writers' (from the latter's admirable essay on style, and how you tell the true man from a false one) to Aristotle's work, Pound finds it

> heteroclite. a hodge-podge of astute comment and utter bosh, material for a sottisier, but above all subversive, morally bad. Safe for an old bloke of 50 (like myself) if he be constantly on the watch for trickery, or let us say not even trickery, but mis-fire sentences that are so or half so but in total effect obscurantist as often as aperient.

Hence Pound considers Aristotle's *Ethics* unsuitable for inclusion in university curricula—and all the more so in light of Aristotle's own belief that the young should not study moral philosophy and that his lectures 'weren't suitable pabulum for the inexperienced', because 'they are definitely the compost, intelligant enough to serve counterfeiters by providing them means toward the confusion and obfuscation of others'. And yet for all his drastic criticism Pound finds something to approve of, even admire in Aristotle's *Ethics*. For instance, he regards Book IV 'a highly civilized treatise', 'a disquisition of manners' which Castiglione 'must have read with pleasure'. But it is 'descriptive rather than, or at least as much as, germinal'. In Book V, on the other hand, Aristotle's terminology is found to be unsatisfactory, and this because 'the philosopher can't use one word for what is unjust and another for what merely contravenes some law or custom'—a flaw that accounts for 'indefinite verbiage'. For example, 'if eleutherion means free-birth in one place, and gentlemanly behaviour in another, we have not even good "pidgin", we have not even a practical language, let alone one valid for finer distinctions of "higher thought". But it is only through a language capable of expressing 'finer distinctions of higher thought' that one can grasp the difference

'between the small totality and the possibly larger fragment which has not in itself the sum of the potentials'.

Pound's examination of Aristotle's *Ethics* is indicative not only of his independence of thought and judgment, but also of the kind of moral strength he considers essential to a critic. It is much easier, he affirms apropos of this,

> to 'sit pretty', keep one's mouth shut or speak of an author as a whole or apply general statements to a whole book, than to risk picking out the good and the bad, the brilliant and the dull—which latter IS the critic's job, especially in an age when the plenum of books and knowledge is increasing. There is more to choose FROM, and the best 100 books or the best 100,000 or million pages DOES not remain the same 100,000 or million from one age or decade to another.

It is, for example, the lack of such strength in Aristotle that accounts for Pound's reductive view of him, making him conclude his estimate of Aristotle with the words: 'Up and down, long and short, I do not believe Aristotle a profound man, but one who handled at times the profundities of others, as in "exchange keeps them together".' As further elucidation Pound compares Aristotle to 'a shallow, clear layer of water, now and again flowing over the deep, that is, the thought of more compact and fibrous precursors. Always able to express what he underatands, but not, by a long chalk, understanding all or, at times, the best that preceded him.' Nevertheless, even though Aristotle had 'no more wisdom than Laforgue's *Salome*', he is for Pound

> Master of those that out apart, dissect and divide. Competent precursor of the card-index. But without the organic sense. I say this in the face of Aristotle's repeated emphases on experience, and of testing by life.
>
> Perhaps the finest thing in this story is that he assembled the collection of state constitutions, seeing clearly that it wd. be *no use unless* someone had the experience and intelligence to know "what to make of it".

Apart from *The Spirit of Romance*, *How to Read*, *ABC of Reading* and *Guide to Kulchur*, in which Pound brings out the various aspects of his critical credo, there are many

critically as well as autobiographically significant observations interspersed throughout his letters dating from 1908, which elucidate and exemplify that credo. For instance, in a letter to William Carlos Williams, (October, 1908), Pound comes out against 'the flattery of those that know nothing about the art and yet adore indiscriminately', whereas in a letter to Harriet Monroe (22 October 1912) he praises honest and intelligent disagreement as the essence of criticism : 'It's only when a few men who know, get together and *disagree* that any sort of criticism is born'. As to the use of parody in literary criticism, Pound regarded it as the best form of criticism, 'sifting the durable from the apparent'. And inasmuch as literary criticism itself is inseparable from the criticism of life, what Pound says concerning the restricted range of themes considered valid for poetic or literary treatment, is equally true of the art of criticism.

> Am I expected to confine myself to a Belasco drawingroom ? Is modern life. or life of any period, confined to polite and decorous actions or to the bold deeds of stevedores or the discovery of the Nile and Orinoco by Teethidorus Dentatus Roosenstein ? Are we to satirize only the politer and Biblical sins ? Is art to have no bearing on life whatever ? Is it to deal only with situations recognized and sanctioned by Cowper? Can one presuppose a public which has read at least some of the classics ? God damn it until America has courage enough to read Voltaire it won't be fit for pigs iet alone humans.[15]

But if art has a bearing on life, it is, first and foremost, a moral bearing, and in criticising art one is, *ipso facto*, criticising the moral as well as the aesthetic aspects of life. This makes it all the more imperative that the critic should be frank to the point of being ruthless in his discriminations, scrutinies and appraisals. For instance, after analysing certain poems by Iris Barry, Pound writes to her : 'Ah well, you may have got a worse overhauling than you wanted, but one can't criticize and be tactful all at once'.

With a belief in minority culture which Pound shared with Eliot and Leavis and which implies, among other things, that real intelligence is possessed only by a small portion of

humanity, went Pound's belief that the gift of critical faculty, to use Housman's celebrated phrase, is 'most charily bestowed'. Moreover, as Pound wrote to James Vogel (21 November 1928), 'it requires more crit. faculty to discover the hidden 10% positive, than to fuss about 90% obvious imperfection'. Also, in a letter to Eliot (26 April 1936), Pound was to insist on the positive and constructive side of criticism by observing that 'the luminous reason of one's criticism iz that one shd. focus attention on what deserves it'. This in a way accounts for the fact that he was not impressed by much of Eliot's later criticism. 'I dunno how you feel about Eliot's evil influence', he wrote to John Drummond (18 February 1932), 'Not that his crit. is *bad* but that he hasn't seen *where* it leads.. What it leads TO. Attention on lesser rather than greater'. Guided by his belief that 'criticism. . . is written in the hope of better things', Pound divides, in his letter to Drummond, critics into three categories.

1 The critic most worth respect is the one who actually causes an improvement in the art he criticises;
2 The best critic of next rank is the one who most focuses attention on the best work;
3 The pestilence masking itself as a critic distracts attention *from* the best work, either to secondary work that is more or less 'good' or to tosh, to detrimental work, dead or living snobisms, or to indefinite essays on criticism.

One requirement any critic worth the name must fulfil is that of being absolutely impartial and objective, so that 'anybody being a friend of anybody has nothing to do with literary criticism. I hope to mainfain at least that point, even if no sonsofbitches ever come to my funeral and if no stinking Judge Thayer of Massachusetts ever places wreaths on my unknown tomb.' But if Pound was ready to strike others he was equally ready to receive blows from others. 'When I go onto a tennis court', he wrote to Douglas McPherson (2 September 1939), 'I don't want the young to send me a soft service even if I am the oldest purrformer except Gustav of

Sweden. Why shd a writer want it soft from young critics ? Naturally, a hard service gets a hard return. One wants a hard ball *in* the court; i.e., pertinent to matter in hand.' However, as he wrote to H. G. Wells (3 February 1940), 'criticism is hard to get. I have had five real criticisms. I doubt if you have ever sought any'.

To sum up Pound's critical credo—pinpoint its ethos and determine the motivating force behind it—is to sum up the urge and inspiration, ethical as well as artistic, behind Pound's personality in its totality as well as complexity. The missionary zeal which characterized all he conceived, campaigned for or achieved—the zeal with which he pursued, in his life and in his work, what he calls 'the flower of a civilization'—went hand in hand with his belief that this flower was not attainable 'save with conviction and a simplicity beyond modern range.' If Pound believed in the value of criticism it is because he believed in the value of honest and meaningful disagreement as opposed to barren academicism for its own sake. Hence, for example, while commenting on the inter-relation between life and literature, he would say : 'we never do learn from the page, and if we do that is only after we have learned from actuality.' Pound's own art and criticism are themselves firmly rooted in actuality. And if, in his criticism. he hit 'almost everybody in the world at one time or another with bludgeons', it was not because he preferred criticism to creation, but because he knew that only through a rigorous and dispassionate exercise of the critical faculty one can realize 'what art is and why it is so damn rare.'

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Sisir Kumar Ghosh

POINT COUNTER POINT : LOOKING BACK

Point Counter Point was published in 1928. More than fifty years after it is time for a second look. The novel's title has become a sort of metaphor for Huxley's career as thinker and artist, the Auxley who, in search of 'harmonious all-round living'[1] came to espouse causes he had once derided. The novel's epigraph : 'Born under one law, to another bound' sounds ambivalent, since one cannot be sure as to what is, or was, his law. Altogether, the 'Manichean charade' of the education of an amphibian provides a map of the self-conscious monad dreaming of wholeness.

But whatever the stance, the change in point of view and technique, Huxley has never lacked justifications. (He has a long and excellent essay on the subject.) There is little that the critic can tell this alert but self-divided writer. Philip's oft-quoted memorandum for instance : 'Put a novelist into the novel. He justifies aesthetic generalisations.' How far the generalizations are made good is another question. That there should be need for such continued compulsive plannning is interesting; but does it not also suggest a creative lacuna, a certain uncertainty ? Will the novel be too much of a 'made-up affair', as Philip himself notes ? And of the two major schemes, musical and zoological, one does not know to which the book inclines more and if the two coalesce. Or if both do not fail for the same reason : too much theorising.

Here is the *locus classicus* of the musical analogy : 'Meditate on Beethoven. The change of moods, the abrupt transitions . . . not merely from one key to another, but from mood to mood . . . Those incredible Diabelli variations, for

example. The whole range of thought and feeling, yet all in organic relation to a ridiculously little waltz tune. Get this into a novel. How ?' The organic relation is what somehow just does not happen.

At the other end of the musical analogy is the zoological, its *reductio ad absurdum :* 'Since reading Alverdes and Wheeler I have quite decided that my novelist must be an amateur zoologist. Or, better still, a professional zoologist who is writing a novel in his spare time'. But apart from a few easy analogies—such as the crocodiles in Lucy's sirenish laugh—this achieves little more than a few easy debunkings. Here are variations on the same theme, both about Marjorie Carling *enceinte;* 'Six months from now a baby would be born . . . What had been a blob of jelly within her body would invent a God and worship, what had been a kind of fish would create and, having created, would become the battleground of disputing good and evil . . . A thing would grow into a person'. Again : 'A cell had multiplied itself and beouse a worm. . . Fifteen years hence a boy would be confirmed: Enormous in his robes, like a full-rigged ship, the Bishop would say : "Do ye here in the presence of God, and of this congregation, renew the solemn promise and vow that was made in your name at your Baptism ?" And the ex-fish would answer with passionate conviction : "I do.", It is hard not to hear the author's chuckle behind the ex-fish's answer.

The meditation on Webley's dead body ('a few hadfull of carbon, a few quarts of water, some time, a little phosphorus and sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, a handful of mixed salts—all scattered and recombined with the surrounding world—would be all that remained'), however, achieves a certain mystery, if not dignity. But surely Sir Tnomas Browne did it better.

Such deliberate exercises in 'multiplicity of vision' automatically limit his audience. As the Gidean novelist within the novel knows, the novel of ideas 'excludes all but .01 per

cent of the human race'. All the same, Huxley's *novel a these* and its hermeneutic multiplicity, all the philosophings fail to make him a philosophical novelist. There is no controlling, consistent focus or attitude, except perhaps the unwillingness to commit oneself to any one single view. Where are the living characters? The portrait of Rampion (based, as everyone knows, on Lawrence), though insulated from irony, a bit of a caricature, is more of an aside than central to the novel. If Philip-Huxley had second thoughts on Lawrence, Rampion-Lawrence too had reacted sharply: 'No, I refuse to be Rampioned',

Spokesman of what he had once called the 'whole truth', Huxley had enthusiastically explicated the doctrine in *Do What You Will* and also in an essay ('Tragedy and the Whole Truth') in *Music at Night*. Yes, behind the gaiety and the amusingness the Pascalian shadow (dung-beetling, to use Spandrell's phrase) does not lift. It is not for nothing that the author most quoted in *Point Counter Point* happens to be Baudelaire. Huxley wanted to be a life-worshipper; actually the offerings were made at another altar. The irony of his counterpoint came closer to tragedy than he may have realised. His true affinity was with Swift whom he had tried to dismiss as a sentimentalist for his hatred of the bowels. But, as Dyson has pointed out, Huxley's own sense of life seems to underline that matter is evil, the body a torment and a trap.

Along with music and zoology, two of the most obvious techniques employed in the novel are the Peacockean house party and frequent tete-a-tetes, at the Tantamount House and Sbisa's restaurant. There is an abundance of conversation, more talk than action and nearly everybody is role-playning, Spandrell as much as Rampion, Spandrell more than Rampion. What Huxley says about one of the minor articulate avatars, Willie Weaver, is true of the rest. 'He acted himself; he was Willie Weaver in the celebrated role of Willie Weaver. He played it for all it was worth.' Adopting roles was Philip's *forte* and weakness. As he ruminates: 'He

had adopted other peoples' opinions, even their modes of life—but always with the underlying conviction that they weren't really his, that he could and ordinarily would abandon them as easily as he had taken them up.' But where, behind these mutable masks, is the person ?

And since action is mostly a function of character, in spite of the pullulating plans there is little plot and no protagonist. The mouthpiece Philip is but a one-man chorus, even if he is not there either at the beginning or at the end. Not only the audience but the dramatis personae are rather special. It is easy to see that the Huxleyan milieu avoids both the poor and the normal individual (if he exists). As Rampion puts it, the world's an asylum of perverts. As for Walter Bidlake, he overtips as a matter of policy: 'He dreaded these encounters, he was frightened of the lower classes.' Yet the book of snobs and aesthetes does not escape sentimentality. More than one critic has pointed out how *Point Counter Point* slips, more than once, into women's magazine stuff. Wyndham Lewis (*Men Without Art*) has made a devastating analysis of its opening pages as the taxi-driver's ideal reading material. There are two other equally deplorable passages, both about Walter and Marjorie (Chs. V. & XII).

But the major weakness of the novel, of which Huxley was aware, is that it seems too contrived and derivative. True, prose never fails him (see the evocative commentary on John Sebastian Bach played by Pongileoni, in Ch. II). Still the novel is alive only in patches. The best portions are probably those where ideas and the endemic encyclopaedism do not obtrude. Two of the finest are the flashback on the Mary-Rampion courtship (Ch. IX) and Webley's drive through London on his way to Elinor (Ch. XXXII).

But, as we have seen, everyone in the novel is eager to hold forth. Here are three examples out of many. When in Bombay a dog is run over, Philip comes out with a typical commentary : 'That's what comes of running after the females of one's species.' And blandly continues to tell his

wife : 'A bad reputation in a woman allures like the signs of heat in a bitch. Ill-fame announces accessibility.' Elinor listens with interest, at the same time with a kind of horror. But the worse horror is that she herself plays the same game when the anxious Marjorie inquires about the source of Walter's infidelity : '"What's Lucy's secret ?" "Isn't it rather obvious ?" answers Elinor, "The fact that a woman has other lovers gives a man hope. Where others have succeeded, I can succeed."' Like husband, like wife.

At another place in the novel Spandrell plays the guru to Lucy, of all persons. The subject under discussion is Illidge's illogical communism. Why illogical, seeing that he is a scientist ? Spandrell is happy to explain at length, echoing no dobt Huxley. Illogical because Illidge, a scientist, happens to be also a communist. "'Which means that he is committed to nineteenth-century materialism. You can't be a true communist without being a mechanist. You've got to believe that the only fundamental realities are space, time and mass and that all the rest is nonsense, mere illusion and mostly bourgeois illusion at that. Poor Illidge. He is sadly worried by Eddington and Einstein . . . They'rs undermining his simple faith. They're telling him that the laws of nature are useful conventions of strictly human manufacture and that space and time and mass themselves, the whole universe of Newton and his successors, are simply our own invention. . . . He's a scientist, but his principles make him fight against any theory that's less than fifty years' old. It's exquisitely comic." "I am sure it is". says Lucy, yawning.' One can sympathise.

Talking of Spandrell two oversights, one minor, the other less so, have escaped notice. Illidge heckles the British Freeman's Hyde Park meeting addressed by its leader, Webley. Though the two had been introduced earlier (Ch. IV), Webley fails to recognise him. This may be excused, for it had been a brief, rather perfunctory introduction and Webley had nodded only 'a distant acknowledgment.' But

how could he overlook Spandrell, the chief accomplice of his murder ? As he is about to read Elinor's telegram left standing on the mantlepiece, a sound made him turn his head . . . A man was standing within four feet of him, his hands raised; the club which they grasped had already begun to swing sideways and forward from over the right shoulders. Everard threw up his arms, too late. The blow caught him on the left temple. It was as though a light had suddenly been turned out. He was not even conscious of falling.' Huxley too, it would seem, was not 'conscious of falling'.

For a champion of life-worship, how many deaths—Weblay's, Spandrell's, Bidlake's and Philip Junior's. Woodcock finds this self-contradiction strange. Even if, in an effort to explain, one could stretch Spandrell's *karmic* aphorism : 'Everything that happens is unmistakably like the man it happens to', how can that include Philip Junior ? No wonder Mrs Huxley was put out.

All its aesthetic meditations and manouevres cannot save the novel. Really neither zoological nor musical, what we have here is a 'cunning montage.' As for 'the astonishingness of the most obvious things.' 'the existence of other categories,' these remain unrealised. Between the 'otherness' and civilsed shocks, with their patina of ceaseless, heartless commentary there is a difference. A sophisticated technique, such as Huxley employs, is calculated to destroy all sense of the holy and the mysterious. The ends and means do not match.

As for the dramatis personae, the many masks and mouthpieces, these tend to be stereotypes. Even in a crisis the characters fail to change and grow. As Theodore Spencer had remarked, Huxley has never successfully attempted the novelist's most difficult task, the presentation of slow develoment in a chief character. As for the latitude given to his *alter ego*, Philip, the novelist within the novel, it is both typical and revealing. Take this, Philip is describing the family kitchen. 'A sketch of the kitchen

in time as well as space, a hint of its significance in the general human cosmos. I write one sentence : "Summer, after summer, from the time when Shakespeare was a boy till now, ten generations of cooks have employed infra-red radiations to break up the protein molecules of spitted ducklings ('thou wast not born for death, immortal bird'). One sentence, and I am already involved in history, art and all the sciences.' Yes, but how very easily, readily, complacently ! It is almost a self-parody, a dangerous sign. And yet the distance remains, both between man and history, and between men in history. When the same 'involved' person goes on to tell us that human contact was, for him, always disagreeable, we are not surprised. 'He avoided it as much as he could; and when contact was necessary, he did his best to de-humanize the relation.' Again, even more explicitly : 'The fact is, I don't care. Not a pin. It's disgraceful. But I don't.' The trouble is that behind the speaker stands the author and on such principles novels cannot be written.

No wonder the novel's deeper themes or quasi-theologies—isolation and predestination—do not come through. Early in the book we have an authorial meditation which has an obvious analogy for the men and events in *Point Counter Point* : 'The parts live their separate lives; they touch, their paths cross, they combine for a moment to create a seemingly final and perfected harmony, only to break apart again. Each is alone and separate and individual. 'I am,' asserts the violin, 'the world revolves about me.' 'Round me,' calls the cello. 'Round me,' the lute insists. And all are equally right and equally wrong; and none of them will listen to the others.' Immediately after follows the parallel with the human condition, in case we failed to see the point. 'In the human fugue there are eighteen hundred million parts.' Each alone. As the young hero in *Crome Yollow* had asked : Did one ever establish contacts with any one ?

The other insight, repeatedly raised by Spandrell that 'Nothing happens to a man except that which is like himself' (Ch XXXVII) and that 'Everything that has happened to him was somehow engineered in advance' is the essence of tragic vision. It is true in the end the irony in *Point Counter Point* comes close to tragedy : 'A deafening explosion, a shout, another explosion, and another. . . Through the open door came the sound of music. The passion had begun to fade from the celestial melody. Heaven, in those long-drawn notes, became once more the place of absolute rest, of still and blissful convalescence. Long notes, a chord repeated, protracted, bright and pure, hanging, floating, effortlessly soaring on and on. And then suddenly there was more music; only scratching of the needle on the revolving disc.' Perhaps the novel should have ended there instead of the Burlap-Beatrice farce that follows.

II

Looking back, *Point Counter Point* sums up, on an ampler canvas, Huxley's earlier novels, before he takes another turn. The sceptical stance, the house party, amour and anomie, all that the congenitally intellectual author had found representative in an age which had seen the violent disruption of almost all the values, standards and conventions current in the previous epoch. If the centre cannot hold, it is because there is no centre. For all that the novel is not wholly negative. Huxley had allowed Spandrell a prophetic aside that has been generally overlooked. To Lucy's emancipated pose : 'I came out of the chrysalis during the war when the bottom had been knocked out of everything.' Spandrell quietly suggests : 'They might put the bottom in again.'

Indeed, through contrary versions of the utopia and the quest this is what the later Huxley has tried to; to put the bottom in again. The rollicking and ribald (Huxley's adjectives) dystopia, *Brave New World*, points to a tension between

what is technically possible and what is ethically desirable. Significantly, the Director of the After Ford World State, Mustapha Mond, is a schizoid. At the time of writing *Brave New World* Huxley had obviously one positive alternative of his own. So the book has to end with the death and defeat of the civilized Savage, with whom the author's sympathies clearly lie. Still later, moving through the Perennial Philosophy and the doors of perception—thanks more to mescalin than to the traditional austerities—Huxley arrives, via the horror comic of *Ape and Essence*, at his Earthly Paradise, *Island*. Paved with good intentions—'Pavlov for purely good purposes'—his island utopia is almost a blow-by-blow refutation of his earlier statement of the theme. Or was the cynical salvationist unconsciously parodying his own cherished values ? All that one can say is that the better idea does not make for the better book.

The quest brings in new themes and techniques. For instance, the Notebooks of Philip give way to the diaries of Anthony Beavis in *Eyeless In Gaza*. Its main concern or content is a conversion crisis : 'This journal is a first step. Self-knowledge is an essential pre-requiaite of self-change.' There had of course been hints of both even in *Antic Hay* and *Those Barren Leaves*. Calamy had gone away, at the end of the novel, on a six-month experiment with practical mysticism. Gumbril had suggested a not wholly convincing change of role : 'I have a premonition that one of these days I may become a saint. An unsuccessful, flickering sort of a saint.' In *Eyeless in Gaza* the note of sanctity, blending mysticism with pacifism, grows more urgent. The 'amused Pyrrhonic aesthete', Anthony, confesses a quasi-mystical afflatus that had thrown the literary critics into jitters. In *After Many a Summer* and *Time Must Have a Stop* appear the increasingly monastic guru figures, armed with their *mahavakyas* and 'the Minimum Working Hypothesis'. Rampion too had been compulsively articulate, but the latter day saints, Propter and Bruno, avowedly more theolo-

gical, are on quite another wave length. Asked to explain his world-view Propter answers with a confidence bordering on hauteur : 'I'll just state the facts. The feeling in question is a non-personal experience of timeless peace. Accordingly, non-personality, timelessness and peace are what it means.' What it might mean for the novel is of course not Propter's concern. We have come a long way from *Point Counter Point* and its blueprints of how to write a novel. In his last work, *Island*, there is a shift back to the art and science of harmonious living. But now the components of what makes life worth living are at variance with those of Rampion, Blake and the doctrine adumberated in *Do What You Will*. In the Kingdom of Pala transcendence without tears via Karezza and Mahayana Tantricism has become a community drill. Everyone, child or adult, is a self-appointed sounding board of the New Dispensation. Even the mynah birds have been taught to twitter *Attention, Karuna, Karuna*, a comic touch that we are expected to treat seriously. 'To gain freedom one sacrifices something,' we are told. But what did Huxley really sacrifice ? The wit, the salacious innuendoes, the idea-mongering are all there, intact. It is only the recipe that has changed, the chef is the same. Be it the Peacockean or Gidean novel, utopia or conversion, Huxley does not deviate from the novel of ideas, which is both his strength and weakness. One of his heroes had wished for two sets of eyes : 'Janus would be able to read *Candide* and *Imitation* simultaneously.' The research undertaken for writing *Island* was enough to sink a ship.

The later novels display an eschatological element absent in *Point Counter Point*. They have also a larger sweep, a deeper involvement with the crisis of man. But none has the brio, the gaiety—even in diagust—of the youthful *Point Counter Point*. The thrust of this sprawling, scintillating book—but dark, dark within—was to reveal, clinically, what happens in the absence of shared values and loss of faith. The whole of the nineteenth century, Arnold's 'darkling

plain', lies behind the book.

Though its place in the Huxley canon will not be disputed, the counterpoint of our admiration is now tinged with afterthoughts. In the year of its publication itself Amos Wilder had predicted : 'Our children, if they read *Point Counter Point*, will probably read it for data on a lost generation.' As we can now see, the novel's onetime spell, the skill and the intelligence, are not without limitations characteristic of the author. Contemporary applause ceases with changing times. Topicality, time's fool, is a devouring mistress. The effort to match music with zoology, the mocking with the meditating eye, does not come off. Huxley exalts Bach in the beginning of his book (Ch. III) and Beethoven at the end (Ch. XXXVII), but his own kind inclines towards Stravinsky. Also Huxley himself might have overlooked that humanism, anti-humanism and transhumanism are strange bedfellows. The canvasser of harmony was not able to deliver the goods. Philip knows that he is incapable of living wholly and harmoniously. Nor has he been able to *dramatise* his own self-division, what he had described in a short story as 'Emotionally a Bunyanite, intellectually a Voltairean'. Later he would add Vedanta and the Void to the Voltairean.

The novels of Huxley mark the evolution of a sceptic, spokesman of psychological atomism, into a soteriologist. Hoping to make the best of both worlds, his dependence on ideas has been the ruin of both satire and salvation. Thanks to Eliot's inspired defence of Donne, levity mixed with seriousness has acquired currency. But the mixture can be risky and may be easily devalued, especially when, as in the later works, Huxley opts for a redemptive programme both to save and solve the universe. And yet one wonders if the triune peace of soul, body and will, of which he now and then spoke, were ever his. Is not the prophet of balance, himself a schizoid, protesting too much ? More a *philosophe* than a novelist, the music of Pan, humanity and eternity do not blend, either before or after. A strange antinomy his

nature's rule, the drama is explicated rather than embodied. Incidentally, Huxley himself found a dramatised version of *Point Counter Point*, without the authorial comments, 'hard and brutal'.

The Waste Land, *Ulysses* and *Point Counter Point* were triumphs of the Twenties. No single generalisation will contain all three. But if we were seeking for technical similarities one might find it in the use of irony and parallelism. Is technique enough ? Basically, every work of art is an avowal, not merely the statement, direct or oblique, of intentions. Also, in the case of Huxley, one may doubt, as Firchow has done, how far the technique has helped him to achieve a total or authentic picture of reality, the human condition. Creative imagination without creative faith gives but the negative triumph of nihilism, deficient in the essential morality of art, which must be a celebration of life. In an otherwise appreciative survey, Isaiah Berlin did not fail to notice that Huxley 'played with ideas so freely, so gaily, with such virtuosity. [but] the performance took place against a background of relatively simple moral convictions, they were distinguished by the technical accomplishment and imposed themselves on the minds of boys of seventeen and eighteen.' As Angus Wilson has confessed : 'Aldous Huxley was the god of my adolescence.' The tribute is in the past tense. The Anything Goes of the new generation has moved in other directions.

Consumed with virtuosity, each of these modern masterpieces, *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses* and *Point Counter Point*, was also an original exploration of existence at a point of time when there was neither a common faith nor a common language. And, so far as Aldous Huxley was concerned, it was a time when 'the Amusing was a cult'. All Huxley's novels are novels of ideas. Nothing dates so easily. 'Ah, if you were little less of an overman, what good novels you'd write !' says his Elinor. But the words are Huxley's own, and may help revaluation. If the incense does not rise as

high as before, that is as it should be. Two but not three cheers to the idol of one's youth.

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THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA : A NUMEROLOGICAL VIEW

The opening paragraph of the novel makes much of time and numbers. The old man has had eighty-four days of bad luck, which are divided into two periods: the first forty days fishing with the boy, and the forty-four days since the boy's parents no longer permit the boy to fish with Santiago because the old man was said to be jinxed. The eighty-four days can be divided into forty before and after plus four extra days.

Ever since Pythagoras believed that numbers held the secret to the world and that numerical ratios, as the intervals in the musical scale, were the keys to relationships in the universe, numbers have fascinated Western man. Pythagoras's explanation that the movement of the celestial spheres produced a heavenly harmony or music added a mythical or mystical aura to this fascination.

Undoubtedly, Hemingway's use of numbers in his novel had the immediate artistic intention of arousing reader response to the old man's bad luck and of awakening admiration for Santiago's tenacity. Yet why precisely eighty-four days and the story itself taking place on the eighty-fifth day?

The number forty calls forth Biblical connotations. Even the reader with the most rudimentary recollection of the Old Testament must recall the forty years that the ancient Hebrews underwent trials and tribulations until they reached the Promised Land. Similarly, one would recall in the New Testament the forty days Jesus fasted in the wilderness, during which the devil tempted Jesus to make bread from

stones to feed himself. In any event, the number forty usually represented in ancient times a long period rather than an exact number of days or years. Obviously then the number forty brings to mind both Moses and Jesus. In the novel, Sangiago too is seeking the fulfilment of a promise (to himself) and willingly undergoes hardship and humiliation to find the place where his promise may be fulfilled. He too rejects the temptation of bread, the money begotten from an easy catch closer to the shore, in order that his life might find a higher purpose.

If so, what significance have the four days? In the context of the story, the number reminds us of the four cardinal directions of the world, the four winds, the four 'corners' of the earth, the four celestial angles (sunrise, sunset, zenith and nadir), and the four seasons of the year and of life. However, since the number forty has so directly led us to Biblical associations, the number four awakens other possible allusions. There are four rivers around Eden, four branches of the Cross, the four great prophets of the Old Testament, four sacred figures (the angel, bull, lion, and eagle) associated with the four evangelists, the four parts of the New Tetament (the Gospels, the Epistles, the Acts, and the Apocalypse), and the four basic materials of the sacrament—wine, oil, water and bread.[1] In the hermeneutics of the Bible, there are thought to be four meanings to Scripture: 1.) the literal or historical sense, 2.) the allegorical, 3.) the moral, and 4.) the anagogical or mystical sense. Bear in mind that anagoge is the mystical or spiritual interpretation of words and numbers, especially of the Old and New Testament.[2]

As obvious as such numerical associations may be to the scholar, there is yet another way of studying the implications of the number eighty-four because that number results from multiplying seven and twelve. Astrologically speaking, the successive positions of the seven planets of the solar system timing the rotation of the twelve signs of the zodiac could

account for Santiago's bad luck. On the other hand, seven and twelve are probably the most renowned mystic numbers in Christian numerology.

For instance, there are the seven deadly sins (pride, envy or malice, wrath, lust, gluttony, avarice, and sloth). Appearing as allegorical figures in many theological, artistic and literary works of the Christian Middle Ages, they often provide the sevenfold system of organizing such works. It is clear that Santiago is guilty of none of these sins. Then there are the seven virtues—the four cardinal virtues of pagan antiquity (justice, temperance, courage and wisdom) plus three Christian or theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity). Careful reflection will show the reader that Santiago indeed possesses both the pagan and Christian virtues.

The seven words spoken by Christ on the Cross, translated as 'My God, Why have You Forsaken Me?', seem to express the state of civilization Santiago saw when the carcass of the fish (symbol of Christ) lay in the garbage and the tourists did not even recognize what the fish was. There are seven holy sacraments (baptism, penance, the Eucharist, confirmation. ordination, matrimony, and Extreme Unction). There are seven ecclesiastical orders. In the Apocalypse were seven series of visions, and in the first four visions appear seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets, seven chalices, and a seven headed beast. During the Annuncation the angel spoke seven words to the Virgin; and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are said to be seven. According to the Gospel of John, Jesus manifested the power of God (the Logos) by seven miraculous events: 1.) turning water into wine at the marriage feast in Cana, 2.) healing the nobleman's son who was on the point of death, 3.) healing the man at the sheep gate pool, 4.) walking on water, 5.) feeding the 5,000, 6) healing the man born blind, and 7.) raising Lazarus. Thus the number seven is the symbol of eternal life and of seven sacramental ways of initiation to that life.

The number twelve has Judaic and Christian associations

as well.[8] In the Old Testament, Jehovah distributed the twelve tribes into four groups according to the four cardinal directions of the world. Jacob had twelve sons by four wives, and twelve minor prophets are subordinated to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. The twelve patriachs are matched by the twelve Apostles in the New Testament, one of whom was Saint James or Santiago. Of even greater significance, if we accept the fish as traditional symbol of Christ, is the fact that the Mass has twelve parts. As evidenced by the relics of his deceased wife and Santiago's references to the 'Lord's Prayer' and 'Hail Mary', he was completely aware of Christian ritual and values. Knowing the Mass by heart, the twelve phases and their spiritual meaning must have been central to his everyday thought whether consciously or not.

Because Santiago's fishing will be shown to have the aura of a holy, archetypal ritual, it is worthwhile to allude briefly here to the twelve specific stages of the Mass. First comes the *Introduction* or preparation of the faithful for confession; second is the *Introit* or opening act of worship with the entrance of the Choir singing the litany 'Gloria Patri'; third, the *Epistle* is given during which a psalm is intoned and a collection for the poor is made; fourth, the *Gospel* of the day with a sermon is given; fifth, the *Apostles' Creed* or the Christian confession of faith is offered, during which three dogmas are directed to each cardinal direction of the world; sixth, the *Offetory*, during which the bread and the wine are consecrated, is enacted and alms collected; seventh, the *Preface* is offered, the prayer of thanksgiving ending with the *Sanctus* that introduces the canon of the Mass; eighth, the *Elevation*, the raising of the Eucharist elements for adoration; ninth, the *Pater Noster* of Lord's Prayer; tenth, the *Fraction*, the act of breaking the bread in the Eucharist, with the *Agnus Dei*, prayer 'O Lamb of God'; eleventh, the *Communion*, the Eucharist end a chant (antiphon) after the distribution of the Eucharist elements;

and twelfth, the *Benediction* or act of blessing at the close of the worship.

While these symbolic suggestions of numbers have their undeniable interest, the reader may well question if this series of numerical analogies actually helps explicate the novel. As tenuous as the mythical and mystical associations seem to be at first sight, they are symbols mirroring the collective unconscious of Santiago or the conscience of Hemingway, which provide an Ariadne thread out of the dark labyrinth of death to light, life and freedom.

If for the moment we accept at face value the need to decipher the meaning of numbers in any given text with mythical or religious connotations, as numerologists would contend, then we can further explore the hints such numbers augur.

In the ancient interpretation of the zodiac, each cardinal number had a meaning. For instance, the number seven was associated with Hermes/Mercury, which name is linked to Hermes Trismegistus, the Greek name for the Egyptian god Thoth, regarded as the founder of alchemy, astrology and other occult sciences. (The word *hermeneutics* ultimately derives from Hermes and the deciphering of his cryptic writings.) On the other hand, the number twelve in the ancient zodiac referred to the moon, the chaste Artemis, guardian of childbirth. Now, if the number seven implies the need to decipher mysterious symbolic allusions and if the number twelve originally had something to do with childbirth, we are led to a startling discovery as to their possible implications in the story.

According to the zodiac, the number three is that of Neptune, who is father of the currents and rhythms of the ocean, and he, therefore, has some connection with Santiago's mythical story. To be sure, three also symbolizes the Holy Trinity. If we divide eighty-four days by three, the result is twenty-eight days, which marks the peried of a woman's ovulation. If we divide this twenty-eight day period

by four, number of the Gospels, we get the number seven, which according to John, denoted the number of miracles proving the Presence of God in the life of Jesus Also, the seven words spoken by Christ on the Cross seemed to indicate death was near at hand for Jesus, but according to ecclesiastical history, those words were the prelude to the advent of the Resurrection. Similarly, the seven words spoken to the Virgin by the angel announced the birth of the Saviour. Hence it would seem the sacred numbers three, four, seven and twelve indicate a ratio of mystic meanings implicit in the story of a fisherman.

If asked what justifies these mythical and mystical numerological implications to the novel, I contend that both explicit and implicit evidence provide such a justification.

Santiago makes explicit statements of a religious character. One of his recurrent phrases to the boy is 'have faith.' Although he states he is not religious (p. 64)[4], he promises to say ten Our Fathers and ten Hail Marys that he should catch the fish, and he promises to make a pilgrimage to the Virgin of Cobre. (p. 65) He confirms what might otherwise be considered merely a passing exclamation by saying with finality, 'That's a promise.'

Later during the battle with the fish, Santiago states he will say a hundred Our Fathers and a hundred Hail Marys (p. 87), and this exaggeration might have humorous overtones if at the crucial stage of the struggle, he did not in all earnestness state that it is a sin not to hope (pp. 104-5), for he here reflects the official Church stance which regards despair a grave sin because Christ brought hope to mankind.

In addition to this explicit evidence justifying a numerological interpretation of the novel, a great deal of implicit evidence is on hand as well. For instance, there is the fact that Santiago's story is so closely identified with symbols and creatures traditionally Christian: the heart, birds, the fish and fishing. To cite only a few of the most striking instances, in Santiago's hut there hangs a picture of the Sacred Heart of

Jesus and of the Virgin of Cobre, which were relics of his dead wife (p. 16). Later Santiago states he had no mystlcism, but then he senses his identity with turtles that have a heart, feet and hands as his own, and he feels compassion for the turtle because heartless men cut out its heart, which will beat for hours after the turtle is cut up and butchered (p. 37). The link between Christ's crucifixion, the Sacred Heart, and the turtle's heart forms an obvious symbolic equation.

Santiago's calling the stars his friends may at first seem an earthy observation of any man who sails on the sea, and yet the phrase 'I am glad we do not have to kill the stars', as he must the fish (p. 75), creates a transparent association between the possible death of a celestial body and the fish, traditional sign of Christ. (One could even argue that Santiago's namesake, Saint James, brother of Jesus, implies a mystical relationship between the old man and the stars),

Although seabirds do not appear in Christian iconography, in the novel they bear a message of compassion and of hope. When Santiago watches the small delicate terns, who seek food but almost never find it, he feels pity for their small sad voices over the sea (p. 29). They are bearers of nature's signs, and the omens they bring the fisherman are that some birds have no chance (p. 34) and that predator birds will soon come to kill them (p. 55). Thus at one level they typify the struggle of life and death in nature, and yet the survival of the fragile tern as a species seems a numerological presage, for the word *tern*, meaning three, implies the ternary and perhaps ultimately the Trinity. Since birds since ancient history have been viewed as augurs of heaven, this ultimate implication may be true.

To be sure, a number of other instances illustrate the religious implications to this contest in nature. For example, the man-of-war dangling its long deadly filaments may be a sign of entangling death, yet the tiny fish that swam between them were immune to its poison (p. 35). More than a sample of symbiosis, the fish (again as tiny symbol of

Christ) seem to say that the Christian is immune to death. Then the turtle returns, as image of the (Sacred) heart, to devour the man-of-war. (p. 36)

Such symbolic clues lead us to understand Santiago's archetypal story as involving a deeper significance than Darwin's theory of the struggle for survival in nature. Indeed, the novel is a modern Christian exemplum. Santiago's going out on the ocean beyond all other men early lends his actions either a heroic or mystical dimension. The old man's identification with the fish as his brother (p. 64) and Santiago's vow to kill him "In all his greatness and glory" (p. 66) already orient our intimation as to the religious relationship between them. Furthermore, Santiago finds that both he and the fish are strange in their endurance and in their capacity for suffering. (At this poinr it seems that fishing is some kind of a ritual of life and death for Santiago.)

When he had caught the fish and tied it alongside his skiff, the fish's eye looks as detached as the eye of a saint's statue in procession. Then the old man recalls how at the end of the struggle the fish had come out of the water and hung motionless in the sky before it fell. Santiago was sure there was some great strangeness in that moment. In the context of both traditional Christian associations with the fish and Santiago's own mystic feeling toward the great marlin, that moment imaged forth Christ on the Cross. Thus Santiago's story conveys an esoteric message to those initiated into the secrets of nature and into the mystery of existence itself.

The skey to those secrets and to that mystery is divulged, at least in part, by the mythical and mystical numbsrs we have been examining. If three, four, seven and twelve are of special significance in Christian numerology, what figurative implications can they have in the story? If we accept the heart as the center of Christianity and as an important symbol in the novel, we recollect that three hearts are mentioned: that of Santiago, that of the turtle (analog to

Christ because its heart still beats on long after the creature has been chopped to pieces), and the picture of the Sacred Heart next to that of the Virgin of Cobre.[5] If we add the three symhols of the heart to the four gospels, we get the number seven, which alludes to the dying words of Christ on the Cross, to the angelic words announced to Mary, and to the seven sacraments which guarantee salvation to the faithful. If we divide the number twelve, which is the zodiac sign of Pisces, the fish, by the four cardinal directions of terrestrial and celestial phenomena, we come back to the number three. Or if we divide the twelve stages of the Mass, deep in the memory of Santiago, by the four Gospels, we come to the Holy Trinity.

The number twelve has another association. On clock, in a calendar year, or as the final number of the astrological cycle, twelve designates the end of the old but indicates also the beginning of the new. Furthermore, the number twelve, associated with Artemis, guardian of the unborn, is a promise of a new beginning or of a new life. If we divide that twelve into the eighty-fifth day of the actual story, we get seven with the number one left over.

This fact leads us to ask what *one* represents. In the ancient zodiac *one* meant unity. In Christian doctrine, the trinity is the union in one Godhead of three persons: Father, Son and Holy Ghost. When we recall that the Virgin gave birth to the one and only Son of God in the twelfth month of the year (at the winter solstice, December 22, which is the beginning of the earth's new solar cycle) and that she first learned of her destiny through the seven words of the angel, we come to understand the meaning of the eighty-fifth day. Beyond the mystical closure of the forty years of Moses' wandering and the forty days of Jesus in the wilderness and of the four Gospels, the next day for Santiago represents a new beginning. Indeed, *one* is not only the beginning of all numbers, it is also the start of life, springing from the fundamental unity at the heart of all apparent

and dualism. One unites differences and diversity—sexually, metaphorically, symbolically—because in spite of the law of competition and the struggle of survival, love sustains life through death. Therefore the chaste Artemis, guardian of the life to be, and the chaste Virgin, who gave birth to the Messiah, deliver living creatures and mankind from death.

Somehow numerology does provide a key to deciphering the hermeneutics of Santiago's story. In the total context of sea, space and time, through Fate and Providence, Santiago was bound to encounter the Greatness and the Glory he had sought on that eighty-fifth day so that at last he could come to grips with his own high destiny.

Through his experience Santiago fathomed the unrevealed truth. Even though the repeated shark attacks on the marlin seem to prove the power of death, and even though in the end there is nothing left but the skeleton of what once had power and beauty, the ironic conclusion to the novel actually serves the purpose of recalling for the reader everything that the unitiated would miss and will never find in their lives.

Despite defeat, Santiago has learned the truth about existence. The ultimate cipher to Hemingway's hermeneutics in *The Old Man and the Sea* is given when Santiago said his prayers to Mary, "Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus." adding, "...pray for us sinners now and at the hour of death." This maternal image mirrors Santiago's naming the sea *la mar* (unlike the men with the motorboats who called it the maculine *le mar*.)

For Santiago the sea is like woman, whose moods are governed by rhe moon. (p. 30) (cf. Artemis) As a male child with his mother, he is a part of her and of nature. His very love of the birds, the porpoises, and the fish proves how much he is one with creation. For this reason, his identity with the fish and the deep respect he feels for all living creatures enable his spirit to survive the shark jaws of death. For this reason, he never feels alone at sea. (p. 61)

It is the rhythm of the sea which makes him aware of the rhythm of all existence. While fishing, Santiago is a part of the great natural cycles—the migration of the birds, the flowing of ocean currents, and the blowing of the winds. At one level, we may say Santiago partakes of the earth's share in the great solar and sidereal cycles, and at another level, Santiago is part of the astrological cycles said to influence the destinies of men. Yet Santiago's mystical oneness with life and his worship of woman, as the sea and the Virgin, reveal the truth of his life. And his ability to endure great physical and mental suffering reveal that fishing, for Santiago, is a ritual reenactment of spiritual rebitth which transcends physical death. The central mythical and mystical numbers unsealed from Santiago's conscience reveal the eschatologicel truth that love is stronger than death. For this reason, Santiago's daily sacrament proved him worthy of the Great Essene.

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FOOTNOTES

[1] To be sure, mythical and mystical associations centred on the number *four* occurred before the advent of Christianity. For instance, there were four rivers around the Greco-Roman Hades; the four human races (black, white, yellow, red), four ages of humanity, according to Hesiod; the four Pythagorean virtues (health, beauty, vigor, and finesse of the senses). For a fascinating and a relatively thorough review of associations of numbers, the reader should refer to Georges Polti's *L'Art d'Inventer les Personnages* (Paris; n. d.), pp. 120-3; 163-73.

[2] Henry Corbin in *Histoire de la philosophie islamique, des origines jusqu'a la mort d'Averroes : 1198,* (Paris : 1964) draws the analogy between this four level exegesis of the Bible and the hermeneutic of the Koran. He states there is no Koranic verse which does not have four meanings: the exoteric *(zahir)* the esoteric *(batin)*, the limited sense (*haad)*, and the divine plan *(mottala)* p. 20. It is also of interest to note that two principal branches of Shiism (the Iranian version of Islam) are the duodenary, which originally derived from the twelve zodiac constellations and the septenary Imamology, which originated in the seven planetary heavens and their mobile stars.

[3] Obviously the number *twelve* has mythical and mystical dimensions beyond immediate Biblical connotations. To mention a very few, the Chaldeans divided the day into twelve double hours; the Egyptian calendar was twelve months of thirty days. In ancient Persia, there were six light (good) and six dark (evil) months. There were twelve ancient Greek gods and twelve Indian gods whose general character and powers corresponded to the same months of the year of the Olympians. Confucius had twelve disciples. There were twelve tables of the law for ancient Rome. Under Charlemagne, there were twelve orders of chivalry. And in contrast to the twelve articles of faith symbolized by the Apostles, there were twelve heresies

[4] All pagination indicated in parentheses are taken from the New York Scribner Library edition of *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952).

[5] It may well be argued that the boy Manolin has much heart in his concern for and love of the old man. Thus his heart is implicit in the story, in which case four hearts could correspond to the four gospels that were concerned with interpreting the true story of Jesus of Nazareth, fisherman of men's souls.

BOOK REVIEWS

Milton and the Baroque. By MURRAY ROSTON (London & Basingtoke : The Macmillan Press Ltd), 1980, ix+192 pp.

Misunderstood for long as a decadent and even grotesque offshoot of the Renaissance movement, it was only in the post-World War I era that the Baroque came to be recognised by historians and critics of art as an authentic and and characteristic feature of the seventeenth century cultural ethos. Originally, Milton was spared the label because of his Puritanical predilections, but in the mid-thirties of the present century his association with the trend began to be progressively realised, and some three decades later he was acclaimed as 'the greatest genius of the Baroque in England.' (F. B. Artz, *From the Renaissance to Romanticism*, 1962; p. 196). M. M. Mahood's perceptive essay 'Milton as a Baroque Artist' (*Poetry and Humanism*, 1950), probably the first cogently argued and comparatively detailed treatment of this relationship, proved to be a trend-setter. Wylie Sypher pursued the study of the subject more extensively in his *Four Stages of Renaissance Style*, (1955). Additional evidence and information was furnished by Roy Daniells in a more exclusive work on the poet, *Milton, Mannerism and Baroque* (1963). Despite some differences of opinion and interpretation with them—particularly the two latter scholars —Murray Roston's book under review shares their basic conceptual framework, and is the latest contribution to the literature on Milton's affinity with this predominant artistic movement of his age. Roston, however, pleads for a more sophisticated approach and claims to have a more challenging objective before him—to identify the Baroque element in Milton, and 'to explore what insights that knowledge can

offer into some of the central prolems raised in twentieth-century Milton criticism' (p. 2).

Comprising five chapters, the book opens with an analysis of the concept and development of the Baroque as a continental phenomenon. The author notes that the movement's primary impulse came from the Catholics' psychological defence strategy against the Protestants' aggressively ascetic negation of material grandeur, and their onslaughts on episcopalian formalism. The encouragement provided by the Jesuits and the patronage extended by Pope Urban VIII to visual arts for aesthetic as well as proselytizing reasons—particularly ecclesiastical painting and architecture —are adduced as evidence of the religious, as against the political, genesis of the movement. The ornate and massive domes of cathedrals, exquisite ceiling frescoes, muscular figures of men and angels. and the sensuous treatment of classical *motifs* in paintings reflect the new sensibility of the age. Further stimulation and enlargement of mind followed from a totally different direction—New Philosophy and cosmology. 'Copernicanism' accentuated the magnitude of inter-stellar spaces and the vastness of the universe, which activised and stirred the creative imagination in an unprecedented manner. Roston points out that the new experience generated an expansive, energy-loving and immensity-prone sensibility. This resulted in the typical Baroque preoccupation with ideas and feelings of vigour, movement, glory, vitality, vastness and massiveness. Since specimens of the new art were specially popular in Italy, it is argued, Milton's direct exposure to them on his Italian tour may have aroused his deep and creative interest in the new mode in spite of his anti-Catholic leanings.

Having placed Milton in the relevant context, the author proceeds to analyse and evaluate the Baroque traits in *Paradise Lost*, and finds them conspicuously in the poet's treatment of the 'Arch Antagonist'. Satan is invested in the poem with heroic proportions as a concession to the new

Christian art, requiring the challenger to be portrayed as a gigantic character with a matching indomitable will for the greater glory of his vanquisher. Likewise, the complexity of his character is also attributable to the Baroque device of juxtaposing 'the two contrary forces approximately equal in might' (p. 72). Roston also finds that the first six books are imbued with these traits in a richer measure than the second half of the poem. He also suggests that Milton's choice of his subject and *genre* bear witness to this pervasive influence. The central theme of *Paradise Lost*, according to him, is the fall of Satan rather than man's disobedience, as the age demanded sublime and consequential struggle and action. Accordingly, 'Milton's final choice of the epic in preference to tragedy may well have been dictated by this very gravitation towards the baroque ethos' (p. 77). However, refreshingly innovative and enlightening as these suggestions sound their implied exclusive causality and tone of finality do appear to be overstressed. The author's conjectures and arguments also overlook the facts of artistic ironic strategy and the ineluctability of generic conventions.

Traditionally, angels had been treated as ethereal, bodiless beings, but Milton's angels are not mere 'flimsy creatures', as those described by Donne or Thomas Heywood. They have a physicality that endows them with realistic martial qualities. In presenting a concretized Satan Milton had before him the literay precedents of Tasso and Marlowe; but the corporeality of the angels was purely of his own contrivance as a concession to the current taste and was in consonance with the depiction of scenes of ascension and spiritual ecstasies in contemporary paintings. The 'florid sentimentality' of Catholic art and veneration of saints could, of course, hold little attraction for the Puritan laureate, but on the artistic plane he could not help responding sympathetically to the products of the 'cosmic vision' of the Baroque artists. Moreover, he shared with the fellow-Puritans their celebration of the phenomenal world as a

manifestation of divine glory. Possibly, the biblical anthropomorphism also encouraged Milton to render the invisible and immaterial forms through tangible images. Indeed, according to Roston, this constituted the poet's chief merit; for, in his words, 'among the most powerful achievements of *Paradise Lost* is its ability to convey the ethereal infinity of heaven in fully realised corporeal terms' (p. 85). This emphasis on tangibility and concreteness was a gift of the baroque, though one wonders if the poet's sensuousness was not, at least, equally caused bv the demands of a dramatic imagination and his own poetic theory that allowed premium to sensuousness. New astronomical knowledge that followed the invention of telescope, it is suggested, also added to Milton's preoccupation with the immense and the concrete simultaneously. Rostan further conjectures that the poet may have actually observed the surface of the moon through some telescope, which contributed to his knowledge of cosmology as reflected in certain verses in *Paradise Lost* (I, 290-91; II, 270-73; III, 588-97). Milton's interest in the chiaroscuro device is also explained in terms of the Baroque passion for contrastive juxtapositions rather than as the psychological result of his blindness (pp. 90 & 93-5).

Milton's treatment of the war in heaven has invited diverse comments from several critics. For example, Johnson found it notoriously unnatural and ridiculous. More recently, J. B. Broadbent dismissed it as romantically fictive and redundant, while Arnold Stein has detected in it some derisive motives on the part of the poet—scoffing at the fallen angels. Roston, however, discovers the pervasive Baroque influence here too, and offers some ingenious explanations. The new taste demanded portraiture of actual conflict of forces, so in spite of the fact that in earlier biblical and literary accounts Satan's defiance was treated briefly, Milton has played it up in graphic details (pp. 121-3). But he was confronted with a couple of problems. Theologically,

God is incorporeal, and so His actual participation in the war was impossible, and even inappropriate in the sense that it would at least temporarily put him at the same footing with the Arch-fiend. Baroque practice, however, supplied an alternative. Illusionism, analogous to the theory of willing suspension of disbelief, Is central to Baroque art, as it ensures prolongation of the vision. So God could be presented as 'vast beyond comprehension' and the actual fighting could be done by the faithful angels under the leadership of the divine Son. This would also obviate the sacrilegious possibility of a direct confrontation between the Supreme Creator and the fallen Archangel. Milton's concern with the new artistic mode, thus, informs the whole poem and constantly manifests itself in 'his translation of spiritual conflict into tangible and spatial elements.' (p. 145)

The final chapter, entitled 'Adventurous Song', deals partly with the theme and partly with the style and diction of *Paradise Lost*. The author reiterates Sypher's earlier description of Milton's style as abounding in 'heaviest masses', 'grandiose motion', and 'outflowing waves of energy.' Marks of massiveness, dynamism and vitality are noticeable in the poet's grand imagery, hyperbolic epithets, sublime diction, lengthy and complex constructions and heavy Latinism. Occasionally, he seems to follow the Virgilian model popular in mid-sixteenth century; but by Milton's time this model of elegance had changed under Baroque influence with distinct adaptation and Christianisation of classical themes and allusions. Unmistakable echoes of these stylistic notes resonate in *Paradise Lost*. The characteristic feature of graceful abundance and fulsomeness may also be noted in the concupiscent luxuriance of the Garden of Eden, and the buxom nudity of Eve, reminiscent of the female portraits by Rubens and his followers. Again, Roston makes an interesting point about the variation on the theme of pride. Discerningly he observes that while the first half of the poem elaborates the conseqences of Satan's

overt arrogance, the second half hinges on the moral implications of Eve's covert pride. Further, agreeing with Roy Daniells' identification of the major Baroque themes in *Paradise Lost* as concepts of unity, power and will (p.164), he points out an additional theme—the glorification of God—which also happens to be the central theme of contemporary ecclesiastical architecture.

Roston does not allow scholarship to hamper easy communication and he has elucidated a complex subject with remarkable clarity and perception. The book is well-documented, and even though the conventional history of the movement is eschewed, relevant information about its genesis, basic concepts and distinctive features is supplied with discrimination. Illustrative pictorial material—including the jacket-design, a reproduction of Rubens' 'The Fall of the Damned'—is tasteful, authentic, apt and educative. Various facets of Milton's assimilation of the tenets, technique and spirit of the new mode of art have been brought out with intimate understanding of the underlying problems, though the exclusive emphasis on a single movement as the solitary shaping force seems to ignore the orchestral nature of artistic creativity.

The title suggests the study of Milton's work as a whole in relation to the Baroque mevement. But rather intriguingly—and without any ostensible excuse—the book deals with *Paradise Lost* only, and all other major works are left out. *Paradise Regained* too contains some readily identifiable Baroque elements, and Wylie Sypher has outlined some of them in his work mentioned above. *Samson Agonistes* also incorporates kindred traits of contrast, conflict, movement and energy, and yet neither of these works is touched upon even in passing. Tillyard has found some of these qualities in Milton's epistolary prose as well. Similarly Lowry Nelson (*Baroque Lyric Poetry*, 1961) has discovered marks of Baroque art in the 'Nativity Ode' and 'Lycidas.' Masque, like the opera, is widely acknowledged to owe

much to the new taste, and *Comus* is certainly not devoid of these qualities. But, surprisingly, all these works are silently excluded from the study, inevitably restricting its scope and utility. However, the book undoubtedly offers some new interpretations, provides fresh insights, and answers some subtle questions of modern Milton criticism in respect of his most important poem. In it Miltoniana has gained a work of exceptional merit.

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Blake and the Assimilation of Chaos. By CHRISTINE GALLANT (Princeton, N. J. : Princeton University Press), 1978, 198 pp.

Blake's 'minor' and 'major' *Prophesies*, which continued to be treated over the years as huge and cloudy constructs built up by a man of fantastic genius, were subjected to a thoroughgoing critical scrutiny in the last quarter of the present century. David Erdman in his *Prophet Against Empire* (Princeton,1954) and Mark Schorer in his *The Politics of Vision* (New York, 1959) were the two formidable and influential critics whose piercing gaze penetrated through the allegorical veil of these poems and who succeeded in correlating Blake's symbolic syntax with the social and political realities of the times. They were thus able to establish that the allegorical design was necessitated by the extreme radicalism of Blake's thought and the censorship of the Press in his day. Christine Gallant, in the above mentioned book, has analyzed the Lambeth books (*The Book of Urizen, The Book of Los, The Book of Ahania), America : A Prophesy,*

Europe : A Prophesy and the three long poems of the last phase from the unified Jungian point of view. Hers is not the casual and mechanical application of Jungian categories to psychological faculties (Zoas), and of persona, individuation and animae to various equivalent counters in Blake. The main thrust of the book seems to be to approach these *Prophesies* as literary artifacts and to show, in the process of explication, how consciousness or Ego makes sense of the personal and collective Unconscious by assimilating it into its own. In other words, Chaos, moral and artistic, is turned into Cosmos (non-myth into myth) not by rejecting and ignoring it but by transmuting it into something positive. The struggle, involved in it, is designated, in Jungian terms, as the process of individuation.

The self, according to Jung, comprises the Ego, the personal Unconscious and the collective Unconscious. To understand and grasp the dark mysteries of the Unconscious, to clarify its contents and to control its reality : in this lies the whole artistic and moral endeavour of man. In this also lies the expression of the mythic consciousness and the non-myth has to be objectified through the language of archetype. The archetypal images provide the only instrument of controlling Reality and ordering it in the light of immanent principles. Archetypal symbols enjoy the same status as the Platonic Ideas with this difference that whereas the latter are transcendent the former are immanent. Such symbols as the Wise Old Man, the Great Mother, mandala, the child, and the Hero are extremely potent and meaningful and form part of regeneration rituals. The main contention of the author is that whereas Chaos and Cosmos are treated as contrary motifs in the early *Prophesies* they may be regarded as polarities of experience in the later ones. Another valid point made by her is that whereas Chaos in the early *Prophesies* is equated with political and cultural disintegration or historical manifestations of non-myth : horrors of war, monarchical tyranny, the stony laws of

religion, utilitarianism, Newtonian physics and phenomena like Druidism and Deism, in the later *Prophesies*, especially in *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, it is primarily an aspect of moral and psychological imbalance and dislocation. In *America : A Prophesy* it is sexuality that functions as the dominant but cryptic metaphor for cleansing the body-politic of the chaotic and perilous stuff and for revolutionary triumph.

Urizen in the earlier *Prophesies* is conceived as the counter symbol of Los and as an adversary of God : the *Book* devoted to him is an essential constituent of Blake's cosmogonic plan and here Urizen seems to be making fun of the cosmic theories enunciated by the Bible, Plato and Milton. He attracts our attention because of the assertion of his opaqueness as against the luminosity of the Divine vision and the instruments he works with are 'compasses, the quadrant & the rule & balance.' Moreover, the 'Abyss' and the 'Voidness' (outside conditions which one has to struggle against) that ultimately 'draw existence in' are used as symbols of deepening Chaos. *The Four Zoas* may justifiably be regarded as a study in divided existence and the disjunction between the Zoas and their emanations is brought out in varying dramatic contexts. Each of the four faculties has its corresponding female counterpart : Los, Urizen, Luvah and Tharmas have their respective persona, too, and the struggle to achieve liberation from it constitutes the process of individuation. It may also be mentioned in passing that two of the Zoas who are closest to the notion of the Unconscious are Luvah (passion) and Tharmas (Sensation). Moreover, parallel to Urizen's Mumdane Shell erected in Night Two is the building up of Golgonooza by Los in Night Seven, and the latter assumes the shape of the true mandala through which the Divine Vision is internalized as pointed out by Christine Gallant. *The Four Zoas* is not altogether devoid of the social and political ramifications of chaos in the contemporary context, for Blake, like many others in his day, was a disillusioned millenenarian.

The poem is however finally concerned with the achievement of harmony and this is brought about after the dramatic conflicts between the Zoas and their emanations have been fully explored and accounted for. The image used by Blake for describing this impending process of harmonization, as pointed out by the author, is Yggdrasil, the tree in Norse mythology. It may also be observed that Urizen gradually ceases to be just an antimony of Los but becomes equally an agent of the Divine. In other words Christ and Anti-Christ become inextricable aspects of the archetype of the self, and Antichrist is incorporated into the process of regeneration. In Night Nine where this process is outlined, pastoral imagery has been employed in order to mediate the sense of fruition and the fulfilled gratification of the human personality. The eschatological vision framed within this Night is a pointer towards the ending of disharmony but the marriage of Zoas with their emanations is preceded by the glimpse of orgy and violence involved in the harvesting and vintage of the human seed. The release of energy and its onrush linked up with the reconstitution of the disrupted psyche is seen in terms of Dionysian frenzy. Dionysius, Orpheus and Jesus are ultimately fused together in a god-man image. The Jungian figure of mandala is not only the image of the circle but also of wholeness and perfection and becomes therefore the most eloquent and suggestive archetype of Christ, the binder of sheaves, the architect of harmony and complete self-realization. Christine Gallant's contention that 'during the long period of the composition of *The Four Zoas* his (Blake's) concept of time and history changed from the linear Judaic concept of his earlier poetry, which saw human history progressing toward an end in which the faithful remanant will be reunited with God' (p. 101) does not seem to be very persuasive. Blake's concept of time was not linear even as far back as the *Songs of Experience*; it was, on the contrary circular.

Milton offers itself as a very convincing illustration of

the kind of psychological study initiated by Christine Gallant, for Blake aims here at delving into the depths of Milton's Unconscious (whom he regards as both a great poet and a culture hero), and, inferentially, to explore his own Satanic sources. The twofold structure of the poem—the Bard's Song in which he examines the personal Unconscious, and the rest of the poem in which Blake searches out the collective Unconscious—views the problem of selfhood as projected through Milton. The Jungian notion of the Shadow which represents the dark aspect of the personal Unconscious, has been pressed into service by Blake as an ineluctable part of his artistic strategy in the poem. On the face of it the poem seems to be concerned with the exposure of Milton's Puritanical errors and the complexes of his egotistical psyche as visualized by Blake. Through the portrayal of Satan—who here takes the place of Urizen and symbolically represents the poetaster Hayley as also Blake's own persona—and by focusing on Plamabron and Rintrah, Blake is really trying to achieve catharsis of his own discords and contradictions. The annihilation of Selfhood in the case of Milton and breaking up of the shell of dissimulation and hypocrisy in respect of Hayley is only an artistic camouflage to lay bare the Unconscious and repressed complexities of his own predicament. Milton's fall through Albion's heart and his entrance into the left foot of Blake (left being the symbol of the Unconscious) and then later the descent of Ololon into his cottage garden are symbolic representations of the chthonic impulses operative in Blake's own psyche. They may be equated with Blake's harrowing of Hell : the endeavour to emerge into the light of consciousness by fathoming the depths of the Unconscious. It may be added that Ololon is the positive anima figure for both Milton and Blake and an adjustment with her is the necessary precondition for any real integration of the self. Blake enters Albion's heart in order to be able to explore the infernal region—Ulro—which focuses on warfare, monarchy and imperialism—all symptomatic of the

pervasive chaos of the human condition. The two images employed for the achievement of final integration are those of the wild thyme and the lark through whom this process is solemnized. Instead of the wine-presses of Luvah as in *The Four Zoas* the emphasis here falls on the forgiveness of sins in the spirit of the gospel of Jesus, and this is an eternal and recurrent process which ensures the capability of the receiving of grace.

Jerusalem is the most inclusive and therefore the most impressive presentation of Albion's fall into the State of sleep in Ulro and his subsequent awakening in apocalypse. Blake's attempt to create his own system in order to destroy other systems of lesser validity is demonstrated here at a stupendous scale. No less evident is the presence of the unifying archetybe of self from the very start and this may be identified as Los-Blake-Christ *exemplum*. The theme is neither specific and political as in the early *Prophesies* nor purely psychological as in *Milton*. And yet it is a continuation of the same endeavour to crystallize the content of the Collective Unconscious : the descents of Albion and Jerusalem into the unconscious and Los's knowledge of it are at the centre of the poem. Jerusalem is the feminine counterpart of Albion and the Los-Urizen conflict is replaced by the Los-Enitharmon harmony and integration. In this *Prophesy* is also found the application of the Jungian idea of animus—the man within the woman—as also that of anima—the woman within the man. The concept of the Female Will which is resistant to the Divine Vision is also examined in its full implications though it will not be very logical to deduce from it Blake's disapproval of the ascendancy of the woman in the human world. The true perceptions of Jerusalem are also contrasted in this connection with the intransigence and purblindness of Vala and the Daughters of Albion whom we come across earlier and obviously to the latter's disadvantage. It is also to be noted that although Chaos is examined in this poem in its moral and metaphysical dimensions yet Los-

Blake also observes the human Polypus of Death in all its social congeries. In other words Albion—both the image of Adam Kadmon and emblem of the body-politic of England or Europe—is shown as falling into the state of utter disruption. The chaotic element of the Unconscious can be harmonized by consciousness only when chaos is incorporated into the integral vision of Albion. Further, clarification and understanding can be achieved by the application of the ritual of sacrifice as sanctioned by Jesus and through this alone can the regeneration of the individual and collective psyche be brought about. The book offers a sober and acute analysis of a basic problem in the reading of the *Prophesies* and emphasis is laid on the shifting significance of the focal characters in accordance with the change in Blake's stance. Towards the end we find Blake persuaded of the fact that there is no linear direction to human history, for following Trismegistus he holds that the way down is also the way up, and that it is only the bipolar nature of the Unconscious which can show us the way in which the opposites can be reconciled.

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