UNIT 35 THE ROMANTIC AGE : A REVIEW

Structure

35.1 OBJECTIVES

You would be able to achieve three objectives by reading this unit. They are as below:

- Review your study of blocks six and seven ;
- Look at the Romantic movement as a whole ; and
- Gain insights into the writing of critical questions.

35.2 INTRODUCTION

This is the last unit on the Romantic period. What would we have done if we had been in a face to face situation ? After having completed a period such as the Romantic Revival we would have thrown the discussion open for your participation. Perhaps we who had taught this period to you over a period of two or three months would have taken our seat in the audience and asked you to present your papers. Alternatively we would have given you a set of questions and asked you to write your answers. We would have then evaluated your answers and may be asked some of you to read your essays aloud for the benefit of your friends. As I am aware that quite a few of you would not visit the study center due to your personal problems so this unit should help you partially overcome the handicap.

In this unit you are going to read five short essays such as you might be asked to write at the final exam. On the one hand they will help you review what you have read in the present and the previous blocks and on the other offer you models for your own answers to critical questions.

You should not have to spend too long on this block because new ideas are not being presented here; new facts will not be discussed. What you are going to learn is the manner of presentation. Each section in this unit has a question written in the italics and the answers to those questions follow in the remaining part of that section.

35.2 ROMANTICISM AND THE REAL WORLD

'The peculiar quality of Romanticism lies in this that in apparently detaching us from the real world, it restores us to reality at a higher point.' Discuss, illustrating from the poetry of the nineteenth century.

The statement presumes that Romanticism detaches us from the real world in some sense. This deserves examination.

The Augustan poets took the urban society as their milieu. The British poets of the early nineteenth century found this society not a society in perfection but being made bad and unhygienic by the Industrial Revolution. Its polite character was being spoilt by the increasing number of the uneducated, homeless workers in the towns. This society became a symbol of greed and trickery, deceit and hypocrisy and the Romantic poets, emerged from this old centre and base of culture and politeness. This may be more true of Blake than of Keats but there would have been some agreement among the Romantic poets on this issue.

This social change affected the thoughts of the people. The range of experience of the previous age was found to be narrow and limited and the permissible interests and sentiments few and limits of good sense and decency soon–reached. The new themes thus were the child's experiences, or interests of peoples remote from the cities or even national life or the unexplored human passions, sentiments and feelings that were more a part of human existence than just reason.

Coleridge's *The Ancient Mariner, Christabel,* and *Kubla Khan* demonstrate the effectiveness of the non–rational and discursive in literature as vehicle for communicating states of mind and feeling that cannot be readily justified in explicit statements. *The Ancient Mariner* is set in the solitariness of the gruesome sea. It is a tale of adventure and more than that, a tale of adventure into the unexplored areas of the psyche. The Mariner is afflicted by a strange urge to tell his tale to someone who is fit for it. Still the morality is a mundane one, but something that was not considered worthy of notice by the predecessors of the Romantics.

> He prayeth well who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.

Christabel has the setting of a medieval castle, where an innocent girl like the kin of the bridegroom in *The Ancient Mariner* is introduced into the complexity of a world of love, witchery, supernatural elements and senility. All these poems express man's willingness to pay serious attention to facts of mind untainted by reason.

Coleridge however was not alone in this matter. Blake had gone farther than Coleridge and imagined a whole world of beings. *America, The Four Zoas, Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* and *The Book of 'Urizen'* are all inhabited by mythical beings of Blake's creation. But analysed on the level of symbols like Urizen for reason they all explain their validity and meaning.

Wordsworth chose for the subject of his poetry the common people, uncorrupted by civilization, the child who has not allowed his innocence to get corrupted by understanding. 'Michael', 'The Cumberland Beggar' and the girl in 'We are Seven' are symbols of innocence. Michael gets corrupted by the new society which he joins. Civilization has not reached others (in the two poems mentioned above), to corrupt them.

In poems like 'The Daffodils' or 'The Sky Lark' or 'The Solitary Reaper' artefacts of nature are seen as a personal, not a public object.

> Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
> As if her song could have no ending;
> I saw her singing at her work
> And o'er the sickle bending ; -
> I listen'd, motionless and still ;
> And, as I mounted up the hill,
> The music in my heart I bore
> Long after it was heard no more.

As the anarchism of Godwin professed man's complete independence from external control the Romantics emphasized the autonomy of a poet's world.

Byron was not an escapist. He remained highly sociable. But while in the society, he wished to fight with the despotism of his time. He set himself against all the monarchies of his day. On the question of Greek independence he recalled Homer, the battles of the Greeks against the Trojans; and nearer in time the memory of the Crusades came surging over his mind. The poetry of *The Vision of Judgment* in theme and treatment is of the previous age. *Childe Harold* and *Don Juan* are earthly and even profane. But they are at a great remove from the setting of the poetry of Dryden, Pope and Dr. Johnson.

Shelley was a revolutionary and joined Byron in his philhellenism. He declared – 'we are all Greeks'. But his poetry is more airy and more than any other romantic poet, worthy of Arnold's sneer.

It asserts the romantic heresy which the poetry of the age had committed in proclaiming the self–sufficiency of the individual. 'To a Skylark' is perhaps the most perfect example of airiness converted into the charms of poetry :

> What thou art we know not;
> What is most like thee?
> From rainbow clouds there flow not
> Drops so bright to see
> As from, thy presence showers a rain of melody.

In sublimating the concrete Shelley licenses our imagination to the extremes of flight and offers a portrait of the purest of human aspirations, not of concrete objects.

Keats loved the vernal bloom, the taste of wine, the fragrance of flowers, the gentle breeze and above all to be lulled to sleep by the one sweet call of a nightingale :

> With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
> And purple–stained mouth;
> That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
> And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

Keats later repudiated his cult of beauty. In his later poetry such as 'Epistle to John Hamilton Reynolds' he laments,

> "... Oh, never with the prize,
> High reason, and the love of good and ill,
> Be my award."

Or again,

> Or is it that imagination brought
> Beyond its proper bound, yet still confin'd
> Lost in a sort of Purgatory blind,
> Cannot refer to any standard law
> Of either earth or heaven ?

Still the standard law which Keats and his contemporary poets adhered to, and recognized the short–comings of, did restore the honour and mystery that surrounded human beings. It is in this sense that they portrayed reality but again it was a part of the reality. In the change of focus if new areas had been discovered old ones had gone into the shade, if not completely eclipsed.

Deb Ratna

35.3 ROMANTICISM, EMOTION AND IMAGERY

'Intense emotion coupled with an intense display of imagery, such is the frame of mind which supports and feeds the new literature.' Discuss the Romantic Revival in the light of this statement.

Intense emotions of love, beauty and patriotism are generally accompanied with an intense display of images. But when a poet meditates upon an object or an idea his intellect provides him with philosophy or a sublime strain of poetry rather than the glimmer of images.

Shelley's skylark is a product of quivering imagination. The bird has been compared with a 'Cloud of fire', an 'un-bodied joy', a 'star of heaven', 'the arrows of that silver sphere', 'a poet hidden in the light of thought', 'a high-born maiden', 'a glow-worm golden' and 'rose embower'd in its own green leaves', and with these images go intense emotions. To quote a few stanzas

Like a poet hidden
In the light of thought,
Singing hymns unbidden
Till the world is wrought
To sympathy with hopes and fears it heeded not.

Or

With thy clear keen joyance
Languor cannot be
Shadow of annoyance
Never came near thee:
Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's sad satiety.

Or

Teach me half the gladness
That thy brain must know
Such harmonious madness
From my lips would flow
The world should listen then, as I am listening now !

For Shelley, the bird becomes a symbol and then it grows until it becomes an agent which participates with him in his flights of fancy, his passions of life, his yearnings for freedom.

Keats is another poet whose emotional experience is conveyed through images. The nightingale is called 'light-winged Dryad of the trees' and Keats thinks of the emperors and clowns of the past:

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird !
No hungry generations tread thee down ;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown :

But Wordsworth's emotional response is for meditation. Much of his imagery is replaced by a 'visionary gleam'. Still his Skylark is 'Ethereal minstrel ! pilgrim of the sky !' And Wordsworth requests humanity to,

Leave to the nightingale her shady wood ;
A privacy of glorious light is thine,
Whence thou dost pour upon the world a flood
Of harmony, with instinct more divine
Type of the wise, who soar, but never roam –
True to the kindred point of Heaven and Home.

This coupling of emotion and imagery is true in other contexts as well. Byron's portrait of the ocean is majestic and conveyed through bold images:

Roll on thou deep and dark and blue Ocean – roll !
Ten thousand fleets sweep over there in vain ;
Man marks the earth with ruin - his control
Stops with the shore ; upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage save his own,
When for a moment, like a drop of rain
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

The majesty and grandeur of the ocean is put in contrast with the littleness of man through appropriate images.

Byron used such images for other purposes like the expression of love of the beauty of women :

She Walks in beauty, like the night
Of cloudless climes and starry skies
And all that's best of dark and bright
Meet in her aspect and her eyes ;

The lady is as beautiful and majestic as a cloudless night, full of stars.

Wordsworth finds the image of an 'apparition' in his 'phantom of delight':

A lovely apparition, sent
To be a moment's ornament ;
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair,
Like twilight's too, her dusky hair
But all things else about her drawn
From May-time and the cheerful dawn
A dancing shape, an image gay
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.'

When he sees her from a nearer view she remains 'a spirit, yet a woman too !' and in the last stanza when Wordsworth sees her with his 'serene' eyes she appears to be

The very pulse of the machine
A being breathing thoughtful breath
A traveller between life and death.

Shelley's call to his beloved is the most intense in this series :

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion ;
Nothing in the world is single,
All things by a law divine

In one another's being mingle –
Why not I with thine ?

Here once again intense emotion has been mixed with intense imagery with a telling effect. The elements of nature wake us to the elements of our own sweet being.

Keats in the 'Ode on the Grecian Urn' talks of the '...still unravished bride of quietness thou foster-child of silence and slow time'. The coming together of 'still unravished bride' with a product of 'silence and slow time' make the portrait on the urn a permanent source of inspiration.

This intensity of emotion when coupled with an intense display of imagery produces the sweeping, pervasive and permanent effect of Romantic poetry.

Gyan Ratna

35.4 POLITICAL DISCONTENT AND HUMANITARIAN ASPIRATIONS

'The Romantic movement at the end of the eighteenth century expressed the aesthetic and emotional sensibilities of the age, the political discontents, and the humanitarian aspiration. Discuss.

George I and George II had been interested more in their province of Hanover from where whey had come than their new kingdom of Great Britain. George III ascended the throne in 1760 and remained on it until his death in 1820. He wanted to get back for himself what his two predecessors had lost, i. e. the power to reign as well as rule This involved a great deal of shady dealings and false play, unfair elections and bribery of parliamentarians and voters. The society had become corrupt and the elite wished a change. The days of despotic rule were over and democracy had dawned across the Atlantic on their (The English men's) own kins in 1776 in the United States of America. The poet of *The Traveller* recorded this passing away of reliance on the king and the waning of the adoration of authority :

How small, of all that human hearts endure,
That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.

The narrowness of the urban society and 'good sense' in philosophy and in poetry, the 'ancient rules'and the crippling medium of the 'heroic couplet', were felt to be a burden which the new age wished to discard. Writing about the metre of the previous age, Blake wrote in his *Poetical Sketches*:

The languid strings do scarcely move !
The sound is forc'd, the notes are few !

But more than the disenchantment with the old medium was the asperity towards the old subjects which desiccated the hearts of men, and narrowed the range of the experience of the educated. These new romantic poets lived in remote places, away from the control-room of the state. The poets of the previous age – Swift and Prior, Milton, Marvell Addison and Donne – were close to the powers that were.

Blake took for his subject the chimney sweeper or the village green and innocent children. Wordsworth directed his interest towards the poor people like the Cumberland beggar or Michael's father and mother. An innocent girl like Lucy or the one in 'We are Seven' drew his attention as much as his own childhood, the 'fair seed time' in which he was 'fostered alike by beauty and by fear.' In this novel realization of man as an autonomus being, his self-sufficient status, lay the secret of Wordsworth's poetic gleams, his aesthetic expressions :

An auxiliary light
Came from my mind, which on the setting sun
Bestowed new splendour ; the melodious birds,
The fluttering breezes, fountains that run on
Murmuring so sweetly in themselves obeyed
A like dominion, and the midnight storm
Grew darker in the presence of my eye :
Hence my obeisance, my devotion hence,
And hence my transport.

Scott, similarly took Young Lockinvar or an innocent Maisie for his theme :

Proud Maisie is in the wood,
Walking so early
Sweet Robin sits on the bush
Singing so rarely.
'Tell, me thou bonny bird,
When shall I marry me?'
When six braw gentlemen
Kirkward shall carry me.

Coleridge's imagination, however, did not turn to things so simple. His imagination was conditioned by his addiction to laudanum. Poetry depicts man's response to uncommon situations. 'Kubla Khan', said to be written in a dream is in its very perfection in this class of poetry :

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure–dome decree
Where Alph, the sacred river ran
Through caverns measureless to man
Down to a sunless sea.

The 'measureless caverns' that Coleridge envisioned was a great fact of his humanitarian aspiration and in accepting the remote and the far fetched as a theme for his poetry, he countenanced the immense possibilities that man was capable of. This conditioned the music of his poetry and ensured its charm :

Weave a circle round me thrice
And close your eyes with holy dread
For he on honey due hath fed
And drunk the milk of paradise.

The music of 'The Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner' is gruesome:

Alone, alone, all all alone,
Alone. on a wide wide sea,
And never a saint took pity on,
My soul in agony.

Or

Day after day, day after day :
We stuck nor breath nor motion ;
As idle as a painted ship
Upon a painted ocean.

Coleridge's gruesome music occupies its place in the full bloom of the joy of marriage :

What loud uproar burst from that door !
The wedding-guests are there :
But in the garden-bower the bride
And bride-maids singing are :
And hark the little vesper bell,
Which biddeth me to prayer.

The poetry of Coleridge re-enacts the medieval motif of *Et in Arcadia ego* - death in Arcady, right in the heart of joy of life. It responds in this way to a deep seated psychological aspect of the human mind.

But the romanticism of the early generation of the romantic poets did not go farther. Wordsworth had written of the Fall of Bastille:

Bliss was it in that down to be alive
But to be young was very heaven

But when the dawn turned into a gory afternoon, repressive and conservative attitudes took hold of the minds of men. Pitt, who was in favour of reforms set all his energy against any liberal measure till the Battle of Waterloo relieved the British people of the liberal sympathies upsetting the pattern of the society. The second generation came to express views against opression and in favour of liberalism, in support of reforms and the utopian creed of anarchism of Godwin and Bakunin and of the socialistic creed of Robert Owen of New Lanark.

Ajay Kumar

35.5 WONDER OF THE ROMANTICS

'The 'wonder' of the Romantics is the enthralling discovery, the progressive lightning up of an inner horizon, which extends beyond the limits of clear consciousness.' How far is this an adequate assessment of the Romantic Movement in English literature?

The great neo-classical poets from Dryden to Dr. Johnson wrote on themes of peoples, which the titles of their poems bear out – 'An Essay on Man', 'An Essay on criticism', 'London', 'The Vanity of Human Wishes' or 'The Village School-Master' The Romantic poets took private themes and glorified the individual. In the absence of public themes they looked for private matters as the proper stuff for poetry.

Children, birds, beauty of nature, flowers, remote lands, mysterious and even fear inspiring landscape or seascape became their themes for poetry. Hence there could not emerge an organized society and a familiar set of norms to which Pope claimed to conform :

That not in fancy's maze he wander'd long
But stoop'd to Truth, and moralized his song

Keats's and in some ways the dilemma of all romantics was whether they were 'fanatics', i.e. of the dreamer tribe or poets.

Fanatics have their dreams,
Wherewith they weave
A paradise for a sect;
The savage too
From forth the loftiest fashion of his sleep
Guesses at Heaven ;

The poet, Keats resolved

... is a sage ;
A humanist physician to all men.

As 'physicians' that the Romantic poets were, they reclaimed imagination for the polite society. A child was born with the 'glories of the imperial palace' whence he had come. Wordsworth beholds

... the child among his newborn blisses
A six year's darling of a pigmy size !
See, where 'mid work of his own hand he lies,
Fretted by sallies of his mother's kisses
With light upon him from his father's eyes !

But this was common. What others could not see was

... at his feet, some little plan or chart,
Some fragment from his dream of human life
Shaped by himself with newly learned art ;

Whether Wordsworth succeeded in persuading his contemporaries of the 'Mighty prophet ! Seer Blest' we do not know but he did incite curiosity into a new field or rather a dormant field of human interest.

'The Daffodils' records another aspect, towards which the romantic poets looked with wonder :

For oft when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude ;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

The beauty of flowers extended to all things of nature. Shelley heard in the West Wind the "trumpet of a prophecy" ;

O wild West wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,
Yellow, and black, and pale and hectic red,

This mighty force gradually goes far away, beyond the range of clear-sight of the poet somewhat like the two children, in 'Dream Children' who from realities slip to the spectral unrealities on the shores of Lethe or like the Sky lark which floats and runs 'like an unbodied joy whose race has just begun' –

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire ;
The blue deep thou wingest
And singing still dost soar and soaring ever singest.

Keats's nightingale does not soar in the sky. It has its

Melodious plot
Of beechen green and shadows numberless

from where it invites Keats and he is ready to 'fade far away, dissolve and quite forget.'

Coleridge's imagination hardly woke up from the forgetfulness imposed upon him by opium. He heard mysterious voices in the air, in the ghostly moonlit nights, in the strikings of the clocks, and in the howls of an old toothless maistiff :

'Tis the middle of night by the castle clock,
And the owls have awakened the crowing cock ;
Tu–whit ! – Tu – whoo !
And hark, again ! The crowing cock,
How drowsily it crew.

What wonder enwrapped the inland objects with the medieval *leit motif* was given a ghostly tinge when the scene was the sea or the 'ancestral voices prophecying war' when the same was Kublai Khan's palace in China.

All the concrete objects in major Romantic poetry except perhaps those of Byron and Southey have a tendency to 'dissolve' into the liquid state and in vapours. Here is kets in *Hyperion*:

His flaming robes steamed out beyond his heels
And gave a roar as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal hours
And made their dove wings tremble. On he flared
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathe ' ligh:,
And diamond–paved lustrous long arcades
Until he reached the great main Cupola ;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region.

It was in this ability of the romantic poets to turn a massive character like Hyeprion into liquid fire and only sound that the unique achievements of the romantic poets lie.

Devraj Kumar

35.6 AWE AND WONDER IN THINGS FAMILIAR

'By associating single sensible experiences with some undefinable superior order of things the Romantics have enriched our appreciation of the familiar world and awakened a new awe and wonder at it.' Discuss.

It is often assumed that there is no human emotion that cannot be found in Shakespeare. Dryden said, ' ... he had the largest and most comprehensive soul All the images of Nature were still present to him ...' Nature, to Dryden and his contemporaries meant far more than it means to us and included human nature as well, but the treatment of nature that we find in the poetry of the Romantic poets was a revolution in literature.

The case of 'the daffodils' of wordsworth may be taken for example. Wordsworth reports,

Ten thousand saw I at a glance
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

But these 'ten thousand' flowers are immediately seen against the background of the milky way, the dance of the waves and the dance of the flowers themselves. As it were, the entire creation is seen in a cosmic dance. We are forced to question whether Wordsworth knew something bout the cosmic dance of Shiv. Ultimately, he thinks of the value of this encounter with a 'never ending line' of daffodils;

> For oft when on my couch I lie
> In vacat or in pensive mood
> They flash upon that inward eye
> Which is the bliss of solitude;
> And then my heart with pleasure fills
> And dances with the daffodils

By the time we reach these lines we start questioning about the sources and aims of romatic poetry. Is Romantic Poetry about nature? Or is it about man. Romantic poetry is primarily about man and only secondarily about nature, but it is nature–poetry because nature is the measure of all things and both the medim and object of the search. The poets of the classical age had the urban society as the standard, the romantic poets replaced it with nature. The song of the solitary reaper reminds Wordsworth of a grand order: 'of old unhappy far off things and battles long ago' of the nightingale and the cuckoo, the traveller in a desert and the voice of the cuckoo from Hebrides in spring. Once again a common song is heard against the bckground of entire creation as it were. Once again we get tempted to know whether Wordsworth had any knowledge of the 'Natya Shastra' of Bharata and our concept of Rasas for in one lyric Wordsworth invokes the entirety and our experience becomes universal. The same applies to fearful sights as well. Wordsworth saw his own boating experience against the background of fearful forms, of the rock extending toward him like a ghost and the mountains all around. All his childish delinquencies, he admits, were reproved by nature's 'ministries of fear'.

It is for such a treatment of nature that common experiences became so valuable to the people of nineteenth century Britain. Coleridge decided to keep his child in the midst of nature:

> ...thou my babe, shall wander like a breeze
> By lakes and sandy shores, beneath the crags
> Of ancient mountain and beneath the clouds

It was Wordsworth's influence, besides being the influence of the age that made him think that nature was the repository of grand forms and of Eternity.

> ...So shall thou see and hear
> The lovely shapes and sounds intelligible
> Of that eternal language, which thy god
> Utters who from eternity doth teach
> Himself in all and all things in Himself.

Hence it was a common belief among the poets of the romantic revival that in nature existed something more than the casual more than the eye could meet without the assistance of the seeking mind. Nature could be a reflection of God himself, was what Coleridge felt. The matin bells, or the bark of the toothless maistiff are agencies of some preternatural beings. Caverns to him were measureless and passed into the sunless sea. The experience of marriage was to be seen against the perspective of the experiences of the Ancient Mariner who felt a pain at certain hours and must tell his experiences to others.

Keats and Shelley see things and evaluate experiences less against the background of mysterious forces and supernatural visitations. To the former, love and immortality are the connecting principles. To the latter, human aspirations of freedom and liberty

and revolution and reform and the amelioration in the condition of mankind take the place of Wordsworth's 'ministeries of nature'. The nightingale's voice cannot be overlooked by generations to come:

> Thou wast not born for death immortal bird,
> No hungry generations tread thee down,
> The voice I hear this passing night was heard,
> In ancient days by emperors and clowns.

And it was heard in ancient days by the 'emperors and clowns' just like Yeats's handiwork;

> Once out of nature I shall never take
> My bodily form from any natural thing
> But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
> Of hammered gold or gold enamelling
> To keep a drowsy emperor awake
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium
> Of what is past or passing or to come.

But the difference is all the more pronounced. While the 'golden bird' is a classical image – Yeats eager to live in his peculiar classical past – the nightingale is something that communicates with us in our real existence. The golden bird is part of a bardic pose. The nightingale is the passionate dream of the poet's life. The bird singing on the golden bough is avowedly unreal and elevates the familiar; the nightingale so common to our daily life becomes thing unreal and awful.

Shelley's treatment of the skylark make the romantic stance clear once again. It is raised to the highest heavens:

> Hail to thee blithe spirit
> Bird thou never wert,
> That from Heaven or near it
> Pourest thy full heart
> In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Although the bird is unreal when looked through Shelley's eyes -- 'bird thou never wert', - it can still give a message to humanity

> Teach me half the gladness
> That thy brain must know
> Such harmonious madness
> From my lips would flow
> The world should listen then, as I am listening now!

However unreal the bird may become in the intensity of experience, of aspiration, dreams or desires it still communicates with humanity whereas the golden handiwork of Yeats, or any other classicist for that matter, speaks only to lords and ladies of the august company. It is for this reason that nature, before the Romantic poets started writing was never seen with the wonder and awe with which it came to be seen after them. Wordsworth expressed the ethos of his age in just two lines:

> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

The meanest flower, the Cumberland beggar, Peter Bell, Michael, the river Duddon were never seen before in the same spirit nor were the matin bells or the marriage songs heard with the same intensity or the dance of lovers on a grecian urn seen with

the same passion or the west wind welcomed as 'destroyed or preserver' with the same compelling force that it was by the great Romantics.

Upendra Sharma

35.7 LET'S SUM UP

In this unit you reviewed the poetry of the Romantic Revival as a whole and gained insights into the craft of writing answers of critical questions that you may be asked in the term-end (i.e. final) examination. Hope you found the unit useful for your self-study. Would you like to read out some of your essays before your friends at the Study Centre or a self-organised group as some students did in this class?

JOHN CONSTABLE THE HAYWAIN. 1821, Oil on canvas, 51¼ x 73"
(130.1 x 185.4 cm). The National Gallery London.

JOSEPH MALLORD WILLIAM TURNER THE SLAVE SHIP
1840. Oil on canvas, 35¾ x 48" (90.5 x 122 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

APPENDIX

POEMS PRESCRIBED FOR DETAILED STUDY

I

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

P.B. SHELLEY

Swift as a spirit hastening to his task
Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth.
The smokeless altars of he mountain snows
Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose
To which the birds tempered their matin lay.
All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
Swinging their censers in the element,
With orient incense lit by the new ray

Burned slow and inconsumably, and sent
Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air,
And in succession due, did Continent,

Isle, Ocean, and all things that in them wear
The form and character of mortal mould
Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil which he of old
Took as his own and then imposed on them;
But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
The cone of night, now they were laid asleep,
Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep
Of a green Apennine: before me fled
The night; behind me rose the day; the Deep

Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head
When a strange trance over my fancy grew
Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread

Was so transparent that the scene came through
As clear as when a veil of light is drawn
O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew

That I had felt the freshness of that dawn
Bathed in the same cold dew my brow and hair
And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn.

Under the self same bough, and heard as there
The birds, the fountains and the Ocean hold
Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air.
And then a Vision on my brain was rolled.....

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay
This was the tenour of my waking dream.
Methought I sate beside a public way

Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
Of people there was hurrying to and fro
Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,

All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
He made one of the multitude, yet so

Was borne amid the crowd as through the sky
One of the million leaves of summers bier.-
Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,

Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,
Some flying from the thing they feared and some
Seeking the object of another's fear,

And others as with steps towards the tomb
Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
And others mournfully within the gloom

Of their own shadow walked, and called it death...
And some fled from it as it were a ghost,
Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath.

But more with motions which each other crost
Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw
Or birds within the noonday ether lost,

Upon that path where flowers never grew;
And weary with vain toil land faint for thirst
Heard not the fountains whose melodious dew

Out of their mossy cells forever burst
Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
Of grassy paths, land wood lawns interspersed

With overarching elms and caverns cold,
And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they
Pursued their serious folly as of old.....

And as I gazed methought that in the way
The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June
When the South wind shakes the extinguished day.—

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon
But icy cold, obscured with [blinding] light
The Sun as he the stars Like the young Moon

When on the sunlit limits of the night
Her white shell trembles amid crimson air
And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might

Doth, as a herald of its coming, bear
The ghost of the her dead Mother, whose dim form
Sends in the dark ether from her infant's chair.

So came a chariot on the silent storm
Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
So sate within as one whom years deform

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape
Crouching within the shadow of a tomb,
And o'er what seemed the head a cloud like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint ethereal gloom
Tempering the light; upon thechariot's beam
A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-winged team.
The Shapes which drew it in thick lightnings
Were lost: I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever moving wings.
All the four faces of that charioteer
Had their eyes banded... little profit brings

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
Nor then avail the beams that quench the Sun
Or that these banded eyes could pierce the sphere

Of all that is, has been, or will be done—
So ill was the car guided, but it past
With solemn speed majestically on...

The crowd gave way, and I arose ghast,
Or semed to rise, so mighty was he trance,
And saw like clouds upon the thunder blast

The million with fierce song and maniac dance
Raging around; such seemed the jubilee
As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea
From senatehouse and prison and theatre
When Freedom left those who upon the free

Had bound a yoke which soon they stooped to bear.
Nor wanted here the just similitude
Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled a captive multitude
Was driven; all those who had grown old in power
Or misery, —all who have their age subdued,

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower;

All those whose fame or infamy must grow
Till the great winter lay the form and name
Of their own earth with them forever low—

All but the sacred few who could not tame
Their spirits tot he Conqueror, but as soon
As they had touched the world with living flame

Fled back like eagles tot their native noon,
Or those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems, till the last one

Were there; for they of Athens and Jerusalem
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen
Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them

Or fled before...Swift, fierce and obscene
The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
Who lead it, fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot and without repose
Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
To savage music...Wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by the agonizing pleasure,
Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
Of that fierce spirit, whose unholy leisure

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair,
And in their dance round her who dims the Sun

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
As their feet twinkle; now recede and now
Sending within each other's atmosphere

Kindle invisibly; and as they glow
Like moths by light attracted and repelled,
Oft to new bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled
That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle
And die in rain, —the fiery band which held

Their nautres, snaps.....ere the shock cease to tingle
One falls and then another in the path
Senseless, nor is the desolation single,

Yet ere I can say *where* the chariot hath
Past over them; nor other trace I find
But as of foam after the Ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desart shore. —Behind,
Old men, and women doully disarrayed
Shake their grey hair in the insulting wind,

Limp in the dance and strain with limbs decayed
To reach the car of light which leaves hem still
Frther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will
They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
Round them and round each other, and fulfill

Their work and to the dust whence they arose
Sink and corruption veils them as they lie—
And frost in these performs what fire in those.

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
Half to myself I said, "And what is this?
Whose shape is that within the car? And why"-

I would have added-"is all here amiss?"
But a voice answered.." Life"...I turned and knew
(O Heaven have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
To strange distortion out of the hill side
Was indeed one of that deluded crew,

And that the grass which methought hung so wide
And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
And that the holes it vainly sought to hide

Were or had been eyes.-"If thou canst forbear
To join the dance, which I had well forborne,"
Said the grim Feature, of my thought aware

"I will tell all that which to this deep scorn
led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

"If thirst of knowledge doth not thus abate,
Follow it even to the night, but I
Am Weary"...Then like one who with the weight

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused, and ere he could resume, I cried,
"First who art thou?"..."Before thy memory

"I feared, loved , hated, suffered, did, and died,
and if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Earth had with purer nutriment supplied

"Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau-nor this disguise
Stain that within which still disdains to wear it.-

"If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore."
"And who are those chained to the car?" "The Wise,

"The great, the unforgotten they who wore
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreathes of light,
Signs of thought's empire over thought; their lore

"Taught them not this-to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mutiny within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

"Caught them ere evening." "Who is he with chin
Upon his breast and hands crost on his chain?"
"The Child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

"The world, and lost all it did contain
Of greastness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of frame and peace than Virtue's self can gain

Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle's pinion to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

"Fall'n as Napoleon fell."-I felt my cheek
Alter to see the great form pass away
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay-
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day-

And why God made irreconcilable
Good and the means of good; and for despair
I half disdained mine eye's desire to fill

With the spent vision of the times that were
And scarce have ceased to be..."Dost thou behold,"
Said then my guide, "those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire,

"Frederic, and Kant, Catherine, and Leopold,
Chained hoary anarchs, demagogue and sage
Whose name the fresh world thinks already old-

"For in the battle Life land they did wage
she remained conqueror-I was overcome
By my own heart alone, which neither age

"Nor tears nor infamy nor now the tomb
could temper to its object."-"Let them pass"-
I cried-"the world and its mysterious doom

Is not so much more glorious than it was
That I desire to worship those who drew
New figures on its false and fragile glass

"As the old faded"-"Figures ever new
Rise on the bubble, paint them how you may;
We have but thrown, as those before us threw.

"Our shadows on it as it past away.
But mark, how chained to the triumphal chair
The mighty phantoms of an elder day-

"All that is mortal of great Plato there
Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not;
That star that ruled his doom was far too far;-

"And Life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
Conquered the heart by love which gold or pain
Or age or sloth or slavery could subdue not-

"And near [him] walk the [Macedpmoam] twaom.
The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.-

"The world was darkened beneath either pinion
Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
Fame singled as her thunderbearing minion:

"The other long outlived both woes and wars,
Throned in new thoughts of men, and still had kept
The jealous keys of truth's eternal doors

"If Bacon's spirit [eagle] had not leapt
Like lightning out of darkness; he compelled
The Proteus shape of Nature's as it slept

"To wake and to unbar the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign-
See the great bards of old who inly quelled

"The passions which they sung, as by their strain
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein

"Of those who are infected with it-I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!-

"And so my words were seeds of misery-
Even as the deeds of others"-"Not as theirs,"
I said-he pointed to a company

In which I recognized amid the heirs
Of Caesar's crime from him to Constantine.
The Anarchs old whose force and murderous snares

Had founded many a sceptre bearing line
And spread the plague of blood and gold abroad,
And Gregory and John and men divine

Who rose like shadows between Man and god
Till that eclipse, still hanging under Heaven,
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode

For the true Sun it quenched.-"Their power was given
But do destroy," replied the leader-"I
Am one of those who have created, even

"If be but a world of agony"-
"Whence camest thou and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin." I said, "and why?

"Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart of one sad thought.-
Speak" "Whence I came, partly I seem to know,

"And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;
Why this should be my mind can compass not;

"Whither the conqueror hurries me still less
But follow thou, and from spectator turn
Actor or victim in this wretchedness.

"And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee-Now listen... In the April prime
When all the forest tops began to burn

"With kindling green, touched by the azure clime
Of the young year, I found myself asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

"Had yawned into a cavern high and deep
And from it came a gentle rivulet
Whose water like clear air in its calm sweep

"Bent the soft grass and kept for ever wet
The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
With sound which all who hear must needs forget

"All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
Which they had known before that hour of rest:
A sleeping mother then would dream not of

The only child who died upon her breast
At eventide, a king would mourn no more
The crown of which his brow ws dispossest

"When the sun lingered o'er the Ocean floor
To gild his rival's new prosperity-
Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore

"Ills, which if ills, can find no cure from thee,
The thought of which no other sleep will quell
Nor other music blot from memory-

"So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell.-
Whether my life had been before that sleep
The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell

"Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
I know not. I arose and for a space
The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep

"Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
Of light diviner than the common Sun
Sheds on the common Earth, but all the place

"Was filled with many sounds woven into one
Oblivious melody, confusing sense
Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun:

"And as I looked the bright omnipresence
Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
And the Sun's image radiantly intense

"Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
Like gold, and threaded all the forest maze
With winding paths of emerald fire-there stood

"Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
Of his own glory, on the vibrating
Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays

"A shape all light, which with one hand did fling
Dew on the earth, as if she were the Dawn
Whose invisible rain forever seemed to sing

"A silver music on the mossy lawn,
And still before her on the dewy grass
Is her many coloured scarf had drawn.-

In her right hand she bore a chrystal glass
Mantling with bright Nepenthe; —the fierce splendour
Fell from her as she moved under the mass

Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender
Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
Glided along the river, and did bend her

"Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow
Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream
That whispered with delight to be their pillow. —

"As one enamoured is upborne in dream
O'er lily-paven lakes mid silver mist
To wondrous music, so this shape might seem

"Partly to tread the waves with feet which kist
The dancing foam, partly to glide along
The airs that roughened the moist amethyst,

"Or the slant morning beams that fell among
The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees;
And her feet ever to the ceaseless song

"Of leaves and winds and waves and birds and bees
And falling drops moved in a measure new
Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze

"Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon,
Dances!' the wind where eagle never flew. —

"And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
To which they moved, seemed as they moved, to blot
The thoughts of him who gazed on them, and soon

"All that was seemed as if it had been not,
As if the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
Her feet like embers, and she, thought by thought,

"Trampled its fires into the dust of death,
As Day upon the threshold of the east
Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath

"Of darkness reillumines even the least
Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
Making the night a dream; and ere she ceased

"To move, as one between desire and shame
Suspended, I said—if, as it doth seem,
Thou comest from the realm without a name,

"Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Shew whence I came, and where I am, and why-
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

"Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply.
And as a shut lily, stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

"I rose and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand

"Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador,
Whilst the fierce wolf from which they fled amazed

"Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore
Until the second bursts—so on my sight
Burst a new Vision never seen before—

"And the fair shape waned in the coming light
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

"Of sunrise ere it strike the mountain tops—
And as the presence of that fairest planet
Although unseen is felt by one who hopes

"That his day's path may end as he began it
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it.

"Or the soft notes in which his dear lament
The Brescian shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content. —

"So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that shape which on the stream
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

"More dimly than a day appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep,
A light from Heaven whose half extinguished beam

"Through the sick day in which we wake to weep
Glimmers, forever sought, forever lost, —
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

"Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;
But the new Vision, and its cold bright car,
With savage music, stunning music, crost

"The forest, and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star. —

"A moving arch of victory the vermilion
And green and azure plumes of Iris had
Built high over her wind-winged pavilion,

"And underneath aetherial glory clad
The wilderness, and far before her flew
The tempest of the splendour which forbade

"Shadow to fall from leaf or stone;-the crew
Seemed in that light like atomies that dance
Within a sunbeam. —Some upon the new

"Embroidery of flowers that did enhance
The grassy vesture of the desart, played,
Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance;

"Others stood gazing till within the shade
Of the great mountain its light left them dim. —
Others outspeeded it, and others made

"Circles around it like the clouds that swim
Round the high moon in a bright sea of air,
And more did follow, with exulting hymn,

"The chariot and the captives fettered there,
But all like bubbles on an eddying flood
Fell into the same track at last and were

"Borne onward—I among the multitude
Was swept; me sweetest flowers delayed not long,
Me not the shadow nor the solitude,

"Me not the falling stream's Lethean song,
Me, not the phantom of that early form
Which moved upon its motion-but among

"The thickest billows of the living storm
I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform-

"Before the chariot had begun to climb
the opposing steep of that mysterious dell.
Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme

"Of him who from the lowest depths of Hell
Through every Paradise and through all glory
Love led serene, and who returned to tell

"In words of hate and awe the wondrous story
How all things are transfigured, except Love,
For deaf as is a sea which wrath makes hoary

"The world can bear not the sweet notes that move
The sphere whose light is melody to lovers-
A wonder worthy of his rhyme-the grove

"Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
The earth was grey with phantoms, and the air
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, brining re evening
Strange night upon some Indian isle, -thus were

Phantoms diffused around, and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them some like eaglets on the wing

"Were lost in the white blaze, others like elves
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

"And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar paws and voluble like fire
Some made a cradle of ermined capes

"Of kingly mantles, some upon the tiar
of pontiffs sate like vultures, others played
Within the crown which girt with empire

"A baby's or an idoit's brow, and made
Their nests in it; the old anatomies
Sate hatching their bare brood under the shade

"Of demon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
To reassume the delegated power
Arrayed in which these worms did monarchize

"Who make this earth their channel-Others more
Humble, like falcons sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar,

"Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
Of lawyer, statesman, priest and theorist.

"And others like discoloured flakes of snow
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

"Which they extinguished; for like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained
In drops of sorrow-I became aware

"Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
The track in which we moved; after brief space
From every form the beauty slowly waned.

"From every firmest limb and fairest face
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

"Of life; the marble brow of youth was cleft
With care, and in the eyes where once hope shone
Desire like a lioness bereft

"Of its last cub, glared ere it died; each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

"In Autumn evening from a poplar tree-
Each, like himself and like each other were,
At first, but soon distorted, seemed to be

"Obscure clouds moulded by the casual air
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there.

"As the sun shapes the clouds—thus, on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all, and long before the day

"Was old, the joy which waked like Heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died,
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance

"And fell, as I have fallen by the way side,
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows past
And least of strength and beauty did abide." —

"Then, what is Life?" I said....the cripple cast
His eye upon the car which now had rolled
Onward, as if that look must be the last,

And answered.....: "Happy those for whom the fold
Of

II

HYPERION: A FRAGMENT

JOHN KEATS

HYPERION. BOOK I

Deep in the shady sadness of a vale
Far sunken from the healthy breath of morn,
Far from the fiery noon, and eve's one star,
Sat grey-hair'd **Saturn**, quiet as a stone,
Still as the silence about his lair;
Forest on forest hung about his head
Like cloud on cloud. No stir of air was there,
Not so much life as on a summer's day
Robs not one light seed from the feather'd grass,
But where the dead leaf fell, there did it rest.
A stream went voiceless by, still deadened more
By reason of his fallen divinity
Spreading a shade: the Naiad 'mid her reeds
Press'd her cold finger closer to her lips.

Along the margin-sand large foot-marks went,
No further than to where his feet has stray'd,
And slept there since. Upon the sodden ground
His old right hand lay nerveless, listless, dead,
Unsceptred; and his realmless eyes were closed;
While his bow'd head seem'd list'ning to the Earth,
His ancient mother, for some comfort yet.

It seem'd no force could wake him from his place;
But there came one, who with kindred hand
Touch'd his wide shoulders, after bending low
With reverence, though to one who knew it not.
She was a Goddess of **the infant world**;
By her in stature the tall **Amazon**
Had stood a pigmy's height: she would have ta'en
Achilles by the hair and bent his neck;
Or with a finger stay'd Ixion's wheel.
Her face was large as that of **Memphian sphinx**,
Pedestal'd haply in a palace court,
When sages look'd to Egypt for their lore.
But oh! how unlike marble was that face:
How beautiful, if sorrow had not made
Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self.
There was a listening fear in her regard,
As if calamity had but begun;
As if the vanward cloud of evil days
Had spent their malice, and the sullen rear
Was with its stored thunder labouring up.
One hand she press'd upon that aching spot
Where beats the human heart, as if just there,
Though and immortal, she felt cruel pain:
The other upon Saturn's bended neck
She laid, and to the level of his ear
Leaning with parted lips, some words she spake
in solemn tenour and deep organ tone:
Some mourning words, which in our feeble tongue
Would come in these like accents; O how frail
To that large utterance of the early Gods!
"Saturn, look up!—though wherefore, poor old King?

I have no comfort for thee, no not one:
I cannot say, 'O wherefore sleepest thou?'
For heaven is parted from thee, and the earth
Knows thee not, thus afflicted, for a God.
And ocean too, with all its solemn noise,
Has from thy sceptre pass'd, and all the air
Is emptied of thine hoary majesty.
Thy thunder, conscious of the new command
Rumbles reluctant o'er our fallen house,
And thy sharp lightning **in unpractised hands**
Scorches and burns our once serene domain.
O aching time! O moments big as years!
All as ye pass swell out the monstrous truth,
And press it so upon our weary griefs
That unbelief has not space to breathe.
Saturn, sleep on. _ O thoughtless, why did I
Thus violate thy slumbrous solitude?
Why should I ope thy melancholy eyes?
Saturn, sleep on! while at thy feet I weep."

As when, upon a tranced summer-night,
Those green-rob'd senators of mighty woods,
Tall oaks, branch-charmed by the earnest stars,
Dream, and so dream all night without a stir,
Save from one gradual solitary gust
Which comes upon the silence, and dies off,
As if ebbing air had but one wave;
So came these words and went; the while in tears
She touch'd her fair large forehead to the ground,
Just where her falling hair might outspread
A soft silken mat for Saturn's feet.
One moon, with alteration slow, had shed
Her silver seasons four upon the night,
And still these two were postures motionless,
Like natural sculpture in cathedral cavern;
The frozen God still couchant on the earth,
And the sad Goddess weeping at his feet:
Until at length old Saturn lifted up
His faded eyes, and saw his kingdom gone,
And all the gloom and sorrow of the place,
And that fair kneeling Goddess; and then spake,
As with a palsied tongue, and while his beard
Shook horrid with such aspen-malady:
"O tender spouse of gold Hyperion,
Thea, I feel thee ere I see thy face;
Look up, and let me see our doom in it;
Look up, and tell me if this feeble shape
Is Saturn's; tell me, if thou hear'st the voice
Of Saturn; tell me, if this wrinkling brow,
Naked and bare of its great diadem,
Peers like the front of Saturn. Who had power
To make me desolate? whence came the strength?
How was it nurtur'd to such bursting forth,
While fate seem'd strangled in my nervous grasp?
But it is so; and I am smother'd up,
And buried from all godlike exercise
Of influence benign on planets pale,
Of admonishments to the winds and seas,
Of peaceful sway above man's harvesting,

And all those acts which Deity supreme
Doth ease its heart of love in.__I am gone
Away from my own bosom. I have left
My strong identity, my real self,
Somewhere between the throne, and where I sit
Here on this spot of earth. Search, Thea, search!
Open thine eyes eterne, and sphere them round
Upon all space: space starr'd, and lorn of light;
Space region'd with life-air; and barren void;
Spaces of fire, and all the yawn of hell.__
Search, Thea, search! and tell me, if thou seest
A certain shape or shadow, making way
With wings or chariot fierce to repossess
A heaven he lost erewhile: it must__it must
Be of ripe progress__Saturn must be King.
Yes, there must be a golden victory;
There must be Gods thrown down, and trumpets blown
Of triumph calm, and hymns of festival
Upon the gold clouds metropolitan,
Voices of soft proclaim, and silver stir
Of strings in hollow shells; and there shall be
Beautiful things made new, for the surprise
Of the sky-children; I will give command:
Thea! Thea! Thea! where is Saturn?"

This passion lifted him upon his feet,
And made his hands to struggle in the air,
His Druid locks to shake and ooze with sweat,
His eyes to fever out, his voice to cease.
He stood, and heard not Thea's sobbing deep;
A little time, and then again he snatch'd
Utterance thus.__"But cannot I create?
Cannot I form? Cannot I fashion forth
Another world, another universe,
To overbear and crumble this to naught?
Where is another chaos? Where?"__That word
Found way unto Olympus, and made quake
The rebel three.__Thea was startled up,
And in her bearing was a sort of hope,
As thus she quick-voic'd spake, yet full of awe.

"This cheers our fallen house: come to our friends,
O Saturn! come away, and give them heart:
I know the covert, for thence came I hither."
Thus brief; then with beseeching eyes she went
With backward footing through the shade a space:
He follow'd, and she turn'd to lead the way
Through aged boughs, that yielded like the mist
Which eagles cleave upmounting from their nest.

Meanwhile in other realms big tears were shed,
More sorrow like to this, and such like woe,
Too huge for mortal tongue or pen of scribe:
The Titans fierce, self-hid, or prison-bound,
Groan'd for the old allegiance once more,
And listen'd in sharp pain for Saturn's voice.
But one of the whole mammoth-brood still kept
His sov'reignty, and rule, and majesty;__
Blazing Hyperion on his orbed fire

Still sat, still snuff'd the incense, teeming up
From man to the sun's God; yet unsecure:
For as among us mortals omens drear
Fright and perplex, so also shuddered he—
Not at dog's howl, or gloom-bird's hated screech,
Or at the familiar visiting of one
Upon the first toll of his passing-bell,
Or prophesyings of the midnight lamp;
But horrors, portion'd to a giant nerve,
Oft made Hyperion ache. His palace bright
Bastion'd with pyramids of glowing gold,
And touch'd with shade of bronzed obelisks,
Glar'd a blood-red through all its thousand courts,
Arches, and domes, and fiery galleries;
And all its curtains of Aurorian clouds
Flush'd angerly: while sometimes eagle's wings,
Unseen before by Gods or wondering men,
Darken'd the place; and neighing steeds were heard,
Not heard before by the Gods or wondering men.
Also, when he would taste the spicy wreaths
Of incense, breath'd aloft from sacred hills,
Instead of sweets, his ample palate took
Savour of poisonous brass and metal sick:
And so, when harbour'd in the sleepy west,
After the full completion of fair day,—
For rest divine upon exalted couch
And slumber in the arms of melody,
He pac'd away the pleasant hours of ease
With stride colossal, on from hall to hall;
While far within each aisle and deep recess,
His winged minions in close clusters stood,
Amaz'd and full of fear; like anxious men
Who on wide plains gather in panting troops,
When earthquakes jar their battlements and towers.
Even now, while Saturn, rous'd from icy trance,
Went step for step with Thea through the woods,
Hyperion, leaving twilight in the rear,
Came slope upon the threshold of the west;
Then, as was wont, his palace-door flew ope
In smoothest silence, save what solemn tubes,
Blown by the serious Zephyrs, gave of sweet
And wandering sounds, slow-breathed melodies;
And like a rose in vermeil tint and shape,
In fragrance soft, and coolness to the eye,
That inlet to severe magnificence
Stood full blown, for the God to enter in.

He enter'd, but he enter'd full of wrath;
His flaming robes stream'd out beyond his heels,
And gave a roar, as if of earthly fire,
That scar'd away the meek ethereal Hours
And made their dove-wings tremble. On he flared,
From stately nave to nave, from vault to vault,
Through bowers of fragrant and enwreathed light,
And diamond-paved lustrous long arcades,
Until he reach'd the great main cupola;
There standing fierce beneath, he stamped his foot,
And from the basements deep to the high towers
Jarr'd his own golden region; and before

The quavering thunder thereupon had ceas'd,
His voice leapt out, despite of godlike curb,
To this result. "O dreams of day and night!
O monstrous forms! O effigies of pain!
O spectres busy in a cold, cold gloom!
O lank-ear'd Phantoms of black-weeded pools!
Why do I know ye? why have I seen ye? why
Is my eternal essence thus distraught
To see and to behold these horrors new?
Saturn is fallen, am I too to fall?
Am I to leave this haven of my rest,
This cradle of my glory, this soft clime,
This calm luxuriance of blissful light,
These crystalline pavilions, and pure fanes,
Of all my lucent empire? It is left
Deserted, void, nor any haunt of mine.
The blaze, splendour, and the symmetry,
I cannot see—but darkness, death and darkness.
Even here, into my centre of repose,
The shady visions come to domineer,
Insult, and blind, and stifle up my pomp.—
Fall!—No, by **Tellus** and her briny robes!
Over the fiery frontier of my realms
I will advance a terrible right arm
Shall scare the infant thunderer, rebel Jove,
And bid old Saturn take his throne again."—
He spake, and ceas'd, the while a heavier threat
Held struggle with his throat but came not forth;
For as in theatres of crowded men
Hubbub increases more they call out "Hush!"
So at Hyperion's words the Phantoms pale
Bestirr'd themselves, thrice horrible and cold;
And from the mirror'd level where he stood
A mist rose, as from a scummy marsh.
At this, through all his bulk in agony
Crept gradual, from the feet unto the crown,
Like a lithe serpent vast and muscular
Making slow way, with head and neck convuls'd
From over-strained might. Releas'd, he fled
To the eastern gates, and full six dewy hours
Before the dawn in season due should blush,
He breath'd fierce breath against the sleepy portals,
Clear'd them of heavy vapours, burst them wide
Suddenly on the ocean's chilly streams.
The planet orb of fire, whereon he rode
Each day from east to west the heavens through,
Spun round in sable curtaining of clouds;
Not therefore veiled quite, blindfold, and hid,
But ever and anon the glancing spheres,
Circles, and arcs, and broad-belting colure,
Glow'd through, and wrought upon the muffling dark
Sweet-shaped lightnings from the **nadir** deep
Up to the **zenith**,—hieroglyphics old
Which sages and keen-eyed astrologers
Then living on the earth, with labouring thought
Won from the gaze of many centuries:
Now lost, save what we find **on remnants huge**
Of stone, or marble swart; their import gone,
Their wisdom long since fled—Two wings this orb

Possess'd for glory, two fair argent wings,
Ever exalted at the God's approach:
And now, from forth the gloom of their plumes immense
Rose, one by one, till all outspreaded were;
While still the dazzling globe maintain'd eclipse,
Awaiting for Hyperion's command.
Fain would he have commanded, fain took throne
And bid the day begin if but for change.
He might not:—No, though a primeval God:
The sacred seasons might not be disturb'd.
Therefore the operations of the dawn
Stay'd in their birth, even as here 'tis told.
Those silver wings expanded sisterly,
Eager to sail their orb; The porches wide
Open'd upon the dusk demesnes of night;
And the bright Titan, phrenzied with new woes,
Unus'd to bend, by hard compulsion bent
His spirit to the sorrow of the time;
And all along a dismal rack of clouds,
Upon the boundaries of day and night,
He stretch'd himself in grief and radiance faint.
There as he lay, the Heaven with its stars
Look'd down on him with pity, and the voice
Of Cœlus, from the universal space,
Thus whisper'd low and solemn in his ear.
"O brightest of my children dear, **earth-born**
And sky-engendered, Son of Mysteries
All unrevealed even to the powers
Which met at thy creating; at whose joys
And palpitations sweet, and pleasures soft,
I, Cœlus, wonder, how they came and whence;
And at the fruits thereof what shapes they be,
Distinct, and visible; symbols divine,
Manifestations of that beauteous life
Diffus'd unseen throughout eternal space:
Of these new-form'd art thou, oh brightest child!
Of these, thy brethren and the Goddesses!
There is sad feud among ye, and rebellion
Of son against his sire. I saw him fall,
I saw my first-born tumbled from his throne!
To me his arms were spread, to me his voice
Found way from forth the thunders round his head!
Pale wox I, and in vapours hid my face.
Art thou, too, near such doom? vague fear there is:
For I have seen my sons most unlike Gods.
Divine ye were created, and divine
In sad demeanour, solemn, undisturb'd,
Unruffl'd, like high Gods, ye liv'd and rul'd:
Now I behold in you fear, hope, and wrath;
Actions of rage and passion; even as
I see them on the mortal world beneath,
In men who die.—This is grief, O Son!
Sad sign of ruin, sudden dismay, and fall!
Yet do thou strive; as thou art capable,
As thou canst move about, an evident God;
And canst oppose to each malignant hour
Ethereal presence:—I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides,
No more than winds and tides can I avail:—

But thou canst.—Be thou therefore in the van
Of circumstance; yea, seize the arrow's barb
Before the tense string murmur.—To the earth!
For there thou wilt find Saturn, and his woes.
Meantime I will keep watch on thy bright sun,
And of thy seasons be a careful nurse."—
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Hyperion arose, and on the stars
Lifted his curved lids and kept them wide
Until it ceas'd; and still he kept them wide:
And still they were the same bright, patient stars.
Then with a slow incline of his broad breast,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stoop'd over the airy shore,
And plung'd all noiseless into the deep night.

HYPERION. BOOK II

Just at the self-same beat of Time's wide wings
Hyperion slid into the rustled air,
And Saturn gain'd with Thea that sad place
Where Cybele and the bruised Titans mourn'd.
It was a den where no insulting light
Could glimmer on their tears; where their own groans
They felt, but heard not, for the solid roar
Of thunderous water falls and torrents hoarse,
Pouring a constant bulk, uncertain where.
Crag jutting forth to crag, and rocks that seem'd
Ever as if rising from a sleep,
Forehead to forehead held their monstrous horns:
And thus in thousand hugest phantasies
Made a fit roofing for this nest of woe.
Instead of thrones, hard flint they sat upon,
Couches of rugged stone, and slaty ridge
Stubborn'd with iron. All were not assembled:
Some chain'd in torture, and some wandering.
Cœus, and Gyges, and Briareüs,
Typhon, and Dolon, and Porphyrion,
With many more, the brawniest in assault,
Were pent in regions of laborious breath;
Dungeon'd in opaque element, to keep
Their clenched teeth still clench'd, and all their limbs
Lock'd up like veins of metal, cramp't and screw'd;
Without a motion, save of their big hearts
Heaving in pain, and horribly convuls'd
With sanguine feverous boiling gurge of pulse.
Mnemosyne was straying in the world:
Far from her moon had Phœbe wandered;
And many else were free to roam abroad,
But for the main, here found they covert drear.
Scarce images of life, one here, one there,
Lay vast and edgeways; like a dismal cirque
Of Druid stones, upon a forlorn moor,
When the chill rain begins at the shut of eve,
In dull November, and their chancel vault,
The Heaven itself, is blinded throughout night.
Each one kept shroud, nor his neighbour gave
Or word, or look, or action of despair.
Creus was one; his ponderous iron mace

Lay by him, and a shatter'd rib of rock
Told of his rage, ere he thus sank and pined.
Iäpetus another: in his grasp,
A serpent's plashy neck; its barbed tongue
Squeez'd from the gorge, and all his uncurl'd length
Dead; and because the creature could not spit
Its poison in the eyes of conquering Jove.
Next Cottus: prone he lay, chin uppermost,
As though in pain, for still upon that flint
He ground severe his skull, with open mouth
And eyes at horrid working. Nearest him
Asia, born of most **enormous Caf,**
Who cost her mother Tellus keener pangs,
Though feminine, than any of her sons:
More thought than woe was on her dusky face,
For she was prophesying of her glory;
And in her wide imagination stood
Palm-shaded temples, and high rival fanes,
By Oxus or in Ganges' sacred isles.
Even as Hope upon her anchor leans,
So leant she, not so fair, upon a tusk,
Shed from the broadest of her elephants.
Above her, on a crag's uneasy shelve,
Upon his elbow rais'd, all prostrate else,
Shadowed Enceladus; once tame and mild
As grazing ox unworried in the meads;
Now tiger-passion'd, lion-thoughted, wroth,
He meditated, plotted, and even now
Was hurling mountains in that second war,
Not long delayed, that scar'd the younger Gods
To hide themselves in forms of beast and bird.
Not far hence Atlas; and beside him prone
Phorcus, the sire of the Gorgons. Neighbour'd close
Oceanus, and **Tethys**, in whose lap
Sobb'd **Clymene** among her tangled hair.
In midst of all lay **Themis**, at the feet
Of Ops the queen all clouded from the sight;
No shape distinguishable, more than when
Thick night confounds the pine-tops with the clouds:
And many else whose names may not be told.
For when the Muse's wings are air-ward spread,
Who shall delay her flight? and she must chaunt
Of Saturn, and his guide, who now had climb'd
With damp and slippery footing from a depth
More horrid still. Above a sombre cliff
Their heads appear'd, and up their stature grew
Till on the level height their steps found ease:
Then Thea spread abroad her trembling arms
Upon the precincts of this nest of pain,
And sidelong fix'd her eye on Saturn's face:
There saw she direst strife; the supreme God
At war with the frailty of grief,
Of rage, of fear, anxiety, revenge,
Remorse, spleen, hope, but most of all despair.
Against these plagues he strove in vain; for Fate
Had pour'd a mortal oil upon his head,
A **disanointing** poison: so that Thea,
Affrighted, kept her still, and let him pass
First onwards in, among the fallen tribe.

As with us mortal men, the laden heart
Is persecuted more, and fever'd more,
When it is nighing to the mournful house
Where other hearts are sick of the same bruise;
So Saturn, as he walk'd into the midst,
Felt faint, and would have sunk among the rest,
But that he met Enceladus's eye,
Whose mightiness, and awe of him, at once
Came like an inspiration; and he shouted,
"Titans, behold your God!" at which some groan'd;
Some started to their feet; some also shouted;
Some wept, some wail'd, all bow'd with reverence;
And Ops, uplifting her black folded veil,
Show'd her pale cheeks, and all her forehead wan,
Her eye-brows thin and jet, her hollow eyes.
There is a roaring in the bleak-grown pines
When Winter lifts his voice; there is a noise
Among the immortals when a God gives sign,
With hushing finger, how he means to load
His tongue with the full weight of **utterless thought**,
With thunder, and with music, and with pomp:
Such noise is like the roar of bleak-grown pines:
Which, when it ceases in this mountain'd world,
No other sound succeeds; but ceasing here,
Among these fallen, Saturn's voice therefrom
Grew up like organ, that begins anew
Its strain, when other harmonies, stopt short,
Leave the dinn'd air vibrating silverly.
Thus grew it up__ "Not in my own sad breast,
Which is its own great judge and searcher out,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
Not in the legends of the first of days,
Studied from that old spirit-leaved book
Which starry Uranus with finger bright
Saved from the shores of darkness, when the waves
Low-ebbed still hid it up in shallow gloom;__
And the book ye know I ever kept
For my firm-based footstool:__Ah, infirm!
Not there, nor in sign, symbol, or portent
Of element, earth, water, air, and fire,__
At war, at peace, or inter-quarreling
One against one, or two, or three, or all
Each several one against the other three,
As fire with air loud warring when rain-floods
Drown both, and press them both against the earth's face,
Where, finding sulphur, a quadruple wrath
Unhinges the poor world;__not in that strife,
Wherefrom I take strange lore, and read it deep,
Can I find reason why ye should be thus:
No, no-where can unriddle, though I search,
And pour on Nature's universal scroll
Even to swooning, why ye, Divinities,
The first-born of all shap'd and palpable Gods
Should cower beneath what, in comparison,
Is **untremendous might**. Yet ye are here,
O'erwhelm'd, and spurn'd, and batter'd, ye are here!
O Titans, shall I say, 'Arise!'__Ye groan. **What can I then?**
O Heaven wide! O **unseen parent** dear!

What can I? Tell me, all ye brethren Gods,
How we can war, how engine our great wrath!
O speak your counsel now, for Saturn's ear
Is all a-hunger'd. Thou, Oceanus,
Ponderest high and deep; and in thy face
I see, astonied, that severe content
Which comes of thought and musing: give us help!'

So ended Saturn; and the God of the Sea,
Sophist and sage, from no Athenian grove,
But cogitation in his watery shades,
Arose, with locks not oozy, and began,
In murmurs, which his first-endeavouring tongue
Caught infant-like from the far-foamed sands.
'O ye, whom wrath consumes! who, passion-stung,
Writhe at defeat, and nurse your agonies!
Shut up your senses, stifle up your ears,
My voice is not bellows unto ire.
Yet listen, ye who will, whilst I bring proof
How ye, perforce, must be content to stoop:
And in the proof much comfort will I give,
If ye will take that comfort in its truth.
We fall by course of Nature's law, not force
Of thunder, or of Jove. Great Saturn, thou
Hast sifted well the atom-universe;
But for this reason, that thou art the King,
And only blind from sheer supremacy,
One avenue was shaded from thine eyes,
Through which I wandered to eternal truth.
And first, as thou wast not the first of powers,
So art thou not the last; it cannot be:
Thou art not the beginning nor the end.
From chaos and parental darkness came
Light, the first fruits of that intestine broil,
That sullen ferment, which for wondrous ends
Was ripening in itself. The ripe hour came,
And with it light, and light, engendering
Upon its own producer, forthwith touch'd
The whole enormous matter into life.
Upon th ' very hour, our parentage,
The Heavens and the Earth, were manifest:
Then thou first-born, and we the giant race,
Found ourselves ruling new and beauteous realms.
Now comes the pain of truth, to whom 'tis pain;
O folly! for to bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm,
That is the top of sovereignty. Mark well!
As Heaven and Earth are fair, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And th usand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness: nor are we
Thereby more conquer'd, than by us the rule
Of shapeless Chaos. Say, doth the dull soil

Quarrel with the proud forests it hath fed,
And feedeth still, more comely than itself?
Can it deny the chiefdom of green groves?
Or shall the tree be envious of the dove
Because it cooeth, and hath snowy wings
To wander wherewithal and find its joys?
We are such forest-trees, and our fair boughs
Have bred forth, not pale solitary doves,
But eagles golden-feather'd, who do tower
Above us in their beauty, and must reign
In right thereof; for 'tis the eternal law
That first in beauty must be first in might:
Yea, by that law, another race may drive
Our conquerors to mourn as we do now.
Have ye beheld the young God of the Seas,
My dispossessor? Have ye seen his face?
Have ye beheld his chariot, foam'd along
By noble winged creatures he hath made?
I saw him on the calmed waters scud,
With such a glow of beauty in his eyes,
That it enforc'd me to bid sad farewell
To all my empire: farewell sad I took,
And hither came, to see how dolorous fate
Had wrought upon ye; and how I might best
Give consolation in this woe extreme.
Receive the truth, and let it be your balm.'

Whether through poz'd conviction, or disdain,
They guarded silence, when Oceanus
Left murmuring, what deepest thought can tell?
But so it was, none answer'd for a space,
Save one whom none regarded, Clymene;
And yet she answer'd not, only complain'd,
With hectic lips, and eyes up-looking mild,
Thus wording timidly among the fierce:
"O father, I am here the simplest voice,
And all my knowledge is that joy is gone,
And this thing woe crept in among our hearts,
There to remain for ever, as I fear:
I would not bode of evil, if I thought
So weak a creature could turn off the help
Which by just right should come of mighty Gods;
Yet let me tell my sorrow, let me tell
Of what I heard, and how it made me weep,
And know that we had parted from all hope.
I stood upon a shore, a pleasant shore,
Where a sweet clime was breathed from a land
Of fragrance, quietness, and trees, and flowers.
Full of calm joy it was, as I of grief;
Too full of joy and soft delicious warmth;
So that I felt a movement in my heart
To chide, and to reproach that solitude
With songs of misery, music of our woes;
And sat me down, and took a mouthed shell
And murmur'd into it, and made melody—
O melody no more! for while I sang,
And with poor skill let pass into the breeze
The dull shell's echo, from a bowery strand
Just opposite, an island of the sea,

There came enchantment with the shifting wind,
That did both drown and keep alive my ears.
I threw my shell away upon the sand,
And a wave fill'd it, as my sense was fill'd
With that new blissful golden melody.
A living death was in each gush of sounds,
Each family of rapturous hurried notes,
That fell, one after one, yet all at once,
Like pearl beads falling sudden from their string:
And then another, then another strain,
Each like a dove leaving its olive perch,
With music wing'd instead of silent plumes,
To hover round my head, and make me sick
Of joy and grief at once. Grief overcame,
And I was stopping up my frantic ears,
When, past all hindrance of my trembling hands,
A voice came sweeter, sweeter than all tune,
And still it cried, 'Apollo! young Apollo!
The morning-bright Apollo! young Apollo!'
I fled, it follow'd me, and cried 'Apollo!'
O Father, and O Brethren, had ye felt
Those pains of mine; O Saturn, hadst thou felt,
Ye would not call this too indulged tongue
Presumptuous, in thus venturing to be heard."

So far her voice flow'd on, like a timorous brook
That, lingering along a pebbled coast,
Doth fear to meet the sea: but sea it met,
And shudder'd; for the overwhelming voice
Of huge Enceladus swallow'd it in wrath:
The ponderous syllables, like sullen waves
In the half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks,
Came booming thus, while still upon his arm
He lean'd; not rising, from supreme contempt.
"Or shall we listen to the over-wise,
Or to the over-foolish, Giant-Gods?
Not thunderbolt on thunderbolt, till all
That rebel Jove's whole armoury were spent,
Not world upon world these shoulders piled,
Could agonize me more than baby-words
In midst of this dethronement horrible.
Speak! roar! shout! yell! ye sleepy Titans all.
Do ye forget the blows? the buffets vile?
Are ye not smitten by a youngling arm?
Dost thou forget, sham Monarch of the Waves,
Thy scalding in the seas? What, have I rous'd
Your spleens with so simple words as these?
O joy! for now I see ye are not lost:
O joy! for now I see a thousand eyes
Wide-glaring for revenge!"—As this he said,
He lifted up his stature vast, and stood,
Still without intermission speaking thus:
"Now ye are flames, I'll tell you how to burn,
And purge the ether of our enemies:
How to feed fierce the crooked stings of fire,
And singe away the swollen clouds of Jove,
Stifling that puny essence in its tent.
O let him feel the evil he hath done;
For though I scorn Oceanus's lore,

Much pain have I for more than loss of realms:
The days of peace and slumberous calm are fled,
Those days, all innocent of scathing war,
When all the fair Existences of heaven
Came open-eyed to guess what we would speak:—
That was before our brows were taught to frown,
Before our lips knew else but solemn sounds;
That was before we knew the winged thing,
Victory, might be lost, or might be won.
And be yet mindful that Hyperion,
Our brightest brother, still is undisgraced—
Hyperion, lo! his radiance is here!"

All eyes were on Enceladus' face,
And they beheld, while still Hyperion's name
Flew from his lips up to the vaulted rocks,
A pallid gleam across his features stern:
Not savage, for he saw full many a God
Wroth as himself. He look'd upon them all,
And in each face he saw a gleam of light,
But splendider in Saturn's, whose hoar locks
Shone like the bubbling foam about a keel
When the prow sweeps into a midnight cove.
In pale and silver silence they remain'd,
Till suddenly a splendour, like the morn,
Pervaded all the beetling gloomy steeps,
All the sad spaces of oblivion,
And every gulf, and every chasm old,
And every height, and every sullen depth,
Voiceless, or hoarse with loud tormented streams:
And all the everlasting cataracts,
And all the headlong torrents far and near,
Mantled before in darkness and huge shade,
Now saw the light and made it terrible.
It was Hyperion:—a granite peak
His bright feet touch'd, and there he stay'd to view
The misery his brilliance had betray'd
To the most hateful seeing of itself.
Golden his hair of short Numidian curl,
Regal his shape majestic, a vast shade
In midst of his own brightness, like the bulk
Of **Memnon's image** at the set of the sun
To one who travels from the dusking East:
Sighs, too, as that Memnon's harp
He utter'd, while his hands contemplative
He press'd together, and in silence stood.
Despondence seiz'd again the fallen Gods
At sight of the dejected King of Day,
And many hid their faces from the light
But fierce Enceladus sent forth his eyes
Among the brotherhood: and, at their glare,
Uprose Iäpetus, and Creüs too,
And Phorcus, sea-born, and together strode
To where he towered on his eminence.
There were four shouted forth old Saturn's name;
Hyperion from the peak loud answered, "Saturn!"
Saturn sat near the Mother of the Gods,
In whose face was no joy, though all the Gods
Gave from their hollow throats the name of "Saturn!"

Thus in alternate uproar and sad peace
Amazed were those Titans utterly
O leave them, Muse! O leave them to their woes;
For thou art weak to sing such tumults dire.
A solitary sorrow best befits
Thy lips, and antheming a lonely grief
Leave them, O Muse! for thou anon wilt find
Many a fallen old Divinity
Wandering in vain about bewildered shores
Meantime touch piously the **Delphic harp**,
And not a wind of heaven but will breathe
In aid soft warble from the Dorian flute.
For lo! 'tis for the Father of all verse
Flush every thing that hath a vermeil hue,
Let the rose glow intense and warm the air,
And let the clouds of even and morn
Float in voluptuous fleeces o'er the hills:
Let the wine within the goblet boil,
Cold as a bubbling well; let faint-lipp'd shells,
On sands, or in great deeps, vermilion turn
Through all their labyrinths; and let the maid
Blush keenly, as with some warm kiss surpris'd.
Chief isle of the embowered Cyclades,
Rejoice, O Delos, with thine olives green,
And poplars, and lawn-shading palms, and beech,
In which the Zephyr breathes the loudest song,
And hazels thick, dark-stemm'd beneath the shade:
Apollo is once more the golden theme!
Where was he, when **the Giant of the Sun**
Stood bright, amid the sorrow of his peers?
Together had he left **his mother** fair
And **twin-sister** sleeping in their bower,
And in the morning twilight wandered forth
Beside the osiers of a rivulet,
Full ankle-deep in lilies of the vale.
The nightingale had ceas'd, and a few stars
Were lingering in the heavens, while the thrush
Began calm-throated. throughout all the isle
There was no covert, no retired cave
Unhaunted by the murmurous noise of waves.
Though scarcely heard in many a green recess
He listen'd, and he wept, and his bright tears
Went trickling down the golden bow he held
Thus with half-shut suffused eyes he stood
While from beneath some cumbrous boughs hard by
With solemn step and awful Goddess came.
And there was purport in her looks for him,
Which he with eager guess began to read
Perplex'd, the while melodiously he said
"How cam'st thou over the unfooted sea?
Or hath that antique mien and robed form
Mov'd in these vales invisible till now?
Sure I have heard those vestments sweep the ground
The fallen leaves, when I have sat alone
In cool mid-forest. Surely I have traced
The rustle of those ample skirts about

These grassy solitudes, and seen the flowers
Lift up their heads, as still the whisper pass'd.
Goddess! I have beheld those eyes before,
And their eternal calm, and all that face,
Or I have dream'd.'__"Yes," said the supreme shape,
"Thou hast dream'd of me, and awaking up
Didst find a lyre all golden by thy side,
Whose strings touch'd by thy fingers, all the vast
Unwearied ear of the whole universe
Listen'd in pain and pleasure at the birth
Of such new tuneful wonder. Is't not strange
That thou shouldst weep, so gifted? Tell me, youth,
What sorrow thou canst feel: for I am sad
When thou dost shed a tear: explain thy griefs
To one who in this lonely isle hath been
The watcher of thy sleep and hours of life,
From the young day when first thy infant hand
Pluck'd witless the weak flowers, till thine arm
Could bend that bow heroic to all times.
Show thy heart's secret to an ancient Power
Who hath forsaken old and sacred thrones
For prophecies of thee, and for the sake
Of loveliness new born."__Apollo then,
With sudden scrutiny and gloomless eyes,
Thus answer'd, while his white melodious throat
Throbb'd with the syllables.__"Mnemosyne!"
Thy name is on my tongue, I now not how:
Why should I tell thee what thou so well seest?
Why should I strive to show what from thy lips
Would come no mystery? For me, dark, dark,
And painful vile oblivion seals my eyes:
I strive to search wherefore I am so sad,
Until a melancholy numbs my limbs;
And then upon the grass I sit, and moan,
Like one who once had wings.__O why should I
Feel curs'd and thwarted when the liegeless air
Yields to my step aspirant? why should I
Spurn the green turf as hateful to my feet?
Goddess benign, point forth some unknown thing:
Are there not other regions than this isle?
What are the stars? There is the sun, the sun!
And the most patient brilliance of the moon!
And stars by thousands! Point me out the way
To any one particular beauteous star,
And I will flit into it with my lyre,
And make its silvery splendour pant with bliss.
I have heard the cloudy thunder: Where is power?
Whose hand, whose essence, what divinity
Makes this alarum in the elements,
While I here idle sit on the shores
In fearless yet in aching ignorance?
O tell me, lonely Goddess, by thy harp,
That waileth every morn and eventide,
Tell me why thus I rave, about these groves!
Mute thou remainest__mute! yet I can read
A wondrous lesson in thy silent face:
Knowledge enormous makes a God of me
Names, deeds, grey legends, dire events, rebellions,
Majesties, sovran voices, agonies,

Creations and destroyings, all at once
Pour into the wide hollows of my brain,
And deify me, as if some blithe wine
Or bright elixir peerless I had drunk,
And so become immortal."—Thus the God.
While his enkindled eyes, with level glance
Beneath his white soft temples, stedfast kept
Trembling with light upon Mnemosyne.
Soon wild commotions shook him, and made flush
All the immortal fairness of his limbs;
Most like the struggle at the gate of death:
Or like still to one who should take leave
Of pale immortal death, and with a pang
As hot as death's is chill, with fierce convulse
Die into life: so young Apollo anguish'd:
His very hair, his golden tresses famed
Kept undulation round his eager neck.
During the pain Mnemosyne upheld
Her arms as one who prophesied.—At length
Apollo shriek'd;—and lo! from all his limbs
Celestial * * * * * * *

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SUPPLEMENTARY READING

I
ROMANTICISM AND CLASSICISM
T. E. HULME

I want to maintain that after a hundred years of romanticism, we are in for a classical revival, and that the particular weapon of this new classical spirit, when it works in verse, will be fancy. And in this I imply the superiority of fancy - not superior generally or absolutely, for that would be obvious nonsense, but superior in the sense that we use the word good in empirical ethics - good for something, superior for something. I shall have to prove then two thing, first that a classical revival is coming, and secondly, for its particular purposes, fancy will be superior to imagination.

So banal have the terms Imagination and Fancy become that we imagine they must have always been in the language. Their history as two differing terms in the vocabulary of criticism is comparatively short. Originally, of course, they both mean the same thing; they first began to be differentiated by the German writers on aesthetics in the eighteenth century.[1]

> I know that in using the words 'classic' and 'romantic' I am doing a dangerous thing. They represent five or six different kinds of antitheses, and while I may be using them in one sense you may be interpreting them in another. In this present connection I am using them in a perfectly precise and limited sense. I ought really to have coined a couple of new words, but I prefer to use the ones I have used, as I then conform to the practice of the group of polemical writers who make most use of them at the present day, and have almost succeeded in making them political catchwords.

I mean Maurras, Lasserre and all the group connected with *L'Action Française*.[2]

At the present time this is the particular group with which the distinction is most vital. Because it has become a party symbol. If you asked a man of a certain set whether he preferred the classics or the romantics, you could deduce from that what his politics were.

The best way of gliding into a proper definition of my terms would be to start with a set of people who are prepared to fight about it - for in them you will have no vagueness. (Other people take the infamous attitude of the person with catholic tastes who says he likes both.)

About a year ago, a man whose name I think was Fauchois gave a lecture at the Odeon on Racine, in the course of which he made some disparaging remarks about his dullness, lack of invention and the rest of it. This caused an immediate riot: fights took place all over the house, several people were arrested and imprisoned, and the rest of the series of lectures took place with hundreds of gendarmes and detectives scattered all over the place. These people interrupted because the classical ideal is a living thing to them and Racine is the great classic. That is what I call a real vital interest in literature, They regard romanticism as an awful disease from which France had just recovered.

The thing is complicated in their case by the fact that it was romanticism that made the revolution. They hate the revolution, so they hate romanticism

I make no apology for dragging in politics here; romanticism both in England and France is associated with certain political views, and it is in taking a concrete example of the working out of a principle in action that you can get its best definition

What was the positive principle behind all the other principles of 1789 ? I am talking here of the revolution in as far as it was an idea, I leave out material causes - they

only produce the forces. The barriers which could easily have resisted or guided these forces had been previously rotted away by ideas. This always seems to be the case in successful changes: the privileged class is beaten only when it has lost faith in itself, when it has itself been penetrated with the ideas which are working against it.

It was not the rights of man - that was a good solid practical war-cry. The thing which created enthusiasm, which made the revolution practically a new religion, was something more positive than that. People of all classes, people who stood to lose by it, were in a positive ferment about the idea of liberty. There must have been some idea which enabled them to think that something positive could come out of so essentially negative a thing. There was, and here I get my definition of romanticism. They had been taught by Rousseau that man was by nature good, that it was only bad laws and customs that had suppressed him. Remove all these and the infinite possibilities of man would have a chance. This is what made them think that something positive could come out of disorder, this is what created the religious enthusiasm. Here is the root of all romanticism : that man, the individual, is an infinite reservoir of possibilities; and if you can so rearrange society by the destruction of oppressive order then these possibilities will have a chance and you will get Progress.

One can define the classical quite clearly as the exact opposite to this. Man is an extraordinarily fixed and limited animal whose nature is absolutely constant. It is only by tradition and organization that anything decent can be got out of him.

This view was a little shaken at the time of Darwin. You remember his particular hypothesis, that new species came into existence by the cumulative effect of small variations - this seems to admit the possibility of future progress. But at the present day the contrary hypothesis makes headway in the shape of De Vries's mutation theory, that each new species comes into existence, not gradually by the accumulation of small steps, but suddenly in a jump, a kind of sport, and that once in existence it remains absolutely fixed. This enables me to keep the classical view with an appearance of scientific backing.

Put shortly, these are the two views, then. One, that man is intrinsically good, spoilt by circumstance; and the other that he is intrinsically limited, but disciplined by order and tradition to something fairly decent. To the one party man's nature is like a well, to the other like a bucket. The view which regards man as a well, a reservoir full of possibilities, I call the romantic; the one which regards him as a very finite and fixed creature, I call the classical.

One may note here that the Church has always taken the classical view since the defeat of the Pelagian heresy[3] and the adoption of the sane classical dogma of original sin.

It would be a mistake to identify the classical view with that of materialism. On the contrary it is absolutely identical with the normal religious attitude. I should put it is this way : That part of the fixed nature of man is the belief in the Deity. This should be as fixed and true for every man as belief in the existence of matter and in the objective world. It is parallel to appetite, the instinct of sex, and all the other fixed qualities. Now at certain times, by the use of either force or rhetoric, these instincts have been suppressed - in Florence under Savonarola, in Geneva under Calvin, and here under the Roundheads. The inevitable result of such a process is that the repressed instinct bursts out in some abnormal direction. So with religion. By the perverted rhetoric of Rationalism, your natural instincts are suppressed and you are converted into an agnostic. Just as in the case of the other instincts, Nature has her revenge. The instincts that find their right and proper outlet in religion must come out in some other way. You don't believe in a God, so you begin to believe that man is a god. You don't believe in Heaven, so you begin to believe in a Heaven on earth. In other words, you get romanticism. The concepts that are right and proper at the one end

sphere are spread over, and so mess up, falsify and blur the clear outlines of human experience. It is like pouring a pot of treacle over the dinner table. Romanticism then, and this is the best definition I can give of it, is spilt religion.

I must now shirk the difficulty of saying exactly what I mean by romantic and classical in verse. I can only say that it means the result of these two attitudes towards the cosmos, towards man, in so far as it gets reflected in verse. The romantic, because he thinks man infinite, must always be talking about the infinite; and as there is always the bitter contrast between what you think you ought to be able to do and what man actually can, it always tends, in its later stages at any rate, to be gloomy. I really can't go any further than to say it is the reflection of these two temperaments, and point out examples of the different spirits. On the one hand I would take such diverse people as Horace, most of the Elizabethans and the writers of the Augustan age, and on the other side Lamartine, Hugo, parts of Keats, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Swinburne.

I know quite well that when people think of classical and romantic in verse, the contrast at once comes into their mind between, say, Racine and Shakespeare. I don't mean this ; the dividing line that I intend is here misplaced a little from the true middle. That Racine is on the extreme classical side I agree, but if you call Shakespeare romantic, you are using a different definition to the one I give. You are thinking of the difference between classic and romantic as being merely one between restraint and exuberance. I should say with Nietzsche that there are two kinds of classicism, the static and the dynamic. Shakespeare is the classic of motion.

What I mean by classical in verse, then, is this. That even in the most imaginative flights there is always a holding back, a reservation. The classical poet never forgets this finiteness, this limit of man. He remembers always that he is mixed up with earth. He may jump, but he always returns back; he never flies away into the circumambient gas.

You might say if you wished that the whole of the romantic attitude seems to crystallize in verse round metaphors of flight. Hugo is always flying, flying over abysses, flying up into the eternal gases. The word infinite in every other line.

In the classical attitude you never seem to swing right along to the infinite nothing. If you say an extravagant thing which does exceed the limits inside which you know man to be fastened, yet there is always conveyed in some way at the end an impression of yourself standing outside it, and not quite believing it, or consciously putting it forward as a flourish. You never go blindly into an atmosphere more than the truth, an atmosphere too rarefied for man to breathe for long. You are always faithful to the conception of a limit. It is a question of pitch; in romantic verse you move at a certain pitch of rhetoric which you know, man being what he is, to be a little high-falutin. The kind of thing you get in Hugo of Swinburne. In the coming classical reaction that will feel just wrong. For an example of the opposite thing, a verse written in the proper classical spirit, I can take the song from Cymbeline beginning with 'Fear no more the heat of the sun'. I am just using this as a parable. I don't quite mean what I say here. Take the last two lines:

> Golden lads and lasses must,
> Like chimney sweepers come to dust.

Now, no romantic would have ever written that. Indeed, so ingrained is romanticism, so objectionable is this to it, that people have asserted that these were not part of the original song.

Apart from the pun, the thing that I think quite classical is the word lad. Your modern romantic could never write that. He would have to write golden youth, and take up the thing at least a couple of notes in pitch.

I want now to give the reasons which make me think that we are nearing the end of the romantic movement.

he first lies in the nature of any convention of tradition in art. A particular convention or attitude in art has a strict analogy to the phenomena of organic life. It grows old and decays. It has a definite period of life and must die. All the possible tunes get played on it and then it is exhausted; moreover its best period is its youngest. Take the case of the extraordinary efflorescence of verse in the Elizabethan period. All kinds of reasons have been given for - this the discovery of the new world and all the rest of it. There is a much simpler one. A new medium had been given them to play with - namely, blank verse. It was new and so it was easy to play new tunes on it.

The same law holds in other arts. All the masters of painting are born into the world at a time when the particular tradition from which they start is imperfect. The Florentine tradition was just short of full ripeness when Raphael came to Florence, the Bellinesque was still young when Titian was born in Venice. Landscape was still a toy or an appanage of figure-painting when Turner and Const le arose to reveal its independent power. When Turner and Constable had done with landscape they left little or nothing for their successors to do on the same lines. Each field of artistic activity is exhausted by the first great artist who gathers a full harvest from it.

This period of exhaustion seems to me to have been reached in romanticism. We shall not get any new efflorescence of verse until we get a new technique, a new convention, to turn ourselves loose in.

Objection might be taken to this,. It might be said that a century as an organic unity doesn't exist, that I am being deluded by a wrong metaphor, that I am, treating a collection of literary people as if they were an organism or state department. Whatever we may be in other things, an objector might urge, in literature in as far as we are anything at all - in as far as we are worth considering - we are individuals, we are persons, and as distinct persons we cannot be subordinated to any general treatment. At any period at any time, an individual poet may be a classic or a romantic just as he feels like it. You at any particular moment may think that you can stand outside a movement. You may think that as an individual you observe both the classic and the romantic spirit and decide from a purely detached point of view that one is superior to the other.

The answer to this is that no one, in a matter of judgment of beauty, can take a detached standpoint in this way. Just as physically you are not born that abstract entity, man, but the child of particular parents, so you are in matters of literary judgment. Your opinion is almost entirely of the literary history that came just before you, and you are governed by that whatever you may think. Take Spinoza's example of a stone falling to the ground. If it had a conscious mind it would, he said, think it was going to the ground because it wanted to. So you with your pretended free judgment about what is and what is not beautiful. The amount of freedom in man is much exaggerated. That we are free on certain rare occasions, both my religion and the views I get from metaphysics convince me. But many acts which we habitually label free are in reality automatic. It is quite possible for a man to write a book almost automatically. I have read several such products. Some observations were recorded more than twenty years ago by Robertson on reflex speech, and he found that in certain cases of dementia, where the people were quite unconscious so far as the exercise of reasoning went, that very intelligent answers were given to a succession of question on politics and such matters. The meaning of these questions could not possibly have been understood. Language here acted after the manner of a reflex. So that certain extremely complex mechanisms, subtle enough to imitate beauty, can work by themselves - I certainly think that this is the case with judgments about beauty.

I can put the same thing in slightly different form. Here is a question of a conflict of two attitudes, as it might be of two techniques. The critic, while he has to admit that changes from one to the other occur, persists in regarding them as mere variations to a certain fixed normal, just as a pendulum might swing. I admit the analogy of the pendulum as far as movement, but I deny the further consequence of the analogy, the existence of the point of rest, the normal point.

When I say that I dislike the romantics, I dissociate two things: the part of them in which they resemble all the great poets, and the part in which they differ and which gives them their character as romantics. It is this minor element which constitutes the particular note of a century, and which, while it excites contemporaries, annoys the next generation. It was precisely that quality in Pope which pleased his friends, which we detest. Now, anyone just before the romantics who felt that, could have predicted that a change was coming. It seems to me that we stand just in the same position now. I think that there is an increasing proportion of people who simply can't stand Swinburne.

When I say that there will be another classical revival I don't necessarily anticipate a return to Pope. I say merely that now is the time for such a revival. Given people of the necessary capacity, it may be a vital thing; without them we may get a formalism something like Pope. When it does come we may not even recognize it as classical. Although it will be classical it will be different because it has passed through a romantic period. To take a parallel example : I remember being very surprised, after seeing the Post Impressionists, to find in Maurice Denis's account of the matter that they consider themselves classical in the sense that they were trying to impose the same order on the mere flux of new material provided by the impressionist movement, that existed in the more limited material of the painting before.

There is something now to be cleared away before I get on with my argument, which is that while romanticism is dead in reality, yet the critical attitude appropriate to it still continues to exist. To make this a little clearer: For every kind of verse, there is a corresponding receptive attitude. In a romantic period we demand from verse certain qualities. In a classical period we demand others. At the present time I should say that this receptive attitude has outlasted the thing from which it was formed. But while the romantic tradition has run dry, yet the critical attitude of mind, which demands romantic qualities from verse, still survives. So that if good classical verse were to be written tomorrow very few people would be able to stand it.

I object even to the best of the romantics. I object still more to the receptive attitude. I object to the sloppiness which doesn't consider that a poem is a poem unless it is moaning or whining about something or other. I always think in this connection of the last line of a poem of John Webster's[4] which ends with a request I cordially endorse:

> End your moan and come away

The thing has got so bad now that a poem which is all dry and hard, a properly classical poem, would not be considered poetry at all. How many people now can lay their hands on their hearts and say they like either Horace of Pope? They feel a kind of chill when they read them.

The dry hardness which you get in the classics is absolutely repugnant to them. Poetry that isn't damp isn't poetry at all. They cannot see that accurate description is a legitimate object of verse. Verse to them always means a bringing in of some of the emotions that are grouped round the word infinite.

The essence of poetry to most people is that it must lead them to a beyond of some kind. Verse strictly confined to the earthly and the definite (Keats is full of it) might seem to them to be excellent writing, excellent craftsmanship, but not poetry. So

much has romanticism debauched us, that, without some form of vagueness, we deny the highest.

In the classic it is always the light of ordinary day, never the light that never was on land or sea. It is always perfectly human and never exaggerated: man is always man and never a god.

But the awful result of romanticism is that, accustomed to this strange light, you can never live without it. Its effect on you is that of a drug.

There is a general tendency to think that verse means little else than the expression of unsatisfied emotion. People say: 'But how can you have verse without sentiment? 'You see what it is : the prospect alarms them. A classical revival to them would mean the prospect of an arid desert and the death of poetry as they understand it, and could only come to fill the gap caused by that death. Exactly why this dry classical spirit should have a positive and legitimate necessity to express itself in poetry is utterly inconceivable to them. What this positive need is, I shall show later. It follows from the fact that there is another quality, not the emotion produced, which is at the root of excellence in verse. Before I get to this I am concerned with a negative thing, a theoretical point, a prejudice that stands in the way and is really at the bottom of this reluctance to understand classical verse.

It is an objection which ultimately I believe comes from a bad metaphysic of art. You are unable to admit the existence of beauty without the infinite being in some way or another dragged in.

I may quote for purposes of argument, as a typical example of this kind of attitude made vocal, the famous chapters in Ruskin's *Modern Painters*,[5] Vol. II, on the imagination. I must say here parenthetically, that I use this word without prejudice to the other discussion with which I shall end the paper. I only use the word here because it is Ruskin's word. All that I am concerned with just now is the attitude behind it, which I take to be the romantic.

> Imagination cannot but be serious ; she sees too far, too darkly, too solemnly, too earnestly, ever to smile. There is something in the heart of everything, if we can reach it, that we shall not be inclined to laugh at .... Those who have so pierced and seen the melancholy deeps of things, are filled with intense passion and gentleness of sympathy. (Part III, Chap. III, S 9.)

> There is in every word set down by the imaginative mind an awful undercurrent of meaning, and evidence and shadow upon it of the deep places out of which it has come. It is often obscure, often half-told; for he who wrote it, in his clear seeing of the things beneath, may have been Impatient of detailed interpretation; for if we choose to dwell upon it and trace it, it will lead us always securely back to that metropolis of the soul's dominion from which we may follow out all the ways and tracks to its farthest coasts. (Part III, Chap. III, S 5.)

Really in all these matters the act of judgment is an instinct, an absolutely unstateable thing akin to the art of the tea taster. But you must talk, and the only language you can use in this matter is that of analogy. I have no material clay to mould to the given shape; the only thing which one has for the purpose, and which acts as substitute for it, a kind of mental clay, are certain metaphors modified it to theories of aesthetic and rhetoric. A combination of these, while cannot state the essentially unstateable intuition, can yet give you a sufficient analogy to enable you to see what it was and to recognize it on condition that you yourself have been in a similar state. Now these phrases of Ruskin's convey quite clearly to me his taste in the matter.

I see quite clearly that he thinks the best verse must be serious. That is a natural attitude for a man in the romantic period. But he is not content with saying that he prefers this kind of verse. He wants to deduce his opinion like his master, Coleridge, from some fixed principle which can be found by metaphysics.

Here is the last refuge of this romantic attitude. It proves itself to be not an attitude but a deduction from a fixed principle of the cosmos.

One of the main reasons for the existence of philosophy is not that it enables you to find truth (it can never do that) but that it does provide you a refuge for definitions. The usual idea of the thing is that it provides you with a fixed basis from which you can deduce the things you want in aesthetics. The process is the exact contrary. You start in the confusion of the fighting line, you retire from that just a little to the rear to recover, to get your weapons right. Quite plainly, without metaphor this - it provides you with an elaborate and precise language in which you really can explain definitely what you mean, but what you want to say is decided by other things. The ultimate reality is the hurly-burly, the struggle; the metaphysics is an adjunct to clear-headedness in it.

To get back to Ruskin and his objection to all that is not serious. It seems to me that involved in this is a bad metaphysical aesthetic. You have the metaphysic which in defining beauty or the nature of art always drags in the infinite. Particularly in Germany, the land where theories of aesthetics were first created, the romantic aesthetes collated all beauty to an impression of the infinite involved in the identification of our being in absolute spirit. In the least element of beauty we have a total intuition of the whole world. Every artist is a kind of pantheist.

Now it is quite obvious to anyone who holds this kind of theory that any poetry which confines itself to the finite can never be of the highest kind. It seems a contradiction in terms to them. And as in metaphysics you get the last refuge of a prejudice, so it is now necessary for me to refute this.

Here follows a tedious piece of dialectic, but it is necessary for my purpose. I must avoid two pitfalls in discussing the idea of beauty. On the one hand there is the old classical view which is supposed to define it is lying in conformity to certain standard fixed forms; and on the other hand there is the romantic view which drags in the infinite. I have got to find a metaphysic between these two which will enable me to hold consistently that a neoclassic verse of the type I have indicated involves no contradiction in terms. It is essential to prove that beauty may be in small, dry things.

The great aim is accurate, precise and definite description. The first thing is to recognize how extraordinarily difficult this is. It is no mere matter of carefulness; you have to use language, and language is by its very nature a communal thing; that is, it expresses never the exact thing but a compromise – that which is common to you, me and everybody. But each man sees a little differently, and to get out clearly and exactly what he does see, he must have a terrific struggle with language, whether it be with words or the technique of other arts. Language has its own special nature, its own conventions and communal ideas. It is only by a concentrated effort of the mind that you can hold it fixed to your own purpose. I always think that the fundamental process at the back of all the arts might be represented by the following metaphor. You know what I call architect's curves - flat pieces of wood with all different kinds of curvature. By a suitable selection from these you can draw approximately any curve you like. The artist I take to be the man who simply can't bear the idea of that 'approximately'. He will get the exact curve of what he sees whether it be an object or an idea in the mind. I shall here have to change my metaphor a little to get the process in his mind. Suppose that instead of your curved pieces of wood you have a springy piece of steel of the same types of curvature as the wood. Now the state of tension of concentration of mind, if he is doing anything really good in this struggle against the ingrained habit of the technique, may be represented by a man employing

all his fingers to bend the steel out of its own curve and into the exact curve which you want. Something different to what it would assume naturally.

There are then two things to distinguish, first the particular faculty of mind to see things as they really are, and apart from the conventional ways in which you have been trained to see them. This is itself rare enough in all consciousness. Second, the concentrated state of mind, the grip over oneself which is necessary in the actual expression of what one sees. To prevent one falling into the conventional curves of ingrained technique, to hold on through infinite detail and trouble to the exact curve you want. Wherever you get this sincerity, you get the fundamental quality of good art without dragging in infinite of serious.

I can now get at that positive fundamental quality of verse which constitutes excellence, which has nothing to do with infinity, with mystery or with emotions.

This is the point I am at, then, in my argument. I prophesy that a period of dry, hard, classical verse is coming. I have met the preliminary objection founded on the bad romantic aesthetic that in such verse, from which the infinite is excluded, you cannot have the essence of poetry at all.

After attempting to sketch out what this positive quality is, I can get on to the end of my paper in this way: That where you get this quality exhibited in the realm of the emotions you get imagination, and that where you get this quality exhibited in the contemplation of finite things you get fancy.

In prose as in algebra concrete things are embodied in signs or counters which are moved about according to rules, without being visualized at all in the process. There are in prose certain type situations and arrangements of words, which move as automatically into certain other arrangements as do functions in algebra. One only changes the X's and the Y's back into physical things at the end of the process. Poetry, in one aspect at any rate, may be considered as an effort to avoid this characteristic of prose. It is not a counter language, but a visual concrete one. It is a compromise for a language of intuition which would hand over sensations bodily. It always endeavours to arrest you, and to make you continuously see a physical thing, to prevent you gliding through an abstract process. It chooses fresh epithets and fresh metaphors, not so much because they are new, and we are tired of the old, but because the old cease to convey a physical thing and become abstract counters. A poet says a ship 'coursed the seas' to get a physical image, instead of the counters word 'sailed'. Visual meanings can only be transferred by the new bowl of metaphor; prose in an old pot that lets them leak out. Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence of an intuitive language. Verse is a pedestrian taking you over the ground, prose - a train which delivers you at a destination.

I can now get on to a discussion of two words often used in this connection, 'fresh' and 'unexpected'. You praise a thing for being 'fresh'. I understand what you mean, but the word besides conveying the truth conveys a secondary something which is certainly false. When you say a poem or drawing is fresh, and so good, the impression is somehow conveyed that the essential element of goodness is freshness, that it is good because it is fresh. Now this is certainly wrong, there is nothing particularly desirable about freshness *per se*. Works of art aren't eggs. Rather the contrary. It is simply an unfortunate necessity due to the nature of language and technique that the only way the element which does constitute goodness, the only way in which its presence can be detected externally, is by freshness. Freshness convinces you, you feel at once at that the artist was in an actual physical state.

You feel that for a minute. Real communication is so very rare, for plain speech is unconvincing. It is in this rare fact of communication that you get the root of aesthetic pleasure.

I shall maintain that wherever you get an extraordinary interest in a thing, a great zest in its contemplation which carries on the contemplator to accurate description in the sense of the word accurate I have just analysed, there you have sufficient justification for poetry. It must be an intense zest which heightens a thing out of the level of prose I am using contemplation here just in the same way that Plato used it, only applied to a different subject; it is a detached interest. 'The object of aesthetic contemplation is something framed apart by itself and regarded without memory or expectation, simply as being itself, as end not means, as individual not universal.'

To take a concrete example. I am taking an extreme case. If you are walking behind a woman in the street, you notice the curious way in which the skirt rebounds from her heels. If that peculiar kind of motion becomes of such interest to you that you will search about until you can get the exact epithet which hits it off, there you have a properly aesthetic emotion. But it is the zest with which you look at the thing which decides you to make the effort. In this sense the feeling that was in Herrick's mind when he wrote 'the tempestuous petticoat' was exactly the same as that which in bigger and vaguer matters makes the best romantic verse. It doesn't matter an atom that the emotion produced is not of dignified vagueness, but on the contrary amusing; the point is that exactly the same activity is at work as in the highest verse. That is the avoidance of conventional language in order to get the exact curve of the thing.

I have still to show that in the verse which is to come, fancy will be the necessary weapon of the classical school. The positive quality I have talked about can be manifested in ballad verse by extreme directness and simplicity such as you get in 'On Fair Kirkconnel Lea'. But the particular verse we are going to get will be cheerful, dry and sophisticated, and here the necessary weapon of the positive quality must be fancy.

Subject doesn't matter; the quality in it is the same as you get in the more romantic people.

It isn't the scale or kind of emotion produced that decides, but this one fact : Is there any real zest in it ? Did the poet have an actually realized visual object before him in which he delighted ? It doesn't matter if it were a lady's shoe of the starry heavens.

Fancy is not mere decoration added on to plain speech. Plain speech is essentially inaccurate. It is only by new metaphors, that is, by fancy, that it can be made precise.

When the analogy has not enough connection with the thing described to be quite parallel with it, where it overlays the thing it described and there is a certain excess, there you have the play of fancy - that I grant is inferior to imagination.

But where the analogy is every bit of it necessary for accurate description in the sense of the word accurate I have previously described, and your only objection to this kind of fancy is that it is not serious in the effect it produces, then I think the objection to be entirely invalid. If it is sincere in the accurate sense, when the whole of the analogy is necessary to get out the exact curve of the feeling or thing you want to express - there you seem to me to have the highest verse, even though the subject be trivial and the emotions of the infinite far away.

It is very difficult to use any terminology at all for this kind of thing. For whatever word you use is at once sentimentalized. Take Coleridge's word 'vital'. It is used loosely by all kinds of people who talk about art, to mean something vaguely and mysteriously significant. In fact, vital and mechanical is to them exactly the same antithesis as between good and bad.

Nothing of the kind; Coleridge uses it in a perfectly definite and what I call dry sense. It is just this: A mechanical complexity is the sum of its parts. Put them side by side and you get the whole. Now vital or organic merely a convenient metaphor for a

complexity of a different kind, that in which the parts cannot be said to be elements as each one is modified by the other's presence, and each one to a certain extent is the whole. The leg of a chair by itself is still a leg. My leg by itself wouldn't be.

Now the characteristic of the intellect is that it can only represent complexities of the mechanical kind. It can only make diagrams, and diagrams are essentially things whose parts are separate one from another. The intellect always analyses - when there is a synthesis it is baffled. That is why the artist's work seems mysterious. The intellect can't represent it. This is a necessary consequence of the particular nature of the intellect and the purposes for which it is formed. It doesn't mean that your synthesis is ineffable, simply that it can't be definitely stated.

Now this is all worked out in Bergson, the central feature of his whole philosophy. It is all based on the clear conception of these vital complexities which he calls 'intensive', as opposed to the other kind which he calls 'extensive', and the recognition of the fact that the intellect can only deal with the extensive multiplicity. To deal with the intensive you must use intuition.

Now, as I said before, Ruskin was perfectly aware of all this, but he had no such metaphysical background which would enable him to state definitely what he meant. The result is that he has to flounder about in a series of metaphors. A powerfully imaginative mind seizes and combines at the same instant all the important ideas of its poem or picture, and while it works with one of them, it is at the same instant working with and modifying all in their relation to it and never losing sight of their bearings on each other - as the motion of a snake's body goes through all parts at once and its volition acts at the same instant in coils which go contrary ways.

A romantic movement must have an end of the very nature of the thing. It may be deplored, but it can't be helped - wonder must cease to be wonder.

I guard myself here from all the consequences of the analogy, but it expresses at any rate the inevitableness of the process. A literature of wonder must have an end as inevitably as a strange land loses its strangeness when one lives in it. Think of the lost ecstasy of the Elizabethans. 'Oh my America, my new found land' [John Donne, 'Elegy XIX : Going to Bed'], think of what it meant to them and of what it means to us. Wonder can only be the attitude of a man passing from one stage to another, it can never be a permanently fixed thing.

Notes and References

1. [The distinction between Imagination and Fancy was popularized by Coleridge, who devotes a chapter to it in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817).]

2. [A right-wing political group found in France in 1898 at the time of the Dreyfus affair, and advocating the restoration of monarchy and a privileged position for the Roman Catholic Church. Its chief spokesman was Charles Maurras.]

3. [The fifth-century theologian Pelagius asserted the essential goodness of human nature and the freedom of the will.]

4. [Bosola's song in *The Duchess of Malfi*, IV. 2. The words are actually 'End your groan and come away'.]

5. [John Ruskin, the Victorian art and social critic, published *Modern Painters* in 1843-60.]

6 [A phrase in the poem ' A sweet disorder in the dress' by the seventeenth-century poet Robert Herrick.]

II

JOHN DRYDEN

T. S. ELIOT

If the prospect of delight be wanting (which alone justifies the perusal of poetry) we may let the reputation of Dryden sleep in the manuals of literature. To those who are genuinely insensible of his genius (and these are probably the majority of living readers of poetry) we can only oppose illustrations of the following proposition : that their insensibility does not merely signify indifference to satire and wit, but lack of perception of qualities not confined to satire and wit and present in the work of other poets whom these persons feel that they understand. To those whose taste in poetry is formed entirely upon the English poetry of the nineteenth century – to the majority – it is difficult to explain or excuse Dryden : the twentieth century is still the nineteenth, although it may in time acquire its own character. (The nineteenth century had, like every other, limited tastes and peculiar fashions ; and, like every other, it was unaware of its own limitations. Its tastes and fashions had no place for Dryden : yet Dryden is one of the tests of a catholic appreciation of poetry.

He is a successor of Jonson, and therefore the descendant of Marlowe : he is the ancestor of nearly all that is best in the poetry of the eighteenth century. Once we have mastered Dryden – and by mastery is meant a full and essential enjoyment, not the enjoyment of a private whimsical fashion – we can extract whatever enjoyment and edification there is in his contemporaries – Oldham, Denham, or the less remunerative Waller ; and still more his successors – not only Pope, but Phillips, Churchill, Gray, Johnson, Cowper, Goldsmith. His inspiration is prolonged in Crabbe and Byron ; it even extends, as Mr. Van Doren cleverly points out, to Poe. Even the poets responsible for the revolt were well acquainted with him : Wordsworth knew his work, and Keats invoked his aid. We cannot fully enjoy or rightly estimate a hundred years of English poetry unless we fully enjoy Dryden : and enjoy Dryden means to pass beyond the limitations of the nineteenth century into a new freedom.

> " All, all of a piece throughout !
> Thy Chase had a Beast in View ;
> Thy Wars brought nothing about;
> Thy Lovers were all untrue.
> 'Tis well an Old Age is out,
> And time to begin a New.
> * * * *
> The world's great age begins anew,
> The golden years return,
> The earth doth like a snake renew
> Her winter weeds outworn :
> Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam
> Like wrecks of a dissolving dream."

The first of these passages is by Dryden, the second by Shelley ; the second is found in the *Oxford Book of English Verse*. the first is not ; yet we might defy anyone to show that the second is superior on intrinsically poetic merit. It is easy to see why the second should appeal more readily to the nineteenth, and what is left of the nineteenth under the name of the twentieth, century. It is not so easy to see propriety in an image which divests a snake of "winter weeds" ; and this is a sort of blemish which would have been noticed more quickly by a contemporary of Dryden than by a contemporary of Shelley.

These reflections are occasioned by an admirable book on Dryden which has appeared at this very turn of time, when taste is becoming perhaps more fluid and ready for a new mould.[1] It is a book which every practitioner of English verse should study. The consideration is so thorough, the matter so compact, the appreciation so just, temperate, and enthusiastic, and supplied with such copious and well- Chosen

extracts from the poetry, the suggestion of astutely placed facts leads our thought so far, that there only remain to mention, as defects which do not detract from its value, two omissions : the prose is not dealt with, and the plays are somewhat slighted. What is especially impressive is the exhibition of the very wide range of Dryden's work, shown by the quotations of every species. Everyone knows *Mac-Flecknoe*, and parts of *Absalom and Achitophel* ; in consequence, Dryden has sunk by the persons he has elevated to distinction – Shadwell and Settle, Shaftesbury and Buckingham. Dryden was much more than a satirist ; to dispose of him as a satirist is to place an obstacle in the way of our understanding. At all events, we must satisfy ourselves of our definition of the term satire ; we must not allow our familiarity with the word to blind us to differences and refinements ; we must not assume that satire is a fixed type, and fixed to the prosaic, suited only to prose, we must acknowledge that satire is not the same thing in the hands of two different writers of genius. The connotations of " satire " and of " wit," in short, may be only prejudices of nineteenth – century taste. Perhaps, we think, after reading Mr. Van Doren's book, a juster view of Dryden may be given by beginning with some other portion of his work than his celebrated satires ; but even here there is much more present, and much more that is poetry, than is usually supposed.

The piece of Dryden's which is the most fun, which is the most sustained display of surprise after surprise of wit from line to line, is *MacFlecknoe*. Dryden's method here is something very near to parody ; he applies vocabulary, images, and ceremony which arouse epic associations of grandeur, to make an enemy helplessly ridiculous. But the effect, though disastrous for the enemy, is very different from that of the humour which merely belittles, such as the satire of Mark Twain. Dryden continually enhances : he makes his object great, is a way contrary to expectation ; and the total effect is due to the transformation of the ridiculous into poetry. As an example may be taken a fine passage plagiarized from Cowley, from lines which Dryden must have marked well, for he quotes them directly in one of his prefaces. Here is Cowley ;-

> "Where their vast courts the mother-waters keep,
> And undisturbed by moons in silence sleep...
> Beneath the dens where unfledged tempests lie,
> And infant winds their tender voices try."

In *MacFlecknoe* this becomes :

> "Where their vast courts the mother-strumpets keep,
> And undisturbed by watch, in silence sleep.
> Near these, a nursery erects its head,
> Where queens are formed, and future heroes bred ;
> Where unfledged actors learn to laugh and cry,
> Where infant punks their tender voices try,
> And little Maximins the gods defy."

The passage from Cowley is by no means despicable verse. But it is a commonplace description of commonly poetic objects ; it has not the element of *surprise* so essential to poetry, and this Dryden provides. A clever versifier might have written Cowley's lines : only a poet could have made what Dryden made of them. It is impossible to dismiss his verses as " prosaic" ; turn them into prose and they are transmuted, the fragrance is gone. The reproach of the prosaic, levelled at Dryden, rests upon a confusion between the emotions considered to be poetic – which is a matter allowing considerable latitude of fashion – and the result of personal emotion in poetry : and, also, there is the emotion *depicted* by the poet in some kinds of poetry, of which the *Testaments* of Villon is an example. Again there is the intellect, the originality and independence and clarity of what we vaguely call the poet's "point of view." Our valuation of poetry, in short, depends upon several considerations, upon the permanent and upon the mutable and transitory. When we try to isolate the essentially poetic, we bring our pursuit in the end to something insignificant ; our

standards vary with every poet whom we consider. All we can hope to do, in the attempt to introduce some order into our preferences, is to clarify our reasons for finding pleasure in the poetry that we like.

With regard to Dryden, therefore, we can say this much. Our taste in English poetry has been largely founded upon a partial perception of the value of Shakespeare and Milton, a perception which dwells upon sublimity of theme and action. Shakespeare had a great deal more ; he had nearly everything to satisfy our various desires for poetry. The point is that the depreciation or neglect of Dryden is not due to the fact that his work is not poetry, but to a prejudice that the material, the feelings, out of which he built is not poetic. Thus Matthew Arnold observes, in mentioning Dryden and Pope together, that "their poetry is conceived and composed in their wits, genuine poetry is conceived in the soul.") Arnold was, perhaps, not altogether the detached critic when he wrote this line ; he may have been stirred to a defence of his own poetry, conceived and composed in the soul of a mid-century Oxford graduate Pater remarks that Dryden :-

" Loved to emphasise the distinction between poetry and prose, the protest against their confusion coming with somewhat diminished effect from one whose poetry was so prosaic."

But Dryden was right, and the sentence of Pater is cheap journalism. Hazlitt, who had perhaps the most uninteresting mind of all our distinguished critics, says :-

" Dryden and Pope are the great masters of the artificial style of poetry in our language, as the poets of whom I have already treated – Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton – were of the natural "

In one sentence Hazlitt has committed at least four crimes against taste. It is bad enough to lump Chaucer, Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton together under the denomination of " natural " ; it is bad to commit Shakespeare, to one style only; it is bad to join Dryden and Pope together ; but the last absurdity is the contrast of Milton, our greatest master of the *artificial* style, with Dryden, whose *style* (vocabulary, syntax and order of thought) is in a high degree natural. And what all these objections come to, we repeat, is a repugnance for the material out of which Dryden's poetry is built.

It would be truer to say, indeed, even in the form of the unpersuasive paradox, that Dryden is distinguished principally by his *poetic* ability. (We prize him, as we do Mallarme, for what he made of his material. Our estimate is only in part the appreciation of ingenuity : in the end the result *is* poetry. Much of Dryden's unique merit consists in his ability to make the small into the great, the prosaic into the poetic, the trivial into the magnificent. In this he differs not only from Milton, who required a canvas of the largest size, but from Pope, who required one of the smallest. (If you compare any satiric " character " of Pope with one of Dryden, you will see that the method and intention are widely divergent. When Pope alters, he diminishes ; he is a master of miniature. The singular skill of his portrait of Addison, for example, in the *Epistle to Arbuthnot*, depends upon the justice and reserve, the apparent determination not to exaggerate. The genius of Pope is not for caricature. But the effect of the portraits of Dryden is to transform the object into something greater, as were transformed the verse of Cowley quoted on page 7[1].

> " A fiery soul, which working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay :
> And o'er informed the tenement of clay."

These lines are not merely a magnificent tribute. They create the object which they contemplate. Dryden is, in fact, much nearer to the master of comic creation than to

Pope. As in Jonson, the effect is far from laughter ; the comic is the material, the result is poetry. The Civic Guards of Rhodes :-

"The Country rings around with loud alarms,
And raw in fields the rude militia swarms ;
Mouths without hands; maintained at vast expense,
In peace a charge, in war a weak defence ;
Stout once a month they march, a blust'ring band,
And ever, but in times of need, at hand ;
This was the morn, when issuing on the guard,
Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepared
Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day."

Sometimes the wit appears as a delicate flavour to the magnificence, as in *Alexander's Feast* :-

" Sooth'd with the sound the king grew vain ;
Fought all his battles o'er again ;
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he
Slew the slain."

The great advantage of Dryden over Milton is that while the former is always in control of his ascent, and can rise or fall at will (and how masterfully, like his own Timotheus, he directs the transitions !), the latter has elected a perch from which he cannot afford to fall, and from which he is in danger of slipping.

" food alike those pure
Intelligential substances require
As doth your Rational ; and both contain
Within them every lower faculty
Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,
Tasting concoct, digest, assimilate,
And corporeal to incorporeal turn."

Dryden might have made poetry out of that ; his translation from Lucretius is poetry. But we have an ingenious example, on which to test our contrast of Dryden and Milton : it is Dryden's " Opera," called *The State of Innocence and Fall of Man*, of which Nathaniel Lee neatly says in his preface :-

"Milton did the wealthy mine disclose,
and rudely cast what you could well dispose :
He roughly drew, on an old-fashioned ground,
A chaos, for no perfect world were found,
Till through the heap, your mighty genius shined,"

In the author's preface Dryden acknowledges his debt generously enough :-

"The original being undoubtedly, one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime poems, which either this age or nation has produced."

The poem begins auspiciously :-

"*Lucifer*. Is this the seat our conqueror has given ?
And this the climate we must change for Heaven ?
These regions and this realm my wars have got ;
This mournful empire is the loser's lot :
In liquid burnings, or on dry to dwell,
Is al the sad variety of Hell."

It is an early work; it is on the whole a feeble work : it is not deserving of sustained comparison with *Paradise Lost*. But " all the sad variety of Hell " ! Dryden is already stirring ; he has assimilated what he could from Milton ; and he has shown himself capable of producing as splendid verse.

The capacity for assimilation, and the consequent extent of range, are conspicuous qualities of Dryden. He advanced and exhibited his variety by constant translation , and his translations of Horace, of Ovid, of Lucretius, are admirable. His gravest defects are supposed to be displayed in his dramas, but if there were more read they might be more praised. From the point of view of either the Elizabethan of the French drama they are obviously inferior ; but the charge of inferiority loses part of its force if we admit that Dryden was not quite trying to compete with either, but was pursuing a direction of his own. He created no character ; and although his arrangements of plot manifest exceptional ingenuity, it is the pure magnificence of diction, of poetic diction, that keeps his plays alive :-

" How I loved
Witness ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet.
As all your business were to count my passion.
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love ;
Another came, and still 'twas only love :
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I untired with loving.
I saw you every day and all the day ;
And every day was still but as the first :
So eager was I still to see you more .....

While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mould'ring from my hands each hour.

Such language is pure Dryden : it sounds, in Mr. Van Doren's phrase, "like a gong." *All for Love*, from which the lines are taken, is Dryden's best play, and this is perhaps the highest reach. In general, he is best in his plays when dealing with situations which do not demand great emotional concentration ; when his situation is more trivial, and he can practise his art of making the small great. The back-talk between the Emperor and his Empress Nourmahal, in *Aurungzebe*, is admirable purple comedy ;-

" *Emperor*. Such virtue is the plague of human life:
A virtuous woman, but a cursed wife.
In vain of pompous chastity y'are proud :
Virtue's adultery of the tongue. when loud.
I, with less pain, a prostitute could bear,
Than the shrill sound of virtue, virtue hear.
In unchaste wives-
There's yet a kind of recompensing ease :
Vice keeps 'em humble, gives ' em care to please :
But against clamourous virtue, what defence ?
It stops our mouths, and gives your noise pre-
tence .....

What can be sweeter than our native home ?
Thither for ease, and soft repose, we come;
Home is the sacred refuge of our life :
Secure from all approaches but a wife.
If thence we fly, the cause admits no doubt :
None but an inmate foe could force us out.

Rumours, our privacies uneasy make :
Birds leave their nests disturbed, and beasts their
Couches forsake "

But drama is a mixed form : pure magnificence will not carry it through. The poet who attempts to achieve a play by the single force of the word provokes comparison, however strictly he confine himself to his capacity, with poets of other gifts. Corneille and Racine do not attain their triumphs by magnificence of this sort : they have concentration also, and, in the midst of their phrases, an undisturbed attention to the human soul as they knew it

Nor is Dryden unchallenged in his supreme ability to make the ridiculous, or the trivial, great

"Avez-vous observé quelquefois ces merls de vieilles Sont presque aussi petits que celui d'un enfant "

Those lines are the work of a man whose verse is as magnificent as Dryden's, and who could see profounder possibilities in wit, and in violently joined images, than ever were in Dryden's mind. But Dryden, with all his intellect, had a commonplace mind His powers were, we believe, wider, but no greater, than Milton's; he was confined by boundaries as impassable, though less strait. He bears a curious antithetical resemblance to Swinburne. Swinburne was also a master of words, but Swinburne's words are all suggestions and no denotation ; if they suggest nothing, it is because they suggest too much Dryden's words, on the other hand, are precise, they state immensely, but their suggestiveness is often nothing.

> " That short dark passage to a future state ;
> That melancholy riddle of a breath,
> That something, or that nothing, after death,"

is a riddle, but not melancholy enough, in Dryden's splendid verse. The question, which has certainly been waiting, may justly be asked : whether, without this which Dryden lacks, verse can be poetry ? What is man to decide what poetry is ? Dryden's use of language is not, like that of Swinburne, weakening and demoralising. Let us take as a final test his elegy upon Oldham. Which deserves not to be mutilated :-

" Farewell, too little and too lately known,
Whom I began to think and call my own;
For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
Cast in the same poetic mould with mine.
One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.
To the same goal did both our studies drive ;
The last set out the soonest did arrive.
Thus Nisus fell upon the slippery place,
Whilst his young friend performed and won the race.
O early ripe ! to thy abundant store
What could advancing age have added more ?
It might (what nature never gives the young)
Have taught the numbers of thy native tongue.
But satire needs not those, and wit will shine
Through the harsh cadence of a rugged line.
A noble error, and but seldom made,
When poets are by too much force betrayed.
Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their
prime,
Still showed a quickness ; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of
rhyme

Once more, hail, and farewell ; farewell, thou
young,
But ah ! too short, Marcellus of our tongue !
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound ;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around."

From the perfection of such an elegy we cannot detract ; the lack of suggestiveness is compensated by the satisfying completeness of the statement. Dryden lacked what his master Jonson possessed, a large and unique view of life ; he lacked insight, he lacked profundity. But where Dryden fails to satisfy, the nineteenth century does not satisfy us either ; and where that century has condemned him, it is itself condemned. In the next revolution of taste it is possible that poets may turn to the study of Dryden. He remains one of those who have set standards for English verse which it is desperate to ignore.

III
POPE[1]
LYTTON STRACHEY

Among the considerations that might make us rejoice or regret that we did not live in the eighteenth century, there is one that to my mind outbalances all the rest – if we had, we might have known Pope. At any rate, we have escaped that. We may lament that flowered waistcoats are forbidden us, that we shall never ride in a sedan-chair, and that we shall never see good Queen Anne taking tea at Hampton Court : but we can at least congratulate ourselves that we run no danger of waking up one morning to find ourselves exposed, both now and for ever, to the ridicule of the polite world – that we are hanging by the neck, and kicking our legs, on the elegant gibbet that has been put up for us by the little monster of Twit'nam. And, on the other hand, as it is, we are in the happy position of being able, quite imperturbably, to enjoy the fun. There is nothing so shamelessly selfish as posterity. To us, after two centuries the agonies suffered by the victims of Pope's naughtiness are a matter of indifference ; the fate of Pope's own soul leaves us cold. We sit at our ease, reading those *Satires* and *Epistles*, in which the verses, when they were written, resembled nothing so much as spoonfuls of boiling oil, ladled out by a fiendish monkey at an upstairs window upon such of the passers – by whom the wretch had a grudge against – and we are delighted. We would not have it otherwise : whatever is, is right.

In this there is nothing surprising ; but what does seem strange is that Pope's contemporaries should have borne with him as they did. His attacks were by no means limited to Grub Street. He fell upon great lords and great ladies, duchesses and statesmen, noble patrons and beautiful women of fashion, with an equal ferocity ; and such persons, in those days, were very well able to defend themselves. In France, the fate suffered by Voltaire, at that very time, and on far less provocation, is enough to convince us that such a portent as Pope would never have been tolerated on the other side of the Channel. The monkey would have been whipped into silence and good manners in double quick time. But in England it was different. Here, though " the Great," as they were called, were all – powerful, they preferred not to use their power against a libellous rhymer, who was physically incapable of protecting himself, and who, as a Roman Catholic, lay particularly open to legal pressure. The warfare between Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu illustrates the state of affairs. The origin of their quarrel is uncertain. According to the lady, it was caused by her bursting into fits of laughter upon a declaration of passion from the poet. Another and perhaps more probable story traces the origin of the discord to a pair of sheets, borrowed by Lady Mary from old Mrs. Pope, the poet's mother, and returned by her ladyship, after a fortnight, unwashed. But whatever may have been the hidden cause of the quarrel, its results were obvious enough. Pope, in one of his *Imitations of Horace*, made a reference to "Sappho," whom all the world knew to be Lady Mary, in a couplet of extraordinary scurrility. Always a master of the art of compression, he asserted, in a single line of ten syllables, that his enemy, beside being a slanderous virago, was a debauched woman afflicted with a disgraceful malady. If, after this, Lady Mary had sent her friends or her footmen to inflict a personal chastisement upon the poet, or if she had used her influence with the government to have him brought to his senses, nobody could have been very much surprised. But she did nothing of the sort. Instead, she consulted with Lord Hervey, whom Pope had also attacked and the two together decided to pay back their tormentor in his own coin. Accordingly they decocted and published a lampoon, in which they did their best to emulate both the style and the substance of the poet. "None," they declared,

> "thy crabbed numbers can endure.
> Hard as thy heart, and as thy birth obscure,"

It shows, they said,

> "the Uniformity of Fate,
> That one so odious should be born to hate."

And if
"Unwhipt, unblanketed, unkick'd, unslain,
That wretched little carcase you retain,
The reason is, not that the world wants eyes,
But thou'rt so mean, they see and they despise."

After sixty lines of furious abuse, they wound up with a shrug of the shoulders, which was far from convincing.

"You strike unwounding, we unhurt can laugh."
they asseverated. But for the unhurt this was certainly very odd laughter. It was also quite ineffective. Pope's first reply was a prose pamphlet, in which there is at least one amusing passage - " It is true, my Lord. I am short, not well shaped, generally ill-dressed, if not sometimes dirty, Your Lord-ship and Ladyship are still in bloom, your figures such as rival the Apollo of Belvedere and the Venus of Medicis, and your faces so finished that neither sickness nor passion can deprive them of colour " But, of course, he reserved his most poisonous shafts for his poetry. Henceforth, his readers might be sure that in any especially unsavoury couplet the name of Sappho would be found immortally embedded ; while, as for Lord Hervey, he met his final doom in the Character of Sporus – the most virulent piece of invective in the English language.

Lady Mary and Lord Hervey, clever as they were, had been so senseless as to try to fight Pope on his own ground, and, naturally enough, their failure was dismal. But why had they committed this act of folly ? Their own explanation was the exact reverse of the truth. Far from despising the poet, they profoundly admired him. Hypnotised by his greatness, they were unable to prevent themselves from paying him the supreme compliment of an inept and suicidal imitation. And in this they were typical of the society in which they lived. That society was perhaps the most civilized that our history has known. Never, at any rate, before or since, has literature been so respected in England. Prior wrote well, and he became an ambassador. Addison wrote well, and he was made a Secretary of State. The Duke of Wharton gave Young 2000 ponds for having written a poem on the Universal Passion. Alderman Barber's great ambition was to be mentioned favourably by Pope. He let it be understood that he would be willing to part with 4000 ponds if the poet would gratify him ; a single couplet was all he asked for ; but the Alderman begged in vain. On the other hand, Pope accepted 1000 ponds from the old Duchess of Marlborough in return for the suppression of an attack upon the late Duke. Pope cancelled the lines ; but soon afterwards printed an envenomed character of the Duchess. And even the terrific Sarah herself – such was the overwhelming prestige of the potentate of letters – was powerless in face of this affront.

For the first time in our history, a writer, who was a writer and nothing more – Shakespeare was an actor and a theatrical manager – had achieved financial independence. Pope effected this by his translation of Homer, which brought him 9000 ponds – a sum equivalent to about 30,000 ponds to-day. The immense success of this work was a sign of the times. Homer's reputation was enormous : was he not the father of poetry ? The literary snobbery of the age was profoundly impressed by that. Yes, it was snobbery, no doubt : but surely it was a noble snobbery which out Homer so *very* high in the table of precedence - probable immediately after the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yet, there were difficulties. It was not only hard to read Homer, it was positively dangerous. Too close an acquaintance might reveal that the mythical figure sweeping along so grandly in front of the Archbishop of York was something of a blackguard – an alarming barbarian, with shocking tastes, small knowledge of the rules, and altogether far from correct. Pope solved these difficulties in a masterly manner. He supplied exactly what was wanted. He gave the eighteenth century a Homer after its own heart – a Homer who was the father – not quite of

poetry, indeed, but of something much more satisfactory – of what the eighteenth century believed poetry to be ; and, very properly, it gave him a fortune in return. The eighteenth century has acquired a reputation for scepticism ; but this is a mistake. In truth there has never been a less sceptical age. Its beliefs were rigid, intense, and imperturbable. In literature, as in every other department of life, an unquestioning orthodoxy reigned. It was this extraordinary self - sufficiency that gave the age its force ; but the same quality caused the completeness of is downfall. When the reaction came, the absolute certainty of the past epoch seemed to invest it with the maximum degree of odium and absurdity. The romantics were men who had lost their faith ; and they rose against the old dispensation with all the zeal of rebels and heretics. Inevitable, their fury fell with peculiar vehemence upon Pope. The great idol was overturned amid shouts of execration and scornful laughter. The writer who, for three generations, had divided with Milton the supreme honour of English poetry, was pronounced to be shallow, pompous, monotonous, meretricious, and not a poet at all.

Now that we have perhaps emerged from romanticism, it is time to consider the master of the eighteenth century with a more impartial eye. This is not altogether an easy task. Though we may be no longer in the least romantic, are we not still – I hesitate to suggest it – are we not still slightly Victorian ? Do we not continue to cast glances of furtive admiration towards the pontiffs of that remarkable era, whose figures, in the edge of our horizon, are still visible, so lofty, and so large ? We can discount the special pleadings of Wordsworth ; but the voice of Matthew Arnold, for instance, still sounds with something like authority upon our ears. Pope, said Matthew Arnold, is not a classic of our poetry, he is a classic of our prose. He was without an "adequate poetic criticism, of life " ; his criticism of life lacked "high seriousness" ; it had neither largeness, freedom, insight, nor benignity. Matthew Arnold was a poet. But his conception of poetry reminds us that he was also an inspector of schools. That the essence of poetry is "high seriousness" is one of those noble platitudes which commend themselves immediately as both obvious and comfortable. But, in reality, obviousness and comfort have very little to do with poetry. It is not the nature of poetry to be what anyone expects ; on the contrary, it is its nature to be surprising, to be disturbing, to be impossible. Poetry and high seriousness ! Of course, to Dr, Arnold's son, they seemed to be inevitably linked together : and certainly had the world been created by Dr. Arnold they actually would have been. But – perhaps fortunately – it was not. If we look at the facts, where do we find poetry ? In the wild fantasies of Aristophanes, in the sordid lusts of Baudelaire, in the gentle trivialities of La Fontaine.

> " Dreadful was the din
> Of hissing through the hall, thick swarming now
> With complicated monsters, head and tail,
> Scorpion, and asp, and amphisbaena dire,
> Cerastes horn'd, hydrus, and ellops drear,
> And dipsas – "

That is not high seriousness ; it is a catalogue of curious names ; and it is poetry. There is poetry to be found lurking in the metaphysical system of Epicurus, and in the body of a flea. And so need we be surprised if it invests a game of cards, or a gentleman sneezing at Hampton Court ? –

> "Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
> A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw;
> The gnomes direct, to every atom just,
> The pungent grains of titillating dust
> Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
> And the high dome re-echoes to his nose."

Pope, we are told, was not only without "high seriousness" ; he lacked no less an "adequate poetic criticism of life." What does this mean ? The phrase is ambiguous ; it signifies at once too much and too little. If we are to understand – as the context seems to imply – that, in Matthew Arnold's opinion, no poetic criticism of life can be adequate unless it possesses largeness, freedom, and benignity, we must certainly agree that Pope's poetic criticism of life was far from adequate ; for his way of writing was neither large nor free, and there was nothing benignant about him. But the words will bear another interpretation ; and in this sense it may turn out that Pope's poetic criticism of life was adequate to an extraordinary degree.

Let us examine for a moment the technical instrument which Pope used – I mean the heroic couplet.

When he was a young man, the poet. Walsh gave Pope a piece of advice. "We have had great poets," he said, "but never one great poet that was correct. I recommend you to make your leading aim – correctness." Pope took the advice, and became the most correct of poets. This was his chief title to glory in the eighteenth century ; it was equally the stick that he was most frequently and rapturously beaten with, in the nineteenth. Macaulay, in his essay on Byron, devotes several pages of his best forensic style to an exposure and denunciation of the absurd futility of the "correctness" of the school of Pope. (There is in reality, he declared, only one kind of correctness in literature – that which " has its foundation in truth and in the principles of human nature." But Pope's so-called correctness was something very different. It consisted simply in a strict obedience to a perfectly arbitrary set of prosodic rules. His couplet was a purely artificial structure – the product of mere convention ; and, so far from there being any possible poetic merit in the kind of correctness which it involved, this "correctness" was in fact only "another name for dullness and absurdity." A short time ago, the distinguished poet, M. Paul Valery, demolished Macaulay's argument – no doubt quite unconsciously – in an essay full of brilliant subtlety and charming wit. He showed conclusively the essentially poetic value of purely arbitrary conventions. But, for our purposes, so drastic a conclusion is unnecessary. For Macaulay was mistaken, not only in his theory, but in his facts. The truth is that the English classical couplet – unlike the French – had nothing conventional about it. On the contrary, it was the inevitable, the logical, the natural outcome of the development of English verse.

The fundamental element in the structure of poetry is rhythmical repetition. In England, the favourite unit of this repetition very early became the ten – syllabled iambic line. Now it is clear that the treatment of this line may be developed in two entirely different directions. The first of these developments is blank verse. Milton's definition of blank verse is well known, and it cannot be bettered : it consists, he says, "in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another." Its essence, in other words, is the combination formed by rhythmical variety playing over an underlying norm : and it is easy to trace the evolution of this wonderful measure from the primitive rigidity of Surrey to the incredible virtuosity of Shakespeare's later plays, where blank verse reaches its furthest point of development – where rhythmical variety is found in unparalleled profusion, while the underlying regularity is just, still, miraculously preserved. After Shakespeare, the combination broke down ; the element of variety became so excessive that the underlying norm disappeared, with the result that the blank verse of the latest Elizabethans is virtually indistinguishable from prose.

But suppose the ten – syllabled iambic were treated in precisely the contrary manner. Suppose, instead of developing the element of variety to its maximum, the whole rhythmical emphasis were put upon the element of regularity. What would be the result ? This was the problem that presented itself to the poets of the seventeenth century, when it appeared to them that the possibilities of blank verse were played out. (In reality they were not played out, as Milton proved ; but Milton was an isolated and unique phenomenon.) Clearly, the most effective method of

emphasising regularity is the use of rhyme ; and the most regular form of rhyme is the couplet. Already, in the splendid couplets of Marlowe and in the violent couplets of Donne, we can find a foretaste of what the future had in store for the measure. Shakespeare, indeed, as if to show that there were no limits either to his comprehension or to his capacity, threw off a few lines which might have been written by Pope, and stuck them into the middle of *Othello*.[2] But it was not until the collapse of blank verse, about 1630, that the essential characteristics which lay concealed in the couplet began to be exploited. It was Waller who first fully apprehended the implications of regularity ; and it is to this fact that his immense reputation during the succeeding hundred years was due. Waller disengaged the heroic couplet from the beautiful vagueness of Elizabethanism. He perceived what logically followed from a rhyme. He saw that regularity implied balance, that balance implied antithesis ; he saw that balance also implied simplicity, that simplicity implied clarity and that clarity implied exactitude. The result was a poetical instrument contrary in every particular to blank verse – a form which, instead of being varied, unsymmetrical, fluid, complex, profound and indefinite, was regular, balanced, antithetical, simple, clear, and exact. But, though Waller was its creator, the heroic couplet remained, with him, in an embryonic state, Its evolution was slow ; even Dryden did not quite bring it to perfection. That great genius, with all his strength and all his brilliance, lacked one quality without which no mastery of the couplet could be complete – the elegance of perfect finish. This was possessed by Pope. The most correct of poets – Pope was indeed that ; it is his true title to glory. But the phrase does not mean that he obeyed more slavishly than anybody else a set of arbitrary rules. No, it means something entirely different : it means that the system of versification of which the principle is regularity reached in Pope's hands the final plenitude of its nature – its ultimate significance – its supreme consummation.

That Pope's verse is artificial there can be no doubt. But then there is only one kind of verse that is not artificial, and that is, bad verse. Yet it is true that there is a sense in which Pope's couplet is more artificial than, let us say, the later blank verse of Shakespeare – it has less resemblance to nature. It is regular and neat ; but nature is "divers et ondoyant" ; and so is blank verse. Nature and blank verse are complicated ; and Pope's couplet is simplicity itself. But what a profound art underlies that simplicity ! Pope's great achievement in English literature was the triumph of simplifications. In one of his earliest works, the *Pastorals*, there is simplicity and nothing else ; Pope had understood that if he could once attain to a perfect simplicity, all the rest would follow in good time :-

"O deign to visit our forsaken seats,
The mossy fountains, and the green retreats !
Where'er you walk, cool gales shall fan the glade ;
Trees, where you sit, shall crowd into a shade ;
Where'er you tread, the blushing flow'rs shall rise,
And all things flourish where you turn your eyes."

The lines flow on with the most transparent limpidity : -

"But see, the shepherds shun the noon – day heat,
The lowing herds to murm'ring brooks retreat,
To closer shades the panting flocks remove ;
Ye Gods ! and is there no relief for love ?"

Everything is obvious. The diction is a mass of *clichés* ; the epithets are the most commonplace possible ; the herds low, the brooks murmur, the flocks pant and remove, the retreats are green, and the flowers blush. The rhythm is that of a rocking - horse ; and the sentiment is mere sugar. But what a relief ! What a relief to have escaped for once from *le mot proper*, from subtle elaboration of diction and metre, from complicated states of mind, and all the profound obscurities of Shakespeare and

Mr T. S. Eliot ! How delightful to have no trouble at all to understand so very, very easily every single thing that is said !

This is Pope at his most youthful (As he matured his verse matured with him. Eventually, his couplets, while retaining to the full their early ease, polish, and lucidity, became charged with an extraordinary weight He was able to be massive, as no other wielder of the measure has ever been

"Lo ! thy dread empire, Chaos ! is restored
Light dies before thy uncreating word ,
Thy hand, great Anarch ! lets the curtain fall,
And universal Darkness buries All "

Here the slow solemnity of the effect is produced by a most learned accumulation of accents and quantities ; in some of the lines all the syllables save two are either long or stressed. At other times, he uses a precisely opposite method ; in line after line he maintains, almost completely, the regular alternation of accented and unaccented syllables ; and conveys a wonderful impression of solidity and force :-

"Proceed, great days ! till learning fly the shore,
Till Birch shall blush with noble blood no more,
Till Thames see Eton's sons for ever play,
Till Westminster's whole year be holiday,
Till Isis' Elders reel, their pupils' sport,
And Alma Mater lie dissolved in Port !"

Perhaps the most characteristic of all the elements [illegible] couplet is antithesis. Ordinary regularity demands that the sense should end with every line – that was a prime necessity ; but a more scrupulous symmetry would require something more – a division of the line itself into two halves, whose meanings should correspond. And yet a further refinement was possible : each half might be again divided, and the corresponding divisions in the two halves might be so arranged as to balance each other. The force of neatness could no further go ; and thus the most completely evolved type of the heroic line is one composed of four main words arranged in pairs, so as to form a double antithesis.

"Willing to wound, and yet afraid to strike".

is an example of such a line, and Pope's poems are full of them. With astonishing ingenuity he builds up these exquisite structures, in which the parts are so cunningly placed that they seem to interlock spontaneously ; and, while they are all formed on a similar model, are yet so subtly adjusted that they produce a fresh pleasure as each one appears. But that is not all. Pope was pre-eminently a satirist. He was naturally drawn to the contemplation of human beings, their conduct in society, their characters, their motives, their destinies ; and the feelings which these contemplations habitually aroused in him were those of scorn and hatred. Civilisation illumined by animosity – such was his theme ; such was the passionate and complicated material from which he wove his patterns of balanced precision and polished clarity. Antithesis penetrates below the structure ; it permeates the whole conception of his work. Fundamental opposites clash, and are reconciled. The profundities of persons, the futilities of existence, the rage and spite of genius – these things are mixed together, and presented to our eyes in the shape of a Chinese box. The essence of all art is the accomplishment of the impossible. This cannot be done, we say ; and it *is* done. What has happened ? A magician has waved his wand. It is impossible that Pope should convey to us his withering sense of the wretchedness and emptiness of the fate of old women in society, in five lines, each containing four words, arranged in pairs, so as to form a double antithesis. But the magician waves his wand, and there it is :-

"See how the world its veterans rewards !
A youth of frolics, an old age of cards ;
Fair to no purpose, artful to no end,
Young without lovers, old without a friend,
A fop their passion, and their prize a sot ;
Alive ridiculous, and dead forgot !"

And now, perhaps, we have discovered what may truly be said to have been Pope's "poetic criticism of life." His poetic criticism of life was, simply and solely, the heroic couplet.

Pope was pre-eminently a satirist : and so it is only natural that his enemies should take him to task for not being something else. He had no benignity : he had no feeling for sensuous beauty ; he took no interest in nature ; he was pompous – did he not wear a wig ? Possible ; but if one is to judge poets by what they are without, where is one to end ? One might point out that Wordsworth had no sense of humour, that Shelley did not understand human beings, that Keats could not read Greek, and that Matthew Arnold did not wear a wig. And, if one looks more closely, one perceives that there were a good many things that Pope could do very well – when he wanted to. Sensuous beauty, for instance :-

"Die of a rose in aromatic pain."

If that is not sensuously beautiful, what is ? Then, we are told, he did not "compose with his eye on the object." But once Pope looked at a spider, and this was what he composed :-

"The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine !
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line."

Could Wordsworth have done better ? It is true that he did not often expatiate upon the scenery ; but, when he chose, he could call up a vision of nature which is unforgettable :-

" Lo ! where Maeotis sleeps, and hardly flows
The freezing Tanais thro' a waste of snows."

We see, and we shiver. It cannot be denied that Pope wore a wig ; it must even be confessed that there are traces, in his earlier work especially, of that inexpressive ornament in the rococo style, which was the bane of his age ; but the true Pope was not there. The true Pope threw his wig into the corner of the room, and used all the plainest words in the dictionary. He used them carefully, no doubt, very carefully, but he used them – one – syllabled, Saxon words, by no means pretty – they cover his pages ; and some of his pages are among the coarsest in English literature. There are passages in the *Dunciad* which might agitate Mr. James Joyce. Far from being a scrupulous worshipper of the noble style, Pope was a realist – in thought and in expression. He could describe a sordid interior as well as any French novelist :-

"In the worst inn's worst rooms, with mat half-hung,
The floors of plaster, and the walls of dung,
On once a flock – bed, but repair'd with straw,
With tape-tied curtains, never meant to draw,
The George and Garter dangling from that bed
Where tawdry yellow strove with dirty red,
Great Villiers lies ....."

But these are only the outworks of the citadel. The heart of the man was not put into descriptions of physical things ; it was put into descriptions of people whom he disliked. It is in those elaborate Characters, in which, through a score of lines or so,

the verse rises in wave upon wave of malice, to fall at last with a crash on the devoted head of the victim – in the somber magnificence of the denunciation of the great dead Duke, in the murderous insolence of the attack on the great living Duchess in the hooting mockery of Bufo, in the devastating analysis of Addison – it is here that Pope's art comes to its climax. With what a relish, with what a thrill, we behold once more the impossible feat – the couplet, that bed of Procrustes, fitted exactly and eternally with the sinuous egoism of Addison's spirit, or the putrescent nothingness of Lord Hervey's. In the Character of Sporus, says the great critic and lexicographer, in memory of whom I have had the honour of addressing you to–day, Pope "seems to be actually screaming with malignant fury." It is true.

"Let Sporus tremble ! – What ? that thing of silk,
Sporus, that mere white curd of ass's milk ?
Satire or sense, alas ! can Sporus feel ?
Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel ?
-Yet let me flap this bug with gilded wings,
This painted child of dirt, that stinks and stings ;
Whose buzz the witty and the fair annoys,
Yet wit ne'er tastes, and beauty ne'er enjoys :
So well–bred spaniels civilly delight
In mumbling of the game they dare not bite,
Eternal smiles his emptiness betray,
As shallows streams run dimpling all the way.
Whether in florid impotence he speaks,
And, as the prompter breathes, the puppet squeaks,
Or at the ear of Eve, familiar toad,
Half froth, half venom, spits himself abroad
In puns, or politics, or tales, or lies,
Or spite, or smut, or rhymes, or blasphemies,
His wit all see – saw, between that and this,
Now high, now low, now master up, now miss,
And he himself one vile antithesis.
Amphibious things ! that acting either part,
The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
Eve,s tempter thus the Rabbins have expressed,
A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest ;
Beauty that shocks you, parts that none can trust,
Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

It is true ; Pope *seems* to be actually screaming ; but let us not mistake. It is only an appearance ; actually, Pope is not screaming at all; for these are strange impossible screams, unknown to the world of fact – screams endowed with immortality. What has happened then ? Pope has waved his wand. He has turned his screams into poetry, with the enchantment of the heroic couplet.

Notes and References

1. The Leslie Stephen Lecture for 1925.

2. " She that in wisdom never was so frail
To change the cod's head for the salmon's tail ;
She that could think, and ne'er disclose her mind ;
See suitors following, and not look behind ;
She was a wight, if ever such wight were,
To suckle fools and chronicle small beer."

IV
WILLIAM BLAKE AND HIS ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE DIVINE COMEDY
W.B. YEATS

I. HIS OPINIONS UPON ART

WILLIAM BLAKE was the first writer of modern times to preach the indissoluble marriage of all great art with symbol. There had been allegorists and teachers of allegory in plenty, but the symbolic imagination, or, as Blake preferred to call it', 'vision', is not allegory, being 'a representation of what actually exists really and unchangeably'. A symbol is indeed the only possible expression of some invisible essence, a transparent lamp about a spiritual flame; while allegory is one of many possible representations of an embodied thing, or familiar principle, and belongs to fancy and not to imagination: the one is a revelation, the other an amusement. It is happily no part of my purpose to expound in detail the relations he believed to exist between symbol and mind, for in doing so I should come upon not a few doctrines which, though they have not been difficult to many simple persons, ascetics wrapped in skins, women who had cast away all common knowledge, peasants dreaming by their sheepfolds upon the hills, are full of obscurity to the man of modern culture; but it is necessary to just touch upon these relations, because in them was the fountain of much of the practice and of all the precept of his artistic life.

If a man would enter into 'Noah's rainbow', he has written, and 'make a friend' of one of 'the images of wonder' which dwell there, and which always entreat him 'to leave mortal thing', 'then would he arise from the grave and meet the Lord in the air'; and by this rainbow, this sign of a covenant granted to him who is with Shem and Japhet, 'painting, poetry and music', 'the three powers in man of conversing with Paradise which the flood', 'of time and space' 'did not sweep away' 'Blake represented the shapes of beauty haunting our moments of inspiration: shapes held by most for the frailest of ephemera, but by him for a people older than the world, citizens of eternity , appearing and reappearing in the minds of artists and of poets, creating all we touch and see by casting distorted images of themselves upon 'the vegetable glass of nature'; and because beings, none the less symbols, blossoms, as it were, growing from invisible immortal roots, hands, as it were, pointing the way into some divine labyrinth. If 'the world of imagination' was 'the world of eternity', as this doctrine implied, it was of less importance to know men and nature than to distinguish the beings and substances of imagination from those of a more perishable kind, created by the fantasy, in uninspired moments, out of memory and whim; and this could best be done by purifying one's mind, as with a flame, in study of the works of the great masters, who were great because they had been granted by divine favour a vision of the unfallen world from which others are kept apart by the flaming sword that turns every way; and by flying from the painters who studied 'the vegetable glass' for its ownsake, and not to discover there the shadows of imperishable beings and substances, and who entered into their own minds, not to make the unfallen world a test of all they heard and saw and felt with the senses, but to cover the naked spirit with 'the rotten rags of memory' of older sensations. The struggle of the first part of his life had been to distinguish between these two schools, and to cleave always to the Florentine, and so to escape the fascination of those who seemed to him. to offer the sleep of nature to a spirit weary with the labours of inspiration; but it was only after his return to London from Felpham in 1804 that he finally escaped from 'temptations and perturbations' which sought to destroy 'the imaginative power' at 'the hands of Venetian and Flemish Demons'. 'The spirit of Titian' and one must always remember that he had only seen poor engravings, and what his disciple, Palmer, has called 'picture-dealers' Titians—was particularly active in raising doubts concerning the possibility of executing without a model; and when once he had raised the doubt it became easy for him to snatch away the vision time after time'; and Blake's imagination 'weakened' and 'darkened' until a 'memory of nature and of pictures of various schools possessed his mind, instead of appropriate execution ,

flowing from the vision itself. But now he wrote, 'O glory, and O delight! I have entirely reduced that spectrous fie.. l to his station' -he had overcome the merely reasoning and sensual portion of the mind- 'whose annoyance has been the ruin of my labours for the last passed twenty years of my life ...I speak with perfect confidence and certainty of the fact which has passed upon me. Nebuchadnezzar had seven times passed over him, I have had twenty; thank God I was not altogether a beast as he was ...Suddenly, on the day after visiting the Truchsessian Gallery of pictures'—this was a gallery containing pictures by Albert Dürer and by the great Florentines —'I was again enlightened with the light I enjoyed in my youth, and which has for exactly twenty years been closed from me, as by a door and by window-shutters. .. Excuse my enthusiasm, or rather madness'; for I am really drunk with intellectual vision whenever I take a pencil or graver into my hand, even as I used to be in my youth'.

This letter may have been the expression of a moment's enthusiasm, but was more probably rooted in one of those intuitions of coming technical power which every creator feels, and learns to rely upon: for all his greatest work was done, and the principles of his art were formulated, after this date. Except a word here and there, his writings hitherto had not dealt with the principles of art except remotely and by implication; but now he wrote much upon them, and not in obscure symbolic verse, but in emphatic prose, and explicit if not very poetical rhyme. He explained spiritual art, and praised the painters of Florence and their influence and cursed all that has come of Venice and Holland in his *Descriptive Catalogue,* in the *Address to the Public,* in the notes on Sir Joshua Reynolds, in *The Book of Moonlight*—of which some not very dignified rhymes alone remain—in beautiful detached passages of his *MS. Book.* The limitation of his view was from the very intensity of his vision: he was a too literal realist of imagination, as others are of nature: and because he believed that the figures seen by the mind's eye, when exalted by inspiration, were 'external existences', symbols of divine essences, he hated every grace of style that might obscure their lineaments. To wrap them about in reflected lights was to do this, and to dwell over-fondly upon any softness of hair or flesh was to dwell upon that which was least permanent and least characteristic, for 'The great and golden rule of art, as well as of life, is this: that the more distinct, sharp and wiry the bounding line, the more perfect the work of art; and the less keen and sharp, the greater is the evidence of weak imitation, plagiarism and bungling'. Inspiration was to see the permanent and characteristic in all forms, and if you had it not, you must needs imitate with a languid mind the things you saw or remembered, and so sink into the sleep of nature where all is soft and melting. 'Great inventors in all ages knew this. Protogenes and Apelles knew each other by this line. Raphael and Michelangelo and Albert Dürer are known by this and this alone. ...How do we distinguish the oak from the beech, the horse from the ox, but by the bounding outline ? How do we distinguish one face or counténance from another, but by the bounding outline and its infinite inflections and movements ? What is it that builds a house and plants a garden, but the definite and determinate? What is it that distinguishes honesty from knavery, but the hard and wiry line of rectitude and certainty in the actions and intentions ? Leave out this line and you leave out life itself; all is chaos again, and the line of the Almighty must be drawn out upon it before man or beast can exist. 'He even insisted that' colouring does not depend upon where the colours are put, but upon where the lights and darks are put, and all depends on form or outline'—meaning, I suppose, that a colour gets its brilliance or its depth from being in light or in shadow. He does not mean by outline the bounding line dividing a form from its background, as one of his commentators has thought, but the line that divides it from surrounding space, and unless you have an overmastering sense of this you cannot draw true beauty at all, but only 'the beauty that is appended to folly', a beauty of mere voluptuous softness, 'a lamentable accident of the mortal and perishing life', for 'the beauty proper for sublime art is lineaments, or forms and features that are capable of being the receptacles of intellect', and 'the face or limbs that alter least from infancy to old age are the face and limbs of greatest beauty and perfection'. His praise of a severe art had been beyond price had his age rested a moment to listen, in the midst of its enthusiasm for Correggio and the later Renaissance, for Bartolozzi

and for Stothard. What matter if in his visionary realism, in his enthusiasm for what, after all, is perhaps the greatest art, he refused to admit that he who wraps the vision in lights and shadows, in irridescent or glowing colour, until form be half lost in pattern, may, as did Titian in his *Bacchus and Ariadne*, create a talisman as powerfully charged with intellectual virtue as though it were a jewel-studded door of the city seen on Patmos?

To cover the imperishable lineaments of beauty with shadows and reflected lights was to fall into the power of his 'Vala', the indolent fascination of Nature, the woman divinity who is so often described in the 'Prophetic Books' as 'sweet pestilence', and whose children weave webs to take the souls of men; but there was a yet more lamentable chance, for Nature has also a 'masculine portion' or 'spectre' which kills instead of taking prisoner, and is continually at war with inspiration. To 'generalise' forms and shadows, to 'smooth out' spaces and lines in obedience to 'laws of composition' and of painting; founded not upon imagination, which always thirsts for variety and delights in freedom, but upon reasoning from sensation, which is always seeking to reduce everything to a lifeless and slavish uniformity; as the popular art of Blake's day had done, and as he understood Sir Joshua Reynolds to advise, was to fall into 'Entuthon Benithon', or 'the Lake of Udan Adan', or some other of those regions where the imagination and the flesh are alike dead, that he names by so many resonant fantastical names. 'General knowledge is remote knowledge,' he wrote; 'it is in particulars that wisdom consists, and happiness too. Both in art and life general masses are as much art as a pasteboard man is human. Every man has eyes, nose and mouth; this every idiot knows. But he who enters into and discriminates most minutely the manners and intentions, the characters in all their branches, is the alone wise or sensible man, and on this discrimination all art is founded. ...As poetry admits not a letter that is insignificant, so painting admits not a grain of sand or a blade of grass in significant, much less an insignificant blot or blur.'

Against another desire of his time, derivative also from what he has called' corpore reason', the desire for 'a tepid moderation', for a lifeless 'sanity in both art and li he had protested years before with a paradoxical violence. 'The roadway of exc leads to the palace of wisdom' and we must only 'bring out weight and meas time of dearth'. This protest, carried, in the notes on Sir Joshua Reynolds, point of dwelling with pleasure on the thought that 'The *Lives of the Pai* Raphael' died of dissipation', because dissipation is better than emoti seemed as important to his old age as to his youth. He taught it to h one finds it in its purely artistic shape in a diary written by Samu 'Excess is the essential vivifying spirit, vital spark, embalming There are many mediums in the *means*—none, oh, not a jot, the *end* of great art. In a picture whose merit is to be exce too brilliant, but individual tints may be too brilliant. ...' medium, but think always on excess and only use me abundantly excessive.'

These three primary commands, to seek a deter treatment, and to desire always abundance a vehement anger, and their opponents calle 'hired' by the wealthy and the idle; but 'sources of delight throughout the wh excellence in any school, finding, of exaggeration. There is a beaut part of the mind, 'the spectre'. hell to reach the heavenly ar between the stars', not 'in labours vain, and turns fly's wing', and make anxious grasp'. So his art with mere

miracle transforms them to a new inspiration; and here and there among the pictures born of sensation and memory is the murmuring of a new ritual, the glimmering of new talismans and symbols.

It was during and after the writing of these opinions that Blake did the various series of pictures which have brought him the bulk of his fame. He had already completed the illustrations to Young's *Night Thoughts*—in which the great sprawling figures, a little wearisome even with the luminous colours of the original water—colour, became nearly intolerable in plain black and white—and almost all the illustrations to the 'Prophetic Books', which have an energy like that of the elements, but are rather rapid sketches taken while some phantasmic procession swept over him, than elaborate compositions, and in whose shadowy adventures one finds not merely, as did Dr. Garth Wilkinson, 'the hells of the ancient people, the Anakim, the Nephalim, and the Rephaim... gigantic petrifications from which the fires of lust and intense selfish passion have long dissipated what was animal and vital'; not merely the shadows cast by the powers who had closed the light from him as 'with a door and windowshutters', but the shadows of those who gave them battle. He drew, however, the many designs to Milton, of which I have only seen those to *Paradise Regained*; the reproductions of those to *Comus*, published, I think, by Mr. Quaritch; and the three or four to *Paradise Lost*, engraved by Bell Scott—a series of designs which one good judge considers his greatest work; the illustrations to Blair's *Grave*, whose gravity and passion struggled with the mechanical softness and trivial smoothness of Schiavonetti's engraving; the illustrations to Thornton's *Virgil*, whose influence is manifest in the work of the little group of landscape-painters who gathered about him in his old age and delighted to call him master. The member of the group whom I have already so often quoted has alone praised worthily these illustrations to the first Eclogue: 'There is in all such a rosy and dreamy glimmer as penetrates and kindles the inmost soul and gives complete and unreserved delight, unlike the gaudy daylight of this world. They are like all this wonderful artist's work, the drawing aside of the fleshly curtain, and the glimpse which all the most holy, studious saints and sages have enjoyed, of the rest which remains to the people of God.' Now, too, he did the great series, the crowning work of his life, the illustrations to *The Book of Job* and the illustrations to the *Divine Comedy*. Hitherto he had protested against the mechanical 'dots and lozenges' and 'blots and blurs' of Woollett and Strange, 'but had himself used' both 'dot and lozenge', 'blot and blur', though always in subordination 'to a firm and determinate outline'; but in Marc Antonio, certain of whose engravings he was shown by Linnell, he found a style full of delicate lines, a style where all was living and energetic, strong and subtle. And almost his last words, a letter written upon his death-bed, attack the 'dots and lozenges' with, even more than usually quaint symbolism, and praise expressive lines. 'I know too well that the majority of Englishmen are fond of the infinite...a line is a line in its minutest subdivisions', straight or crooked. It is itself, not intermeasurable by anything else... but since the French Revolution'—since the reign of reason began, that is—Englishmen are all intermeasurable by one another: certainly a happy state of agreement, in which I for one do not agree. 'The Dante series occupied the last years of his life; even when too weak to get out of bed he worked on, propped up with the great drawing book before him. He sketched a hundred designs, but left nearly all incomplete, some greatly so, and partly engraved seven plates, of which the 'Francesca and Paolo' is the most finished. It is not, I think, inferior to any but the finest in *Job*, if indeed to them, and shows in its perfection Blake's mastery over elemental things, the swirl in which the lost spirits are hurried, 'a watery flame' he would have called it, the haunted waters and the huddling shapes. In the illustrations of Purgatory there is a serene beauty, and one finds his Dante and Virgil climbing among the rough rocks under a cloudy sun, and in their sleep upon the smooth steps towards the summit, a placid, marmoreal, tender, starry rapture.

All in this great series are in some measure powerful and moving, and not, as it is customary to say of the work of Blake, because a flaming imagination pierces

through a cloudy and indecisive technique, but because they have the only excellence possible in any art, a mastery over artistic expression. The technique of Blake was imperfect, incomplete, as is the technique of wellnigh all artists who have striven to bring fires from remote summits; but where his imagination is perfect and complete, his technique has a like perfection, a like completeness. He strove to embody more subtle raptures, more elaborate intuitions than any before him; his imagination and technique are more broken and strained under a great burden than the imagination and technique of any other master. 'I am,' wrote Blake, 'like others, just equal in invention and execution.' And again, 'No man can improve an original invention; nor can an original invention exist without execution, organised, delineated and articulated either by God or man...I have heard people say, "Give me the ideas; it is no matter what words you put them into"; and others say, "Give me the design; it is no matter for the execution".... Ideas cannot be given but in their minutely appropriate words, nor can a design be made without its minutely appropriate execution.' Living in a time when technique and imagination are continually perfect and complete, because they no longer strive to bring fire from heaven, we forget how imperfect and incomplete they were in even the greatest masters, in Botticelli, in Orcagna, and in Giotto.

The errors in the handiwork of exalted spirits are as the more fantastical errors in their lives; as Coleridge's opium cloud; as Villiers de l'Isle-Adam's candidature for the throne of Greece; as Blake's anger against causes and purposes he but half understood; as that veritable madness an Eastern scripture thinks permissible among the saints; for he who half lives in eternity endures a rending of the structures of the mind, a crucifixion of the intellectual body. [1896]

1 Woollett and Strange had established names when Blake began to draw, and must have seemed to Blake in certain moods the types of all triumphant iniquity. Woollett used to fire a cannon from the roof of his house whenever he finished an important plate.

V
THE PHILOSOPHY OF SHELLEY'S POETRY
W.B. YEATS

I. His Ruling ideas

When I was a boy in Dublin I was one of a group who rented a room in a mean street to discuss philosophy. My fellow-students got more and more interested in certain modern schools of mystical belief, and I never found any-body to share my one unshakable belief. I thought that whatever of philosophy has been made poetry is alone permanent, and that one should begin to arrange it in some regular order, rejecting nothing as the make believe of the poets. I thought, so far as I can recollect my thoughts after so many years, that if a powerful and benevolent spirit has shaped the destiny of this world, we can better discover that destiny from the words that have gathered up the heart's desire of the world, than from historical records, or from speculation, when in the heart withers. Since then I have observed dreams very carefully, and am now certain that the imagination has some way insight on the truth that the reason has not, and that its commandments, delivered when the body is still and the reason silent, are the most binding we can ever know. I have re-read *Prometheus Unbound*, which I had hoped my fellow-students would have studied as a sacred book, and it seems to me to have an even more certain place than I had thought among the sacred books of the world. I remember going to a learned scholar to ask about its deep meanings, which I felt more than understood, and his telling me that it was Godwin's *Political Justice* put into rhyme, and that Shelley was a crude revolutionist, and believed that the overturning of kings and priests would regenerate mankind. I quoted the lines which tell how the halcyons ceased to prey on fish, and how poisonous leaves became good for food, to show he foresaw more than any political regeneration, but was too timid to push the argument. I still believe that one cannot help believing him, as this scholar I know believes him, a vague thinker, who mixed occasional great poetry with a fantastic rhetoric, unless one compares such passages, and above all such passages as describe the liberty he praised, till one has discovered the system of belief that lay behind them. It should seem natural to find his thought full of subtlety, for Mrs. Shelley has told how he hesitated whether he should be a metaphysician or a poet, and has spoken of his 'huntings after the obscure' with regret, and said of that *Prometheus Unbound*, which so many for three generations have thought *Political Justice* put into rhyme, 'It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating, as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.' From these scattered fragments and observations, and from many passages read in their light, one soon comes to understand that his liberty was so much more than the liberty of *Political Justice* that it was one with Intellectual Beauty, and that the regeneration he foresaw was so much more, than the regeneration many political dreamers have foreseen, that it could not come in its perfection till the Hours bore 'Time to his tomb in eternity'. In *A Defence of Poetry*, he will have it that the poet and the lawgiver hold their station by the right of the same faculty, the one uttering in words and the other in the forms of society his vision of the divine order, the Intellectual Beauty. 'Poets' according to the circumstances of the age and nation, in which they appeared, were called in the earliest epoch of the world legislators or prophets, and a poet essentially comprises and unites both these characters. For he not only beholds intensely the present as it is, and discovers those laws according to which present things are to be ordained, but he beholds the future in the present, and his thoughts are the germs of the flowers and the fruit of latest time. 'Language, colour, form, and religious and civil habits of action are all the instruments and materials of poetry'. Poetry the creation of

actions according to the unchangeable process of human nature as existing in the mind of the creator, which is itself the image of all other minds'. 'Poets have been challenged to resign the civic crown to reasoners and merchants....It is admitted that the exercise of the imagination is the most delightful, but it is alleged that of reason is the more useful. ...Whilst the mechanist abridges and the political economist combines labour, let them be sure that their speculations, for want of correspondence with those first principles which belong to the imagination, do not tend, as they have in modern England, to exasperate at once the extremes of luxury and want. ...The rich have become richer, the poor have become poorer, ...such are the effects which must ever flow from an unmitigated exercise of the calculating faculty.' The speaker of these things might almost be Blake, who held that the Reason not only created Ugliness, but all other evils. The books of all wisdom are hidden in the cave of the Witch of Atlas, who is one of his personifications of beauty, and when she moves over the enchanted river that is an image of all life, the priests cast aside their deceits, and the king crowns an ape to mock his own sovereignty, and the soldiers gather about the anvils to beat their swords to ploughshares, and lovers cast away their timidity, and friends are united; while the power which, in *Laon and Cythna*, awakens the mind of the reformer to contend, and itself contends, against the tyrannies of the world, is first seen as the star of love or beauty. And at the end of the *Ode to Naples*, he cries out to, 'the spirit of beauty' to overturn the tyrannies of the world, or to fill them with its, 'harmonising ardours'. He calls the spirit of beauty liberty, because despotism, and perhaps, as 'the man of virtuous soul commands not, nor obeys', all authority, pluck virtue from her path towards beauty , and because it leads us by that love whose service is perfect freedom. It leads all things by love, for he cries again and again that love is the perception of beauty in thought and things, and it orders all things by love, for it is love that impels the soul to its expressions in thought and in action, by making us seek to awaken in all things that are, a community with what we experience within ourselves. 'We are born into the world, and there is something within us which, from the instant that we live, more and more thirsts after its likeness.' We have 'a soul within our soul that describes a circle around its proper paradise which pain and sorrow and evil dare not overleap', and we labour to see this soul in many mirrors, that we may possess it the more abundantly. He would hardly seek the progess of the world by any less gentle labour, and would hardly have us resist evil itself. He bids the reformers in the *Philosophical Review of Reform* receive 'the onset of the cavalry', if it be sent to disperse their meetings, 'with folded arms', and 'not because active resistance is not justifiable, but because temperance and courage would produce greater advantages than the most decisive victory'; and he gives them like advice in *The Masque of Anarchy*, for liberty the poem cries, 'is love', and can make the rich man kiss its feet, and, like those who followed Christ, give away his goods and follow it throughout the world.

He does not believe that the reformation of society can bring this beauty, this divine order, among men without the regeneration of the hearts of men. Even in *Queen Mab*, which was written before he had found his deepest thought, or rather perhaps before he had found words to utter it for I do not think men change much in their deepest thought, he is less anxious to change men's beliefs, as I think, than to cry out against that serpent more subtle than any beast of the field, 'the cause and the effect of tyranny'. He affirms again and again that the virtuous, those who have 'pure desire and universal love', are happy in the midst of tyranny, and he foresees a day when the 'Spirit of Nature', the Spirit of Beauty of his later poems, who has her 'throne of power unappealable' in every man heart, shall have made men so virtuous that 'kingly glare will lose its power to dazzle', and 'silently pass by', and, as it seems, commerce, 'the venal interchange of all that human art or nature yield; which wealth should purchase not', come silently to an end.

He was always, indeed in chief witness for that 'power unappealable'. Maddalo, in *Julian and Maddalo*, says that a soul is powerless, and can only, like a 'dreary bell hung in a heaven-illumined tower, toll our thoughts and our desires to meet below

round the rent heart and pray'; but Julian, who is Shelley himself, replies. as the makers of all religions have replied:

> Where is the love. beauty, and truth we seek
> But in our mind? And if we were not weak,
> Should we be less in deed than in desire?

while *Mont Blanc* is an intricate analogy to affirm that the

soul has its sources in 'the secret strength .of things which governs thought, and to the infinite dome of heaven is as a law'. He even thought that men might be immortal were they sinless, and his Cythna bids the sailors be without remorse, for all that live are stained as they are. It is thus, she says, that time marks men and their thoughts for the tomb. And the 'Red Comet', the image of evil in *Laon and Cythna.* when it began its war with the star of beauty, brought not only 'Fear, Hatred, Fraud and Tyranny', but 'Death, Decay, Earthquake, and Blight and Madness pale'.

When the Red Comet is conquered, when Jupiter is over= thrown by Demogorgon, when the prophecy of Queen Mab is fulfilled, visible Nature will put on perfection again. Shelley declares, in one of the notes to *Queen Mab.* that 'there is no great extravagance in presuming... that there should be a perfect identity betwee the moral and physical improvement of the human species', and thinks it 'certain tha wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilised man'. In *Prometheus Unbound* he sees, as in the ecstasy of a saint, the ships moving among the seas of the world without fear of danger—

> by the light
> Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
> And music soft,

and poison dying out of the green things, and cruelty out of all living things, and even the toads and efts becoming beautiful, and at last Time being borne 'to his tomb in eternity.

This beauty, this divine order, whereof all things shallbecome a part in a kind of resurrection of the body, is already visible to the deadand to souls in ecstasy, for ecstasy is a kind of death. The dying Lionel hears thesong of the nightingale, and cries:

> Heardst thou not sweet words among
> That heaven-resounding minstrelsy ?
> Heardst thou not, that those who die
> Awake in a world of ecstasy?
> That love, when limbs are interwoven,
> And sleep, when the night of life is cloven,
> And thought, to the world's dim boundaries clinging,
> And music, when one beloved is singing,
> Is death? Let us drain right joyously
> The cup which the sweet bird fills for me.

And in the most famous passage in all his poetry he sgs of Death as of a mistress. 'Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass, stains thehite radiance of Eternity.' 'Die, , if thou wouldst be with that which thou dost sk' ; and he sees his own soon-coming death in a rapture of prophecy, for 'the fire f which all thirst' beams upon him, , 'consuming the last clouds of cold mortality' /hen he is dead he will still influence the living, for though Adonais has fled 'toe burning fountain whence he came', and 'is a portion of the Eternal which must gw through time and change, unquenchably the same', and has 'awakened from t dream of !life', he has not gone from the 'young Dawn', or the caverns and the fore, or the 'faint flowers and

fountains'. He has been 'made one with Nature', and his voice is 'heard in all her music', and his presence is felt wherever 'that Power may move which has withdrawn his being to its own', and he bears 'his part' when it is compelling mortal things to their appointed forms, and he overshadows men's minds at their supreme moments, for—

> when lofty thought
> Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
> And love and life contend in it for what
> Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there,
> And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

'Of his speculations as to what will befall this inestimable spirit when we appear to die,' Mrs. Shelley has written, 'a mystic ideality tinged these speculations in Shelley's mind; certain stanzas in the poem of *The Sensitive Plant* express, in some degree, the almost inexpressible idea, not that we die into another state, when this state is no longer, from some reason, unapparent as well as apparent, accordant with our being— but that those who rise above the ordinary nature of man, fade from before our imperfect organs; they remain in their 'love, beauty, and delight', in a world congenial to them, and we, clogged by 'error, ignorance, and strife', see them not till we are fitted by purification and improvement to their higher state.' Not merely happy souls, but all beautiful places and movements and gestures and events, when we think they have ceased to be, have become portions of the Eternal.

> In this life
> Of error, ignorance and strive,
> Where nothing is, but all things seem,
> And we the shadows of the dream.
> It is a modest creed, and yet
> Pleasant, if one considers it,
> To own that death itself must be,
> Like all the rest, a mockery.
> That garden sweet, that lady fair,
> And all sweet shapes and odours there,
> In truth have never past away;
> 'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed, not they.
> For love, and beauty, and delight
> There is no death nor change; their might
> Exceeds our organs, which endure
> No light, being themselves obscure.

He seems in his speculations to have lit on that memory of Nature the visionaries claim for the foundation of their knowledge; but I do not know whether he thought, as they do, that all things good and evil remain for ever, 'thinking the thought and doing the deed', though not, it may be, self-conscious; or only thought that 'love and beauty and delight' remain for ever. The passage where Queen Mab awakes 'all knowledge of the past', and the good and evil 'events of old and wondrous times', was no more doubtless than a part of the machinery of the poem, but all the machineries of poetry are parts of the convictions of antiquity, and readily become again convictions in minds that brood over them with visionary intensity.

Intellectual Beauty has not only the happy dead to do her will, but ministering spirits who correspond to the Devas of the East, and the Elemental Spirits of mediaeval Europe, and the Sidhe of ancient Ireland and whose too constant presence, and perhaps Shelley's ignorance of their more traditional forms, give some of his poetry an air of rootless fantasy. They change continually in his poetry, as they do in the visions of the mystics everywhere and of the common people in Ireland, and the forms of these changes display, in an especial sense, the flowing forms of his mind when freed from all impulse not out of itself or out of supersensual power. These are 'gleams of a remoter world which visit us in sleep', spiritual essences whose shadows

are the delights of all the senses, sounds 'folded in cells of crystal silence', 'visions swift, and sweet, and quaint', which lie waiting their moment 'each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis', 'odours' 'among' ever-blooming Eden-trees', 'liquors' that can give 'happy sleep', or can make tears all wonder and delight; 'the golden genii who spoke to the poets of Greece in dreams'; 'the phantoms' which become the forms of the arts when the mind, arising bright from the embrace of beauty, 'casts on them the gathered rays which are reality', 'the guardians' who move in 'the atmosphere of human thought'; as 'the birds within the wind, or the fish within the wave', or man's thought itself through all things; and who join the throng of the happy Hours when Time is passing away—

> As the flying-fish leap
> From the Indian deep,
> And mix with sea-birds half asleep.

It is these powers which lead Asia and Panthea, as they would lead all the affections of humanity, by words written upon leaves, by faint songs, by eddies of echoes that draw 'all spirits on that secret way', by the 'dying odours' of flowers and by 'the sunlight of the spherèd dew', beyond the gates of birth and death to awake Demogorgon, eternity, that 'the painted veil called life' may be 'torn aside'.

There are also ministers of ugliness and all evil, like those that came to Prometheus :

> As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
> To gather for her festal crown of flowers
> The aerial crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
> So from our victim's destined agony
> The shade which is our form invests us round;
> Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Or like those whose shapes the poet sees in *The Triumph of Life*, coming from the procession that follows the car of life, as 'hope' changes to 'desire', shadows 'numerous as the dead leaves blow in autumn evening from a poplar-tree'; and resembling those they come from, until, if I understand an obscure phrase aright, they are 'wrapt' round 'all the busy phantoms that were there as the sun shapes the clouds'. Some to sit 'chattering like restless apes', and some like 'old anatomies' 'hatching their bare broods under the shade of demon wings', laughing 'to reassume the delegated power' they had given to the tyrants of the earth, and some 'like small gnats and flies 'to throng' about the brow of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist', and some 'like discoloured flakes of snow' to fall 'on fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair', to be 'melted by the youthful glow which they extinguished' and many to 'fling shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves', shadows that are shaped into new forms by that 'creative ray' in which all move like motes.

These ministers of beauty and ugliness were certainly more than metaphors or picturesque phrases to one who believed the 'thoughts which are called real or external objects' differed but in regularity of recurrence from 'hallucinations, dreams, and the ideas of madness', and lessened this difference by telling how he had dreamed 'three several times, between intervals of two or more years, the same precise dream', and who had seen images with the mind's eye that left his nerves shaken for days together. Shadows that were—

> as when there hovers
> A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
> Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening,
> Strange night upon some Indian isle.

could not but have had more than a metaphorical and

picturesque being to one who had spoken in terror with an image of himself, and who had fainted at the apparition of a woman with eyes in her breasts, and who had tried to burn down a wood, if we can trust Mrs. Williams' account, because he believed a devil, who had first tried to kill him, had sought refuge there.

It seems to me, indeed, that Shelley had reawakened in himself the age of faith, though there were times when he would doubt, as even the saints have doubted, and that he was a revolutionist, because he had heard the commandment, 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if do them'. I have re-read his *Prometheus Unbound* for the first time for many years, in the woods of Drim-na-Rod, among the Echtge hills, and sometimes I have looked towards Slieve na' nOg where the country people say the last battle of the world shall be fought till the third day, when a priest shall lift a chalice, and the thousand years of peace begin. And I think this mysterious song utters a faith as simple and as ancient as the faith of those country people, in a form suited to a new age, that will understand with Blake that the Holy Spirit is 'an intellectual fountain' and that the kinds and degrees of beauty are the images of its authority.

II. HIS RULING SYMBOLS

At a comparatively early time Shelley made his imprisoned Cythna become wise in all human wisdom through the contemplation of her own mind, and write out this wisdom upon the sands in 'signs' that were 'clear elemental shapes, whose smallest change made 'a subtler language within language' , and were 'the key of truths which once were dimly taught in old Crotona' His early romances and much throughout his poetry show how strong a fascination the traditions of magic and of the magical philosophy had cast over his mind, and one can hardly suppose that he had not brooded over their doctrine of symbols or signatures, though I do not find anything to show that he gave it any deep study. One find in his poetry, besides innumerable images that have not the definiteness of symbols, many images that are certainly symbols, and as the years went by he began to use these with a more and more deliberately symbolic purpose. I imagine that when he wrote his earlier poems he allowed the subconscious life to lay its hands so firmly upon the rudder of his imagination that he was little conscious of the abstract meaning of the images that rose in what seemed the idleness of his mind. Anyone who has any experience of any mystical state of the soul knows who there float up in the mind profound symbols,[1] whose meaning, if indeed they do not delude one into the dream that they are meaningless, one does not perhaps understand for years. Nor I think has anyone, who has known that experience with any constancy, failed to find some day, in some old book or on some old monument, a strange or intricate image that had floated up before him, and to grow perhaps dizzy with the sudden conviction that our little memories are but a part of some great Memory that renews the world and men's thoughts age after age, and that our thoughts are not, as we suppose, the deep, but a little foam upon the deep. Shelley understood this, as is proved by what he says of the eternity of beautiful things and of the influence of the dead, but whether he understood that the great Memory is also a dwelling=house of symbols, of images that are living souls, I cannot tell. He had certainly experience of all but the most profound of the mystical states, and had known that union with created things which assuredly must precede the soul's union with the uncreated spirit. He says, in his fragment of an essay 'On Life', mistaking a unique experience for the common experience of all: 'Let us recollect our sensations as children... we less habitually distinguished all that we saw and felt from ourselves. They seemed as it were to constitute one mass. There are some persons who in this respect are always children. Those who are subject to the state called reverie, feel as if their nature were resolved into the surrounding universe or as if the surrounding universe were resolved into their being', and he must have expected to receive thoughts and images from beyond his own mind, just in so far as that mind transcended its preoccupation with particular

[1] *Marianne's Dream* was certainly copied from a real dream of somebody's, but like images come to the mystic in his waking state.

time and place, for he believed inspiration a kind of death; and he could hardly have helped perceiving that an image that has transcended particular time and place becomes a symbol, passes beyond death, as it were, and becomes a living soul.

When Shelley went to the Continent with Godwin's daughter in 1814 they sailed down certain great rivers in an open boat, and when he summed up in his preface to *Laon and Cythna* the things that helped to make him a poet, he spoke of these voyages: 'I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains.'

He may have seen some cave that was the bed of a rivulet by some river-side, or have followed some mountain stream to its source in a cave, for from his return to England rivers and streams and wells, flowing through caves or rising in them, came into every poem of his that was of any length, and always with the precision of symbols. Alastor passed in his boat along a river in a cave; and when for the last time he felt the presence of the spirit he loved and followed, it was when he watched his image in a silent well; and when he died it was where a river fell into 'an abysmal chasm'; and the Witch of Atlas in her gladness, as he in his sadness, passed in her boat along a river in a cave, and it was where it bubbled *out* of a cave that she was born; and when Rousseau, the typical poet of *The Triumph of Life*, awoke to the vision that was life, it was where a rivulet bubbled out of a cave; and the poet of *Epipsychidion* met the evil beauty 'by a well, under blue nightshade bowers'; and Cythna bore her child imprisoned in a great cave beside 'a fountain round and vast, in which the wave, imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually'; and her lover Laon was brought to his prison in a high column through a cave where there was 'a putrid pool'; and when he went to see the conquered city he dismounted beside a polluted fountain in the market-place, foreshadowing thereby that spirit who at the end of *Prometheus Unbound* gazes at a re=generated city from 'within a fountain in the public square'; and when Laon and Cythna are dead they awake beside a fountain and drift into Paradise along a river; and at the end of things Prometheus and Asia are to live amid a happy world in a cave where a fountain 'leaps with an awakening sound'; and it was by a fountain, the meeting-place of certain unhappy lovers, that Rosalind and Helen told their unhappiness to one another; and it was under a willow by a fountain that the enchantress and her lover began their unhappy love; while his lesser poems and his prose fragments use caves and rivers and wells and fountains continually as metaphors. It may be that his subconscious life seized upon some passing scene, and moulded it into an ancient symbol without help from anything but that great Memory: but so good a Platonist as Shelley could hardly have thought of any cave as a symbol without thinking of Plato's cave that was the world; and so good a scholar may well have had Porphyry on 'the cave of the Nymphs' in his mind. When I compare Porphyry's description of the cave where the Phacacian boat left Odysseus, with Shelley's description of the cave of the Witch of Atlas, to name but one of many, I find it hard think otherwise. I quote Taylor's translation, only putting Mr. Lang's prose for Taylor's bad verse. 'What does Homer obscurely signify by the cave in Ithaca which he describes in the following verses? "Now at the harbour's head is a long-leaved olive-tree, and hard by is a pleasant cave and shadowy, sacred to the nymphs, that are called Naiads. And therein are mixing-bowls and jars of stone, and there moreover do bees hide. And there are great looms of stone, whereon the nymphs weave raiment of purple stain, a marvel to behold; and there are waters welling evermore. Two gates there are to the cave, the one set towards the North wind, whereby men may go down, but the portals towards the South pertain rather to the gods, whereby men may not enter: it is the way of the immortals". He goes on to argue that the cave was a temple before Homer wrote, and that 'the ancients did not establish temples without fabulous symbols', and then begins to interpret Homer's description in all its detail. The ancients, he says, 'consecrated a cave to the world' and held 'the flowing waters' and the 'obscurity of the cavern' 'apt symbols of what the world contains', and he calls to witness Zoroaster's cave with fountains; and often caves are, he says, symbols of 'all invisible power; because as caves are obscure and

dark, so the essence of all these powers is occult', and quotes a lost hymn to Apollo to prove that nymphs living in caves fed men 'from intellectual fountains' ; and he contends that fountains and rivers symbolise generation, and that the word nymph 'is commonly applied to all souls descending into generation', and that the two gates of Homer's cave are the gate of generation and the gate of ascent though death to the gods, the gate of cold and moisture, and the gate of heat and fire. Cold, he says, causes life in the world, and heat causes life among the gods, and the constellation of the Cup is set in the heavens near the sign Cancer, because it is there that the souls descending from the Milky Way receive their draught of the intoxicating cold drink of generation. 'The mixing-bowls and jars of stone' are consecrated to the Naiads, and are also, as it seems, symbolical of Bacchus, and are of stone because of the rocky beds of the rivers. And 'the looms of stone' are the symbols of the 'souls that descend into generation'. 'For the formation of the flesh is on or about the bones, which in the bodies of animals resemble stones,' and also because 'the body is a garment' not only about the soul, but about all essences that become visible, for 'the heavens are called by the ancients a veil, in consequence of being as it were the vestments of the celestial gods'. The bees hive in the mixing=bowls and jars of stone, for so Porphyry understands the passage, because honey was the symbol adopted by the ancients, for 'pleasure arising from generation', The ancients he says, called souls not only Naiads but bees, 'as the efficient cause of sweetness'; but not all souls 'proceeding into generation' are called bees, 'but those who will live in it justly and who after having performed such things as are acceptable to the gods will again return (to their kindred stars). For this insect loves to return to the place from whence it came and is eminently just and sober.' I find all these details in the cave of the Witch of Atlas, the most elaborately described of Shelley's caves, except the two gates, and these have a far-off echo in her summer journeys on her cavern river and in her winter sleep in 'an inextinguishable well of crimson fire'. We have for the mixing-bowls, an jars of stone full of honey, those delights of the senses, 'sounds of air' 'folded in cells of crystal silence', 'liquors clear arid sweet' 'in crystal vials', and for the bees, visions 'each in its thin sheath like a chrysalis', and for 'the looms of stone' and 'raiment of purple stain' the Witch's spinning and embroidering; and the Witch herself is a Naiad, and was born from one of the Atlantides; who lay in a 'chamber of grey rock' until she was changed by the sun's embrace into a cloud.

When one turns to Shelley for an explanation of the cave and fountain one finds how close his thought was to Porphyry's. He looked upon thought as a condition of life in generation and believed that the reality beyond was something other than thought. He wrote in his fragment On Life: 'That the basis of all things cannot be, as the popular philosophy alleges, mind, is sufficiently evident. Mind, as far as we have any experience of its properties, and beyond that \experience how vain is argument, cannot create, it can only perceive'; and in another passage he defines mind as existence. Water is his great symbol of existence, and he continually meditates over its mysterious source. In his prose he tells how 'thought can with difficulty visit the intricate and winding chambers which it inhabits. It is like a river, whose rapid and perpetual stream flows outward. ...The caverns of the mind are obscure and shadowy; or pervaded with a lustre, beautiful and bright indeed, but shining not beyond their portals. 'When the Witch has passed in her boat from the cavemed river, that is doubtless her own destiny, she passes along the Nile 'by Moeris and the Mareotid lakes', and sees all human life shadowed upon its waters in shadows that 'never are erased but tremble ever'; and in 'many a dark and subterranean street under the Nile'- new caverns—and along the bank of the Nile; and as she bends over the unhappy, she compares unhappiness to the strife that 'stirs the liquid surface of man's life' ; and because she can see the reality of things she is described as journeying 'in the calm depths' of 'the wide lake' we journey over unpiloted. Alastor calls the river that he follows an image of his mind, and thinks that it will be as hard to say where his thought will be when he is dead as where its waters will be in ocean or cloud in a little while. In Mont Blanc, a poem so overladen with descriptions in parentheses that one loses sight of its logic, Shelley compares ,the following through our mind of 'the universe of things', which are, he has explained elsewhere, but thoughts; to the

flowing of the Arve through the ravine, and compares the unknown sources of our thoughts, in some 'remoter world' whose 'gleams' 'visit the soul in sleep', to Arve sources among the glaciers on the mountain heights. Cythna in the passage where she speaks of making signs 'a subtler language within language' on the sand by the 'fountain' of sea water in the cave where she is imprisoned, speaks of the 'cave' of her mind which gave its secrets to her, and of 'one mind, the type of all' which is a 'moveless wave reflecting all moving things that are'; and then passing more completely, under the power of the symbol, she speaks of growing wise through contemplation of the images that rise out of the fountain at the call of her will. Again and again one finds some passing allusion to the cave of man's mind, or to the caves of his youth, or to the cave of mysteries we enter at death, for to Shelley as to Porphyry it is more than an image of life in the world. It may mean any enclosed life, as when it is the dwelling-place of Asia and Prometheus or when it is still the 'cave of poetry', and it may have all meanings at once, or it may have as little meaning as some ancient religious symbol enwoven from the habit of centuries with the patterns of a carpet or a tapestry.

As Shelley sailed along those great rivers and saw or imagined the cave that associated itself with rivers in his mind, he saw half-ruined towers upon the hilltops, and once at any rate a tower is used to symbolise a meaning that is the contrary to the meaning symbolised by caves. Cythna's lover is brought through the cave where there is a polluted fountain to a high tower, for being man's far-seeing mind, when the world has cast him out he must to the 'towers of thought's crowned powers'; nor is it possible for Shelley to have forgotten this first imprisonment when he made men imprison Lionel in a tower for a like offence; and because I know how hard it is to forget a symbolical meaning, once one has found it, I believe Shelley had more than a romantic scene in his mind when he made Prince Athanase follow his mysterious studies in a lighted tower above the sea, and when he made the old hermit watch over Laon in his sickness in a half-ruined tower, wherein the sea, here doubtless, as to Cythna, 'the one mind', threw 'spangled sands' and 'rarest sea shells'. The tower, important in Maeterlinck, as in Shelley, is, like the sea, and rivers, and caves with fountains, a very ancient symbol, and would perhaps, as years went by, have grown more important in his poetry. The contrast between it and the cave in *Laon and Cythna* suggests a contrast between the mind looking outward upon men and things and the mind looking inward upon itself, which may or may not have been in Shelley's mind, but certainly helps, with one knows not how many other dim meanings, to give the poem mystery and shadow. It is only by ancient symbols, by symbols that have numberless meanings besides the one or two the writer lays an emphasis upon, or the half-score he knows of, that any highly subjective art can escape from the barrenness and shallowness of a too conscious arrangement, into the abundance and depth of Nature. The poet of essences and pure ideas must seek in the half-lights that glimmer from symbol to symbol as if to the ends of the earth, all that the epic and dramatic poet finds of mystery and shadow in the accidental circumstances of life.

The most important, the most precise of all Shelley's symbols, the one he uses with the fullest knowledge of its meaning, is the Morning and Evening Star. It rises and sets for ever over the towers and rivers, and is the throne of his genius. Personified as a woman it leads Rousseau, the typical poet of *The Triumph of Life*, under the power of the de- stroying hunger of life, under the power of the sun that we shall find presently as a symbol of life, and it is the Morning Star that wars against the principle of evil in *Laon and Cythna*, at first as a star with a red comet, here a symbol of all evil as it is of disorder in *Epipsychidion*, and then as a serpent with an eagle—symbols in Blake too and in the Alchemists; and it is the Morning Star that appears as a winged youth to a woman, who typifies humanity amid its sorrows, in the first canto of *Laon and Cythna;* and it is invoked by the wailing women of *Hellas*, who call it 'lamp of the free' and 'became of love' and would go where it hides flying from the deepening night among those 'kingless continents sinless as Eden', and 'mountains and islands' 'prankt on the sapphire sea' that are but the opposing

hemispheres to the senses, but, as I think, the ideal world, the world of the dead, to the imagination: and in the *Ode to Liberty*, Liberty is bid lead wisdom out of the inmost cave of man's mind as the Morning Star leads the sun out of the waves. We know too that had *Prince Athanase* been finished it would have described the finding of Pandemos, the Star's lower genius, and the growing weary of her, and the coming of its true genius Urania at the coming of death, as the day finds the Star at evening. There is hardly indeed a poem of any length in which one does not find it as a symbol of love, or liberty, or wisdom, or beauty, or of some other expression of that Intellectual Beauty which was to Shelley's mind the central power of the world; and to its faint and fleeting light he offers up all desires, that are as—

> The desire of the moth for the star,
> Of the night for the morrow,
> The devotion to something afar
> From the sphere of our sorrow.

When its genius comes to Rousseau, shedding dew with one hand, and treading out the stars with her feet, for she is also the genius of the dawn, she brings him a cup full of oblivion and love. He drinks and his mind becomes like sand 'on desert Labrador' marked by the feet of deer and a wolf. And then the new vision, life, the cold light of day moves before him, and the first vision becomes an invisible presence. The same image was in his mind too when he wrote:

> Hesperus flies from awakening night
> And pants in its beauty; and speed with light,
> Fast fleeting, soft and bright.

Though I do not think that Shelley needed to go to Torphyry's account of the cold intoxicating cup, given to the souls in the constellation of the Cup near the constellation Cancer, for so obvious a symbol as the cup, or that he could not have found the wolf and the deer and the continual flight of his Star in his own mind, his poetry becomes the richer, the more emotional, and loses something of its appearance of idle fantasy when I remember that these are ancient symbols, and still come to visionaries in their dreams. Because the wolf is but a more violent symbol of longing and desire than the hound, his wolf and deer remind me of the hound and deer that Oisin saw in the Gaelic poem chasing one another on the water before he saw the young man following the woman with the golden apple; and of a Galway tale that tells how Niamh, whose name means brightness or beauty, came to Oisin as a deer; and of a vision that a friend of mine saw when gazing at a dark-blue curtain. I was with a number of Hermetists, and one of them said to another, 'Do you see something in the curtain?' The other gazed at the curtain for a while and saw presently a man led through a wood by a black hound, and then the hound lay dead at a place the seer knew was called, without knowing why, 'the Meeting of the Suns', and the man followed a red hound, and then the red hound was pierced by a spear. A white fawn watched the man out of the wood, but he did not look at it, for a white hound came and he followed it trembling, but the seer knew that he would follow the fawn at last, and that it would lead him among the gods. The most learned of the Hermetists said, 'I cannot tell the meaning of the hounds or where the Meeting of the Suns is, but I think the fawn is the Morning and Evening Star'. I have little doubt that when the man saw the white fawn he was coming out of the darkness and passion of the world into some day of partial regeneration, and that it was the Morning Star and would be the Evening Star at its second coming. I have little doubt that it was but the story of Prince Athanase and what may have been the story of Rousseau in *The Triumph of Life*, thrown outward once again from that great Memory, which is still the mother of the Muses, though men no longer believe in it.

It may have been this memory, or it may have been some impulse of his nature too subtle for his mind to follow, that made Keats, with his love of embodied things, of precision of form and colouring, of emotions made sleepy by the flesh, see

Intellectual Beauty in the Moon; and Blake, who lived in that energy he called eternal delight, see it in the Sun, where his personification of poetic genius labours at a furnace. I think there was certainly some reason why these men took so deep a pleasure in lights that Shelley thought of with weariness and trouble. The Moon is the most changeable of symbols, and not merely because it is the symbol of change. As mistress of the waters she governs the life of instinct and the generation of things, for, as Porphyry says, even 'the apparition of images' in the 'imagination' is through 'an excess of moisture'; and, as a cold and changeable fire set in the bare heavens, she governs alike chastity and the joyless idle drifting hither and thither a generated things. She may give God a body and have Gabriel to bear her messages, or she may come to men of their happy moments as she came to Endymion, or she may deny life and shoot her arrows; but because she only becomes beautiful in giving herself, and is no flying ideal, she is not loved by the children of desire.

Shelley could not help but see her with unfriendly eyes. He is believed to have described Mary Shelley at a time when she had come to seem cold in his eyes, in that passage of Epipsychidion which tells how a woman like the Moon led him to her cave and made 'frost' creep over the sea of his mind, and so bewitched Life and Death with 'her silver voice' that they ran from him crying, 'Away, he is not of our crew'. When he describes the Moon as part of some beautiful scene he can call her beautiful, but when he personifies, when his word come under the influence of that great Memory or of some mysterious tide in the depth of our being, he grows unfriendly or nor truly friendly or at the most pitiful. The Moon's lips 'are pale and waning', it is 'the cold Moon', or 'the frozen and inconstant Moon', or it is 'forgotten' and 'waning', or it 'wanders' and is 'weary', or it is 'pale and grey', or it is 'pale for weariness', and 'wandering companionless' and 'ever changing', and finding 'no object worth' its 'constancy', or it is like a 'dying lady' who 'totters' 'out of her chamber led by the insane and feeble wanderings of her fading brain', and even when it is no more than a star, it casts an evil influence that makes the lips of lovers 'lurid' or pale. It only becomes a thing of delight when Time is being borne to his tomb in eternity, for then the spirit of the Earth, man's procreant mind, fills it with his own joyousness. He describes the spirit of the Earth and of the Moon, moving above the rivulet of their lives, in a passage which reads like a half-understood vision. Man has become 'one harmonious soul of many a soul' and call all things flow to 'all and 'familiar acts are beautiful through love', and an 'animation of delight' at this change flows from spirit to spirit till the snow 'is loosened' from the Moon's c lifeless mountains'.

Some old magical writer, I forget who, says if you wish to be melancholy hold in your left hand an image of the Moon made out of silver, and if you wish to be happy hold in your right hand an image of the Sun made out of gold.[2] The Sun is the symbol of sensitive life, and of belief and joy and pride and energy, of indeed the whole life of the will, and of that beauty which neither lures from far off, nor becomes beautiful in giving itself, but makes all glad because it is beauty. Taylor quotes Proclus as calling it 'the Demiurgos of everything sensible'. It was therefore natural that Blake, who was always praising energy, and all exalted overflowing of oneself, and who thought art an impassioned labour to keep men from doubt and despondency, and woman's love an evil, when it would trammel man's will, should see the poetic genius not in a woman star but in the Sun, and should rejoice throughout his poetry in 'the Sun in his strength'. Shelley, however, except when he uses it to describe the peculiar beauty of Emilia Viviani, who was like 'an incarnation of the Sun when light is changed to love', saw it with less friendly eyes. He seems to have seen it with perfect happiness only when veiled in mist, or glimmering upon water, or when faint enough to do no more than veil the brightness of his own Star. . and in *The Triumph of Life*, the one poem in which it is part of the avowed symbolism, its power is the being and the source of all tyrannies. When the woman personifying the Morning Star has faded from before his eyes, Rousseau sees a 'new

[2] Wilde told me that he had read this somewhere. He had suggested it to Burne-Jones as a subject for a picture. 1924.

vision' in 'a cold bright car' with a rainbow hovering over her, and as she comes the shadow passes from 'leaf and stone' and the souls she has enslaved seem 'in that light, like atomies to dance within a sunbeam', or they dance among the flowers that grow up newly in 'the grassy vesture of the desert', unmindful of the misery that is to come upon them. These are 'the great, the unforgotten', all who have worn 'mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light', and yet have not known themselves. Even 'great Plato' is there, because he knew joy and sorrow, because life that could not subdue him by gold or pain, by 'age, or sloth, or slavery', subdued him by love. All who have ever lived are there except Christ and Socrates and the 'sacred few' who put away all life could give, being doubtless followers throughout their lives of the forms borne by the flying ideal, or who, 'as soon as they had touched the world with living flame, fled back like eagles to their native noon'.

In ancient times, it seems to me that Blake, who for all his 'protest was glad to be alive, and ever spoke of his gladness, would have worshipped in some chapel of the Sun, but that Shelley, who hated life because he sought' more in life than any understood', would have wandered, lost in a ceaseless reverie, in some chapel of the Star of infinite desire.

I think too that as he knelt before an altar where a thin flame burnt in a lamp made of green agate, a single vision would have come to him again and again, a vision of a boat drifting down a broad river between high hills where there were caves and towers, and following the light of one Star; and that voices would have told him how is there is for every man some one scene, some one adventure, some one picture that is the image of his secret life, for wisdom first speaks in images, and that this one image, if he would but brood over it his life long, would lead his soul, disentangled from unmeaning circumstance and the ebb and flow of the world, into that far household where the undying gods await all whose souls have become simple as flame, whose bodies have become quiet as an agate lamp.

But he was born in a day when the old wisdom had vanished and was content merely to write verses, and often with little thought of more than verses.

VI
SHELLEY'S VIEW OF POETRY
A.C. BRADLEY

The ideas of Wordsworth and of Coleridge about poetry have often been discussed and are familiar. Those of Shelley are much less so, and in his eloquent exposition of them there is a radiance which almost conceals them from many readers. I wish, at the cost of all the radiance, to try to see them and show them rather more distinctly. Even if they had little value for the theory of poetry, they would still have much as material for it, since they allow us to look into a poet's experience in conceiving and composing. And, in addition, they throw light on some of the chief characteristics of Shelley's own poetry.

His poems in their turn form one of the sources from which his ideas on the subject may be gathered. We have also some remarks in his letters and in prose pieces dealing with other topics. We have the prefaces to those of his works which he himself published. And, lastly, there is the *Defence of Poetry*. This essay was written in reply to an attack made on contemporary verse by Shelley's friend Peacock, - not a favourable specimen of Peacock's writing. The *Defence*, we can see, was hurriedly composed, and it remains a fragment, being only the first of three projected parts It contains a good deal of historical matter, highly interesting, but too extensive to be made use of here. Being polemical, it no doubt exaggerates such of Shelley's views as collided with those of his antagonist. But, besides being the only full expression of these views, it is the most mature, for it was written within eighteen months of his death. It appears to owe very little either to Wordsworth's Prefaces or to Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria:* but there are a few reminiscences of Sidney's *Apology*, which Shelley had read just before he wrote his own *Defence* ; and it shows, like much of his mature poetry, how deeply he was influenced by the more imaginative dialogues of Plato.

And one familiar with the manner in which Shelley in his verse habitually represents the world could guess at his general view of poetry. The world to him is a melancholy place, a "dim vast vale of tears, " illuminated in flashes by the light of a hidden but glorious power. Nor is this power, as that favourite metaphor would imply, wholly outside the world. It works within it as a soul contending with obstruction and striving to penetrate and transform the whole mass. And though the fulness of its glory is concealed, its nature is known in outline. It is the realised perfection of everything good and beautiful on earth ; or, in other words, all such goodness and beauty is its partial manifestation. "All," I say : for the splendour of nature, the love of lovers, every affection and virtue, any good action or just law, the wisdom of philosophy, the creations of art, the truths deformed by superstitious religion, - all are equally operations or appearances of the hidden power. (It is of the first importance for the understanding of Shelley to realise how strong in him is the sense and conviction of this unity in life : it is one of his Platonic traits. The intellectual Beauty of his *Hymn* is absolutely the same thing as the Liberty of his *Ode*, the "Great Spirit" of Love that he invokes to bring freedom to Naples, the One which in *Adonais* he contrasts with the Many, the Spirit of Nature of *Queen Mab*, and the Vision of *Alastor* and *Epipsychidion*. The skylark of the famous stanzas is free from our sorrows, not because it is below them, but because, as an embodiment of that perfection, it knows the rapture of love without its satiety, and understands death as we cannot. The voice of the mountain, if a whole nation could hear it with the poet's ear, would "repeal large codes of fraud and woe" : it is the same voice as the reformer's and the martyr's. And in the far – off day when the "plastic stress' of this power has mastered the last resistance and is all in all, outward nature, which now suffers with man, will be redeemed with him, and man, in becoming politically free, will become also the perfect lover, Evidently, then, poetry as the world now is, must be one of the voices of this power, or one tone of its voice. To use the language so dear to Shelley, it is the revelation of those eternal ideas which lie behind the many

coloured, ever-shifting veil that we call reality or life. Or rather, it is one such revelation among many.

When we turn to the *Defence of Poetry* we meet substantially the same view. There is indeed a certain change ; for Shelley is now philosophising and writing prose, and he wishes not to sing from the mid-sky, but, for a while at least, to argue with his friend on the earth. Hence at first we hear nothing of that perfect power at the heart of things, and poetry is considered as a creation rather than a revelation. But for Shelley, we soon discover, this would be a false antithesis. The poet creates, but this creation is no mere fancy of his ; it represents " those forms which are common to universal nature and existence," and " a poem is the very image of life expressed in its eternal truth." We notice, further, that the more voluntary and conscious work of invention and execution is regarded as quite subordinate in the creative process. In that process the mind, obedient to an influence which it does not understand and cannot control, is driven to produce images of perfection which rather form themselves in it than are formed by it. The greatest stress is laid on this influence or inspiration ; and in the end we learn that the origin of the whole process lies in certain exceptional moments when visitations of thought and feeling, elevating and delightful beyond all expression, but always arising unforeseen and departing unbidden, reach the soul ; that these are, as it were, the interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own ; and that the province of the poet is to arrest these apparitions, to veil them in language, to colour every other form he touches with their evanescent hues, and so to " redeem from decay the visitations of the divinity in man."

Even more decided is the emphasis laid on the unity of all the forms in which the "divinity" or ideal power thus attests its presence. Indeed, throughout a large part of the essay, that "Poetry" which Shelley is defending is something very much wider than poetry in the usual sense. The enemy he has to meet is the contention that poetry and its influence steadily decline as civilization advances, and that they are giving place, and ought to give place, to reasoning and the pursuit of utility. His answer is that, on the contrary, imagination has been, is, and always will be, the prime source of everything that has intrinsic value in life. Reasoning, he declares, cannot create, it can only operate upon the products of imagination. Further, he holds that the predominance of mere reasoning and mere utility has become in great part an evil ; for while it has accumulated masses of material goods and moral truths, we distribute the goods iniquitously and fail to apply the truths, because, for want of imagination, we have not sympathy in our hearts and do not feel what we know. The "Poetry" which he defends, therefore, is the whole creative imagination with all its products. And these include not merely literature in verse, but, first, whatever prose writing is allied to that literature ; and next, all the other fine arts ; and finally, all actions, inventions, institutions, and even ideas and moral dispositions, which imagination brings into being in its effort to satisfy the longing for perfection. Painters and musicians are poets. Plato and Bacon, even Herodotus and Livy, were poets, though there is much in their works which is not poetry. So were the men who invented the arts of life, constructed laws for tribes or cities, disclosed, as sages or founders of religion, the excellence of justice and love. And every one, Shelley would say, who, perceiving the beauty of an imagined virtue or deed, translates the image into a fact, is so far a poet. For all these things come from imagination.

Shelley's exposition of this, which is probably the most original part of his theory, is not very clear ; but, if I understand his meaning, that which he takes to happen in all these cases might be thus described. The imagination – that is to say, the soul imagining – has before it, or feels within it, something which answering perfectly to its nature, fills it with delight and with a desire to realise what delights it. This something, for the sake of brevity, we may call an idea, so long as we remember that it need not be distinctly imagined and that it is always accompanied by emotion. The reason why such ideas delight the imagining soul is that they are, in fact, images or forebodings of its own perfection – of itself become perfect – in one aspect or another. These aspects are as various as the elements and forms of its own inner life

and outward existence ; and so the idea may be that of the perfect harmony of will and feeling (a virtue), or of the perfect union of soul with soul (love), or of the perfect order of certain social relations or forces (a law or institution), or of the perfect adjustment of intellectual elements (a truth) ; and so on. The formation and expression of any such idea is thus the work of Poetry in the widest sense ; while at the same time (as we must add, to complete Shelley's thought) any such idea is a gleam or apparition of the perfect Intellectual Beauty.

I choose this particular title of the hidden power or divinity in order to point out (what the reader is left to observe for himself) that the imaginative idea is always regarded by Shelley as beautiful. It is, for example, desirable for itself and not merely as a means to a further result ; and it has the formal characters of beauty. For, as will have been noticed in the instances given, it is always the image of an order, or harmony, of unity in variety, of the elements concerned. Shelley sometimes even speaks of their "rhythm." For example, he uses this word in reference to an action ; and I quote the passage because, though it occurs at some distance from the exposition of his main view, it illustrates it well. He is saying that the true poetry of Rome, unlike that of Greece, did not fully express itself in poems. "The true poetry of Rome lived in its institutions: for whatever of beautiful, true and majestic they contained could have sprung only from the faculty which creates the order in which they consist. The life of Camillus ; the death of Regulus ; the expectation of the senators, in their god-like state, of the victorious Gauls ; the refusal of the Republic to make peace with Hannibal after the battle of Cannae" – these he describes as "a rhythm and order in the shows of life," an order not arranged with a view to utility or outward result, but due to the imagination, which, "beholding the beauty of this order, created it out of itself according to its own idea."

2

If this, then is the nature of Poetry in the widest sence, how does the poet, in the special sense, differ from other unusually creative souls ? Not essentially in the inspiration and general substance of his poetry, but in the kind of expression he gives to them. In so far as he is a poet, his medium of expression, of course, is not virtue, or action, or law ; poetry is one of the arts. And, again, it differs from the rest, because its particular vehicle is language. We have now to see, therefore, what Shelley has to say of the form of poetry, and especially of poetic language.

First, he claims for language the highest place among the vehicles of artistic expression, on the ground that it is the most direct and also the most plastic. It is itself produced by imagination instead of being simply encountered by it, and it has no relation except to imagination ; whereas any more material medium has a nature of its own, and relations to other things in the material world, and this nature and these relations intervene between the artist's conception and his expression of it in the medium. It is to the superiority of its vehicle that Shelley attributes the greater fame which poetry has always enjoyed as compared with other arts. He forgets (if I may interpose a word of criticism) that the media of the other arts have, on their side, certain advantages over language, and that these perhaps counterbalance the inferiority which he notices. He would also have found it difficult to show that language, on its physical side, is any more a product of imagination than stone or pigments. And his idea that the medium in the other arts is an obstacle intervening between conception and expression is, to say the least, one-sided. A sculptor, painter, or musician, would probably reply that it is only the qualities of his medium that enable him to express at all ; that what he expresses is inseparable from the vehicle of expression ; and that he has no conceptions which are not from the beginning sculpturesque, pictorial, or musical. It is true, no doubt, that his medium is an obstacle as well as a medium ; but this is also true of language.

But to resume. Language, Shelley goes on to say, receives in poetry a peculiar form. As it represents in its meaning a perfection which is always an order, harmony, or

rhythm, so it itself, as so much sound, *is* an order, harmony, or rhythm, It is measured language, which is not the proper vehicle for the mere recital of facts or for mere reasoning. For Shelley, however, this measured language is not of necessity metrical. The order or measure may remain at the stage which it reaches in beautiful prose, like that of Plato, the melody of whose language, Shelley declares, is the most intense it is possible to conceive. It may again advance to metre ; and he admits that metrical form is convenient, popular, and preferable, especially in poetry containing much action. But he will not have any new great poet tied down to it. It is not essential, while measure is absolutely so. For it is no mere accident of poetry that its language is measured, not does a delight in this measure mean little. As sensitiveness to the order of the relations of sounds is always connected with sensitiveness to the order of the relations of thoughts, so also the harmony of the words is scarcely less indispensable than their meaning to the communication of the influence of poetry. "Hence," says Shelley, "the vanity of translation : it were as wise to cast a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal; principle of its colour and odour, as seek to transfuse from one language into another the creations of a poet." Strong words to come from the translator of the *Hymn to Mercury* and of Agathon's speech in the *Symposium* ![1] And is not all that Shelley says of the difference between measured and unrhythmical language applicable. at least in some degree, to the difference between metrical and merely measured language ? Could he really have supposed that metre is no more than a "convenience," which contributes nothing of any account to the influence of poetry ? But I will not criticise. Let me rather point out how surprising, at first sight, and how significant,, is Shelley's insistence on the importance of measure or rhythm. No one could assert more absolutely than he the identity of the general substance of poetry with that of moral life and action, of the other arts, and of the higher kinds of philosophy. And yet it would be difficult to go beyond the emphasis of his statement that the formal element (as he understood it) is indispensable to the effect of poetry.

Shelley, however, nowhere considers this element more at length. He has no discussions, like those of Wordsworth and Coleridge, on diction. He never says, with Keats, that he looks on fine phrases like a lover. We hear of his deep – drawn sigh of satisfaction as he finished reading a passage of Homer, but not of his shouting his delight, as he ramped through the meadows of Spenser, at some marvellous flower. When in his letters he refers to any poem he is reading, he scarcely ever mentions particular lines of expressions ; and we have no evidence that, like Coleridge and Keats, he was a curious student of metrical effects or the relations of vowel – sounds. I doubt if all this is wholly accidental. Poetry was to him so essentially as effusion of aspiration, love and worship, that we can imagine his feeling it almost an impiety to break up its unity even for purposes of study, and to give a separate attention to its means of utterance. And what he does say on the subject confirms this impression. In the first place, as we have seen, he lays great stress on inspiration ; and his statements, if exaggerated and misleading, must still reflect in some degree his own experience. No poem, he asserts, however inspired it may be, is more than a feeble shadow of the original conception ; for when composition begins, inspiration is already on the decline. And so in a letter he speaks of the detail of execution destroying all wild and beautiful visions. Still, inspiration, if diminished by composition, is not wholly dispelled ; and he appeals to the greatest poets of his day whether it is not an error to assert that the finest passages of poetry are produced by labour and study. Such toil he would restrict to those parts which connect the inspired passages, and he speaks with contempt of the fifty – six various readings of the first line of the *Orlando Furioso*. He seems to exaggerate on this matter because in the *Defence* his foe is cold reason and calculation. Elsewhere he writes more truly of the original conception as being obscure as well as intense :[2] from which it would seem to follow that the feeble shadow, if darker, is at least more distinct than the original. He forgets, too, what is certainly the fact, that the poet in reshaping and correcting is able to revive in some degree the fire of the first impulse. And we know from himself that his greatest works cost him a severe labour not confined to the execution, while

his manuscripts show plenty of various readings, if never so many as fifty-six in one line.

Still, what he says is highly characteristic of his own practice in composition. He allowed the rush of his ideas to have its way, without pausing to complete a troublesome line or to find a word that did not come ; and the next day (if ever) he filled up the gaps and smoothed the ragged edges. And the result answers to his theory. Keats was right in telling him that he might be more of an artist. His language, indeed, unlike Wordsworth's or Byron's, is, in his mature work, always that of a poet ; we never hear his mere speaking voice ; but he is frequently diffuse and obscure, and even in fine passages his constructions are sometimes trailing and amorphous. The glowing metal rushes into the mould so vehemently that it overleaps the bounds and fails to find its way into all the little crevices. But no poetry is more manifestly inspired, and even when it is plainly imperfect it is sometimes so inspired that it is impossible to wish it changed. It has the rapture of the mystic, and that is too rare to lose. Tennyson quaintly said of the hymn *Life of Life* : "He seems to go up the air and burst." It is true : and, if we are to speak of poems as fireworks, I would not compare *Life of Life* with a great set piece of Homer or Shakespeare that illumines the whole sky ; but, all the same, there is no more thrilling sight than the heavenward rush of a rocket, and it bursts at a height no other fire can reach.

In addition to his praise of inspiration Shelley has some scattered remarks on another point which show the same spirit. He could not bear in poetic language any approach to artifice, or any sign that the writer had a theory or system of style. He thought Keats's earlier poems faulty in this respect, and there is perhaps a reference to Wordsworth in the following sentence from the Preface to the *Revolt of Islam* : "Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to interfere with the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving, - to disgust him according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity."[3] His own poetic style certainly corresponds with his intention. It cannot give the kind of pleasure afforded by what may be called without disparagement a learned and artful style, such as Virgil's or Milton's ; but, like the best writing of Shakespeare and Goethe, it is, with all its individuality, almost entirely free from mannerism and the other vices of self-consciousness, and appears to flow so directly from the thought that one is ashamed to admire it for itself. This is equally so whether the appropriate style is impassioned and highly figurative, of simple and even plain. It is indeed in the latter case that Shelley wins his greatest, because most difficult, triumph. In the dialogue part of *Julian and Maddalo* he has succeeded remarkably in keeping the style quite close to that of familiar though serious conversation, while making it nevertheless unmistakably poetic. And the *Cenci* is an example of a success less complete only because the problem was even harder. The ideal of the style of tragic drama in the nineteenth or twentieth century should surely be, not to reproduce with modifications the style of Shakespeare, but to do what Shakespeare did – to idealise, without deserting, the language of contemporary speech. Shelley in the *Cenci* seems to me to have come nearest to this ideal.

3

So much for general exposition. If now we consider more closely what Shelley says of the substance of poetry, a question at once arises. He may seem to think of poetry solely as the direct expression of perfection in some form, and accordingly to imagine its effect as simply joy or delighted aspiration. Much of his own poetry, too, is such an expression ; and we understand when we find him saying that Homer embodied the ideal perfection of his age in human character, and unveiled in Achilles, Hector, and Ulysses "the truth and beauty of friendship, patriotism, and persevering devotion

to an object." But poetry, it is obvious, is not wholly, perhaps not even mainly, of this kind, What is to be said, on Shelley's theory, of his own melancholy lyrics, those "sweetest songs" that "tell of saddest truth"? What of satire, of the epic of conflict and war, or of tragic exhibitions of violent and destructive passion ? Does not his theory reflect the weakness of his own practice, his tendency to portray a thin and abstract ideal instead of interpreting the concrete detail of nature and life : and ought we not to oppose to it a theory which would consider poetry simply as a representation of fact ?

To this last question I should answer No. Shelley's theory, rightly understood, will take in, I think, everything really poetic. And to a considerable extent he himself shows the way to meet these doubts. He did not mean that the *immediate* subject of poetry must be perfection in some form. The poet, he says, can colour with the hues of the ideal everything he touches. If so, he may write of absolutely anything so long as he *can* so colour it, and nothing would be excluded from his provide except those things (if any such exist) in which no positive relation to the ideal, however indirect, can be shown or intimated. Thus, to take the instance of Shelley's melancholy lyrics, clearly the lament which arises from loss of the ideal, and mourns the evanescence of its visitations or the desolation of its absence, is indirectly an expression *of* the ideal ; and so on his theory is the simplest song of unhappy love or the simplest dirge. Further, he himself observes that, though the joy of poetry is often unalloyed, yet the pleasure of the "highest portions of our being is frequently connected with the pain of the inferior," that "the pleasure that is in sorrow is sweeter than the pleasure of pleasure itself," and that not sorrow only, but "terror, anguish, despair itself, are often the chosen expressions of an approximation to the highest good." That, then, which appeals poetically to such painful emotions will again be an indirect portrayal of the ideal ; and it is clear, I think, that this was how Shelley in the *Defence* regarded heroic and tragic poetry, whether narrative or dramatic, with its manifestly imperfect characters and its exhibition of conflict and wild passion. He had, it is true, another and an unsatisfactory way of explaining the presence of these things in poetry ; and I will refer to this in a moment. But he tells us that the Athenian tragedies represent the highest idealisms (his name for ideals) of passion and of power (not merely of virtue) ; and that in them we behold ourselves. "under a thin disguise of circumstance, stripped of all but that ideal perfection and energy which every one feels to be the internal type of all that he loves, admires, and would become." He writes of Milton's Satan in somewhat the same strain. The Shakespearean tragedy from which he most often quotes is one in which evil holds the stage, *Macbeth*, and he was inclined to think *King Lear*, which certainly is no direct portrait of perfection, the greatest drama in the world. Lastly, in the Preface to his own *Cenci* he truly says that, while the story is fearful and monstrous, "the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes," if duly brought out, "mitigates the pain of the contemplation of moral deformity" : so that he regards Count Cenci himself as a *poetic* character, and therefore as in *some* sense an expression of the ideal. He does not further explain his meaning. Perhaps it was that the perfection which poetry is to exhibit includes, together with those qualities which win our immediate and entire approval or sympathy, others which are capable of becoming the instruments of evil. For these, the energy, power and passion of the soul, though they may be perverted, are in themselves elements of perfection ; and so, even in their perversion or their combination with moral deformity, they retain their value, they are not simply ugly or horrible, but appeal through emotions predominantly painful to the same love of the ideal which is directly satisfied by pictures of goodness and beauty. Now to these various considerations we shall wish to add others ; but if we bear these in mind, I believe we shall find Shelley's theory wide enough, and must hold that the substance of poetry is never mere fact, but is always ideal, though its method of representation is sometimes more direct, sometimes more indirect.

Nevertheless, he does not seem to have made his view quite clear to himself, or to hold to it consistently. We are left with the impression, not merely that he personally preferred the direct method (as he was, of course, entitled to do) , but that his use of

it shows a certain weakness, and also that even in theory he unconsciously tends to regard it as the primary and proper method, and to admit only by a reluctant after-thought the representation of imperfection. Let me point out some signs of this. He considered his own *Cenci* as a poem inferior in kind to his other main works, even as a sort of accommodation to the public. With all his modesty he knew what to think of the neglected *Prometheus* and *Adonais*, but there is no sign that he, any more than the world, was aware that the character of Cenci was a creation without a parallel in our poetry since the seventeenth century. His enthusiasm for some second-rate and third-rate Italian paintings, and his failure to understand Michael Angelo, seem to show the same tendency. He could not enjoy comedy : it seemed to him simply cruel : he did not perceive that to show the absurdity of the imperfect is to glorify the perfect. And, as I mentioned just now, he wavers in his view of the representation of heroic and tragic imperfection. We find in the Preface to *Prometheus Unbound* the strange notion that Prometheus is a more poetic character than Milton's Satan because he is free from Satan's imperfections, which are said to interfere with the interest. And in the *Defence* a similar error appears. Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, though they exhibit ideal virtues, are, he admits, imperfect. Why, then, did Homer make them so ? Because, he seems to reply, Homer's contemporaries regarded their vices (e. g. revengefulness and deceitfulness) as virtues. Homer accordingly had to conceal in the costume of these vices the unspotted beauty that he himself imagined ; and, like Homer, "few poets of the highest class have chosen to exhibit the beauty of their conceptions in its naked truth and splendour." Now, this idea, to say nothing of its grotesque improbability in reference to Homer, and its probable baselessness in reference to most other poets, is quite inconsistent with that truer view of heroic and tragic character which was explained just now. It is an example of Shelley's tendency to abstract idealism or spurious Platonism. He is haunted by the fancy that if he could only get at the One, the eternal Idea, in complete aloofness from the Many, from life with all its change, decay, struggle sorrow, and evil, he would have reached the true object of poetry : as if the whole finite world were a mere mistake of illusion, the sheer opposite of the infinite One, and in no way or degree its manifestation. Life, he says –

> "Life, like a dome of many – coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity ;"

but the other side, the fact that the many colours *are* the white light broken, he tends to forget, by no means always, but in one, and that not the least inspired, of his moods. This is the source of that thinness and shallowness of which his view of the world and of history is justly accused, a view in which all imperfect being is apt to figure as absolutely gratuitous, and everything and everybody as pure white or pitch black. Hence also his ideals of good, whether as a character or as a mode of life, resting as they do on abstraction from the mass of real existence, tend to lack body and individuality ; and indeed, if the existence of the many is a mere calamity, clearly the next best thing to their disappearance is that they should all be exactly alike and have as little character as possible. But we must remember that Shelley's strength and weakness are closely allied, and it may be that the very abstractness of his ideal was a condition of that quivering intensity of aspiration towards it in which his poetry is unequalled. We must not go for this to Homer and Shakespeare and Goethe ; and if we go for it to Dante, we shall find, indeed, a mind far vaster than Shelley's but also that dualism of which we complain in him, and the description of a heaven which, equally with Shelley's, regenerated earth, is no place for mere mortality. In any case, as we have seen, the weakness in his poetical practice, though it occasionally appears also as a defect in his poetical theory, forms no necessary part of it.

4

I pass to his views on a last point. If the business of poetry is somehow to express ideal perfection, it may seem to follow that the poet should embody in his poems his beliefs about this perfection and the way to approach it, and should thus have a moral

purpose and aim to be a teacher. And in regard to Shelley this conclusion seems the more natural because his own poetry allows us to see clearly some of his beliefs about morality and moral progress. Yet alike in his Prefaces and in the *Defence* he takes up most decidedly the position that the poet ought neither to affect a moral aim nor to express his own conceptions of right and wrong. "Didactic poetry," he declares, "is my abhorrence : nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse."[4] "There was little danger," he tells us in the *Defence*, "that Homer or any of the eternal poets" should make a mistake in this matter ; but "those in whom the poetical faculty, though great, is less intense, as Euripides, Lucan, Tasso, Spenser, have frequently affected a moral aim, and the effect of their poetry is diminished in exact proportion to the degree in which they compel us to advert to this purpose." These statements may appeal to us, but are they consistent with Shelley's main views of poetry ? To answer this question we must observe what exactly it is that he means to condemn.

Shelley was one of the few persons who can literally be said to *love* their kind. He held most strongly, too, that poetry does benefit men, and benefits them morally. The moral purpose, then, to which he objects cannot well be a poet's general purpose of doing moral as well as other good through his poetry - such a purpose, I mean, as he may cherish when he contemplates his life and his life's work. And, indeed, it seems obvious that nobody with any humanity or any sense can object to that, except through some intellectual confusion. Nor, secondly, does Shelley mean, I think, to condemn even the writing of a particular poem with a view to a particular moral or practical effect ; certainly, at least, if this was his meaning he was condemning some of his own poetry. Nor, thirdly, can he be referring to the portrayal of moral ideals ; for that he regarded as one of the main functions of poetry and in the very place where he says that didactic poetry is his abhorrence he also says, by way of contrast, that he has tried to familiarize the minds of his readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence. It appears, therefore, that what he is really attacking is the attempt to give, in the strict sense, moral *instruction*, to communicate doctrines, to offer argumentative statements of opinion on right and wrong, and more especially, I think, on controversial questions of the day. An example would be Wordsworth's discourse on education at the end of the *Excursion*, a discourse of which Shelley, we know, had a very low opinion. In short, his enemy is not the purpose of producing a moral effect, it is the appeal made for this purpose to the reasoning intellect. He says to the poet : By all means aim at bettering men ; you are a man, and are bound to do so ; but you are also a poet, and therefore your proper way of doing so is not by reasoning and preaching. His idea is of a piece with his general championship of imagination, and it is quite consistent with his main view of poetry.[5]

What, then, are the *grounds* of this position ? They are not clearly set out, but we can trace several, and they are all solid. Reasoning on moral subjects, moral philosophy, was by no means "tedious" to Shelley; it seldom is to real poets. He loved it, and (outside his *Defence*) he rated its value very high.[6] But he thought it tedious and out of place in poetry, because it can be equally well expressed, in "un-measured" language – much better expressed, one may venture to add. You invent an art in order to effect by it a particular purpose which nothing else can effect, as well. How foolish, then, to use this art for a purpose better served by something else ! I know no answer to this argument, and its application is far wider than that given to it by Shelley. Secondly, Shelley remarks that a poet's own conceptions on moral subjects are usually those of his place and time, while the matter of his poem ought to be eternal, or, as we say, of permanent and universal interest. This, again, seems true, and has a wide application ; and it holds good even when the poet, like Shelley himself, is in rebellion against orthodox moral opinion ; for his heterodox opinions will equally show the marks of his place and time, and constitute a perishable element in his work. Doubtless no poetry can be without a perishable element ; but that poetry has least of it which interprets life least through the medium of systematic and doctrinal ideas. The veil which time and place have hung between Homer or Shakespeare and the general reader of to– day in almost transparent, while even a

poetry so intense as that of Dante and Milton is impeded in its passage to him by systems which may be unfamiliar, and, if familiar, may be distasteful.

Lastly – and this is Shelley's central argument – as poetry itself is directly due to imaginative inspiration and not to reasoning, so its true moral effect is produced through imagination and not through doctrine. Imagination is, for Shelley, "the great instrument of moral good." The "secret of morals is love." It is not "for want of admirable doctrines that men hate and despise and censure and deceive and subjugate one another" : it is for want of love. And love is "a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action or person not our own." " A man," therefore, "to be greatly good must imagine intensely and comprehensively." And poetry ministers to moral good, the effect , by acting on its cause, imagination. It strengthens imagination as exercise strengthens a limb, and so it indirectly promotes morality. It also fills the imagination with beautiful impersonations of all that we should wish to be. But moral reasoning does not act upon the cause, it only analyses the effect ; and the poet has no right to be content to analyse what he ought indirectly to create. Here, again, in his eagerness, Shelley cuts his antitheses too clean, but the defect is easily made good, and the main argument is sound.

Limits of time will compel me to be guilty of the same fault in adding a consideration which is in the spirit of Shelley's. The chief moral effect claimed for poetry by Shelley is exerted, primarily, by imagination on the emotions ; but there is another influence, exerted primarily through imagination on the understanding. Poetry is largely an interpretation of life ; and, considering what life is, that must mean a moral interpretation. This, to have poetic value, must satisfy imagination ; but we value it also because it gives us knowledge, a wider comprehension, a new insight into ourselves and the world.[6] Now, it may be held – and this view answers to a very general feeling among lovers of poetry now – that the most deep and original moral interpretation is not likely to be that which most shows a moral purpose or is most governed by reflective beliefs and opinions, and that as a rule we learn most from those who do not try to teach us, and whose opinions may even remain unknown to use : so that there is this weighty objection to the appearance of such purpose and opinions, that it tends to defeat its own intention. And the reason that I wish to suggest is this, that always we get most from the *genius* in a man of genius and not from the rest of him. Now, although poets often have unusual powers of reflective thought, the specific genius of a poet does not lie there, but in imagination. Therefore his deepest and most original interpretation is likely to come by the way of imagination. And the specific way of imagination is not to clothe in imagery consciously held ideas ; it is to produce half – consciously a matter from which, when produced, the reader may, if he chooses, extract ideas. Poetry (I must exaggerate to be clear), psychologically considered, is not the *expression* of ideas or of a view of life ; it is their discovery of creation, or rather both discovery and creation in one. The interpretation contained in *Hamlet* or *King Lear* was not brought readymade to the old stories. What was brought to them was the huge substance of Shakespeare's imagination, in which all his experience and thought was latent ; and this, dwelling and working on the stories with nothing but a dramatic purpose, and kindling into heat and motion, gradually discovered or created in them a meaning and a mass of truth about life, which was brought to birth by the process of composition, but never preceded it in the shape of ideas, and probably never, even after it took that shape to the poet's mind. And *this* is the interpretation which we find inexhaustibly instructive, because Shakespeare's *genius* is in it. On the other hand, however much from curiosity and personal feeling towards him we may wish to know his opinions and beliefs about morals or religion or his own poems or Queen Elizabeth, we have not really any reason to suppose that their value would prove extraordinary. And so, to apply this generally, the opinions, reasonings and beliefs of poets are seldom of the same quality as their purely imaginative product. Occasionally, as with Goethe, they are not far off it ; but sometimes they are intense without being profound, and more eccentric than original ; and often they are very sane and sound, but not very different

from those of wise men without genius. And therefore poetry is not the place for them. For we want in poetry a moral interpretation, but not the interpretation we have already. As a rule the genuine artist's quarrel with "morality" in art is not really with morality, it is with a stereotyped or narrow morality ; and when he refuses in his art to consider things from what he calls the moral point of view, his reasons are usually wrong, but his instinct is right.

Poetry itself confirms on the whole this contention, though doubtless in these last centuries a great poet's work will usually reveal more of conscious reflection that once it did. Homer and Shakespeare show no moral aim and no system of opinion. Milton was far from justifying the ways of God to men by the argumentation he put into divine and angelic lips ; his truer moral insight is in the creations of his genius ; for instance, in the character of Satan or the picture of the glorious humanity of Adam and Eve. Goethe himself could never have told the world what he was going to express in the First Part of *Faust* : the poem told *him*, and it is one of the world's greatest. He knew too well what he was going to express in the Second Part, and with all its wisdom and beauty it is scarcely a great poem. Wordsworth's original message was delivered, not when he was a Godwinian semiatheist, nor when he had subsided upon orthodoxy, but when his imagination, with a few hints from Coleridge, was creating a kind of natural religion ; and this religion itself is more profoundly expressed in his descriptions of his experience than in his attempts to formulate it. The moral virtue of Tenny – son is in poems like *Ulysses* and parts of *In Memoriam*, where sorrow and the consciousness of a deathless affection or an unquenchable desire for experience forced an utterance ; but when in the *Idylls* he tried to found a great poem on explicit ideas about the soul and the ravages wrought in it by lawless passion, he succeeded but partially, because these ideas, however sound, were no product of his genius. And so the moral virtue of Shelley's poetry lay, not in his doctrines about the past and future of man, but in an intuition, which was the substance of his soul, of the unique value of love. In the end, for him, the truest name of that perfection called Intellectual Beauty, Liberty, Spirit of Nature, is Love. Whatever in the world has any worth is an expression of Love. Love sometimes talks. Love talking musically is Poetry.

Notes and References

1. Statements equally emphatic on this subject may be found in a passage quoted by Mrs. Shelley in a footnote to Shelley's letter to John Gisborne, Nov. 16, 1819 (Letter XXX. in Mrs. Shelley's edition). Cf. also Letter XXXIII. To Leigh Hunt, Nov. 1819.

2. I cannot find the passage or passages to which I referred in making this statement, and therefore. I do not vouch for its accuracy. Cf. from the fragment *Fiordispina*,

> " The ardours of a vision which obscure
> The very idol of its portraiture."

3. Cf. from the Preface to the *Cenci* : "I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that, in order to move men to true sympathy, we must use the familiar language of men ... But it must be the real language of men in general, and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong."

4. Preface to *Prometheus Unbound*.

5. I do not discuss the adequacy of Shelley's position, or assert that he held it quite clearly or consistently. In support of my interpretation of it I may refer to the Preface to the *Cenci*. There he repudiated the idea of making the dramatic exhibition of the story "subservient to what is vulgarly called a

moral purpose," and, as the context shows, he identifies such a treatment of the story with the "enforcement" of a "dogma."

This passage has a further interest. The dogma which Shelley would not enforce in his tragedy was that "no person can truly be dishonoured by the act of another, and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love"; and accordingly he held that "if Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better." How inexcusable then is the not uncommon criticism on the *Cenci* that he represents Beatrice as a perfect character and justifies her murder of "the injurer."

Shelly's position in the *Cenci*, it may be added, is in total disagreement with his youthful doctrine and practice. In 1811 he wrote to Miss Hitchener, "My opinion is that all poetical beauty ought to be subordinate to the inculcated moral," and a large part of *Queen Mab* is frankly didactic. Even there, however, he reserved most of his formal instruction for the Notes, perceiving that "a poem very didactic is ... very stupid."

6. "I consider poetry very subordinate to moral and political science," he says in a letter to Peacock, Jan. 1819.

7. And, I may add, the more it does this, so long as it does it imaginatively, the more does it satisfy imagination, and the greater is its *poetic* value.

VII
LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI
P.B. SHELLEY

Bright wandered fair coquette of Heaven
To whom alone it has been given
To change and be adored for ever.....
Envy not this dim world, for never
But once within its shadow grew
One fair as [thou], but far more true.
She left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure dome of Heaven's steep,
And like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light,
Hovered in the purple night,
Ere she sought her Ocean nest
In the chambers of the west.-
She left me, and I staid alone
Thinking over every tone,
Which thou now silent to the ear
The enchanted heart could hear
Like notes which die when born, but still
Haunt the echoes of the hill:
And feeling ever-O too much-
The soft vibrations of her touch
As if her gentle hand even now
Lightly trembled on my brow;
And thus although she absent were
Memory gave me all of her
That even fancy dares to claim.-
Her presence had made weak and tame
All passions, and I lived alone,
In the time which is our own;
The past and future were forgot
As they had been, and would be, not.-
But soon, the guardian angel gone,
The demon reassumed his throne
In my faint heart....I dare not speak
My thoughts; but thus disturbed and weak
I sate and watched the vessels glide
Along the ocean bright and wide,
Klike spirit-winged chariots sent
O'er some serenest element
To ministrations strange and far;
As if to some Elysian star
They sailed for drink to medicine
Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
And the scent of sleeping flowers
And the coolness of the hours
Of dew, and the sweet warmth of day
Was scattered o'er the twinkling bay;
And the fisher with his lamp
And spear, about the low rocks damp
Crept, and struck the fish who came
To worship the delusive flame:

Too happy, they whose pleasure sought
Extinguishes all senses and thought
Of the regret that pleasure [leaves]
Destroying life alone not peace.

VIII
SELECTED LETTERS OF KEATS*

I. To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS[3]

Saturday 22 Nov. 1817

Saturday

My Dear Reynolds,

There are two things which tease me here — one of them Crips,[4] and the other that I cannot go with Tom into Devonshire—however I hope to do my duty to myself in a week or so; and then I'll try what I can do for my neighbour —now is not this virtuous? on returning to town — I'll damn all idleness — indeed, in superabundance of employment, I must not be content to run here and there on little two penny errands — but turn rake hell, i e go a masking[5] or Bailey will think me just as great a promise keeper as *he* thinks you—for myself I do not, — and do not remember above one complaint against you for matter O' that — Bailey writes so abominable a hand, to give his letter a fair reading requires a little time: so I had not seen, when I saw you last, his invitation to Oxford at Christmas — I'll go with you. You know how poorly Rice was — I do not think it was all corporeal bodily pain was not used to keep him silent. I'll tell you what; he was hurt at what your sisters said about his joking with your mother, he was, soothly to sain — It will all blow over. God knows, my dear Reynolds, I should not talk any sorrow to you — you must have enough vexations — so I won't any more—If I ever start a rueful subject in a letter to you — blow me! Why don't you — Now I was agoing to ask a very silly question neither you nor any body else could answer, under a folio, or at least a pamphlet — you shall judge — Why don't you, as I do, look unconcerned at what may be called more particularly Heart vexations? They never surprize me — lord! a man should have the fine point of his soul taken off to become fit for this world — I like this place very much. There is hill & dale and a little river I went up Box hill this evening after the moon—you a' seen the moon—came down—and wrote some lines. Whenever I am separated from you, and not engaged in a continued poem—every letter shall bring you a lyric—but I am too anxious for you to enjoy the whole, to send you a particle. One of the three books I have with me is Shakespear's Poems: I neer found so many beauties in the Sonnets—they seem to be full of fine things said unintentionally—in the intensity of working out conceits. Is this to be borne? Hark ye!

When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
And Summer's green all girded up in sheaves,
Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard.[6]

He has left nothing to say about nothing or any thing: for look at snails, you know what he says about snails, you know where he talks about " cockled snails "[7]—well, in one of these sonnets, he says the chap slips into—no! I lie! this is in the Venus and Adonis: the simile brought it to my mind.

*Selection and notes by Walter Jackson Bate.

[3] J. Reynolds, a young clerk, slightly older than Keats, had been writing poetry for some years. Keats met him through Leigh Hunt.

[4] Crips: Charles Cripps; see n. 17, below.

[5] go a masking: wear a mask, as rakes of the time often did when they roamed the town at night.

[6] *Sonnets*, XII.

[7] *Love's Labor's Lost*, IV.iii.338.

Audi—As the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
Shrinks back into his sh. lly cave with p ain
And there all smothered up in shade doth sit,
Long after fearing to put forth again:
So at his bloody view her eyes are fled,
Into the deep dark cabins of her head.[8]

He overwhelms a genuine lover of Poesy with all manner of abuse, talking about "a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song".[9]

Which by the by will be a capital motto for my Poem[10], won't it?—He speaks too of "Time's antique pen"— and "April's first born flowers "— and "deaths eternal cold".— By the Whim King! I'll give you a stanza, because it is not material in connection and when I wrote it I wanted you to — give your vote, pro or con.

Crystalline Brother of the belt of Heaven,
Aquarius! to whom King Jove hath given
Two liquid pulse-streams! - stead of feathered
wings—
Two fan-like fountains—thine illuminings
For Dian play:
Dissolve the frozen purity of air;
Let thy white shoulders silvery and bare,
Show cold through watery pinions: make more
bright
The Star-Queen's Crescent on her marriage night:
Haste Haste away!—[11]

Now I hope I shall not fall off in the winding up, as the woman said to the —— [12] .. I mean up and down. I see there is an advertizement in the Chronicle to poets he is so overloaded with poems on the late Princess![13]— I suppose you do not lack — send me — a few lend me thy hand to laugh a little — send me a little pullet sperm, a few finch eggs [14]—and remember me to each of our card playing club—When you die you will all be turned into dice, and be put in pawn with the Devil — for cards they crumple up [15] like any king — I mean John in the stage play what pertains Prince Arthur.

I rest
Your affectionate friend
John Keats

Give my love to both houses [16] — hinc atque illinc.[17]

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[8] Lines 1033—38.
[9] This and the following three quotations are from the *Sonnets*, XVII, XIX, XXI, XIII.
[10] Poem: *Endymion*, the title page of which bore this quotation.
[11] *Endymion*, IV, 581-90.
[12] Word illegible.
[13] the. ..Princess: Princess Charlotte, only daughter of the Prince Regent (later George IV) had just died. As in the eighteenth century, deaths in the royal family were mourned publicly in mediocre verse.
[14] The preceding three phrases are from Shakespeare's *I Henry* IV*,* II.iv.2; *Merry Wives of Windsor,* III.V.32; and *Troilus and Cressida,* V.i.41. The letters of Keats abound with Shakespearean allusions of this sort.
[15] crumple up: *King John,* V.vii.31.
[16] to. ..houses: *Romeo and Juliet,* III.i.94, 111.
[17] hinc ...illinc: hence and thence.

II. To BENJAMIN BAILEY [18]

Saturday 22 Nov. 1817

My dear Bailey,

I will get over the first part of this (*un*said) [19] letter as soon as possible for it relates to the affair of poor Crips—To a man of your nature such a letter as Haydon's must have been extremely cutting—What occasions the greater part of the world's quarrels? simply this, two minds meet and do not understand each other time enough to prevent any shock or surprise at the conduct of either party—As soon as I had known Haydon three days I had got enough of his character not to have been surprised at such a letter as he has hurt you with. Nor when I knew it was it a principle with me to drop his acquaintance although with you it would have been an imperious feeling. I wish you knew all that I think about Genius and the Heart —and yet I think you are thoroughly acquainted with my innermost breast in that respect, or you could not have known me even thus long and still hold me worthy to be your dear friend. In passing however I must say of one thing that has pressed upon me lately and encreased my humility and capability of submission and that is this truth —Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal chemicals operating on the mass of neutral intellect— but they have not any individuality, any determined character—I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self Men of Power—

But I am running my head into a subject which I am certain I could not do justice to under five years study and 3 vols octavo — and moreover long to be talking about the Imgination — so my dear Bailey do not think of this unpleasant affair if possible — do not — I defy any harm to come of it — I defy. I'll shall write to Crips this week and request him to tell me all his goings on from time to time by letter wherever I may be — it will all go on well so don't because you have suddenly discover'd a coldness in Haydon suffer yourself to be teased. Do not my dear fellow. O I wish I was as certain of the end of all your troubles as that of your momentary start about the authenticity of the Imagination. I am certain of nothing but of the holiness of the Heart's affections and the truth of Imagination—What the Imagination seizes as Beauty must be Truth—whether it existed before or not—for I have the same idea of all our passions as of love they are all in their sublime, creative of essential Beauty In a word, you may know my favorite speculation by my first book and the little song I sent in my last—which is a representation from the fancy of the probable mode of operating in these matters. The Imagination may be compared to Adam's dreams [20] —he awoke and found it truth. I am the more zealous in this affair, because I have never yet been able to perceive how any thing can be known for truth by consequitive reasoning [21]—and yet it must be. Can it be that Even the greatest philosopher ever arrived at his goal without putting aside numerious objections. However it may be, O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts! It is "a Vision in the form of youth" a shadow of reality to come—and this consideration has further convinced me for it has come as auxiliary to another favorite speculation of mine, that we shall enjoy ourselves here after by having what we called happiness on earth repeated in a finer tone and so repeated. And yet such a fate can only befall those who delight in sensation rather than hunger as you do after Truth, Adam's dream will do here and seems to be a conviction that Imagination and its empyreal reflection is the same as

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[18] Bailey was an undergraduate at Oxford, preparing to enter the Church, when Keats first met him. Keats wrote Book III of *Endymion* while visiting him at Oxford.

[19] unsaid: Keats is playing on the legal phrase " said letter"; the " said letter" would be Haydon's to Bailey, the " unsaid " Keats's. Benjamin Robert Haydon (17861846), the historical painter, had for a year been friendly with Keats. See " To Haydon," I. 7n., above. The background of the present incident is not clear. Cripps, a young artist, had attracted Haydon's attention. Haydon implied he would help to train Cripps, and then demanded an apprentice fee which Keats tried to raise.

[20] Adam's dream: *Paradise Lost*, VIII. 460—90.

[21] Consequitive reasoning: abstract analysis, and consecutive. Step by step logic.

human life and its spiritual repetition. But as I was saying—the simple imaginative mind may have its rewards in the repetition of its own silent working coming continually on the spirit with a fine suddenness—to compare great things with small—have you never by being surprised with an old melody—in a delicious place—by a delicious voice, felt over again your very speculations and surmises at the time it first operated on your soul—do you not remember forming to yourself the singer's face more beautiful than it was possible and yet with the elevation of the moment you did not thing so—even then you were mounted on the wings of Imagination so high—that the prototype must be here after—that delicious face you will see. What a time! I am continually running away from the subject—sure this cannot be exactly the case with a complex mind—one that is imaginative and at the same time careful of its fruits—who would exist partly on sensation partly on thought—to whom it is necessary that years should bring the philosophic mind [22] —such an one I consider your's and therefore it is necessary to your eternal happiness that you not only drink this old wind of Heaven, which I shall call the redigestion of our most ethereal musings on earth; but also increase in knowledge and know all things. I am glad to hear you are in a fair way for Easter—you will soon get through your unpleasant reading and then!—but the world is full of troubles and I have not much reason to think myself pesterd with many—I think Jane or Marianne has a better opinion of me than I deserve—for really and

> I do not thing my brothers illness connected mine—you know more of the real cause than

they do nor have I any chance of being rack'd as you have been—You perhaps at one time thought there was such a thing as worldly happiness to be arrived at, at certain periods of time marked out—you have of necessity from your disposition been thus led away—I scarcely remember counting upon my happiness—I look not for it if it be not in the present hour—nothing startles me beyond the moment. The setting sun will always set me to right—or if a sparrow come before my window I take part in its existence and pick about the gravel. The first thing that strikes me on hearing a misfortune having befalled another is this. "Well it cannot be helped—he will have the pleasure of trying the resources of his spirit"—and I beg now my dear Bailey that hereafter should you observe any thing cold in me not to put it to the account of heartlessness but abstraction—for I assure you I sometimes feel not the influence of a passion or affection during a whole week—and so long this sometimes continues I begin to suspect myself and the genuineness of my feelings at other times—thinking them a few barren tragedy=tears—My brother Tom is much improved—he is going to Devonshire—whither I shall follow him—at present I am just arrived at Dorking to change the scene—change the air and give me a spur to wind up my Poem, of which there are wanting 500 lines. I should have been here a day sooner but the Reynoldses persuaded me to stop in town to meet your friend Christie. There were Rice and Martin—we talked about ghosts. I will have some talk with Taylor and let you know—when please God I come down at Christmas. I will find that Examiner if possible. My best regards to Gleig. My brothers to you and Mrs. Bentley's.

Your affectionate friend

John Keats

III. To GEORGE and THOMAS KEATS
Sunday 21 Dec. 1817

Hampstead Sunday

My dear Brothers,

I must crave your pardon for not having written ere this...[23] I saw Kean [24] return to the public in 'Richard III', and finely he did it, and, at the request of Reynolds, I went

[22] Years...mind: Keats is echoing Wordsworth, "Intimations of Immortality," l 187, above.
[23] A passage was here omitted in the only copy of the letter that has survived.

to criticize his Luke in Riches. The critique is in to-day's 'Champion', which I send you, with the Examiner, in which you will find very proper lamentation on the obsolotion of Christmas gambols and pastimes: [25] but it was mixed up with so much egotism of that drivelling nature that pleasure is entirely lost. Hone, the publisher's trial, you must find very amusing: and, as Englishmen, very encouraging—his *Not Guilty* is a thing, which not to have been, would have dulled still more Liberty's emblazoning—Lord Ellenborough has been paid in his own coin---Wooler and Hone [26] have done us an essential service— I have had two very pleasant evenings with Dilke, [27] yesterday and to-day, and am at this moment just come from him, and feel in the humour to go on with this, began in the morning, and from which he came to fetch me. I spent Friday evening with Wells, [28] and went next morning to see Death on the Pale Horse. [29] it is a wonderful picture, when Wests age is considered. But there is nothing to be intense upon: no women one feels mad to kiss, no face swelling into reality—The excellence of every art is its intensity, capable of making all disagreables evaporate, from their being in close relationship with Beauty and Truth. [30] Examine 'King Lear,' and you will find this exemplified throughout; but in this picture we have unpleasantness without any momentous depth of speculation excited, in which to bury its repulsiveness—The picture is larger than 'Christ rejected.'

I dined with Haydon and Sunday after you left, and had a very pleasant day, I dined too (for I have been out too much lately) with Horace Smith, and met his two brothers, with Hill and Kingston, and one Du Bois.[31] They only served to convince me, how superior humour is to wit in respect to enjoyment—These men say things which make one start, without making one feel: they are all alike; their manners are alike: they all know fashionables; they have a mannerism in their very eating and drinking, in their mere handling a decanter—They talked of Kean and his low company—would I were with that company instead of yours, said I to myself! I know such like acquaintance will never do for me, and yet I am going to Reynolds on Wednesday Brown and Dilke walked with me and back from the Christmas pantomime. I had not a dispute but a disquisition, with Dilke on various subjects; several things dove-tailed in my mind, and at once it struck me what quality went to form a Man of Achievement, especially in Literature, and which Shakespeare possessed so enormously —I mean *Negative Capability*,[32] that is, when a man is

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[24] Kean: Edmund Kean (1787-1833), the noted tragic actor. Keat's review of his performance appeared in the Champion, Dec. 23.1817.

[25] lamentation. ..pastimes: The reference is to an essay of Leigh Hunt on this subject in *Examiner*. Dec. 21 and 28, 1817.

[26] Wooler ...Hone: publishers. William Hone had been tried for libel.

[27] Dilke: Charles Dilke *(1789-1864)*, later known as an editor and scholar.

[28] Wells. Charles Wells (1800-79). author of *Stories after Nature*.

[29] Death. .. Horse: Benjamin West (1738-1820). His Christ Rejected, referred to later in the paragraph, was criticized in the same terms by Hazlitt, whose critical opinions Keats closely followed.

[30] The ..Truth: If the imaginative grasp of an object is sufficiently intense, it takes so strong a hold of the mind that whatever qualities are irrelevant to its central character (the "disagreeables") evaporate. Its truth (or character) then "swells into reality" for us so vividly that the dynamic awareness of it is also "beautiful." In other words, reality taking form and meaning is "beauty" if it is vitally enough known and felt. Cf. "Ode on a Grecian Urn," ll. *46- 50* above.

[31] Smith .. **Do Bola**: writers who contributed to magazines of the time.

[32] We may interpret these difficult remarks, from here to the end of the paragraph, as follows: Our life is filled with change, uncertainties, mysteries; no one complete system of rigid categories will explain it fully. We can grasp and understand the elusive flux of life only by being imaginatively open-minded, sympathetic, receptive—by extending every possible feeler that we may have potentially in us. But we can achieve this active awareness only by *negating* our own *egos*. We must not only rise above our own vanity and prejudices, but resist the temptation to make up our minds on everything, and to have always ready a neat answer. If we discard a momentary insight, for example, because we cannot fit it into a static category or systematic framework, we are selfishly asserting our own "identity." A great poet is less concerned with himself, and has his eyes on what is without. With him "the sense of

capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason—Coleridge, for instance would let go by a fine isolated verisimilitude caught from the penetralium of mystery, from being incapable of remaining content with half-knowledge. This pursued through volumes would perhaps take us no further than this, that with a great poet the sense of Beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration.

Shelley's poem [33] is out, and there are words about its being objected to as much as "Queen Mab" was. Poor Shelley, I think he has his quota of good qualities, in sooth la!! Write soon to your most sincere friend and affectionate brother

John

IV. *From* To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS
Tuesday 3 *Feb.* 1818

It may be said that we ought to read our contemporaries—that Wordsworth & c. should have their due from us. But, for the sake of a few fine imaginative or domestic passages, are we to be bullied into a certain philosophy engendered in the whims of an egotist--Every man has his speculations, but every man does not brook and peacock over them till he makes a false coinage and deceives himself.[34] Many a man can travel to the very bourne of Heaven, and yet want confidence to put down his half-seeing. Sancho will invent a journey heavenward as well as any body. We hate poetry that has a palpable design upon us—and if we do not agree, seems to put its hand in its breeches pocket. Poetry should be great and unobtrusive, a thing which enters into one's soul, and does not startle it or amaze it with itself, but with its subject–How beautiful are the retired flowers! how would they lose their beauty were they to throng into the highway crying out, "admire me I am a violet!--dote upon me I am a primrose!" Modern poets differ from the Elizabethans in this. Each of the moderns like an Elector of Hanoever governs his petty state, and knows how many straws are swept daily from the causeways in all his dominions and has a continual itching that all the housewives should have their coppers well scoured: the antients were emperors of vast provinces, they had only heard of the remote ones and scarcely cared to visit them. I will cut al this—I will have no more of Wordsworth or Hunt in particular—Why should we be of the tribe of Manasseh, when we can wander with Esau? why should we kick against the pricks, when we can walk on roses? Why should we be owls, when we can be eagles? Why be teased with "nice eyed wagtails",[35] when we have in sight "the Cherub Contemplation"[36]—Why with Wordsworht's Mathew with a bough of wilding in his hand" [37] when we can have Jacques "under an oak &c."[38]—The secret of the bough of wilding will run through your head faster than I can write it—Old Matthew spoke to him some years ago on some nothing and because he happens in an evening walk to imagine the figure of the old man—he must stamp down in black and white, and it is henceforth sacred-I don't mean to deny Wordsworth's grandeur and Hunt's merit, but I mean to say we need not be teazed with grandeur and merit when we can have them uncontaminated and unobtrusive. Let us have the old poets, and Robin Hood. Your letter and its sonnets gave me more pleasure than will the 4th Book of Childe Harold[39] and the whole of

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Beauty"—the capacity to relish concrete reality in its full, if elusive, meaning— "over comes every other consideration." In fact, it goes beyond and "obliterates" the act of "consideration"—of deliberating, analyzing, and piecing together experience in a logical structure. For related remarks, see the letter to Woodhouse, Oct. 27, 1818, below.

[33] Shelley's poem: "Laon and Cythna."

[34] Keats, in his contrast of Wordsworth with the Elizabethan, is following Hazlitt, for whom much of the poetry of the Romantic movement, especially that of Wordsworth, was subjective self-expression.

[35] Leigh Hunt, *The Nymphs*, II 170

[36] Milton, "Il Penseroso," I. 54, in Vol.I.

[37] "The Two April Mornings," II. 59-60, above.

[38] *As You Like It*, Iii. 31.

[39] Byron's *Childe Harold*, which was to be published on April 28.

anybody's life and opinions. In return for your dish of filberts, I have gathered a few catkins,[40] I hope they'll look pretty.

V To JOHN TAYLOR[41]
Friday 27 Feb. 1818

Hampstead 27 Feby—

My dear Taylor,

Your alteration strikes me as being a great improvement-the page looks much better. And now I will attend to the punctuations you speak of—the comma should be at *soberly*, and in the other passage the comma should follow *quiet*. I am extremely indebted to you for this attention and also for your after admonitions—It is a sorry thing for me that any one should have to overcome prejudices in reading my verses—that affects me more than any hypercriticism on any particular passage. In *Endymion* I have most likely but moved into the go-cart from the leading strings. In poetry I have a few axioms and you will see how far I am from their centre. 1st. I think poetry should surprise by a fine excess and not by singularity—it should strike the reader as a wording of his own highest thoughts, and appear almost a remembrance 2nd. Its touches of Beauty should never be half way thereby making the reader breathless instead of content: the rise, the progress, the setting of imagery should like the sun come natural too him—shine over him and set soberly although in magnificence leaving him in the luxury of twilight—but it is easier to think what poetry should be than to write it—and this leads me on to another axiom. That if poetry comes not as naturally as the leaves to a tree it had better not come at all. However it may be with me I cannot help looking into new countries with 'O for a Muse of fire to as cend![42] If Endymion serves me as a pioneer perhaps I ought to be content. I have great reason to be content, for thank God I can read and perhaps understand Shakespeare to his depths, and I have I am sure many friends, who, if I fail, will attribute any change in my life and temper to humbleness rather than to pride—to a cowering under the wings of great poets rather than to a bitterness that I am not appreciated. I am anxious to get *Endymion* printed that I may forget it and proceed. I have coppied the 3rd Book and have begun the 4th. On running my eye over the proofs—I saw one mistake I will notice it presently and also any others if there be any. There should be no comma in "the raft branch down sweeping from a tall ash top". I have besides made one or two alterations and also altered the 13 line page 32 to make sense of it as you will see. I will take care the printer shall not trip up my heels. There should be no dash after Dryope in this line "Dryope's lone lulling of her Child." Remember me to Percy Street.

Your sincere and oblig[d] friend
John Keats —

P S. You shall have a short *Preface* in good time—

VI From To JOHN HAMILTON REYNOLDS
Sunday 3 May 1818

...I will return to Wordsworth—whether or no he has an extended vision or a circumscribed grandeur—whether he is an eagle in his nest, or on the wing—And to be more explicit and to show you how tall I stand by the giant, I will put down a simile of human life as far as I now perceive it; that is, to the point to which I say we both have arrived at—Well—I compare human life to a large mansion of many apartments, two of which I can only describe, the doors of the rest being as yet shut

[40] Filberts...catkins: Filberts are hachunts, catkins their blossom.
[41] Taylor: of the firm of Taylor and Hessey, publishers of Keat's *Endymion*.
[42] Prologue to Shakespeare's *Henry V*.

upon me. The first we step into we call the infant or thoughtless chamber, in which we remain as long as we do not think—We remain there a long while, and notwithstanding the doors of the second chamber remain wide open, showing a bright appearance, we care not to hasten to it; but are at length imperceptibly impelled by the awakening of this thinking principle within us—we no sooner get into the second chamber, which I shall call the chamber of maiden-thought, than we become intoxicated with the light and the atmosphere, we see nothing but pleasant wonders, and think of delaying there for ever in delight: However among the effects this breathing is father of is that tremendous one of sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of man—of convincing one's nerves that the world is full of misery and heartbreak, pain, sickness and oppression—whereby this chamber of maiden thought becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open—but all dark—all leading to dark passages—We see not the ballance of good and devil. *We* are in a mist. We are now in that state—We feel the "burden of the mystery", To this point was Wordsworth come, as far as I can conceive when he wrote 'Tintern Abbey' and it seems to me that his Genius is explorative of those d... passages Now if we live, and go on thinking, we too shall explore them—he is a Genius and superior to us, in so far as he can, more than we, make discoveries, and shed a light in them—Here I must think Wordsworth is deeper than Milton—though I think it has depended more upon the general and gregarious advance of intellect, than individual greatness of mind—From the Paradise Lost and the other works of Milton. I hope it is not too presuming, even between ourselves to say, that his philosophy, human and divine, may be tolerably understood by one not much advanced in years, In his time Englishmen were just emancipated from a great superstition—and men had got hold of certain points and resting places in reasoning which were too newly born to be doubted, and too much opposed by the mass of Europe not to be thought etherial and authentically divine—who could gain... his ideas on virtue, vice, and chastity in Comus, just at the time of the dismissal of cod-pieces and a hundred other disgraces? Who would not rest satisfied with his hintings at good and evil in the Paradise Lost, when just free from the inquisition and burning in Smithfield? The Reformation produced such immediate and great benefits, that Protestantism was considered under the immediate eye of Heaven, and its own remaining dogmas and superstitions, then, as it were, regenerated, constituted those resting places and seeming sure points of reasoning—from that I have mentioned, Milton, whatever he may have thought in the sequel, appears to have been content with these by his writings—He did not think into the human heart, as Wordsworth has done Yet Milton as a philosopher, had sure as great powers as Wordsworth—What is then to be inferr'd? O many things—It proves there is really a grand march of intellect—, It proves that a mighty providence subdues the mightiest minds to the service of the time being whether it be in human knowledge or religion—I have often pitied a tutor who has to hear "Nom: Musa"[43]—so often dinn'd into his ears— I hope you may not have the same pain in this scribbling—I may have read these things before, but I never had even a thus dim perception of them; and moreover I like to say my lesson to one who will endure my tediousness for my own sake—After all there is certinly something real in the world—Moore's present to Hazlitt [44] is real—I like that Moore, and am glad I saw him at the theatre just before I left town. Tom has spit a leetle blood this afternoon, and that is rather a damper—but I know—the truth is there is something real in the world. Your third chmber of life shall be a lucky and a gentle one—stored with the wine of love—and the bread of friendship. When you see George if he should not have received a letter from me tell him he will find one at home most likely—tell Bailey I Hope soon to see him-Rmember me to all. The leaves have been out here, for mony a day—I have written to George for the first stanzas of my Isabel[45]— I shall have them soon and will copy the whole out for you.

Your affectionate friend
John Keats

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[43] "Nom: Musa": the first lesson in Latin grammar: "Nominative: Musa," etc.
[44] Probably a copy of one of Thomas Moore's books.
[45] Isabel: Keats's poem, *Isabella.*

VII. To RICHARD WOODHOUSE[46]

Tuesday 27 Oct. 1818

My dear Woodhouse,

Your letter gave me a great satisfaction; more on account of its friendliness, than any relish of that matter in it which is accounted so acceptable in the "genus irritabile". The best answer I can give you is in a clerk-like manner to make some observations on two principle points, which seem to point like indices into the midst of the whole pro and con, about genius, and views and achievements and ambition and coetera. 1st As to the poetical character itself (I mean that sort of which, if I am any thing, I am a member; that sort distinguished from the Wordsworthian or egotistical sublime; which is a thing per se and stands alone) it is not itself—it has no self—it is every thing and nothing—It has no character—it enjoys light and shade; it lives in gusto, be it foul or fair, high or low, rich or poor, mean or elevated—It has as much delight in conceiving an Iago as an Imogen. What shocks the virtuous philosopher, delights the camelion poet. It does no harm from its relish of the dark side of things any more than from its taste for the bright one; because they both end in speculation. A poet is the most unpoetical of any thing in existance; because he has no identity—he is continually in for[47]—and filling some other body—The sun, the moon, the sea and men and women who are creatures of impulse are poetical and have about them an unchangeable attribute—the poet has none; no identity—he is certainly the most unpoetical of all God's creatures. If then he has no self, and if I am a poet, where is the wonder that I should say I would write no more? Might I not at that very instant have been cogitating on the characters of Saturn and Ops? It is a wretched thing to confess: but is a very fact that not one word I ever utter can be taken for granted as an opinion growing out of my identical nature—how can it, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with people if I ever am free from speculating on creations of my own brain, then not myself goes home to myself; but the identity of every one in the room begins to press upon me that I am in a very little time annihilated—not only among men: it would be the same in a nursery of children:I know not whether I make myself wholly understood; I hope enough so to let you see that no dependence is to be places on what I said that day.

In the second place I will speak of my views, and of the life I purpose to myself. I am ambitious of doing the world some good.: if I should be spared that may be the work of maturer years—in the interval I will assay to reach to as high a summit in poetry as the nerve bestowed upon me will suffer. The faint conceptions I have of poems to come brings the blood frequently into my forehead. All I hope is that I may not lose all interest in human affairs—that the solitary indifference I feel for applause even from the finest spirits, will not blunt any acuteness of vision I may have. I do not think it will—I feel assured I should write from the mere yearning and fondness I have for the beautiful even if my nights labours should be burnt every morning, and no eye ever shine upon them. But even now I am perhaps not speaking from myself: but from some character in whose soul I now live. I am sure however that this next sentence is from myself. I feel your anxiety, good opinion and friendliness in the highest degree, and am

Your's most sincerely
John Keats

VIII. *From* To GEORGE and GEORGIANA KEATS

Sunday14 Feb.Monday 3 May 1819

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[46] Woodhouse, a few years older than Keats, was a young lawyer with an intelligent approach to literature. He collected valuable information about Keats and his work, and perhaps understood the character of his mind better than any of Keats's other friends.

[47] in for: probably "in forming."

...Very few have been influenced by a pure desire of the benefit of others—in the greater part of the benefactors to humanity some meretricious motive has sullied their greatness—some melodramatic scenery has fascinated them—From the manner in which I feel Haslam's misfortune I perceive how far I am from any humble standard of disinterestedness [48]—Yet this feeling ought to be carried to its highest pitch as there is no fear of its ever injuring society—which it would do I fear pushed to an extremity—For in wild nature the hawk would loose his breakfast of robins and the robin his of worms—the lion must starve as well as the swallow. The greater part of men make their way with the same instinctiveness, the same unwandering eye from their purposes, the same animal eagerness as the hawk. The hawk wants a mate, so does the man—look at them both they set about it and procure one in the same manner. They want both a nest and they both set about one in the same manner—they get their food in the same manner—The noble animal man for his amusement smokes his—pipe the hawk balances about the clouds—that is the only difference of their leisures. This it is that makes the amusement of life—to a speculative Mind. I go among the fields and catch a glimpse of a stoat or a fieldmouse peeping out of the withered grass—the creature hath a purpose and its eyes are bright with it. I go amongst the buildings of a city and I see a man hurrying along to what? the creature has a purpose and his eyes are bright with it. But then, as Wordsworth says "we have all one human heart"[49]—there is an electric fire in human nature tending to purify —so that among these human creatures there is continually some birth of new heroism. The pity is that we must wonder at it: as we should at finding a pearl in rubbish. I have no doubt that thousands of people never heard of have had hearts completely disinterested: I can remember but two—Socrates and Jesus —their histories evince it. What I heard a little time ago, Taylor observe with respect to Socrates may be said of Jesus—That he was so great a man that though he transmitted no writing of his own to posterity, we have his Mind and his sayings and his greatness handed to us by others. It is to be lamented that the history of the latter was written and revised by men interested in the pious frauds of religion. Yet through all this I see his splendour. Even here[50] though I myself am pursueing the same instinctive course as the veriest human animal you can think of —I am however young writing at random—straining at particles of light in the midst of a great darkness—without knowing the bearing of any one assertion of any one opinion. Yet may I not in this be free from sin? May there not be superior beings amused with any graceful, though instinctive attitude my mind may fall into, as I am entertained with the alertness of a stoat or the anxiety of a deer? Though a quarrel in the streets is a thing to be hated, the energies displayed in it are fine; the commonest man shows a grace in his quarrel—By a superior being our reasonings may take the same tone—though erroneous they may be find—This is the very thing in which consists poetry, and if so it is not so fine a thing as philosophy—For the same reason that an eagle is deepened, and his nature is increasingly "fortified" and perfected into a "soul."

not so fine a thing as a truth—Give me this credit—Do you not think I strive—to know myself. Give me this credit—and you will not think that on my own account I repeat Milton's lines

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[48] disinterestedness: freedom from all selfish motives. Keats is referring to the approaching death of the father of his close friend, William Haslam, a young businessman.

[49] "The Old Cumberland Beggar," l. 153, above.

[50] This and the following two sentences may be paraphrased thus: I myself am far from being completely " disinterested" that is, completely free from all selfish motivations. In fact, like all human animals, I am pursuing my own instinctive course of action. (Also, I am young, groping without much light as yet; and I still do not know very well what would be the full, logical result of attitudes I instinctively adopt.) Yet is this to be greatly condemned? This following of one's instinctive course, this assertion of " self identity ," is not complete " selfishness" so much as it is the instinctive activity of the animal world, innocent and to be expected. It is not, to be sure, the highest development of what human nature can and should be. As Keats's later remarks about the " vale of Soul making " suggest, the developing of human character comes about by gradual concrete experience. From this experience, provided one is endowed with intelligence and sensitivity, wisdom (or philosophy) emerges, man's heart is deepened, and his nature is increasingly " fortified " and perfected into a " soul. "

"How charming is divine Philosophy
Not harsh and crabbed as dull fools suppose
But musical as is Apollo's lute "— [51]

Call the world if you please. "The vale of So making," Then you will find out the use of the world (I am speaking now in the highest terms for human nature admitting it to be immortal which I will here take for granted for the purpose of showing a thought which has struck me concerning it) I say '*Soul making*' Soul as distinguished from an Intelligence—There may be intelligence or sparks of the divinity in millions—but they are not Souls till they acquire identities, till each one is personally itself.[52] Intelligences are atoms of perception—they know and they see and they are pure, in short they are God—How then are Souls to be made? How then are these sparks which are God to have identity given them — so as ever to possess a bliss peculiar to each one's individual existence? How, but by the medium of a world like this? This point I sincerely wish to consider because I think it a grander system of salvation than the chrystiain religion—or rather it is a system of spirit creation— This is effected by three grand materials acting the one upon the other for a series of years. These three materials are the *Intelligence*—the *Human Heart* (as distinguished from Intelligence or Mind) and the *world or elemental space* suited for the proper action of *Mind and Heart* on each other for the purpose of forming the *Soul or Intelligence destined to possess the sense of identity*. I can scarcely express what I but dimly perceive—and yet I think I perceive it—that you may judge the more clearly I will put it in the most homely from possible—I will call the *world* a school instituted for the purpose of teaching little children to read—I will call the *human Heart the horn book* used in that school—and I will call the *child able to read, the Soul* made from that *school* and its *hornbook*. Do you not see how necessary a world of pains and troubles is to school an Intelligence and make it a Soul? A place where the Heart must feel and suffer in a thousand diverse ways! Not merely is the Heart a hornbook. It is the Minds Bible, it is the Minds experience, it is the teat from which the Mind or Intelligence sucks its identity...If what I have said should not be plain enough, as I fear it may not be, I will put you in the place where I began in this series of thoughts—I mean, I began by seeing how man was formed by circumstances—and what are circumstances?—but touchstones of his Heart—? and what are touchstones? but proovings of his Heart? And what are proovings of his Heart but fortifiers or alters of his nature? and what is his altrered nature but hid Soul?—and what was his Soul before it came into the world and had these provings and alterations and perfectionings?—An Intelligence — without identity — and how is this identity to be made? Through the medium of the Heart? And how is the Heart to become this medium but in a world of circumstances?

IX. TO MISS JEFFREY[53]

Wednesday 9 June 1819

Wentworth Place

My Dear young Lady,

I am exceedingly obliged by your two letters—Why I did not answer your first immediately was that I have had a little aversion to the south of Devon from the continual remembrance of my brother Tom. On that account I do not return to my old lodgings in Hampstead though the people of the house have become friends of mind—This however I could think nothing of, it can do no more than keep one's thoughts employed for a day or two. I like your description of Bradley[54] very much

[51] Comus, *ll, 476-78*
[52] Seen 49, above.
[53] Miss Jeffrey: A member of a family friendly to Keats, at Teignmouth, Devon. It is uncertain to which of the daughters of the family the letter is addressed.
[54] Bradley: in South Devon.

and I dare say shall be there in the course of the summer; it would be immediately but that a friend will ill health and to whom I am greatly attached call'd on me yesterday and proposed my spending a month with him at the back of the Isle of Wight. This is just the thing at present—the morrow will take care of itself— I do not like the name of Bishop's Teigntown—I hope the road from Teignmouth to Bradley does not lie that way —Your advice about the Indiaman is a very wise advice, because it justs suits me, though you are a little in the wrong concerning its destroying the energies of mind;[55] on the contrary it would be the finest thing in the world to strengthen them— Tobe thrown among people who care not for you, with whom you have no sympathies forces the mind upon its own resources, and leaves it free to make its speculations of the differences of human character and to class them with the calmness of a botanist. An Indiaman is a little world. One of the great reasons that the English have produced the finest writers in the world is, that the English world has ill-treated them during their lives and foster'd them after their deaths. They have in general been trampled aside into the bye paths of life and seen the festerings of society. They have not been treated like the Raphaels of Italy. And where is the Englishman and poet who has given a magnificent entertainment at the christening of one of his hero's horses as Boyardo [56] did? He had a castle in the Appenine. He was a noble poet of romance; not a miserable and mighty poet of the human Heart. The middle age of Shakespeare was all clouded over; his days were not more happy than Hamlet's who is perhaps more like Shakspeare himself in his common every day life than any other of his characters Ben—Johnson was a common Soldier and in the Low Countries, in the face of two armies, fought a single combat with a French trooper and slew him—For all this I will not go on board an Indiaman, nor for example's sake run my head into dark alleys: I dare say my discipline is to come, and plenty of it too. I have been very idle lately, very averse to writing; both from the overpowering idea of our dead poets and from abatement of my love of Fame. I hope I am a little more of a philosopher than I was, consequently a little less of a versifying pet-lamb [57] I have put no more in print or you should have had it. You will judge of my 1819 temper when I tell you that the thing I have most enjoyed this year has been writing an ode to Indolence. Why did you not make your long-haired sister put her great brown hard fist to paper and cross your letter ? Tell her when you write again that I expect chequer work—My friend Mr Brown is sitting opposite me employed in writing a life of *David*. He reads me passages as he writes them stuffing my infidel mouth as though I were a young rook—Infidel rooks do not provender with Elisha's ravens [58] If he goes on as he has begun your new church had better not proceed, for parsons will be superseeded—and of course the clerks must follow. Give my love to your mother with the assurance that I can never forget her anxiety for my brother Tom. Believe also that I shall ever remember our leaving-taking with you.

Ever sincerely yours
John Keats

X. To BENJAMIN BAILEY

Saturday 14 Aug. 1819

We removed to Winchester for the convenience of a library and find it an exceeding pleasant town, enriched with a beautiful cathedrall and surrounded by a fresh-looking country. We are in tolerably good and cheap lodgings. Within these two months I have written 1500 lines, most of which besides many more of prior composition you will probably see by next winter. I have written two tales, one from Boccaccio call'd

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[55] Your. . .mind: Keats had been speculating about the advisability of becoming a surgeon on an East India trade ship. In an earlier letter to Miss Jeffrey, he had mentioned this as a possibility.

[56] Boyardo: Matteo Maria Boiardo (143494), an Italian poet who wrote chivalric romances based on the legends of Arthur and Charlemagne.

[57] Of. The letter to George and Georgiana Keats (Feb. 14-May 3, 1810), above, p.40, and the discussion in the headnote to *Lamia*.

[58] Elisha'a ravens: Elijah, not Elisha, was fed by the ravens (I Kings 17:6).

the Pot of Basil: and another call'ds. Agnes' Eve on a popular superstition; and a third call'd Lamia--half finished—I have also been writing parts of my Hyperion and completed 4 acts of a tragedy.[59] It was the opinion of most of my friends that I should never be able to write a scene.—I will endeavour to wipe away the prejudice I sincerely hope you will be pleased when my labours since we last saw each other shall reach you. One of my ambitions is to make as great a revolution in modern dramatic writing as Kean has done in acting--another to upset the drawling of the blue stocking literary world—if in the course of a few years I do these two things I ought to die content--and my friends should drink a dozen of claret on my tomb—I am convinced more and more every day that (excepting the human friend philosopher)[60] a fine writer is the most genuine being in the world. Shakspeare and the Paradise Lost every day become greater wonders to me. I look upon fine phrases like a lover. I was glad to see, by a passage in one of Brown's letters some time ago from the north that you were in such good spirits. Since that you have been married and in congratulating you I wish you every continuance of them. Present my respects to Mrs Bailey. This sounds oddly to me, and I dare say I do it awkwardly enough: but I suppose by this time it is nothing new to you—Brown's remembrances to you—As far as I know we shall remain at Winchester for a goodish while—

Ever your sincere friend
John Keats.

XI. To PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Wednesday 16 Aug. 1820

Hampstead August 16th

My dear Shelley,

I am very much gratified that you, in a foreign country, and with a mind almost overoccupied, should write to me in the strain of the letter beside me. If I do not take advantage of your invitation it will be prevented by a circumstance I have very much at heart to prophesy. There is no doubt that an English winter would put an end to me, and do so in a lingering hateful manner, therefore I must either voyage or journey to Italy as a soldier marches up to a battery. My nerves at present are the worst part of me, yet they feel soothed when I think that come what extreme may, I shall not be destined to remain in one spot long enough to take a hatred of any four particular bedposts. I am glad you take any pleasure in my poor poem;—which I would willingly take the trouble to unwrite, if possible, did I care so much as I have done about reputation. I received a copy of the Cenci, as from yourself from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of; the poetry, and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now a days is considered the mammon. A modern work it is said must have a purpose, which may be the God—*an artist* must serve Mammon—he must have "self concentration" selfishness perhaps. You I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and "load every rift" of your subject with ore.[61] The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furl'd for six months together. And is not this extraordinary talk for the writer of Endymion! whose mind was like a pack of scattered cards—I am pick'd up and sorted to a pip. My Imagination is a monastry and I am its monk--you must explain my metap[hs] to yourself. I am in expectation of Prometheus[62] every day. Could I have my own wish for its interest effected you would have it still in manuscript—or be but now putting an end to the second act. I remember you advising me not to publish my first-blights, on Hampstead heath— I am "returning advice upon your hands. Most of the poems in

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[59] tragedy; *Otho the Great*, which was written rapidly, amid much distraction, and gives little indication of Keats's potential dramatic ability.

[60] excepting. ., philosopher: This exception should be kept in mind in reading *Lamia* and the *Fall of Hyperion*.

[61] Cf. Spenser, *Faerie Queen*,. II. vii. 28, p. 130.

[62] Prometheus; Shelley's verse drama, *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

the volume [63] I send you have been written above two years, and would never have been publish'd but from a hope of gain; so you see I am inclined enough to take your advice now. I must express once more my deep sense of your kindness, adding my sincere thanks and respects for Mrs Shelley. In the hope of soon seeing you I remain

most sincerely yours,
John Keats—

XII. To CHARLES BROWN

Thursday 30 Nov. 1820

Rome, 30 November 1820.

My dear Brown,

'Tis the most difficult thing in the world to me to write a letter. My stomach continues so bad, that I feel it worse on opening any book,—yet I am much better than I was in quarantine. Then I am afraid to encounter the pro-ing and con-ing of anything interesting to me in England. I have an habitual feeling of my real life having passed, and that I am leading a posthumous existence. God knows how it would have been—but it appears to me—however, I will not speak of that subject. I must have been at Bedhampton nearly at the time you were writing to me from Chichester—how unfortunate—and to pass on the river too! There was my star predominant! I cannot answer anything in your letter, which followed me from Naples to Rome, because I am afraid to look it over again. I am so weak (in mind) that I cannot bear the sight of any handwriting of a friend I love so much as I do you. Yet I ride the little horse, and, at my worst, even in quarantine, summoned up more puns, in a sort of desperation, in one week than in any year of my life. There is one thought enough to kill me; I have been well, healthy, alert, &c., walking with her,[64] and now—the knowledge of contrast, feeling for light and shade, all that information (primitive sense) necessary for a poem, are great enemies to the recovery of the stomach. There, you rogue, I put you to the torture; but you must bring your philosophy to bear, as I do mine, really, or how should I be able to live? Dr. Clark is very attentive to me: he says, there is very little the matter with my lungs, but my stomach, he says, is very bad. I am well disappointed in hearing good news from George, for it runs in my head we shall all die young. I have not written to Reynolds yet, which he must think very neglectful; being anxious to send him a good account of my health, I have delayed it from week to week. If I recover, I will do all in my power to correct the mistakes made during sickness: and if I should not, all my faults will be forgiven. Severn [65] is very well, though he leads so dull a life with me. Remember me to all friends, and tell Haslam [66] I should not have left London without taking leave of him, but from being so low in body and mind. Write to George as soon as you receive this, and tell him how I am, as far as you can guess; and also a note to my sister—who walks about my imagination like a ghost,—she is so like Tom. I can scarcely bid you goodbye, even in a letter; I always made an awkward bow.

God bless you!
John Keats.

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[63] volume: Keats's new volume, which contained *Lamia, Isabella, Eve of St. Agnes, Hyperion,* and the odes..

[64] her: Fanny Brawne.

[65] Severn: Joseph Severn, a young painter who befriended Keats and nursed him in his last illness.

[66] See n. 47, above.

ERRATA
UNIT 22: THE AGE OF DRYDEN

Page No.	Line No.	Incorrect	Correct
7	17	Fiction	fiction
8	12	conflict,	conflict
	14	national,	national
	35	consious	conscious
9	6	has	his
	7	relations	relations,
	12	christian	Christian
	16	clergy	Clergy
	20	illuminating	illuminating.
	24	earth	earth,
	29	.....	(start separate line with) But
9	34	way,	way.
11	1	public'	public
12	19		(shift the line to the left hand margin)
	33	'the	the
	35	was	was,
13	8	wills	Will's
	14	scientists	Scientists
	17	my own apartment	'my own apartment'
14	14	Commonwealth	Commonwealth'
	20	goal	gaol
15	6	New	new
	8	respectively	respectively,
	11	books	books".
	15	christian	Christian
	38	Society for promoting christian knowledge	Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge
16	6	afterwards them	afterwards change them
	39	cnd	and
18	30	'Eighteenth	Eighteenth
19	39	noun Augustus the Roman Emperor	noun, Augustus, the Roman Emperor,
	41	Classicism	classicism
	46	neoclassical	neo-classical
	47	renaissance	Renaissance
20	3	But	And
	12	poct	poct,
	31	satirist	satirists
	34	them	them,
21	9	virgil	Virgil
	17	criticism Rapim	criticism Rapin
	23	spirit,	spirit
	30	Curiously	curiously
	34	Revolted	revolted
	37	time	time.

UNIT 23: JOHN DRYDEN

Page No.	Line No.	Incorrect	Correct
32	7	literature	literature
33	12	of	to
34	42	Came	came
35	8	en'n	ev'n
35	39	popish	Popish
	47	Commons	Commons.
		in	Its
	50	Shaftesbury	Shaftesbury,
37	5	Hind	hind
39	10	english	English
	41	humour	Humours
40	20	age	age,
	30	sense?'	sense'?
	35	said	said,
	42	will	Will
		prevail	Prevail
	47	in love with	in love with
41	17	with conquest	with the conquest
	29	resentment	resentment'
	45	cormic	comic
42	3	Kind	kind
		tellye	tell ye
	6	what was	what I was
	10	Tis	'Tis
	13	wit.	Wit
	26	yon	you
	27	compared	complained
	32	Farewell	'Farewell Ungrateful
		Ungrateful Traitor	Traitor'
42	41	art	art,
		It	it
	43	Soft	soft
	44	Johnson	Jonson
	46	plays	plays.
		Interestingly	Interestingly
43	5	inrealised	unrealised
	13	verso-satire	verse-satire
	27	'emotionally	emotionally
	30	fountain-head	fountainhead
	32	'the	the
		who:	who
	33	composition:	composition.
	35	essay	Essay
	36	1768	1668
		english	English
	40	Main	main
	47	in French	French
42	2	poets	poets.
	4	Johnson's	Jonson's
	14	if	it
	28	essay	Essay
	44	age	age,
	51	Janus of poet	Janus of a poet

Errata

45	9	influence	influence.
	10	Aristolic	Aristotle
	15	realised	realised,
	16	theres	three
	17	translator	translation
	21	pleeses	pleases
	27	comedy	comedy,
	28	Chauer's	Chaucer's
	33	buffonery	buffoonery
	34	painting	Painting
	39	tragedy	tragedy.
	44	Poem	Poem,
46	33	delicate`	delicate
	40	spenser	Spenser
	42	original	original`
	50	Canterbusy	Canterbury
47	3	life-liness	liveliness
	17	in	is
48	11	Weakness	weakness
	27	bestow's	bestowed
	30	sane	same
	42	imperialism	imperialism,
49	18	entitles	entitled
	21	enlogies	enlogise
50	16	state	state,
	24	Surfi's	Swift's
	29	have	....
	36	situation	situation.
51	10	life	life,
	Q.4	polities	politics
52	13	life	Life
	15	of	on

UNIT 24 MAC FLECKNOE

Page No.	Line No.	Incorrect	Correct
53	9	Poetry	Poetry?
	between insert		24.6.4 Conclusion
	14 and 15		
54	18	The waste land	The Waste Land
	26	Consequently,	Consequently
55	30	variety	varity
	46	Know	know
56	6	whigs	Whigs
	9	for	far
	29	has	had
60	12	transition	translation
61	1	Poetry	Poetry?
	36	His	Dryden's
63	27	land	Land
	35	said	Said
	40	satire	Satire
64	5	title	title.
65	22	roses	roses,
	30	Devls	Devils
66	note to L61	joy	Boy
69	note to L63-64	play	play.
70	28	the Mac	Mac
71	3	true	turn
	14	action	unction
	23	feel	feet
	after 35 ...		(insert)
			24.6.4.Conclusion
	44	loud.	loud
72	1	has	had
	32	history used	history is used
	42	unify,	unify
73	2	Purcell	Pucell
	39	Keat's	Keats's

APPENDIX I

Page No.	Line No.	Incorrect	Correct
104	20	shadwell	Shadwell
	30	though	Thou
	37	what	that
105	59	more	more.
	77	punks	Pukes
	83	clinches	cliches
106	8	true	truce
	29	his	him
	53-54		(Join the two lines together
107	6	Johnson's	Jonson's
	9	Johnson	Jonson
	36	open	pen
	37	purchse	purchase
109	25	flery	fiery

Errata				
	2	3	eternal	eternal.
		30	unnatural	unnatural.
	3	13	elegy	Elegy
			country	Country
		15	had	were
		16	his poetry	poetry
		18	had held	held
		31	had excelled	had been excelled
	24	15	wordsworth	Wordsworth
		30	verse	verse.
		31	Tis	'Tis
		39	Jolinson	Johnson
	25	3	He	'he
		3	astonoshing	astonishing
		6	'British	British
		15-16		(O sacred.. insolence) to be put together
	26	6	self-explanatory	self-explanatory.
		11	'greatness	'greatness'
		28	essay	Essay
			criticism	Criticism
				(insert after Criticism)is in verse
	27	2	spirt	spirit
		3	perhaps,	perhaps
		7	christianity	Christianity
		46	Men not afraid of God, afraid of me	'Men not afraid of God, afraid of me'
	28	17	Lord	Lord.
		21	The identify	to identify
			has never	has, however, never
	29	Question 2©	Victoria	Victorian
	30	Q.7	age	Age
		Q.17	Virgil epic	Virgil's epic
	31	S.No.2 of books	criticism	Criticism